# The Cry: A New Dramatic Fable.

Sarah Fielding

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# Sarah Fielding

Also written by
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# INTRODUCTION.

Our address is to the candid reader; to the morose critic we know that all address is vain; to such as are willing to understand, we will endeavour to be perspicuous; and to those who are desirous of being pleased, we shall greatly miss of our aim, if we give no entertainment. Nay, we will venture to affirm, that every reader by his own disposition, in a great measure, contributes to his own entertainment.

For if a man reads with the desire of gaining information, such an enquiring mind will certainly find matter on which to build some knowledge; if to be pleased and amused be his design, his own good−humour humour will not suffer him to lose his labour; and if to carp and find fault should be his choice, his inclination will not fail of producing proofs enough of his having found an object of his splenetic delight: it not being more certain that an impatient lover, expecting his mistress to the minute of an appointment, will mistake every moving object, nay even every bush, for his approaching fair one, than that an earnest seeker after faults will take in as such every object in his view, in order to gratify his greedy expectations. 'Tis speaking of such kind of readers only that the poet says—

*Critics on life or verse are hard to please;*
*Few write to those, and none can live to these.*

And both for the same reason, namely, the warmth with which men embrace the discovery of every new fault. It were well if they stopp'd here, and every minute failing also was not taken in to make up the weight. Such men, instead of endeavouring to keep pace with the imagination of writers of genius, strive rather to cramp and bind them in such chains as must render them insipid.

Those inimitably beautiful chorus's to *Shakespear's Harry* the fifth, where he desires his audience *to play with their fancies,* and to suffer him to bear them on the lofty wings of his own sublime imagination, over the expanded ocean to different countries and distant climates, we should have thought might have warm'd the morosest cynic into a taste of pleasure, and have baffled the ill−humour of the severest critic. And yet we once remember in a conversation, to have heard a gentleman treat these very chorus's, as if he had been examining an evidence in a court of justice; and then gravely (we will not say dully) pronouncing sentence, that they were contrary to all form and order, and only the wild reveries of an unbridled imagination. On such Critics justly may one say with *Terence*;

*Faciunt næ intelligendo, ut nihil intelligant.*

And between such authors as *Shakespear,* (if any more there are) and such critics as our before−mention'd gentleman, who would blame any one for acting, as *Terence* in the same prologue is said to act by some other Authors of confirm'd credit;

*Quorum æmulari exoptat negligentiam,*
*Potius quam istorum obscuram diligentiam?*

When a judicious writer sets before his readers entertainment for their imaginations, and desires them to indulge both him and themselves by playing with their fancies, should any man be so perversely sour as to sit in strict judgment; or if on the other hand, where the judgment ought to be employed, should he give a loose to his own wild imaginations, all time and place must be confused, and every image must be distorted into absurdity.

With the two principal ends in view, to entertain and to instruct (not to mention another principal view, which hath undoubtedly produced more volumes than either of the former, but, however seriously important to the writer, is too ludicrous to find more than this cursory notice here) various have been the methods taken for those purposes. *Ariosto, Spenser,* and even *Milton,* ran into allegory, as there is nothing to which a great and lively imagination is so prone. It is a flight by which the human wit attempts at one and the same time to investigate two objects, and consequently is fitted only to the most exalted genius's. It should therefore be very sparingly practised, lest, whilst the writer plays with his own fancies, and diverts himself by cutting the air with his wide−spread wings, he should soar out of the view of his readers, leaving them in confusion and perplexity to

explore his viewless track.

Those who would attempt the same uncommon flights must, we are very sensible, have the same uncommon genius's; otherwise they would make as ridiculous a figure as those poets mentioned by *Horace,* who to prove their title to natural genius, went unshaved and slovenly into the public walks, because *Democritus* had said that a nature was better than art. But with some small portion of real genius, and a warm imagination, an author surely may be permitted a little to expand his wings, and to wander in the aerial fields of fancy, provided the well−known fable of *Icarus* bears this prudent advice to his ear, that he soar not to such dangerous heights, from whence unplumed he may fall to the ground disgraced, if not disabled from ever rising any more. There is scarcely to be found in any author such an inexhaustible treasure, such an immense fund of knowledge, as in *Montaigne*; but like a heap of pearls for want of being strung, half their beauties are lost in confusion. His intrinsic worth, by not being stamp'd with some outward image, is not always current with the memory; and to digest such rich matter as is scatter'd about in every chapter, requires a very searching and attentive mind. Yet it is hardly to be doubted but the free manner of writing which he assumed, was most fitted to his own genius, and by chusing any other he might have lost part of the force and energy of his images, which could not have been compensated by regularity and method.

Essay−writing is perhaps of all others the easiest for the author, and requires little more than what is called a fluency of words, and a vivacity of expression, to avoid dullness: but without such a real foundation of matter, as is to be found in the above−mentioned author, and in some few others of our own nation, whose names are too obvious to need repeating, an essay−writer is very apt, like *Dogberry* in *Shakespear's Much ado about nothing,* to think that if he had the tediousness of a king, he would bestow it all upon his readers. 'Tis on this account in all likelihood, that stories and novels have been so much more sought after than meer essays. Yet stories and novels have flowed in such abundance for these last ten years, that we would wish, if possible, to strike a little out of a road already so much beaten. There are two obvious reasons for such a deviation. One is the real excellence of some of those writings, both as to humour, character, moral, and every other proper requisite, which (without an affected humility) we by no means promise fully to equal, much less to surpass; and the other reason is, that we may not be thrown aside as increasing the number of that set of trifling performances, whose names we presume are most of them already devoted to oblivion. For although a decent modesty of not boasting ourselves equal to the best, may not be misbecoming; yet the same modesty would restrain us from imposing on the public what we thought below their consideration.

"b When an author (writes a gentleman of no less erudition than judgment), poorly anticipates your pardon for a bad performance, by declaring that *it was the fruits of a few idle hours; written meerly for private amusement; never revised; publish'd against consent, at the importunity of friends, copies (God knows how) having by stealth gotten abroad*; with other stale jargon of equal falshood and inanity; may we not ask such prefacers if what they allege be true, what has the world to do with with them and their crudities?" And may we not farther ask, what can induce a reader to turn one leaf beyond such contemptible prefaces?

In an epic poem, the proem generally informs you of the poet's intention in his work. He tells you either what he designs to do, or what he intreats some superior power to do for him.

*Arms and the man I sing, &c.*
says *Virgil.*

*The wrath of Peleus' son, the direful spring*
*Of all the Grecian woes, O Goddess sing;*

begins the immortal *Homer*; whose example is follow'd by our own *Milton,* in his *Paradise Lost, Of man's first disobedience,* &c.—
Sing heav'nly muse.—

Sometimes the poet not only tells you what is the subject of his song, but he also informs you what is not, as in the beginning of the *Paradise Regain'd, I who ere while,* &c.—
Now sing, &c.—

The same method is observed by *Spenser* in his † *Fairy Queen,* and even by *Virgil,* if the c disputed verses in the beginning of the *Æneid* may be allowed to be his. But in plain prose, we beg to inform our readers, that our

intention in the following pages, is not to amuse them with a number of surprising incidents and adventures, but rather to paint the inward mind.

*Plutarch,* in the beginning of his life of *Alexander the Great,* says, that "neither do the most glorious exploits always furnish us with the clearest discoveries of virtue or vice in men; sometimes a matter of less moment, an expression, or a jest, informs us better of their manners and inclinations than the most famous sieges, the greatest encampments, or the bloodiest battles whatsoever. Therefore, as those who draw by the life, are more exact in the lines and features of the face, from which we may often collect the disposition of the person, than in the other parts of the body: so I shall endeavour, by penetrating into, and describing the secret recesses and images of the soul, to express the lives of men, and leave their more shining actions and atchievements to be treated of by others."

If the heroine of a romance was to travel through countries, where the castles of giants rise to her view; through gloomy forests, amongst the dens of savage beasts, where at one time she is in danger of being torn and devour'd, at another, retarded in her flight by puzzling mazes, and falls at last into the hands of a cruel giant; the reader's fears will be alarm'd for her safety; his pleasure will arise on seeing her escape from the teeth of a lion, or the paws of a fierce tiger: if he hath conceived any regard for the virtuous sufferer, he will be delighted when she avoids being taken captive, or is rescued by the valour of some faithful knight; and with what joy will he accompany her steps when she finds the right road, and gets safely out of the enchanted dreary forest! —But the puzzling mazes into which we shall throw our heroine, are the perverse interpretations made upon her words; the lions, tigers, and giants, from which we endeavour to rescue her, are the spiteful and malicious tongues of her enemies. In short, the design of the following work is to strip, as much as possible, d *Duessa* or Falshood, of all her shifts and evasions; to hunt her like a fox through all her doublings and windings; to shew, that, let her imitate Truth ever so much, yet is she but a phantom; and, in a word, to expose her deformity, in hopes to persuade mankind to shun so odious a companion. Nor can this be effected, unless we could awaken the judgment to exert itself, so as to reject all the alluring bribes which the passions, assisted by the imagination, can offer. Unless we could prove that to moderate, and not to inflame the passions, is the only method of attaining happiness; and that it is the interest of man at once to use and to be thankful for his reason, and not absurdly by disuse to weaken its force, and at the same time vainly to boast of its strength.

Thoroughly to unfold the labyrinths of the human mind, is an arduous task; and notwithstanding the many skilful and penetrating strokes which are to be found in the best authors, there seem yet to remain some intricate and unopen'd recesses in the heart of man. In order to dive into those recesses, and lay them open to the reader in a striking and intelligible manner, 'tis necessary to assume a certain freedom in writing, not strictly perhaps within the limits prescribed by rules. Yet we desire only to be free, and not licentious. We wish to give our imagination leave to play; but within such bounds as not to grow mad. And if we step into allegory, it shall not be out of sight of our reader. The liberty we desire, is to bring one or more persons before an allegorical assembly, in order for them truly to relate their actions and sentiments throughout their past lives. If it should sometimes be found that our imaginary allegorical phantoms talk exactly the language of this world, let it be remember'd that human nature is the picture we intend to paint. If it should be objected, that our mortal persons confess to their audience, what one mortal is not apt to confess to another, let us plead in our defence, that our audience are meerly allegorical. In short, as the machinery of heathen poetry is at present deny'd, the defect can no otherwise be supply'd to the writer of imagination, but by the good−humour of the reader.

As we shall constitute an audience to hear the stories of those who shall be brought before them, instead of the common divisions of books and chapters, we beg to be indulged in borrowing from the stage the name of scenes. In which we will not promise that every interruption shall always strictly or visibly require a change of scene, but may be sometimes made only in order to give the same respite as is given to the reader, by the common contrivance of chapters, as aforesaid. But besides the avoiding a worn−out practice, and the plea of variety, which we make for this our method (whose novelty perhaps may give offence rather than pleasure to some sort of critics) we cannot help flattering ourselves, that we shall be the better enabled by these means to give life and action to our history.

Altho' we have borrow'd from the stage the name of scenes, and generally its dialogue, yet have we kept the privilege of being our own chorus, in order not only to point out the behaviour of our actors, which for want of a real stage representation could sometimes not otherwise be understood; but to express or relate some things which

are not proper to be spoken by our principal characters; or, according to the author of *Tom Jones,* to tell what we cannot prevail on any of our actors to tell our readers for us.

It must be allow'd that characters should be animated to gain our attention, and some degree of sympathy is necessary to raise a desire of our farther acquaintance with them. The motives to actions, and the inward turns of mind, seem in our opinion more necessary to be known than the actions themselves; and much rather would we chuse that our reader should clearly understand what our principal actors think, than what they do. To answer both these purposes, the method of making the principal character the speaker seems the best calculated; and the nearer things are brought to dramatic representation, the more are you acquainted with the personages, and interested in the event of the story. But whether this method be really the best or worst, let future critics decide, if they think it worth their notice. We can only declare, that we found it our easiest manner of conveying our thoughts and executing our purpose; and if our reader should be neither inform'd nor amused, we shall be very sorry for his loss of time as well as our own.

The reason of our affixing mottos to our various scenes, is in order to give a sanction to our own sentiments by those of the most approved authors.

Fully to exclude that pernicious interpretation on characteristic writings, namely, the fixing them down into personal libels, we beg to declare, that so far are we from using feign'd names to signify real persons, that we make use of the real names of *England, London,* &c. to signify the world; and our characters are intended to mean human nature in general.

But in all things whether we shall make only a due use of the liberties we have ask'd, is left entirely to the judicious reader to decide.

## PROLOGUE TO Part the First.

In the regions far above the reach or sight of mortality dwells sacred Truth. In eternal opposition to Truth, is blind and perplexing Error.

On the wings of Fancy, gentle readers, bear yourselves into the mid air, where by imagination you may form a large stupendous castle. Within is a magnificent and spacious hall; in which behold a large assembly, composed of all such tempers and dispositions as bear an inveterate hatred to Truth and Simplicity, and which are possess'd also with a strong desire of supporting Affectation and Fallacy:

## Such is Error and her NUMEROUS TRAIN.

To this assembly, when cloathed in mortal forms, we beg leave to give the general name of THE Cry: for although their whole hearts are fill'd with discord and dissension; yet whenever they meet with a common foe, they are generally unanimous.

The cry are indeed composed of all those characters in human nature, who, tho' differing from each other, join in one common clamour against Truth and her adherents. By bringing all such characters together, we would wish to dive into the bottom of their hearts, to shew what must be their sentiments, what the tendency of such sentiments, and how carefully they ought to be avoided.

To this assembly is brought (whether by magic, by enchantment, or what other means, let particular fancy dictate) a young lady call'd Portia, who relates the history of her own life and connexions: yet not by a long recital without lett or hinderance; for such an audience as those before whom she speaks, are not likely to suffer such sentiments as our *Portia* will venture to avow, to pass undisputed.

The cry being form'd of a set of characters, whose principal view must be the exalting each themselves, and mortifying all others to the dust, our poor *Portia* would have too hard a task, unaided and friendless, to indure the insulting taunts and biting reproaches of such a multitude. We must again therefore, gentle reader, implore your assistance, and beg you to employ your fertile fancy in presenting to your view, placed on a seat high exalted from the croud, a radiant form, all mild, all gentle, yet possessing such a graceful majesty as is able at any time by a single word to awe the tumultuous Cry into silence.

## Such is the force of SIMPLE Truth.

To this fair phantom of the imagination, arrayed in the same form of mortality as once before she deign'd to wear, when she accompany'd her favourite red−cross knight, and now condescends to give attention to our *Portia's* story, we beg to give the name of Una; borrow'd, we confess, from our master *Spenser,* for this very good reason, that we could not possibly find any other name half so adequate to express our meaning.

As strongly different as light from darkness (or indeed as truth from error) is Una from the Cry. And to which party our *Portia,* or any other person brought before the same assembly, may be thought nearest allied, let their words and actions shew.

The passions as well as the sciences may be said to have their technical terms; and there are certain words, which, when they fall from the tongue, as plainly indicate the pride or envy of the heart, as doth a man's desiring you to *heave* that glass across the table, inform you that he hath been walking the foremast deck. The characters which compose our Cry in this sense, if natural, must be known; yet not so as to indulge private spleen, or to gratify malice: for which reason, whenever there shall be occasion for making any distinction amongst them, we shall make use of names already known, such as *Clodio, Harpacia, Timandra,* or any other fictitious name that may chance to suit the speaker, which we chuse much rather than to say Mr.— Mrs.—or Miss—in order to avoid giving the least handle for the aspersing any living character: for scandal and invective are our utter abhorrence. We would therefore advise those readers (if any such there are) who think every thing dull which cannot be interpreted into one of those meanings, to let these scenes alone; for here they will find no food fit to please such a depraved palate.

That mortal errors are represented by allegorical persons, is still farther to drive off the possibility of malicious applications. That divine Truth is envelop'd in a mortal form, is to exculpate ourselves from the daring attempt of pretending to pronounce, what would be the decision of the Spirit of Truth.

As we ourselves are mortal, we pretend not to infallibility. We readily allow ourselves liable to be mistaken; yet we still claim this candour at the hand of our readers, that they condemn not any sentiment which is stamp'd by the approbation of our Una, till they have thoroughly consider'd and given it a fair examination. For, be it remember'd, that we have not publish'd any such sentiment without having first ourselves carefully examined it on all sides: we expect not therefore from any judges, but such as our own CRY, a hasty censure, because our opinions may happen to appear new as to some particular points, which our readers may never before have thoroughly examined.

Our assembly being now form'd, not by ourselves, but by the good−will and spritely imagination of our readers, we have nothing to do but to draw up the curtain (our prologue being ended) and to discover our chief personage on the stage. And should any other happen to arrive, or should any of those present chuse to depart from the said stage, our reader shall not fail of due and proper notice of all such entries and exits.

# PART the FIRST.

## SCENE I.

*And oft though Wisdom wake, Suspicion sleeps*
*At Wisdom's gate, and to Simplicity*
*Resigns her charge, while Goodness thinks no ill*
*Where no ill seems—*

Milton.

# Portia. Una. The Cry.

## *PORTIA.*

About seven years ago, I became acquainted with a family, which from that time hath caused all my pains and all my pleasures. This family then consisted of an old gentleman named *Nicanor,* a son and daughter who were twins and lived with him, and an elder son, who, altho' he spent most of his time with them, lived in a separate house from his father and family.

I was introduced amongst them by a young lady named *Melantha,* and the account she gave me of their situation and circumstances was, that *Nicanor* the father had been a widower many years, that he had once a large fortune, but was now (by what means she knew not) so reduced that he lived on the bounty of his eldest son, who was the only one of his three children, that had preserved his fortune to be of use to his family. She highly extoll'd the generosity as well as the prudence of this eldest son, whose name was *Oliver*; adding, that he was a young gentleman of great learning and wisdom, and she doubted not but I should be very much pleased with his conversation. As to the youngest son named *Ferdinand,* and his Sister *Cordelia,* she allow'd them to be inoffensive and good−humour'd; but they were generally so reserved (she said) that she knew not well what to make of them: but for *Nicanor* himself, altho' he was the father of the family, yet had he sometimes more cheerfulness and entertainment in his conversation than the youngest amongst them.

Her account of *Nicanor* I found to be in some measure true, at least on my first acquaintance with him: for when no outward accidents had chagrin'd his temper, or when the conversation turn'd not on subjects which stirr'd some rising passion; his great knowledge of the world both by reading and travels made him an exceeding entertaining and agreeable companion.

How just the character was which *Melantha* had given of the wise, the prudent, the generous *Oliver,* the course of my narrative will evince: but as to the twin sister of *Ferdinand,* whose name is *Cordelia,* a sympathy I had never felt before seized me, ere I had been long enough in the room to say I had conversed with her. She became my friend almost at first sight. For where there is a real strong sympathy in two minds, something will break out on a very small acquaintance, which must create a reciprocal affection.

The *Cry* were now rising to a general clamour on *Portia's* last words, when she declared that the sentiment was taken out of *Telemachus*; and their respect for so approv'd an author as the archbishop of *Cambray,* for the present withheld their tongues; whilst *Portia* thus proceeded.

The truth of the foregoing observation I never much doubted; but strongly did I feel its force on my first acquaintance with *Cordelia* . Her gentleness of disposition, her modest manner of expressing the most noble sentiments, her warmth of heart, and open simplicity of behaviour, kindled at once in my breast such a friendly affection for her, that I could readily have open'd to her every secret thought of my heart; and, if necessity had required it, could willingly have trusted her with the disposal of my life and fortune.

Altho' the *Cry* chose not openly to contradict a sentiment stampt by the seal of so great a man as the archbishop of *Cambray* ; yet when *Portia* acting in consequence of believing the truth of such a sentiment had adopted it by her practice, they could no longer refrain from breaking forth into astonishment at her folly, as they call'd it, that she could without examination or tryal admit into so close a connexion as that of friendship, a person with whom she had not above an hour's acquaintance. Then did they strive with emulation who should repeat most wise maxims, importing the necessity of suspicion in the choice of our friends—such as—*mistrust is the mother of security,* with many more to the same effect. And for all such maxims they express'd the highest regard and veneration. But notwithstanding the esteem which they profess'd for suspicion, yet did they think proper to veil it under the name of caution.

The veil was too thin to deceive *Portia,* and as soon as she could be heard, thus she answer'd.

Altho' I honour true maxims of morality as much as any one; yet have I always despised those prudential laws, which should rather be call'd the rules of cunning, too much to take them for my guides. And I believe that infamous saying, "That it is the part of wisdom to live always with a friend, as if he (was one day to become an enemy," was, (as an ingenious author says on another occasion) the devil's favourite maxim when he was last on earth: for bring it into day−light and strip off its borrow'd mask of wisdom, and the plain *English* is neither more nor less than this: that you are justified in attaining all the advantages of friendship you can get from others, and

are at the same time commanded not to be a real friend to any human creature. Such maxims serve well the purpose of men incapable of the least degree of reciprocal affection, and who by craft and deceit inveigle the open−hearted into acts of friendship, and then consider them as meer dupes to their superior wisdom. By which name they dignify their own cunning, and cover over the corruption of their hearts. Such persons are sure to follow our Saviour's advice, in having the wisdom of the serpent, but drop the more essential part, the innocence of the dove. When characters of this kind force themselves on my thoughts, I want to banish the word *friendship* from common use, that I may never more be a witness of its being thus prostituted: but when I turn my thoughts on my *Cordelia*, I would recall the banish'd word, and cherish every pleasing image that can attend a reciprocal affection.

The *Cry*, notwithstanding *Portia's* answer, still persisted in it, that the observance of cautious and prudent maxims, was the only security against becoming a dupe; when *Portia* thus proceeded.

The terror mankind imbibe of being made dupes, is the bane of society, the destruction of all friendship, and oftentimes the cause of those very misfortunes, which they would most wish to avoid. Even in the compass of my small acquaintance, many are the instances I have observed of the greatest misfortunes arising from this evil root. I knew one young lady, whose kind parents had provided for her a husband, whom they very judiciously approved. But so far did they carry their indulgence to their daughter *Julia* (for that was her name) that they would not suffer a formal proposal to be made to her, knowing the averseness of young girls to such kind of formalities, and the pleasure they take in a personal particular address. They therefore invited their intended son−in−law to their country seat, in order to give him an opportunity of gaining by degrees their daughter's love. The young gentleman had an agreeable address, and *Julia* was galloping on in the road of being most violently in love with him. As she knew not whether her father or mother would give a sanction to her choice, and as she rather imagined according to general observation that they would not, (for she was an only child, the heiress to a large fortune, and her lover a young gentleman, whose real merit was his only wealth) there was an air of intrigue in her love which greatly pleased her, and her passion daily increased so violently, that had she met with any opposition, she would undoubtedly have taken the advantage of the first dark night to have flown out of the window, from her cruel parents to her admiring lover. But *Julia* unluckily one day overheard her fond father and mother exulting in the success of their stratagem, and pleasing themselves with the prospect of their *Julia's* future happiness, with a young man whom they had chosen for his real merit to be their son−in−law; and from the moment she had discover'd, that the object of her passion was first the object of her parents choice, and that he was invited by her father for the very purpose which had fallen out, all her fancy'd love immediately fled, and she was obstinately bent against being thus *duped* into her own happiness. She lived unmarried till her parents died, and then became the prey of a common *Irish* fortune−hunter, who duped her out of all her money, ran away into his own country with a girl who lived with her as a servant; and the last I heard of her is, that she lives a wretched neglected wife, with no other support but what arises from the generous friendship of her first lover, whom she refused for fear of being duped by her parents, and who makes the best of husbands to a woman of three times *Julia's* fortune that married him for love. Nor less deplorable is the fate of another girl that I knew, who ran into the irrevocable chains of matrimony, with a man disagreeable both in person and manners, whose temper was morose, and whose disposition was cruel and tyrannical: yet into the power of this man did she put herself for life, only because her elder sister advised her against the match; and she therefore fancy'd that her sister had a mind to dupe her out of such a valuable husband. But instances of the miserable consequences which attend this false fear, and which must have fallen under every one's observation, who hath got this key to the human mind, would be endless in the repetition. It is this which makes those domestic politicians, who are filling their brains with continual suspicions and stratagems about nothing; who are a curse to every family in which they are to be found; who are the most mischievous, and I believe in their own hearts the most miserable of all beings. They can enjoy no pleasure for fear their friends and acquaintance should have lain some traps to deceive and gull them. The timorous hare doth not exceed them in fear, altho' she doth in wisdom; for the number of her foes justifies her terrors: but these voluntary seekers of objects of fear, may generally find their only enemy at home; and like *Swift's* fat man in the croud, if they could remove themselves from the number of those imaginary enemies which they complain of, they would find the whole croud dwindled into nothing. But I shall always esteem it as a greater effect of true wisdom, to suffer myself to be duped by a great variety of my acquaintance, than to fix myself down as a constant dupe to my own unnecessary anxieties. Nothing indeed to me could be so terrible, as to spend my

life continually haunted with ghosts, form'd by my own capricious imagination: for whatever enemies I find without, I will always endeavour not to cherish one in my own bosom.

No such fears, no such suspicions could prevent my having an unreserved, an unbounded confidence in the friendship of *Cordelia* . Whatever pleasures I meet with in life, how do I rejoice in communicating them to her friendly bosom! Sorrows in her absence never come with all their poignancy, as their sharpness must be abated by the reflexion she escapes them: for that use of a friend, the only one that seems to be commonly learnt, namely the power of making somebody else as miserable as ourselves, I have never yet experienced. May my pleasures ever be enlarged by communication, and my griefs lessened by a consciousness, that my friends, by being ignorant of them, avoid all their pains. To conceal what might be displeasing to her, is the only reserve my heart ever felt towards *Cordelia*; and when my whole soul is open, and my words with an unreserved and joyous confidence, fearlesly express the very inmost thoughts of my heart, how do I pity those who assuming the name of friends, surround themselves with maxims, importing the wisdom of doubt and suspicion, till they impose on themselves that very hard task of labouring through life, without ever knowing a human creature to whom they can make the proper use of language, and freely speak the dictates of their hearts! This is voluntarily moving in continual chains, for fear of they know not what, they know not whom: this is miser−like to give up every convenience, every joy in life, from a cowardly fear of inconveniences that may never come; and if they should come, to bear them once is not half the pain as is the living in continual dread of them. Truly does *Lillo,* in his *Fatal Curiosity,* make *Eustace* say,

*The wretch who fears all that is possible,*
*Must suffer more than he who feels the worst.*
*A man can feel, who lives exempt from fear.*

For to be ten times deceiv'd (painful as it is) doth not to me carry half the horror with it, as the forming a fix'd opinion, that in my passage through this Life I am doom'd to an impossibility of conversing with any sort of creatures, but beasts of prey, tigers, wolves, and foxes, who are ever laying in wait to destroy me. To consider myself as in a continual state of war, and to employ all my time in forming stratagems to escape the wiles of my supposed adversaries, suits so little with my disposition, that should I be so unfortunate as to live long enough to find, that not one amongst the human race will confer on me that greatest of all favours, the suffering me to esteem and love them, I must quit mankind, and lead the life of a hermit: for to be always studying what words I may utter, or what I must stifle, in short, according to the vulgar proverb, to be afraid to say my very soul is my own, for fear somebody should lay a plot to rob me of it, is too painful a task for me ever to undertake; and I had rather stand the worst consequence which can attend the freely energizing the affections of my heart, than bear such an intolerable burthen.

The *Cry,* during the time that *Portia* had been declaring her sentiments of friendship, had undergone a various change of countenance. Sometimes their looks indicated an insipid inattention, and then would they gape and stare as if they were asking each other the meaning of all the nonsense, as they pleased to term it, which *Portia* had been talking. At other times, when their favourite sentiments were contradicted, their eyes lower'd with angry frowns; but on *Portia's* declaring that she would stand the consequence of any deception, rather than bear the chains of suspicion, their angry frowns were gone, invidious sneers play'd about their mouths, and they began to whisper to each other, that "the creature would be a dupe all the days of her life; but that their good−nature should not carry them so far as to endeavour to undeceive a person so conceited of her own opinion, as in their judgments they pronounced our *Portia*."

For it is the common language of the *Cry,* to pity themselves for the excess of their own good−nature, which they generally declare to be the cause of every misfortune that attends them.

The countenance of *Una* was a perfect contrast to that of the whole *Cry*; a languid softness damp'd the lustre of her eyes, at the image of the miseries which the suspicious feel; but they shone with all their brightness at *Portia's* description of the joyous confidence she placed in her *Cordelia*.

The pleasure *Una* receives, whenever she hath an opportunity of approving, now visibly appear'd in the dimpled smiles that play'd about her mouth; and as *Una* delights in approving, so did *Portia* no less delight in her approbation; and thus encouraged, proceeded in laying open her heart, by the declaration of her sentiments, and by a relation of her past life.

The whisper of the *Cry*, that *Portia* would be a dupe, was not design'd by them to be so low as to be conceal'd from her ears; and the scorn which was visible in their countenances, shew'd that they desired not to conceal their opinion: thus therefore she address'd them.

'Tis not the love of friendship, but an earnest desire after flattery, which lays the human mind open to deception. This love of flattery is so gross in its desires, that it will (as *Shakespear* says) leave a coelestial bed to pray on garbage. There is an innocence of mind that delights in friendship, which, far from perverting, makes the judgment exert itself, and is therefore very little liable to be deceiv'd: but when fulsome flattery is once become the sweetest of all food to the mental palate, whoever brings such an agreeable repast, will be received with open arms, and a league of fancied friendship will immediately be sign'd. 'Tis such a perversion of the judgment, such a desire of applause, without the trouble of deserving it, that forms those connexions, which hath often made all friendship appear as a crafty contest for imposition, hath brought the very name into disgrace, and render'd the supposition of a true and disinterested friendship, to be only the chimæra of a warm imagination. But whilst you, O ye *Cry,* enjoy a fancy'd ridicule on my sentiments, and please yourselves with the thought that I shall be duped by whoever hath a mind to impose on me, 'tis you yourselves who will be the easiest imposed on by any language best suited to gratify your vanity, and to increase your coveted good opinion of yourselves.

The *Cry* now left their sneering; for there was a sort of detection in *Portia's* words, which, as they could not answer, excited their anger, and they all at once loudly declared, that *Portia* had accused them and all mankind of being fond of flattery. For the affirmation that all mankind in general are condemn'd, when any particular vice or affectation is blamed, is one of the favourite outcries of this assembly. Nor did they stop at their accusation of *Portia's* having reflected on all mankind for their fondness to flattery; but they added, that she had at the same time boasted, that no flattery whatever could be pleasing to herself; as if she alone was exempt from every human frailty.

*Portia,* conscious that she had thrown out no such accusation against mankind, but had only blamed the indulgence of a love of flattery, where it might happen to be found; and certain also, that she had not given the least hint of being exempt from any of the frailties of her species, made them no sort of answer.

And the *Cry*, glad that their false assertions, and malicious representations, were not forced into an examination, held their peace, and suffer'd *Portia* thus to proceed.

## SCENE II.

*The very truth I undisguis'd declare:*
*For what so easy as to be sincere?*

Homer's Odyssey.

# Portia. Una. The Cry.

## *PORTIA.*

I think I have mention'd all *Nicanor's* family, but his younger son *Ferdinand,* the twin brother of *Cordelia*—*Oh for a muse of fire to ascend the brightest heaven of invention,* that I might in terms adequate to the noble subject depict his character, speak his virtues, and sing his praises!

The *Cry* now in language suitable to accost a spectre, clamor'd forth,—Avaunt, avaunt; we spy

*A faultless monster, that the world ne'er saw.*

*Portia*. I once knew a man, to my sorrow be it remember'd, whose vices the tongues of men or of dæmons could not paint. He possess'd not so much as the shadow of one virtue; his heart was the lowest sink of corruption; and from his lips flow'd nothing but malignant venom.

The *Cry* now changed their averted countenances, hung on *Portia's* words with attention, and seem'd impatient for the remaining part of the character of the *faulty* monster she had begun to describe. When instead of proceeding, she cast an intelligent smile on *Una*; who perceiving her meaning, bad her go on with her account of *Ferdinand*; and the *Cry*, inwardly stung with being thus detected in their love of detraction, and hatred to just praise; awed also by the permission granted by *Una* for *Portia* to continue her description of *Ferdinand,* shrunk into themselves, nor for the present express'd their inward rage, otherwise than by sparks of fury darting from their eyes.

*Portia*. Thoroughly to make your hearers sensible of the true character of any person, with whom you would bring them acquainted, it is necessary to declare their actions; and by these alone will this assembly hereafter be enabled to judge, whether I exceed the truth, when I say that *Ferdinand,* on as short an acquaintance as with his sister, appear'd to me to possess an uncommon strength of capacity, and a superlative goodness of heart, which shone forth in every word he utter'd: for, when in the freedom and good−humour of his heart, he diffuses cheerful mirth around him, it would not be improper to say, that he is in possession of the whole force of true and lively humour. He hath the command of every species of wit, humour, or pleasantry, that can be named or invented; yet doth he not so worship it, because it is his own, as ever to exult in his visible superiority over all his companions. His learning, his knowledge of human nature, his deep reflexions on every thing that claims the name of science, renders him no less an acceptable companion amongst his grave acquaintance. His affability, his polite behaviour, his agreeable address—

Here *Portia* was interrupted by a general laugh from the *Cry,* nor could she guess the occasion of it, till one of them as soon as she could find her breath, in an ironical tone of voice cry'd out. "You are not warm'd at all, *Portia,* by your description of *Ferdinand*."

Yes I am, replied *Portia,* and it would be a false shame in me to endeavour to deny, that my heart is truly warm'd with such a character. My acquaintance with *Ferdinand* hath ever been my pleasure, and it was my glory to have that esteem for him which he so justly deserved.

The *Cry* were all baffled and disappointed by *Portia's* answer; for they hoped that they had discover'd a secret which she would have wish'd to have conceal'd.

I confess, continued *Portia,* my love for *Ferdinand,* yet never was I conscious of being in love with him, according to the common acceptation of that much−abused word. For at any time, had his interest or pleasure demanded such a sacrifice, rather than have been his burthen or vexation, I could have submitted never to have beheld him again, nor should he ever have been teazed and tired with my repinings or complaints. It would, I confess, be the highest joy of my life, to know myself instrumental to his happiness; but was that deny'd me, all I could do would be to take care that by my behaviour I became not the cause his misery. Was the man I love even to marry another woman, so far should I be from endeavouring to injure that woman, that I could not be inspired with the least degree of hatred towards the real object of his choice, and perhaps the cause of his happiness.

The *Cry* could hold no longer, but from every mouth burst forth—Was ever heard such romantic stuff? such affectation! such refinement! with many other abusive words of the same import; concluding at last in full chorus, that *Portia* had positively declared, that she should be better pleased to have her lover marry any other woman than herself.

*Portia*. It is not in the power of the most labour'd eloquence, fairly to extort such a conclusion from my words, as that I should be better, or even as well pleased, with *Ferdinand's* making choice of another woman. I said only, and still declare, that his wife could not be the object of my hatred, nor could I rejoice in any misfortunes that might attend the man for whom I have an affection. Such wresting false conclusions from plain and simple expressions is your refuge, O ye foolish *Cry,* from beholding truth. Was the man I love to chuse another woman, I might indeed be grieved for the disappointment of my love, but I could not be angry that he had exerted his undoubted right of chusing for himself. And however we may deceive ourselves by prostituting that poor injured word *love*; yet is it really pride piqued, and not love disappointed, that causes that resentment and rage which often produces the most tragical events. Is any woman enraged with her lover because he dies? her disappointment in that case produces a grief unmix'd with anger: for, whilst she is spared the mortifying reflexion that another is prefer'd before her, let her love be ever so violent, there will be no rage, no fury is join'd with her affliction. Whereever, therefore, those boisterous passions exert themselves, we must look for some other cause besides mere love, or we shall be highly deceived in our judgments. Fury and love, I will venture to affirm, never inhabited the same breast towards the same object; and whenever we fancy they meet, let us but examine them a little nearer, and we shall easily distinguish pride piqued from disappointed love.

The supposition, that it was possible for any woman to be so mean−spirited, as not at least to wish to tear out her rival's eyes, was too hard for the digestion of the *Cry*: but on *Portia's* having confess'd herself that mean−spirited creature, they laugh'd and sneer'd to express their contempt; and said, that undoubtedly *Ferdinand,* if he was a man of any spirit, would be mightily pleased to hear his mistress so tamely giving him up; he would think himself under great obligations to *Portia,* for her fantastic generosity; he would thank her highly for her disinterested love, in desiring him to marry another woman!

*Portia*. Why, O ye *Cry,* do you by leaving out my words, and putting in your own, entirely change my meaning? I said not any thing like what you have represented. I say, I wish my lover happy, and would therefore suppress any thoughts in my own bosom, rather than teaze and make him uneasy. As to his thanks indeed I never thought of any such thing; 'tis his *happiness,* and not his *thanks,* that I desire. And you are much deceived, if you imagine that a lover's not thinking himself obliged to me would give me the least uneasiness. The word *obligation* is very seldom in my thoughts, and consequently very seldom is it utter'd by my tongue; for I am satisfyed, that whoever hath the word obligation continually in his mouth, hath the love of tyranny steadily fixt in his heart. Whatever acts of kindness such a man may appear to do, his chief design is but to buy so much flattery and a servitude, which if the person he chuses to confer his favours on, or in his own words to oblige, doth not (as being no flatterer) return according to his expectations; altho' the whole strength of his body and mind should wait ready to be exerted at command; yet will his obliging friend turn into an inveterate enemy, and he will soon perceive the sweet apparent kindness suddenly changed into the bitterest of gall. His grateful honest heart, for want of having paid the expected loan of adulation, must endure the heavy load of being

*—A discontented friend, grief−shot*
*With unkindness—*

*Portia* could not have thrown amongst the *Cry* any bone so hard as a thought of hers, wherein the two words *obligation* and *gratitude* were to be found. Yet was it a subject which set them a quarrelling amongst themselves, too much to suffer them to attempt giving any answer to *Portia*. One would have *gratitude* to mean one thing; another would put it in a quite different shape; a third would make it something between the other two, and so of all the rest. Their eager arguments and jarring discords would have had no end, unless they had hit on a point in which they could all join against *Portia*; and this was no other than affirming, that her last words contain'd a panegyric on *ingratitude,* from whence they pronounced her to be the most ungrateful creature in the world; then resuming the subject of love, they put a question to her, which they thought it impossible for her to answer, namely, whether she could retain any affection or regard for a deceitful villain? for such they said must be the man she loved, if he was to marry another woman.

*Portia* made not a ready answer to their question; because she really at first understood not their meaning, which threw the *Cry* into such a transport of joy, as thinking they had entirely silenced their enemy, that with a sort of shout they repeated their question by the mouth of a female orator in the following terms. —How is it possible for a woman to have any affection for a man, who after having made love to her, should then be so base

as to marry another woman?

This must be the case, said another female voice from a different part of the *Cry*; for 'tis out of nature to make so absurd a supposition, as that any woman of either modesty or spirit, could be in love with a man before he had used every art of persuasion to insinuate himself into her affections, and before he had absolutely made love to her.

*Portia*. I don't know what is meant by making love, unless it implies feigning it. And I am certain a man could no more persuade me to bestow on him my affections, unless he could prove himself the object of love, than he could persuade me so much out of my senses, as to acknowledge him to be a giant, whilst my eyes are every minute convinced that he is of the common size of mortals. If you mean by the necessity of being persuaded to love, that you can have no regard for a lover, till he hath repeated over a certain number of flattering speeches; I differ so far from you in opinion, that nothing could render a man so detestable in my eyes, as thus to treat me like an idiot. The woman who insists on such persuasion, is not aware of the consequence. She knows not perhaps that 'tis the flattery itself which gains her heart; and every man or monkey, who can learn and repeat his lesson by rote, has it in his power, whenever he pleases, to make himself the object of what she calls her affections.

The *Cry*, who were in hopes by their question to have ensnared *Portia* into confusion and perplexity, and to have put her to shame before *Una* (whom they pretended to admire, and would fain have persuaded to prefer them to *Portia* were so vex'd at her answer, and so enraged at the least hint, that by the insisting on this kind of courtship they were most easily to be gained, that they were at a loss for adequate terms in which to vent their anger. They twisted and wrested *Portia's* words into a thousand different meanings, which she never so much as thought of; they repeated their whole catalogue of abusive terms, which they always keep ready to fly to, when any the least ray of truth strikes on their eyes, and concluded with a general declaration, that they believed such romantic stuff as fill'd the head of *Portia*, was never before thought of by any human creature.

*Portia* then ask'd the *Cry*, what idea they had fix'd to the word *romantic*; but instead of answering her question, they each fell to jogging their next neighbour, and softly whisper'd,—Do you answer her—No, you answer her, says another; and so on to the third, fourth, *&c*. throughout the whole assembly.

*Portia* then declared, that if they would not answer her question, she was very ready to tell them in what sense she thought a woman might properly be call'd romantic; for (continued she) I hate to suffer any word which implies ridicule to pass indefinite, and to be left at large to be apply'd at pleasure.

The application of the word *romantic*, as we now generally use it, took its rise from the great love young girls formerly had to reading those voluminous romances, in which the heroine is represented as thinking it the highest breach of modesty to give the least hint of having one favourable sentiment for her lover, till he hath passed many years of probation, and given innumerable proofs of being capable of adoring his mistress even to madness. The poor deluded readers of such romances, who thought it a fine thing to imitate these exalted heroines, and expected of their lovers such service and adoration, were very properly ridiculed by the name of romantic, and 'tis no more than an act of kindness to laugh them out of such absurdities: but whether I have said any thing which can justify the application of that word to my sentiments, let *Una* be the judge.

The *Cry* too well knew what would be the opinion of *Una*, to stand to her decision; they admitted not therefore of the appeal, but boldly asserted that they were too certain of their own opinions, to stand by the judgment of any other.

*Una* gave her approbation to *Portia* by a look, which she very well understood; and silence being made amongst the *Cry*, she thus proceeded in her discourse.

## SCENE III.

*—Nam qui cupiet, metuet quoque.*

Hor.

# Portia. Una. The Cry.

## *PORTIA.*

Women by thus insisting on it, that they will be persuaded to love, lead their whole lives in expectation, which makes them continually liable to the vexation of a disappointment. Little miss is taught by her mamma, that she must never speak before she is spoken to. On this she sits bridling up her head, looking from one to the other, in hopes of being call'd to and address'd by the name of pretty miss, and of being ask'd some questions, for which her nursery maid perhaps hath furnish'd her with a smart answer: but if this should not happen, and no one should take any notice of her, she is ready to cry at the neglect: but should there be another miss in the room caress'd and taken notice of, whilst she is thus over−look'd, it will be impossible for her to contain her tears; and blubbering is the word.

When the white frock is laid aside, the bigger miss seats herself in public at a ball, expecting every moment to be chosen by some man for a partner for that evening. If she is baulk'd, what galling disappointment doth she feel within! Her heart is ready to burst with envy, at all those who are so happy as to be taken out; and she hath, I confess, sometimes a hard task to support the insolent questions of her friends, who will not fail to ask her "why she is not one amongst the dancers? whether she loves dancing, or whether she is not well?" She is put to the utmost shifts for answers to these questions; sometimes she says she does not chuse dancing to−night, 'tis so excessive hot. — If she is not quite out of hope, she will say her partner is not yet come; but her general excuse is, "that her head achs, and she is not very well." Should she happen luckily to be relieved from this most deplorable distress, by the entrance of a man of fashion, who should ask her to dance, her sickness is fled; she is in as high spirits as any amongst them. Should her partner also chance to be the man most generally liked in the room, the outward tosses of her person sufficiently indicate the inward triumph of her mind. But a few of these triumphs are but a very small recompence for the rancour she so often feels (unless she is at the head of beauty's train) at having her expectations baulk'd: and if miss would come to the ball with a simple mind without highly raising her expectations, if she would confess that she should like to dance, if she was ask'd, and was not ashamed of being overlook'd, the stings of neglect would lose their poignancy, and by finding out that grand secret of keeping her mind independent, she would sometimes be greatly pleased at a ball, but never greatly mortified: she might not, 'tis true, if she indulged not the spirit of insult, ever experience the lying all night awake in rapturous reflexions on an evening's triumph, but many a night would she spare herself the torment arising from gnawing discontent, and bedewing her pillow with tears of rage and vexation for her disappointment.

The same expectation of being chosen out as a partner for life, continues from miss of fifteen, to miss of—and if no such partner offers, full as many excuses are found out to cover over the dreadful appearance of being neglected as miss made use of at the ball. The girl who is baulk'd of a partner for one evening, vents her vexation, and renews her hopes against another; but the woman who is continually expecting great offers of marriage, which may never happen, knows not when to give up here xpectations. This is, I believe, a very good account for the peevishness of old maids; and the old maid who is not peevish, plainly proves that she hath led no such life, nor been accustom'd to frequent disappointments.

The *Cry* had a great mind to have thrown out some trite joke at old maids; but as they could not make themselves believe, that *Portia* was likely to be in that number, it was so small a gratification of their spleen, it was not worth indulging; and thus *Portia* proceeded.

But supposing none of these baulks and disappointments to happen, and miss in due time should receive the expected address. According to your notion, O ye *Cry,* of making love, or prevailing with a young woman to yield her affections to persuasion, I will draw you a picture, or tell you a story (call it which you please) of a young gentleman paying his court to a young lady in the way you mention.

Behold my young lady the morning of that day in which she is to receive her lover in the afternoon, I mean the man who hath already enter'd on some few of those speeches he is condemn'd to make, before he obtains any mark of her favour. The first part of the day is spent in the consideration of the manner, in which she may best adorn herself to please her worshipper. This is perform'd with both cost and care, and *Betty* is alternately praised or chid, abused for being awkward, or commended for being handy, just as her own looks, or the remembrance of her lover's last behaviour, depresses or elates her vanity. Every ribbon, every flower is chosen, and placed where

it is thought most becoming; yet she goes not into high dress, but appears rather careless, for fear she should be suspected by her lover of having a design to appear agreeable in his eyes. When she is dress'd, behold her still sitting at her glass, repeating poems or speeches out of plays, such as follow,

*If on her share some female errors fall,*
*Look on her face and you'll forget them all.*

Or perhaps these,

*My life! my soul! my all that heav'n can give!*
*Death's life with thee, without thee death to live.*

Not that she hath any intention or inclination to speak those lines to any creature living, or really in the least feels that she knows any man, whom she cannot very well live and breathe without: but her imagination is anticipating the part *Philander* is to perform, and she is repeating the language which she hopes to hear him utter.

This young lady had taken a great fancy to shell−work, and was indulging that fancy by forming a little grotto at the end of the garden. She had always just finish'd something new whenever *Philander* paid his visits, and willing to entertain him with the sight of this agreeable grotto, thither she leads him.

And now behold the goddess seated on her throne, the work of her own fair hands, fill'd with the imagination of her own charms, receiving the adulation of her worshipper. *Philander* profusely pours forth his angels and his goddesses; makes himself the humblest of her slaves; petitions at the shrine of her altar for some distant hint of her favour, which by small degrees she grants him, 'till his task is done, 'till his number of flattering speeches are run out; and when the weather−glass of the lady's vanity is swell'd to the top, then is she persuaded into what she calls a rational affection. For she could not be *mean* enough to like a man before he had made use of such persuasion: but now is she perfectly satisfied to be most violently in love with him, and from that day forward, admits it reasonable to set no bounds to her fondness.

From the time that *Portia* began to describe the goddess on her throne, with her adoring lover at her feet, a sympathizing pleasure overspread the countenances of the female part of the *Cry*: but when she dropp'd the description and was proceeding with her own observations, their brows were again knit into their usual discontent, and *Portia* thus went on.

Strange absurdity! Strange language this of angel and of goddess! An adulation, which translated into plain *English,* means no more than an address of the following kind. "Madam, I like you (no matter whether from fortune, person, or any other motive) and it will conduce much to my pleasure and convenience, if you will become my wife: that is, if you will bind yourself before God and man to obey my commands as long as I shall live. And should you after marriage be forgetful of your duty, you will then have given me a legal power of exacting as rigid a performance of it as I please." But, as the adulating language is not thus translated 'till the ceremony of marriage is past, and is 'till then perfectly unintelligible; 'tis no wonder that the poor woman, who hath been thus egregiously imposed on, (or rather who hath so egregiously imposed on herself) should find it so difficult a language to learn; and very naturally will all her fancy'd love, which had no better a foundation than momentary flattery, when that ceases, fall to the ground. What a curse, under such circumstances, must attend a domestic life! The company of strangers, who are more likely to please her ears with some of her darling sounds, must be to such a wife her best relief from the dull company of her husband. Dull only will be the company of her husband, while he is indifferent to her; but she will not long stop here: for vanity disappointed, will always find an enemy on whom to bestow the utmost hatred and dislike; and the woman who hath been thus entangled in her own snares, will generally find that enemy in the person of her husband. As from him, when her lover, arose all her pleasure; so from him now flows all her disappointment. She will grow sour, and morose; every thing in her husband's house will become hateful to her sight. No indulgence on his side, (should he be willing to be an indulgent husband) can compensate the loss of adoration. She will not confess, even to herself, her own inferiority, enough to understand the language of indulgence, nor will she deign to accept it. The heart that is puffed up, and swelling with vanity, can never be fitted to receive real kindness, nor knows to beat with pleasure from gratitude, for gentle treatment. But I think a more ridiculous instance of female vanity cannot well be discovered, than that of a woman boasting that she scorns to love, without being persuaded, (that is, flattered out of her affections;) when by these means she robs herself of her greatest privilege, that of distinction and choice.

She boasts of demanding to be used with insolence and contempt: she lays snares to entrap herself, and makes herself liable (as she insists on deceit) to fall to the share of the most worthless of mankind.

The female part of the *Cry* were so dull and melancholy, on *Portia's* mentioning a domestic life, that altho' they had many flying notions wandering in their brains, which they thought amounted to a proof of the absurdity of her sentiments, yet had they not spirit enough to contradict her: and as there were no men in that assembly, who durst avow the truth of *Portia's* translation of the adulating language, for fear of losing a mistress, or offending a wise, she met with neither approbation nor opposition, and without interruption thus proceeded.

Flattery in courtship is the highest insolence; for whilst it pretends to bestow on you more than you deserve, it is watching an opportunity to take from you what you really have. The bestower of it is laughing to think what a ridiculous figure you will make, when like the fox in the fable, he hath, by sounding your praises, robb'd you of your treasure; and you are indeed in a worse situation than the deluded crow, who only lost her piece of cheese; for you are fix'd for life the slave of your deluder.

The *Cry* now a little roused themselves from their lethargy, and affirm'd, that *Portia* from her discourse had intimated, that it was in no man's power to recommend himself to her favour; that her liking, if she could have any, (which indeed they scarcely allow'd, for they pronouced her totally incapable of that love, to which they join'd the epithets of generous and noble) must depend on caprice, and not on the merit of her lover; that she was above being courted, and in short, that she was the proudest of all her kind.

If the reader should chance to remember, that *Spenser*, in his allegory of the *house of pride*, makes all those who are enlisted in that numerous train, the most ready to complain of the pride of their leader; it may not appear strange, that the *Cry* should on all occasions be no less prompt to accuse others of a vice, to which they themselves are most prone.

The *Cry's* last charge against *Portia* was too complicated for her to give an answer to every particular; but how true it was that no man could recommend himself to *Portia* by his merit, her following discourse will shew.

## SCENE IV.

*Verbaque provisam rem non invita sequentur*.

Hor.

# Portia. Una. The Cry.

## *PORTIA.*

The common flattering language of courtship, I will be bold to affirm, is not calculated (even if flowing from the mouth of *Ferdinand*) to gain my esteem: nor could my imagination form a more serious affliction, than finding myself so much the object of his contempt, as to be treated by him in that manner. [*Here* Portia *deeply sigh'd.*] I have already confess'd the sincerest love for *Ferdinand*; to discover him therefore to be unworthy my regard, is the only point which could touch my soul with sorrow: for as my love for him had no other foundation than thinking he deserved it better than the rest of mankind; the knowing him guilty of any action that would rob me of that thought, must rob me of my love.

Never, O ye *Cry*, by the methods you would delight in, could *Ferdinand* have persuaded me to love him: but often hath he raised himself in my esteem, when I believe I have not been in his thoughts, and when he hath been addressing his conversation to some other part of the company; and in this sense (and no other) often might he be said strongly to make love to me.

I remember one evening, a gentleman told a story of a young woman formerly his acquaintance, and equal in station to himself, who was fallen into unavoidable distress by the loss of her parents; she had three little sisters, whom it was her earnest desire to support, but wanting the means, she ask'd this her friend what measures would be most proper for her to take; and he closed his story with saying, that he advised her immediately to go to service. The gentleman related this his advice to her with so much indifference, as plainly prov'd he was untouch'd with the poor girl's distress; nor fail'd to throw forth some of those common reflexions made upon the unhappy, whether deserving or undeserving of such censure; namely, "that pride and laziness make people a burthen to their friends, and that 'tis every one's duty to submit to their station, *&c.*" But *Ferdinand* so humanely deplored the unhappy circumstances of a young creature born and bred in affluence, and now reduced to the necessity of undergoing the taunts and insults of her former companions; he with so deep a penetration and clear distinction ran through the several specious methods of veiling the want of generosity, and a stubborn hardness of heart, under pretended prudence and friendly advice; at the same time speaking his sense of the poor girl's distress, in language which must flow from so feeling a heart; that for an hour together he made love to me, without his knowing any thing of the matter; and from seeing him thus capable of being touch'd with afflictions, in which he was no personal sufferer, I could not but think how happy must that woman be, who is beloved by a heart susceptible of such true kindness!

Another evening *Ferdinand*, by his behaviour, convinced me that his humanity and compassion for the distress'd, was in his practice, as well as in his discourse; and he made love to me for two or three hours, more by his manner of treating a lady who was fallen into great indigence, although her extraction was from an honourable stock, and her living relations enjoy'd themselves in plenty. Fortune at that time denied to *Ferdinand* the least means of exerting the natural munificence of his disposition; but it chanced to be in his power to do this unfortunate lady, by his assiduity and recommendation, a signal piece of service; and when I have said it was in his power, to say he used that power would be unnecessary. The lady was pretty far advanced in years, and in her youthful days had lived what is call'd at the top of life. Whether from a good understanding, and a happiness of disposition, this lady was always chearful under her misfortunes; whether the treatment she met with from *Ferdinand* and *Cordelia* had raised her spirits, or whether she had discernment enough to see, that so kind a heart as was in the breast of *Ferdinand* wanted not to be moved by lamentations, tears, and complainings, (for something less than a widow and four small children could move his compassion) I know not; but I never spent a more agreeable evening in my life. By the lady's behaviour I should never have guess'd, had it not afterwards been told me by *Cordelia*, that she was a woman reduced to the lowest distress of circumstances; and by *Ferdinand's* treatment of her, it appear'd much more likely that she had visited him with the power and the design of conferring some great favour on him, than that she was a petitioner for his assistance. That the behaviour of *Ferdinand*, and not a set of frothy words, should gain my affection, was so very agreeable to my disposition, that every new instance of his being deservedly the object of my esteem, fill'd me with inexpressible pleasure.

Another way which *Ferdinand* had of making love to me, altho' I dare say very undesignedly, was by being ready at all times to give me information concerning any thing, in which I had a curiosity to be inform'd.

Oh! now our love of knowledge is going to be display'd, whisper'd the *Cry*, at the same time nodding their heads at each other.

*Portia*. I dare ask *Ferdinand* for information, which odd as it may appear to say so, is no such easy thing to do by most of one's acquaintance; and with truth can I declare, that I have long remain'd ignorant of many things, from the fear of asking any questions. Not out of any dread of shewing my own ignorance, but from the impossibility I generally find of getting a direct answer. I will tell you a short story to illustrate my meaning. Having once an intention to go from *London* to *Twickenham* by water, I ask'd a gentleman if he knew what time the tide would serve the next day for that purpose. When instead of giving me the information I wanted, the gentleman began a long discourse upon tides. He talk'd of their nature, their use; of the influence of the moon; quoted all the books that had ever mention'd the word *tide*, and displayed his knowledge of all the various systems concerning so surprizing a phænomenon, till he lost himself in the multiplicity of his own words, confounded my attention, and left me full as ignorant as before he had utter'd one syllable. However, I found he had answer'd his own purpose, altho' he was not the nearer answering mine; for I easily perceived that his intention was, to present himself with the agreeable image of his being a teacher, whilst my information or instruction was a point he never once consider'd. As soon as he had finish'd his long harangue, I told him that I doubted not, but all he had been saying was very true, for I supposed he had often consider'd the subject, which I had not: but I begg'd to know if he could tell what time the tide would serve, for me to go the next day to *Twickenham*. On which after taking still some time for deliberation, wrapp'd up in a great many words, he gave me to understand, that he could not at that time answer my question. For he was not able to bring himself to utter those few plain words, "Indeed, madam, I cannot tell."

*Ferdinand* hath a candour in his mind, which gives him a capacity of perceiving when ignorance is not willful, and a generosity and communicativeness of disposition, which makes him delight in the informing his companions. There appears to me a wide difference between the desire of being a teacher or dictator, and the love of communicating knowledge. The man who attempts to teach from the former motive, endeavours purposely to render his ideas, if he hath any, perplex'd and obscure: whilst the man who is actuated by the latter, will take any pains to become clear and intelligible to his hearer. I believe it is certainly true, that when a man is confused in his language, and can give no distinct ideas, he either understands not the subject he talks of, or doth not desire that you should do so. And often perhaps from the same motives as may be found in *Alexander* the great's letter to *Aristotle*, wherein he expresses his displeasure at that philosopher for publickly communicating his knowledge, "for then (says he) others will be as wise as ourselves." But when I declare it as my opinion, that whatever a man really knows, that he will be able to teach or express; all hesitation and defects in the organs of speech itself must be consider'd as thouroughly out of this question.

*Una* intirely agreed with *Portia* on this head; but wonder'd, she said, as it was so very clear, that she should say so much about it.

*Portia*. There is Nothing, which is in conversation a more common topic of dispute; and if you, O *Una*, will give me your attention, (for I see the *Cry* are in some grand debate among themselves) I will relate what happen'd to myself, concerning this very subject. —I was talking one day with a very learned and ingenious man on this point; and was mentioning my opinion, as you have just now heard. He would not admit the truth of the observation, but insisted on it, that people might have very clear ideas, which it was impossible for them to express: and altho' I readily gave up all faults in elocution, and fix'd it down to a cool and deliberate expression in writing, yet even this he would not admit, and strenuously stood by his first assertion. About half a year afterwards, I found he had entirely changed his opinion, and in the same company in which he had contradicted *me*, applying his discourse to *Ferdinand*, he said that in reading *Aristotle* he found it affirm'd, "that whatsoever a man understands he can teach." I own, I could not help smiling on *Cordelia*; and *Ferdinand* said to his friend, "Don't you remember, Sir, this is the very subject which *Portia* was talking to you about some time ago, and you then disputed those sentiments in *her*, which you now admit in *Aristotle*?" But *Ferdinand* might full as well have been silent; for the gentleman (a little angry, perhaps, at the discovery of his want of candour) only renew'd his assertion, that *Aristotle* was in the right. "For whatever a man thoroughly understands, that he will certainly be able to teach."

## SCENE V.

*A n' y a qu' une sorte d' amour: mais il y en a mille differentes copies.*

Rochfoucault.

## Portia. Una. The Cry.

The *Cry* had not heard one word that *Portia* had been talking with *Una*, nor did they trouble themselves at present about teaching or understanding. For from the time *Portia* had said, that *Ferdinand* possess'd a generosity of disposition, which made him delight in informing his companions; they had been in a deep consultation on the word *generosity*, as apply'd by *Portia* . In order to prove her absurd in her expressions, they turn'd and twisted it every way, and confused and entangled themselves in their own various conceptions. They were unwilling to allow that it was ever used, except to express a profuse distribution of money; but unless they could attain some other images, besides those which relate to property, *Portia's* liberal way of expressing herself must for ever remain above their comprehension. However, after a long debate, they began to find that their taking exception to *Portia's* expression in this case, would appear even too frivolous to deserve an answer; and they therefore agreed to wait for a fairer opportunity of abusing her, and for the present permitted her uninterrupted to proceed with her story.

*Portia*. Whilst *Ferdinand* was shewing me every day, that he was in possession of those amiable qualities, which alone had the power of gaining my affections, I am not ashamed to confess, that I endeavour'd as much as possible to recommend myself to him, and that my chief wish was to appear agreeable in his eyes.

The word *recommend* set the whole *Cry* in a uproar. —"Recommend one's self to a *man*!" scream'd out every female voice; which expression was reechoed and tossed about, till it was interpreted to be indecent, and they delighted themselves with discovering that *Portia* had fully confess'd, that she every day pleaded the cause of her love to *Ferdinand*, and had therefore given up the modest dignity of her sex. Full conviction of this, they pretended, had possess'd their minds; and this threw them into such raptures, that words were not sufficient to express their joy: but all in full chorus began to sing,

*The fruit that will fall without shaking,*
*Indeed is too mellow for me.*

Many other things they said and sung, importing their contempt of *Portia*, and their high admiration of themselves, which all entirely lost their desired effect; for without being the least disconcerted, *Portia* thus attempted to proceed.

*Portia*. My love to *Ferdinand*, altho' very great and sincere, never inclined me to be jealous.

Now the *Cry* lost even the affectation of patience, and declared that *Portia* used them like idiots, to pretend thus to impose on their understanding; but she would find herself much mistaken; for their knowledge of human nature was a little too deep for such stuff to pass upon them. Then they repeated all the sayings they had ever heard, signifying that there can be no love without jealousy; every woman confessing herself the most jealous creature in the world. Yet there was not one, who whilst she profess'd the most raging jealousy on the supposition that her lover, as she said, should *dare* to look on another woman, after she had *condescended* to grant him any mark of her favour; that did not also declare, that she should so heartily despise and contemn such a man, that she should be under no anxiety whether she lost him or no.

*Portia*. When I said, that I was not inclined to be jealous, I meant not that the fear of losing *Ferdinand* could give me no anxiety. The freedom I enjoy'd in his conversation (which was indeed the chief pleasure of my life) I knew would most probably be lost, if he married any other woman: but I should think I gave a man a very little proof of my affection, let my own happiness depend ever so much on living and conversing with him, if for that reason I should endeavour to rob him of his liberty, and force him on a choice, in which his own future happiness could not be the consequence. Conjugal felicity cannot be found, where the liking is not reciprocal; but when 'tis wanting on the man's side, the two poor wretches condemn'd to spend their lives together must be miserable indeed! To see that *Ferdinand* liked another woman better than myself, I should not call jealousy, but certainty. Or even supposing that I only doubted, and was not certain of what would really grieve me to perceive; yet could not this inflame my jealousy or anger, call it which you please. For that raging jealousy which we falsely assert to arise from love, hath not one spark of real love in its whole composition. The very language, O ye *Cry*, which ye just now used,—Shall a man *dare* when I *condescend*, &c. is proper to declare that your pride is piqued, and that

from thence arises all the jealous tumults in your breast. Yet I confess there may be another motive to raging jealousy. But this should be the rage of a man, not of a woman; and hath not a grain more of true love in it than the former.

The *Cry* now open'd on a new scent, and instead of supposing *Portia* the fond creature, which they lately pretended to despise, they accused her of asserting that her love was all platonic, and of pretending to a purity, which exempted her from the common frailties of human nature. Then with significant shrugs and tosses of the head. — For my part—and for my part—I don't pretend to such perfection—I confess myself a daughter of *Eve*—I have no notion of such a seraphic passion—were the only sounds to be heard amongst them. And altho' a little before, they would not for all the world have acknowledged but that the race of mankind should be extinct, rather than they would own the least liking for any man, that had not persuaded them to love; yet now were they ready, for the sake of contradicting *Portia,* to confess themselves all over one blaze of desire.

*Portia*. I am so far from pretending to what is generally call'd platonic love, that I know not of any one invention, from the beginning of the world to this day, that is more brimful of nonsense. *Plato,* I doubt not, may thank his commentators, for extracting such absurdities from his doctrines. I know how dangerous this notion of platonism hath been to womankind, and most sincerely wish that every young woman would avoid its alluring snares. A pretence of this kind hath, I fear, been but too often instrumental in betraying a young and tender mind, which from its innocence also is the more likely to be entrap'd by such a specious bait.

I endeavour not to conceal, that I believe there is a great mixture of desire in the passion which is call'd love: or rather, without any far−fetch'd strain on words, it may properly be call'd the companion of love. I would not therefore have them so confounded, as that poor *Love* should be condemn'd for every fault of his rash companion: nor indeed would I have him falsly asserted to be present, when *Desire* is wandering about by herself, or takes with her a more favourite associate, namely, *Pride*. I would wish, if possible, to exonerate poor *Love* from the blame of those mad and barbarous actions, which proceed from a mixture of *Desire* and *Pride* . Instigated by these, *Christina* queen of *Sweden* was said to order the death of a man, whom she profess'd to doat on, because his heart being engaged to another, made him incapable of returning her passion; yet of that barbarous action hath *Love* often been falsly accused. Wherever *Rage, Revenge,* and *Cruelty* appear, I will venture boldly to assert that *Love* is not to be found in such company.

As soon as *Portia,* in the warmth of her heart to vindicate *Love* from the many aspersions it had been loaded with, had utter'd those last words, she began to fear that she had too boldly asserted her own sentiments. She was suddenly silent, and cast a look of modest diffidence on *Una,* as if she wish'd to be informed of her opinion.

The *Cry* were ready, full−mouth'd, to open, but *Una's* voice awed them into silence; by telling *Portia* that she very much approved her distinctions between *Pride, Desire,* and *Love,* and *Portia* thus encouraged, readily proceeded.

*Portia*. Notwithstanding all the eloquence, O ye *Cry,* that you have expended in the justification of jealousy, I will declare that I never was jealous of *Ferdinand*. I always consider'd him as at full liberty to exert his power of choice; and was I conscious of artificially endeavouring to restrain him in that freedom, I should fall under that most heavy of all punishments, the being self−condemn'd. But when a man, whom I have reason to esteem, hath once declared me the object of his choice, my unbounded confidence in his sincerity and honour, would soar far above the suspecting him of either levity or deceit.

An imaginary affection, founded on a love of flattery, properly exerts itself when it is accompanied by suspicion, and a long train of ungovernable passions. A conversation between a jealous woman, and a justifying lover, (to say no worse of it) bears in my opinion all the marks of a language, properly adapted to express hatred and contempt.

I once overheard an altercation of this kind, which to the best of my memory I will repeat, and will then appeal for judgment, whether the lady's passion ought to be honour'd with the name of true love. At the time when *Islington* gardens were much frequented for the sake of the waters, I went for one whole month very early in the mornings, and happen'd one day to see a young lady fix'd as I may say, for she seem'd immoveable, on a seat at the end of the garden; nor had she any signs of life, but the breath which she spent in deep−fetch'd sighs, and which seem'd to come from a bosom oppress'd with some heavy affliction. She seem'd so fully employ'd by her own thoughts, that I came very near her without her having perceived me, on which I turn'd aside into another walk, separated from her by a hedge, that I might not be guilty of an impertinent intrusion on her solitude; I was

no sooner on the other side of the hedge, than through the brakes I saw a young gentleman walking hastily up to the melancholy lady, and they enter'd into discourse before I had time to withdraw myself. When I had overheard the beginning of their conversation, I imagined it much better, for their sakes, to remain in the same place where I was, than by coming in sight to let them know that they had in part been overheard. This, in their own words, was their dialogue.

*Gent.* Well, Madam, you see I am punctual to my appointment, but I expect no ill−humour; no reproaches; no upbraidings, where I have so little deserved them.

*[Great signs of love on either side, by such expressions!]*

*Lady. [In a soft voice*] Let not my love for you, cruel man, be the cause of your using me thus inhumanly.

*Gent.* How, my dear creature, have I used you inhumanly?

*Lady. [in a voice something higher*] Not used me inhumanly! Did I not see you with my own eyes, barbarous man, caressing the forward hussey?

*Gent.* Nay, why should you dwell on such a trifling circumstance, when 'tis near a week too since it happen'd?

*Lady. [something louder still*] If it was a thousand years, I should never forget the cruel insult. —Only because my back was turn'd, you could not refrain from kissing the first girl you met.

*Gent.* Fye, my dear *Lucy,* how can you mention such a foolish piece of gallantry? You know that the girl desired me to help her over the stile, and, 'tis true, I gave her a civil salute: she was a *very pretty girl—*

*Lady. [with her voice raised almost to its highest pitch*] Oh! you villain! a civil salute! I saw you give her half a dozen kisses: and does the remembrance too of the girl's charms dwell so strongly on your imagination, that you cannot even talk to me without being wanton in her praises?

*Gent. [a little nettled at being call'd villain*] Why, madam, will you give way to your passions in such a manner? I have said nothing but the truth. The girl was pretty. I kiss'd her, and should not have longer detain'd her, had you not exposed yourself by turning about, and flying into a rage with me for nothing. I own after such a behaviour in you, it pleased me to give you the farther vexation of seeing my pretended fondness for the country girl.

The lady's tears now gush'd in such abundance, that she could only with sobs utter the words, "Barbarous cruel man, thus to insult me with your fondness for another!" The gentleman, who I believe fear'd she would go into a fit, protested that he said *pretended* fondness only, and vow'd and swore that he was fond of no creature but herself. The lady recovering a little breath, thus went on. "Aye, your *pretended* fondness I believe is all bestow'd upon poor me, whilst your real fondness is for every pretty girl that you cast your eyes on."

*Gent. [something peevishly*] I have never thought of the girl since: I have no fondness for her; I have told you so fifty times: but if you won't believe me, you must take your own way.

*Lady. [still sobbing*] I find how indifferent you are, whether I believe you or no. I doubt not but my suspicions were all true of Mrs. *B—,* and Miss *C—,* and *Molly D—,* and *Betty G—*. [*And then she reckon'd up about ten persons besides, whom she had suspected him with before, and thus went on*.] I am resolved not to bear this tormenting life any longer, and I will leave you at liberty to go to all your favourites as soon as ever you please.

*Gent. [still peevishly*] I beg, madam, that you would for your own peace leave off these idle suspicions.

*Lady*. Call them not idle suspicions, base man; for from the stories you have told me of yourself, I can prove you to be one of the most deceitful of creatures.

This ungenerous retorting his own openness of temper on him, enraged the gentleman beyond all patience, and there ensued between them a downright quarrel; in which they both exhausted their whole stock of bitter reproaches against each other. 'Till at last the gentleman turning on his heel, was going hastily to leave her. But she caught hold of his coat, and scream'd out in the loudest voice; "Aye, do, stab me; kill me, barbarous man; and all because I love you to distraction." He begg'd her not to speak so loud in such a public place, and expose herself in this manner. She reply'd, that she cared not how much she was exposed, or what became of her, unless he would promise not to leave her. To this at last he consented: and after some farther discourse, he own'd himself convinced, that all her jealousies arose from excessive love; and they walk'd off arm in arm, as fondly as if nothing had happen'd.

The falling out of *such* lovers, may indeed be call'd the renewal of *such* love, and is I believe the only love that can be renew'd or heighten'd by quarrelling. I have heard something not very unlike this between two animals, scampering over the ridge of a house at midnight.

The *Cry* were now all so very delicate, that on *Portia's* last comparison, they stretch'd out one hand, turn'd their heads the contrary way, and croak'd out, *O foy, foy, foy*!

*Portia,* who knew the indelicacy not to be in herself, but in the before−mentioned lovers, thus went on.

*Portia*. When such a mixture of ungentle passions, as were contending in the breast of the *Islington* lady, claim to themselves the name of love, it requires not the eloquence of an orator to prove it a misnomer. In *Christopher Layer's* trial, there was a long pleading about a letter in his name, either about an e, or an o, I have forgot which; and a learned counsellor wanted to quash the indictment, by proving a misnomer from the alteration, addition, or omission of a single letter. Could this plea be admitted, where there was only one letter wrong in two words, how much stronger would it appear where an e is the only letter in the whole word, which belongs to its true interpretation! For *Hatred,* and not *Love,* must be the parent of such a scene as I overheard, and have just now related. And by what juggle, or legerdemain trick it can be brought about, that where disappointed pride raises up hatred enough to excite such language, poor *Love* should be deem'd the criminal, is astonishing to me, and is also the highest degree of injustice. I wish some able advocate would rescue innocent *Love* from such barbarous treatment, and according to the common saying, would fairly set the saddle upon the right horse.

The general word *passion,* is, I allow, a good one, to express the sensations of most people who talk of being in love; for such love produces hatred, rage, jealousy, and fondness, each in their several turns, in the space of twenty−four hours. We do not often say of an avaritious man, that he hath got a passion: or, if we mention the word, it is definitely, by calling it the passion of avarice; and so of all the other passions which actuate the human mind. But to love, we vulgarly give the name, A Passion, and by using it thus in general, we tacitly confess that we know not what particular passion it is; or rather we imply that it is a mixture of them all together. *Rochefoucault,* or *La Bruyere,* I have forgot which, very truly observes, that of all the various persons who imagine themselves in love, there are very few who have attain'd the knowledge of what it means. A true esteem, built on a just foundation, must keep paltry suspicion at too great a distance ever to approach it: and I am certain that the love which is centered intirely in its own gratification, without any regard or concern for the separate good or happiness of its object, deserves no other appellation than that of the most narrow selfishness. If I might venture to give a definition (or rather a description) of what I mean by love, it is this.

A sympathetic liking, excited by fancy; directed by judgment; and to which is join'd also a most sincere desire of the good and happiness of its object.

*Una,* with a smile, stamp'd this definition with her own seal, which the *Cry,* by various inventions, vainly endeavour'd first to hinder, and then to make frustrate. Sometimes they tried to melt it off by the flames of their raging passions; and when baffled in that attempt, they tried to prevent its being legible, by covering it over by the chilling ice of their own frozen hearts. So many cunning shifts did they fly to, in order thoroughly to deface it, that they made it unintelligible to those who are afflicted with any degree of weakness of sight; but to the piercing eye of reason, it is still perfectly clear and intelligible. This also is well known to the *Cry,* and they undesignedly bear testimony to the truth of the definition, by their eager desire of destroying it. The motive is easily discover'd: for never having experienced one grain of true love in their own bosoms, they modestly desire mankind to stand by them, in asserting that there is in nature no such disinterested affection.

## SCENE VI.

*In loving thou dost well; in passion not:*
*Wherein true love consists not.—*

Milton.

# Portia. Una. The Cry.

## *PORTIA.*

Added to the various ways I have already mention'd, one very pleasing manner in which *Ferdinand* made love to me, was by the innocence and chastity of his behaviour.

The horse−laugh, which burst from the *Cry,* on *Portia's* last expression, was so loud, and continued so long, that she almost despair'd of ever again resuming her discourse. At last with a broad grin on all their countenances, as if ready to burst out again on the next words she should utter, they jogg'd each other into silence.

*Portia*. I wore no disguise, and my affection for *Ferdinand* must be too visible for him to be ignorant of it; yet had I been his sister, he could not have conversed with me with more innocent freedom; and a woman in such a situation, cannot, I think, receive from a man a higher obligation, than such a generosity of behaviour.

The *Cry* were not in the least baulk'd, for they found an occasion loudly to renew their laugh. *Portia* was perfectly at a loss to discover the cause of their mirth; but as soon as they could recover breath enough for utterance, she soon found what had so much diverted them. The words *innocence* and *chastity* were tost about amongst them, as the most absurd epithets that ever were apply'd, as *Portia* used them; and miss *Notable* coming forward with an air of great humour and ridicule, said, that an old maiden aunt of hers, who never had more claim to beauty in her youth, than she now possess'd at threescore, used often to talk of the innocence and chastity of all the men with whom she had ever conversed, and fancied herself under the same sort of obligation as *Portia* had mentioned to mankind, for her present state of virginity. I would venture a good wager, said miss *Notable,* that *Potiphar's* wife was about as handsome as my maiden aunt; for indeed, that is the only circumstance which in my opinion can make that old story probable. And it is the fate I believe of all ugly women, continued she, to meet with nothing but chaste and innocent men. Miss *Notable* was highly applauded for her wit; and now was the rude laugh renewed with the loudest acclamations of insult.

It may not be amiss in this place to inform the reader, that notwithstanding the pertness of miss *Notable* in her story, and the malicious application of it by the *Cry,* that nothing could be less applicable than it was to the person against whom it was pointed. As *Portia* hath hitherto been, and will still continue to be relator of her own life and actions, no intimation will drop from her tongue of a truth which we must here beg leave to make known, namely, that she possessed as much beauty as ever fell to the share of any human creature; and the reason we are not more particular in the description of her person is, that we think it not half so material as to bring our reader fully acquainted with her mind.

Notwithstanding the loud laugh of applause, which follow'd the attempted satire of miss *Notable's* story; yet the *Cry* very well knew how little it could touch our *Portia*: and the men who were mix'd in the assembly, had they not felt the same dread as with−held them once before; the fear of offending a wife or mistress would soon have taken the part of insulted beauty, although in the person of *Portia*. This dread with−held them from speaking; but casting their eyes on *Portia,* they shew'd her by their looks, that they were not insensible to her personal charms.

The rough and unmannerly behaviour of the *Cry,* for a moment confounded *Portia,* enough to bring into her face a blush, which according to *Milton,*

*—added grace invincible.—*

Yet with a conscious innocence of mind, under the sanction of *Una's* protection, thus she continued to express her real sentiments.

*Portia*. I wanted not to be told that *Ferdinand* had no dislike to me, nor is it I think any great vanity for a young woman under twenty, who is not deformity itself, to think, that the man she likes may, at least for some time, be pleased with her, as one woman. He might indeed easily prove to her his strong liking to her person; but this surely would be no proof of his love: whereas should he converse with her with innocence (notwithstanding the laugh that expression just now caused) it ought to be look'd on as the highest proof of his affection.

That grand master of human nature (I need not say I mean *Shakespear*) very judiciously in his *Midsummer night's dream,* makes *Demetrius* say to a young lady who follows him into a lonely wood; that he wonders−she will trust herself (being both young and handsome) in such a solitary place with one who loved her not. Most of

the dabblers in human nature, would have made his want of love for her an argument of her security, and would have supposed the danger to have arisen from being alone with a man who really loved her. Which translated into plain *English*, is neither more nor less, than affirming that a man would not desire to injure the woman he doth not love, but would not care how much he injured the woman for whom he had a sincere affection. This is making a man declare with the old ballad,

*So much I love this maid,—I will undo her.*

The *Cry* once or twice seem'd going to speak, and to contradict *Portia*; but they found that there was something so very uncommon in her manner of considering this subject, and they were sometimes at such a loss to catch her meaning, that for fear of saying yes, when they should say no, they suffer'd her to go on without interruption.

*Portia*. If I should even be mistaken in thinking, that the behaviour of *Ferdinand* towards me was a proof of his affection, yet would I willingly continue still to think so. For 'tis a thought which I would not lose for any other that could be given me in exchange. Such a proof of love is more pleasing to me, than all the profusion of enamour'd language, which passionate rapture can bestow. 'Tis not words, but deeds, that to me prove a man's thoughts.

Here notwithstanding the real chastity of *Portia's* language, which indeed arose from the pure images in her honest mind, the *Cry* could not keep out some ideas which strongly renew'd the laugh. Then follow'd a general malicious sneer, and they talk'd apart to each other (but designedly loud enough to be heard) in sort of hints and implications (most dangerous weapons in the hands of folly or malice) all which implications amounted to the discovery, that *Portia* by her own confession was entirely in the power of *Ferdinand*; and that she would easily be prevail'd with to sacrifice her virtue, whenever he should please to make the tryal. It was, they said, a consciousness of her own weakness, that made her dwell so much on the praises of his innocence; and truly might she call herself under high obligations to him on that account.

*Portia*. As to being conscious, that I could not have withstood any sollicitations from *Ferdinand*, I boldly deny it. Yet never had I so much confidence in my own strength, as to wish for such a tryal. I look on it as no trifling effort of female strength, to withstand the artful and ardent sollicitations of a man that is thoroughly master of our hearts. Should we in the conflict come off victorious, it hardly pays us for the pain we suffer from the experiment: [*Here Portia suppress'd another rising sigh, the occasion for which, as well as the former, we must beg to keep secret till our sagacious readers find it out*] and I still persist in it, that such a behaviour in any man I love, would rob me of that most pleasing thought; namely, the obligation I have to him for not making such a tryal.

A new discovery now presented itself to the *Cry*; and they imagined that *Portia* had greatly contradicted her former sentiments, at least had included herself in her own censure, when she said, that those people who have the word *obligation* continually in their mouths, have the love of tyranny strongly engrafted in their hearts; and they fell on *Portia* with ironical taunts, for her great love of using the word *obligation*.

*Una*, with her usual candour, plainly discover'd by this seeming contradiction the generosity of *Portia's* heart, which induced her strenuously to disclaim the word *obligation*, when 'twas in her power to confer the favour, and willingly to use it, when she thought herself the person obliged.

But such a favourable construction on any one's words or actions, never enter'd into the head or heart of the *Cry*; whose favourite employment is to hunt for some absurdity or contradiction in the words and sentiments of all those who will not enlist themselves amongst their numerous train.

## SCENE VII.

*Chi troppo s' assottiglia, si scavezza.*

A Tuscan Proverb.

# Portia. Una. The Cry.

## *PORTIA.*

Your behaviour just now, O ye *Cry*, puts me in mind of those people whom I call discoverers in conversation; and whose chief view is indeed the discovery of some absurdity, which they hunt for with as much eagerness, as sportsmen hunt for their chace; and hollow with as much joy, when they fancy they have started their desired game. But there is this wide difference between a sportsman and a discoverer; that the game of the former being the object of his sight, cannot well deceive him; whereas the latter is perpetually following false alarms, and is continually imagining that he hath found, when like *Macbeth's* dagger,

*—there's no such thing—*

for his very characteristic is a resolution to censure. And so far doth a true discoverer resemble what we call a gold−finder, that filth is his pursuit, he sculks from day−light, and works always in the dark; by forced implications he changes the most inoffensive meanings into some dark design, and then exults in the strength of his own penetration.

The *Cry* from inattention, very little understood what *Portia* had been saying of discoverers: but they agreed unanimously to accuse her of having absurdly abused all discoveries, and of wishing to put a total stop to all useful enquiries.

*Portia*. You yourselves, O ye *Cry*, whilst your view is to condemn what I have said of a discoverer, heedlesly have confirm'd my opinion by changing my terms, and using the word *enquiries* instead of *discoveries*. The character of a candid enquirer is very commendable; for in his search whatever he finds he immediately acknowledges; he gives his judgment liberty to exert itself, and restrains his imagination from soaring beyond its strength, and from declaring that he hath found what is not. Whereas what I call a discoverer, sets out in his search with an inclination to some particular point; he leads his judgment in chains, gives a loose to his imagination, and is sure to prove (at least to his own satisfaction) that the new and desired discovery is made.

A discoverer is continually talking false logic; he multiplies words till he himself (as well as his hearers) hath lost all traces of the true and natural deductions of reasoning. Perhaps it may not be impossible to prove, that a man's talking false logic, as well as being guilty of wrong actions, arises originally from his heart; that is, from his inclinations being byass'd on the side of error, from cherishing some favourite image or system, to which all others must bow down and worship, or must suffer being rack'd and tortured till they submit to such an adoration; in short, from being a resolute discoverer instead of a fair enquirer.

*[Portia meeting with no interruption thus continued.]*

—What led me into this way of thinking was, by observing from my youth that men of such parts, that their capacity could not be doubted, and of such learning, that their knowledge of the proper manner of reasoning must be unquestionable, would at times talk as false logic as could possibly have been uttered by the most silly or ignorant part of mankind. Nay, what confirmed me more strongly in the truth of this opinion was, that I have often heard the same man, who would one day talk as logically as *Aristotle* himself; and yet the very next on some other subject set logic on its head; change the premisses into the conclusion, and the conclusion into the premisses, and bewilder himself in his own words, till he became at last almost untelligible. To what can this be imputed, but to some hidden passion or inclination in the mind; which is working the common effect of all unrestrained passions, inveloping and darkening the understanding?

Children who have not yet corrupted their minds, with a strong desire of proving one thing more than another, often talk the truest logic. Those few images which they have imbibed, are more clear and intelligible than those of grown−up people, who are surrounded with strong inclinations and whose imagination hath, perhaps been pamper'd and indulged. Yet this desire of obscuring truth, will begin to peep forth and shew itself even in children, when the doll or the plumb cake happens to be the subject of contention; and each will use as many perplexing words, to engage mamma to determine the right of property to be invested in the little speaker, as any the most eloquent lawyer in *Westminster−hall*.

The reason *Portia* had been so long uninterrupted, was not owing to the acquiescence of the *Cry* to any of her sentiments; but from the time she had mentioned the word *logic*, they had stretched their eyes wide open, and fix'd

them on her, with an amazed stare as if they had beheld a monster. Then opened all at once full−mouthed against women's understanding logic; not in a manner as if they even desired to prove it either useless or hurtful, (for they deal not in proofs) but in attempted ridicule; they abused female logicians, and cast forth sly reproaches against every woman that knew any thing of the matter. First, all the feminine part of the *Cry* utterly disclaim'd all knowledge of it themselves; and whatever they thus disclaim, they not only insinuate is of no value, but labour also to shew that the possession of it is attended with shame. Then they unanimously pronounced that logic was a man's business; and they were certain that a woman would never be married who pretended to such high learning; for men were not such fools as to burthen themselves with logical wives. A fine wife indeed would any woman make, who should chop logic all day with her husband! Then after a loud laugh they raised their voices to the highest pitch, and talk'd all together till their breath fail'd them, in endeavouring to prove that logical women would stun their husbands, and never suffer them to be at rest for their eternal babbling.

*Portia*, who had no notion that logic meant any thing, but an art of reducing the forms of speech into such a method, as from thence clearly to distinguish truth from falshood, could not but smile at the present alarm amongst the *Cry*; and out of a whimsical curiosity which was just then raised in her mind, she asked them what they really understood to be the meaning of the word *logic*?

This question *Portia* address'd to the female part of the assembly; and the men stood silent, willing to hear what the women would say on the subject. A sudden question hath the same effect on the *Cry*, as an attempt to touch it hath on an hedgehog. For the fretful animal rolls itself up, hides its head, and throws forth all its bristles in order to pierce the bold hand that dares approach it. The *Cry*, on *Portia's* question, were all suddenly struck on a heap into sullen silence. Modesty or diffidence in themselves, was far from causing their silence; for they had long soar'd above such groveling motives; but the space of time before they spoke, was employed in meditating the manner in which they should express their indignation. To ask them what they understood by any thing, they always construed into a suspicion of their ignorance; and this being the highest of all offences, never fail'd of raising their anger. Strange anger this! considering how vehemently they had just before disclaimed all such knowledge. But after having vented part of their wrath, by dealing out such words as *wits, women of sense, pretenders to learning*, &c. they strove with emulation, who first should prove herself capable of answering *Portia's* question. But it was, after the manner so humourously express'd by *Hudibrass*,

*In proper terms such as men smatter,*
*When they throw out and miss the matter.*

For one said that logic was an outlandish language; another, blushing for the ignorance of her friend, said that it was learning a parcel of hard names in order to conjure by; a third, eager to display her knowledge of what she had pretended heartily to despise, declared that it was something which men learnt at the universities, in order to hinder themselves from being understood. In short, logic by one or other amongst them, was found out to be every thing that it was not. Each hit on some new invention to assert, and every one was best pleased with her own invention.

As soon as every one had vented a separate opinion, in order to take off the reproach, as they thought, of not being able to answer any question which *Portia* could propose, they all once more in a body declared, that for a woman to pretend to understand logic, or any other kind of learning, which was properly a man's business, it must and would subject her to deserved contempt, and she would be despised and neglected by all mankind.

*Portia*. The fear of being neglected, or disesteem'd for any knowledge I could attain, never once came into my mind. I am conscious that it cannot make me the proper object of disesteem, unless the pride of my own heart turns wholesome food into poison, and that affectation or insolence should be the consequence of every degree of knowledge, to which I could arrive. And as to any contempt that I may lie under, for which there is no reasonable foundation, I endeavour to keep such a command over my own mind, as to enable me to easily bear it, without fretting, or feeling from thence the least degree of anxiety.

*Portia* could have uttered nothing more likely to inflame the *Cry* with indignation, than the assertion that she was not to be ruffled by their ill−grounded contempt; and they were ready to have fallen on her for affectation with the utmost virulence of their tongues, when the harmony of *Una's* voice prevented their doing more than muttering and grumbling their discontent; for she encouraged *Portia* in her way of thinking, by telling her, that steadily to preserve that temper of mind, was the only true road to happiness.

*Portia*. There is a superficial desire of seeking after knowledge, which is satisfied with swimming on the surface of every science: or which, like a sickly appetite, is greedy after every thing it spies, but is unable either to receive a quantity sufficient for nourishment, nor hath the power of digesting what it receives. To carry on the same metaphor, I believe the whole force of the human imagination is unequal to the finding an illustration more adequate in all its parts, to exemplify a mind injudiciously cram'd with undigested knowledge, than is a body pampered and glutted with poignant sauces, by which the palate loses all taste of wholesome food, and grows so luxuriously wanton, that at last all kind of relish is entirely lost, and the unfortunate body which is thus apparently indulged, but in fact cruelly treated, becomes a sink of loathsome diseases, and an intolerable burthen to itself. I had such an unbounded trust in the judgment of *Ferdinand*, that I knew he would easily distinguish whether I thus perverted instruction, so as to deserve contempt; and whilst my behaviour obtained his approbation, I was perfectly satisfied, nor valued the opinion of the whole world besides.

And now the gloomy discontent of the *Cry* began a little to subside, and they seem'd recovering from *Una's* last rebuke. However, they could not yet venture at the contradicting *Portia's* sentiments, because indeed they did not clearly understand whether she was at present an advocate for or against knowledge; but they all hit, as they thought, on a most wonderful discovery from *Portia's* last words, namely, that she was most excessively in love with *Ferdinand*. That she herself had repeatedly confess'd it, had no chance of being acknowledged by them. For a true discoverer shuts up all his windows at noon−day, and cannot enjoy the light of the sun, whilst the blessing is visibly common to all, and whilst 'tis nothing new to declare that it shines: but he must contrive to peep through some small crevice, and then is wonderfully delighted that he hath found out the open blaze of day.

*Portia*. No wonder is it, O ye *Cry*, that you should find out my love for *Ferdinand*, since I have declared it in plain and honest words several times. I have confessed it to be my glory.

The *Cry* baulk'd and disappointed at *Portia's* confessing the truth of what they thought a shameful accusation against her, were resolved to be revenged, and took so strange a turn, as is almost incredible: for rather than make no discovery at all, they were resolved to rob her of her glory, by finding out that she was not in love with *Ferdinand*. And this they attempted to prove, by positively asserting, that her being in love with any one, was a matter of fact in itself impossible. She had not a heart, they said, capable of such a passion; for ice itself was the truest emblem of her affections. So that in their perverse imaginations, ice or fire alternately reigned in her bosom, just as either was best suited to the promoting their constant and fixed purpose of abusing her with an unconquerable malignity.

The *Cry* spend their whole lives in the same manner as children spend their time, when they play at cat's cradle. They puzzle and perplex themselves, and twist every string a thousand different ways, but all in vain: for 'till they have found it out themselves, or by owning their ignorance, have, according to the children's phrase, *yielded* to be inform'd how to put their fingers into the right place, the cradle will never come into its intended form.

## SCENE VIII.

*At nos virtutes ipsas invertimus; atque*
*Sincerum cupimus vas incrustare.—*

Hor.

## Portia. Una. The Cry.

*Portia* was now call'd back by *Una,* to a subject she would by no means have farther enlarged on in that company, had *Una* been absent. But we would not here be misunderstood, as if contempt for the understandings of the *Cry* would have caused her silence. *Portia* well knew that there was no want of capacity in that assembly, for understanding any subject that she was capable of discoursing on; but it was the inflexible stubbornness of their minds, and the impossibility she knew there was of gaining from them any the least degree of candid attention, which would have caused her silence, had not *Una* kindly protected her, and given her all the encouragement which was due to modest merit.

This subject was no other than that of learning and knowledge; on which *Una* was desirous of hearing the utmost *Portia* could say.

*Portia*. When real knowledge or learning of any kind, is accused of creating in the heart of man either pride or contempt of others; the accusation must be as false, as if we were to assert that a peer−tree produced the baleful berries of the yew. A little learning is well observed to be a dangerous b thing; but as the danger is confess'd to arise from the smallness of the quantity, 'tis more proper to say, that ignorance and the want of learning is dangerous: for by drinking deeply, all the apprehended evil will in a moment vanish. But, even in this drinking deeply, great care must be taken to draw our liquor from the right and wholesome fountain; otherwise (to continue the metaphor) we shall be but entoxicated, instead of replenished, and shall confound our brains in a giddy perplexity. We must drink deep enough to go to the very bottom; we must find out the certain value of every degree of knowledge, before we can possibly make a right use of it; we must fix strongly in our minds this one simple truth, "That no natural or acquired transitory advantages in this world, ought to be esteemed valuable, unless they are connected with such a regulation of the mind, and animate the heart with such a degree of goodness, as will be a recommendation to the God of truth and wisdom." Where this truth is once properly fixed, can the advantage of knowing ten, or ten thousand different names for one thing, or any other knowledge within the reach of man, ever produce a self−sufficient pride in ourselves, or an insolent overbearing contempt towards others? Whilst indeed we wilfully blind our eyes, and keep out the knowledge of this truth; whilst we use all our endeavours to forget our own dependance on one far above us, and keep our thoughts bent only on our inferiors: insolence will be produced by every the least advantage which we can but make ourselves imagine we possess. This is throwing away one of the distinguishing privileges of man, (which even his bodily form hath given him) that of lifting up his eyes towards heaven, and chusing to let them lower down continually on the earth, only that the power of trampling on worms may dwell on his memory.

'Tis the not opening our eyes to the simple truth before mentioned, and the continual comparisons which we delight to make of ourselves with our companions, that induces us to display insolence with knowledge, or malice with ignorance. For I will boldly assert, that the man who is disdainfully overbearing amongst those over whom he hath but the least degree of either real or fancied superiority, will be slily malicious whenever he is admitted into company, where the painful thought intrudes itself on his mind, that he stands in the least degree inferior to any of his companions. If we would strike at the root of this evil, we must strip all pain from the thought of our own inferiority, and must learn to bear it with mildness and good−humour. Could this fear of being less than the greatest, be but once eradicated from the human breast, how great a change would appear in almost all conversations! I fancy, if a man who had been long conversant in this world, was to be placed amongst a set of beings, bearing the outward form of his acquaintance, but who had thus plucked up this evil by the roots, he would be seized with the highest astonishment; he would wonder what was become of all the insolence on the one hand, and all the malice on the other, to which he had been all his life accustomed. He would then be able to taste mirth without hurtful ridicule; instead of seeing mortified discontent, or insulting sneers, he would behold nothing but benignant smiles, arising from the indulgence of innocent pleasantry, and the height of social good−humour.

*Una* embraced *Portia,* for drawing such an agreeable picture, whilst the *Cry* laboured with all their force to disunite them. But finding their endeavours to be in vain, they loudly call'd on *Portia* to answer or deny, if 'twas in her power, this affirmation; that learning, and every degree of knowledge, must give at least an additional opportunity of exerting insolence, and opened therefore a much greater inlet to arrogance, than ignorance could

possibly give.

*Portia*. That knowledge and learning, in a small degree, gives an additional opportunity for exerting insolence, or rather impertinence, you are undoubtedly in the right, O ye *Cry*.

And now the melody of *Frasi's* voice might as well be heard amongst the sound of warlike instruments, preceding a triumph for victory, as *Portia's* amongst the noisy acclamations of the *Cry*, for their own imaginary conquest. The puff'd and swell'd, and invited echo by their loud applauses. They fully proved indeed the truth of their assertion, by the insolence of their clamour, and undeniably shew'd how small a degree of knowledge is capable of producing the most overbearing contempt. Yet they felt something within very unpleasing, which amounted to a consciousness that they had falsly accused *Portia* of ever denying the truth of their observation; and if their inmost hearts could have been laid open, it would have been seen, that their triumph was not half so compleat, as by their outward applauses they endeavoured to make appear.

*Portia*. If giving *one* opportunity to exert insolence, be held a reasonable cause for condemning any such advantage, and if it can be by this means accused of being mischievous, every faculty of the mind, every superior degree of strength of the body, and every kind of property whatsoever, must plead guilty to the accusation: we must desire that mankind should be reduced to naked unanimated clods of earth. But such a wish would be full as pregnant of absurdity, as if we should desire to banish every thing in which there is any utility, because there hath been nothing which men at one time or other have not, in the height of some pamper'd and blown−up passion, turn'd into instruments of mischief and destruction. By this way of reasoning, instead of confining madmen, we should take away from the sober part of mankind, whatever the mad in their raving fits of frenzy had employ'd in doing mischief. Surely we have had but little experience, or have profited but very little by that most useful of all knowledge, if we are not convinced that insolence and arrogance rages most in those minds, where poor knowledge by the most positive of all proofs that of absence, must be exculpated from a possibility of being the cause of its exertion. But I confess that, more than I at first intended, I have confounded the two words knowledge and learning, whereas to avoid confusion, great care should be taken to keep our ideas of them distinct. There is a knowledge which is concerned in the gaining ideas of things, and investigating their utility; whereas what we generally call learning, is concerned only in gaining the various names for those things. The farmer when he plows his land, hath as much, nay perhaps more useful knowledge of the plow−share, than the man of learning, or more properly the linguist, who knows its name in every language spoken throughout the globe.

As this world is at present constituted' what we call the lower part of mankind work for pay, and by that means support themselves and families; yet their assistance by the means of their labour, is as necessary to the rich, as the pay of the rich is to the labouring man. Did not this dependence for common subsistence oblige the lower class of men to sell their labour; if the gentleman whose birth and fortune had enabled him to have had a literate education, was to despise his cook for his ignorance; the cook in my opinion would then have a very reasonable pretence for with−drawing his labour, and forcing the learned insulter to employ some of that time in preparing food for his body, which he (by the help of his cook) hath now leisure to employ in pampering the pride of his heart, by first acquiring, and then applauding his own acquired learning. I have often reflected with pleasure on the following observations of *Montaigne*. "Men (says he) are presently apt to enquire, doth such a one understand *greek* ? or is he a critic in *latin*? and should you cry out of one that passes by—O what a learned!—and of another—O what a good man goes there! the people would not fail to turn their eyes, and address their respect to the former. There should then be another cryer to exclaim—O the puppies and coxcombs!"—

The *Cry* were now in the highest perplexity. For when first *Portia* mention'd learning, they thought themselves secure of a good opportunity of abusing her, as by her language and manner they imagined her to be possess'd of it; but now as it appeared to them, that she had taken the other side of the question, they consequently concluded that she had no learning, and they therefore set up a general high admiration of it. They declared it to be the only valuable thing in this world. Some blamed their parents for their ignorance (for they must have somebody to blame) and were sorry, they said, that it was too late in life for them to attain it. These also pitied and lamented themselves, deplored their own condition, and at last made a kind of attempt at talking the language of humility; but most awkwardly was it executed. However, their doubt about *Portia's* having learning or no learning, kept them from unanimously either praising or decrying it, and 'tis impossible to repeat the jargon they uttered on this subject. They would not see how easily they might have turn'd their perplexity into certainty, by only asking *Portia* the question. But the fear of damping the real joy at their hearts, on the supposition of her want of learning

(notwithstanding their affected contempt for it in a woman) withheld them from such enquiry. *Portia* saw their dilemma, and altho' she would freely have answered any one who had asked her, whether she ever had or had not been instructed in any language besides her own; yet was she resolved at this time not to gratify the curiosity of the *Cry*, as they had not candour enough with good−humour, to ask her the plain question.

*Portia*. You shall never, O ye *Cry*, till I think proper, positively know whether I am or am not possessed of learning. Not that I think such your information of the least consequence. But I very well know that the motive to your curiosity is in order to abuse me, if you could find out that I have learning, and to insult and trample on me if you are certain that I have not. For one of the great advantages of learning is, that it keeps the modest mind from being overborne and insulted by that proud pedantry which struts in a borrow'd phrase from the ancients, which phrase also is often no more than a sentence recollectd out of the *latin* syntaxis, and which nothing but the rod hath imprinted on the memory. But I should really be glad, O ye *Cry*, if you would inform me whether the meaning of all you have been saying is, that you despise learning, or whether you hold it in very high estimation?

*Una* smiled at *Portia's* spritely treatment of the *Cry*, whilst the *Cry* themselves toss'd up their noses, said they cared as little about her learning, or her want of it, as she did for their opinions; nor would they inform her whether they admired learning, or whether they did not.

*Portia*. Since ye will not declare your own meaning, I will tell you an illustrating story, in order more fully to explain mine when I say, that, whatever faults any one may think proper to charge on learning, yet that it is ignorance which is very often the motive to malice and detraction.

An illustrating story from *Portia* was as dreadful to the *Cry* as a question; nor would they have suffered her to have proceeded, had not the awful voice of *Una* forced them to shrink into themselves, and to retire in sullen discontent.

*Portia*. Some years ago I went from *London* to a part of *Kent*, which lies on the sea−shore, in what is called a hoy−boat, being indeed a pretty large vessel, which contains a great number of passengers. There was so dead a calm, that we were kept out two nights; yet was there such a coldness in the air, that forced most of the passengers to go down into the hold where the goods were stow'd. As I could not bear the suffocation of such a place, my companion and myself sat upon the deck on hampers, hop−bags, or what we could find. A young man and woman also were seated not far from us, and seemed conversing on a subject which very much raised our attention to their discourse. The man appeared by his dress to be a carpenter, and the girl, as I afterwards heard, was a servant in a gentleman's family; yet these two were discoursing on no other than the subject of learning. A gentleman, it seems, in whose service this young fellow's father had spent the greatest part of his life, had put this boy to school, and intended to have provided for him in something an higher station of life than his birth demanded; but finding his thorough incapacity for such an education, he took him from school, prenticed him to a carpenter, and the boy now grown up was become a sweet−heart to *Betty* his fellow−traveller, and his master's maid.

*John*, conscious that *Betty* knew he had been at school, exerted all his eloquence in the praise of learning, but strictly confined it to men, in which *Betty* very heartily agreed with him; for, she was jealous of a rival in her own fellow−servant, who was able both to write and read (two things *Betty* was intirely ignorant of) but her fear on this score was perfectly groundless; for her rival had lost *John's* favour on that account. However *Betty*, to secure her triumph, began to reckon up in her own knowledge, a great number of women in every degree of life, who (she said) were proud and lazy, from having more learning than became their *sect*. Amongst many other instances she named miss *C*—, an intimate acquaintance of my own. Miss *C*—*'s* father (says *Betty*) had much better have bred his daughter a housewife, and then, mayhap, she might have got her a husband, which with all her fine learning she has not yet been able to do. —And no wonder, for what man wou'd be plagued with a slattern? —No truly (says *John*) I believe no gentleman would like to have his family affairs neglected, because his wife was filling her head with crotchets and pothooks, and who, because she understood a few *scraps* of *latin*, valued that more than minding her needle, or providing her husband's dinner.

Had I been a stranger to miss *C*—, or had I not had too much experience of the world, to fix my opinion of any character where malice appeared in the representation, I might have been deceived. I might have imagined that the lady of whom they spoke, had not only neglected every thing that could be called neatness, but that she prided herself in carelessness of dress, in order to prove her title to a little superficial learning; and that she affected to soar above every part of domestic oeconomy. Under such circumstances I should have been very far from discovering the true character of miss *C*—, which from my own knowledge I am very well enabled to give.

*Una* look'd full of expectation, and the *Cry* (for reasons best known to themselves) full of terror, for what *Portia* would represent to be this lady's true character, when thus she proceeded.

*Portia*. Miss b *C*— is so far from being a slattern, that she is remarkably neat in her person, and is uncommonly diligent in every part of useful oeconomy. Her father is a clergyman, and hath a large family. Her mother dying when she was very young, she hath rather been a mother than a sister to all her younger brothers and sisters. She hath indeed, under her father's tuition, acquired, not a few scraps of *latin* as *John* insinuated, but a large share of real learning, of almost all the living and dead languages: nor was the leisure which she found for such acquirements produced by neglecting any thing necessary or useful for the family, but by the most assiduous industry. But *Betty* in her representation topp'd her part; for she first invented faults to throw on miss *C*— which she never had, and then cast the blame of those faults on that part of miss *C—'s* character, which she had most inclination to censure. There is a corruption of heart in this perverse and fallacious manner of proceeding, which it is much pleasanter to avoid the sight of, than to keep continually before our eyes.

*Una*, who of all things detested that any seemingly just censure should stick on any thing that may be useful to mankind, was heartily rejoiced to hear poor *Learning* so exculpated, and that she had an opportunity of delighting herself with the view of so fair a character as miss *C—'s*; whilst the *Cry*, forgetting their late high admiration of learning, all sat, before they were aware of it, for the picture of *John* and *Betty*. They began to declare that they would hold a good wager that *Portia* had misrepresented her friend, and that the honest country girl in the hoy−boat had fairly spoke the truth. Then did they load poor miss *C*— whom they had never seen, with ten times more calumny than *John* or *Betty* had done before them.

*Portia*. Another part of *John's* courtship to *Betty* which I cannot omit, was, that fully to shew his own learning, he began repeating to his sweet−heart several scraps of *latin* verses which he had picked up at school; and greatly did it make my companion (who was a man of very great learning) smile to hear how thoroughly he exposed his ignorance by not speaking three syllables right, whilst he attempted to set off his knowledge. But this fully answer'd *John's* purpose towards *Betty*; for as she did not understand, she highly admired him, and he concluded by again repeating, that learning was a fine thing for a man, but 'twas both useless and blame−worthy for a woman, either to write or read. It is, I confess, no wonder that a poor ignorant girl should be thus imposed on, and should take for a compliment such bare−faced contempt. Might we make the supposition, that in higher life a man was thus to court his mistress, the thoughts which must pass in his mind before such an intended address, could be no other than these.

Flattery, I am convinced, is the only snare by which I can entangle my prey; but of this there are so many sorts I know not which to chuse. The woman whom I at present admire, is extremely handsome; and compliments to her person she is so accustom'd to, that they will have but little weight. I know she is very silly, and it would be no uncommon practice therefore to entrap her by encomiums on her understanding: but the most artful method in my opinion would be this, to tell her that what she doth not possess is useless and contemptible; that weakness and imperfection is the perfection of a woman; that I am stark mad in love with ignorance, and thus shall I allure her by calling her fool.

This is the language in the heart of every such lover, altho' other words may chance to flow from his lips; and he generally proves how justly founded his opinion is of his mistress's folly, by her being thus to be ensnared.

The female part of the *Cry*, who had many of them often experienced a joyful self−approbation, on being told by their admirers that all their perfection lay in folly, and that to prove their wisdom they must shun, as poison, every offer'd instruction, for fear of becoming disagreeable to their lovers, now felt rolling in their bosoms the highest anger and disdain. —Not against their adorers for so preposterous a method of flattery—much less against themselves for receiving and being pleased with such absurd adulation; but all their indignation was pointed against *Portia*, for daring to bring into open light the true meaning of such paradoxical stuff. Yet as there was not wanting amongst them some, who had enjoyed the pleasure of having been flattered for their high understandings; a dissension began to arise amongst themselves, which for the present took off their attention from *Portia*; and such their contention growing every minute louder and louder, the usual and only effectual remedy was forced to be applied, namely, the commands of *Una*, which soon awed them into a sullen attention.

## SCENE IX.

*If any here chance to behold himself,*
*Let him not dare to challenge me of wrong;*
*For if he shame to have his follies known,*
*First he should shame to act 'em.—*

Ben Johnson.

# Portia. Una. The Cry.

## *PORTIA.*

Since you just now, O ye *Cry,* shuffled away the question which I asked you, for fear something should come out that you could not justify; I myself will tell you from your own language, whether you hold learning in contempt, or in very high estimation.

You really set a much higher value on learning than it deserves. But your admiration of it continues no longer than whilst you can keep it at a distance, and whilst you can look on it as too robust and masculine to be suited to female delicacy. Let it once come so near you, as for a woman and an acquaintance to be possess'd of it; and you would sink under the intolerable burthen of seeing (at least in one point) your own inferiority, if you could not substitute something of your own property to admire in its stead: and unless by fancied ridicule, or open invective, you could cast an odium on whoever thus boldly dare to soar above you.

That *Portia* should thus penetrate the thoughts of the *Cry,* swell'd their hearts with rage. They would have gone farther, had they dared, than speaking daggers. But they plentifully bestowed on her their whole collection of ironical taunts, by talking of *wits, women of sense, pretenders to penetration,* &c. and concluded by drawing this absurd inference from *Portia's* true representation of miss *C—*; that she thought it right and fitting for all girls to be instructed in *latin* and *greek,* and that housewifry and needle−work were very improper female employments.

The laugh and hubbub of the *Cry,* on this fancied discovery of a real absurdity, was so great, that it was a very long time before *Portia* could be heard. And it would be endless to repeat the number of silly trite sayings that were uttered, in order to contradict *Portia,* in what was he farthest from her intentions to assert.

*Portia*. That every woman ought to be an oeconomist, and to be thoroughly acquainted with all those things which are call'd female accomplishments, I am so far from contradicting, that I look'd on it as too universally allow'd to need any mention or justification. And, full as distant also am I from thinking, that what is call'd a learned education, is by any means necessary, or even proper for women in general. But, when added to all the useful knowledge of a woman, without neglecting any of the necessary duties of her station, a young lady employs her leisure hours in acquiring as much learning in languages, as will enable her to have a higher relish both for reading and conversation (by which means she may indeed have something a less relish than other young ladies for cards and public places) I see not why she should be stared at as a monster, reviled as a slattern, or ridiculed as an absurd animal, not fit for the company of either men or women.

When mankind are forced to acknowledge another possessed of any particular excellence, the great pains they take in endeavouring to tack on to that excellence some necessary defect, is a contrivance invented by envy, in order to prevent bursting with inward spleen at so hateful a sight. And it brings to my remembrance a practice I have heard of one of our former sovereigns, who, when he wanted money, would never sign any useful bill in parliament, without tacking on another for his own supplies. Thus to make *wit* pass current in the world, malice tacks on to it *want of judgment*; to *sound judgment* is tack'd *want of invention*; to *learning* in men, *pedantry*; in women, *want of every domestic virtue*; to *vivacity, levity*; to *gravity, dullness*; but above all, to a *lively imagination, madness*. The behaviour of mankind to each other, in exulting in every trifling advantage which they have over another, and repining at the want of every advantage which they cannot enjoy, puts me in mind of a scene which was acted amongst some children in a family, where, one summer, I pass'd some months of my time. The gentleman and lady, to whom I paid my visit, had a very large house in the country, and the upper apartment was allotted for the children. Two girls and a boy made up the number of this little society. One day, miss *Nancy,* the eldest girl, who was about twelve years old, had bolted herself into a large closet, that was within the nursery. She was sitting in an indolent posture, seeming at a loss for eitheir employment or diversion, 'till she heard her sister *Nelly* in the next room who ran directly to the closet door, and finding it bolted, entreated her sister to let her in. On this, miss *Nancy* grew so proud, with thinking she was in a place where miss *Nelly* could not come, that her indolence fled, and she soon found employment enough in forming resolutions for keeping her sister still out; and collecting reasons for so doing, she told her through the door, that as she was the eldest, she had a right to chuse her own apartment; that the books were kept in that closet, and she was retired to read; that the nursery and the outer room were properest for children to play in, and there she might stay, for into her closet she should not come.

Ten thousand rooms would now have been of no use to *Nelly,* unless she could have got into the place from which her sister had excluded her. She intreated, she threatened, but all to no purpose; for miss *Nancy* could not be prevailed on to open the door. On which *Nelly* fell into a most violent passion of roaring and crying, and vow'd revenge against her sister, whenever she should have it in her power. But whilst this terrible tragedy was acting in her little heart, a gleam of comfort arose; for hearing her brother *Billy* running up the stairs, she flew to the nursery door, bolted it against him, and by resolving to keep him out, had the pleasure of thinking that there was one person, however, that could not get so far as herself. Little *Billy* used the same endeavours to prevail on his sister *Nelly* to admit him, as she had before done with her sister *Nancy,* and as much in vain. Miss *Nancy* was all joy at the thought of being able to exclude her sister from the closet. Miss *Nelly* was greatly perturb'd; for she knew not whether she should be more pleased or vexed. She sometimes crept close to the door, which excluded her from her sister; and there blubber'd, stamp'd and rag'd, with all the agonies of anger, arising from envy. She then ran back to the door which she had bolted against her brother, and there laugh'd, and crow'd, and chuckled, and received the highest raptures that insult can give. Poor *Billy* was all grief; he had no−body to shut out except the cat; and there the distance was too great to give him any pleasure. He had no relief, but by the vent which *Nelly* first gave to her passion; namely, by setting up a very loud roar. This soon changed the whole scene; for miss *Nancy* from her closet hearing her little brother cry in the outer room, rush'd out to his assistance. Pity now seem'd wholly to possess her mind: she could not indure to have the poor child vex'd, and severely reprimanded her sister *Nelly* for her cruelty, in excluding her brother from the nursery.

The exact degrees of envy and insult, practised amongst these little children towards each other, are generally to be discovered in some infants of so large a growth, that their bodies are visibly arrived at maturity, whilst their minds have carefully preserved every part of childishness, but its innocence. Mr. *Pope,* in his preface to *Shakespear's* works, declares it as his opinion, that *Ben Johnson's* envy first gave rise to the report of *Shakespear's* want of learning, which report hath prevailed even to this day. The surly laureat (as *Theobald,* in one of his notes, judiciously calls *Johnson*) hath left behind him a very good receipt, which gloomy malice may ever make use of, to pull down a bright contemporary genius. In the first place, *Johnson* exalted learning to a pitch beyond its value; then by making the most glaring shew of his own learning, he endeavoureed to fix the highest admiration on himself; casting at the same time an imputation on *Shakespear,* for want of learning, and spared no pains in exhibiting what he thought so much his own superiority in that single point.

Whoever will take the trouble of extracting from *Johnson's* prologue to *every man in his humour,* and from various other parts of his writings, the side−way reflexions which he frequently casts on *Shakespear,* need not I think seek farther for the strongest proofs of his malevolence and impudence of heart. I would not use such words, if softer terms could convey my meaning; but I cannot from complaisance, lose the use of language, and drop half the image I design to give.

*Shakespear* saw a rising genius in *Johnson,* and like himself, that is, like one who knew the true value of human learning, and its utmost boundaries, and whose genius was exalted by candor and good−nature, prevailed on the managers of the theatre to encourage *Johnson,* and to exhibit his first performance on the stage. After *Shakespear* had nourish'd in his breast this young and venomous snake, now grown to maturity, and warm'd by his friendly bosom, *Ben Johnson,* like himself, that is, like one who possess'd so much of genius as to make him grasp at the fame of having all, spurn'd at his generous benefactor, caught the ears of the multitude by sharp expressions against him, which he call'd humour, and I call spite, and endeavoured to throw all the obstacles he could invent in the way of *Shakespear's* race to the goal of fame. But *Shakespear* could never be provoked to return such paltry spite; he, like the strong mastiff, steadily pass'd by the whiffling cur, unheeding of his yelpings. I know the men (as *Montaigne* says of *Plutarch,* and some other writers) to their inmost souls; I know them by their works. *Shakespear* indeed had no cause to disguise himself; and *Johnson's* malice was too obstreperous for his management; he could not restrain it from breaking out, where gratitude should have with−held it, and with the monument he hath left to posterity of his genius, he hath join'd to it a strong picture of his unconquerable envy.

The *Cry,* not in the least observing what *Portia* had said of the character of the man, began to accuse her of a total want of humour, in not being pleased with such entertaining characters, as are drawn by *Ben Johnson*. Then some were sounding the praises of *Bobadel,* others of the jealous *Kitely,* and all joined in admiration of the diverting figure of master *Stephen,* when he saw his broken toledo.

*Portia*. Very justly, O ye *Cry*, have you pointed out the humour of three very entertaining comic characters, which have lately gained such merited applause; nor is there any one amongst you, who can admire the beauties of some of *Ben Johnson's* writings more than I do. For, besides the foregoing ones, which by the force of inimitable action have made such an impression on your memories, there is *Morose*, *Macilente*, lady *Woud−be*, and many other strong pictures of nature, in his comedies: and for his tragedies, the speeches are extremely fine, both in his *Catiline*, and his *Sejanus*: his just picture also of an inexorable mob, in their usage of *Sejanus's* daughter, where the distress must move the hardest heart, are such proofs of genius as have often pleased my fancy, and claim'd my admiration.

The *Cry* were now all agape, and as they were conscious that to give merited praise, without being blind to glaring faults, was not in themselves (notwithstanding, when it served their purpose, they were always ready loudly to clamour for impartiality) they could not imagine what *Portia* meant by bearing such testimony to *Ben Johnson's* genius as a writer, since she had before condemn'd his malice.

*Portia*. I should be ashamed of myself, if I would not acknowledge the merit of *Ben Johnson* as a writer; but a capacity for writing holds so very low a place in my esteem, when weigh'd in the balance with an honest heart, that with me (and I wish it was the same with every other human creature) it hath no chance of concealing one grain of malice or envy; had *Ben Johnson* known the insignificancy of genius in comparison with a benevolent heart, he had been contented with himself, had borne to have taken the second rank, had loved his friend *Shakespear* instead of abusing him, had therefore been a happier man whilst he lived, and left behind him postumous fame (if postumous fame could delight him) sufficient to have gratified the wishes of any reasonable man; and it might also have been untainted with that malice, which is now too visible to be concealed from observing eyes.

Altho' (as I before said) I would willingly acknowledge all *Ben's* merit as a writer; yet would I wish to set his malignant envy in full view, that the face of such envy may be known whenever it dares to make its odious appearance; nor would I willingly have mankind bully'd into becoming the paltry instruments to gratify the spleen of malignant envy, by turning their eyes averse from one of the greatest glories of the human race.

The *Cry* toss'd up their noses, and said that they should not condemn *Ben Johnson*, because *Portia* had pleased to abuse him; nor would they blindly admire *Shakespear*, because she thought proper to *puff* him off as something so very extraordinary: and then with the highest insult they sneeringly threw about the word Puff, and wittily told her she would do well to enlist herself in that office to some modern author. A loud laugh of triumph re−echo'd through the throng; and *Portia* unheeding of their rude behaviour thus pursued her subject.

*Portia*. The author of *Joseph Andrews* hath gone through the several degrees of envy, from the lower classes of men to those just above them, as also the degrees of insult from the upper rank to those below them, in my opinion very judiciously; and whenever I see his observations exemplified by insult exerting itself over the degree just below it, my remembrance always presents me with a scene that I once saw perform'd between two monkeys, which were for a long time shewn amongst the curious sights at the Tower. One the keeper dignified with the name of the *wise monkey*, and the other he debased with the appellation of *foolish pug*. It appeared indeed to me, that it was nothing more than a violent deafness which had seized the poor wretch, and prevented his obeying the word of command, and no sort of incapacity, that brought on him this imputation, and degraded him below his companion, who was praised for his superior wisdom. For such was the force of comparison in this case, that it gave the epithet of *wise* even to a monkey.

First, the *wise monkey*, at the command of his master, display'd his various feats of activity to the great delight of all his beholders. But there was yet a higher entertainment in store, which was no other than the insult practised by the *wise monkey* over the *foolish one*, who either from stupidity or deafness, was indeed perfectly incapable of obeying his master's commands. On which the *wise monkey* again repeated the various little tricks which the other could not perform; then strutted, chattered, and convulsed himself into such a number of insulting sneers and gestures, importing contempt, that surely *pug* must have been a narrow observer of his master MAN, before he could be so perfect in them all. But the poor little insulted animal escaped every degree of suffering from his insults, for he was happily ignorant of what they meant. But the *wise monkey* was resolved not to be so baffled: he found out therefore a method of proceeding, which must be felt by both the *wise* and *foolish*, and beat the poor dear wretch till he almost left him for dead; then grinn'd and chattered aloud with the thoughts of his own facetious behaviour. I ask'd the keeper why he suffer'd the poor little animal to be so barbarously treated; who

replied, that most of the gentlemen and ladies who came to the Tower, were so pleased with the essential difference between the *wise* and *foolish monkey*, that the shewing them made a very considerable part of his profit. I observed indeed some people then present, who seem'd highly delighted with the sport, as they thought proper to term it: for they spurr'd the *wise monkey* on with, "Well done *wise pug*—at him again—there you have him on this side—now you have him on t'other," with many more such words of encouragement, as are proper to be made use of at a prize−fighting. Peals of applause burst forth in rattling sounds, till the vanity of the *monkey* was puffed up to its utmost height, and he stood collected in his own wisdom. This scene I have always call'd the PICTURE. I wish it was an original instead of a copy; but alas! *monkeys* can but imitate, and have never yet had the honour of being called inventors. But whenever we see insult to be the effect of any superiority, either natural or acquired; we may I believe with certainty conclude, that the degree of such superiority is not greater, than that of *wise pug* over his unfortunate *brother*.

## SCENE X.

*Nequidquam sapere sapientem qui ipsi sibi prodesse non quiret—Non enim paranda nobis solum sed fruenda sapientia est.*

Ex Ennio & Cicerone.

## Portia. Una. The Cry.

The *Cry* were at present fill'd with the highest rage and indignation against *Portia*, and were clamorously loud in their accusation of her having treated them with contempt, in imagining that stories of children and monkeys were best adapted to their weak comprehension.

*Portia*. I am now censured of acting a part, to which of all others my nature is most averse. To treat any living creature with contempt, I hope is not in my disposition; and whenever I bend one thought towards pointing out a weak comprehension as an object of scorn, may that scorn be deservedly retorted on my own arrogant, and consequently most contemptible head. But if the highest insolence reigned in my bosom on that score, 'tis almost impossible that I could be guilty of the intention with which I am now accused, in stories I have or shall relate before this particular assembly.

The gloomy lowering looks of the *Cry* suddenly brighten'd up; for, doating on the word *assembly* applied to themselves, they looked with an air of satisfied dignity, each as a part of such a collective body. They forgot indeed that *Portia's* words, which imply'd respect for her audience, could in any degree be applicable to *Una*, for a very palpable reason, namely, that they did not at that instant remember that *Una* was present, for they had no leisure to look at her, their eyes being all separately fixed on themselves; and every one tacitly making use of that figure in rhetoric, which includes the whole in a part. Thus agreeably employ'd, they retracted their accusation, and unanimously declared that 'twas impossible for *Portia* to be so daringly silly, as to think of treating them with contempt. *Portia* inwardly smiled at the odd turns in the mind of the *Cry*, and thus proceeded.

*Portia*. Stories and exemplars from undisguised nature, are most properly used when we have a mind to trace meer simple nature; for when in such researches we labour through the windings of art, we often impose upon ourselves, and have, not the least desire of knowing the truth. Yet in the most labour'd and adorn'd poetic fables it is possible, nay, far from difficult, to find the most easy and familiar instruction. I remember that the learned and ingenious *Bossu* gives the following definition of fable.

"A c fable (says he) is a discourse invented to form the manners by instructions, disguised under the allegories of an action."

"These d ingenious inventions (in another place says the same author) "under which the truth was disguised, bore for their excellency the name of FABLES, that is to say, of WORDS; as if there was as great a difference between the fabulous discourses of the wise, and the common language of the vulgar, as there is between the speech of man and the sounds used by brutes, to express their passions and sensations."

The name of an acknowledged authority hath always great weight with the *Cry*; and as *Portia* profess'd to be speaking from *Bossu*, they without interruption gave her their attention.

*Portia*. There appears not perhaps at first view, any great degree of excellence in the appellation of a WORD, by which the *French* critic (taken too as he says from *Aristotle*) honours his fable: for according to the vulgar notion of a WORD, which may be either good, bad, or indifferent, it rather degrades to common conceptions this ingenious invention, which is to instruct mankind: but if we will add, that it is (or at least contains in it) *the watchword* given only to the few, that it is the key which admits the adept into those inner apartments from whence the vulgar are excluded, or in short that it is, according to the common saying, *a word to the wise*; we shall I believe have a full and perfect idea of what is contained under the term fable. In what manner the *Iliad* and *Odyssee* of *Homer*, as also the *Æneid* of *Virgil*, may be called fables, as justly as any of the stories which bear that name written by *Æsop*, *Bossu* hath very clearly explained; and hath shewn us that under the quarrel of *Achilles* and *Agamemnon*, whilst the vulgar are amusing themselves with the descriptions of battles, feasts, *&c.* there is to be found a useful *word to the wise*. And by the same rule many a story left us on record may be turned into a lesson of instruction. There is indeed in every story worth either remembering or repeating, a word to the vulgar, and a word to the wise. Let us take for instance what is reported of *Alexander the great*, namely, that he extended his conquests so as to become master of the known world; and then sat down and wept, because he knew of no more worlds to conquer.

As to those people who would consider this, as only one historical fact added to the number with which their memories are already crowded, they are scarcely indeed worth mentioning. But if a country fellow, whose

images, not for want of capacity but leisure to reflect, have seldom gone farther than the outward objects of his labour, whose mind or body hath not travelled beyond his own parish or the neighbouring villages round about, was to be told this story of *Alexander the great*; he would think what a huge man was this *Alexander,* who could conquer the whole world! which too our *Colin Clout* would confine perhaps to his one parish, and would stare with astonishment at the giant who could conquer the squire and all his tenants, who could seize on his coach and six, his large retinue, and take even madam in all her silk and jewels a prisoner. And as to the latter part of the story of *Alexander's* crying for more worlds to conquer, our rustic would soon pronounce him a fool, and boldly declare that he himself should not cry if he had but one half of the world, nor would care one farthing who was in possession of the other.

The ambitious man in the pursuit of glory and conquests, on hearing or reading this story, would sympathize with the mighty conqueror; would follow him with joy in all his victories and at the end (altho' he might not shed tears) would be vexed at such a stop to human grandeur; and would wish with *Alexander,* when the earth was subdued, to extend his conquests to the heavens. But the philosopher, the man of cool reflexion, who hath accustom'd himself to weigh the true value of all earthly enjoyments, would find this *word to the wise* in the before−mentioned story: "That man not only enslaves himself in the vain pursuits of ambition; but that the attainment of his utmost desires, and the extending his conquests even beyond his first most sanguine hopes, will but bring to his view the short bound of his carreer, and the imbecility of his power."

The different judgments passed on this story by the hero and the rustic is owing to this; that the former, warm in his passions, and having his imagination filled with the same glorious pursuits, is so far from looking with any gaping admiration at *Alexander,* that he hopes soon to overtake him: whilst the latter, having no byas from inclination, comes, in the pointed part of the story, much nearer the truth: for he laughs at *Alexander's* childish tears; and 'tis inexperience of mankind alone that makes *Colin Clout* imagine, that a person who had conquered one half of the world, could be contented without subduing the other.

The *Cry* express'd no sort of displeasure at what *Portia* had been saying, concerning the word to the wise, which might be extracted from fables, and the histories of great men; and nodded their heads on each other, as if conscious of being themselves the wise, and far above the vulgar.

*Portia*. 'Tis the dress and outward ornaments of poetical fables, and historical relations, which make their moral not always obvious to vulgar simplicity; for the substance of this story of *Alexander* every nurse is sensible of, who tells you, that the more a child is humoured and indulged in play things, the more will it cry and roar for a new set of baubles. When we farther consider the moral of the fable of *Homer's Odyssee,* as pointed out by *Bossu,* and which he says is equally applicable in private families as in public states, we shall find that every honest careful farmer hath it at his fingers ends in his own language. For when he is at an alehouse, and is desired by his companions to stay longer than is proper from his own family at home, he will tell you, "that when the cat is away, the mice will play;" and with this thought hastens home with the same eagerness, as had the wise *Ulysses* to return to his wife and native kingdom.

The *Cry* now began to grow a little displeased at *Portia's* seeming to bring down all knowledge to proverbs and old saws, which could be repeated by nurses and country farmers. They declared therefore, that they should consider such stuff as fit for the vulgar, but the higher fables and histories were alone worthy their consideration.

*Portia*. 'Tis the application alone which gives value to any sort of knowledge, and renders it either useful or agreeable. If a man was possessed of all the golden mines contained within the fertile womb of the earth; yet was he only to think of this his treasure, as a subject of admiration, it would be to him a useless lump of uninformed matter. It must be current coin before he can be the better for it. He must see useful knowledge contained in the most vulgar language, as well as admire it in a fine writer: he must be so intimately acquainted with the images he hath imbibed from the writings of the greatest genius's, as readily to know them again, although cloathed in the plainest garb; otherwise, let him be ever so profuse or eloquent in his admiration of them, yet by refusing to own their acquaintance when they are unembellished and unadorned, he denies himself the utility of their friendship. Nothing indeed can discover the vanity of a reader of large volumes of learning, more than this simple test. For if a man peruses the works of the learned, from an intention of profiting by their sentiments, and of being acquainted with what gives him real pleasure, he will gladly acknowledge his old friends, when dress'd in the garb of common saws and vulgar proverbs; whereas, should he intend no other use from his reading, but the boasting of his fine grand acquaintance; he will, according to the way of the world, turn his eyes from them, when they appear

in lowly weeds; nay, for fear of being disgraced, he will, if question'd, flatly deny his knowledge of such unpolite company.

## SCENE XI.

*—Licuit, semperque licebit*
*Signatum præsente nota producere nomen.*

Hor.

## Portia. Una. The Cry.

Altho' the *Cry* had tacitly yielded a small degree of approbation to *Portia's* explanation of the word to the wife, fondly and closely embracing the idea, that they themselves were included in that number of the wise to whom a word was sufficient; yet were they ready to retract any such approbation the moment their favourite image of their own wisdom was in danger of being lessened. They were continually on the watch to discover that they were contemptible in *Portia's* eyes, and consequently were assiduous to make themselves miserable. From the time therefore that they could extract from her words an intention, as they thought, of reducing all their knowledge to saws and old proverbs, they felt the image of their own wisdom sliding by degrees from their minds, and sought through all their hoarded treasure of abuse for some device to censure *Portia* . They were resolved, if possible, to rob her of any little degree of merit which they had granted to her observation, and fled to that stale common trick of taxing her with picking up all her observations from some favourite of her own acquaintance: nor were they at a loss for a person on whom to confer the honour of being the prompter to all her sentiments; for in full chorus they all agreed, that she had been retailing to them the peculiar notions of *Ferdinand*. Then with a self−sufficient shout they applauded their own wonderful discovery.

Had it not been for their shout of triumph, and for those gestures of insult which accompanied their words, *Portia* would not have been in the least sensible that they designed any ill−natur'd reflexion, when they pronounced her observations to have been learnt from *Ferdinand*: for as she pretended not to any intuitive knowledge, it was in her opinion matter of praise, rather than reproach, that she should have profitted by the conversation and remarks of another. Thus, therefore, in the simplicity of her heart, she answer'd.

*Portia*. I freely confess, that from the lips of *Ferdinand* I have often heard many useful and improving observations, and I have always endeavoured to apply them properly, and by the help of my memory to retain them in my own particular service. And tacitly do you now, O ye *Cry*, approve my sentiments, when, resolutely bent on abuse, you are driven to that trite device, of labouring to fix on me the imputation of being a plagiarist in all my thoughts. That I utter not one word but what I have somewhere, or somehow learnt, I very freely acknowledge. That I endeavour to improve myself by such conversation as that of *Ferdinand's*, is, in my opinion, more to my honour than my shame. And well are you convinced, (although I expect not you should be so ingenuous as to confess it) that no one can make a right use of another's observations, without a capacity to understand them, and judgment to make the proper applications; otherwise sentiments thus taken from another, would as illy fit the mouth of the mechanic retailer, as the robe of a giant would the roguish pigmie, who had clandestinely purloined it from the right owner.

The *Cry*, inwardly tormented by the thought of *Portia's* darting penetration, could not avoid feeling the truth of what she had said: baffled also by her honest confession, that she knew nothing by intuition, they thought their surest method of revenge was to vent their present anger on her favourite *Ferdinand*. They mangled and defaced his character into every false form they could invent: various were their accusations against him, every one making some outward pretence for abuse, whilst the true cause of their hatred to a person unknown, was in reality nothing more than his being the chosen object of *Portia's* affections. At last, without the least blush for their own contradictions, they now positively affirm'd, that she could have learn'd nothing from *Ferdinand*, for he was too dull, too stupid, too shallow, too trifling, for any one to be the better for his company: and this they had the assurance to declare they had collected from her own account of him.

*Portia* well knew how fruitless would be the attempt to answer or convince such malice and perverseness, as appeared in the *Cry's* abuse of *Ferdinand*: her following reply therefore was intended for no other purpose than to bear an honest testimony to her own opinion.

*Portia*. I never knew any one person to whom the accusation of dullness could be so little applicable, as to *Ferdinand*: the gravest of his discourse hath a spirit in it, which the utmost levity (unless join'd to malice) could not call dull: and when he is disposed to be humourous, the moroseness of a cynic could scarcely accuse him of levity. Greatly indeed must *Ferdinand* be changed, before I can alter my opinion of his being the most entertaining companion in the world; for he laughs and sports with innocence, unmix'd with one grain of malignity.

The *Cry* now, leaving their abuse of *Ferdinand,* hastily seized on *Portia's* last words, as affording them new matter for cavil. It was at present their good−will and pleasure, to interpret her praise of *Ferdinand's* laughing without malignity, into an opinion, that all laughter generally arose from malignity of heart. Found was the word, a new discovery was started, and *Portia* was pronounced a favourer of mr. *Hobbes*.

As the *Cry* are sometimes to be silenced by the authority of an acknowledged author, so nothing puts them into a greater tumult, than the name of an unpopular writer. Without examining the truth therefore of their charge against *Portia,* they began a loud clamor against *Hobbists*; and declared that they fear'd all be to contaminated by conversing with so wicked a creature as a *Hobbist* .

*Portia*. There is no one who can more thoroughly dislike *Hobbes's* assertion, that all laughter arises from malignity, than myself; and little could I have expected to have been call'd upon to justify my sentiments on that head, when the very words which raised the clamor against me, might have shewn my real opposition to mr. *Hobbes* in that point. Children's laughing at the sight of a candle, or at any other object in which they take a delight, is a contradiction to mr. *Hobbes,* and a proof that laughter is caused by a certain degree of pleasure, for which we cannot give the reason why, and comes from as many various causes as are capable of raising that degree of pleasure. Had *Hobbes,* instead of saying *always,* declared that laughter *sometimes* arose from a malignity of heart, I should not have dissented from his opinion; for laughing as well as crying hath two very distinguishable marks, by which it reveals the inmost recesses of the heart. The ghastly smile, which *Milton* mentions in hell, can mean I think nothing but invidious sneering: and this invidious sneering is, I believe, as strong a proof of a diabolical disposition, as is the amiable benignant smile an indication of an heavenly temper of mind. Thus also is a passionate blubbering, when words are too weak to vent the inward rage of the soul, as strong a proof of what I beg leave to call the *turba* in the human breast, as are tears silently flowing from sorrow, at harsh unkindness, the signs of a meek and humble disposition.

Whether *Portia* was right or wrong in her last observation, was not once thought on by the *Cry*; for at the word *turba* they all started up at once, and wanted nothing but the assistance of cat−calls with their shrill and piercing notes, to express their dislike, in order to have been a true picture of a condemning play−house audience. *Portia* several times in the midst of their noise and uproar, began to speak, but found it as impossible to gain attention, as the player doth when the multitude are resolute to hear nothing explained. The *Cry* knew not clearly her meaning, yet dreaded to submit to an explanation from her, for fear of being forced to own their ignorance. They chose therefore what they thought the easiest and most pleasing method; namely, the abusing her for using words which had no sense nor signification, concluding with a general clamour against innovation and novelty. *Portia* did once or twice go so far as to utter the words, "I don't desire;" but the *Cry* without giving her leave to speak, insisted upon it, "that she did desire," although they knew not what.

But as it is the nature of the *Cry* to retire into themselves in sullen silence at the dreaded voice of *Una,* not out of respect, but in order to meditate some fallacy against her their greatest enemy; their tumult was soon appeased by *Una's* desiring *Portia* to explain what she intended to express by the word *turba* ; that if she used it any more in the remaining part of her story, no one might be ignorant of her meaning.

I don't desire, resumed *Portia,* to impose a new form on any one, without explanation: and if you, O *Una,* approve not the word *turba,* when I have declared what I would express by it, I never will use it any more.

*Una,* who always preserved her candor, and therefore never condemned without full hearing, made a motion to *Portia* to proceed with her explanation.

*Portia*. I want a single word, by which I can at once convey the idea of all the evil passions, such as wrath, hatred, malice, envy, &c. which sometimes altogether possess the human breast; and I think every common *latin* dictionary will shew how adequate the word *turba* is, to express this legion of evil spirits, without being at the trouble of a continual repetition of all their names. *Turba* means not only a multitude, but a multitude of various kinds: it signifies also trouble, bustle and confusion; and is therefore expressive, when apply'd to the mind, both of the cause and the effect; of the evil passions which are the disturbers of man; and of the very disturbance itself.

The *Cry* cared not to appear ignorant of what had been so clearly explained; but as they had still remaining so popular an objection, they fail'd not to renew their clamor against novelty and innovation.

*Portia*. I am very sensible, that loudly to clamor against novelty hath been a general practice for ages past. *Horace* bears testimony, that it was in use in his time: yet he very judiciously asks those cavillers at new words, what must be the date for calling things new? and declares that if an objection to novelty had been always thought

valid, no writings or expressions could ever have been transmitted from our ancestors to their posterity. He also by many beautiful illustrations, shews that the change of words, and the adapting them to new purposes, doth but make language follow the fate of all nature. He says, that it is, and always will be, lawful to produce new words, provided they are stampt with a known signature: bringing thus an apt metaphor from coining; for new money will be current whenever it is stampt with an image of acknowledged authority.

The *Cry,* when they have the least notion that they have really an advantage against their adversary, never use their common method of noise and uproar, but always speak by their orator *Duessa,* who was now deputed to ask *Portia* what was her acknowledged authority, for the word she was desirous of imposing on their understandings.

*Portia*. I confess I can produce none. But on the introduction of every new word, the judgment of mankind must determine whether it be adapted to express the strength of the idea for which it is formed, more adequately than any other before made use of.

If the judgment of mankind must determine; we are mankind, roared out the whole *Cry*; and were going unanimously to condemn *Portia's* word, had she not declared, that she believed on consideration, they would find that it needed no apology for its novelty, nor could she claim any merit from its application, in the sense she desired to use it; for perturbation was a common *English* word, made use of by all kinds of writers, and was indeed the acknowledged philosophic word amongst the stoics, to express the workings of the passions. Those therefore, she said, who understood the meaning of the word perturbation, or a perturb'd mind, could not, except through wilful ignorance, be at a loss for the full idea of what she intended to express, by a mind possessed of the *turba*.

The *Cry* now found themselves excessively puzzled, and the *turba* itself at that time made a strong division in their breasts, whether they should resolutely deny their being able to comprehend her new term, or whether they should contemn her for pretending to explain what was so very easy to be understood.

But whilst they were in doubt how to determine this mighty point, *Una* told *Portia,* with a smile, that she very well understood her meaning, and therefore desired her to indulge her inoffensive whim of using the word *turba,* whenever it would clearly express her ideas, and desired her also to go on with her account of the family of *Nicanor*.

The approbation given by *Una* to *Portia's* whim, stung the *Cry* to the very soul; and although they dared not contradict a positive command from *Una,* that *Portia* should be indulged in the future use of her new word, (which they well knew was very easy to be understood) yet the *turba* at that time so swell'd and turmoil'd their furious breasts, that in order to give them time for composing themselves into a more proper disposition for attention, *Una* for the present dismiss'd the assembly, and appointed another day, when she intreated *Portia* to appear again before them, in order to continue her narration.

## PROLOGUE TO Part the Second.

As we promised in our introduction to retain to ourselves the office of a chorus, in order to relate such matters as are necessary to be known, and "which we could not prevail on any of our actors to tell for us;" it appears in our judgment by no means impertinent to offer to our reader's view a retrospect of the family, with which our principal person is so intimately connected.

The matters of fact contained in the following history, our *Portia* could not with any propriety relate, had they been all within her knowledge: but concerning most of the circumstances she was perfectly ignorant, as her intimacy was with that part of *Nicanor's* family, whose dutiful regard for their father would have made them not thought it proper or decent to have given her such kind of information.

As this is all that we think expedient to be said on the introduction of the following story, we hope it will be as much as the reader will think necessary for his own satisfaction.

# PART the SECOND.

*Nicanor* was the only child of his parents, and left by them very young, with a tolerable easy independent fortune. He had a school education, and was intended by his guardians for some profession: but falling in love at eighteen, with a young lady whose fortune was very suitable to his own; instead of going from school to the university, he married before he was nineteen, and settled himself in the middling station of life; not intending any farther endeavour of encreasing his fortune: and by prudence and oeconomy he made a very genteel appearance, yet lived perfectly within the compass of his income.

For the first six years of their marriage, they had no children; but at the end of that time, his wife was brought to bed of a son, whom they call'd by the name of *Oliver*.

As the affections of some parents depend on meer accident, so the joy of being first a mother, made the mother of *Oliver* doat on him to such a degree, that neither she nor her husband had one minute's peace from the hour of his birth. The fear of losing him, and anxiety for his health, kept her eternally on the fret; and instead of possessing that chearful complacency which used to accompany all her words and actions, she was now so alter'd, that *Nicanor* no longer enjoy'd those pleasant meals and chearful hours, to which he had been so long accustomed: nor had his companions the same pleasure in being his guests, as they had formerly experienced.

*Oliver,* by his mother's ill−placed indulgence, grew every day more and more humoursome, 'till his health decay'd from his restlessness to find out his own will. His mother became perfectly miserable, from seeing that weakness in her son's body, which the weakness of her own mind had caused. *Nicanor* had too much understanding not to condemn her behaviour, and was grieved also to see her ill management of his son; but he was excessively fond of his wife, and had not resolution enough to contradict her in any thing.

In two years after the birth of *Oliver,* they had two children more, *Ferdinand* and *Cordelia,* who were twins. Their mother still continued so doatingly fond of her first−born son, and her whole thoughts were so taken up in humouring and indulging him, that she gave herself no farther trouble concerning the little *Ferdinand* and *Cordelia,* than was meerly necessary to keep them from falling into mischief. But *Nicanor,* as soon as they were old enough to learn, took care that they should be instructed in every thing which he thought necessary for them to know, and educated them in the manner that he judged most proper for their future good. Their mother, who saw that they were not humour'd so much as her *Oliver,* took it for granted (such was her notion of love) that *Nicanor* loved her favourite best; and therefore she was not displeased with the real care he took of his two younger childrens education.

When *Oliver* was fourteen, and the little *Ferdinand* and *Cordelia* twelve years old, their mother died. Altho' *Nicanor's* wife had married him for love, and he had been to her the best of husbands, yet was her separation from him wholly excluded from causing any of those agonies which she felt in her mind at the approach of death; for they were all caused by her being forced to part with her darling *Oliver*: and how did she lament the leaving him to what she called the wide world, without a mother's tender indulgence! for she thought it impossible for any one to take so much care of him, as she fancyed she had hitherto done.

The first and grand rule that the mother of *Oliver* had laid down was, that she had much rather her son in his future conduct should injure all with whom he might converse, than that he should suffer the least inconvenience himself from his own good−nature. Her strongest point in view was to make him cultivate suspicion and policy, which she called wisdom; and she therefore laid the foundation in his mind for such a fortification, and such a set of political maxims against being a dupe, that he suspected every good−natured action of another to arise from some cunning selfish motive. And as he imagined that all people were endeavouring to impose on him, even where they appeared to design him a kindness, he rather hated than loved his benefactors. His mother indeed had no farther intention than to preserve him from being imposed on: but when the subtile minds of youth are taught continually to look askance on all the words and actions of their best friends, to suspect cunning motives also at the bottom of every good−natured action, it will not be long before such minds will begin to take as great a delight in making dupes of others, as in avoiding to be made such themselves.

As soon as cunning is settled to be wisdom, how natural is the progress to make the utmost use of it in our power!

The wife of *Nicanor* was an excellent oeconomist, and by the influence she held over him, they had always lived perfectly within compass; but she knew the turn of *Nicanor's* mind, to be strongly bent towards profusion and expence; and altho' she doubted not his affection towards his children, yet she dreaded what might be the consequence, when she was gone, of his attachment to some other woman: therefore just before her death, she by intreaties prevailed on him, to settle out of his own power her whole fortune, which was twelve thousand pounds, on her children, and in the following manner; one half on her son *Oliver*, and the other half, which was three thousand pounds a piece, on *Ferdinand* and *Cordelia*.

*Nicanor* the more readily gave into this her request, which was indeed by no means unreasonable, as it freed his mind from future anxiety about his children; and left him his own estate free to engage himself in marriage, or to descend, should he make no second choice, on his eldest son.

Although *Nicanor* still loved his wife enough, strongly to feel her loss at first, yet was not his grief half equal to what it would have been, had he lost her before the birth of *Oliver*. He was always sensible of his own weakness, in not being able to contradict her, while she was destroying her own peace and her son's welfare: but when he had for some time given way to it, he could not then alter his behaviour without some degree of harshness, which it was impossible for him to exert toward a woman, who was the object of his fondness. As he saw therefore that his misery was inevitable, either from the death of her favourite child, which from the weakness of his body was an event not unlikely, or from his life, which by her management and his own disposition was likely to be the plague and torment of all around him, he could not long lament a person's leaving this world, whose portion in it was likely to be only sorrow and vexation of spirit.

*Nicanor* on the death of his wife, took proper care of the education of all his children: for having real good sense, he could govern any thing but his own passions. And so great indeed was his love of pleasure and aversion to pain, that there were no lengths he would not go, either to attain the former, or to avoid the smallest degree of the latter for the present moment.

Although *Oliver* was now fourteen years old, and *Ferdinand* and *Cordelia* but twelve, yet was *Ferdinand* and his little sister so much forwarder than their brother in the knowledge attainable by their years, that any person who had heard them all talking in another room, would have been persuaded that the words uttered by *Oliver* were spoken by the youngest child in the company.

*Nicanor* having lived a whole year in the country after his wife's death, amusing himself with the care and instruction of his children, now met with a gentleman who was very desirous that he would accompany him in the progress he intended to make, not only through all *Europe*, but into *Egypt* also.

This proposal was very agreeable to *Nicanor*, as he had at this time no immediate intentions of settling again in marriage, and his sons also were of a proper age to be sent to a public school. Having fixed them therefore at *Eton*, he placed his daughter under the care of an aunt, her mother's sister, who lived about five and twenty miles from *London*, was a widow with a moderate income, and every way qualified for such a charge. All things being thus fixed perfectly to his satisfaction, he set out with his friend for *Holland*, which was the first of their intended tour.

The life which the two boys led at school was as follows.

*Oliver* every day improved in his suspicious maxims. He led his life in defending himself against imaginary enemies; for, as he thought all his school−fellows were so wise as to endeavour to impose on him, he was resolved not to be outdone in wisdom, and played all the most artful cunning tricks he could invent. However as he was not quite a master of *Machiavel*, he was often found out, brought to shame, and sometimes he suffered punishment. Yet this only doubled his assiduity for spite and mischief, and made him exert his utmost cunning to prevent such discoveries.

The innocent *Ferdinand* improved in learning surprisingly for his age, and was beloved by all his companions, whose love was worth obtaining; that is to say, by all who were capable of having an affection for the only true object of love. But *Oliver* made him the object of his hatred; for he envied him, and could not bear the praises which his brother received for his learning, altho' he had neither attention or industry enough to attain to it himself. Yet did *Ferdinand* endeavour to endear himself to his brother, by every act of kindness and friendship that was in his power. But nothing can be a stronger picture of the life which *Oliver* lived with his companions, and the manner in which he received kindness, than a cat when 'tis offered any food. The suspicious animal first smells to it, then starts back several times, and seems to be thus ruminating with itself: "Man is a mischievous

animal; for men betray and murder one another. 'Tis true, I have from this particular man often received great benefits; but the wise are cautious." Exulting therefore in her own wisdom, puss again smells to the offered meat, and having by her sagacious nose found it out to be wholesome food and not poison, she darts out her offensive weapons, snatches it away with her claws, and often draws blood from the hand of her benefactor. A stronger picture of the behaviour of *Oliver* than is shewn by this ungrateful cat it is impossible to draw; and yet how would he and all such characters burst with rage, in the midst of their fancy'd wisdom, if they thought any one dared to make such a comparison!

Five years being expired, *Nicanor* returned to *England*. He found his daughter now nineteen, improved equal to the expectations which her earlier years had given him; for 'tis impossible to form any thing more amiable than was the gentle *Cordelia*.

*Oliver* had left school two years, and had been all that time in a gentleman's family, a distant relation of *Nicanor's*, in the country. *Ferdinand* also had just left *Eton*, and was in the same house with his brother. *Nicanor* whilst he was abroad had given a loose to his natural disposition, had spared no expence in any thing that was for his pleasure or amusement, and had indeed greatly lessened his circumstances; but this, as his children were tolerably provided for, did not excessively concern him. His intention was to settle in the country, to take his daughter home to him, and to make also a home to his sons, in the vacation of any business or profession they might chuse to follow. But whilst he stay'd in *London* to settle his affairs, an accident happened which changed all his purposes, and was indeed the cause of all the future misfortunes of his family. He became acquainted with a lady whose name was *Cylinda*, and grew so enamoured of her person and charms, that he could not possibly break from her. *Nicanor* was now turned of forty−seven years old, but he had all the cheerfulness and spriteliness of youth without its levity. He had a very good natural understanding, improved by every kind of polite literature and travel, which made him a most agreeable companion to such a woman as *Cylinda* . As she took no pains to disguise the real pleasure she found in his conversation, he had no doubt but his proposal of marriage (the only proposal he intended to make) would be readily accepted; but to his great surprize, the first time he addressed her on that subject, she forbad him positively ever to mention it again, and with so serious an air, that, as he was deeply in love with her, he conversed with her some time without having courage enough to risque her displeasure by disobeying her commands. But finding that, notwithstanding her prohibition to him from mentioning marriage, she conversed with him with as much freedom as ever, and with rather more appearance of liking; he imputed her first refusal to a resolution of not yielding the first time she was asked: he therefore mustered up courage once more to repeat to her his offer of marriage. On this *Cylinda* with a gravity and reserve unusual to her, and with a steadiness in her countenance, which shew'd her perfectly in earnest, replied to his proposal in these words: "*Nicanor*, I have great cause to be displeased with you, for suspecting that in my refusal of marriage I was playing the common trick of refusing, only to be more earnestly intreated; when you know me better, you will find how much I despise such paltry arts. I now once more solemnly declare to you, that my resolution is unalterably fixed never to marry: and unless you will promise never more even to think of matrimony, this is the last day of our acquaintance. A continuance of my friendship with you is only on those conditions."

*Nicanor*, who but the moment before had no one image in his head but marriage, now forgot he had ever heard of such a connexion; and all other passions vanished from his breast, but his fear of losing the acquaintance of *Cylinda*. He could only therefore utter these words: "On any conditions, on any conditions!"

*Cylinda* saw his confusion; and as she had frowned him into terror, she now smiled him into peace, and left him to compose himself, saying, "We are still friends, *Nicanor*; but remember the conditions, from which I am determined never to recede."

*Cylinda's* smile when she quitted the room left *Nicanor* almost as well pleased as if she had granted his request: for the dread of losing her acquaintance, which her menace had raised in his mind, being now banished, joy naturally took its place; and he was some time before he could make any reflexions on her uncommon conduct.

*Nicanor* was not of a temper to quit the pursuit of any pleasure, and especially where his whole heart and inclinations were so engaged, as in the enjoyment of *Cylinda's* company; and it would be needless to say of a man so agreeable as *Nicanor* could make himself, and of a woman of the turn we have described *Cylinda*, that they quitted not each other's company; nor did the lady by any means recede from her declarations against the chains of marriage. *Cylinda* continued in her own lodgings, and *Nicanor* quitting his design of going into the country,

took a small house in town; for they were both agreed in the resolution of keeping the appearance at least of separate houses. The lady was desirous of keeping that reputation which she had hitherto preserved; and *Nicanor* being the father of a family grown to men and women's estate, cared not publickly to lead a life, which however right he pleased to think it by his own rule of conscience, he should have been ashamed of towards his own children.

*Nicanor* called himself a christian, and perhaps thought himself so; for he had not professed atheism or deism; yet had it never entered into his head to obey the laws of God farther than he himself judged those commands to be moral; and as to the manner in which he lived with *Cylinda*, he thought as it was injurious to no one, and as they pleased themselves, it could not possibly be any crime. He had indeed in his first wife's time, whilst he was fond of her and had no inclination to be inconstant to her, look'd with a severe eye on all women, who by any means had been betrayed by men; but then it was because he looked on such women to be profligate; for he had no notion that any woman like *Cylinda*, from the beauty of morality, from the precepts of philosophy, or (what was to him a more pleasing thought) from a fix'd affection, could be constant to one man without the ties of matrimony. This, joined to the beauty of her person, and the spriteliness of her conversation, so inslaved him in his affections to her, that, could all the kingdoms of the earth have been put in the balance against his living with her, like *Mark Antony* he would have given them up, and perished for the sake of a smile from his beloved *Cylinda*.

Notwithstanding *Nicanor* had persuaded himself, that there was neither crime nor shame in his manner of life, yet he could not bear the thought of his children's considering him at that age as a man of intrigue, without a secret pain; and the moment any thought gave *Nicanor* pain, he could not rest till he had by some means removed it. His daughter *Cordelia* was happily placed with her aunt, and for letting her remain there he had many obvious excuses; but the presence of his sons were thoroughly troublesome and irksome to him. They were now at a time of life to have been placed in some profession to have increased that fortune, which, altho' a very good foundation for any man to set out upon, and for the want of which many a man hath been kept his whole life at the bottom of a profession, to which he would have been an ornament if placed at the head, yet was far from an ample provision for idleness and independence. This *Nicanor* knew perfectly well; and these thoughts would his fatherly affection for his sons have raised in his mind, had not that prevailing wish of his heart, his sons absence, borne down all other considerations, and he was resolved at all events to send them out of *England*. Reading them a long lecture therefore on the advantages of seeing foreign countries, he strongly advised them, with as much oeconomy as their fortunes would afford, to make the tour of *Europe*.

As soon as he had got rid of his sons, he gave a loose to his enjoying himself with the company of a woman, who, to say the truth, was by the force of beauty, wit, and vivacity, one of the most agreeable companions that 'tis possible for a pleasure−loving man to form. She had nothing profligate in her behaviour, was not vainly extravagant, and had an easy independent fortune of her own: so that one of those evils which too generally attend such an attachment, namely, the ruin of a man and his whole family, need not have been the consequence of his amour, had not *Nicanor*, intoxicated by his own passions, acted little otherwise than as a downright madman, and wrapped up in luxurious enjoyments, lost all sense, feeling, and regard for any human creature but himself, or his *Cylinda*. The little remainder of his own fortune which he brought from abroad, he soon ran through, that is, he so far loaded an estate, which was not settled on his children, with mortgages, that it would bear no more.

*Nicanor* could not be so blind to outward circumstances, as not to find himself reduced to the necessity of holding his hand in those superfluous expences, which he had lavish'd away in costly entertainments, and profuse presents to his beloved *Cylinda*. This was a strong baulk to his pleasures: but when he found also that his circumstances were so desperate, that he could not well any longer conceal the truth from his mistress, his pain on that thought was almost intolerable. Then the consequence which must attend such a declaration (had he resolution enough to make it) being no other than his being kept by the bounty of *Cylinda*, gave such a twinge to his pride, that the world might, if in his power, have fallen a sacrifice, rather than he would have submitted to what appear'd to him so very horrible. To borrow another farthing of strangers, his credit would not support: to ask his sons for money was impossible, for they were out of *England*: to take his daughter's fortune! the first thought of it excessively shock'd him, and he fancied that he would sooner suffer any misery, than by his extravagance expose a beloved daughter to those many insults, to which youth and beauty in distress of circumstances are liable. Now did his affection for his daughter make him in imagination run over all her past

actions; and with pleasure did he reflect on those numberless amiable qualities which she possessed. Her filial duty, her gentleness of mind, and a noble generosity of disposition, which he had ever observed in her from her childhood, rose full in his view; but on those very amiable qualities a thought unluckily struck him, that she could not surely refuse to her father in distress some part of her fortune, which also he flattered himself he might on the sale of his estate find himself inabled to repay. With these thoughts floating in his mind, hardly indeed knowing his own intentions, he went into the country to make a visit to his sister and his daughter *Cordelia*.

His sister was abroad, and he found his daughter alone. Having something labouring in his breast, which he was in doubt whether to utter or conceal, he appeared more thoughtful than usual; the innocent *Cordelia* to please and amuse him, entertained him with as chearful prattle as she could collect; and having a genius, and a love to painting, she told her father that she begged him to accept a small performance of her art in that way; and taking it out of her pocket−book, she gave him a picture in water−colours, which she had copied from a fine original of *Rosa Alba,* and the subject was what is called the *Roman Charity,* that is, the figure of a beautiful young woman, who visiting her father in prison, where he was condemn'd to be starved to death, gave him from her own breast a daily support. *Nicanor* struck with the subject, suddenly burst into tears. *Cordelia* had too much tender sagacity not instantly to guess the cause of his tears. And, having intreated his pardon for mentioning what he had never yet granted her permission to discourse on, she without the least hesitation begged him to relieve any distress of circumstances, (which her fears told her he might labour under) by taking any part, or the whole of that fortune which was call'd hers, and which she considered as of right due to his necessities. Overcome for the present with his daughter's excessive goodness, he cryed out, God forbid, my child, that I should cruelly be the destruction of that innocence, which I am by so many ties bound to protect! But seeing his sister advancing towards them, be begged *Cordelia* to hide the concern which this conversation had occasion'd, and to conceal from her aunt what had passed between them; and after staying one night, he returned the next day to *London*.

On his return to town, return'd also his perplexities. No money was to be had, and therefore to him no pleasure. He sat himself down at last in order to write to his sons, and to tell them that a particular pressing occasion for money having happened, he begged they would supply him with what he wanted. This letter when he had finished, and thoroughly considered on the contents, made him appear very low in his own eyes. He found an absolute impossibility of declaring to his sons the use for which he wanted this money, namely, revelling in a way of life which he dared not to avow; and then the thought of his false pretences to borrow their money being ever discovered, and how mean he must appear before them on the discovery, hurt him too much even in apprehension. Yet all these difficulties, rather than not obtain what he so much wanted, would, we doubt not, have been got over, had not a readier way stole on his imagination. From his daughter he feared no prying enquiries into his manner of life; from her gentleness he feared no reproaches, not even by her looks; and from her generosity a door was opened to him for an easy supply. Suppressing therefore all farther intruding thoughts about her future welfare, he took the liberty she had given him of using (one hundred pounds after another) as much of her fortune as was necessary to his pleasures. Altho' *Nicanor* in this manner lessen'd his daughter's fortune from three thousand to fifteen hundred pounds, yet on every sum he took did he make himself believe that it was the very last that he would touch for his own use; and after having lived on in this manner four years with *Cylinda,* and now every day expecting his sons at home, he had just brought himself as he thought to a resolution of declaring the whole truth to *Cylinda,* of telling her both his circumstances and family, which he had hitherto with the utmost reserve concealed, when an accident happened which overthrew all his resolutions, and drove him into a worse situation than he ever imagined himself in before. For *Cylinda* acquainted him with her having by the roguery of her agent lost her whole fortune, and shewed him at the same time a letter which threatened her with being immediately arrested, unless she paid the sum of a thousand pounds, which she confessed was due by a bond sign'd and seal'd under her own hand. So extravagant was *Nicanor's* passion for *Cylinda,* that the least image of any harm or inconvenience happening to her, made him like a madman. He knew his own inability to help her; but to declare it at such a time when he had hitherto appear'd to her rather in the light of a man of great affluence, must seem so like a poor evasion to get off when he was really wanted, that he could not bear the thought. He knew, that should he suffer her once to be arrested, he had no way to release her but by paying down the money; for 'twas not likely, should he offer it, that his bail would be taken for such a sum, at least without some person of known fortune to join with him; and where to find such a person was harder than to find the money. There was a time indeed when *Nicanor* had several friends who would have been bail with him or for him, on his bare word of

payment only, for twice that sum, as he was then held strictly to be a man of honour; but unluckily that was at a time when it was next to impossible that he should ask any one to shew to him such an act of friendship. It could hardly at present be said that he had any acquaintance with his friends; for by a kind of divining art, (like rats who leave a ship that is sinking) they had for some time foreseen that *Nicanor's* ruin was at hand, and therefore by dropping any converse with him, they very good−naturedly spared themselves the trouble of beholding so melancholy an event.

As paying the money therefore was the only method which to *Nicanor* appeared possible, for the keeping his beloved mistress out of prison (a thought which shock'd him more than would the death of all his family) he at once determined that it was better to prevent such a disaster, than to heal the blow after it was given.

His mind was too full of these various sensations, to suffer him to say scarcely any thing to *Cylinda* on the unlucky news she had told him with an apparent abruptness; therefore, after about an hour's silence, he left her, and said he would return to her with the money in a few hours time.

What enabled him to make such a promise was, that he that very day expected his daughter in town to pay him a visit. When he came home to his own house, and on enquiry found that *Cordelia* was not arrived, it is impossible to describe the tumultuous anxiety of his mind. He flew home with eager haste to meet his daughter, in order to have the means of saving his *Cylinda* from what he thought perdition. But having time for reflexion, he began to rejoice that *Cordelia's* absence prevented him from breaking the promise he had made to himself, of touching no more of her money. On this he sat down eagerly to write to his sons; for *Cylinda's* distress was still uppermost, enough to make him bent on relieving it: but no sooner was such a letter begun, than recollecting the great distance they were at, his fancy was again haunted with the frightful picture of *Cylinda's* being arrested before he could receive any answer. Then did his daughter again return to his thoughts, and he hardly knew whether he most wished or feared her coming into his house. In this excessive struggle in his mind, shame so prevailed, that he could not bear the thoughts of seeing *Cordelia's* face; he therefore sat down, and in a tremor, in which he could hardly hold his pen, wrote a letter, which he intended to leave for her against she came, and to fly to some place or other to avoid her sight. He was in such a hurry to get over the sum which he wanted, that instead of writing it in words at length, he set it down in figures; and not only so, but in his hurry he omitted one of the cyphers, and instead of desiring her to take up for him 1000 *l.* he said he had occasion for 100*l.* He had written no farther of his letter than mentioning the sum, when *Cordelia* entered the room, hastening with joy to have her father's blessing. *Nicanor's* countenance at that instant very little indicated the pleasure which might naturally be expected in any father, on seeing such a daughter; but on the contrary, from the consciousness of what he was doing, and from vexation at being thus surprised into an interview which he intended to avoid, his eyes flash'd with a mixture of fear and anger.

*Cordelia*, shock'd at so unexpected a reception from her father, fearing that he was for some reason highly displeased with her, stood like one astonish'd. At last, with a faultering voice, she said, "I hope, Sir, I have by no inadvertent step offended." Here *Nicanor* interrupting her, took hold of her hand, and reply'd, "'Tis impossible, I think, for the image of offence, and my *Cordelia*, ever to arise together in my mind; I was only vexed, my child, at an accident which hath happened. My best friend is arrested on my account, and must go to prison unless I can supply a timely relief. The vexation which I felt at being obliged to take any more of your fortune, was the cause of that anxiety which you mistook for anger. I was just writing a letter to you, *Cordelia*." Not being able to proceed any farther, he gave the letter which he had begun into his daughter's hand; which no sooner did *Cordelia* receive, than a sudden joy flush'd into her countenance, to find that her father's anxiety arose from no other cause than what was in her power to relieve.

The tender heart of *Cordelia* could not see in distress any one she loved, without using any means in her power for their relief, without considering also by what means that distress arose. The imprudence of her father, and his attachment to *Cylinda*, had been for some time no secret to *Cordelia*.

For there was a lady, who imagining *Nicanor* a rich prize, had laid forth all her allurements to engage him in marriage; not for any real liking, but with a prudent intention of prevailing with him, under the sanction of the law, to pillage as much as possible from his children, in order to heal her own broken fortunes. As soon as she found the badness of his circumstances, she rejoiced in her escape: but when she heard *Nicanor* had a mistress in private, and fear'd that her allurements had failed from his attachment to some other more powerful charms, her jealous rage made her use all manner of dirty means to pry into this secret amour. And having from the servants

fished out the real truth, namely, that *Cylinda* was a woman of an independent fortune, of such decency of behaviour that the very people of the house could not tell whether *Nicanor's* visits meant more than pure friendship; yet her zeal for *Nicanor's* poor children made her tell *Cordelia*, that her father was cruelly ruining them all, by supporting an extravagant ugly baggage, who she doubted not would impoverish him, so as to bring him to a goal; and 'twas well if she did not excite him to some wicked deed, which would bring him to the gallows. *Cordelia* could not stop the first volley of her tongue; but she would never afterwards suffer either her or any one else to mention it any more, as hearing such tales was, in her opinion, a mark of disrepect to her father. *Cordelia* had none of the water of *Lethe* to drive this knowledge from her breast, and her father's imprudence and misfortunes fill'd her heart with secret sorrow; yet the least hint of such her knowledge never dropp'd from her tongue; nor did she, for her own convenience, use that common method of stifling her concern for his necessities, by reflecting on the imprudent measures from whence they arose. She begg'd her father to have no fears on her account, but if he wanted it, that he would take all that remain'd of her fortune, for she looked upon it as his own; and she could never do any thing with it, which could give her greater happiness than his making use of it.

*Nicanor* charged her on his blessing to take up no more than he had mention'd in his letter; and the same reason which had made him before mistaken in the setting down the sum, made him now omit a repetition of what he could but just indure to think on. *Cordelia* made no reply; for as she did not think of letting her father have this money by way of gift, she could not talk the language of bestowing, so much as to press him to accept of more than he wanted. The image of her own property was not uppermost in her thoughts; she look'd on what she was doing as an act of duty; and therefore chearfully hasten'd to obey her father's commands.

As soon as *Cordelia* was gone to her banker's to fetch the money, *Nicanor* was again seized with one of those violent struggles in the mind which is not far from temporary distraction. He left his own house, intending to fly to *Cylinda*, but considering that he had nothing more to say than to renew the promise he had before made of bringing her the money, and finding his mind too much ruffled to enjoy any chearful pleasure, like a wandering ghost he traversed the streets from one end of the town to the other, hardly knowing what he did, or where he went; sometimes resolving yet to drop his purpose of thus robbing his daughter, yet dreading to see *Cylinda's* face with such shame as disappointment would bring; more dreading to encounter the tender looks of his gentle *Cordelia*; and in this agony of mind did he wander about for near five hours, till recollecting that his daughter and his servants would think him lost, or some harm come to him, he ventured home.

As soon as he entered his house, his servant told him that his daughter *Cordelia* was gone out of town, and had left a letter for him. The occasion of which was as follows.

*Cordelia* came to town to visit her father, which he permitted her to do as often as she pleased, and was as usual to have returned into the country the next morning: but when she came back from her banker's, she found at her father's house a messenger, who was come from her aunt to beg her immediate return, if she ever wished to see her alive, for she had been taken violently ill just after *Cordelia* left her. *Cordelia* waited some time in hopes of her father's coming home; but as every minute seemed an hour from her impatience to be with her aunt, who was not less dear to her than if she had been her mother; she wrote a letter, begging her father to excuse her in not waiting for his return, and in the letter she enclosed a bank note for a hundred pounds, which she imagined was the sum he had desired of her.

When *Nicanor* opened the letter, and saw a bank note, notwithstanding the struggle he had before felt, an unbounded joy flow'd in upon his mind, from reflecting on the pleasure with which he should now fly to his *Cylinda*; his absence from whom had in reality given him more than half the pain he had indured: but on perceiving the sum to be one hundred instead of one thousand pounds, his disappointment made him give way to the utmost rage against the poor innocent cause of that disappointment. As he could not know the mistake which he himself had made, he began to accuse *Cordelia* with having feign'd this sickness of her aunt's in order to avoid his sight, after she had been guilty of so paltry a trick as putting him off with one hundred instead of a thousand pounds. The long experience he had had of *Cordelia's* being incapable of such an action, had no chance for being thought of in her favour: for when once a man whose sole pursuit is his own indulgence, meets with any baulk to his pleasures, his hatred rises against every such obstacle to his favourite pursuit. Besides, another very unfortunate circumstance for poor *Cordelia* was, that he could not take the blame from her without throwing it on a person much dearer to him, namely, himself; for granting it to be no trick and contrivance, but only a mistake; if it was not hers, it was his own, which he could by no means admit to be possible. And whilst he could suppose

her guilty even of such a mistake, he at the same time supposed her void of that earnestness to serve him, which she had in reality always shewn. It was with no very favourable thoughts towards his daughter then, that he determined to post down after her with the utmost speed, to get the mistake rectified. He wrote a note and sent it directly to *Cylinda,* to acquaint her that a little accident had happened to prevent his return so soon as he intended, but before the evening was over he would certainly bring her the money.

But as it once again, before he set out, came into his head, that this might be no mistake, but that his daughter might be, perhaps, determined to hold her hand, and would not let him have the sum he required; he was resolved not to see *Cylinda's* face without the money: and left word therefore with his servant, that he did not know when he should return home. For he was indeed determined in his mind, if his daughter disappointed him, to go directly abroad to his sons; and if baulk'd in his expectations there, never to return to *England* any more.

*Nicanor's* note to *Cylinda,* which promised his return to her that evening, was perfectly inconsistent with what he told his own servant, of not knowing when he should return: but his reason for writing such a note to *Cylinda* was, first because he could not bear to give her the pain of even the least prospect of a disappointment; and besides, that he made no doubt of overtaking *Cordelia* before she was gone many miles, imagining his own ardent wishes would outfly every thing. But *Cordelia's* anxious desire to see her kind relation, outflew his utmost speed, and she arrived at her aunt's house about an hour after sun−set, and to her great joy found her in a manner in perfect health: for her complaint was indeed a kind of fit or falling sickness, to which she was subject, and which as soon as it went off, left her near as well as before she was taken. They had scarcely supped, when they were excessively surprised by the arrival of *Nicanor,* who being told on enquiring for his sister, that she was very well, suffered all his suspicions against his daughter to return; and on entering the room, he commanded *Cordelia* to attend him immediately to *London*. Her aunt, astonished at *Nicanor's* wild behaviour, begged to know what had happened which could occasion such a command, and intreated him at least to delay his journey till the next morning, if it was but in pity to her niece who had just come off such a journey, and could scarcely undertake such a fatigue as would be an immediate return to *London*. He answered his sister, with no great mildness, that he should not publish his private affairs to all the world; and that he thought himself the best judge what was fit for his own daughter to do; but if she chose not to obey his commands, as she knew she was independent, he would instantly return without her.

Poor *Cordelia* hesitated not a moment on obeying her father's commands; but was excessively grieved to see him speak with a sternness with which he was unaccustomed to treat her, and for which she could not in the least guess the cause.

As soon as *Nicanor* and *Cordelia* were driven from the door, the former began (not without a great deal of roughness) to mention the disappointment he had met with from her note of a hundred pounds, which he had in his letter desired might be a thousand. *Cordelia* assured him that one hundred was all that he had mentioned; for it was with the utmost care she attended to the sum, that being the principal thing in the letter. She was very sorry, she said, that she had no method of clearing her innocence but by the most sincere protestations; for she confess'd she had burn'd his letter as soon as she had comply'd with its contents.

But unlucky was it for poor *Cordelia,* that from her own generosity in putting it out of the power of chance to discover what had pass'd only between herself and her father, (which was her true motive for burning his letter) she was look'd on as the cause of every uneasy hour pass'd by that mistaken, infatuated, may it not be said ungrateful father, to the end of his life.

*Nicanor* was at last convinced that his daughter meant not to disappoint him; but that the mistake was her's and not his own, he was resolutely bent to believe. However, as he now view'd his horses heads moving towards *London,* a circumstance which gave him no small pleasure, his wrath was somewhat abated; and after condemning *Cordelia* for a carelessness, which he persisted in laying at her door, he told her he could not long be angry with any one for a fault, where there was in the bottom no ill intention.

O generous *Nicanor*! and happy *Cordelia*! to have a father who could forgive a fault, of which her love to him made her utterly incapable!

But now an accident happened, that moved in *Nicanor* some few of those fatherly sparks of affection, which the reader may think had for some time been pretty much stifled.

It was a fine moon−shine night, and they were got on their journey about eighteen miles; when, entering into a town within twelve miles of *London,* the post−boy, either through carelessness or the deceitful light of the moon,

ran the chaise up upon a bank, and overturn'd them with such violence, that *Cordelia* received such a blow on her head, as entirely stunn'd her senses, and *Nicanor* almost lost his own, with the dreadful apprehensions that she was bereft of life.

He carried her in his arms into the middle of the town, roused the people at one of the inns, and on finding both warmth and breath in his unhappy daughter, they got a surgeon to let her blood, which restored her again to some degree of life. They then put her into a warm bed, and *Nicanor* sat by her bed−side in such agonies, considering the real occasion of the accident, that is easier to be imagined than express'd.

After some hours of sound sleep, she found herself greatly refresh'd, but by no means able to pursue her journey. Nor had *Nicanor* so far lost all feeling or tenderness, as not to remain with her all that day and the next night; when the following day before noon, she found herself so well, that she begg'd to accompany her father, as he first intended, to *London*.

As soon as they arrived in town, *Cordelia* being tolerably well recover'd, hastened to rectify the mistake which had given her father so much uneasiness. And *Nicanor,* fearing that from his absence what he intended to prevent might have happened to his *Cylinda,* and that more therefore than the bare sum might be necessary, bad his daughter take up twelve hundred, instead of a thousand pounds. As soon as this money was in his possession, the swiftness of thought would scarcely paint the speed with which he flew to *Cylinda's* lodgings. But what was his surprise when the woman of the house told him that the lady had paid off her lodgings and was gone the evening before, without leaving any word to what place she was removed, only declaring that she should return thither no more!

Gone! (said *Nicanor*) impossible! How? when? whither? and with whom did she go?

She went (reply'd the woman) last night, sir, as I have already told you, and in a coach with a gentleman: but where she is gone, no−body in this house knows, I believe, but her own maid, whom she bid to follow her as soon as she had pack'd up all her things.

Where is her maid? cry'd *Nicanor*; let me speak to her this moment.

Indeed, sir, answers the landlady, you are unluckily a quarter of an hour too late even for that; for it was not longer ago that the maid in a hackney coach drove from the door, and bid the coachman go to the top of the street, and then she would tell him whither he was to carry her.

*Nicanor's* fears were now alarm'd to the utmost; for he doubted not but the lawyer had put his threat of an arrest in execution. —Gone! (therefore repeated he) and with some men! Pray, madam, how look'd the barbarous ruffians that forced the poor lady. from your house?

I believe, sir, reply'd the good woman, you very much mistake the case: I mention'd no more than one man, and such indeed I can scarcely call him, for his blooming cheeks and fair complexion vied with even those of the lady herself. I never in my life beheld so sweet a figure; he was exactly, sir, like that picture of *Adonis,* which you presented the lady *Cylinda* to hang in her bed−chamber. Damnation! cry'd *Nicanor* (for he could hardly contain himself within any bounds) I wanted not to hear a fine description, woman; I asked if you knew the gentleman, in hopes to trace the lady, for I have business to communicate to her of the utmost importance; and I am certain she must leave some message for me, in case I should call after she was gone.

Upon the word of an honest woman, sir, said the woman of the house, the lady left no such message, but rather seemed to take the utmost precautions, as did her servant after her, to avoid being traced.

Did not the man look like a lawyer? said *Nicanor*; are you sure he used no threats?

Whether from a good−natured desire of removing those fears which *Nicanor's* expressions pretty plainly shewed, or whether from the malicious pleasure some few people take in plaguing their fellow−creatures, we pretend not to declare; for matters of fact are at present chiefly our view: but the landlady left nothing unsaid, which might convince *Nicanor* that the lady went off with the prettiest young fellow she ever beheld, and perfectly voluntarily. Her discourse failed not indeed thoroughly to remove *Nicanor's* first fear; but placed in its room such another, or rather such a certainty, as made him return in such a disposition of mind, that like the mighty monarch in the tragedy of *Tom Thumb,* he would gladly have ordered the prisons to be shut up, *&c.* and the school−masters severely to have whipped all their boys.

*Nicanor,* notwithstanding he had good reason to believe that *Cylinda* desired not to be followed, went to every place where he could imagine it possible to hear any news of her; but all in vain: and almost mad with disappointment that *Cylinda* was gone, he returned at past twelve at night to his own house. *Cordelia* was to set

out very early the next morning for her aunt's in the country, much before *Nicanor's* time of rising. She sat up therefore waiting for his coming home, hoping now all mistakes were rectify'd, that she should, with an indulgence and good−humour, which she had sometimes experienced from him, receive her father's blessing. But the rage within *Nicanor's* mind must have some vent; and the dutiful innocent *Cordelia* was the only object in his way, on whom he could bestow it. On his entering the room, *Cordelia* grieved still to see a cloud upon his brow, his cheeks also as pale almost as death itself, asked him with anxious concern if he was not well: he answered, that health was the least of his concern, but he could only say that he was ruined and undone, for the greatest misfortune in the world had befallen him; and her careless and silly mistakes were the cause of it. —She humbly begged to know what misfortune had befallen him. On which he said, he supposed she wanted to sift out his affairs, in order to upbraid him for his conduct, or perhaps to talk of it to her companions. *Cordelia* took no notice of so cruel and unjust a suspicion, the harshness of which went to her very soul, but still continued to entreat her father to let her know, if 'twas in her power by any labour, by any sufferings, to remove his great anxiety. To this he only answered, that he wanted no more of her management; and if he had not been fool enough to have depended upon her, he had been now a happy man. —*Cordelia* finding every thing she said, or could say, thus unkindly misinterpreted; and having no hopes of being able by the softest and gentlest words to give any pleasure to her father, remained some time in silent sorrow; a tear now and then stealing from her eyes without her consent, which she contrived so to wipe off, that *Nicanor* should not see she wept: for it had been long her custom, whatever befell her, to be all chearfulness before her father, as she knew her chearfulness always gave him pleasure. But little necessity was there at present for poor *Cordelia's* caution; as *Nicanor* was in such a disposition of mind, that her chearfulness would have been by him called impertiment mirth; and from her tender tears of sorrow she would have been accused of blubbering, from the pride and stubbornness of her heart. The result was, that with a heavy heart at seeing her father's grief and displeasure, she went out of town the next morning as she intended; nor did *Nicanor* in the least think of detaining her, for her absence was what he at present most wanted, in order to be at liberty to follow his own schemes and inventions. The money which he had taken up to secure *Cylinda,* as he imagined, from being forcibly taken from him to a prison, he now employed in the most assiduous search to recover her once more to his acquaintance: for the thought that she had willingly deserted him, was too painful for him often to admit it into his bosom; but whenever in its turn it found a place there, then did he storm and rave at the levity and inconstancy of women; all the general invectives that ever were written against them would he repeat; and whenever he had worked himself into a general rage against the whole sex, poor *Cordelia* never failed of coming in for a large share of that anger; as her supposed mistake was to him the only cause of all the uneasiness he felt. Yet now and then a thought would struggle to arise in his mind, tending to shew him that his own selfish extravagance, with an indulgence of a passion unbefitting a man of his years with such a family, was the true cause of all his misfortunes; nay more, that his anger to *Cordelia,* supposing the mistake hers, was perfectly cruel and unreasonable: but this like all other struggles gave him great pain, and then was treated as he would all pain, driven off with the utmost speed. *Nicanor* had not resolution enough to suffer a moment's uneasiness that he could avoid; and therefore instead of putting himself into the hands of that skilful surgeon *Reason* to probe his wounds to the bottom, he always employed that quack *Fallacy* to plaister them over at the top, and left the rotten part at the bottom to shift for itself.

Two months were employed in his search after *Cylinda,* but to no purpose. Messengers after messengers were sent to all parts of *England,* and no expence did he spare in this most vain and trifling of all his foolish extravagances. Having thus squandered away great part of the money he had last taken up; and from his despair of recovering *Cylinda* beginning to turn his reflexion a little on his future means of subsistence, a thought struck him which is too apt to present itself to men in his desperate situation, and this was no other than a gaming table. The mortgage on his estate for want of interest being paid was foreclosed; and so far was he from receiving any overplus (with which he had a long time flattered his hopes, and made himself believe that he should replace his daughter's fortune) that he was a thousand pounds in debt. The money remaining out of the twelve hundred pounds was not half equal to the discharging this debt; and to take the very small remainder in his daughter's hands, he could not now think of, especially as it would have been still insufficient for his purpose. He knew very well that his sister's income was only for life, and therefore on her death *Cordelia* would be destitute of support. Altho' his daughter held not the same place in his affection as before that unlucky mistake of his, which obstinately passed in his mind for hers, yet could he not well bear the thought of a young woman, and so

handsome a young woman as *Cordelia,* being thrown in such a manner on the world without horror; and altho' his affection was subsided, yet his pride was piqued at the prospect of his own daughter's being forced into a servile situation, or tempted to infamy.

To the gaming table therefore he flies, by which he had already in his vain imagination retrieved all the errors of his life, and gained an ample provision for himself and family. —The event is too common, too certain, as he unhappily fell amongst a set of sharpers, to need being related.

When he was thus reduced to the last shilling he had in the world, all his debts still unpaid, his son *Ferdinand* unexpectedly arrived at his door.

Never did father receive a son with greater joy than *Nicanor* received *Ferdinand*; and *Ferdinand* was no less delighted with such a reception from his father. *Nicanor* doubted not for the moment, but that his pleasure arising on the sight of *Ferdinand,* was owing to his paternal love for him, of which indeed there was some mixture: but when a man hath once given way to such an extravagant passion as *Nicanor* had for *Cylinda,* whether the woman be a mistress or a wife, all other affections and attachments grow excessively cool. 'Tis pretty certain also, that where the object of a man's pleasure is the chief object of his love (that love too solely founded on her being the object of his pleasure) every small portion of affection which he can spare, to brothers, sisters, parents, grown−up children, or friends, is only in proportion to the use or service they may be able to render him in any light: but chiefly in the gratification of his favourite pleasure. As soon therefore as *Ferdinand* had told his father, that he must beg his forgiveness for having so much neglected his advice, as imprudently to have reduced his fortune greatly for the time he had been abroad; the hope of such relief as *Nicanor* expected being partly destroyed, his joy at his son's arrival was greatly diminished, and the inward turn of his mind from pleasure to uneasiness, was very visible by the sudden change of his countance.

*Nicanor* never felt a disappointment, but his mind was immediately filled with anger against the person who was the cause of such disappointment, without the least consideration whether there was or was not any real blame in the person who was so unhappy as to baulk his greedy expectations. —This we mention as being (we hope at least) an uncommon peculiarity of temper in *Nicanor*. —For were such dispositions common, what would avail the most tender love, the most assiduous duty, the most friendly diligence, should our sincere endeavours chance to fail of their desired success!

*Ferdinand* was excessively grieved at seeing the anger of his father's brow on this confession. He begged his permission to relate in as short a manner as possible, all that had happened to him in his travels; "And then I trust, sir, (said he,) I shall not appear quite inexcusable in your eyes."

*Nicanor* on the last words of *Ferdinand,* conceived some hope that his affairs were not so bad as his fears at first made him apprehend; and slackening the severity of his look, he bad him proceed with his narration.

"When my brother *Oliver* and I went abroad (said *Ferdinand* ) we travelled through *Holland*, *France* and *Italy*; making all the observations we thought necessary for improvement, in every country through which we passed. Our stay at each particular place was extremely short, altho' we often returned back again to the same cities in which we had before resided. My brother *Oliver,* by whose inclinations in those points I was entirely directed, was indeed in so dejected low−spirited a way, that I feared he was going into some lingring distemper: I was very glad therefore to comply with his restless desire of moving from one place to another, in hopes of contributing something both to his health and pleasure.

"While we were in *Rome* about two years ago, we became acquainted with an *English* gentleman of a large fortune, who was very desirous that I would travel with him into *Turkey* through *Greece,* into *Persia,* and indeed over almost all the known parts of the world; and this he promised to make perfectly easy to me, from taking on himself the whole burthen of the expence. This proposal was so very agreeable and advantageous, that I should not even have hesitated on the acceptance of it: but *Oliver* expressed so much uneasiness at the thought of my going away, and leaving him to return home by himself, adding also that he was certain he should not live long, and intreating me therefore by my brotherly affection for him, not to forsake him in the weak condition he was in, that I begged the gentleman to excuse my not accepting his kind offer: which however he did not excuse; for being of a very odd temper, he took my refusal so extremely ill, that he would not speak to me afterwards.

"The stay of this *English* gentleman at *Rome* was much longer than he at first intended; for when I refused to accompany him on his travels I imagined that he was setting out as the next week, but it was some months before he pursued his intended voyage. My brother *Oliver* on my determination not to accompany the *English*

gentleman, was very earnest with me that we should directly return back into *France*, to which I readily consented; but the next day he changed his mind, and seemed full as desirous of our longer stay in *Rome*, to which also I made no sort of objection, being directed, as I before said, intirely by his inclinations. At the end of three months my brother told me, that he was going to communicate to me what he believed would a good deal surprise me; which was, that the *English* gentleman who had offered some time ago to take me with him in his travels, had that day (as he met him by accident in the street) made the very same proposal to him; and that knowing the oddness of his temper, he had at once agreed to the acceptance of an offer which was so very agreeable. *Oliver* told me, that he hoped I had opinion enough of his honour to believe him incapable of acting in any underhand way towards obtaining the favour of a man, who had by his former behaviour to me shewn himself to be plainly govern'd by caprice and whim. But, still farther to convince me how little this agreeable excursion was of his own seeking, he would still, if I desired it, revoke the promise he had given to the gentleman of setting out with him the very next morning. He confessed, he said, that to accompany this gentleman in his travels would be the greatest pleasure to him in the world, and would he believed contribute to the establishment of his health: but still rather than I should suspect him of a mean treachery, which his very soul abhorr'd, he was ready to give up any satisfaction of his own, if his losing such an advantage would be any pleasure to me. I told him that I wondered he could suppose I harbour'd any such suspicion of him, and assured him that his pleasing himself and recovering his health, was what of all things I most earnestly wish'd and desir'd. The next day therefore my brother set out with his friend; and as soon as I had made myself perfect master of the *Italian* language, I intended returning into *England*. I happened just at this time to meet with a young gentleman named *Drusus* whose conversation was perfectly agreeable, and whose whole heart and soul seemed by all his sentiments to bear such an exact resemblance to my own, that in a short time we contracted the most intimate friendship. We travelled together towards *Paris*, where his affairs, he said, would oblige him to make some stay; and as I had no particular call to any other place, I was extremely glad to remain with him as long as it would suit with his convenience or pleasure. But after about two months residence in *Paris*, my friend appear'd to be oppress'd with the deepest melancholy; and on my enquiring the cause, he with the most seeming reluctance, was prevailed on at last to declare that his melancholy arose from distress in circumstances. And since he had gone so far, he would, he said, lay open the whole truth of his very unhappy life, which he had hitherto conceal'd, in order to spare me the pain which such a recital would give. He then inform'd me that he had been left an easy independent fortune by an uncle, but had ruin'd himself by supporting the extravagance of the worst of fathers."

Here *Nicanor* with great heat said, You should not have contracted a friendship with any man who could speak thus disrespectfully of his father.

"It was, sir, (reply'd *Ferdinand*) his tender manner of repeating those circumstances in his father's life, which were necessary towards informing me in his history, that endear'd him still more to me, and gain'd from me an unlimited credit to his story: for never did *Drusus* utter one disrespectful word of a man, whose behaviour deserved not from his son the generosity and duty which he related of himself towards his father, and by whose means, according to his own account, he was totally impoverish'd. Yet it was not his own poverty, he said, that he was unable to bear, but he confess'd that he had a wife, a beautiful young creature, who by marrying him had disobliged all her friends: and altho' when she was of age, she would have a claim to an ample fortune; yet so great was their present distress, that he had just now received a letter from her, to say that she was ready to lie in at a little village, where she was obliged to stop in her intended journey to meet him at *Paris*, and that she was at that time void also of common necessaries for her support."

"Poor wretch, (cry'd *Nicanor*) what must he feel for the distresses of a beloved woman, whom it was not in his power to support! You could not, my boy, refuse him a supply on so urgent, so tender an occasion!"

"I hope, sir, reply'd *Ferdinand*, that I have not a heart incapable of being moved by a friend's distress: but not to dwell long on the relation of what gives me the utmost pain to think on, as it hath half damp'd the pleasure I could propose in any future confidence or friendship; this *Drusus* was the most artful of men: he formed his story specious in all its circumstances, perfectly calculated to move my compassion, and to impose on my generosity, and in conclusion borrowed of me a thousand pounds. The very next day he left *Paris*, and I was soon convinced from undoubted evidence, that he was a most notorious cheat, and had assumed several different shapes, and invented several different stories, adapted to impose on the generous and open−hearted."

Now *Nicanor's* compassion for *Drusus* was flown, and with a frown he said, "that had *Drusus's* story been

true, something had indeed been due to his necessities. But you are very little qualified, *Ferdinand,* (said he) to go through the world, if you cannot guard yourself against common cheats and impostures."

"I am very sensible, sir, said *Ferdinand,* that I may incur censure for want of prudence and proper caution; but had you known *Drusus,* had you heard his artful tale, you must have condemned me for−want of friendship and feeling, had I not complied with his request. Besides I considered, that should I by his death or misfortunes (for his treachery I never suspected) lose the whole sum which I had advanced for his service, I should hurt or distress no one but myself; for I had the happiness to know that you, sir, were in easy circumstances" —here *Nicanor* sighed—"that my sister also is well provided for." —Here *Nicanor* looked wild, frowned, and muttered the word, fool. —"Pardon me, sir, said *Ferdinand,* altho' I love my sister with a brotherly affection, yet have I always considered a moderate provision as a greater blessing than such heaps of wealth, as tend only to make the owners a prey for designing men. 'Twas on that consideration, sir, that I termed my sister well provided for: and as to my brother, his prudence will never suffer him to want any assistance."

*Nicanor* peevishly bad him spare his observations and reflexions, and proceed with his story.

"I have nothing farther, sir, to add, said *Ferdinand,* but that in a few days after the departure of *Drusus,* I left *France* in order, as you see me here, to pay my duty, and to receive your blessing."

*Nicanor* now finding that he had heard the worst, and that his son, altho' he had lessened his fortune, had sufficient remaining for his present relief, kindly embraced him; and told him that he was sincerely glad to see him safely returned. "But I am extremely sorry, my son, to acquaint you, (said he) that you are come to be a melancholy witness to your father's misfortunes and distress." *Ferdinand* alarm'd by these words, and seeing also the fix'd melancholy, which appeared in the face of *Nicanor,* begged to know of what kind such distress and misfortunes were, and if in his power to relieve. In short, *Ferdinand* and *Cordelia* were so truly twins in their minds, as well as by birth, that it would be a tedious repetition to relate what *Ferdinand* felt, or how he acted on hearing of his father's circumstances. Nor could the fear of any consequences for himself have the least chance for making him keep any thing in his own possession, of which his father stood in need.

*Ferdinand* from having been sent abroad (which *Nicanor* did from a desire of getting rid of both his sons) was now in that most unhappy of all siuations, a gentleman both by birth and education, with parts capable by application of making a figure, at an age in which he ought to be entered on business or some profession; yet thrown so much back in the world, that it must be some years before any thing he could pursue would yield him the least advantage, void also of the means for almost common subsistence, till he could be enabled reputably to subsist himself.

As soon as *Nicanor's* debts were paid by *Ferdinand,* he lived on in the same house with him on the small remainder of his fortune, till he could turn himself to any profession, or find means for his own and his father's future support. But it was not above a month before they had an addition to their family, by the coming home of *Cordelia*; who as her aunt was just dead, wanted that protection which a father is most proper to give. She had not been long with her father in *London,* before a man in very great circumstances liked her so well, as to make a proposal of marriage to her father. He asked not her fortune, nor desired any, he said, but would make whatever settlements they should require. Now was *Nicanor's* heart greatly elated with joy, for he wanted not affection enough for his daughter to wish to see her happy; or with more propriety may we say, to see her rich: for as to happiness he could not expect there would be much in a marriage between two persons so thoroughly opposite in their dispositions, as was this man and the gentle *Cordelia*. *Ruffinus,* for that was his name, had acquired great wealth by business, and was still in a way by merchandise of doubling and trebling his fortune. His person was by no means disgreeable; yet if report belied him not, nothing could be more sordid than his mind, or more void of every thing that is truly amiable. He kept in his house a brother who had fail'd in business as his bookkeeper; and fewer privileges did that brother enjoy, than he would have given his father's butler, if he had been qualified for the office. His only sister, whose outward deformity, poor girl, had prevented her ever hoping for any other protection, lived with him as his house−keeper: and how she lived need not be told, since it was with a brother, who worth near a plumb could suffer his sister to remain in that situation.

*Nicanor* knew all these family circumstances, yet dwelt so strongly to *Cordelia* on the excessive liberality of his proposal to her, that she plainly perceived her father's whole heart and soul to be bent upon this match. *Nicanor* urged to his daughter, that common reports of the avaritious temper of *Ruffinus* must be false, when he could thus generously offer to take her without a shilling; and this being evidently the effect of love, that love

must make him to her the best of husbands: he omitted not also to remind her, that from her own disposition she could not but be happy, as the whole pleasure of her life, he knew, consisted in the kindness and affection of the person with whom she was most nearly connected.

It was impossible for *Cordelia* on this subject to give her father any other answer, but that she begged a few days to consider of a proposal which so nearly concerned the happiness of her future life.

*Cordelia* so well knew the character of *Ruffinus,* that she would not have wanted one moment's consideration for the rejecting him and his offers. No consideration for herself would have made her have given her hand to a man whom she could not esteem and love, and whom therefore she must have deceived under that most solemn vow of marriage. But her father's necessities and her brother's distress, made her endeavour if possible to reconcile her mind to the undergoing the most dreadful of all lives, for the sake of bringing them some relief, or at least of relieving them from any cares for her support. As to the real generosity of *Ruffinus's* proposal, it was not specious enough to deceive her; she well knew that it proceeded from gratifying that liking, which she was not so blind but she perceived he had taken towards her the only time she had been in his company; and plainly did she see the fallacy of her father's reasoning, as being full well convinced that with so tyrannical, so cruel, and so hard a heart, as 'twas plain from his behaviour to his family he was possessed of, there could not dwell that love and affection which was indeed the chief joy of her life. She acquainted her brother *Ferdinand* with the proposal made by her father, to which he deeply sighed, and begged her to consult her own heart, and take advice from thence, for 'twas not in his power to dare the consequence which might attend the advice he wished to give her: but should she accept this offer'd opportunity of snatching herself from one kind of misery, surely, he said, heaven would bless such generosity, and her own affectionate heart would not suffer her to be unhappy.

*Cordelia* knew how excessively her brother loved her, and how much he wished her real happiness: seeing him therefore so subdued by their miserable circumstances, as not to dare the consequence of her refusing this advantageous offer, she caught his fears and his despair, and was almost come to a resolution of sacrificing her own peace for her father's support, when her brother *Oliver* arrived at the door.

He was received by them all with affectionate joy, and *Ferdinand* soon took an opportunity of informing him of the desperate state of his family. This information happened to be needless, for *Oliver* had long before heard of the ruin of his father; and altho' he made the appearance of being just come from abroad, he had been in *England* some weeks, but had his reasons for not going home, or giving them any notice of his arrival.

He gave them a short account of his travels, and seemed surprized they had not heard of the death of his friend with whom he travelled. This gentleman he informed them died at *Constantinople,* and left him all his fortune; which, *Oliver* said, amounted not to the sum it was reputed, but was sufficient, he hoped, to enable him to relieve the distresses of his family: and he kindly declared that his sister *Cordelia* should not be driven into a match which was disagreeable to her, if she would depend on his brotherly affection.

The arrival of *Oliver,* and this his behaviour, filled the whole family with a joy that is not to be expressed. *Nicanor* was freed from the fears of poverty, which he had by no means strength of mind enough to look boldly in the face; and *Ferdinand* and *Cordelia* shed tears of joy, to find such an alteration as they thought in *Oliver,* of whose generosity or affection they had hitherto had no great reason to think very highly. *Cordelia* readily embraced the liberty she now found she had of refusing her opulent lover; and he, in resentment for her refusal, married the first pretty face that came in his way.

*Oliver* took chambers for himself in one of the inns of court, and told his father that he would allow him sufficient to remain in his own house with his brother and sister.

The real joy which possessed *Oliver's* mind, not that he could relieve his family, but that they were now truly his dependents, made him appear at first so very good−humour'd, that *Ferdinand* and *Cordelia* doubted not the truth of his friendly professions towards them.

*Oliver* was not naturally what may be called covetous, for he considered his money as a means of his pleasure: but that his pleasure was to exercise a tyrannical power of making people feel the weight of what he pleased to call an obligation, plainly appeared when he came to grant this promised allowance to his family.

*Oliver* fixed in *Nicanor's* mind a high opinion of his own prudence, and insinuated also that it was owing to his dutiful affection that he had preserved his fortune, in order to be of service to his father in his old age. He then artfully threw out so many reflexions on the contrary behaviour, that *Nicanor* looked back on the unmatched generosity of *Ferdinand* and *Cordelia* towards him, as a blameable extravagance, and knew not that he was the

father of one valuable child but *Oliver*.

When this mighty allowance from *Oliver* came to be made, it was indeed sufficient to *keep* his father; that is, from starving: and yet this was to be thought a proper maintainance for the whole family.

*Ferdinand* and *Cordelia* plainly saw their error, in imagining that a heart, so paltry as was *Oliver's*, could be in reality changed: but as they delighted not in the discovery, they seldom made it even to each other the subject of discourse.

*Ferdinand* now found the necessity of applying himself with the utmost assiduity to the study of the law; but as he had not admitted into his mind the possibility of his brother's being so excessively sordid as to refuse him mere necessary assistance, he asked *Oliver* to supply him with barely money enough to support him, without his taking any thing from his father, till he could be able to repay him, and to support himself.

This request *Oliver* not only refused, but complained to his father that *Ferdinand* wanted (for the sake of indulging himself in idleness and luxury) to rob him of the means by which he was enabled at present to afford such an allowance, as he hoped indeed would be perfectly sufficient for his dear father's support.

*Nicanor* was but too apt at present to admit into his mind the idea of *Ferdinand's* doing something wrong; for *Ferdinand* had not the happiness of appearing necessary to his pleasures: and *Oliver* by swelling every trifling gift and obligation into a mountain, possessed all the small stock of affection *Nicanor* had to bestow.

*Ferdinand* and *Cordelia* could have been happy in each other's company, and happier still if by their chearful endeavours they could have amused and pleased their father; but their means were spent, their generosity was forgot, and *Nicanor*, instead of looking on them with delight, loved not the sight of them, as from their distress he was self−reproached, and yet from their dutiful behaviour he could never find any just occasion for anger against them.

There is not perhaps any thing more unhappy for a family, than to have the head of it a pleasure−loving man soured by disappointments. Such a one is always gloomy and morose to those around him, and if ever he indulges the least vein of chearfulness or good−humour, 'tis in the company of strangers before whom he may still have some little restraint. This was the present temper of *Nicanor*, and this made his children, partly to please and divert him, and partly to relieve themselves from his domestic moroseness, encourage the frequent visits of more company than strict prudence in their very strait circumstances would otherwise have allowed.

In this situation was *Nicanor's* family in the beginning of our history; and how they proceeded, our chief character on her next appearance in person shall farther relate.

*End of Part the Second.*

End of the First Volume.

# Vol. 2

# PROLOGUE TO Part the Third.

"By invention (says an ingenious author) I believe is generally understood, a creative faculty; which would indeed prove romance writers to have the highest pretensions to it; whereas by invention is really meant no more (and so the word signifies) than discovery, or finding out; or to explain it at large, a quick and sagacious penetration into the true essence of all the objects of our contemplation."

Invention then is in truth pretty much the same with having eyes and opening them in order to discern the objects which are placed before us. But the eye here made use of must be the mind's eye (as *Shakespear*, with his peculiar aptness of expression, calls it) and so strictly just is this metaphor, that nothing is apparently more frequent than a perverse shutting of this mental eye when we have not an inclination to perceive the things offered to our internal view. I know not likewise, why a short−sighted mind's eye should not be as good an expression as a short−sighted body's eye. But in this we are much kinder to our sense than to our intellect; for in order to assist the former we use glasses and spectacles of all kinds adapted to our deficiency of sight, whereas in the latter we are so far from accepting the assistance of mental glasses or spectacles, that we often strain our mind's eye, even to blindness, and at the same time affirm that our sight is nothing less than perfect.

The poet who writes to the mind's eye, and collects his images through the same medium, lies under a great disadvantage in comparison with the painter. The original, from whence the latter draws his copy, is an outward object, and his picture, when finish'd, is address'd to the visual sense: whereas the original, from whence the former takes copy, is perceived by the mind's eye, and address'd also to the mental perception of his reader. In order, therefore, clearly and distinctly to convey his images, the poet is obliged to make use of allegories, metaphors, and illustrations from outward objects, and from things visible, to deduce the evidence of things not seen.

Thus, properly speaking, the works, which we call works of invention, ought to contain the history of the mind of man; and he is the best writer, who represents it most truly.

If invention then be only a capacity of finding, and not of creating, we must endeavour (if we would exercise this faculty) to to keep our mind's eye open, and on the search, and not close it up by bending all our thoughts on the gratification of some present humour. The reader also may be said to partake of the invention of the author, when he finds his own acquaintance in the true representations of nature. Thus the reader who hath most truly considered and digested the sentiments which he reads, must be a man of the best taste, and must find most pleasure in the perusal of authors worth the reading. It is but to preserve candor enough to keep up an impartial attention, and instead of being actuated by a false shame of ignorance, to know when properly to confess myself a learner; and I have it in my power, as far as my capacity will reach, to command any knowledge that is extant in the whole universe.

Would mankind be but contented without the continual use of that little, but significant pronoun, *mine*, or *my own*, with what luxurious delight might they revel in the property of others! Every man possessed of a competency enough to obtain necessaries, without the task of hard labour, might, innocent of theft or pillage, reap enjoyment from all the productions of the industry and faculties of half mankind. He, like the queen of the bees, might partake in the fruit of the labours of all the hive. The works of nature and of art combine to delight his senses. To omit the ennumeration of all natural beauties, such as hills, dales, woods, rivers, the fragrance of flowering shrubs, the melody of birds, *&c.* which are all at the command of the poorest peasant; 'tis in my power with truth to declare, that to please my eyes the vain man builds magnificent palaces, and toils for riches in order to raise for my view a beautiful structure: for the same purpose serves the most finish'd pieces of the painter's art: the musician toils to gratify my sense of hearing, and the poet's pen is employ'd for my delight and entertainment: but if envy makes me sicken at the sight of every thing that is excellent out of my own possession; then will the sweetest food be sharp as vinegar, and every beauty will, in my depraved eyes, appear as deformity.

Men look on knowledge, which they learn, or might learn from others, as they do on the most beautiful structures, which are not their own: in outward objects they would rather behold their own hogsty than their neighbour's palace; and in mental ones, would prefer one grain of knowledge, gain'd by their own observation, to all the wisdom of a thousand *Solomons*.

It is the remark of a very ingenious *French* writer, that scarcely any man ever soared so high in knowledge as he might have done by more intense industry. And I believe the chief baulk to this industry is, the great aptitude of the human mind immediately to pronounce the perfection of all its own productions. We are inclined to do by the produce of our minds as by those of our bodies: namely, admire them for being ours; and instead of taking the proper pains to form our children into objects of esteem and admiration, we swear, although their deformity is apparent to all impartial eyes, that they are patterns of perfection: we are angry that others are not as blind as ourselves, and, knight−errant like, are at all times ready to defend the beauties of our own *Dulcinea*.

A poet is not only a mental painter (as generally allowed) but architect, sculptor, *&c.* And *Horace* confirms this as his opinion, by illustrating his rules for poetic composition by every outward object he could devise. In joining things congruous together, so as to form a resemblance according to nature, the judgment alone must be employed; and in mental objects, where outward lines and plummets cannot be used, the judgment must be the mental rule, and make boundaries for proper proportions; but in the animating and adorning parts accident hath often had a great share, and many a fine stroke, I believe, for which the poet hath almost gained the credit of inspiration, may have been entirely owing to a lucky hit. The finishing a most famous piece of ancient painting we are told was owing to the rageful despair of the painter, who, by throwing his brush wet with paint, in order to deface what he despaired to compleat, gave that expressive stroke which all his labour before could not effect. One of the most beautiful adornments in architecture, the capital of the *Corinthian* column, was found out, as *Perrault* says, by accident, or apparent accident, namely, the seeing some leaves of the acanthus winding themselves round the handle of a basket placed on a young lady's tomb. The reason I say apparent accident, is, that although the seeing such leaves in such a careless form was accident; yet the use which was made of it was owing to the penetration of the architect, who, by habit, had accustomed his mind to make use of outward objects; and thus the finished piece of the painter was, in the first place, owing to his candor, in seeing that his art was baffled by the trying circumstances of his subject; and in the next place, to his not being ashamed to acknowledge, that the finished excellence of his inimitable picture arose from a stroke in which he was conscious of having no more merit, as to the manual operation, than might be attributed even to the pencil itself.

The stamp of immortality, or rather of duration equal to mortality itself, which we have reason to believe is on some poems, must be made by a judgment directed by modesty and candor, which will not suffer the poet to think there is a magic in his touch which immediately brings all things to perfection. This modesty engages him, before he vents his thoughts, to examine and re−examine them; and not being partial to them as his own, he will awaken all his faculties, in order to cultivate and exalt his genius to the height, before he brings his productions into public view.

If modesty and candor are necessary to an author in his judgment of his own works, no less are they in his reader. And when I hear every pert boy and girl, just come from school, and who should not yet be out of the hands of their governors, admitted to sit in judgment on *Milton, Shakespear,* &c. the face of things seems reversed, the infant is become the master, and the master is forced to submit to be the scholar.

Should an ingenious mechanic find out a machine in watch−making, or any other art, which was by experience proved to be for the use and pleasure of mankind; an honest indignation would arise in every generous bosom to hear it criticised, pulled to pieces, and condemned, by such as are not only ignorant of its multiform wheels and connexions, but who know not even its common use.

The learned *Bossu,* in his discourse on epic poetry, hath very intelligibly set forth the rules of *Aristotle,* as formed on *Homer*. He hath compared the fables of both the Iliad and Odyssee with that of the *Æneid* of *Virgil,* and by adding the opinion of *Horace* on fable, action, character, *&c.* he hath shewn how exactly *Aristotle, Homer, Virgil,* and *Horace,* all agreed in their ideas of epic poetry.

May I be allowed to suppose, that the chief reason for such their agreement of opinion, was owing to their not each contending for the mastery?

*Aristotle* drew his rules from *Homer,* as his *master; Virgil,* in the same manner, imitated this first great pattern, and it is most likely, assisted his judgment by *Aristotle's* rules; *Horace* drew his precepts from the same sources with *Virgil*; and *Bossu,* in the clearest manner, hath shewn the connexion and co−incidence of opinion in them all four: and this also by modestly forming his judgment from them as models, and not with an air of superiority deciding their merits or demerits.

"b Ainsi (dit elle) avant que de juger d'un poëme, il faut rendre nôtre jugement regulier, & l'éprouver sur les

ouvrages excellens des meilleurs maîtres. S'ils ne nous plaisent pas, nous devons plûtôt croire que le défaut est dans nôtre jugement, que dans ces modeles: & s'ils nous plaisent, nous pouvons nous fier à nous mêmes avec plus d'assurance, suivant cette judicieuse pensé de *Quintilien*: que celui à qui *Ciceron* plaît, doit par là reconnoître qu'il a beaucoup profité."

In works of the imagination, the imagination must be first employed to awaken the attention, and to lead us afterwards to the exercise of the judgment. The pleasure which *Aristotle* must take in reading the works of *Homer*, most probably led him to employ his judgment in finding out causes for that pleasure.

Whether a man who cannot write an epic poem, is, or is not, qualified to judge of one, is a dispute on which I shall not attempt to enter; yet modesty and candor, I should imagine, must induce a critic to draw his rules from the highest and best exemplars of that kind of writing, which he makes the subject of his enquiry; and I could almost venture to assert, that *Aristotle* would have blushed to have attempted the propounding a set of rules for what he could neither execute himself, nor of which he had not yet seen any example: but much less would he have attempted a criticism on epic poetry, whilst two such poems as the Iliad and the Odyssee were extant, without deducing all his precepts from the father, the inventor, and the judicious executor of that kind of writing.

I know not whether it would be too bold an assertion to say, that *candor* makes capacity; yet it is I believe indisputably true, that by this alone it hath the power of fully exerting all its vigour. But in order to try the truth of any observation relating to the mind, the easiest method is to illustrate it by outward objects. If, for instance, a man was to sweat and labour all the days of his life to fill a chest which was already full, the absurdity of his vain endeavour would be glaring: in the same manner, when the human mind is filled and stuffed with notions, brought thither by fallacious inclinations, there is no room for truth to enter; candor being banished, passions alone bear the sway.

——*Function*
*Is smother'd in surmise; and nothing is*
*But what is not.*

Truth is the very reverse of what is said of that fickle goddess Fortune;

*She flys those that sue,*
*And those that fly pursue.*

For truth meets those who affectionately invite her, and is unattainable by none but those who detest her embraces, and fly her as their enemy. But,

After all that has been said in various shapes, by many various writers, concerning JUDGMENT, TASTE, INVENTION, *&c.* they all and severally mean no more than THE PERCEPTION OF TRUTH, which way soever it is offered to our view.

# PART the THIRD.

## SCENE I.

*—I will mix with you in industry*
*To please—but whom? Attentive auditors;*
*Such as will join their profit with their pleasure:*
*For these I'll prodigally spend myself*
*And speak away my spirits into air;*
*For these I'll melt my brain into invention,*
*Coin new conceits, and hang my richest words*
*As polish'd jewels in their bounteous ears.*

Ben Johnson,
Every Man out of his Humour.

# Portia. Una. The Cry.

## Portia.

As I have ventured on using a single word at once to signify all the evil passions turmoiling the mind of man, to spare the repetition of the various passions of which the *Turba* is designed to convey a full idea; I should, on the other hand, be very glad if I might be admitted under one word also, to convey an idea of all that I could wish my hearers to understand, when I would describe a bosom fraught with gentle peace; a heart casting out those tormentors which compose the *Turba*, and kindly yielding itself up to the enjoyment of its own tranquillity. To this RIGHTNESS of mind, this completion of wisdom and goodness (as far as the human mind can tread the road to perfection) I would, if allowed, give the name of the Dextra.

The *Cry*, without the least examination, loudly clamoured against the use of this word; declaring that they did not, nor could they understand its meaning: but they supposed it was some more gibberish of her own invention.

*Portia*. Was it hard to be understood, I would not attempt the introducing it; but it is so easy to be explained, it is to me so expressive, and yet so simple, that a child might soon be informed of its utmost signification.

And now the *Cry*, in universal chorus, repeatedly exclaimed against any explanation, declaring, that they would not be treated like children, and would farther exert the right of judgment, so as absolutely to forbid *Portia's* ever mentioning it any more.

But great as they imagined themselves, they soon found that there was a greater in presence; for *Una*, with a commanding voice, declared, that such tyranny, as to condemn any one unheard, should not be suffered before her; and that *Portia* was at full liberty to explain her reasons for the use of this word. It will then be time enough, said she, to judge whether it be intelligible or adequate to her purpose; that is, whether it be properly adapted to answer the real use of language, the making our ideas clearly understood.

*Portia*. Dextra in *Latin*, when applied to the hand, signifies the right, as sinistra means the left;—and—

The *Cry*, who had been forcibly silenced by *Una's* voice, now again rose up in a universal tumult, and declared, that if they must learn new languages to understand her meaning, they were determined to hear no more. They would not be her butts, in order for her to puff off her own learning, and to treat them with contempt.

*Portia*. There is nothing that I would say on this subject, for which the least degree of learning is necessary. For example, *Milton* says, that the *Messiah* conquered his enemies with his *better* hand. Surely if I asked any learned friend, why *Milton* says the better hand? and he should tell me, it was an expression borrowed from the *Latin* authors who made the same word sometimes (as when applied to omens) stand for good, better, *&c.* and sometimes for the hand, which we call by the name of the right hand, I might without any farther learning understand *Milton's* meaning: and what is there in this, O ye *Cry*, that you might not all know as well as myself?

At the image that *Portia* knew no more than themselves, the *Cry* began to drop their furious looks, and the turba within them to abate something of their stings.

*Portia*. Learning is not only unnecessary in order to use the word dextra in the sense I speak of it, but on further consideration, it may perhaps appear that there is nothing so very new or uncommon in this manner of expression as was at first imagined.

I believe it will be found, that nothing more certainly fixes the true meaning of a word than examining its opposite or reverse. Now the word in opposition to dexter is sinister; and if we only reflect on what daily passes in common conversation, we shall see that we have all naturalized the word sinister, and made it also applicable to the workings of the mind. What ears amongst us have not been accustomed to the words, sinister views, sinister designs, *&c*?

The *Cry* now shouted with applause [mistake me not, reader, nor accuse me of representing an unnatural fact] for it was with self−applause, on the discovery that *Portia* had not, nor could say any thing, which was not familiar to their apprehensions. With one united voice they declared, that they had been accustomed to her expressions all their lives. In a tone, much softer than usual, they said, "We agree with you, *Portia*, that there is nothing extraordinary in your application of dexter and sinister; you do but talk the language familiar even to children and the vulgar."

*Portia* knew this to be a fancied league of peace which could not hold long; but taking the opportunity of this temporary calm, she thus proceeded—

*Portia*. The word dexter is not less naturalized than sinister; for nothing is more common than to say, a man is possessed of dexterity, and that he is dextrous in all the exercises of riding, fencing, or the like: and amongst prize fighters, it is a frequent phrase to say, "that blow was dextrously given."

True, *Portia,* (said the *Cry*) we are all unanimous in our opinions, that the very lowest and most vulgar of the people use this sort of language. There is nothing in what you have spoke beyond the meanest comprehension.

*Portia*. Hitherto indeed the words dextrous, dextrously, dexterity, have, in the *English* language, been applied only to the activity of the body. But this I believe doth not arise from the impropriety of applying them to the mind, but rather from our greater aptness to adapt proper terms expressive of outward objects than of the objects of mental view. If a man, in the manufacture of weaving, was to employ his fingers in disentangling a heap of confused threads or strings of any kind, that were got together, and should be so lucky at to compleat his design, we should say, that he had dextrously unravelled the intricate knot, and classed every thread in its proper order, so as to enable him to go on with his work. Should any person, willing to unravel the intricate mazes of the human mind, so divide and distinguish one passion from the other, as to range them each in its proper class, might we not say, that such a man had dextrously separated truth from error?

*Una* smiled; and the *Cry* began to look askew.

*Portia*. Since in the relation of my story (especially as *Una* condescends to be one of my audience) I would wish that my hearers should be truly acquainted with the minds of those persons, of whom I shall be obliged often to make mention: all the indulgence I ask is, to be suffered to translate the word *dextra* into the mind, and that I may use it to express mental vigour and wisdom with the same freedom as *sinister* is used to express mental weakness, or that paltry mimic of true wisdom, shuffling cunning.

The *Cry* began now to grow into their usual alarm; for they dreaded what use *Portia* might make of their late concessions; but collecting themselves into a heap, they fixed their heavy eyes, as if busied in profound contemplation, and for the present only choruss'd themselves into a gloomy universal hum.

*Portia*. When we perceive, with certainty, any thing whatever to be in the mind of one human creature, we may, I believe, upon a due scrutiny, discover its reverse in the mind of some other. If this be true, and if it is allowed that the word *sinister* can be ever properly applied to any human mind, then may the word *dexter* be with as great propriety applied to some other. I think I know several characters to which the two different words are equally applicable; and to bring my hearers acquainted with those characters, I know not of any method more adequate than this, of naturalizing the word *dextra* into the mental language.

In all language conversant about the human mind, we are under a necessity of adopting metaphors taken from outward objects. I cannot recollect one yet made use of more fit in all points to express the perfection of the exercise of the mental qualities, than what I now beg leave to introduce; and so far am I from wanting to make learning necessary to the understanding it, that its easiness to be comprehended by the most illiterate, if they have no sinister views in its exclusion, made me propose it, and gave me, I own, some pleasure in its adoption.

I have fully considered it in various lights, and have found great amusement in observing how thoroughly the analogy between a man dextrous in body holds in almost every instance.

The man, who with his right hand (or indeed with either hand that by habit is the most dextrous) endeavours to help and assist another, exerts his whole strength, and is generally enabled to compass his friendly design; or if a blow is necessary to be given, the dextrous hand hits the intended mark, and gives just the force designed; whereas a blow given through passion, with the aukwardness of a weak−handed stroke, may beat out an eye, flatten a nose, or indeed aiming at an enemy may sometimes hit a friend.

The mind fraught with the *dextra,* hath the due use of all its faculties; it keeps a steady pace, is ready and able to assist its friends, and if it is necessary for self−defence, or quelling the insolence of malice, its wit strikes properly, and with judgment; nor ever blindly frantic doth it deal about its blows without distinction.

The mind misled by the *sinistra* is the emblem of weakness, it is unable to assist others, or direct itself; yet does it boast, that from the exercise of shuffling cunning, it is in possession of the *dextra*: and in this most truly doth it follow the practice of those jugglers, who by shuffling contrivances, and all sort of indirect methods, impose upon our senses, and yet honour their paltry juggling with the name of true dexterity of hand.

The *Cry* had drawn themselves into a sad dilemma from their acknowledging that they could easily understand *Portia's* meaning. They hardly knew how so soon to resume their affected ignorance, and continued to lay their heads close together, to hum and groan, as if they had been under some very great affliction.

*Portia,* to relieve them from their present uneasiness, quitted the subject which seem'd to give them such pain, and thus went on with her story.

## SCENE II.

*When churchmen scripture for the classics quit!*

Dr. Young's Univ. Pas.

# Portia. Una. The Cry.

## *PORTIA.*

My acquaintance with *Melantha,* the young lady whom I at first mentioned to have introduced me to *Nicanor's* family, began from an intimacy which subsisted between my mother and an aunt of hers, by whom she was brought up to *London* a few months before I was deprived of the blessing and protection of the best of parents. Nor was it long before death bereft *Melantha* also of her affectionate aunt.

I had from my own inclination, as well as a sense of my duty, submitted with great cheerfulness to the excessive retired way of life which was my mother's choice, and had therefore contracted very few acquaintance.

*Melantha* on becoming her own mistress, and being in possession also of all her aunt's effects, which were very considerable, entered into a more gay manner of living, whilst I continued as much as possible to keep myself out of those hurries, called pleasures and diversions, which to me, for the most part, appear only as so many methods of intoxicating our senses, and squandering away what by most wise men has been termed the greatest treasure of our lives, namely, our time.

There is not, I believe, a greater let to knowledge than the living what I call a look−there life; for whilst the eyes are thus continually engaged by outward objects, how should we find any leisure for looking within?

Mighty sententious, indeed! said the *Cry,* with a sort of contemptuous toss of all their heads.

*Portia. Melantha* had what is called an exceeding handsome face: her complexion was clear, although not of the whitest grain, her features were extremely regular, her eyes were very much admired, being shineing, large and black; yet when any thing ruffled or discomposed her temper, they shot forth such a fierceness and malignity, they were covered with such lowering brows, and every feature suffered such distortions, as rendered all her beauty little less than deformity. She was tall and thin, yet was but ill made and aukward in her person; and from having been bred intirely in the country, she wanted that gentility, which had it been added to the beauty of her face would have entitled her to public admiration. She had the natural flow of spirits, which youth, and a competent share of beauty, joined to an independent fortune, seldom fails to give. This, with but a very moderate share of understanding, made her no unpleasing companion; and the great fondness which she either had, or express'd to have for me, kept her so much upon her guard in her behaviour, that I seldom saw her in the least out of temper; and thus she in a manner forcibly for a long time ingrossed all the intimacy I bestow'd on any one. My intimacy with *Melantha* had continued about two years, when by perpetual importunity, and much against my will (for I loved not making new acquaintance) she introduced me to *Cordelia*.

The cat in the fable, which by the young man's prayers was turned into a woman, and who on the sight of a mouse, forgeting her transform'd state, jump'd out of bed, earnest to follow her usual diversion, could not more eagerly pursue her destined prey than I have pursued any human creature, who would give me leave to energize my favourite affections.

To apply the fable, I may say, that to meet with such a person is my mouse, it is my food, I cannot live without it. Whoever, therefore, of my acquaintance will suffer me to have the best opinion of them, must obtain some share of my affections: but if the object be not fully adequate to the purpose, my heart is but barely kept alive, and is in a sort of meagre half−starved condition.

Such was my situation with regard to *Melantha*. As I delight both in reading and society, I deal with my living acquaintance as I do with authors: there are some books whose proper habitation is a window, in order that they may lie ready at hand to employ a leisure minute, but which we can lay down without regret on the entrance of the most trifling visitors, and can easily bear the interruption of even a thundering rap at the door.

*Portia's* putting in the word *even* gave great disturbance to the *Cry,* who most of them had experienced a joyful beat of heart on every such thundering rap: for they considered that in proportion to the number of those raps, they should be esteem'd of consequence in their own neighbourhood.

*Portia*. If I was an heathen poet, and had an inclination to indulge a little whim, I would represent thunder as a noise made by *Jupiter's* guards against some celestial door whenever *Juno* went a visiting. I could imagine also that *Pallas* and *Venus* drew up repeated petitions to the father of the gods, in order to prevail with him to grant them the same privileges; but that *Juno* claims such a distinction as an honour due only to herself, being both wife and sister to *Jupiter,* and the acknowledged queen of heaven. I fancy if the invention was but managed by as able

hands, that the three goddesses might make as entertaining a quarrel about this thundering rap; as about the famous apple decreed by *Paris* to the queen of love.

The goddess of wisdom would certainly make a rather less ridiculous figure in this contention, than where she expects the preference to be given to her before the goddess of beauty, and yet knows that a man is to be the umpire.

But to descend from the sky, I remember it is really recorded in history, that one of the greatest revolutions in the *Roman* empire was caused by a plebeian's wife not being able to bear the uneasy sound of the fasces, and the rattle at the door before the arrival of her sister, whose husband was then consul. So grating was this noise of distinction, which belonged only to the consulship, in the ears of this good woman, when it preceded the equipage of any other lady but herself, that she could not sleep in peace till she had stirred up her husband to make a mutiny in the state, and to insist on it that the plebeians should have a chance of the honour of the consulship, as well as the patricians.

*Una* smiled benignant at *Portia's* whimsical flight. Not that she thought it any subject for admiration, but because such trifling indulgences of the fancy are proofs of a joyous heart, and a mind unincumbered by the heavy load of malice; for whatever is inoffensive must be uncensured by *Una*.

But with far other eyes do the *Cry* view any whimsical flight of the imagination, be it ever so innocent. They turned and twisted this trifling fancy of *Portia's* into ten thousand various forms, and extorted from it matter of the highest offence. They declared that she had treated the gods and goddesses too lightly; for the *Pantheon* was to them a deep study; that, and a poetical dictionary, made indeed the chief part of some of their libraries. The heathen mythology they look'd upon as a sort of bible, and would have been more ashamed of their ignorance in it than in any part of the old testament.

Not to know who was the father of *Abraham*, or whether *Nathan* was a priest or a prophet, they would suffer any one to laugh off, and would take for a good excuse the saying that you had not look'd into the story since you came from school: but if any person had forgot who was the father of *Jupiter*, should mistake in the proper office of *Mercury*, or should talk of the fine eyes of *Cupid*, whom fiction has pleased to represent as blind; all their sneers, and attempted witticisms, which they keep ready at hand upon such occasions, would be cast forth against such an ignorant blunderer.

This sort of knowledge the *Cry* think necessary towards shining in conversation; and therefore is it of the utmost consequence to the chief purpose of their ever−busy bustling lives.

After they had expressed their censure of *Portia* for speaking thus lightly of their highest learning, they extracted from her words an absolute declaration, that she thought herself equal in a poetical genius to *Ovid*, or even to *Homer* himself. They accused her also of a paltry vanity in boasting of her memory by relating to them an incident out of the *Roman* history.

These were the outward accusations with which the *Cry* thought proper to charge *Portia*; but if they would have spoke plainly, and confessed the real offence of her fancy, they must have said, "Where is the galling sting of pointed satire? where is the shame−bringing ridicule? where is the opportunity for mounting ourselves aloft into the delightful regions of contempt, at the expence to some others of pain and mortification?" Necessary ingredients all in every story, in every flight of imagination calculated to fill the *Cry* with any the least degree of pleasure.

*Portia*. Let me intreat you, O ye *Cry*, to have more friendly regard for your own peace, than to be thus labouring about nothing. My trifling whim I think not worth one moment's consideration, and could I have imagined that it would not, as it deserves, have passed unheeded, I would not have mentioned it. But yet if the mangling and worrying it about into so many various meanings (of all which it is perfectly innocent) can give you any sort of pleasure, you are heartily welcome still to chace it till you are as tired of it as I am myself already. But I pray ye now be only so kind to yourselves, as not to fill your minds with fruitless displeasure.

This carelessness of *Portia's* about her own fancies, or their censures of them, enraged the *Cry* to the highest degree of anger. The *Turba* roused and rolled about their stings in their unhappy bosoms, and swelled them into the most tumultuous storms, at the fearful apprehension that there was no real cause for their displeasure; which was no more than, as *Shakespear* says of jealousy, a monster born upon itself. As it is the characteristic of minds inhabited by the *Turba*, to be continually laying plots and stratagems, which tend to no other effect than teazing and tormenting themselves; the *Cry* (laying their heads close together) were now in deep consultation by what

means they should next abuse the then present object of their hatred: whilst *Portia,* according to the constant custom of those whose minds are filled by the *dextra,* amused herself with her own innocent fancies; and taking the advantage of the *Cry's* inattention, she thus address'd her generous protectress, whose ears are ever open to hear with candor, and to judge without partiality or prejudice.

*Portia*. The indulgence, O *Una,* that you kindly give to my unreserved manner of expressing my thoughts on all occasions, emboldens me to utter another of my whims, which came into my head on the *Cry's* high admiration of all heathen learning.

Suppose an *Indian,* or any pagan worshipper of many gods, was on the account given him of the Christian religion by an *Englishman,* to be so far inclined to be converted as to take a journey into *England,* on purpose to enquire fully into its doctrines: it would not be unnatural on such an occasion for him to be particularly inquisitive into the manner in which we educate our youth; for in their instruction he would reasonably expect to learn the grounds and substance of the national religion. But in his visits to our great and public schools, would it be possible for him to avoid reflecting on the want of veracity in his friend, who told him that the Christians worshipped but one God? would he not be apt to think that the Christians had as many gods as the heathens, only bearing different names? for one he would think was worshipped under the name of *Homer,* another of *Virgil,* and another, who had no small number of votaries, was called by the name of *Horace*. On his return home, he would undoubtedly inform his countrymen, that the doctrines of these deities, and their religious rites, were so hard to be learnt, that the *English* youth were forced to undergo a very rigorous discipline, even to the loss of blood, before they could attain such knowledge. Would it be possible to make this pagan believe that *Homer, Virgil,* &c. were only the names of certain men who wrote for the amusement of themselves and others, in the respective language of their countries? that so far from containing the doctrines of our religion, they were filled with an account of fabled gods, to which it would be held impious in me to give any credit; and that the book, which really contained the treasure of that religion we profess, is neither taught, nor seldom so much as heard of amongst them? should it also be added, that the instructors of our youth are themselves generally the priests of our religion; would not the intended convert be apt to cry out,

*Ridiculum est & non credendum mihi!*

Not one word of what *Portia* had last been saying was heard by the *Cry*; but finding, from all their different proposals amongst each other of contradicting and cavilling against her words, that this was not so proper a time as they hoped might hereafter offer for insulting her, they renewed their usual kind of attention; and called on her to go on with her account of *Melantha*. For the *Cry* are as penetrating as the great politician in the *Rehearsal*: they are very apt to know when they spy a brother, and were therefore in hopes of receiving great pleasure from the story of *Melantha*.

## SCENE III.

*Who for the poor renown of being smart*
*Would leave a dagger in a brother's heart?*

Universal Passion.

# Portia. Una. The Cry.

## *PORTIA.*

Before I was introduced into the family of *Nicanor, Melantha* was to me (like one of the books before mentioned) as a proper inhabitant of the window: and although I frequently conversed with her, yet was not any interruption much uneasiness. But when I became intimate in *Nicanor's* family, that is, from the moment I could with any propriety say they were of my acquaintance, I found every interruption painful. As in the reading any of the best authors, such as *Milton, Shakespear,* &c. we forget, for the time, that there are any other books in the world; we are absorbed in the delight which they give us, and are compleatly satisfied: so when I was conversant in the family of *Nicanor,* I, for the time, forgot every other object, my mind was fully employed, and perfectly gratified.

To meet with conversation in which I could, without any painful reserve, open my whole heart; and where I could be understood, and not have my words misinterpreted, and tortured into meanings I never thought of, hath been the chief pursuit of my life. Yet have I been generally censured for a blameable reserve; but I verily believe that an apparent reserve is very often the effect of a natural openness of temper.

The *Cry* were now so certain that *Portia* had uttered a paradoxical absurdity, that they were in the very height of their good humour and merriment; whilst *Una* looked a little fearful in what manner *Portia* would prove her assertion.

*Portia* perceiving from *Una's* looks what passed within her bosom, hastened to relieve her friendly anxiety.

*Portia*. The man whose disposition is naturally reserved and suspicious, can play the part of openness just to the pitch he chuses, and always retains a power of returning back into himself, whenever he imagines his interest requires it. He, without difficulty, can throw off the borrowed robe with which he cloathed himself for a season; whereas the man of a free and unreserved disposition, must keep a watchful guard over the natural bent of his temper; he must, in most company, be greatly reserved, otherwise having once in the least slackened the rein, and given a loose to his highest pleasure, he cannot help imagining himself surrounded by friends; and therefore he thinks aloud, and wantons in the freedom of an unlimited confidence. But as experience in time teaches the danger of such a freedom of speech, the open−hearted man is obliged to wear the borrowed robe of reserve; for he cannot throw it off by halves, nor begin to cast off his heavy load without suffering his natural skin inevitably to appear naked and unguarded against the sharp stings of spite and malice. I cannot take any delight, nor speak with the least freedom in company, where rancour, malignity, impiety, or profligacy, are continually breaking forth; nor doth it, in my opinion, make any very essential difference whether such discourses are supported by wit, or admired only for their own natural beauties. I am indeed most grieved when wit is so basely employed, because it hath more chance of doing mischief. Hurtful ridicule is hateful to my hearing, and I esteem those alone the truest objects of it, who are most delighted with its practice. Who can be unreserved where mischievous fallacy is the sandy foundation on which the whole conversation is built? such intercourses are to me so many real tragedies. What can be more tragical than for a set of human creatures to assemble together, under the pretence of friendship and good−fellowship, in order only to take every opportunity of slyly hurting, and bringing one another to shame? For such must be the principal aim of ridicule, under whatever name of mirth, humour, *&c.* it may endeavour to hide its biting head.

The *Cry* were now in as great a fright as if *Portia* had visibly shewn a design of mangling, or chopping off one of their principal limbs. Taunting ridicule is their strongest hold: once bereave them of that support to their conversation, and you would almost take from them the use of speech. Loudly therefore did they vociferate in praise of this their best friend, and with an universal clamor, accused *Portia* of having a gloomy aversion to all mirth and good−humour.

*Portia*. Innocent mirth and real good−humour are the joy and delight of my soul; such mirth I mean as described by *Spenser* in his *Tears of the Muses,*

*Fine countrefeasance and unhurtful sport,*
*Delight and laughter deck'd in seemly sort.*

But never are they to be found in those tragic scenes I have already mentioned. Another property of which is,

that altho' the time of their action is seldom more than three or four hours, their consequences often go through the lives of the actors. They pretend indeed, like *Laertes* in *Hamlet,* to play only in jest, and carouse in flowing bowls over their contention; yet are their foils like his, generally touched with poison; and the most inveterate and lasting enmities follow every stroke. Inexorable hatred hath, I believe, oftener arisen from a biting, taunting jest, than from any other cause whatever. Another part of these delightful tragedies is, the continual loud din of the kettle−drums and trumpets; not beat at the distance of the stage, but sounding close in your ear; I mean the noise and clamor which is raised on every fresh imaginary jest: for noise and clamor are the constant attendants on fallacy, and are indeed the very best invention to prevent the appearance of truth. In such a set of company, where noise is mistaken for mirth, and where the chief pleasure proposed seems to be like that of lady *Betty Modish,* to take off, and drive the placed smile from every countenance: who that delights in placed smiles can take any joy, or ever be unreserved! *Oliver* indeed often hath censured me for thus closing up my heart, and hath called it a self−sufficiency of mind, and a proud contempt of others.

And very rightly he calls it so, said the *Cry,* with universal consent.

*Portia*. But I know that whenever my heart is thus closed up, it is the fault of my company, and not owing to my own disposition. Let *Ferdinand,* let *Cordelia* be asked, if I was ever reserved in their company.

Great was the joy of the *Cry* on their present discovery, that *Portia's* openness to *Ferdinand* and *Cordelia* was owing intirely to the opinion she had of their understandings; and that she had therefore by implication confessed what she had so often denied, namely, that want of capacity in any one was to her an object of contempt.

*Portia*. It is true, I have an opinion of their understanding.

Have we found you out? said the *Cry,* fixing their thoughts on their own penetration.

*Portia*. But my unreserved openness of mind, my joyful freedom of conversation with them, is fixed on a much stronger foundation than that opinion: it is built on the firmest footing, on the presence of the *dextra,* and the absence of the *sinistra*. I hope contempt, as I have before declared, is not an inhabitant in my bosom; I hope I never should, in the sense our Saviour speaks it, call my brother fool; but if there is any contempt in me, the want of what we commonly call parts or understanding, would never set it in motion; and I think I could honestly lay my hand upon my heart, and without the least equivocation or mental reserve, boldly assert, that during the course of my whole life, I never once endeavoured to raise the least degree of uneasiness in any one individual of the human race by the exertion of an insolent superiority of unstanding.

I have always received the utmost pleasure in considering these lines of the poet.

*Parts may be prais'd, good−nature is ador'd,*
*Then draw your wit as seldom as your sword;*
*And never on the weak.—*

The *Cry* now made two very *coherent* discoveries. —The first was, that *Portia* did not exert this superiority, because she was not possessed of it;—and the second was, that she did exert it every moment of her life.

*Portia*. Every degree of understanding made an ill use of seems to me (if any thing is so) the justest object of contempt; it enables a man to find out more shifts and evasions to support falsehood, and consequently becomes the highest instrument of mischief. But when such capacities are made use of innocently for amusement, I think them exceedingly agreeable; I love the possessors of them the better for making a right use of them. For as I think no subject too grave, provided for *grave* we do not read *dull*; so I esteem no subject too trifling when it is treated with good−humour and pleasantry. Such conversations should be considered as the play−things of maturity; and it is with great propriety that they take place of the left−off rattles and marbles. But when wit and repartee are looked on as matters of importance, and the serious business of a person's life; when men exert their capacities to make sharp the arrows of malice, or to throw into ridicule things sacred, and which ought to be reverenced: I always think that it is pity the rod should be left off with the marbles, and that playful idleness should be whipt, whilst malicious tongues throw forth their venom with impunity. It is malice alone that is the object of my aversion; and whenever I see rancorous malice shewing its odious face, I cannot help flying with horror from the company where it is cherished, and looking with pleasure into my own bosom, which I assiduously guard from the entrance of such a guest. Thither when I retire from either peevish crossness or malicious inventions, I am sure to meet the delight of my soul, good−humour and pleasantry. With *Ferdinand* also and my *Cordelia* my mind can be all joy and freedom! the constant harmony and good−humour subsisting between them freed me from the

disagreeable apprehensions which attend me in many families, where we are in dread that every moment of time, every sentence that is uttered, will tear open some wound that is but lately healed, and will produce fresh matter on which to ground fresh quarrels. When I hear those pointed strokes of the sharpest satire, when I see them accompanied by the proper significant looks and gestures to fix down at whom they are meant, when such hints are thrown about till the inward anger, no longer able to be contained, bursts forth into an open contention; I know not which way to look, nor can I venture to make a general observation, for fear that one of the combatants should enlist it in his own particular service; but am at the utmost loss for a proper behaviour till I can make my escape from so disagreeable a scene.

## SCENE IV.

*Ludere quæ vellem—permisit—*

Virg. Ecl.

# Portia. Una. The Cry.

## *PORTIA.*

The freedom and joy I have expressed on meeting with such companions as *Ferdinand* and his sister (nay as *Nicanor* also, when *Oliver* had not artfully filled his mind with some dark suspicions concerning his amiable twins) is one of the most pleasing reflexions I can bring into my mind: for the highest delight in conversation to me is, where I may fearlesly express my thoughts, and be even indulged in all the luxury of talking nonsense with impunity.

The *Cry* burst into a loud fit of laughter on *Portia's* making use of the word *impunity*. They declared that they never yet had heard of any act of parliament against talking nonsense. They presumed that those people who were so *low,* so foolish, as to delight in nonsensical conversation, might, with the greatest impunity, follow the bent of their own silly inclinations. It would be hard indeed, they said, to rob idiots of this privilege; for it could not be supposed that one would talk nonsense who was capable of talking any thing else.

At this instant were the teeth of the whole *Cry* again visible to every beholder; for even the formal forgot to retain their solemnity of face on this occasion: so warmly were they all engaged in the loud and rapturous laugh; and so brimful of contempt with *Portia's* confession, that she loved to talk nonsense.

*Portia*. How unfortunate are you, O ye *Cry,* in proving continually by your practice the truth of my observations, whilst in words you are endeavouring with all your utmost art and eloquence to contradict me! You now, by the most incontestable evidence, confirm my opinion, and evince, that although there is no act of parliament against it; yet, in your company, there is an act of criticism against the pleasure of talking such nonsense as I would plead for the indulgence of. I mean a liberty of uttering every innocent rising thought, and of not being at the trouble, according to the old saying, of taking out all my words to look at them. To talk nonsense agreeably is the talent of very few; but to allow that privilege to others, without a rigid examination of every single word and sentence, is rather more rare than even the other, and is to me a very distinguishing mark of good−humour.

Men who have but few ideas, whose chief joy is that of shining in conversation, and pluming themselves on their own wisdom, must indeed make the most of their small stock; they cannot therefore afford to spend any of it in what I call play and diversion: it is a richness of images that enables a man to use either of them as play−things; and it is an exuberance of good−humour that can delight in such play. The heart must be innocent, and have no sinister plots to carry on, or there will be no leisure or inclination for such liberality of discourse: there must be no jealousies, no rivalship for wit, and fear of another's shining; no desire to lessen or degrade each other's faculties: for in all companies that are agreeable, the images must be shared as one common stock, in the same manner as in all families of love, there is no dispute about any kind of property.

I never in the company of *Ferdinand* and *Cordelia* heard an objection made to any fancy or conjecture on account of its being trifling; and yet none of the human race better shew the difference between a trifling conjecture and an important truth. It is indeed the being capable of clearly distinguishing between them, that enables the human mind to enjoy both; and I believe to trifle and talk nonsense agreeably, is almost always accompanied with a capacity of talking seriously, with judgment and perspicuity. And instead of its being true, as you just now said, that no one ever talked nonsense, who could talk any thing else, it is a rule I believe with few exceptions, that none can talk agreeable nonsense, but those who can talk every thing else. If you, O ye *Cry*, will still persist in throwing forth terms of contempt, as if I meant to praise talking foolishly and injudiciously, instead of trifling with an innocent freedom, enjoy your sneers; but small is the pittance of pleasure you are contented with, whilst you are ignorant of the immense delight which others enjoy, who can receive and communicate the pleasure of what I call talking nonsense.

The *Cry* gave but little attention to *Portia's* last words; for the idea that her conversation was nothing but nonsense, and that all her delight was in childish fooleries, had puffed up their vanity to the highest pitch of self−sufficiency. They strained all their faculties, in order to convince themselves of their own wit and great talent for raillery; they endeavoured to confound *Portia's* meaning, and to confuse all her images by affected laughs, and sneering witticisms, and were indeed themselves, at that instant, a visible exemplification of the truth of that observation, that

*Pride, where wit fails, steps in to her defence;*
*And fills up all the mighty void of sense.*

*Portia*. I am never anxious whether the company I fall into chuse to be trifling or serious; I desire nothing more from my companions than good−humour, and a readiness to be pleased. Wit and vivacity may produce entertainment, may be the luxury of conversation; but while the necessary ingredients, good−nature and kindness of heart, are absent, my soul is depressed, and I am as far from having any pleasure as I should be from being fed with painted food or carved luxuries. If, O ye *Cry*, you could but be prevailed on not to imagine wit one of the necessaries of life, or, banishing all wrath, anger, spite, and malevolence, would you content yourselves without the reputation of sense, parts, understanding, *&c.* you might then become agreeable, which is in the power of every human creature to be, and is all that I intreat of you, of *Oliver*, or any of his train.

The *Cry* would willingly have parted with whatever was most valuable to have been satisfied that they were agreeable; yet would they not take *Portia's* method of becoming so. Anger was within, and anger will find its object. *Portia* was therefore accused by them of the highest arrogance, and the most audacious insolence, in pretending not only to condemn them for not being agreeable, but daring to prescribe to them in any thing.

*Portia*. Justly might I be censured, not only of arrogance and insolence, but also of the most contemptible folly, was I capable of making the least reflexion on you for the want of any accomplishment which was not in your own power to obtain. But it is for your own sakes that I beg you, O ye *Cry*, to be agreeable. Do not invite into your breasts such evil passions as are, according to *Shakespear* in his *Winter's Tale*,

*—Goads, thorns, nettles, tails of wasps—*

The *Cry*, conscious of the force of *Portia's* quotation by the pains they felt within, yet resolutely bent on not confessing their folly in being thus their own tormentors, with lowering brows, with raised voices, and every technical mark of anger, declared that *Portia* was to them the highest object of contempt, and that they despised her from their very souls.

*Portia*. To your sorrow, O ye foolish *Cry*, you are so far from despising me, that you at this instant suffer me to be of consequence enough to alarm all these tumultuous passions in your bosoms; and the secret you are now labouring to conceal, is, that you are so unfortunate as to be filled with self−contempt: for contempt, depend upon it, always begins at home. I beg, I intreat you to be truly wise: endeavour to deserve your own esteem, and you will certainly have a sufficient share of it from others. Be but so prudent, so kind, as not to despise yourselves, and you will be no longer tormented with the fear of being subject to the contempt of all your acquaintance.

*Portia* had such a mildness in her countenance, and generally such a softness in her manner, as induced such characters as the *Cry* boldly, like the frogs in the fable, to insult their sovereign; for as they fear'd not from her lips any biting reply, they bounteously bestow'd on her all their taunting wit. But there always dwells in such insultors an abject dastardly spirit, which the least resistance can easily confound: and *Portia's* last words to the *Cry* were uttered with such a spirit, and real dignity of superior penetration, that, almost thinking they heard the dreaded voice of *Una*, they shrunk into themselves, and hid their coward heads.

## SCENE V.

*—Demens*
*Judicio vulgi, sanus fortasse tuo—*

Hor.

# Portia. Una. The Cry.

## *PORTIA.*

*Melantha* was at this time, as I thought, engaged to a young gentleman, named *Demetrius*; and, as I imagined, on the very brink of matrimony: for he had dangled long enough after her to enable her to reconcile the being in love with him, to the opinion she held of her own dignity; and as I saw not at first the little wheels on which her imaginary passion turned, I knew not but it might be real.

*Demetrius,* and *Oliver,* the elder brother of *Ferdinand,* were profess'd friends, but made as strong a contrast as possible to each other. *Oliver* never moved a step without the guidance of some prudential maxim; whilst *Demetrius* set up a hearty contempt for all rules whatever, and held it the wisest method to act intirely by chance. He was so different from *Oliver,* who thought it shameful ever to change his opinion, that he gloried in being called a gay fellow, who said one thing one moment, and contradicted it the next: he contemn'd, he said, all philosophy, and was constant in his admiration of only that one sentiment contained in the following verses:

*He who knows all that e'er the learned writ,*
*Knows only this, that he knows nothing yet.*

*Oliver* and *Demetrius* reciprocally called each other friend, and frequently conversed together from a very odd reason, namely, this their contrast of character; for each took delight to rally the other. *Oliver* exerted the whole force of his wit on the levity of *Demetrius,* who returned the compliment by what he thought the most lively raillery on every trifling incident in life.

The fickleness and inconstancy of *Demetrius* was not, one would imagine, a very desirable disposition for a lover; yet it was this very disposition which made *Melantha* persuade herself that he had gained her heart. It was rather her fear of losing him, than any delight she took in his conversation, that made her deceive herself, and fancy that her affections were engaged; for the loss of any lover was to her an insupportable misfortune.

*Demetrius,* in some evenings which I had passed with him and *Melantha,* behaved to me with so much particular deference and complaisance, that I was afraid in the wavering of his mind he wanted to become my lover. And yet I thought that would be something difficult for any man, for whom I had no manner of liking, to bring about: especially too if he had in his composition vanity enough to dread being refused.

Insufferable vanity and arrogance! burst forth the *Cry,* unable longer to contain themselves.

*Portia*. This behaviour of *Demetrius* frighted *Melantha* most excessively; for her chief reason for forcing me into her parties with *Demetrius* was, in hopes that I should be entangled in the passion of love for her admirer, whilst she might joyfully exult in the triumph of his visibly giving her the preference. What then must be the terror when she perceived it likely that she should see the picture reversed! that I should be the person preferred, and she should be neglected! Yet I believe it was this very fear which first raised in her mind such a strange admiration of me, and such an opinion of my understanding, that ever afterwards she endeavoured to be my shadow, and to tread in all my steps.

As I had not the least design nor desire of robbing *Melantha* of her lover, my indifference, or rather dislike to *Demetrius,* became pretty visible in his eyes; and he wanted not observation so much, as not to see how fruitless any address from him would prove. Thus was *Melantha* soon cured of her apprehensions; but at the same time she was cured of her love. To think of being married to a man that I should not chuse for a husband, was dreadful to her thoughts. As her vanity therefore could not be any longer gratified by the addresses of *Demetrius,* the rotten foundation was sapp'd, and down fell all her imagined affection. I perceived it falling as plain as if it had been a visible object.

*Demetrius* was too careless to trouble himself much about the loss of a mistress: first he threw forth a few common invectives against the inconstancy of women; then sung the song,

*That haughty Strephon scorns to die,*

and took his final leave of *Melantha* with an air of satisfaction that convinced us there was no fear of his being driven to desperation from his disappointment.

Thus in a small compass of time, and by the intervention merely of the opinion of another, was put an end to

such a reciprocal affection as had convinced both *Demetrius* and *Melantha,* that the most reasonable thing they could do, would be to enter into a solemn and irrevocable engagement to spend their whole lives together. A strange method of marrying this! Only because two people make themselves necessary to support each other's vanity!

If matrimony be really beneficial to society, the custom that (below people of quality) married women alone are allowed any claim to place, is as useful a piece of policy as ever was invented. This I believe hath often weighed greatly in the scale, when a woman hath been solicited to become a wife; and the eager desire of taking place of some of their acquaintance, hath induced many a woman to accept of a husband as the only expedient for that darling purpose. The ridicule fixed on the appellation of old maid hath, I doubt not, frightened a very large number into the bonds of wedlock: and how many are there who fancy themselves in love with men no ways suited to their taste, only from the joyful hope of triumphing over some other woman, by marrying the man on whom she hath placed her affections!

Part of the *Cry* brighten'd up at this image of triumph, and visibly shewed by their countenances that (as *Bajazet* says) they enjoyed it in thought.

*Portia*. Yet every fault or folly of which women, actuated by any of these motives, are guilty, is by a too general consent immediately thrown on poor love.

What crime, my dear *Love,* have you committed against mankind, that you are perpetually loaded with such unmerciful abuse! Why are you falsely accused of being the promoter of every preposterous match, the inlet to intrigue, the procurer to all manner of debauchery! Why are you called a mischief−maker, and the blow−coal of all quarrels between lovers! the stirrer of those jealousies and feuds which are the destruction of all harmony and peace in married families! In short, why are such numberless and heavy charges daily brought against you, when in my opinion, nothing in mathematics is more clearly demonstrable than that you are absolutely innocent of them all! Why do mankind shut you out of their doors, obstinately barricade all their windows, and not suffer you so much as to peep into their houses, yet at the same time cherish and embrace all your counterfeit shadows, and swear also that they give you the uppermost seat in their bosoms?

The *Cry* were now in a perplexity not uncommon to them. They were angry that *Portia* should dare to exculpate *Love* from the crimes with which they thought proper to charge him. But as their briefs were not ready at hand to make good the charge, they flew to a refuge, which, in any great extremity, always stood them in stead. They fixed their thoughts on the peculiarity of *Portia's* manner of expressing her sentiments of the passion of love, by such a sudden address to love itself. Then all at once, as if seized with horror, looking at *Portia* with a kind of compassion, they shook their heads, and cried out, *Mad—mad—very mad, indeed*!—

## SCENE VI.

*These, when their utmost venom they would spit,*
*Most barbarously tell you—"You're a WIT."*

# Portia. Una. The Cry.

## *PORTIA.*

Altho', I think, I have with truth declared that it would be difficult for any man, if I do not like him, to profess himself my lover, especially if he looks with dread on being refused; yet, I had not been very long acquainted in *Nicanor's* family, before *Oliver* (whom, if I know my own heart, I disliked the most of all human kind) in some measure brought this about.

No one could have been more piqued at a refusal than *Oliver*; but his vanity lifted him so high, that he never admitted into his thoughts the possibility of such a misfortune.

*Oliver* was generally called a handsome man; and he had indeed as much title to beauty as a good complexion and a regular set of features could give him: but there was something so sly and wicked in the look of his eyes, that it was impossible to meet them with any pleasure; nor in my opinion can the finest set of teeth, or the best form'd mouth, attone for the envious sneer which dwelt about his lips.

It was not, however, on his beauty that *Oliver* depended for success in his amours, but on the force of his wise maxims.

He had invented and remember'd political maxims enough to have filled a large volume on the methods of gaining women hearts. The difference of their dispositions he never consulted; for he had read,

*That women have no characters at all:*

and no sooner had he read this assertion than the truth of it gained in his mind an unlimited credit. For that the author of the above verse confessed an exception to his own general rule, by addressing the poem to a lady, was an observation that could never enter into the head of such characters as *Oliver*.

He gave also his full and serious assent to those writers, who (generally I believe from a vein of humour) have made an analogy between a military siege, and the progress of courtship; and had he written the rules of address, they would undoubtedly have been in all the technical terms of a warlike assault.

He began therefore to invest the fortress of my heart by a circumvallation of distant bows and respectful looks; he then entrenched his forces in the deep caution of never uttering an unguarded word or syllable; his designs being yet covered, he played off, from several quarters, a large battery of compliments: but here he found a repulse from the enemy, by an absolute rejection of such fulsome praise; and this forced him back again close into his former trenches.

No further had *Oliver* advanced in his siege, before *Melantha's* love for *Demetrius* fled from her mind. She was now disengaged, and that was a state in which she could not long continue; her mind must be employed in pursuing some engagement, which she called love, or she must sink into indolence, and would be unable to support that intolerable burthen, her time. A common misfortune which many women labour under! She soon perceived *Oliver's* intention towards me, and was miserable till she could form a hope of making him raise the siege, and sit down with all his forces before her.

*Melantha,* added to what is called a good person, hath one of the strongest recommendations to men of *Oliver's* turn of mind that can be, namely, a very great self−sufficiency: for women, like tradesmen, draw in the injudicious to buy their goods by the high value they themselves set on them. You may see a picture of what I mean in almost every mercer's shop in town; where, from behind the counter, you may hear the sounds, "Indeed, madam, it is the finest piece of silk I ever had in my shop;—there is not such another piece to be got in the kingdom. I cut off thirty yards this morning for the dutchess *De bon Gout,* and her grace strictly commanded me to save the remainder till I heard from her again: nevertheless, now your la—ship has seen it, if your la—ship likes it, your la—ship shall have it. Though I would not for the world disobey the commands of the dutchess on any account but to please your la—ship." Thus at once does he fix in her la—ship's mind, the high value of his silk, the impossibility of getting such another piece, and the approbation of the dutchess *De bon Gout,* whose taste is in high fashion. Her la—−ship, from these considerations, never takes her eyes off its beauties, nor quits the shop till it becomes her property, firmly believing, that if she leaves it, the dutchess *De bon Gout* will certainly have it. For one odd insignificant circumstance never enters into her head, namely, that if her grace the dutchess had really commanded the mercer to have kept it, he would on no account have parted with it to her la—ship. In

this manner women deal with their lovers. They endeavour strongly to fix in the minds of their enamorato's their own high value, and then contrive, as much as possible, to make them believe that they have so many purchasers at hand, that the goods, if they do not make haste, will all be gone. And I believe many a poor man by this artifice has been drawn in to purchase a most worthless piece of goods, which he might have had without being in such a hurry.

The *Cry* now spared no abuse which they could bestow on *Portia* for her love of ridicule. For their parts, they did not love to hear any one turned into ridicule for only desiring to be thought agreeable. —For, said they, it was the case of all *wits*, a word of abuse always ready at hand, to be severe and satirical. Their observations and remarks were too paltry and malicious, to deserve an answer; otherwise *Portia* could have told them, that—Those who would plead for ridicule against sacred and innocent things, and abuse it when its edge is justly turned on malice or affectation, act just as properly as those people would do, who should put swords and other offensive weapons into the hands of rogues and madmen, and yet deny them to the honest and sober, whose only use of them would be for self−defence. —But taking no notice of their spiteful cabal, as soon as they had vented their spleen, and were become silent, she proceeded with her history.

## SCENE VII.

*Judicio perpende, &, si tibi vera videtur*
*Dede manus: aut, si falsa est, accingere contra.*

Lucretius.

# Portia. Una. The Cry.

## *PORTIA.*

I remember *Montaigne* says, that in the civil wars in *France* he was advised not to fortify his castle, as the best means of preserving it from being besieged and plundered. Fortifications naturally induce a belief, that there is something within worth fortifying. A man who, like *Oliver,* lays a regular siege to a woman, if he meets with no resistance, hath no triumph in a conquest. Had my liking to *Oliver* been as great as it really was for *Ferdinand,* I am so bad at wearing a disguise, that it would have been impossible for me to have raised this fortification; and then how would he have despised me! how would he have tyrannized and played the coxcomb!

The *Cry* now chusing to understand, that what *Portia* had before said of fortifications, implied a sort of censure on women acting with caution, and being on their guard against designing men, wrested a meaning from her words, which was the farthest from her thoughts. For they peremptorily insisted on her having again plainly confessed, that had she liked any man, he might easily have taken the advantage of her affections, as it was not in her power to resist him. From whence they fairly concluded, that her virtue was mere accident; and such a triumph played and danced over all their countenances, as plainly indicated their excessive joy on having drawn such a false conclusion.

But *Portia* was immoveable, and could not be prevailed on to believe, that her words implied any thing more than—that *Oliver,* from seeing a woman's affection for him, would have behaved like a coxcomb. —The *Cry,* however, used all the most persuasive arguments in their power, to convince her of the depth of their own penetration; for they were not wanting in loud and vehement assertions, thundering raps upon the table, and a universal babble, in which no one could be distinctly heard; concluding at last with an ironical pretended pity for the great number of poor young creatures, who (from wearing no disguise like *Portia*) had fallen a sacrifice to the deluder, man. And this no doubt, said they, was owing to the softness of their dispositions, and the tenderness of their affections.

*Portia*. Notwithstanding, O ye *Cry,* the sharp reproaches you have cast on those unfortunate young creatures, whom you insultingly pretend to pity, I cannot help thinking, that those girls who have been deluded from the simplicity of their hearts, and (as you say) the tenderness of their affections, are truly the objects of compassion. But it is in truth the office of vanity, and not of love, to be the inward betrayer of the heart, the pander to men's artful designs. It is the immoderate thirst after admiration, and a desire of being prefer'd to some other woman, that opens an easy road for that flattery, which too often is the prevailing bribe. If in the education of young women, instead of pointing all our force against their admitting into their hearts one grain of real affection, we were to convince them, that admiration is not necessary to their well−being, we then might perhaps effectually guard them against being in the power of every man who can but once contrive to pique their vanity or pride.

The *Cry* now collected together a whole load of quotations to prove *Portia* in the wrong.

*'Tis b pride that keeps men oft, and women too from falling.*

*Value yourselves, and men despise,*
*You must be proud if you'll be wise.*

Several other quotations did their memory furnish them with; and they thought *Portia* could not dare to hold her own opinion against what they had read in so many different books.

*Portia*. The oftener pride or vanity hath been represented in so fair a light, the more pains should be taken to strip off the disguise, and to shew, that it hath been improperly represented. I believe it may be as plainly proved from experience, that nothing really good ever came from pride, as that grapes never were gathered from thistles.

The *Cry* were in a very great passion that *Portia* would not allow the authority which they brought from their reading; and declared, that she was the most perverse, obstinate, arrogant, self−sufficient woman, that ever yet was born.

*Portia*. Why, O ye *Cry,* are you so enraged, that pride or vanity should stand condemned for their own faults, and should not be suffered to hide their heads behind the borrowed names of virtue?

It might with greater propriety be said, that the *Cry* felt the question than that they heard it. The rage which

always possessed their minds, whenever their inmost hearts were detected, flashed from their eyes. For they were conscious, that at this time every one was secretly employed in thought how they might hide away the idea of pride, and metamorphose the very word into dignity and greatness of mind. They stood ready prepared also, in case *Portia* should happen to mention the words modesty and humility in their true sense, to transform them into stupidity and meanness of spirit.

*Portia*. Although the world should not have bribed me to have been guilty of an action which I should think so wicked; yet I very well knew that it was in my power to have sacrificed the chastity of *Melantha* to *Oliver* whenever I had pleased.

Cruel! uncharitable! were now the words which the *Cry* thought proper to utter.

*Portia*. Had I but given *Oliver* public encouragement enough to have made *Melantha* believe that he was the object of my choice; and whilst her passions were all in a tumult between rage, jealousy, and despair, had I drawn back enough to have raised his resentment, and sent him to her as a refuge from his disappointment;— what would be her joy to find, on a sudden, the gloomy prospect all vanished! and should she behold my lover prostrate at her feet, and with the most inveterate abuse sacrificing me at the shrine of her altar—what lengths would she not go! or where would she stop, if there was the least danger of her again losing so transporting a triumph!

This picture was too pleasing to the *Cry* for them to contain their joy. They suddenly, and before they were aware of it, clapped their hands in token of inward raptures.

*Portia*. But when I represent what I believe would have been the consequence had I liked *Oliver,* and had such preference been visible to his eyes, I am supposing impossibilities. For could his person or address at first have raised in me a capricious liking, I am very certain that a short time, and a little observation, would have brought a perfect cure. When a man by insult shews that he despises a woman only because she prefers him to the rest of mankind, the coxcombical part he plays is such a tacit confession of his being undeserving her approbation, that I think she cannot long be at a loss in forming a right judgment of him: for if we place no boundaries to the indulgence of our capricious inclinations, if a plain discovery of the utmost unworthiness in the object of our affections is not of sufficient force to cure our love, we are all liable to become the prey of the lowest and most abandoned of mankind.

Fine love indeed, said the *Cry,* that could be so easily cured!

And fine love, thought *Portia* to herself, is that which cannot thus be cured, nor has any dependence on the behaviour of its object for its duration!

But now *Serina* stepping forward from the assembly, undertook to plead the cause of constant love. —*Serina,* who thought herself violently entangled in a passion for a worthless young fellow, who had no one good quality to recommend him. His only merit in her eyes was fixed on no other basis than that of an indulgent father's disapprobation, and paternal anxiety on her account, lest she should throw herself, and her fortune, acquired by his laborious industry, away upon a wretch, whose vices must necessarily render her miserable. She was indeed a proper advocate for the resolute persistance in a passion, which if adequately expressed, would with much greater propriety be called obstinacy than love. This *Serina,* not yet twenty years old, her heart filled with the image of her own meritorious constancy, pleaded long in defence of the merit of thus resolutely fixing the affections, and concluded with an high admiration of the character and behaviour of *Prior's Emma*.

The *Cry* were loud in their applauses of *Serina's* eloquence, and perfectly agreed with her in her general praises of constancy; declaring that *Portia* had no heart, no soul, no feeling of the tender passions, and was more like an insensible stock than a woman.

*Portia*. If you are resolved, O ye *Cry,* to make such extravagant passions the objects of your admiration and imitation, it is not in my power to prevent it. But I will tell you a story within my own knowledge, of a very tragical catastrophe which attended one of these unsurmountable passions. It happened when I was very young, for I was but ten years old, yet the impression it made on my memory is not likely to be erased by time.

A farmer in the village where my mother then lived, had two daughters: the youngest they lost when an infant in the cradle; for she was stolen from them by a set of strolling wretches, called gypsies: but in a twelve−month's time the same crew coming again through the village, were stopped and forced to render back their smiling plunder. From hence her parents called her *Perdita*; and her recovery in such an unexpected a manner so endeared her to them, that they might be said to doat on her to distraction; and her great beauty, as she grew towards being a woman, made her the admiration of the whole neighbourhood. But at sixteen the unhappy *Perdita* gave an

unbounded loose to one of those passions, which you, O ye *Cry*, imagine to be so meritorious, and in praise of which your *Serina* hath been so eloquent. From that time her thoughts wandered from her rural business, and center'd all in *Colin*, her father's shepherd, who, unfortunately for the enamour'd maid, chanced to have very little resemblance to the *Arcadian* shepherds, either in virtue or constancy. *Perdita* (as is the natural consequence of such indulged passions) now left her cows unmilked, forgot to drive the young lambs to pasture, and, wandering herself like a strayed sheep, carved on every tree the name of *Colin*, admiring those good qualities in her lover, which had no other existence than what her own fancy had formed. But *Colin* was a treacherous inconstant swain; for whilst the amorous *Perdita* hung on his words, and gazed with fondness on his eyes, he took the advantage of her passions, bereaved her of her virtue, laughed at her folly, and triumphed in his conquest over the vanquished maid: for such characters are not confined to any peculiar class of men; nor are they to be found only in the metropolis or its environs.

*Perdita* could not long conceal the effects of her passion; for the visible alteration of her taper shape was too plain a discovery. Her beauty had gained her so many lovers, that there was hardly a wealthy farmer's son in the country that had not vainly sued for her love. She had refused all their offers by the public declaration, that she was too young to think of marriage; but she sustained her constancy of mind to reject so much importunity (joined sometimes with the entreaty of her parents) by the inward fixed resolution, that of all mankind she would have none but *Colin*.

As soon as tattling scandal had divulged the secret of *Perdita's* misfortune through the village, the perjured faithless shepherd quitted his native home to avoid making her the only reparation in his power, and quickly fled out of the reach of all inquiry. What now was her situation! She was oppressed with shame, loaded with grief at *Colin's* barbarous treatment. Her father sternly upbraided her with being now as much his disgrace as she was before his boast and glory. Her mother sometimes mixed tears with her reproaches, but often told her that she was grown hateful to her sight; and most bitterly would both her parents curse her unhappy birth, and the hour in which they a second time received her to their arms. Her sister, who was always envious of her for her beauty, now looked on her as a fit object of her malicious jokes. And, added to all these heavy calamities, she bore within her own bosom the sharp stings of cruel self−reproach. But when the time came for her to be delivered, she was happily delivered of all her burthens, by ending her present misery with her life. When she found her death certainly approaching, she begged in her last moments to see my mother, who had taken great notice of her, and shewn a fondness to her from her infancy: my mother went to her at her request; nor shall I ever forget the real sorrow I felt, nor the manner in which my mother's compassionate heart was moved when she related the tragic scene.

*Perdita's* stern parents, at the visible approach of her death, forgot their rage; the malice even in her sister's breast was subsided, and they surrounded her bed shedding the tears of real sorrow. She tenderly grasped their hands, and, in her last gasp, uttered with a feeble voice these words: Be witness, worthy lady, (said she to my mother) of my repentance. Do you, my father and mother, forgive my follies, forget them, and let my shame be buried with me in the grave. May you, my dearest sister, live to be as much of a blessing as I have been a curse to my once indulgent parents, and try to cherish me in your memory as I once was, when blessed with innocence.—

Here *Portia* stopped, unable to proceed—

*The big round tear stood trembling in her eye.*

*Una's* eyes also glitter'd with liquid dew, and dropp'd such tears,

*—as violated not her bliss.*

The *Cry* toss'd up their noses in sign of contempt, said they saw nothing moving in the death of a low−lifed wretch, who had been the cause of her own misery. They upbraided *Portia* for her compassion for such *creatures*, and then called *Perdita* by many vulgar abusive names which shall not be here repeated.

*Portia*. From my inmost soul I pity such victims to their passions as the unhappy *Perdita*; but would not therefore, when like *Prior's Emma* they are accidentally crowned with success, have them set forth as examples fit for imitation, and be admired as patterns of a virtuous and faithful constancy. I would have every action placed in its proper class in our esteem, and not erroneously judged by its accidental consequence.

But now *Harpasia*, from amongst the *Cry*, entered on the topic of faithful and constant love. *Harpasia* was a

widow, who had continued in that state for twenty years, in all which time she had been endeavouring to impose on herself the belief, that she was a true pattern of conjugal fidelity to her dead husband; but what a vexatious companion she was to him whilst living, our history shall not here enlarge upon. She highly valued herself upon not having been twice married, although she had lived a life of errant coquetry with almost every man that came in her way; nor, if she could have prevented it, would have suffered either maid or widow (herself only excepted) to have had one lover in peace. Full of levity as was her mind, and trifler as she was esteemed by all her acquaintance, *Harpasia*, because she had from choice (in order to carry on her scheme of coquetry) retained the state of widowhood, deemed it her proper cue, with gravity to condemn the impertinence of young girls who should talk of constancy: then with all the force of her rhetoric she sounded forth the praises of every celebrated matron both ancient and modern, which she could recollect, all whose virtues she modestly desired might, by general consent, be conferred upon herself.

The *Cry* now ranged themselves in parties; and every one, according to their different situations, connexions or inclinations, chose forth some example for their esteem and imitation.

For the *Dramatis Personæ* of *Tom Thumb*, which says,

*Doodle in place, consequently for the court:*
*Noodle out of place, consequently against the court:*

is in reality the universal drama of the *Cry*.

One would represent the wife of *Seneca*, and grieve herself to death for the loss of her husband. Another would imitate the wife of *Brutus*, and swallow living coals of fire only for the apprehensions of her husband's danger; her fancy was so strong, she would not have patience to wait for the certainty of his death. But some carried this point so far as to work themselves into an admiration of the *Indian* custom, where living wives share the fate of their husbands dead bodies, and are burnt alive on their funeral pile. But it was very remarkable, that the unmarried part of the *Cry*, whose husbands were only imaginary, were the most vociferous in their applauses of this extravagant proof of conjugal affection.

*Portia*. To be burned alive is a most dreadful thing. A scalded finger for the instant affects the whole body, and is a momentary misery. My soul would shudder at the kindling of those fires which were design'd to turn me into ashes. But what horror would seize my imagination on knowing, that whilst I retained sensibility I should be fewel on which those flames would spend their raging force! that my shrieks and cries would be vainly lost in those winds which helped the rising flames to my destruction! and that not one of the human species would come to my relief!

The *Cry* at this picture stood aghast. Their power of speech was lost in their astonishment: for in their admiration of the *Indian* wives being burnt with their husbands, they had fixed their thoughts only on the posthumous fame of those women, and on the applause of the spectators for their noble resolution. In the fancied enjoyment of such airy advantages, they had buried and concealed the idea of the horrid flames with the torments they were to indure, in order to acquire the valued purchase of being rewarded with having it said, "There died a brave woman."

The *Cry* by no means wanted imaginations, they only wanted the power of using them for their real amusement or profit. They seldom suffered them to rove abroad for either, as they found them such continual employment at home: for the imagination, as well as every other faculty of the mind, is incapable of travelling two ways at once. Whilst therefore they were fancying what a fine figure they should make by such indelible marks of their love as following the custom of the *Indian* women, they entirely forgot every other circumstance except this desired heroic appearance. But being all inwardly vexed at the *real−figure* they were conscious they *now* made in this their overstrained admiration of being burnt alive with their dead husbands, they resolved to retrieve their error by exercising their common talent at abuse; and whilst they were seeking in their minds for some known characters of inconstancy in women; their widow *Harpasia* helped them to the instance of the *Ephesian* matron, whom they immediately loaded with every term of reproach they could invent, and whom they represented as a picture of the highest hypocrisy and affectation in in her apparent affliction; and consequently they pronounced that all the love she is described to have for her husband when living, was equally pretence and affectation.

Amongst the many terms of abuse, which the *Cry* hoard up as their greatest treasure, affectation holds the

foremost place. This, whenever they are resolved to censure, without being able to answer the question why, they instantly produce; and are never therefore at a loss to unravel the most intricate foldings of the human heart: nor are they ever driven to the dismal necessity of confessing their own ignorance, whilst this word *affectation* stands their friend, ready to be applied, according to their own desire, where, in reality, it is not the least applicable.

*Portia*. If affectation means a desire to appear what we are not, in my opinion there never was a character to whom it was less applicable than to the *Ephesian* matron, although she is so frequently named in general satires against women, for pretending immoderate grief for the loss of their husbands. Take the whole story fairly, as it is represented, and she acted only according to the simple dictates of nature.

The *Cry* now really sharpened their attention: the universal judgment of mankind was so much with them in the censure they had passed on the *Ephesian* matron, that they were in some doubt whether *Portia* was not going to burlesque the story, and to heighten the satire by irony.

*Portia*. The society of her indulgent lord was said to be the *Ephesian* lady's chief pleasure whilst he was living. She and her husband are described as two of the happiest of the human kind. She was innocent of one thought to wrong him; the married state was to her a scene of the highest felicity, and her beloved husband's sudden death raised in her mind a torrent of unaffected sorrow. She mourned his loss with a violence, which when once indulged cannot well be restrained. But passions rising to their height, and blowing where they list, although they cannot be stopped, may be turned into another channel: for we must make a strong distinction between affectation and imagination, or we shall be greatly confused in our judgments of any characters that appear to act in an uncommon manner.

The *Ephesian* matron did not affect to be grieved; she was really pierced with sorrow to her inmost soul: and in this situation, what soothed and heightened her grief was the only thing grateful to her mind. Her greatest indulgence was to follow her husband's dead body to the grave; and she really imagined that she should never chuse to leave his tomb. She abhorred all food; she sought no comfort, because she esteemed it to be a vain search, sincerely believing that there was now no comfort to be found. She imagined it a pleasure to endure cold and hunger, and did not know but such a rough treatment of her body might alleviate the sorrows of her mind. In such a situation, it is no wonder (to those who know the natural turn of human passions) that she readily yielded to the first impression she received, that her husband's death was not necessarily the death of all pleasure. That it was possible for her to live and to be happy, was a most pleasing discovery; and she could not resist being delighted to find such a sudden revolution in her thoughts, as a transition from dark despair to animating hope, and to change a gloomy sepulchre for a second bright hymenæal torch. I once heard a gentleman (who had pretty clearly penetrated the human heart) declare, that if he was in love with a widow, he would chuse to court her sitting by her husband's tomb, and giving vent to the highest gust of passionate lamentations. (From his good−nature, no doubt, and his delight in drying the widow's tears.) But he also added, that his success would entirely depend upon her grief being real, and not affected; for to endeavour to alleviate or remove what is not to be found, would be a ridiculous as well as a fruitless undertaking. Where affectation is the source of apparent sorrow, all endeavours to remove that sorrow must be vain; for it would destroy its own foundation, if it once admitted the possibility of a cure.

The *Cry* with their usual candor pronounced that *Portia* had been talking absurd nonsense; and then with sneering witticisms asked her, if in the number of her favourites she did not place lady *Anne*, in *Richard the Third*, in the foremost rank of her esteem? for she too had changed the gloomy sepulchre for a second bright hymenæal torch.

*Portia*. I am not conscious, that by any thing I have said, you can justly call the *Ephesian* matron a favourite character of mine: or because I have asserted her whole behaviour to be the result of following the bent of her inclinations, and not containing one spark of affectation; that I do not therefore condemn whoever gives way to uncurbed violent grief, which is likely to produce the same effects; but least of all can it be reasonably deduced from my words, that I either esteem or admire a character so truly detestable as that of lady *Anne* in *Richard the Third*.

The babble amongst the *Cry* was now so great, that it was a considerable time before *Portia* could again be heard; some of them affirming that if she excused the *Ephesian* matron, she must also excuse lady *Anne*; others declaring that the latter was much more pardonable than the former; and all concluding, that the characters of the two women bore such an exact similitude to each other, that it was impossible to make any distinction between

them.

*Portia*. There is nothing causes so great a confusion in our judgments, as the thus shuffling together characters which have no resemblance to each other: nor is there any two known characters that I remember more unlike than that of lady *Anne* and the *Ephesian* matron; and yet it is very common to hear them thus confounded. Lady *Anne*, as we take the story from our poet, was actuated by nothing but a love of flattery. Her husband's murderer therefore, by only artfully saying, that *her beauty was the cause*, could as by a magic charm transform, in her eyes, his own deformity into irresistible grace, and extract all the villainy and cruelty from that fatal stroke, which fell'd in his bloom of youth the sweet young prince her husband, described in such amiable colours by the pen of *Shakespear*. Far other motives led the *Ephesian* matron to a second marriage; and the characteristics of the two women are in my opinion essentially different.

If *Portia* could indeed have spoke with all the eloquence of a *Demosthenes*, the *Cry* were resolutely bent not to understand the difference, between a woman's giving up the dead body of her husband to save a living man from death, and the being flattered into marrying her husband's murderer. If the preference also was to be given to either of these two characters, they still persisted (for reasons best known to themselves) to confer it on lady *Anne*.

## SCENE VIII.

*First man creates, and then he fears the elf,*
*Thus others cheat him not, but he himself—*
*—He hates realities and hugs the cheat,*
*And still the only pleasure's the deceit.*

Garth.

# Portia. Una. The Cry.

## *PORTIA.*

Mankind are unanimously agreed in the opinion, that charity begins at home; but I believe it is the only inhabitant of the human mind that ever ends where it begins, and is void of all progressive motion towards outward objects: for hatred, contempt, anger, and all those passions which compose the *turba*, although each is (as *Shakespear* says of jealousy) *a monster, begot and born upon itself*; yet are all so kindly communicative as to spread their baleful influence to every thing around them. From hence arises the cruelty of tyrants, whether placed on a throne which commands the lives and properties of millions, or having their power confined only to the small circle of their own domestics. There is another cause also for the excessive heights to which human tyranny and cruelty hath soared, namely, the resolution of the actor to top his part; and which shews us that a man must first impose upon himself, and that hypocrisy, as well as contempt, anger, *&c.* often begins at home.

Never were the hearts of the *Cry* more elated by the hope of proving *Portia* guilty of uttering nonsense and absurdity, than at this instant; for that hypocrisy begins at home, or that a man could be a hypocrite to himself, seemed to them an absolute contradiction in terms; it being so generally allowed, that the very essence of a hypocrite is making an appearance to the world of what he is conscious doth not pass within his own breast. Her joining also the ideas of hypocrisy and tyranny, was to them another pleasing proof of her having uttered a paradox which she could not support; and they all at once called out upon her to prove, that *Nero*, one of the cruellest tyrants on record, acted the hypocrite after he was settled on his throne. For they allow'd, that in the beginning of his reign he was guilty of affectation and hypocrisy in shedding tears, and shewing such a seeming reluctance to the setting his hand to the first dead warrant which was brought to him to sign, "that he wished, he said, that he had never learnt to write, rather than to be obliged to make such a use of his power."

*Portia*. I confess there is a seeming paradox in my words; but as it is a subject I have often considered, and, as *Nero* is the very character I should have wished that I might have brought as an exemplification of my assertion, I most humbly beg of *Una* that I may be permitted at least to attempt the clearing up what may appear at present a little contradictory in my position.

This liberty was readily granted by *Una*, but with no rebuke to the *Cry*, as they had uttered only a general opinion, without any mixture of malevolence.

*Portia*. I have been told by the learned, that the original word in *Greek*, which we render hypocrite, signifies also a player: and I believe it will not be denied, that a man may play a part to deceive himself as well as another. *Plutarch* reports of a *Æsop*, the celebrated tragedian, "that whilst he was representing on the theatre *Atreus* deliberating the revenge of *Thyestes*, he was so transported beyond himself in the heat of action, that with his truncheon he smote one of the servants hastily crossing the stage, and laid him dead upon the place." And I have been told by Mr. *Garrick* (whose judgment in these points I esteem infallible) that it is impossible to warm the imaginations of an audience into a belief of the truth of the representation before them, unless the player first is capable of imposing on himself, and of forcibly feeling all the passions which actuates the character he is to represent. If this be true, then for the acting an assumed part in the universal drama, it is necessary carefully to conceal the truth in some corner of the human heart, and to use all the force of fallacy, in order to envellop it in the gloomy mist of darkness. And, if *Shakespear* is in the right in saying, that man is a player, hypocrisy must then begin at home.

The *Cry* at this time, not clearly understanding *Portia's* meaning enough to be struck with their usual fear, that it would tend towards revealing any secret within their own bosoms which they wished to conceal, were not actuated with their usual wrath against her. They found no occasion therefore for their chief orator *Duessa*, who always spoke when a favourite fallacy was to be supported; but deputed one of the most reasonable amongst them to ask *Portia*, whether she had not confounded the hypocrite with the madman. "For, said the speaker, if a man deceives himself in the part he undertakes to act, he is exactly in the same situation with the bedlamite, whose temples are surrounded with a crown of straw."

*Portia*. The difference between the hypocrite and the madman, in the sense I have chose to use the word, appears to me to be exactly the same as between the madman and the player: for was there no secret corner in the mind which concealed the truth, Bedlam I allow would be the proper place for those men who assume any part

that doth not properly belong to them. For still to carry on the analogy between the hypocrite and the player, the latter, if he is not warmed into some degree of self−deception, is so languid in his action, that every one can see through the thin disguise. Such are the common race of hypocrites, whose painting is so gross that it deceives but very few; whilst that hypocrisy which, according to *Milton*,

*—walks unseen, except to God alone—*

must have taken such deep root in the heart, as to have grown up with the very man; and where the self−deceit is pleasing, and the part assumed is to gratify our pride, every attempt to undeceive us, and to expose our hypocrisy, raises an anger, which must be fatal to all within the reach of our power.

That *Nero* was any other hypocrite than that of being a player, resolute to enter into the part he chose to perform, I think appears not from any history. For as there is no reason to imagine that he was born without the seeds of humanity and compassion, his reluctance to sign an order for the execution of a poor wretch who had never given him any particular offence, might be sincere and unaffected. The characteristic of his mind was yet in its bud; and those spreading branches of wanton cruelty, springing from the insane root of a maid desire after divinity, had not at that time entirely choaked up and smothered every good inclination in his heart. But when the short struggle of humanity even in that instance was past, it is not unlikely that the darling image of his own authority, and this first pleasing proof of his having life and death in his option, was a step towards that height of inhumanity to which he afterwards mounted. He had hitherto been actuated only by common vanity; the fiddler and buffoon were his chosen parts; and whilst he remained in a private station, malice and sly cunning were the only weapons he had power to employ against his competitors. The exercise of public power against his successful rivals in fiddling or buffoonery, was not topping the part his ambition prompted him to assume: for when the trifling vanity of such contentions gave way to the more enlarged pride of mounting from the power of empire to that of divinity; then, conscious that his rivals in omnipotency were entirely enthroned above his reach, and that the arrows of his wrath could not ascend to heaven, he pointed his enmity at the objects of his power, the human race, and wantoned in the height of cruelty. The would−be fidler is dangerous but to a few; the would−be god is like a general pestilence that ravages amongst mankind, and seeks by its own venom to overspread the world with a general destruction.

The *Cry* now, with great outward solemnity (a certain indication of inward joy on the supposed discovery that *Portia's* sentiments were full of absurdity) declared, she must be mistaken in imputing *Nero's* cruelty to his pride; as he might have found an equal indulgence of that passion by exercising his power in benevolent, as in cruel actions.

*Portia*. If that was true, I believe the grand wheel on which cruelty and tyranny always turns, would stop its motion, and the human breast would escape its power. The would−be god cannot create, but if placed at the head of any temporary government, he can easily destroy.

*Shakespear* makes *John a Gaunt* say to king *Richard* II.

*Shorten my days thou canst with sullen sorrow,*
*And pluck night from me, but not lend a morrow:*
*Thou canst help Time to furrow me with age;*
*But stop no wrinkle in his pilgrimage:*
*Thy word is current with him for my death;*
*But dead, thy kingdom cannot buy my breath.*

*Nero* could with impunity wanton in the sight of those devouring flames which were kindled at his command; and whilst the groans of his wretched victims reached his ears, he could, by the blaze of his own fires, warm his imagination into a belief that he was a god, from thus commanding destruction: but if he let his eyes wander but the least step the other way, he must necessarily every moment meet some glaring discovery of his own embecillity, and might, if he please, weep at the absurdity of his own godship. He could not command a leaf to spring, nor a flower to blossom out of its season, more than the poorest peasant, or the lowest vassal of his tyranny. If *Nero* was resolved therefore to mimic a superior power, it must be in doing evil, and dooming destruction with a breath; for all his own flattery, joined with that of his parasites, could not force into his mind a moment's belief that he was possessed of the power of creation. This kind of preposterous pride of wanting to be

more than man, must, I think, joined with power, necessarily produce rage and cruelty, instead of benevolence and love.

I have before often said, that contempt begins at home; and that it arises from a a discovery of our not being able to obtain that frantic wish of being something which God never made us, and which we cannot make ourselves. By endeavouring therefore to hide from our own eyes the knowledge of what we really are, we are striving at impossibilities, and nothing but our own torment can be the consequence. Wretched is the man who despises himself, and this wretch was *Nero*. He wished to be a god, yet, in spite of himself, was conscious of not being possessed of divine perfection. This inward consciousness filled him with all the horrors naturally flowing from such madness: he was discontented within, was cruel to himself; and the poor wretches, whose hard fate it was to be the vassals of his power, could expect no better treatment than he allowed himself.

I have been credibly informed that if a ship at sea takes fire, and the flames become too violent to be quenched, although at first she be at a great distance from the fleet, yet will she of her own accord, and without any direction, mix amongst the other ships, in order to communicate her flames, and it is with the utmost difficulty that she can be kept off. This seems as if the burning ship was animated to seek a refuge from her own consumption by the destruction of other objects: and if this be really a known fact, and not an idle report, we plainly trace the *word to the wise,* and read in it the noblest of fables, writ by the hand of nature herself.

Every thing in the physical world, actuated by stated laws, is either communicative of its own qualities, or submits to the general power of attraction. The human mind, and every part of intelligent nature, is exempt from these laws, and hath the power of cherishing one seed and stifling another. The mind that chuses to nourish the *turba,* by a restless desire after impossibilities, takes delight, like the fireship, to communicate its devouring flame to all that are so miserable as to fall in its way. But this consuming flame arises first in its own breast; and, let him roam where he will, such a man, like the poor wounded stag, still carries the arrow sticking in his heart; or rather like a mad dog, enraged with his own misery, endeavours to bite and poison, with his own venomous foam, every object in his reach.

*Nero,* whilst in appearance he was enjoying the highest luxury, in that gallant exploit of burning his native city, and playing on his harp, at the same time that he beheld the flames which rose at his command, was at once performing the two parts which he had chosen, namely, the fidler and the god. Although no outward hisses dared proclaim the unskilfulness of the musician, nor the weakness of the pretended omnipotent; yet the inward hisses and stings of the *turba* within his breast, gave him such torment as I would not feel for the command of twenty such globes as this which we inhabit.

The man who makes a god of his appetite, may be cruel and revengeful on any present disappointment of his pleasure: and his rival in his mistress, or any other object on which he hath fixed his desire, may feel the effects of his utmost hatred.

The picture of such contentions may be seen in the canine race. The bone being thrown amongst them, they snarl, they growl, and fall into fierce battle; but the subject of their general quarrel being removed, they lie down quietly to sleep by each other's side, forgetful of all their painful enmity. But although in the temporary rage or cruelty arising from such motives there are many intervals of humanity, yet, in the madness of a man's wanting to be a god, there are no intervals, no momentary relief: for he cannot meet one of his fellow−creatures but he will be excited to vent his rage by dooming his destruction, if it is but for boldly daring to resemble his godship. Thus a man's having eyes in his head, or a nose in his face, may, nay must, to such a mind be a high matter of offence.

The tyrant, who vainly strives to impose on himself the belief of his own divinity, feels all the force of what the philosopher said to *Alexander* the Great; who asked him, what a man must do to become a god: "That (answered the philosopher) which it is impossible for a man to perform."

Under the mental pain of continual disappointments, the temper naturally grows four and rageful. In such an uneasy situation, it was no wonder that *Nero* should seek his pleasure in the destructive flames, which, by the breath of his power, blazed to consume the then metropolis of the known world. It is no matter of astonishment that *Caligula,* in the same tormenting situation, and from the same motives, should wish all the *Romans* had but one neck, that he might have the pleasure of destroying them at a blow. Had he added all mankind, it would still have been in character; but indeed as he was a *Roman,* and an emperor of the *Romans,* it was very possible his idea of mankind extended not beyond the objects of his own power. With a heart thus swelling with pride, and grasping at divinity, *Xerxes* like a madman whipped the sea, for daring to roll its waves, to mount its surges, and,

heedless of an emperor's command, steadily to keep its destined course. The disobedience of the ocean shewed *Xerxes,* that he could not do all things. There is indeed but one who can still its waves and turn its course, and that *Xerxes* himself was not that one, was the galling reflexion within his mind, whilst he was attempting with vain strokes to be revenged on the unfeeling waters for presenting him with the view of so hateful a truth. Had not *Xerxes* undertaken the vain labour of imposing such a fallacy on himself, as that his power extended beyond what is allowed to the human race; had not his hypocrisy, his endeavour of playing a part he could not perform, begun at home, he could never have been guilty of such a mad ravery.

With this clue to the labyrinths of the human heart, how many latent motives of actions, which fall under our own observation, will be brought to light! how many well−attested facts in history, which, without this clue, seem to make the characters of men into an incongruous heap of absurdity, will join, and be so many characteristical marks of the men of whom they are related, that we may trace their minds without any obstacle to bar our knowledge. In reading *Plutarch* with the same view with which I believe he wrote, namely, to discover the human heart, I doubt not but we shall fairly find this *word to the wise* to be deduced from all his writings, that hypocrisy begins at home.

But I pretend not to impose my opinions as absolute truths. All I have said on this clue to the discovery of men's characters is only conjecture; yet if we are excluded from entering this road to the knowledge of the human mind, I confess that I can find no other but what immediately overwhelms us in the utmost uncertainty and confusion. I must, like the grave−digger in *Hamlet,* acknowledge that I am non−plus'd, and that

*—by the mass I cannot tell.*

The *Cry* were at present in an odd situation of mind. They had not attended sufficiently to what *Portia* had been saying, fully to take her whole meaning. As her instances also were drawn only from such high stations as kings and emperors, they were not quite positive whether any thing she had said of hypocrisy, pride, or cruelty, could be applicable to themselves; (for that a latent *Nero* might but too surely be found in many private families, was a truth which as she had not declared they had not fathomed) their actuating motive, anger, therefore, not being within, their indolence was too great to attempt either contradicting *Portia,* or being at the trouble of comprehending what she had proposed.

*Portia*. If in comic incidents, arising from the peculiar bent of humour, consists the chief beauties of comedy; and if the risible in such incidents springs from the glaring absurdity of indulging some such bent of the disposition, then shall we find I believe in histories, where characters are well preserved, frequent and stronger instances of such comic incidents than the highest human invention can produce. For it appears to me that even *Shakespear's Falstaff* killing the dead *Piercy* to prove his courage, is not more calculated to raise a judicious laughter, than *Xerxes* whipping the senseless ocean to prove himself a god. And so far even beneath a comic incident was the contrivance of that emperor, who drove his chariot over an high erected arch of brass, in order to imitate *Jupiter's* thunder, that none of the ingenious tricks of machinery, practised in our pantomimes, more justly claim to themselves the rank of being one degree below farce.

As I love to delight myself with imaginary pictures, I have often formed a group of many of these heros together; and, in one piece, I have (by fancy) drawn *Nero* on one side, striking the strings of his harp over a street all in flames, from whence he may be supposed to have his discord answered by human shrieks and cries: *Xerxes,* on the other side, is standing with his whip in his hand, and confined on a little spot of earth, with a human feeble arm, still shorter than his whip, lashing the wide expanded ocean: but in the middle of this piece sits the mighty master of the world, the famous *Macedonian* conqueror, *Alexander* stiled the Great (or as *Fluelin* says, the magnanimous, the pig, it is all the same thing) putting his finger in his eye like a child, and crying for imaginary conquests. If absurdity be the basis of the ridiculous, who (as *Horace* says) admitted to the sight of such a picture, could abstain from laughter? *Una* sighed. The *Cry* screwed about their faces, and allowed, with a forced half laugh, that the picture was indeed a little droll; and some went so far as to say, that *Portia* was mistress of a good deal of drollery.

*Portia*. Although the absurdity is visible, yet we might look on it in another view, wherein laughter would be very inadequate to express our sensations. But I chuse not to shew its reverse; I would rather draw the veil: A word to the wise is sufficient.

## SCENE IX.

*And like our heroes, much more brave than wise,*
*She conquers for the TRIUMPH, not the prize.*

# Portia. Una. The Cry.

## *PORTIA.*

*Oliver's* love, or rather his wanting to make a conquest of my affections, was truly irksome and disagreeable to me; and I knew also that the consequence of his being entirely baffled would be an implacable hatred. There is indeed no degree of rage which will not arise in the bosom of such a man, against the woman who could not return the honour of his passion: for a breast which the *turba* inhabits is at all seasons, and on every trifling occasion, ready prepared to transform a capricious liking (by such called love) into an hatred of all others the most inveterate and inexorable.

I soon perceived the drift of every word and action of *Melantha* . There was no artifice, no stratagem, she did not make use of, to gain the attention and address of every man with whom she was in company, whilst *Oliver* was also present. This she did her utmost to conceal, as it was to appear the natural effects of her own superior charms; nor was her design at present to gain a variety of lovers, but only to resemble the piece of silk liked by the dutchess *De bon Gout,* in order, by the admiration of others, to gain the heart of *Oliver* . All her views were terminated in conquering the man whom she imagined to be my lover; and I never formed any wish more sincerely than that she might succeed in her undertaking. Had she known how much it would have rejoiced me to have been rid of *Oliver,* without raising his indignation, her pursuit would have been at an end; and her hopes of triumphing over me being vanished, she would not so eagerly have languished for the conquest. But she was so firmly possessed of the belief, that the very assuming the character of a lover must render any man agreeable, that whilst she had no suspicion of liking any other person, she had no idea of the possibility of my being displeased with the addresses of *Oliver*.

*Oliver,* notwithstanding his first repulse, renewed his attacks, and proceeded for some time regularly in his siege. He found indeed a pretty strong fortification, but it was a natural and not an artificial defence; for my dislike to him was unconquerable. Although he found the resistance too strong for his force, yet, as he had undertaken it, he would not hastily give up his point. However, *Melantha's* stratagems at last prevailed; yet would not *Oliver* confess to his own heart, that he was baffled, but with a seeming neglect, he imposed on himself the belief that he had deserted me as a worthless prize; and then he eagerly removed all his forces to surround another town, in his opinion much more worth the taking.

*Melantha* made a regular defence according to art; and resolved to make *Oliver* take the due time for persuading her to love; yet by some seeming inadvertent sighs, by praises of the happiness of two lovers, where the affection was reciprocal, by expressions of her great compassion for those poor creatures who could not long engage the addresses of a lover, I soon found that she again fancied herself as much in love with *Oliver,* as she had before imagined she was with *Demetrius*.

*Melantha,* as I have already said, looked on a lover as one of the necessaries of life; and she could as easily have endured to have drest herself for a ball without a looking−glass, as to have undergone the fatigue of breathing without enjoying a continual fair representation of herself by the soothing praises of some admirer. But what an immense happiness was now her lot, whilst she enjoyed the thought that she was in possession of a mirror which, at one view, represented her own form in the highest degree of beauty; and that of mine, her acquaintance, and as she called me her dearest most favourite friend, but little short of deformity.

The *Cry* were so excessively pleased with this picture, that they forgot to search for methods of abusing *Portia*.

*Portia*. This pleasing mirror was *Oliver* to *Melantha* ; and by these means for some time we all enjoyed some pleasure, as it now fell to my share, in all parties, freely to enjoy the conversation of *Ferdinand*. *Oliver* and *Melantha* were both continually throwing forth insinuations of my being vexed and mortified; and I confess that I did not take any pains to root this fallacy from their minds, that I might, unobserved, have more liberty to follow my own inclinations.

A pretty good share of art that, said the *Cry,* for one who boasts of her simplicity!

*Portia*. But my real pleasure soon became too visible: for whilst my whole thoughts were ingrossed by the various and pleasing images raised in my mind from the conversation of *Ferdinand,* I did not (for it was not in my power) employ myself in inventing new methods to impose on *Melantha* and her lover the belief that I was really grieved for the loss of *Oliver*.

Notwithstanding the *Cry* had so lately condemned *Portia* for an artful behaviour, yet they scrupled not to deride her for want of common discretion in not being able keep her own counsel; when *Portia,* unheeding of their currish snaps, thus went on.

*Portia*. As soon therefore as the imaginary belief of my being hurt by the loss of *Oliver* left *Melantha's* mind, like an enraged conqueror it vacated not the town till it had put to the sword all its peaceful inhabitants, till it had ravaged and laid waste every joyous thought within her bosom.

## SCENE X.

*Among unequals, what society*
*Can sort, what harmony or true delight?*

Milton.

# Portia. Una. The Cry.

## *PORTIA.*

*Melantha* at the time she introduced me to *Nicanor's* family, knew no more of the real character of *Ferdinand* than if she had never been acquainted with him. His humour soared far above her comprehension; and she looked on him as a dull kind of a philosopher, who minded very little besides his books. And *Oliver,* who made it a part of his rule of life to be gallant and polite amongst the ladies, was much more really suited to her inclinations.

The reason I believe why the character of such a man as *Ferdinand* is often mistaken is, that he is too easily known for the generality of mankind to find him out: for shooting beyond the mark is as certain a method of missing the aim, as the falling short of it. It is a simple mind alone that can penetrate a single character; and in most companies, the best mask you can wear is always to appear barefaced. For there are such numbers amongst mankind who will not believe but the whole world is so much of a masquerade that no one chuses to appear in it without a disguise, that whoever dares to shew his face, or rather his mind, in its own natural colours, without a mask, will gain the credit (such as it is!) of only making use of a more artful refinement in putting on his disguise: and most probably every one of his acquaintance will form a different judgment of him, and each will privately rejoice in the thought of being alone able to trace his real character.

When I became fully acquainted with *Ferdinand,* and recollected some of *Melantha's* former discourse concerning him, I was very well convinced, that had she been contented to have followed her natural taste, almost any other man would, in her eyes, have been preferable as a lover.

If affectation could be entirely banished, how few, in comparison with the present state of things, would be the number of preposterous matches! If mankind would be contented to be properly classed, every man and woman would chuse the companion most suited to give them pleasure. If it was not for the vanity of a man's declaring that he hath such and such acquaintance, or for the dread of what others would say if he had not such nominal friends, who would place themselves continually in company, where they must rack their brains to come in for any share of the conversation; and for the pleasures of which society they have not the least taste or relish! Whereas now half mankind waste their time amongst those with whom they would least chuse to converse, in order that the absent may be told that they are admitted into such a society. And I believe it often happens that a man wilfully places himself where he might reasonably be the object of his own pity, only for the gratification of thinking himself the object of another's envy.

*Melantha,* as soon as she was thoroughly convinced that it was not *Oliver,* but *Ferdinand,* on whom my heart was truly fixed, took up the noble resolution of so closely pursuing my steps, as resolutely to make herself believe that *Ferdinand* also was the only object of her affections.

Could *Melantha,* by some superior power, be obliged to declare honestly the secret springs which actuated her to fancy herself in love first with *Demetrius,* then with *Oliver,* and lastly with *Ferdinand,* I could draw up for her a very true confession.

The *Cry* now all rose up in confusion, like the pit at the play−house, when they resolutely persist in their *off—off* —and declared, that *Portia* should not be indulged in such mad raveries, nor suffered to go on, imagining that she could dive into the secret springs which actuate the human heart. But *Una,* like *Neptune,* (as described in b *Virgil*) with her awful voice made the waves of their passions to subside (or at least forced them to conceal their rage;) and as it is her pleasure to trace the most intricate labyrinths of the human mind, she desired *Portia* to proceed.

*Portia*. I will not pretend to discover more of *Melantha's* heart than what may be fairly deduced from her actions. Shall I, O *Una,* relate only my own observations, or may I be permitted to suppose *Melantha* present, and speaking; by which means, in a more lively manner, I could paint all her sensations, and throw into action every motion of her heart?

*Una*. It is the subject matter itself I seek; and to cavil about the manner of conveying it, is trifling and unnecessary. Take therefore that method, *Portia,* by which, in the most lively and intelligible manner, you can paint the real history of *Melantha's* mind.

The *Cry,* although they were forced to submit, looked full of dread, for fear what picture *Portia,* thus left at liberty, might draw, and who she might, by the force of truth, restrain to sit for that picture.

*Portia*. Now then suppose me to be *Melantha,* and speaking thus.

*Portia, [in the assumed character of* Melantha.] I danced in company with *Demetrius* at a ball. He was then the partner of my most intimate friend *Isabinda,* and was generally supposed to be her lover. I found that evening that my charms had attracted the eyes of *Demetrius*; and by the pretence of visiting my friend, I easily obtained frequent opportunities of pursuing my half−gained conquest. *Isabinda* could not pretend to cope with me in beauty; nor, as she afterwards found, in artful methods of gaining admiration. *Demetrius* was pleased to see a contention for him, and soon visibly gave me the preference. *Isabinda,* enraged at seeing her own want of power, threw forth many reproachful hints against coquetry, all bent indeed against me; then quitted her pretensions to *Demetrius,* and dropped my acquaintance.

*Demetrius,* by his flattery and assiduity, gained all the love I had to bestow. I knew when first I introduced *Portia* to his acquaintance, that her heart was disengaged. I thought *Demetrius* very agreeable, and I therefore expected to see her laying out all her snares to entrap my lover, as I had before done to get him from *Isabinda,* my former friend. I had too good an opinion of myself, and at first too low an opinion of *Portia,* to fear experiencing the fate of *Isabinda*. I rejoiced therefore in the approaching picture I had formed of seeing *Portia* in love with *Demetrius,* and *Demetrius* preferring me. In such a situation, with what contempt could I look down on the trifling joy felt by *Cæsar* or *Pompey,* or any other hero, in the midst of a triumph!

In the most compleat victory gained by a warlike hero, every soldier that attends his triumphal car, having before followed him in the field of battle, has a right to claim some share in his glory; but in the victories I aim at, the glory is all my own, and to my own superior charms alone am I indebted for my conquests. Secure as I believed myself of this triumph over *Portia,* I practised the speaking many insulting speeches, some cloathed in the garb of pity, and others in their native colours. I intended soon to have thought inwardly, and perhaps repeated aloud the following lines:

*If there's delight in love, 'tis when I see*
*The heart, which others bleed for, bleed for me.*

But alas! the image of rapture I had raised in my mind concerning *Portia* and *Demetrius,* was soon reversed; and the whole comedy, by one unlucky circumstance, was turned into a tragedy in my bosom: for instead of *Portia* liking *Demetrius,* and his preferring me, she disliked him, and he was not displeased with her. Now indeed (as the children say) doomsday was come! what could I do! marry the man that *Portia,* who passes for a woman of sense, dislikes! forbid it, pride! forbid it, vanity! yet absolutely to part with *Demetrius,* whilst I have no other lover to admire me, what woman of spirit can bear that! Well might I say that a tragedy was acting in my mind; for had I lost all my relations, or been driven to the utmost distress, I could not have felt a deeper sorrow. Nor could I, in this affliction, send to all my friends, that they might partake my grief; for the true cause of my tears I would not for the world have revealed, and an apparent cause was not at that time to be found. My perplexity was so great I knew not which way to turn myself, nor what method to pursue, till I perceived that *Oliver* was become a lover of *Portia's*. Now *found* was the word. —The hare was started. I forgot all my love for *Demetrius,* and had the pleasure of discarding him, before he had visibly deserted me. I cannot say this hurt him quite so much as I wished it should; and at another time this thought would have grieved me enough to have induced me to the trial of bringing him back again into my chains: but now *Oliver* was my pursuit, and all other images were lost in the rapturous thought, that *Portia's* lover might yet become mine. I mustered all my forces; I laid out all my snares; and my artifices succeeded so well, that in a short time I carried my point. *Portia* was neglected, I was preferred.

Here the eyes of the *Cry* brightened up to such a degree, and they were so charmed with the very imagination of *Portia's* being neglected, that they could hardly contain from giving a sympathizing shout of joy on *Melantha's* triumph.

*Portia* perceived the inward pleasures dancing at their hearts, and thus went on.

*Portia. [In the assumed character of* Melantha.] Now perfectly secure of my triumph, it cost me many a wakeful night in order to form proper replies to the reproaches I expected to hear from the mouth of *Portia;* and I was prepared also with insulting words of compassion, if her vexation for her disappointment had been vented in tears. But finding no reproaches to flow from her lips, no tears to burst from her eyes, I hugged myself for some time on the discovery that she was the most artful of womankind. Thus I received some pleasure in thinking what pain *Portia* must undergo, not only from the loss of her lover, but from the labour of concealing her rage and

resentment at my happiness. This pleasing imagination I enjoyed not long; for truth forced itself into my mind (forced, I may well say, for never willingly did I invite such a guest into my bosom) and it appeared but too plainly, that I had been labouring to effect what *Portia* most ardently wished, namely, to be freed from the addresses of *Oliver*, and by those means to be more at liberty to converse freely with his brother *Ferdinand*.

Words of rage (as I had no one to speak to) I could not utter; and on this cruel disappointment, tears of passion were my only relief. *Oliver* now grew detestable in my eyes; and, without considering whether designedly or not, I looked on him as the cause of my misery. All my love for him took the natural progress of such love, and turned into an inveterate inward hatred. I too much dreaded his resentment to shew it outwardly; but resolved, as fast as possible, to withdraw my part of that mutual love, which I a little before imagined had linked our hearts in one.

Some time ago I would not for the universe have encouraged one favourable thought of any man who had not persuaded me to love him; although I was always ready to spread out my snares, in order to induce him to set about such a work of persuasion: but I now saw *Portia*, without any flattering address, plainly preferring the conversation of *Ferdinand* to that of any other man; and, without any disguise, appearing so pleased with his company, that it was easy to perceive her heart was not untouched with an affection for him. Shall *Portia* then, thought I, do any thing which I dare not attempt? I will shew the world that *Melantha* hath as much generous love to bestow as *Portia*. *Ferdinand* shall have it all; and I will convince him how great a right I have to a return of his love, by the extravagances I will act to prevent his bestowing his heart upon another. This resolution for the instant gave me some pleasure; but I confess that ever since I have given way to this generous passion, I live in a continual terror lest any one should suspect that I am in love with *Ferdinand*, and that he doth not return it. I am afraid of my own contempt, afraid of the contempt of others, afraid of *Portia's* success, yet afraid that were my wishes to succeed I could enjoy no great happiness with such a man as *Ferdinand*: but most of all am I afraid that he should enjoy any happiness without me. In short, I am all over frights, fears, horrors, and torments. My mind is become the seat of civil war, where raging tyrants by turns oppress me, and put to the sword every thought of peace within my bosom.

This last picture of their favourite *Melantha* so displeased the *Cry*, that they insisted on it that *Portia* had falsly and maliciously represented her: but as all she had been saying was only the reverie of a wild imagination, *Portia* was too mad, they said, to know of whom or of what she had been talking.

*Portia* declared that *Una* should be her judge, from what she had already related, joined to what would hereafter appear, whether the imaginary representation of *Melantha's* mind and motives to her actions might not be fully justified, as not exceeding the truth.

*Una* allowed that the representation was indeed very strong; but *Melantha* having, in so short a time, fancied herself in love with three different men, in some measure seemed to justify the likeness of the mental picture.

*Portia*. From *Melantha* herself I had the account of her getting away *Demetrius* from her friend *Isabinda*, with many pointed circumstances, which I feared would be tedious to relate. This exploit used to be her favourite boast; and this indeed gave me at first the clue to *Melantha's* character. In the beginning of our acquaintance we were both very young, being near of the same age, and both under seventeen. And very little do girls know of each others real dispositions till a lover sets the secret springs in motion, and then are the workings of the heart truly discovered. All that I have said of *Melantha* hath been strictly gathered from her own words, although many times she hath been perfectly ignorant, I believe, of the force of her own language.

*Una* then said that the remaining part of the story would undoubtedly prove, whether *Portia* was mistaken or not in her representation of *Melantha*, and it was necessary therefore to attend with candor.

The *Cry*, though ever so unwilling to wait to the end before they passed their final condemnation of *Portia*, were, as usual, for the present awed by *Una* into silence.

## SCENE XI.

*—Sunt certi denique fines*
*Quos ultra citraque nequit considere rectum.*

Hor.

# Portia. Una. The Cry.

## *PORTIA.*

*Oliver* in some time (as well as *Melantha*) was forced into the knowledge that *Ferdinand* was the only true object of my choice; and that nothing could have given me more pleasure than being thus rid of the importunity of his passion. *Oliver* could not but perceive that his regular siege, guided by all his wise maxims, had made no impression on me (for to persuade me that he could be the object of my love was an attempt which must be baffled) and this sent him to beset *Melantha*. There indeed he had the greatest prospect of success; the garrison was betrayed from within; but the bribe to be paid for that treachery was *Oliver's* being my accepted lover. The bribe failed, and on the discovery that *Ferdinand*, and not *Oliver*, was my choice, the garrison rallied its forces, the attack from without was vigorously beat off: and thus in a short time was *Oliver*, in spite of his wise maxims, twice repulsed; and twice repulsed in favour of the very man in the world to whom he had the greatest aversion: for neither the head or heart of *Ferdinand* could give him the least opportunity of enjoying the thought of his own superiority, nor suffer him with any shew of reason to censure or condemn his brother's conduct. This forced him on the insupportable labor of endeavouring to find faults in *Ferdinand* for which there was no foundation: forced him, I say, for he never once admitted the thought that it was possible to let those endeavours alone. It was cruel in *Ferdinand* that he would not dismiss every innocent, and consequently every pleasing thought from his bosom, wisely inviting the *turba* there to take up their habitation, in order to qualify himself for accepting the honour of his brother's friendship. But *Oliver* doubled his care to conceal from *Ferdinand* his real hatred in proportion as it increased in his mind: for he had not studied political maxims to so very little purpose, as not to know that small is the mischief which can come from an open enemy, in comparison of that which is perpetrated under the cloak of professed friendship. The serpent must be admitted close to the bosom before he can dart his stings into the heart. It is from the false pretences of affection that flow most of the evils in human life. The knowledge of this truth *Oliver* held in the highest admiration, and so far reduced it to practice, that he endeavoured by every means in his power to impose on *Ferdinand*; and to make him believe his professions of kindness. But the *turba* being forced to hide their snaky heads, twisted and wreathed themselves round his heart, so as to keep him in perpetual torture. Whilst mankind, or any part of them, act thus, *Bedlam* ought to be enlarged, and the censure of madness should not be confined to one and perhaps the least species of it!

The innocent *Cordelia* too added to the uneasiness of *Oliver*, by the preference she visibly gave *Ferdinand* in her affections; for true affection is very apt to point towards its proper object: this raised in his mind an inveterate hatred against his truly inoffensive sister; but he scorned to be at the trouble of professing kindness towards her, and generally assumed an haughty superiority, treating her as a weak silly girl, much below his notice. This was the view also in which *Melantha* at first considered her; although when she found how much I was delighted with the company of *Cordelia*, she would seldom suffer me to enjoy that pleasure without adding herself to the party, and this out of pretended fondness to her dear *Cordelia*.

*Melantha*, in order to follow my path, and to endeavour at appearing agreeable to this her new lover, (as in her own hopes and imagination she had formed him) could not, as she had hitherto done, tread the beaten road of fondness, jealousies, rages, and all sorts of passions; for she had sense enough to see the impossibility of succeeding by such methods with *Ferdinand*: she endeavoured therefore to adopt all my sentiments, which, till her high admiration of me commenced, she had always abused and treated with contempt.—

The *Cry* began all to be set in agitation; winking, nodding, tossing their heads, sneering, and dropping broken sentences: but the purport of all their words and gestures was nothing more than to shew *Portia*, that they had discovered in her an insufferable vanity in imagining that her sentiments were worth adopting.

*Portia*. But this *Melantha* did so very aukwardly, that the sentiments she adopted fitted her as ill as borrowed robes. Besides (as is generally the case with borrowed garments) by endeavouring to make them appear her own, she took them in at one part and let them out at another, shortened them, lengthened them, and so transformed them, that with difficulty could the right owner claim them as her own. For example; because I said I should not be jealous, *Melantha* declared that she could never believe her own eyes, in seeing that a man prefered another woman before her. Because I declared, that I should wish the happiness of the man I loved, although he made another woman his choice, and would rather exert my utmost power to increase his happiness, than to take one

grain from his felicity: *Melantha,* resolving to soar above me, solemnly protested (how truly let her conscience inform her) that she should not only wish the happiness of the man she loved, although he was attached to another woman; but that she would endeavour by her persuasions to prevail with any woman he liked, to bestow her affections on him; and if want of fortune stood in the way of their happiness, *Melantha* would part, she said, with all her own property, without leaving herself a morsel of bread, in order to make them happy.

The *Cry,* who (as before observed) are very seldom inclined to bestow applause, were now so liberal of it on this protestation of *Melantha's,* that they were at a loss to find words by which they might extol it highly enough for their own satisfaction. Their approbation, like wine at the miser's feast, flowed very profusely; for like the miser, they could well afford plenty from a vessel which they so seldom tapped. For although they were ready at all times to load *Portia's* sentiments with the words *refined, impossible,* &c. yet never would they allow the least refinement or absurdity in the preposterous sentiments or actions of one of their own race, who was aukwardly and affectedly imitating generosity and disinterested love.

## SCENE XII.

*If a skilful man hear a word he will commend it, and will add to it: but as soon as one of no understanding heareth it, it displeaseth him, and he casteth it behind his back.*

Ecclus. ch. xxi. ver. 15.

# Portia. Una. The Cry.

## *PORTIA.*

So far did *Melantha's* fancy of being my shadow benefit our society, that she kept a much stronger guard than usual over her passions; she indulged not those frequent sallies of pettishness which we had often seen in her, and as much as possible restrained her very eyes from casting about malignant glances. *Ferdinand* had made no declaration of love to either of us, but I fancied he rather seemed in his inclination to prefer *Melantha*. [*Now a sudden flush of joy rushed into the countenances of the* Cry.] But his behaviour was unexceptionable. I never imagined (as I have said before) that my affection for him gave me any right of debarring him the privilege of choice: but notwithstanding the appearance of his liking *Melantha,* my uncommon confidence in the judgment of *Ferdinand* induced me to believe that he loved me most, because I much best deserved his love.

The rapture of the *Cry* now rose to such a height, that they could scarcely contain it within any bounds. They were convulsed with the pleasure of this farther proof of *Portia's* vanity, and knew not which way best to express their triumph. This is the lady, said half a dozen of them together, who just now imputed all her neighbour's actions to vanity. [*This was really not true, but truth was the last thing thought of in the* Cry's *accusations against* Portia.] Half a dozen more asserted that no human being was without a large share of vanity, and brought this declaration of *Portia's* to justify their assertion. Some were resolved to prove that a tree could bear both good and evil fruit, and their clamorous discourse was continually interlarded with such expressions as these—'Tis *my* opinion—for *my* part—*I* think—*I* own, *&c. &c.* and then they all sat down at once, shaking their heads (a favourite motion with the *Cry*) and as if seized with a sudden compassion for *Portia,* said, 'Tis pity—'tis great pity! but we are all liable to think too well of ourselves! vanity is a sad thing! few of us are sensible of our own imperfections! we none of us are acquainted with ourselves! we should learn to know ourselves, *Portia,* before we declare our minds free from vanity.

*Portia*. Mankind in general too well know themselves, and the labour lies not in finding themselves out, but in hiding themselves. There is as great a distinction between the possessing any knowledge, and knowing we possess it, as *Montaigne* makes between a man's believing, and only thinking that he believes. Many a person is like *Moliere's* citizen, who talked prose all his life, and yet was far advanced in years before he knew what prose was. When *Cicero* and other philosophers speak of the difficulty of knowing ourselves, those learned and ingenious men mean, I believe, the difficulties we must encounter in order to restrain our inclinations, and command our passions within such bounds as will enable us boldly to acknowledge to ourselves any pravity in our own minds, without wanting to impose it on others for so much goodness. Thus we catch at the writings of philosophers, and interpret the cowardice of our dispositions in not daring to behold our own hearts, into a difficulty of finding out its defects. If we really know not our own hearts, it is not because we cannot, but because we will not attain that knowledge. Such a wilful blindness is indeed the darkest and most incurable; for according to an old *English* proverb, *Who so blind as those that will not see*?

*Una*. That a want of understanding often lies in the WILL, Christ himself witnesses, when he says to the stubborn−hearted *Jews,* who would not admit his doctrine; "Eyes have you and see not; ears have you and hear not; neither *will* ye understand."

The *Cry* dared not answer *Una,* but were enraged to their very souls at her approbation of *Portia,* and her sanctifying that approbation with a text of scripture; an authority which they were ashamed to acknowledge, yet afraid to contradict. For should they confess its weight, that was, as they imagined, to confess the weakness of their own unaided reason, which pride forbad! and positively to deny its sanction, was wading more boldly than they dared against the strong current of custom. In silence therefore they suffered *Portia* to proceed.

*Portia*. Mankind will seldom be at the trouble to cleanse their minds, and throw out from thence that confused heap of lumber which is accumulated by suffering every roving passion to bring thither what indulged inclination it pleases. It is, in my opinion, a much greater labor they undertake, when they employ their time in secreting their litter: for the old proverb is true, that *the first trouble is the least,* and that *lazy people make themselves most work.* It would be impossible for mankind to take such pains for the hiding their trumpery, if they were not conscious it was there. For as *Shakespear* says, "The quality of nothing hath not such need to hide itself." —Men keep in their minds, as well as in their houses, a private corner, into which they are continually cramming all things

disagreeable to their sight; endeavouring by this method to conceal their rubbish from their own view, as well as from that of their neighbours. In their latter attempt they sometimes succeed, but in the former they are constantly baffled. It is this consciousness, this knowledge of ourselves, that renders us suspicious, captious, angry, spiteful. —In short, innumerable is the train of evils which arise from the knowledge that we do not deserve esteem, and from the fear that we shall not therefore obtain it. I wish it was true, in the literal sense of the words, that men did not know themselves, unless amendment surely followed that knowledge. If this was true, they would not be perplexed with so many anxious fears, nor enraged with anger that others do not think of them as they wish. If men did not know themselves, or had no private corner in their minds, which they were afraid should be laid open, I believe there would be a total end of all enmity whatever: for if we had a real settled good opinion of our own merit, another's mistake would neither give us pain, nor raise our indignation. The compliment we should pay to our own judgments, would be our satisfaction, as it is now the same compliment (by which we know it is no mistake) that sets all the *turba* at work in our bosoms.

Ask the beautiful miss—if at a masquerade she should be told by any man, that he was sure her mask concealed an ugly face, whether she would not find such a pleasure in knowing him to be mistaken in his guess, as would disarm all her anger; and whether this agreeable consciousness would not induce her to continue her discourse with him in such high good−humour, as would convince him as fully of his mistake as if she was even to unmask? But should a man chance to hit the right nail on the head in such an uncivil attempt to shew his penetration, his conviction, that he was not out in his guess, would be, in all probability, full as strong by the behaviour of the enraged mask, who had no beautiful face to hide. For stung to the quick by finding her disguise of no real use to her, she would, it is most likely, shew her resentment by turning suddenly on her heel in the highest wrath and indignation at the impertinence of the saucy fellow's supposition. That woman, however, at a masquerade, who doth not on the like occasion shew the resentment above−mentioned, is, we may fairly presume, either very handsome or very good−humoured, and contented with possessing no large share of beauty.

Proverbs (says Mr. *Addison*) are formed on the universal consent of mankind built on experience. The common proverb, that it is the galled horse that winches on being touched, is a proof that the having a sore place is necessary to render the being touched painful.

I believe it might easily be proved, that the darkest ignorance concerning our minds, is not productive of half the evils as is the knowledge of ourselves, unless we could strike at the root of the disease, and bear without pain the sight of what we necessarily are; adding the trouble also of removing, as much as possible, whatever is noxious from our breasts. But when we toss about the sayings of philosophers, and do not take care to enter into their true meaning: we only disguise and cover over falshood by the sanction of acknowledged authority. It would, in my opinion, be an ill compliment to those philosophers, who dwell so strongly on the difficulty of knowing ourselves, to suppose they could have any other meaning than that the difficulty is raised by the perverseness of our inclinations, and our want of candor to own even to ourselves the truths which we have discovered, rather than from any incapacity in our natures for such knowledge.

The *Cry* stood all this while gaping and staring on each other as if they wanted to catch *Portia's* meaning: but instead of preserving the candor which she had been just recommending, they were in reality not endeavouring to understand her words, but to censure them; not to examine her sentiments, but to load them with abuse. First, they accused her of talking above their comprehension; in the next breath they denied the possibility of her doing so; then again would they assert that they did not understand her; but in the conclusion they all set themselves hard at work at proving that the fault lay not in their want of candor or capacity, but in her want of meaning. In the most taunting language she was now abused for her boldness in soaring so far out of her depth as to meddle at all with the philosophers, whom they would insinuate were placed in the clouds not to be looked at by any mortal, especially by female eyes; and with pretended humility they talked of such writings as if calculated for the perusal of some other species besides their own, who had nothing to do but to stand at a distance and admire.

*Portia*. Since, O ye *Cry*, you are so offended at my mentioning the philosophers, I will tell you a familiar story to illustrate my meaning.

A merchant in the city had three daughters. They had every one of them separate apartments; and the father of these girls insisted on it that each of them should keep her own apartment in decent order.

Miss *Betty*, the eldest, was a slut; and instead of making every thing clean, she used herself to the lazy odious custom of thrusting about what was dirty into closets, cupboards, holes and corners.

Miss *Nanny,* the second sister, was properly a slattern. She had a carelessness in her disposition, which might be opposed to exact neatness, but not to decent cleanliness.

Miss *Jenny,* the youngest, always kept herself and her apartments perfectly neat and tidy.

One day it chanced that Miss *Betty* had some visitors. As soon as she heard them at the door she was all confusion, running here and there to fill her hiding places, and to make her rooms appear tolerably decent. She had but just recovered herself, and was seated with her acquaintance, when Miss *Jenny* (wanting something out of a closet in her sister's room) came in, opened the closet door, and discovered to the guests such a slut's hole as made *Betty* colour like scarlet, and tremble in every joint with the shame of such a discovery. She had however so much command of herself as to say nothing for the present. But no sooner were the visitors gone, than she began to abuse her sister so loudly and immoderately, that it was impossible for *Jenny* to be heard one word in her own defence. At last, when *Betty* was out of breath, and could talk no longer, *Jenny,* in the mildest terms, assured her that she intended not any offence; she humbly begged her pardon, and said every thing she could think of to appease her sister's wrath: but all in vain! for it was the discovery of her own trumpery which had raised her anger; nor could the innocence of *Jenny's* intentions by any means be proved to a mind so enflamed with wrath, and so irritated by vexation. *Betty,* from this time forward, took a most inveterate hatred to her sister *Jenny* ; nor ever afterwards saw her entering the room without looking ascance at her, as thinking she was come with a malicious intention of discovering more of her dirty ways.

Will any one say that *Betty* did not know the state of her own apartments, but fancied they were quite clean when she acted thus? I should rather be inclined to pronounce, that it was consciousness, and not ignorance, that, on the sight of *Jenny,* raised all this hurly burly in *Betty's* mind.

Miss *Nanny,* whenever her sisters came into her apartments, and found fault with a few scattered things that lay about the room through carelessness, was not angry, but rather obliged to them for assisting her in putting her rooms in order. *Nanny* knew that there was no more to be discovered than what was visible before their eyes, and therefore had neither fear nor anger in her mind at their approach.

Little *Jenny,* in whose apartments no real fault was to be found, dreaded not the nicest scrutiny; nor suffered any emotion from the restless inspection of her sister *Betty* into every closet, cupboard, and corner of her rooms.

One day when *Deby* was searching about, and carrying a broom to sweep where there was no dust, she struck her sister *Jenny* such a blow on the head as almost stunned her; but when *Betty* assured her that the blow was accidental, *Jenny's* unsuspicious and friendly mind was soon appeased, and perfectly contented. When *Betty* had for a long time searched for dirt and litter, and all to no purpose, she fell into the strangest whim I ever heard of. She would not give credit even to her own eyes, but (thinking no doubt on the trumpery in her own apartments) insisted on it that 'twas utterly impossible for any place to be so clean as *Jenny's* rooms appeared to be. She was positive, she said, that it was *Jenny's* more artful manner of hiding her litter from her acquaintance, that made her pass upon the world for a neat and decent woman.

Behind this bulwark of *Jenny's* supposed hypocrisy and cunning did *Betty* intrench herself, and often would she say, that "for her part she did not pretend to such perfection; and since all mankind had dirt in their apartments, those were in her opinion the most honest, who did not, by hiding it quite away, impose upon the world a belief that they had none."

Let no one presume to say, that this was not knowing herself: for *Betty* was conscious of the falsehood of her assertion, and was thoroughly convinced that *Jenny* had really no dirt or disorder in her apartments. *Betty* said this because she had an inclination to say it, and that very inclination arose from a knowledge of its falsehood.

*Betty* is the man who inviting the *turba,* cultivating every degree of evil in his mind, conscious of his own turpitude, lives a life of horror for fear of being discovered, and therefore suspects and hates every one around him.

*Nanny* is the man, who through carelessness and love of pleasure is guilty of faults, but doth not love nor cherish them.

*Jenny* is the man, who cherishing the *dextra* with a true christian spirit, keeps his conscience clear, and his heart free from one malicious thought; who barricades his breast against the *turba,* and with watchful care prevents their most distant approach.

The *Cry* now changed their inclination of censuring *Portia* for meddling with the philosophers, into a desire of abusing her for talking such low and indelicate stuff: but recollecting that she had opened to them a door for the

admiration of their own wisdom, in extracting a meaning from the most trifling tale; unheeding of her own general and philosophic explanation of her story, they each began narrowly to apply the characters of miss *Nanny* and miss *Betty* to some one or other of their own female acquaintance: but as to the character of *Jenny,* they denied it to have any existence in nature.

*Portia*. You have shewn me, O ye *Cry,* that besides the *word to the vulgar,* and the *word to the wise,* which may be found in all good fables, there is also a *word to the malicious*: for no other name can be given to such a narrow application as you have made of the merchant's daughters. But to extract private libels from public satire hath ever been the office of malevolence and folly.

The *Cry,* excessively nettled at *Portia's* last observation, declared it as their opinion, that all she had ever said of the *word to the wise* was stark nonsense, and uttered with a vain desire of setting off her own wisdom.

*Portia*. If any thing I have advanced can give the least offence; or bear the interpretation you now insinuate, I will gladly change the *word to the wise* into the *word to the learner,* it being I confess in one respect a much properer phrase: for whoever is above receiving instruction couched in fables, as a learner, will never be the wiser for all the knowledge and learning that is extant under the sun. For although the learners may become the wise, yet must the wilful always remain in their ignorance.

## SCENE. XIII.

*To think well of ourselves, if we deserve it, is a lustre to us.*

Beaum. & Fletcher.

## Portia. Una. The Cry.

The *Cry* were so enraged at finding all their attempts to confuse and confound *Portia's* sentiments baffled, and their own malevolence detected, that they could not bear the sight. Suddenly therefore they turned their eyes another way; they recollected *Portia's* saying, that she thought herself more deserving than *Melantha* of the love of *Ferdinand*; they still hugged close the idea of her insufferable vanity; censured her for having amused them with a heap of contradictions, and then concluded with a repetition of their new discovery, namely, that vanity is the only actuating motive in the human mind; by which, had they spoke plainly, they intended to confine their meaning to the mind of *Portia* only.

*Portia*. I do not perceive in what manner my saying, that I think I deserve the love of *Ferdinand* better than *Melantha,* can possibly prove me possessed of so large a share of vanity as you, O ye *Cry*, are ready to lay to my charge. But supposing me ever so vain, your conclusion that vanity is the only actuating motive to the human mind, doth not appear to me naturally to follow. If my faults were as innumerable as the sands of the sea; if I have not one virtue, but on the contrary am possessed of every vice in the catalogue; truth will nevertheless steadily keep her own place; and as far as my judgment goes, I will always bear her testimony, and not by any hocus pocus tricks endeavour to turn vice into virtue, or fallacy into truth. 'Tis this desire of bending all things to our own purposes, which turns them into confusion, and is the chief source of every error in our lives.

I say, I depended on the judgment of *Ferdinand* to distinguish between me and *Melantha,* who best deserved his love. Nor do I think there is more vanity in doing justice to ones self, than doing justice to another. I was truly sensible of the real merit of *Ferdinand*; and from being able to distinguish his true character, I esteemed him above all mankind. My own natural taste induced me to like him, and from the kindness and innocence of his behaviour, I loved him with the utmost warmth of gratitude. His happiness (as I have repeatedly said) was the strongest and most forcible wish of my soul: and altho' in his pursuit of happiness I had been forced to lose so great a pleasure as the enjoyment of his company, had he attained his pursuit, my first wish must have been gratified. Were we separated never to meet again by the distance of a thousand miles, yet must the hearing of his prosperity give me the most sensible pleasure; [*now the word* impossible *re−echo'd through the assembly*] whilst to have his company at the expence of knowing that I was a burthen to him, or in any way the cause of his uneasiness; was he to conceal the truth as much as possible, and instead of upbraiding me to make it his business to indulge and gratify me, yet should I be very miserable and unhappy.

Now the *Cry,* unable longer to contain themselves, threw forth a loud affirmation, that what *Portia* described was not in nature; that it was all refined nonsense, and that no human being ever yet had such a way of thinking.

*Portia*. How easily should I have gained credit in relating what passed within my own mind, had not you, O ye *Cry*, known yourselves, and found in your own hearts the impossibility of thinking or acting in the same manner. But with all the ridicule you attempt to throw on my words, you only prove to me that, in spite of your inclinations to the contrary, you in fact admire what you pretend to despise.

*Portia* could never say any thing more certain of raising all the *turba* in the minds of the *Cry,* than by thus repeatedly informing them that their hearts were no more concealed from others than from themselves. In the height of their rage they used many expressions to prove her in the wrong, which (as is commonly the case with indulged passions) clearly proved her to be in the right.

*Portia*. For all what I have said seems so incredible to your ears, yet doth it amount to no more than a plain confession, that with an honest simplicity of heart I really loved *Ferdinand*; and what I have described of myself is but a description of the natural progress of true love in the mind. Whenever any passion, to which the name of love is given, wanders into another road, 'tis my unalterable opinion that the name is falsely given. Love disclaims its acquaintance, and PRIDE or DESIRE, or both, walking hand in hand, may justly claim it as all their own.

*Melantha's* esteem for *Ferdinand* was built on that tottering foundation, the opinion of others: her love for him was confined within the selfish narrow bounds of wishing to make him the instrument of her own pleasures: her liking to him at the most went no farther than an accidental desire, raised by the general law of attraction, and caught in the road of endeavouring to gratify her vanity: therefore plainly seeing all this, I could not but think that in the balance I best deserved the love of *Ferdinand*. Yet at that very time (load them, O ye *Cry*, with refinement

as much as you please) these were my real thoughts, and these sort of reflexions sometimes passed in my mind.

I think myself, 'tis true, in some measure deserving the love of *Ferdinand*: but in the end should he on reflexion prefer *Melantha,* so unbounded is my confidence in his judgment, that I shall be dubious of myself. And altho' I am certain that I am not mistaken in what passes in my own breast concerning him, yet I shall suspect that I have fallen into a common error, and have suffered my own passions to drive me headlong on to mistake *Melantha*. [ *Now we are affectedly humbled, said the* Cry.] But when I examine myself, and reflect that *Ferdinand* of all mankind is my fixed choice, that altho' the whole world was to be so blinded as to imagine him an idiot, yet would my opinion be as a rock immoveable: [ *self−conceit and stubbornness were uppermost in the thoughts of the* Cry] that altho' distress of every kind, poverty, and its almost constant attendant contempt, was to take ever so strong hold of him; yet would I chuse to share his distress, and assiduously to use my utmost endeavours to lighten his misfortunes, rather than to be placed by any other on the highest summit of human grandeur and glory. —When on the other hand I think, nay am certain, unless the strongest prejudice blinds my eyes, that any one man amongst ten thousand (provided her best friend was her rival) would please *Melantha* full as well; and that if *Ferdinand* was to lose the reputation of his understanding, her love would instantly vanish; that she would not chuse to share his misfortunes, but with the contempt of the rest of the world, he must unavoidably experience that of *Melantha*. I confess when I made this comparison, and yet fancied that *Ferdinand* in his heart preferred *Melantha,* a refractory notion sometimes attempted to arise in my mind, implying, "'tis a little hard;" and this notion I could not help accompanying with a sigh: but as soon as I had the power of reflexion, knowing that the mind is not in a proper disposition whilst it is inclined to imagine itself dealt hardly with, I always took this notion by the head and shoulders, and with my utmost resolution cast it out as matter of offence.

The *Cry* now began to play over all their postures, and to signify to each other a new discovery just come to their knowledge; and this was no other than that *Portia's* last words amounted to an absolute contradiction of all her former sentiments concerning love: for they proved perfectly to their own satisfaction, that *Portia* had by implication fully informed them that she was possessed at that time with a raging jealousy against *Melantha*; that she felt the sharpest indignation against *Ferdinand* for daring to think himself at liberty to like whom he pleased; and, in short, that all those passions to which *Portia* had a little before so resolutely refused to give the name of love, had taken full possession of her whole soul. They made use of their wonted arguments, such as clamor, sneers, *&c.* not to convince *Portia,* but to justify, as they fancied, their several accusations which they knew really to be false; and it was that knowledge which induced the bitterness of their anger in such their accusations.

*Portia*. An intruding notion, which was carefully watched in its first rise, which was immediately as well as resolutely thrown out, although the love of *Ferdinand* was in the balance, and which produced also nothing more than a rising sigh, pressed back to my own bosom, hath no more real likeness to raging jealousy and frantic fury, than have those turbulent passions to true and gentle love. But once resolved, O ye *Cry,* to chain down truth on the side of your own inclinations, with what an unlimited faith do ye give credit to the most glaring absurdities, and the most absolute contradictions! Oh that you had never known, no not even had the least suspicion of yourselves! that you had really believed yourselves possessed of all goodness and wisdom! How much inveterate malice would then be spared, and what an immense way would it go in driving the tormenting *turba* from your bosoms! How greatly, O ignorance, art thou to be preferred before every degree of knowledge, short of that real wisdom which teaches us to amend our faults, or to bear with patience and humility those defects which are not within our power to remove.

This was so like a former rebuke of *Portia's,* by which the audacious *Cry* were before abashed, that they endeavoured to turn the discourse, by calling on her for a farther account of *Melantha,* whom secretly in their hearts they all approved, as being (as they were now convinced) one of their own society.

## SCENE XIV.

*Man is to man a monster−hearted stone:*
*With heav'n there's mercy, but with man there's none.*

Old Play.

# Portia. Una. The Cry.

## *PORTIA.*

Whenever *Melantha* imagined that *Ferdinand* paid her any deference, or preferred her in his regard, she had so many sly contrivances to throw forth the insolence of her heart, that I fancy she must have lived without sleep in order to have invented them: yet had she a difficult part to act, as that insolence was to be visible only to me, and totally hid from the of *Ferdinand*.

This labor of acting a double part is a strange choice for any one to make! It is like carrying a dark lantern, and keeping the thoughts continually on the watch for fear of making a mistake, and, by turning the wrong side, of exposing their own countenances, which they desire to keep hid. This double part also is generally undertaken for the same purpose as the dark lantern is carried; to perpetrate some mischievous intent.

But *Melantha* was baffled in her design of becoming the object of my envy; for I knew her character; and that she should act conformable to it was neither matter of my wonder or vexation. It was the behaviour of *Ferdinand* alone that was capable in the least degree of influencing my mind. Insolence I was certain could not take root in his heart; it was not the proper soil to produce such weeds. I think, as *Desdemona* says, *the sun where he was born drew all such humours from him*. Had he even dropped any expression which, at first sight, I might have construed into insolence, I should have blamed myself for such a construction, and should carefully have searched my own heart for the cause of such an error. I should have arraigned some indulged inclination of perverting my judgment: I should have endeavoured first to have discovered, and then to have driven it from my bosom.

The *Cry*, conscious that they had never imputed any mistake to their own inclinations; that they had never searched their own hearts for any error, and therefore had never found the only place where it lay hid; were very angry with *Portia* for pretending to assert, that she had ever exerted resolution enough to stand such a self−examination. Then, for *my* part, and, *I* do not pretend, *&c. &c.* were re−echoed through the assembly: and all those sentences which begin with "for *my* part *I* don't," always imply "for *your* part *you* do." At last the *Cry*, from this account of *Portia's* impartial examination of her own mind, jumbled up a very odd accusation; for dropping what she last said of herself, they dwelt on the confidence she had placed in *Ferdinand*; nodded, winked, and exulted in the discovery that she was the most partial creature breathing. It was no wonder, they said, for a woman, actuated so strongly by partiality as *Portia* was, to dwell on the great esteem she had for the man she liked. It was acting just like all the rest in the world. They could not make her the compliment of thinking she had, in this instance, any superiority over the rest of her sex. They were too sincere to flatter her in such a manner. Then was the word *partiality* again tossed about from one to the other; and the whole *Cry* were unanimous in their opinion, that *Portia* stood fully convicted of it to the highest degree.

*Portia* thought to herself that the word *partiality* had no more to do with what she had been saying, than the word *hobnob* : but to convince the *Cry* that any thing they please to say is not perfectly to the purpose, was a task which she knew would be in vain,; she asked them therefore what idea they had really annexed to the word *partiality*.

The *Cry* were some time before they gave any answer to this question; at last they produced so many, that to enumerate them would be endless: but the sum and substance of all the meaning that could be extracted from half an hour's babble was, that partiality was something very bad, and they resolutely persisted that *Portia* was guilty of it.

*Portia*. Without going farther for an explanation of the word than the common acceptation of it, partiality means a willingness to justify rather than condemn the words or actions of any person for whom we have conceived an affection. If this affection should be built on the foundation of capricious liking, then is our partiality towards that person an injudicious approbation.

This is not all, said *Clodio* from the *Cry*; for partiality will approve in one person the very same actions which it condemns in another.

*Portia*. Unless the inducement to such approbation can be proved to be an ill−grounded esteem, obtained from us by flattery, I see nothing so absurd in such a favourable construction of some men's words and actions. For on due consideration we shall find it I believe true, that some persons have a right to our partiality: or rather, from the uniform innocence that runs through their conversation, they have a right to claim it as a piece of justice at our

hands, that we should interpret in their favour any little accidental appearance of a contradiction in their behaviour, or in their sentiments. This, instead of being a blameable partiality, ought to be called a right−placed confidence, and is nothing more than common charity of mind.

"Now we are all benevolence and charity, said the *Cry*; but when we mention *Oliver* and *Melantha,* we can shew our prejudice as plainly as we can our partiality, when we chuse to be lavish of our praises on our favourites *Cordelia* and *Ferdinand* ."

*Portia*. Can it justly be called partiality not to yield our belief without the strongest proofs that a peach−tree will not produce sour crabs? or is it prejudice against the poor crab−tree not to expect from it the melting peach? And yet the not yielding our assent to the possibility of a peach−tree's bearing crabs, might, with full as much propriety, be termed partiality, as the unbounded confidence I have expressed towards the innocent and well−regulated minds of *Ferdinand* and *Cordelia*. If with justice also we might apply the word *prejudice* to any one's persisting in the belief that peaches are not produced by crab−trees, then with equal justice must I stand condemned of prejudice for pronouncing, that the language of *Oliver* and *Melantha* (however they may endeavour to disguise their thoughts) must be the genuine fruit of the *turba,* which are crawling and twisting themselves about their wretched hearts. The true distinction between that capricious partiality, which is the result of wrong judgment, and that tendency towards approving, nay sometimes excusing our friends, whom long−tried experience hath endear'd to us, is to me so plain, that I should have said very little on the subject, did I not daily perceive that the great dread of appearing partial, and the general outcry for impartiality, hath opened a field for mankind to give a loose to every degree of harshness in their dispositions, and, under the pretence of justice, to suppress with an iron hand every inlet to mercy. This great love of impartiality sometimes goes so far as not to suffer men's failings to rest with them in their graves, and urges us on to the tearing open the wounds of our dead friends, and, as Mr. *Addison* says, *exposing them to public view*: but by this renting and tearing them open (to continue the metaphor) they must necessarily be enlarged, and often to a little scar is given the appearance of a ghastly wound. In a rigid, or call it an impartial examination, into the merits of the living, it may be supposed that the amendment of the person is designed by such rough physic; but the pretence of probing the wounds of the dead, in order to heal them, is by death rendered impossible. Where then can be the utility or inducement to such impartial justice? I am afraid the inducement is found in the security arising from the common saying, *that dead dogs,* —&c. (the proverb, as *Hamlet* says, is something musty) and the utility in the raising our own fame on the mangled reputations of our dead friends.

The *Cry,* although they were not fond of agreeing with *Portia,* were struck with such a reverential awe for themselves whenever they should be dead, that they did not contradict her sentiments on this head: but they carried their compassion for the dead to such an extreme, as plainly shewed they had none to spare for any human creature living.

## SCENE XV.

*Fictis jocari nos meminerit fabulis.*

Phædrus.

# Portia. Una. The Cry.

## *PORTIA.*

In spite of all the pains *Melantha* took in acting her double part, and carrying her dark lantern steady, it often turned its light upon herself, and gave me so full a view of her, as to enable me with certainty, I believe, to draw her picture. From a woman's behaviour to her lover and her friends around her, it is no difficult task to describe every step she would take on being married to the man whom she believes to be the choice of another. And if I may be permitted once more to assume the character of *Melantha,* I will endeavour fairly to exhibit the life which her imagination must have formed in being the wife of *Ferdinand*.

The *Cry* were not so averse to this proposal of *Portia's,* as from their aversion to all her imaginary flights of fancy might have been expected: they had a faint remembrance, that in *Portia's* last representation of *Melantha,* it turned out to her own mortification; and desirous of once more enjoying such pleasing sounds, they, with ready acquiescence, intreated her to tell them in what manner the happy *Melantha* enjoyed herself when she was married to *Ferdinand*.

*Portia*. Whether in reality *Melantha* ever enjoyed that superior lot, is not at present my purpose to declare: but at the time when she had made herself believe that it was her highest wish to become the wife of *Ferdinand,* while she was labouring under some apprehensions lest I should be the object of his choice, and yet from his complacency of temper had gathered hopes enough to form a distant prospect of success. These were the thoughts which I doubt not sometimes passed within her bosom. "Oh that I could but once make *Ferdinand* fully declare himself my lover, to free me from those dreadful apprehensions which I confess I sometimes have, that *Portia* is more agreeable to him than myself! For fear of losing my desired prize, I would soon fix him in the marriage chains; but I would so far conceal my inward triumph over *Portia,* the neglected *Portia,* that I would more assiduously than ever seek her conversation, and force myself into her friendship. I would intreat her company to church on the solemn day of our marriage; I would engage her not to refuse me, by urging to her her own declarations of the pleasure she always took in beholding her friend's happiness. I would insist upon her going with us to make some stay at our pleasant country−house, which I intend *Ferdinand* shall take for me on my wedding. Her delight in his company and conversation would induce her to accept my offer; for I have often heard the mean−spirited creature declare, that if she loved any man (and I know she loves *Ferdinand*) there was no conjuration in his being married to another, which could banish such love from her mind. Oh heavens! what an unaccountable young woman is *Portia*! I am sure was she to be married to *Ferdinand,* all my love to him would vanish with a vengeance, as I may say; for nothing less than vengeance could appease the torments of my breast. Daggers or poison would be my only wish; nor could toads or adders be more loathsome to my sight, than would be *Portia* if she was the wife of *Ferdinand*. —But avaunt thou tormenting picture, and let me again suppose myself the happy woman. — Having prevailed with *Portia* to accompany us to our country−house at—as soon as we were settled I would give out that I saw company, and this village being remarkable for the number of genteel families who live there, as well as for their great politeness to strangers, I should not want spectators and admirers of my wedding cloaths, the neatness of my furniture, the richness of my plate, and the elegance of my fancy in china, shells, *&c.* But my chief joy would not be in shewing off those trifling things which money can give any one possession of, but in shewing off *my* husband. When at table with other learned men, *Ferdinand* talked as learnedly as they, I would frequently interrupt him with *my dear* and *my love*; so as not to let the company one minute forget, that the man who uttered such good sense was *my* husband. Yet all this good sense in *my* husband, I must contrive by some trick or other to have transferred to *myself* . This I would effect by watching narrowly after some peculiarity in my husband's temper; which being once found, I would make such a bustle about complying with it before company, that they should always go away satisfied with the notion of my superior understanding, which could thus condescend to humour a man in his unaccountable whims. *Ferdinand's* openness of temper and generosity of mind, would make him conceal nothing from me; and I should every day find something new to work upon, whilst he should know no more of me than I thought proper; nor would I fail to have some hidden, as well as some apparent view in all my actions. I would leave no methods untried to retain *Portia* still in our family, as a constant witness of my triumph. She would perhaps soon see through all my tricks, and find me out; but this I would by no means endeavour to prevent, as I know that nothing could afflict her more,

than to see her beloved *Ferdinand* dealt with thus treacherously. I should then have the inward satisfaction to know, that *Portia* with a most poignant regret would secretly think, *O that I had been happy enough to have pleased* Ferdinand! *how differently would I have acted towards him*! But whatever *Portia* might think or see, she must not dare to say the least word to *Ferdinand*: for if she should, what a clamor would I soon raise against her as a mischief−maker! How would I extol in the highest terms my own civility to her! How would I brand her with the names of treacherous and ungrateful! I would load her with the accusation of making a breach between me and my lawful husband. I would contrive that the whole world should believe that her design was to allure *Ferdinand* from his virtuous wife. Then would *Portia's* infamy be the consequence; and I should enjoy all the raptures of the highest revenge."

The minds of the *Cry* now all sympathized so strongly with the raptures of *Melantha* for this compleat triumph over *Portia,* that they could admit no other image. They fairly forgot in whose person *Portia* had been speaking; they imagined *Melantha* present before their eyes. They declared that it was ever their opinion, that *Portia* would at last come to the highest disgrace. They pityed poor *Melantha* for entertaining such a treacherous guest, and abused *Portia* as if she was absent in the most virulent terms they could invent.

*Portia* at first was a little startled, and could not directly comprehend their meaning. But *Una* said—Don't you perceive, *Portia,* that the *Cry* have all drank of the *Circean* cup; they are intoxicated by the pleasure of supposing it possible for *Melantha* to have the power of treating you in such a manner. They are so drunk with their own inclinations, that they have literally lost their senses, and are metaphorically all standing upon their heads.

*Portia* plainly saw their transformation; but she took no other method of reducing them again into their natural forms, than thus to continue her discourse.

*Portia*. These, from the knowledge I have of *Melantha's* mind, were sometimes her pleasing hopes; but like the poor man in the *Spectator,* she found her basket overturned; and all her imaginary joys vanished by the obtruding thought, that perhaps *Ferdinand* might be able to look through all her designs, and prevent all her endeavours of imposing on him; and 'twas possible besides, that she might never be his wife. This thought awakened the *Cry* also from their pleasing dream. They hated the light, and wished like *Nell* in the farce, that they could have dreamt for ever. They recollected their own fantastic behaviour, when their heads were so topsy turvy as to believe *Melantha* present, and *Portia* absent. Their dread lest *Portia* as well as *Una* had observed their being thus mistaken, and what was yet worse, had penetrated the motive to their mistake, roused all the *turba* in their bosoms, and set their whole souls into a flame: at last they turned off their rage by bursting into a loud fit of laughter, as if they had suddenly found a good jest: and on *Portia's* enquiring the cause, they declared that they were laughing to think how she and *Una* were mistaken, in believing them to be in an error. For they only pretended to mistake *Portia* for *Melantha,* and were following her example in playing with their own imaginations and whims.

## SCENE. XVI.

*Is't reason we should quarrel with the glass,*
*Which shows the monstrous features of our face?*

# Portia. Una. The Cry.

## *PORTIA.*

Whether *Ferdinand* had at that time one serious thought of marrying *Melantha,* I could not from his behaviour positively discover: and from this uncertainty my most assiduous care was necessary, to preserve such an even balance in my mind, as to prevent my being elated by self−flattery into deceitful hopes, founded only on my own imagination. Nor on the other hand did I give way to despair, which too generally arises only from indignation, at not being treated according to the opinion we may have formed of our own deserts. Such despair whilst it wears the face of modesty, is sculking behind a borrowed disguise, and is ashamed to shew itself in its own natural colours.

The inward misery of *Oliver* is not to be described on finding himself thus disregarded; and the desire of revenge against me and *Melantha,* for our preference of *Ferdinand,* actuated and tormented his mind: the desire of revenge against his brother for deserving to be preferred, imbittered every corner of his bosom. His bed, the proper place of rest, afforded him no repose. And never were the words of the prophet, that "there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked," more truly verified than in the bosom of *Oliver*: as he was possessed with the highest degree of revenge, he was consequently oppressed with the highest degree of misery.

*Una* at this picture dropped her eyes in token of soft pity, and turned her thoughts on *Portia's* invocation to Bedlam, to enlarge itself.

Whilst the eyes of all the *Cry* glared with horror, and altho' they felt to the quick the truth of *Portia's* description, yet they declared that it bore no resemblance to any thing in nature, and was only a phantom of her own brain. They grew also so wondrously tender−hearted and humane, that they could not indure (they said) to think on such a picture of horror, as that with which *Portia* had presented them. But this was not the first time she had endeavoured to expose human nature, by dwelling on its deformities, or rather the deformities of her own depraved imagination.

Then, they would impose on others for truth, what they were conscious was an absolute falsehood; and *Duessa* herself, their chief orator, undertook with all her eloquence to plead the cause of benevolence, and to accuse *Portia* of having denied its existing in human nature.

*Duessa* performed her part perfectly to their satisfaction. She traced back by a partial remembrance all that *Portia* had said, capable of being wrested to their present purpose. She accused her of having justified bad characters, and depreciated good ones, in her pretended distinctions between *Prior's Emma,* lady *Anne,* and the *Ephesian* matron. *Portia's* introducing the new terms of *dextra* and *sinistra,* was interpreted by *Duessa* into a design of exalting her favourites, and abusing those to whom she bore an inveterate hatred. And from a long detail of attempted arguments, *Duessa* in the end deduced this logical conclusion; that all nice distinctions of characters are intended as a general satire against mankind; and finished her harangue with an assertion, that *Portia* was the most malevolent satirical creature that ever yet was born.

*Portia*. So heavy a charge as you have now mustered up against me, O ye *Cry,* I cannot well pass by in silence; but to the candor of *Una* I appeal, whether I am deserving of your rigorous censures: or whether my endeavours have not been to support the existence of good characters; and to shew that the seeds of good−nature, benevolence, and every amiable quality are in almost every human breast; and would undoubtedly yield the first of such grain, were they not choaked and smothered by the rank weeds, which men through choice, and not necessity, take pains to cultivate.

That my being desirous of introducing the word *dexter* into the mind, to express an uprightness of acting as well, as the *sinister* is used, to point out paltry and base designs, can, I confess, as fairly be proved to arise from my desire of depreciating human nature, as that all nice distinctions are a satire against mankind.

Oh ignorance, how often could I invoke thy friendly aid! Did you not, O ye *Cry,* perfectly know yourselves, and were ye not conscious on which side you would be ranged; if, from a just distinction in character, the human race were to be properly divided, you would be no longer in dread of such a division.

When at first I was desirous of introducing to you a good character, and so far from thinking it unnatural, declared him of my own acquaintance, you screamed out that it was the *faultless monster* ; but when I contrasted it with a bad one, you favoured me with your attention, and hung on my words in hopes of receiving food for your

malice. Your resolutely denying that there was to be found such a real character as miss *Jenny*, and yet your readiness to apply the characters of the two other sisters *Betty* and *Nanny*, in my story of the merchant's daughters, fully prove the high opinion you have of human nature, which you now pretend so strenuously to vindicate. If I commend any one from my own knowledge, you accuse me of partiality; if from the same certainty I dispraise or censure, 'tis set down to the account of prejudice. I cannot even warmly admire the writings of a known and approved author, but you immediately call forth for me the abusive appellation of PUFF, in hopes by these means to mark with contempt and scorn every kind of deserved praise.

Your eager thirst after methods of abusing me very little do I heed or regard: But your outcry that human nature is vilified, when one false or rotten heart is detected, your having the words *virtue* and *benevolence* continually in your mouths, your bestowing every human virtue profusely on all mankind, but taking them positively from every individual, is so common, so stale a practice, in order to impose upon the world a belief of your own great goodness, that nothing but perfect inexperience can be deceived by it.

If I am mistaken, let *Una* correct my error; but as the case at present appears to me, your desire of supporting the cause of virtue and goodness, against my attempts to extirpate them from the human race, is like a petition from the wolves, that they may protect the sheep against the watchful dog, or like the same request made from the fox, to have a grant for being a sole protector of the domestic feather'd kind.

This ingenious device, peculiar to the *Cry,* of declaring that human nature is vilified, and mankind attacked whenever any of their fallacies are laid open to public view, is one of those *arcana* which rouses all the *turba* in their breasts, and fills them with the most dreadful apprehensions on the least danger of a discovery. Too well they knew the truth of what *Portia* had said; and without the dreaded decision of *Una,* they clung close to each other, muttering and meditating future vengeance.

*Portia*. The man or woman who is continually putting in practice sly artifices, for vexing and teazing those around them, and from whose mouth daily flows nothing but the words of spite and envy, shall not pretend, under the general notion of the goodness and benevolence of the human race, to hide the malignity of their own hearts. 'Tis from observation on all his words and actions, that I venture boldy to describe the secret working of *Oliver's* bosom: but he never was so perplexed in his life, as in his attempts to mollify the torments in his own breast, by communicating part of them to me and *Melantha*: for the characteristic difference between us two, render'd it impossible by the same methods to vex us both. *Melantha's* mind he was perfectly acquainted with by the force of sympathy; but not one of his wise maxims or general observations on the sex, could lead him to the knowledge of a single thought that passed in my breast. When he endeavoured therefore to communicate the *turba* to us both, *Jupiter* could grant but half his prayer.

One great diversion with him was (for there was nothing so triflingly paltry that a mind guided by the *sinistra* will not descend to) that when he had been abroad with his brother, he would inform us of some peculiar notice that *Ferdinand* had taken of some pretty woman, in order to alarm our minds with jealous fears: and with *Melantha* he in part succeeded; but on me he had seldom any chance of enjoying the malicious pleasure he proposed to himself: nay even with *Melantha* he was not perfectly satisfied; for altho' she might believe his report, yet would the joy arising from the knowledge, that *Ferdinand* could not fix his love on another woman without my disappointment as well as her own, prevent her being so much vexed as *miss Oliver* designed. One instance of this kind of girlish foolery practised by him was as follows.

*Ferdinand* and his brother had been together near three weeks in the country, at the house of a gentleman with whom they had long been intimately acquainted. On their return, my pleasure at again beholding *Ferdinand* was so great, that I was animated into a liveliness of humour more than is commonly natural to me; and this was such wormwood to *Melantha,* that it poisoned all the comfort she might otherwise have expected from his return. She would gladly have accepted of his absence, for the sake of my being barred his conversation. Besides, she could not prevail on herself to believe that I could be so visibly and unaffectedly delighted only with the company of *Ferdinand,* unless I had flattered myself with having gained the preference in his esteem. But *Melantha* had a laborious part to perform; for it was necessary in the part she had undertaken of being my shadow and adopting my sentiments, that she should appear filled with the highest joy on the return of *Ferdinand,* whilst her bosom was really filled with the dreadfullest apprehensions from seeing that gaiety of disposition in me, which was her task to imitate. But of *Melantha* I speak here only *en passant,* and shall now return to *Oliver*.

He took the opportunity of his brother's first absence, after his coming back to town, to inform both *Melantha*

and me of the great gaiety and unusual pleasantry of *Ferdinand* whilst he was in the country. Mistaken *Oliver*! to imagine that the knowledge of *Ferdinand's* enjoying himself could ever wound my heart! I smiled from real pleasure; and *Melantha* resolving to continue the part she had undertaken, twisted her mouth in order to mimic that smile; but in reality her eyes grew fierce instead of brightening into chearfulness; and the thought that *Ferdinand* could enjoy himself in her absence set the *turba* to their usual work within.

*Oliver* saw *Melantha's* perturbation. Sympathy discovered it to him; but he had no traces, nor could his wise maxims lend him any, by which he might read my mind. He was willing to make himself believe, that I was artfully concealing the uneasiness, which hearing of *Ferdinand's* chearfulness in my absence had given me; yet he saw something he did not like, and the *turba* within made him feel something which no one can like. However he was resolved to try me to the utmost; and began therefore to throw forth some small hints, as if *Ferdinand* had made love to one of the daughters of the gentleman to whom they paid their visit. We could not but understand him; for to confess the truth, his small hints were conveyed in the plainest terms imaginable.

Had *Melantha* heard that *Ferdinand* had been cruelly murdered, it would have brought joy to her heart, in comparision with the intelligence which *Oliver* had now given her: and whilst her eyes flashed fire, and her every feature expressed disappointment and indignation at the thought that *Ferdinand* in her absence could not only enjoy himself, but meet with an object worthy of his addresses; I confess a rising sigh was swelling in my bosom, which with some difficulty I suppressed.

The *Cry* all eagerly seized this sigh of *Portia's*, and worried it about till with their fallacious breaths they had swelled it into a raging storm. They pronounced *Portia's* confession of this sigh to be another absolute contradiction of all her foregoing sentiments. And it was now their choice to babble forth their triumph on their discovery of her contradictions in ironical terms, addressed not to *Portia*, but to each other. We thought, said some of them, with how much pleasure *Portia* could see *Ferdinand* married to another woman. — Talking absurdly you know is the common fate of all those who set themselves up for more than mortal. —Great wits have short memories, and are apt indeed to contradict themselves. —Then a kind of indolent self−satisfied laugh was heard throughout the assembly.

*Portia*. I am not surprized that you, O ye *Cry*, can think I have talked the highest absurdity, if it is possible to deduce from any of my past words such a conclusion, as that I ever could have given up *Ferdinand* with pleasure; for all my prospects of happiness in this world were centered in the hope of his affections. *Ferdinand*, I must repeat, could not have been the same loss to any other woman as to me; for I verily believe that I am the only one of his acquaintance who hath truly penetrated his character; and, consequently, the only one who can properly be said truly to love him.

In *Plato's* dialogues, one of the disciples of *Socrates* (after describing a set of people to whom that philosopher's conversation must have been disagreeable) tells him, that such people could not love him, however desirous from other motives they might be of appearing in his company; and this because they did not understand him. I may venture therefore, I think, to affirm, that without reciprocally understanding each other, there can be no true love. A man who chuses a companion, whose capacity doth not reach high enough to comprehend any of his ideas, might (as far as regards that single companion) be as well struck dumb; for the utility of language is to him entirely vanished. Had I only read the character of such a man as *Ferdinand* judiciously given, although he had passed through life a thousand years ago, and had I known that at the same time there lived a *Portia*, whose head penetrated, and whose heart was warmed with that character; had they been separated I could not but have sighed: yet I freely confess the sigh comes deeper from my heart, when I consider it as my own case; and, without keeping a strict guard over my thoughts, they would wander into the road towards discontent; and I could be ready to say, "'Tis pitiful, 'tis wondrous pitiful!"

The *Cry* not understanding *Portia's* humour in the above quotation, opened full mouthed against her, for pretending that she thought or acted differently from all other women; for by her own account, they said, she was filled with that self−compassion which she had so much condemned; and was also full as much vexed at *Ferdinand's* courting another woman as poor *Melantha* was.

*Portia*. If you will not, O ye *Cry*, understand the difference between a sigh, attempting to rise in a heart melted with gentle sorrow, and a rageful look proceeding from a heart alarmed with tumultuous passions, I cannot possibly help it. This confusing them together is not owing to your want of understanding; for had you not an obstinate inclination to prove me guilty of absurdity, you have no incapacity for making such a distinction.

Although *Portia* never had, and indeed could not bring a greater accusation against the *Cry*, than thus maliciously perverting and confounding all she said to the purpose of abusing her; yet did this accusation itself for the present quite reverse the scene, and conquer that very inclination to abuse of which she had accused them.

The allowing that they possessed a capacity of distinguishing, was the soporiferous draught that calmed into a momentary repose the *turba* in their bosoms. Although with this pleasing bait they were to swallow the potion of knowing that their malice was not hid from *Portia's* discernment, yet they were on a sudden so totally changed, that they agreed by consent that *Portia* was really possessed of a great deal of wit, joined to the most penetrating judgment. And would she have submitted to the insult with patience, they would have bestowed on her the most fulsome flattery; for by such means they were willing to repay what they so highly esteemed, namely, an acknowledgment that they possessed the trifling advantage of a head capable of distinguishing, whilst they wanted that uprightness of heart which alone could enable them to make a proper use of that capacity.

*Una*, from the moment *Portia* had accused the *Cry* of what she imagined the most dreadful of all charges, namely, perverseness and malignity of heart, had expected that the sharpest and most pointed arrows in their quiver would have been discharged at *Portia*. She was amazed therefore to find all their darts transformed into soft feathers, and all their indignation changed into a contention who most should praise and admire her.

*Portia*. Wonder not, O my beloved and ever revered *Una*, at the strange and contradictory behaviour of the *Cry*. They lead a life of shutting close their eyes from their great abhorrence of the light, yet suffer intolerable torments from the fear that their acquaintance should suspect that they are naturally blind; for nothing can equal their dread of being suspected to labour under any natural defect. Only allow that they are able to behold the brightness of the sun, whenever they are disposed in inclination so to do; and so strangely are they infatuated by this concession, that, without any rage or resentment, they will bear the charge of thus willingly shutting out the blessing of light.

*Una*. Well *Portia* may you say that the *Cry* are strangely infatuated: for this behaviour seems to me full as pregnant of madness, or the grossest folly, as if a man was to hide his face with shame, or to swell with wrath and indignation, at its being known that he once accidentally stumbled for want of light; and yet should stand unmoved, nor shew the least signs of abashment, for being accused of having treacherously committed the most atrocious murder.

The *Cry* were so rapt up in the enjoyment of *Portia's* acknowledging their capacities, that they did not hear one word of what passed between her and *Una*: but recollecting at last that part of *Portia's* relation, from which by their falling on her rising sigh they had drawn her, they desired her to proceed in her story.

## SCENE XVII.

*Hem astutia!*

Terence.

# Portia. Una. The Cry.

## *PORTIA.*

*Oliver* forming the same judgment of my rising sigh as you yourselves (O ye *Cry,* just now formed, and from the same motives) triumphed in the joyful thought that he had communicated the *turba* to my bosom. But to pursue his triumph, he hastened to acquaint us that *Ferdinand,* notwithstanding his most ardent solicitations, had been refused by the young lady; and he was not wanting in intimations that he himself, if he pleased, might have been the real object of her public choice, as it was visible to his penetrating eyes he was of her secret affections. Never could *Oliver's* cunning artifices more thoroughly take effect than they did at this time on *Melantha*; for her rage and vexation on thinking she had placed her affections, and was now languishing for a man whom another woman had refused, would have exceeded all bounds, but for the small alleviation that I stood in the same wretched degree of mortification with herself.

As my love to *Ferdinand* depended not on such outward accidents as the vague opinion of others, what a perfect disappointment would *Oliver* have met with in me, had I continued to believe his silly inventions! but from the moment he had with so much pains endeavoured to insinuate that he was preferred to his brother, the paltry deceit was all laid open to my eyes; and I visibly perceived that the whole was nothing but a contrivance, first to teaze and vex both me and *Melantha,* and then to cure us of our love to *Ferdinand*.

The reason indeed that I at first gave the least credit to any part of *Oliver's* account was, that I believed *Ferdinand* to have a heart susceptible of affection——

[She has not much reason for such belief, whispered the *Cry* to each other, too softly to be heard by *Portia*.]

—and I doubted not the possibility of his finding an object agreeable to his taste. 'Till *Oliver* therefore had told us of *Ferdinand's* being refused from a preference given to himself, the story was not quite incredible. Besides, I knew it to be one of *Oliver's* favourite maxims, in order to succeed in deceit, to mix up a large quantity of truth with falsehood. I make no doubt but from experience he could have composed a receipt, stampt *probatum est,* with as exact a measure of their just proportions as was ever drawn up by good housewives for potting beef, woodcock, *&c.* Take of your falsehood (he would say) so much; cram it into a story, so closely compacted in all its circumstances, that not the least chink may be discerned; then pour over it as much of the butter of truth as will preserve it from detection, and render it impossible for the keenest eye to penetrate through its covering to the falsehood concealed within. The seasoning of gravity or humour must be varied according to the palate for which it is designed.

O cunning *Oliver*! I could let you (as well as many good housewives, who are very busy in following the directions of expensive receipts in order to save money for their families) into a secret, which would be much more worth your notice; namely, that the *truest wisdom* in you, and the *best housewifry* in them, would be, instead of TAKING so much of one thing, and so much of another, to LET ALL YOUR INGREDIENTS ALONE.

I was inwardly convinced, as I before said, of the falsehood of *Oliver's* story from the face of it: but I was some time after truly informed, that the gentleman where they had passed their time was so pleased with the character and behaviour of *Ferdinand,* that he offered him a large fortune with his youngest daughter, if he would have become his son−in−law. This generous offer *Ferdinand,* in the handsomest manner, declined. His reasons, or his motives, being not to the present purpose, I must beg to be excused from repeating.

*Oliver* soon perceived that my uneasiness was fled; he perceived it with no small vexation: my behaviour baffled all his general observations upon women, put his wisdom to a nonplus, and he had no other refuge to fly to but the making himself believe that I had not one grain of affection in my composition, and was the most stupid, insensible creature breathing.

The *Cry* here were in a comical dilemma. They had not yet lost sight of *Portia's* acknowledgment of their capacities enough to suffer their desire of abusing her to rise to its usual height; yet the force of an old habit was so strong, that they could not help being delighted on receiving any image of her stupidity.

*Portia*. But whilst *Oliver* was pleasing himself with the thoughts of my insipid want of affections, my imagination was employed in building a pleasing fairy castle, concerning the life I would lead, if ever I should be so happy as to become the wife of *Ferdinand*. For notwithstanding the affectation of some women, who assert that they are married quite accidentally, and without having once thought of it; yet such a scheme of life passes, I

believe, in every woman's head, concerning the man whom she thinks well enough of to desire to marry him. There are some perhaps who go no farther than the visiting scene, dressed in white satin to receive their company; whilst others in their imaginations follow the sad remains of their rich husbands to the grave, and plan out their scheme of widowhood or a future marriage.

That the picture of the married life I wished to lead with *Ferdinand* often came into my mind, I freely confess; but it is too whimsical perhaps to relate the workings of my own imagination at that time on this subject.

*Una* assured *Portia* that it was so far from being too whimsical, that on her saying she had formed such a scheme, she herself was going to call on her for an honest representation of it.

Thus encouraged *Portia* proceeded.

*Portia*. The two ideas, husband and *Ferdinand,* were so closely connected in my imagination, that the former could not be mentioned without the image of the latter's becoming its pleasant companion. I considered him as the husband of my mind, the husband of my voluntary choice, selected from among the rest of mankind by the joint consent of my judgment and inclination. And had I thought of being prevailed to marry any other man, I should have esteemed it little less than adultery: I should should have looked on such an action with horror, and condemned myself as guilty of the highest treachery. To be bribed from the consideration of wealth or grandeur to become the wife of one man, whilst my heart is fixed upon another:—to marry a man, in whose conversation I could have no enjoyment:—to sit at the upper end of one man's table (a very common prudential motive to marriage) and at the same time to wish another in his place:—what prudence! what goodness! It is a sort of policy I could never fathom: and so far does charity begin at home, that I myself am the very last woman I would wish in such a situation.

*Portia's* disapprobation of those methods of marrying, which the *Cry* approved, roused them into their old cabal against her, and they stood ready prepared to find matter of offence in her words.

*Portia*. Whenever I read the speech *Shakespear* hath put into the mouth of queen *Catherine* in his *Henry* VIII. wherein she says,

*I've been to you a true and humble wife,*
*At all times to your will conformable:*
*Ever in fear to kindle your dislike,*
*Yea, subject to your count'nance; glad or sorry*
*As I saw it inclin'd. When was the hour*
*I ever contradicted your desire?*
*Or made it not mine too? Which of your friends*
*Have I not strove to love, altho' I knew*
*He were mine enemy?*

Just such a wife I used to think could I with pleasure make to *Ferdinand*. I could not hear *Shakespear's Portia* in the *Merchant of Venice,* freely and without reserve giving herself and all her riches to the disposal of *Bassanio,* without ardently wishing for the power of using the same words, and acting in the same manner towards *Ferdinand*. How is my heart warmed when I read of the faith and true affection of the *Roman Arria* to her *Petus* ! and how often did my imagination prompt me with this secret wish,

*My heart let Ferdinand most strictly prove:*
*There's Arria's truth, her innocence and love!*

Here the *Cry,* having read the story of *Arria* and *Petus* in the *Spectators,* and fixing their thoughts on what they esteemed the heroical part of her character, expressed their astonishment at *Portia's* immense vanity and presumption in thus boasting, (as they called it,) of such strength and constancy of mind as would enable her to destroy herself rather than part with *Ferdinand*.

*Portia*. It is not the death but the life of *Arria* which is to me so exemplary. In what manner my fears might be alarmed at the approach of immediate dissolution I pretend not to say; nor, as a christian, could I think it justifiable, or even excusable, to give my husband such a proof of my affection. But when I reflect on *Arria's* gentleness of spirit; her chusing retirement with her husband, before all the most alluring baits of grandeur; her placing her chief enjoyment in her innocent endeavours to render her dear *Petus* happy; the joining her own cares

with his in the education of their children; and, when *Petus* lay ill of a fever in one room, and their youngest favourite child dead in the next, her walking to and fro as if the child was yet living, feigning also a chearfulness which her heart was unable to feel, in order to support the drooping spirits of her husband— these are the virtues which raise my admiration: and it is her tender, her affectionate behaviour throughout her whole life, that I would wish to imitate.

Frequently have I thought within myself, to be placed in the bosom of my *Ferdinand,* not as a treacherous snake, but as his faithful friend; to have his entire confidence; to be indulged by him because he sees me capable of gratefully receiving such indulgence, without crying, like a humoured child, for want of finding out my own desires.

*—is a consummation*
*Devoutly to be wish'd—*

[Here a rising titter on *Portia's* expression ran through the *Cry*; but as she knew there was no real cause for such titter, without taking any notice of it she proceeded.]

—There is a haughty pride of mind that scorns even indulgence itself, as it implies power and superiority in the person who bestows it; but there is no idea of pleasure my highest imagination ever could form equal to that of being indulged by the man I love.

The great error that women fall into about marrying is, the seeking wives instead of husbands. The fear of having it thought that they have submission enough in their tempers to be governed, sets the whole *turba* at work in their breasts. To join the idea of love and obedience is not in their power. To marry sensibly let the woman chuse the man she can obey with pleasure. To marry *Ferdinand,* and then to obey him, ever appeared to me as if I was commanded (as *Desdemona* says on another occasion)

*—to do peculiar profit*
*To my own person—*

It is a command to follow the bent of my own inclinations; for so far am I from thinking the vow of obedience in the matrimonial service a burthen, that it is my utmost pleasure. With *Ferdinand* how joyfully (thought I) could I pursue the same studies! I could partake all his pleasures (nay, I must partake them, for his being pleased must communicate the same sensations to my heart) and willingly could I share, or rather monopolize all his griefs. As in my choice of *Ferdinand* I am determined by nothing but himself, no outward circumstances, no situations, no opinions, besides my own, could have any influence on my mind.

But it would be endless to repeat the various pictures of delight my imagination formed on the thought of being his wife. Very justly does a ningenious poet say, that to a thinking mind

*On ev'ry thorn delightful wisdom grows:*
*In ev'ry rill a sweet instruction flows.*

And with such a companion as my *Ferdinand,* every shrub, every bush, every flower of the field, must also become objects of the highest pleasure. With my principal wish thus fully gratified, what an inexpressible lustre must be thrown over every outward object, whilst I placed my delight in my husband's friendship, esteemed his understanding, made his will a law of liberty, and spent my whole life in giving him every moment fresh instances of what, in my opinion, only deserves the name of true love!

All the men amongst the *Cry* were so fixed in attention on *Portia's* allowing the subordination of the wife to the husband, that never would she from them have met with the least interruption in her present subject of discourse; and as to the female part of the assembly, they were rendered at present perfectly incapable of making any observations, by no other accident than being all fast asleep. For from the time that *Portia* had mentioned the word *obedience to a husband,* an indolent gaping had stretched their mouths, and heavy slumber weighed down their eye lids, till they were involved in a general and sound repose.

*Una* smiled at the warmth of *Portia's* imagination, whilst she was reviewing the pictures she had formed of living with *Ferdinand,* and was pleased to see the joy which dwelt on her countenance.

And we doubt not but *Portia,* rather than have quitted the subject, would have been found talking on till this moment, had not one of the *Cry* in her sleep suddenly fallen from her seat; which accident awoke the rest of the

sleepers, and alarmed the whole assembly.

The *Cry* were all seized with such an immoderate fit of laughter at this facetious joke (for the poor woman struck her forehead so violently against the edge of a seat as to fetch the blood) that *Portia* alone was capable of taking her up, giving her assistance, or acting with any propriety on such a *merry* occasion. The lady however was forced to be carried out into the air; and for the present *Una* dismissed the whole assembly, appointing another general meeting for *Portia* to proceed with her story.

End of Part the Third.

## PROLOGUE TO Part the Fourth.

Our assembly being again met, we implore as at first your assistance, gentle reader, that by your imagination you would add another personage to those with whom you are already brought acquainted. Her name *Cylinda*. Her character—such as will appear by her discourse, and the relation of her past life.

Should our *Portia* have been so favoured by our readers, that, pleased and engaged by her character and conversation, they should esteem every interruption to the conclusion of her history a bar to their pleasure; we would beg leave to appologize for the introduction of *Cylinda*, by a few observations on the nature of an episode; which according to *Bossu*, is an interesting incident not absolutely necessary to the fable, nor yet so detached from it, as to carry the reader quite out of sight of the chief personages, or the first intent of the poem. Might we not add also another essential to the above description of a proper episode, namely, that it ought to be such an incident as is introduced in order to call forth some characteristic virtue of the principal personage? Suppose, for instance, that *Ulysses* the hero of *Homer's Odyssey* (or the hero of any other poetical fable) had in his travels met with a beautiful young princess in distress, and she should tell him a long and moving story of her past life and misfortunes; was the reader never more to hear of this princess, or was it not in the power of the hero to redress her wrongs, and relieve her anxiety, her story, however interesting or entertaining in itself, hath certainly no business there, and is absurdly impertinent: but if from the relation of her life he should be enabled to punish her oppressors, or to assist her in her distress; would not this be a pertinent, as well as an agreeable episode, because it would tend towards the exemplification of some of the hero's virtues?

In this view we think we can with truth assure our readers, that *Cylinda* is no impertinent intruder into our assembly; but being brought thither (as *Portia* was before her) by a swift messenger called fancy, she will by her own narrative best explain the necessity for her appearance. Yet if strict criticism should still frown on our method, let candor and good−humour forgive what is done to the best of our judgment, for the sake of perspicuity in the story, and the delight and entertainment of our candid reader.

# PART the FOURTH.

## SCENE I.

*The mind when turn'd adrift, no rules to guide,*
*Drives at the mercy of the wind and tide;*
*Passion and Fancy toss it to and fro.*

Dr. Young.

## Portia. Cylinda. Una. The Cry.

## *CYLINDA.*

My father was a learned and generally esteemed a very wise man, for he had the honour of attaining the highest degree of approbation from the whole body of moral philosophers. I lost my mother when I was very young; and, as I was an only child, in my welfare and future prosperity my father placed all his worldly happiness. His principal delight was to instruct me; and he chose to educate me just in the same manner as if I had been a boy. To render my learning more agreeable to me, he sent for his sister's son, my little cousin *Phaon*, who was about three years older than myself, to educate him with me; thinking by such a companion I should be both improved and delighted. My cousin was a spritely boy, and had very good natural parts; but notwithstanding his advantage in years, I did not suffer him to outrun me in any sort of learning; and by the time I was sixteen I became an exceeding good *latin* scholar, and was pretty far advanced in *greek*.

The *Cry* suddenly started on the very mention of a woman's understanding *greek*; but as they had from the very first appearance of *Cylinda* conceived a strong hope that she was rather more inclined to their party than to that of their enemy; they hushed themselves into silence, and were filled with expectation of gaining by her a compleat triumph over *Portia*, who they were pretty positive, from her never having in express terms boasted of her learning, had no learning to make her boast of.

*Cylinda*. I was extremely handsome, insomuch that I might have had my choice of admirers amongst all the young gentlemen in the neighbourhood; but I was so fond of my books, and so pleased with my cousin's company, that I shunned all other conversation.

*Cylinda* spoke this of her being handsome, with such an air of indifference, that the *Cry* at that instant found they had no great affection for her. If she would thoroughly have recommended herself to their admiration, she should have swelled, and puffed, and shewed that her whole mind was filled with the knowledge and admiration of her own beauty, and at the same time have practised every foolish affectation imaginable, to have pretended an ignorance of it.

*Cylinda*. The vanity of dress or person, which so fills and possesses most girls, had no effect on me. My vanity was more gratified by despising such things, and I soared at what I thought much higher game. My swift progress in learning, and my great love to reading, greatly increased my father's delight in me; and he was so pleased with the enjoyment of the conversation within our own family, that we employed very few of our hours in visiting; or scarce ever went even to our neighbouring town, which was but three miles from my father's house. All the time that my father could spare me from his presence, I employed in ranging about the fields, and reading the most admired authors. Every fine sentiment charmed me; and every spritely thought played and increased in my imagination, till in a short time I began to look on myself as the goddess of wisdom; and how much in my own judgment did I blame *Paris*, that he had not presented the apple to *Minerva*! But as my father's instructions related only to moral philosophy, and as his reasonings were all concerning the *nature of things*, the *beauty of virtue*, and the distinctions of moral good and evil, a thought now and then struck me about RELIGION, and every time this thought struck me it puzzled me. At last I communicated my doubts to my father, and he in answer talked I believe a full hour about the nature of mankind and natural religion: from which I collected no more than this: —That 'twas very right to do right, and very wrong to do wrong. — But as I cannot say that he gave me any very intelligible ideas, and as I had a very high opinion of his understanding, I concluded there was a mystery in religion above mortal comprehension, or at least that it was perfectly incommunicable to another. I therefore took a resolution to chuse my own religion, and to settle my own rule of life. I had read over many books of philosophy, and had got a vast deal of matter into my head. I had no fixed principle, but suffered my imagination to rove and play amongst the heap of unregulated stuff that my memory had heaped together; sometimes to one point and sometimes to another, without any glimmering of a settled path.

The *Cry* never were so puzzled in their lives, as to know what to make of *Cylinda*. Some of her sentiments and actions they did not disapprove, yet her manner of relating them was by no means according to their fancy. *Portia* they knew they hated, and consequently thought her their enemy: such a character as *Melantha* they knew they loved, and therefore thought her their friend: but *Cylinda* was quite above their comprehension. However they agreed amongst themselves for the present to hold a perfect neutrality towards her, till they should find out cause

by her story, for an open declaration of war, or a league of lasting friendship.

*Cylinda*. Confounded in the vanity of unconnected knowledge, with which I had filled my memory; my imagination overleaped all bounds, and with its own wandering velocity almost distracted me. I wanted some pilot to guide my thoughts, that every blast of wind might not shatter and overset me. I wanted some object of worship; some rule on which to depend; and a mind in this state will make some deity of its own, nor is it unlikely but inclination will bear the greatest sway in its formation. *Montaigne,* in a chapter where he collects together a vast variety of customs from different nations, mentions one place where every person made a deity to worship, according to what best pleased his own humour; but I think he need not have put this into his enumeration of extraordinary customs, for we have no occasion to go farther than a little observation amongst those around us, to convince us of its credibility.

This custom was perfectly agreeable to my humour; altho' I practised it at that time without the least consideration of its force, or having the least guess at my own motives. 'Tis reflexion since that hath made the discovery: for on quitting any pursuit for a new one, I always clearly perceived the fallacy of the rejected favourite, but was as warmly fond of my new−adopted whim, till for some other that also was rejected and thrown aside.

Agreeable then to my present inclination, I formed the object of my own worship, which was no other than my own understanding.

The *Cry,* who had all stood trembling with fear till they could discover what object of worship *Cylinda* would chuse, now overjoyed, clapped their hands, called her last sentence a fine sentiment, and encored it with the utmost vociferation.

Whilst *Una* sighed at the melancholy consideration, that so lively an imagination, and so good a capacity as *Cylinda* seemed to be mistress of, should be so thrown away, as only to become fewel to make her errors blaze out with the greater strength, and to place them in the more conspicuous light.

The *Cry* on recollection were not so perfectly pleased as at first they seem'd with *Cylinda's* manner of declaring her worship for her own understanding; for the true phrase they had been accustomed to, in order to express the same thing, was a worship of human reason in general. *Cylinda* therefore had in this rather betrayed the cause, by fairly confessing that it was to her own understanding alone that all her veneration was paid. But not caring to contradict what they had before applauded, the *Cry* continued their encore of her last words, nor would suffer her to proceed without a repetition of them.

*Cylinda*. Well then—the object of my worship was no other than my own understanding. And the use I made of all the learning I had attained, was to gaze at and review it with admiration, or rather I made it a ladder on which I mounted to the admiration of my own perfections. My cousin *Phaon* too, who was bred up with the same fluctuating principles, or rather half−formed notions with myself, greatly contributed towards my yielding up an implicit faith in the infallibility of this my new−formed deity. But as *Phaon* had a good deal the same disposition with my self, we should undoubtedly have quarreled, and grown into inveterate enemies, on the mutual suspicion of both admiring ourselves more than each other: a great contention and rivalship must necessarily have followed, before we could have decided which of us should have been endued with imagined divinity, or which should have submitted to have acknowledged mortality, had it not been for an accident not extremely unnatural in our situation. I was now just sixteen, in the bloom of youth, and possessed of an uncommon share of vivacity and spirit. So far had I made use of my reading, that it assisted me to vary my ideas, and to render me agreeable in conversation; for I had too much real understanding to descend to that paltry vanity of growing impertinent, and suffering my self−admiration to babble forth in every sentence that I uttered. *Phaon* was young and amorous; therefore, instead of contending with me for a superiority of understanding, he admired the beauty of my person, the temple which my new deity inhabited; and provided he could enjoy the pleasure of beholding the beauties of the outward structure, he was contented to worship the same idol with myself. This was such a pleasing piece of flattery to my darling inclination, that although I had before never considered *Phaon* in any other light than as a companion allotted me by my father in order to promote my studies, yet I now began daily to discover in him such a variety of charms as rendered his conversation the most exquisite of pleasures. *Phaon* was but three years older than myself; yet (as I have since reflected on his character and conduct) had he as much subtilty and art as he could have obtained from a life of long experience. His discourse to me was all concerning books and philosophy, never so much as mentioning my beauty; for had he not disguised his admiration of my outward form

under a pretence of adoring my own idol, he would highly have offended me; I should have thought that my understanding was affronted, and should have believed that he could have said as much to every illiterate girl, whose fair skin might attract his inclination. *Phaon* soon discovered where all my weakness lay, and bent his whole force to increase that weakness.

The *Cry,* who had been rapturously (like *Bajazet*) enjoying in thought the picture of *Cylinda's* happiness in having such a lover as *Phaon,* at the word *weakness,* all started—all groaned.—

Whilst *Portia's* eyes expressed a sudden pleasure from a new−conceived hope of *Cylinda,* and by interchanging a look with *Una,* they reciprocally understood each others thoughts.

*Cylinda*. Whenever we read any book together, *Phaon* took care to insinuate that I had on every subject much brighter thoughts of my own: and the use he made of conversing with me was, by degrees to yield up all his opinions to mine, till he became the echo and approver of all my sentiments.

[Oh rapture! thought the *Cry*.]

He frequently called me his *Sappho,* and, superscribed to me under that name, wrote several extreme pretty poetical pieces, all addressed to my understanding as a real divinity—

[Delightful! charming! had the *Cry* spoke, would now have been their exclamation.]

—When he had a mind that I should embrace any opinions fitted to serve his turn, he would give only some distant intimation; and then artfully leading me into a repetition of such sentiments, would receive them as perfectly new; and by his acquiescence (not by fulsome praises) confirmed them in my mind, and flattered me to the highest pitch of gratification. He knew that my imagination would not suffer the most distant hint to be lost; and by this artful manner he took care to convey into my mind a sentiment which hath sacrificed the chastity of whole hecatombs of women. This is no other than that women of uncommon understanding, and a superiority of parts, ought not to be tied in fetters by the rules of honour or the forms of established custom: that it is a mark of true spirit to break through such servile and ridiculous chains, fit to be imposed only on the vulgar and illiterate; and that 'tis a proof of the highest wisdom to give an uncontrouled liberty to the violence of our own inclinations.

The female part of the *Cry* divided on this question; and a debate was likely to ensue; in which it appeared pretty plain from the beginning of it, that the parties were more nearly concerned in the dispute than as a mere matter of opinion: but the curiosity of some of them was so great to hear the result of *Phaon's* courtship, that they amongst themselves insisted upon a silence for *Cylinda* to proceed with her story.

*Cylinda*. So besotted was I by *Phaon's* artful manner of address, that I suffered this opinion to creep into my bosom; and to fix itself there so strongly, that it failed not of its pernicious influence through the whole course of my life. Care was now taken by him that *Ovid's* epistles should never be out of my reach; and there I was to learn that the wit and genius of *Sappho* consisted in the violence of her uncontrouled passions; from whence I was farther to conclude, that in order to prove my own title to genius and understanding, I must follow her example. Thus was I commanded by the divinity I worshipped, to assist my imagination in inflaming my passions; and if I would be another *Sappho,* I must necessarily be in love with another *Phaon*. Variety of books also to my present purpose occurred to my memory; for there have been writers in all ages, who, in order to gratify the vanity of displaying a lively imagination, have employed their time and capacities, if not designedly, yet heedlesly, for the purpose of softening and deluding the young and tender mind.

*Oh Amarilli, Amarilli,* &c. would I often repeat; and highly was I pleased with my own wisdom in discovering the folly of those people, who would imagine that nature, or the God of nature (for I always considered them as synonymous terms) would give laws to restrain those passions which were as natural to us as to the feathered race; yet with the utmost truth can I declare, that I had in reality a very small degree of any passion that actuated me, besides that of self−admiration: for I could have resisted all the inclination I had for *Phaon,* with much less pains than I took to impose on myself the belief that I was in love with him; and often was I forced to have recourse to my memory for his last pleasing piece of flattery, in order to prevent the fallacious structure from tumbling to the ground. In short, my excessive love of flattery was the foundation of my fancied love of *Phaon*; and by the pleasure which he perceived he could by that means give me, I fear it was but too likely that he would very soon have gratified all his wishes, had not my father (perhaps from suspecting the truth) on a sudden sent him abroad with a gentleman who was going to *Turkey*. What confirmed me in the opinion that my father had discovered my liking to *Phaon,* and that he by no means approved it, was, that no sooner had he sent my cousin away, than he informed me that he had a proposal of marriage for me from the uncle of a young gentleman who

was desirous of marrying his nephew, and preferred me as a wife for him before any young lady in the neighbourhood. My father was going to tell me what an easy fortune the young gentleman possessed, and what his uncle would also do for him; when I told him, that as he himself had taught me to despise all mercenary views, I hoped he would not think me capable of being moved by riches. My father kindly assured me, that fortune was in this case the least inducement; for the young gentleman was a man of an unexceptionable character, was justly esteemed by every body, and he doubted not but he would make me extremely happy. I very earnestly entreated him to mention the affair no more; for I was so extremely easy and happy, I said, with the life which I passed with him, that nothing could make me wish to change it; nor did I even desire to know who the gentleman was that had made the proposal: for, as I was fully determined (if he would give me leave to make such a choice) not to marry any one at present, I should rather be spared the uneasiness of a particular refusal. My father assured me, that my happiness was always his chief point in view; and since he saw me so very averse to marriage, and so pleased and contented with living with him, and being as he confessed the comfort and joy of his life, he would no farther urge an affair that by any means was disagreeable to me. I returned my father a thousand thanks for his kind indulgence to me in giving me this freedom of refusal, and I was greatly pleased also with his complying with my peculiar whim of not knowing who my intended lover was, as it might spare me an uneasy restraint, should I, by accident, fall into his company. I had in reality no inclination for marriage; but what determined me to be so resolute in my refusal of I know not whom, was, that I had now an opportunity of applauding myself for an imagined constancy to my cousin *Phaon*, whose absence had so increased my fancied passion for him, that nothing could, in my opinion, have moved the steadiness of my love.

I resolved, if possible, to surpass all the examples that are left us of women whose fidelity and love were not to be shaken; and with what resolution in my own imagination did I refuse as large a train of lovers as the faithful *Penelope*, in hopes of the return of my wandering *Phaon*! It was not long before I chanced to be personally addressed by two young gentlemen more. Their persons or conversation I cannot say were any way agreeable to me; and having refused them both, I exulted in topping the part of constancy I had at present undertaken to act. But in justice to my own heart I must declare, that had they been less exceptionable, I should have thought myself meanly treacherous could I have condescended to have given my hand to one man, whilst my thoughts were wandering after another. Yet all my constancy to *Phaon* did not arise from any virtues of his, but from a desire of exercising a virtue, which was to make me the object of my own admiration; and had I received the most demonstrable evidence of his being ever so bad a man, it would not in the least have staggered my constancy; for the less he deserved my favour, the more generosity should I exert in bestowing it on him.

[The *Cry* now all looked as if they spied a brother.]

But it was not many months before my father received an account that my cousin *Phaon* was dead of a fever, which seized him on his voyage: and this news released me from that excess of constancy, which was to wait for his return; but I was in reality extremely sorry for him, and grieved very heartily. I raised pictures from poetry of his being snatched away in the bloom of youth, and untimely brought to his grave: but as deep sorrow, especially where the foundation was so very weak, could not dwell long in my mind, and was really very tiresome, I chose another play−thing, and rejoiced in the thought, that as my worshipper was dead, he was incapacitated from prostrating himself at the shrine of any other idol. And now was my mind soon restored to perfect tranquillity; and I was at liberty to find for my imagination what new employment I might think most proper or agreeable.

The *Cry* were still perfectly at a loss, and groveling in the dark as to *Cylinda's* character; and the picture of a multitude staring at the sun's eclipse, and gaping big with expectation when he will again blaze forth, and bring them new light, would be the strongest resemblance of their present situation.

## SCENE. II.

*To mirth's tribunal drag the caitiff train;*
*Where mercy sleeps and nature pleads in vain.*
*And whence this lust to laugh? what fond pretence?*
*Why Shafts'b'ry tells us mirth's the test of sense;*
*Th'enchanting touch, which fraud and falshood fear,*
*Like Una's mirror, or Ithuriel's spear.*
*Not so fair Truth.—*

Essay on Ridicule, by Mr. Whitehead.

## Portia. Cylinda. Una. The Cry.

## *CYLINDA.*

As soon as I had banished the thoughts of my cousin *Phaon* from my mind, my usual bent for self−admiration returned, and my imagination was employed in searching for demi−gods, who should bow down before me, and every moment bring to my remembrance my own exalted understanding.

I had fixed in my mind the highest admiration for my lord *Shaftesbury's* writings, which I believe originally arose from the common conversation I heard at table from my father and his companions. Nothing could be more exactly adapted to the humour I at this time indulged, than that freedom of thought and enquiry, which he asserts to be the distinguishing prerogative of the human mind. I was by him conveyed in imagination on the throne of judgment, and all nature seemed waiting with dependence on my determination. The crowns and scepters of the whole world laid at my feet, would not have given me half the gratification as thus believing myself the sovereign judge of all things. I had such an aversion to every thing that had the least appearance of being gloomy or morose, and such a delight in giving an unbounded vent to every whimsical piece of pleasantry which presented itself to my fancy, that the making RIDICULE the TEST OF TRUTH was most perfectly agreeable to my inclinations. I turned therefore every smart expression, or *bon mot* of my author, into a basis on which to build something that I called a principle; and thus whilst the standing ridicule, or not standing it, was to prove truth or falsehood, I joined with my author in boasting my security, that however I might be *frightened* out of my wits, I never could be *ridiculed* out of them. That pleasant fancy of a grave bishop's believing in fairies, a with the words *tradition* and *revelation* being jumbled in so very near to that story, had the effect designed, and easily convinced me, that all belief in revelation or tradition had in it something very ridiculous, and therefore could not suit with the dignity of human wisdom. The ridicule of believing in fairies ran away with me, and I began to suspect every thing of being a childish incredible tale. Thus on the one hand was I allured, whilst on the other I was terrified by such expressions as these, THE FETTERS OF PRIESTCRAFT, BIGOTRY, SUPERSTITION, VULGAR ENTHUSIASM, SOLEMN MUMMERY, RELIGIOUS IMPOSTURE, and all RESTRAINTS made to BUBBLE the understanding, and to ENSLAVE the FREE and GENEROUS SPIRIT. The illustrations which he uses too from outward objects, came very strongly to the assistance of raising my horror at the thoughts of any restraint. "Nor do we say (writes our b author) that he is a good man, when having his hands tied up he is hindered from doing the mischief he designs, or (which is in a manner the same) when he abstains from executing his ill purpose, through a fear of some impending punishment, or through the allurement of some exterior reward." The word *slavery* had before sufficiently raised my horror; but when the picture of slavery illustrated by a man bound in chains was placed before my view, nothing but the idea of condemned felons presented themselves to my imagination, and I fled immediatly from such a disagreeable spectacle into the pleasing contemplation of my own liberty of judgment, and the free agency of all my faculties. The latter part of my author's before−quoted sentence, where he makes the fear of punishment or hope of reward indications of a servility of spirit, was not lost upon me: for I felt such a liberality in the thought of being good, because I myself had discovered it to be right and fit, such an exaltation of my own understanding, in being thus made sole judge to myself of right and wrong, that I disdained to be fettered by the paltry fear of punishment, or allured by the selfish hope of reward. I scorned all restraint and dependence, and esteemed myself free and unbounded as the air. How was I charmed when I read the words *virtue* c and *merit* used as synonymous terms, and found them confined to the human species! Here was an opportunity for me to be conveyed in fancy above the clouds, and looking down on the whole creation, to build a second imaginary temple dedicated to my merit. Yet how great the suspense, whether to give the highest rank to my long deified *understanding* or my new dignified *merit*! An altar was due to the former for its judicious distinctions of right from wrong, with its direction of my affections; and to the latter in that I was possessed of such natural good affections to need no directions. Voluntary UNCOMMANDED VIRTUES independent of all hope or fear, were the only ones I could bear to be possessed of, as they alone seemed to be the produce of my own determinations. But I was warmed into enthusiasm whilst I contemplated my author's picture of virtue. I found daily delight by discovering in myself all the GENEROUS AFFECTIONS which he commends. I felt, or fancied I felt, a CLOSE SYMPATHY, a CONSPIRING VIRTUE, a CONFEDERATING CHARM, and an HERDING INCLINATION towards the whole species. The SYMPATHY, the BEAUTY, the ORDER of

NATURE raised in my mind such a kind of HEROISM, as my author himself allows to the same passion as PHILANTHROPY. But with what excessive delight did I embrace the thought, that the DEITY must be the BEST NATURED d BEING in the universe! and my assent to this opinion was founded perhaps on the very same basis, as that on which the noble author himself formed that opinion. For I was naturally possessed of a great share of good−nature, and had besides very early in life found out the political use of it, enough to know that ill−nature, ill−humour, and sourness of temper, would only create my own misery: so that whilst I was approving the sentiment of the deity's good−nature, I in reality fixed my approbation on my own.

*Portia* smiled at the uncommon manner of *Cylinda's* representing her own principles and disposition; and the *Cry* looked full of inward displeasure.

*Cylinda*. In lord *Shaftesbury's* rhapsody is the following paragraph "Nor *could* God witness for himself, or assert his being any other way to men, than by revealing himself to *their reason,* appealing to *their judgment,* and submiting *his ways* to *their censure* and cool deliberation." To which I yielded with my whole heart an absolute assent. What follows may be found in his miscellaneous e reflexions. "Man is not only by nature sociable within the limits of his own species or kind; but in a yet more generous and extensive manner. He is not only born to virtue, friendship, honesty and faith, but to religion, piety, adoration, and a GENEROUS SURRENDER of his mind to whatever happens from that SUPREME CAUSE, or ORDER of things, which HE ACKNOWLEDGES intirely just and perfect." To which I yielded, as implicit an assent as to the former; since those two sentences contained all the doctrine to which my inclination led me to give any credit. For to think that there were things which God himself *could not* do, immediately took from me all those flying notions that ever forced themselves on my thoughts of my own imbecillity. This in a manner equalled me with the deity: then that the deity was to submit to *my* censures, not only equalled, but made me superior to the supreme being. I could wander in the fields meditating on my author's rhapsody on the beauty of nature, could pick up even pebble−stones or falling leaves, and by examining the contexture of their parts, could believe myself led to the worship of that *deity,* who was to submit to *my* censures. For he was *necessarily* to submit to me, and I was *generously* to surrender myself to him; and where there is *necessary submission* on the one side, and *generosity* on the other, 'tis very easy to determine which is in reality the superior.

My author's account of the f *Egyptian* mysteries and idolatries, mixed as it is with other parts of history collected together, plainly shewed me the truth of that verse quoted by him from *Dryden,*

That *priests of all religions are the same*.

From whence nothing could be more natural than to draw this conclusion, that religion itself was all policy and priestcraft, fit only to awe the vulgar and illiterate; but far beneath the free and generous mind, which disdained such paltry motives to goodness as hope or fear, and whose God was to submit to its judgment. A disinterested social affection appeared to me the only moral virtue, and a *generous surrender* of my worship to my creator (because my own wisdom had discovered him, and because I judged it proper to pay him such adoration) the only true religion. For that god *had not* revealed himself to me by any other than the foregoing means I was thoroughly persuaded; having determined with my author that he *could not*. Thus had I made up my mind so close, that there was no loop−hole as I thought for the entrance of any other opinion: and if any other notion contradictory to my beloved free social scheme dared but to make the least appearance, I turned it into some ridiculous light, burst out a laughing, and by the test of ridicule pronounced it to be false. Having thus settled my principles, as I imagined, on the firmest foundation, I enjoyed the highest rapture in being the sovereign judge of all things; and since the deity was to submit to my censures, I admired my own *generosity* in bestowing one thought about him. In the midst of this my admiration of lord *Shaftesbury,* I went to make a visit for a few days to a family that were extremely fond of my company; and one evening as I was talking in raptures of the Characteristics, a gentleman then present, an old friend of my father's, (having expressed some astonishment that a person of my youth and vivacity should have taken a turn so uncommon for a handsome girl not yet twenty years old) asked me very seriously what system I had deduced from my favourite author, and what principles I had really learnt from him. I had ran through the Characteristics with such pleasure, from the meeting with so many things suited rather to warm the imagination than to convince the judgment, that when thus called on to answer a plain question I found myself startled, and a good deal disconcerted. However I mustered up a great many of my author's favourite expressions, such as SOCIAL AFFECTIONS, PHILANTHROPY, THE BEAUTY, the ORDER OF NATURE, and many more of the same kind; yet at last was almost reduced to the necessity of closing my sentence with Mr.

*Bay's* phrase of ALL THAT. But when I had a little recovered myself, I repeated to the gentleman almost all that I have been already repeating from the Characteristics. He heard me with great candor without the least interruption, and, when I had concluded, looking at me with an eye of compassion, he said, "that it was great pity that such a lively imagination should be so misled." He found that my favourite author had exerted the influence he had over me in the general manner of favourites, and had led me the road which he intended. But he begged, as I was so fond of having all things submitted to my own judgment, that I would a little more impartially examine the Characteristics.

It was very difficult for my friend to bring me to give him the least attention; for I was ready to catch hold of every word he uttered, in order to laugh at it; and by the vivacity of my fancy to raise images on his expressions which they did not tend to; and then, believing that he could not stand ridicule, I was ready to pronounce that he had not therefore spoke a syllable of truth.

The gentleman proved himself my friend; for he bore my treatment of him with patience; till at last having gained my attention, he began in the following manner.

"First consider, *Cylinda,* what your author says of ridicule's being the test of truth. If that test itself hath not some other test to be tried by, the chatterings or burlesque distortions of monkeys may have a power to overthrow all things that are serious. But if contradictions and false reasonings are the true objects of ridicule, then must your author be condemned by his own criterion of truth; and instead of being any longer the object of your admiration, he may become a new subject for your laughter."

This assertion I own greatly startled me; but without giving him any interruption, I suffered the gentleman to proceed in the following manner.

"Examine what lord *Shaftesbury* says of the good−nature of his deity. There is some ingenuity I must confess in this fancy of his about good−nature: for having some apprehensions that God may expect our obedience to his command, it is a very cunning evasion to discover, first, that we are to sit in judgment on those commands, and, if we determine them not to be agreeable to our boasted reason, then that we are justified in a total disobedience to them. But should we by this proceeding, find ourselves in the wrong, we have no occasion for any farther ceremony than to tell our God that he is a very good−natured deity, and therefore he cannot possibly be angry with us; nor can he so contradict the nature we have thought proper to allot him, as to be out of humour. He must undoubtedly very kindly accept such a compliment, and approve our judgments! This brings to my remembrance the story of a country−fellow, servant to a farmer, who, in a cause for his master, took a false oath; and, being asked by a neighbour how he could do so wicked a thing as to forswear himself, thought it a sufficient apology to answer, *That God Almighty was merciful, and would pardon him, but that his master he was sure would never have forgiven him if he had told the truth*."

"Would any man, if his children were continually to run retrograde to his commands, and set up their own judgments in opposition to his, think it a sufficient excuse for them to say, that they did it upon the confidence they had of his good−nature? with what indignation would any master look upon his servants who should boldly make such an apology!"

"You confess, *Cylinda,* (continued my friend) that the whole drift of lord *Shaftesbury* is to exalt human reason, to prove that all nature is subject to our determintion, and that no man hath a right to impose on us the belief of any thing but what our penetration hath discovered, and our judgment approved: yet how doth he give up his own cause at last by comparing the human mind to a a passenger on board a ship sitting down in the *hold,* and ignorant of all that passes above deck. We are confined (he says) in a dark case of flesh. And in another place, speaking of human comprehension, these are his words: b *In an infinity of things mutually relative, a mind which sees not infinitely, can see nothing fully; and must therefore frequently see that as imperfect, which in itself is really perfect* ."

"Is not this like what *Pope* says in his *Dunciad,*"

*—To prove a thing till all men doubt it,*
*And write about it goddess and about it?*

"How many pages of the Characteristics are employed, in proving that our reason can investigate all things, and by the beauties of nature lead us to the discovery of a deity; yet when the author is on the very point of converting his sceptic, by proving that all appearance of evil can be nothing but appearance, how easily doth his

champion give up the cause, by saying that it would be hard to put him upon the proof of such an hypothesis, since nothing less than an infinite mind can see infinite connexions!"

"Can you, *Cylinda*, (adds he) be imposed on by such fallacious pretences to argument? Candidly examine all that hath passed in your own mind, since you first suffered your imagination to be warmed by the florid style and specious reasonings of the Characteristics; and you will find that you have sometimes been soothed by the power of pleasing words, sometimes terrified with bug−bear expressions, and upon the whole bubbled (as your author himself calls it) out of your understanding."

As obstinacy in error never possessed my mind, the moment it appeared to me that I had been deceived, I readily confessed the deception, and hastily fled from its influence.

On this the *Cry* began to make wry faces, and to look on *Cylinda* with scorn.

*Cylinda*. I was so pleased with my friend's acknowledging that I myself, if I would examine them impartially, should easily find out the fallacy of the Characteristics, that I soon set about the pleasing task; and on reflexion plainly perceived the truth of the gentleman's observation, that bug−bear words, and bug−bear pictures, had made a child of me, and really *bubbled* me out of my understanding: so that whilst the fear of being a dupe had made me assent to I knew not what, I fell into the very snare which I took so much pains to avoid, and was the greatest dupe of all. Besides, I must confess that my lord *Shaftesbury's* owning the narrow−sightedness of us mortals, was what had the strongest effect on my mind toward persuading me to change my opinion of him; for I looked on myself as trick'd and deceived by him, since from his own words I had enjoyed the pleasing thought, that I was sovereign judge of all things; and yet he at last betrays his cause, by confessing the imbecility of the human intellect to see every thing fully.

The *Cry* had suffered various sensations during this account of *Cylinda's* change of opinion. Her not being obstinately tenacious of a favourite error, had almost made them declare open war against her; but when her motives to this change came to appear, and were found to be no other than her friend's compliments to her own sagacity, and lord *Shaftesbury's* having given up the cause of human wisdom, they were tolerably appeased, and were not in much doubt but her future story would prove her to be their dearest friend.

Now *Portia* rose up and made a motion with her hand, as if she had an inclination to speak; which the *Cry* no sooner perceived, than the late calm, that her silence had granted to the boiling passions within their breasts, immediately vanished, and all within was disorder and perturbation. The remembrance of some hints, which *Portia* had formerly thrown out concerning the opinion of ridicule's being the touchstone of truth, awakened all their apprehensions, lest she should endeavour to clear up that point, and to refute that their favourite and best beloved assertion. Actuated therefore by these fears, they declared that *Cylinda* should not be interrupted; and raised such a clamor as they very well knew *Portia* would not attempt to speak in, or if she did, her being heard would be an impossibility. But *Una's* voice peremptorily insisting that *Portia* should be heard, forced them to comply; although any sort of compliance or submissions was so averse to their natures, that nothing could more set the *turba* at work to torture their bosoms. And this all their beholders might easily discern by their powting looks and sour countenances.

*Portia*. I would not willingly interrupt the narrative of a life, which appears to merit the closest attention. But I should gladly add a few thoughts to the gentleman's opinion of lord *Shaftesbury's* writings, and explain my own sentiments more fully on the subject of ridicule.

*Cylinda* declared that such an interruption would be extremely agreeable to her, and begged her therefore to proceed.

*Portia*. Of all the inventions in which mankind have delighted, this favourite one of making ridicule the test of truth, stands foremost in the rank for doing mischief. Yet taken in the right sense, it hath the appearance of undoubted truth.

The *Cry*, whose fears had been all alarmed, felt such a sudden change on hearing those words, that according to an expression in *Tom Thumb*, a country dance of joy was in their eyes; and for the first time they spared even *Portia* a little degree out of their small stock of admiration.

*Portia*. But if ridicule be not rightly understood, so far is it from being the test of truth, that it is the grandest prop of fallacy that the human imagination could ever have formed.

First the ridiculous ought visibly to arise from the absurdity of the subject ridiculed, and not from the whimsical fancy of the ridiculer. Otherwise what would become of all the most beautiful works of art, if they

were to fall into the hands of buffoons? Should any person who had no taste for real beauty, but delighted rather in preposterous deformity, clap on upon the head of the famous *Venus de Medicis* a fool's cap with a pair of ass's ears, bedaub the beautiful face with mud or wine less, and throw a large robe of patchwork over its well−proportion'd limbs; how soon might that exquisite model of symmetry and beauty become to the vulgal the highest object of ridicule?

And so it would, said the *Cry*; and all burst into a loud laugh at the ridiculous imaginary picture.

I don't deny it, reply'd *Portia*, if it had originally come out of the artist's hands in that figure: but when we remember its symmetry, its elegance, and the pleasure which at first view it gave to our imaginations, can we be so imposed on as not to perceive, that all the ridicule falls on the buffoon destroyer of beauty, and not on the admirable statue itself? Visible absurdity may at first sight (especially where there is an immoderate love of laughter in the mind) give motion to the risible muscles, altho' in the before mentioned instance, I should imagine it should rather produce sorrow to see so much beauty destroyed. But is there breathing a person so absurd, as to avow that this disfigured *Venus de Medicis* is in itself a deform'd, incongruous, and consequently a ridiculous figure, because the grinning multitude cannot behold it without a loud laugh? Nor can it be denyed, but that the most finish'd pieces of art are full as liable to become the objects of buffoonery, as the most rude and unpolished; nay much more so, if we consider but a moment on the true motive which must set these ridiculing wits at work, namely, the desire of rendering themselves of consequence, by depreciating that excellence which they cannot reach: for finding within an incapacity for forming any thing beautiful themselves, they endeavour to disguise every thing that is worthy admiration. *Horace* seems to me of all other writers to have the most just notions of true ridicule. His clear images, his beautiful illustrations being perfectly calculated to place before our eyes what in its own nature is truly ridiculous. 'Tis the pretending to paint either with the pen or the pencil any picture, without knowledge enough to render it uniform and natural. —'Tis when the produce of a labouring mountain is a poor diminutive mouse that he justly calls for laughter, and not when false with hath jumbled together a parcel of images, in order to raise the phantom of absurdity where there is no such thing, and where malice tries to raise laughter amongst those who delight in deriding both friend and foe. But when an author sets out with a parade of pompous words, in order to draw a fair picture of his own species, and endeavours to exalt our opinion of ourselves into a belief that we have a right to censure even the deity himself; when he hath insinuated, that we are born to every perfection which the imagination can form; when he hath described this wonderful perfect creature, as prepared by solitude and contemplation, to sit in judgment on the universe, and to discover from thence his own deity; when also we are big with the expectation of his judicious determination;—how are we all baulked and disappointed to find this stupendous being, this sovereign judge of the universe, suddenly dwindled into a poor short−sighted creature confined in a dark case of flesh! Is it possible on this occasion to avoid thinking of *Horace's* beautiful woman that ended in a fish's tail? or do we not perceive all the mountains in labour, and find the produce to be—a mouse? 'Tis impossible to keep our imaginations from presenting us with the bathos of writing, when we thus behold

*a This hold Dalhousy the great god of war,*
so suddenly transformed into

*Lieutenant colonel to the earl of Marr.*

To follow therefore the example of justice, left us in the story of *Phalaris*, let us try this polite author by his own test; and if inconsistency and contradictions call for our laughter, his much−admired writings will in some measure become the subject for ridicule.

The *Cry*, who were always ready for a jest, gave their assent in this case, even to *Portia* their greatest enemy; for if somebody was to be laugh'd at, they cared not much who it was, provided they themselves, in that collective body, were exempt from being the objects of another's derision.

*Cylinda* listen'd to *Portia* with a silent attention, and look'd ardently desirous that she would pursue the subject she had so well begun.

*Portia*. But notwithstanding I can see the contradictions and the ridiculous of some part of the Characteristics, yet I would by no means deny the author of them his due praise. His strong and elegant strokes in many parts of his works, claim our admiration of him as a writer. Nay he stands forth as one of the principal instances that I can

recollect, of a truth which I think incontestable, namely, that candor exalts and enlarges the capacity, whilst the want of candor stifles and suppresses all its force. For in those parts of his writings, where he is willing truth should really appear, he both proves his taste and shews his understanding; but when by the force of fallacy he endeavours uncandidly to hide away and conceal the truth, his reasonings are confused, and he only heaps one absurdity upon another.

How justly founded lord *Shaftesbury's* assertion is, that ridicule could not hurt the doctrines of *Socrates*, or the reputation of that philosopher, I will not at present take upon me to determine; but that ridicule was the only implement of mischief in the hands of his malicious adversaries which could have wrought his destruction, appears to me excessively plain; for, if I am not mistaken, thus stood the case with that great man at *Athens*.

*Anytus*, on some private pique, sought to take away the life of *Socrates*; but, on a consultation with his friend *Melitus*, they agreed that the character of *Socrates* was too much honoured and revered, for them to hope success from any slanderous accusation against him. On this they applied to the witty *Aristophanes*, who (it is most likely at their request) wrote the comedy of the *Clouds*, in which he descends to every base and mean artifice adapted to catch the ears of the vulgar, that, by false ridicule, he might depreciate the man whose wisdom soar'd far above his reach. *Socrates* was said in his person to resemble *Silenus*, the softer father of *Bacchus*, who was deified for his debauches. *Aristophanes* therefore clapp'd a fellow into a basket, hung him up in the middle of the stage, gave him the name of *Socrates*, (dress'd no doubt as like him as possible) and made him speak some noted words of *Silenus*, which words by *Socrates* had in truth never been made use of. I appeal to the common experience of mankind, whether such a public false representation would not at any time raise peals of laughter from a vulgar audience, who, wanting judgment to distinguish (altho' the likeness was not a whit more than between an elephant and an ant) would pronounce the man so represented ridiculous? But at the end of the play, when it might be supposed that the *Athenian* mob had sufficiently vented their laughter, malice breaks out in its own true colours. *Socrates* was loaded with false accusations, as being the head of a sect who denied the being of the gods; and now that it was found that *Socrates*, by their buffoon tricks, was become a laughing−stock, the weapons of ridicule were to be changed into firebrands, which were recommended to the mob whilst their hearts were thus inflamed; and the last speech of the play, without disguise, tells them where to direct their fury. The minds of the grinning multitude being caught by buffoonery, were fitted to receive any ill impression against *Socrates*. First, by the power of burlesque they laugh'd at him; then, glad to justify their own buffoonery, they readily lent an ear to any evil accusation that his enemies could propose. Those accusations, which were first swallowed in the form of jesting on the theatre, now became serious in the forum; and thus, by the force of *ridicule*, of *funn*, of *burlesque*, (meant undoubtedly only to make folks merry) was laid the true foundation for the fall of the wisest and best man that ever yet appear'd in the heathen world.

Languishing for ridicule, and an immoderate love of jesting, is the bane of society. Such universal scoffers and gigglers may properly be termed mental posture−masters, who distort and weaken their faculties, instead of exerting them with strength and activity to any eligible purpose. But let those persons, who are never in earnest, and who endeavour to prove that every thing in nature is a jest, take great heed that they claim to themselves no one virtue or good quality, lest the jest of the claim should too visibly appear to the dullest apprehension. This preposterous love of joking, upon all occasions, is foolishly indulged in children, grows headstrong and offensive in manhood, and when the faculties begin to decay, renders old age ridiculous. As much as I abhor all harsh severity to children, and the keeping them continually in dread of the rod, in order to make them learn what may never be of the least use to them, yet would I by severity (if gentle methods would not prevail) root early from their minds this malicious love of turning every thing into ridicule. And greatly do I approve what a lady of my acquaintance did on this occasion. She had been the best of wives, whilst she was so happy as to have the most indulgent of husbands yet alive; but being left a widow with two little girls, she confined all her thoughts to the care of her children. She was the most affectionate of mothers. She spared no pains for their instruction, nor ever corrected them, except when the sole consideration for their own good made it absolutely necessary. But observing one day that her youngest girl had thrown down her sister's card−built house, only for funn and diversion, and because her sister was vexed at it, the young one insulted her, or, in other words, turned her into ridicule (so early doth the love of this sport begin) for being grieved at a jest, she, in my opinion, very judiciously whipp'd her for the joke.

The *Cry* wrung their hands, and bemoan'd the child in all the terms of compassion they could invent; declaring,

that they never heard of any thing half so barbarous, as the mother to whip a poor dear little innocent only for a jest.

*Portia*. But the very next day, on the same child's running hastily, and dashing to pieces a fine set of china, a present from a beloved husband, her mother let this accident pass, without any other reproof, than saying, "You must take care, my dear child, and not run so hastily another time."

Now all the compassion which late had seized the minds of the *Cry* for the poor dear little innocent vanished at once; and each separately fixing her thoughts on some favourite piece of china, some shell, or some other brittle ware of her own private property, screamed out; "An odious little careless brat, had she been mine I would certainly have flead her alive."

*Portia* took no notice of their behaviour, but having finished what she intended to say, sat down in her seat, whilst the *Cry* continued for some time to be the picture of a play−house audience, after the performance of a new play, each being eager to vent some criticism on what they had heard: but *Una* at last commanded silence among the *Cry*, and permitted *Cylinda* to proceed with her uncommon story.

## SCENE III.

*Et mihi dulce magis resoluto vivere collo.*

# Portia. Una. The Cry.

## *CYLINDA.*

I have already, and with great truth declared, that I had not obstinacy enough in my disposition to retain an error, and to stick by an absurdity that was glaring. I have a sort of mental greediness, which makes me eager to take in any food that appears wholesome or palatable; but as soon as it becomes any ways distasteful, I instantly reject it. Yet was my imagination too active, too full of vivacity, to bear idleness, and my mind was so much delighted with its self−admiration, that it could by no means quit the search after some new method of enhancing that my greatest pleasure. As my discarding my lord *Shaftesbury* and all his opinions was not from considering him in the view which I have now seen him so justly painted, but for his betraying the cause of human wisdom (for his endeavour to exalt man's reasoning faculties was by no means to me his offence) quitting so weak a guide, I sent my roving fancy unbridled to explore the ways of heaven and earth, in order to discover some new object of admiration, or rather some new foundation on which I might build some yet unthought−of superstructure to my own self−applause. From the general idea I had before conceived of virtue, I now began to form a muster roll of them all, as separately defined by philosophers; and I fell in love with each particular virtue in its turn, just as it happened to suit with my then present inclination. I was amongst the virtues like the great *Turk* in his seraglio of women; and I chose to dwell with that virtue which looked the fairest in my eyes, and gave me at that season most pleasure. In short, I made wives of them; I first admired them, then made them my own property, and if they would not submit to my will, I again turned them off and divorced them.

*Portia* could not refrain from smiling as before at *Cylinda's* whimsical manner of relating the sensations of her mind. *Una* looked at her with an attentive concern: almost fearing that her wild imagination would carry her to perdition. Whilst the *Cry* were too much puzzled what to make of her sentiments, to suffer them often to give her any sort of interruption in her discourse.

*Cylinda*. The four cardinal virtues, prudence, temperance, fortitude and justice, I made all my own, and forced them to submit to my command. Instead of the common ambition of outward honours and high station, I was my own world, and the kingdoms I coveted were such as I could raise in my own mind. The four cardinal virtues were the chief pillars of my state; and the other attendant virtues, with all their properties ascribed to them by philosophers, came in their train to support my dignity.

When any inclination arose in my mind (the force of which was but small) I scrutinized the gratification of it on every side, and rejoiced on the discovery of its being in the least imprudent; for then I could, by resisting this inclination, indulge myself with the thought that the a rational part of my soul was in its full vigor, and that prudence was all my own. But if the inclination rose with any impetuous sway, I was sure either to prove (fully to my own satisfaction) that the gratification of it was not imprudent, or that prudence was another word for mean−spiritedness; and that my soul was too enlarged to be tyed down by rules, fit only to restrain cowards. I chose nobly to dare, and was far above the fear of any consequences. Then up rose MAGNANIMITY, backed with all the arguments my inclination could suggest; and by the force of my imagination it was always sure to get the better, and poor prudence either shamefully retreated, or was beaten off in the fray. For, as an ingenious author once made a battle of the books, so I made a battle of the virtues; and the field of action was my own mind. Yet these tumults gave me very little trouble or vexation, for I never fail'd taking that part to which my inclination most strongly led me, and that side was always sure to come off victorious. I never was out of humour with or discarded justice; for the part I made her play was to determine me always in the right, and to allow me possessed of every good quality; this I made justice pronounce as my due, and liberality bestow on me with a plenteous hand. Then as to FORTITUDE, nothing could be more truly at my command: for I could at any time sit and raise in my mind the idea of every evil to which human life is incident, and could bear them (being absent) with such perfect ease and tranquillity, that I doubted not but I was possessed of the highest degree of fortitude. Yet as I was not extremely fond of the contemplation even of ideal ills, I soon grew tired of this virtue; and giving a loose to my imagination, I again raised myself up to the highest pitch of magnanimity. I had read amongst the philosophers, "that it is the property of magnanimity bravely and with an equal mind to bear prosperity, adversity, renown, or ignominy; that it delights not in pleasure, in power or in victory; but in its own greatness and profundity of soul: that the man of magnanimity loves not life, nor desires to live on base conditions; but fixes his

delight on what is generous and noble." It was this then of all the virtues that had most chance for my highest favour. Fortitude, which was only to support me against the anguish of any present calamity, or the fear of any future, fell short in the comparison; and my whole delight was fixed in the admiration of *my own greatness and profundity of soul*. Whatever path my roving imagintion led me, whether cordially to embrace the virtues, because I thought myself possessed of them, or to despise them when that fancy fail'd me; whether prudence, fortitude, or any other demigod was for the present set up, yet the main point was still the same; all were to bow down before my own greatness and profundity. My books also I chose according to my reigning whim, with which I made every thing to coincide. The heros of my fancy too had the same fate, and I shortened even the short date of mortal heroism; for mine were only the heros of a day, nay sometimes of an hour, just tallying with the present subject of my admiration. Whilst I was enraptured with magnanimity, one part of which is said to be "the disdaining to live on base conditions," *Cato* of *Utica* was my hero. Every outward accident also that happend to me, generally took its rise from the present favourite imagination of my brain; and it was I think in the third day of the reign of *magnanimity*, in the sixth hour of the heroism of *Cato*, that I was prevailed on by some young ladies of my acquaintance to go with them to the neighbouring city to see *Addison's* tragedy of *Cato* acted by a set of strollers, amongst whom was a young gentleman, the younger son of a baronet. This youth, from having been highly applauded in the part of *Cato*, which he acted amongst his companions in the school where he was put for education, became so fond of such popular applause, as to quit the road of life he was designed for by his parents, and to join himself to this strolling company; where he still held the pre−eminence, and was invested with all the dignity of their principal parts. This was the young gentleman, who now also personated *Cato*. He was extremely handsome, thoroughly topp'd his part, and met with universal approbation. I beheld with pleasure all the sentiments of my favourite hero of antiquity, in a manner brought into life by the force of fine action, and animated by the vigor of youth. The graceful attitude of the actor, with the sensibility of his countenance, when looking on his dead son, he with a steady greatness of mind uttered these words, "Thanks to the gods, my boy has done his duty," dwelt strongly on my imagination; and I was so charmed with seeing my old *Cato* in a manner boil'd in *Medea's* kettle, and metamorphosed into the bloom of youth and beauty, that I was somewhat a little like being in love with him. My father had formerly some acquaintance with the parents of this young gentleman, and now paid their son the civility of giving him a general invitation to our house, which was not a little pleasing to me, and which he also very readily accepted. From the moment I in the least liked this young fellow, I suffered him in my opinion to participate with me in the possession of the virtues; and generously bestowed on him some share of all my favourites; even magnanimity itself: for as I looked upon myself as perfect mistress of all the virtues, I imparted them to others just in what degree I thought proper, and measured their desert just as they were or were not agreeable to my fancy. As I wore no disguise, it was not long before my young hero perceived my great liking to him; but his imagination far outran my intentions. For as soon as he seriously endeavoured to prevail with me to marry him, he awakened all my apprehensions and alarmed my fears. Not from those common considerations, such as the care of a future family, or the station of life he had thrown himself into, (for as *Socrates* says, that a wise man is a citizen of the world, so I thought that a wise woman was equally at liberty to range through every station or degree of men, to fix her choice wherever she pleased:) but my fears were of a deeper kind, and struck at matrimony itself. The loss of liberty which must attend being a wife, was of all things the most horrible to my imagination; and the absurdity of my losing my liberty from my admiration of *Cato*, was too glaring to escape my observation. Yet as I had little accustomed myself to contradict even the most whimsical of my inclinations, I had some short struggle in my mind, whether I should resign my lover or my liberty; but this lasted not long. I found myself as free as air, and could not bear the thought of putting myself in any man's power for life, only from a present capricious inclination. I therefore gave my young gentleman an absolute refusal; and it was not long before he left the country with the rest of his companions. I was not of a humour to pine for the absent; I rejoiced I had escaped matrimony, and could even rally myself for having suffered an inclination for the young *Cato* to creep in on the back of my admiration of the old one. I immediately dethroned MAGNANIMITY, and placed PRUDENCE in its stead; for I hugged myself in the thought, that no inclination was able to put me off my guard, or to get the better of my forecast and prudence.

## SCENE IV.

*Metrodorus disoit qu'en la tristesse, il y a quelque alliage de plaisir: je ne sçay s'il vouloit dire autre chose, mais moy, j'imagine bien, qu'il y a du dessein, du consentement, et de la complaisance, a se nourrir de la melancholie.*

Montaigne.

# Portia. Cylinda. Una. The Cry.

## *CYLINDA.*

But now an affliction befel me, to which my own whims did not in the least contribute; and which at that time so entirely engaged all my attention, that the cares of the imaginary kingdom I had erected in my own mind were forced for a season to yield to another object of my thoughts. My father had been long in a weak state of health, but now each day brought on him visible marks of his approaching dissolution; and in three months he was released from all his pains.

Whilst any life remained in him, my whole care, my every thought was bent on attending my father with the utmost assiduity; my invention was continually on the search for methods to soften his pains and alleviate his sufferings. No pleasures could have bribed me to have been guilty of the least neglect, in the performance of a duty in which my heart was so entirely involved. For indeed my highest pleasure was centered in my attendance on a parent, for whom I truly felt the most filial affection.

The speaking eyes of *Portia* at this moment sparkled with lively joy on *Cylinda*, and *Una* herself began to cherish some pleasing hopes of her; the *Cry* also at this time chose to bestow their praises on the same object which *Una* had honoured with her approbation; for 'tis one of their properties to exalt to the skies, and to esteem as the highest virtue, some sorts of common duties. Filial affection happened to be amongst their catalogue, and as if such a tender behaviour was extremely scarce, and extraordinary in children towards their parents, they first gaped at the wonder, and then fell into their common method of praise, by throwing forth all the language properly adapted to fulsome adulation.

*Cylinda*. When my father was no more, I gave an unbridled loose to my affliction, and set no bounds to my immoderate sorrow; to mourn, to bewail, and to lament myself became the strongest bent of my soul. I was hurried through all the wild delusions to which uncurbed passions can lead; raging grief and wild despair were then in such full possession of my heart; that to indulge them was my greatest b pleasure.

Now *Portia's* countenance indicated a compassionate sorrow, *Una* sighed, and the high praises the *Cry* had sounded forth of *Cylinda* were suddenly transformed into full as high censures. For; that there is a pleasure in the indulgence of grief when it is the principal bent of the mind, is a secret they wish to be concealed deep in the center of the earth; and they abhor the person who brings such a truth into open light, with as much inveteracy as a felon feels towards his accomplice who betrays him to the magistrate, and gives him up as a guilty sacrifice to the laws of his country.

*Cylinda*. I roved in fancy through every past scene of my life, in which either my father's conversation or his indulgence had given me pleasure, by which means I contrived to preserve continually in my thoughts the immense greatness of my loss; by such political management I at last raised such tumultuous storms in my breast, as by experience I found was much easier to raise than to allay; for sorrow thus indulged bore me down with a resistless torrent, and I was too weak to stop its course: my late admired virtues were now no longer the objects of my consideration, *prudence* was forgot, *sortitude*, (the ill being present and the trumpet sounding to battle,) like a coward fled the field, and *magnanimity* suddenly dwindled from its giant greatness into the diminutive appearance of a dwarfish pigmy. All the beauties of nature, which at times I had admired with an enthusiastic warmth, were vanished, or transformed into wild disorder and universal confusion. My soul being darkened, tumultuous and unruly, every outward object seemed to sympathize with the deformity harboured within my own bosom. All my favourite authors either ancient or modern, that were accustomed to fill my mind with pleasure, from whom also I had often extracted such satisfactory consolation for the loss of my friends, whilst that loss was at a distance and uncertain, ceased, now that loss was present, to yield me the least glimmering ray of comfort. My thoughts dwelt too intensely on my own sorrow to leave room for the entrance of any other idea, and the most eloquent philosophy might as well have been bestowed on an inanimate statue. My imagination scaled heaven itself, and dethroned the very gods; for whilst I was, as I fancied, thus cruelly and unjustly afflicted, I would by no means suffer myself to believe that any deity governed the world.

The fatigues of nightly watchings, and the daily anxiety I laboured under during my father's illness, joined to the unlimited grief that I suffered in my mind after his death, so shook my constitution, that I once thought both my life and affliction would soon come to a final period.

The *Cry* now burst into a loud fit of contemptuous laughter, imagining that they had the happiness to perceive a manifest absurdity in *Cylinda's* saying, that there was a pleasure in grieving, whilst she confessed it had like to have produced so fatal an effect; but as this absurdity was too small to be visible to any eyes but those of the *Cry, Cylinda* proceeded, and left them to the full enjoyment of their fancy'd discovery.

*Cylinda*. As soon as sorrow began to flow from my eyes, my heart felt lighter, and the violence with which I vented my affliction did that for me which I not did endeavour to do for myself: for I found that the sluces of grief are not inexhaustible, and that by venting it without restraint it naturally subsided, and wanted not my assistance. After every violent vent of sorrow, something like a little calm ensued, during which intervals it was my custom to raise up to myself some small comfort, by imagining that it was the peculiar delicacy, the great sensibility of my soul, that caused such an unusual degree of sorrow for the loss of a father: and as I imputed it to gratitude, and made filial affection its basis, all the tender and softer ties of kindred and affection were, my in opinion, the most amiable of all the human virtues.

But when the height of my sorrow by its violence had spent itself, it left me so extremely weak, that my faculties had no power to exert themselves: my imagination was in a manner subdued; and there was a sort of vacuum, or, to speak more properly, an interregnum in my mind, and both my bodily and mental appetite were so weak that I loathed all kind of food, and was but barely in a state of existence: but when my grief was subsided, I did not endeavour to keep up any appearance of sorrow in order to impose on others; a practice I abhor'd, and always avoided; for the opinion of others was never considered by me with any great anxiety. The true motto I deserved was, that

*My mind to me a kingdom is;*

and so absolute a kingdom that I could crown, depose, pull down one monarch and set up another at the word of command, without being beholden to the assistance of ordinary human means; such as fleets, armies, stratagems, policies, with a long train of *et ceteras,* necessary to make any revolution in earthly kingdoms and the fluctuating empires of this world.

The *Cry,* from the time they had made that transition so agreeable to their natures, from extolling *Cylinda* for her filial affection, to abusing her for betraying one of their secrets, had remained in profound silence, still deeply contemplating whether *Cylinda* was to be deemed a friend; or to be marked as an enemy: her raging in grief, her beholding all nature in confusion because she was afflicted, her dethroning the gods on the fancy that she met with injustice, with many other things she had related, had met with their highest approbation: but then her betraying their secrets, her abhorrence of the affectation of sorrow for the purpose of deceit, staggered their purposes, and prevented their coming to any fixed resolution. They weighed all sides nicely in the balance, and were in the perplexed situation of the man in the farce, who declares "much may be said on both sides the question." But *Cylinda's* last picture of having a kingdom at her command, in which she could perform the part of a deity, and crown or depose whomever she pleased, raised so great a delight in the minds of the *Cry,* that they for the moment forgot even her betraying one of their favourite secrets; were ready to embrace her; all rose with emulation to clap their hands, and strove to make manifest every mark of approbation, till the whole place re−echoed their clamorous applause.

## SCENE V.

*—Rex denique regum,*
*—nisi cum pituita molesta est.*

Hor.

## Portia. Cylinda. Una. The Cry.

## *CYLINDA.*

My strength returning, and my passion of grief being subsided, a new employment was now to be sought for my restless imagination. The VIRTUES like false friends had fail'd me in the day of necessity, and were therefore to be no longer trusted. Besides, the imagination can never be raised twice into an enthusiastic warmth for the same mental object, any more than the outward eye can view with the same desire as at first sight that beauty to which it is grown indifferent. The search of a new adventure is as pleasant to a mental knight errant as it ever could have been to the officious gallantry of *Don Quixot* himself: and none oftener than such intellectual adventurers mistake large flocks of sheep for advancing armies, or windmills for giants. I now endeavoured to make my self more perfect in *greek*, and eagerly began reading *Plato*. From hence I soon became so enraptured with the intellectual part of my own composition, that all outward things were contemptible in the comparison. I immediately placed all pleasure in the contemplation of the divine nature, and of the intellectual part of the human nature, which, as far as it is immortal, must (according to *Plato*) partake of the divine. I could for hours together delight myself with the thought, that it was possible for me to partake of divinity. Whilst I had two pursuits in reading *Plato*, namely, the learning his philosophy, and getting more knowledge of the *greek* language, I was very well pleased with my employment: but yet there were some things in the platonic doctrine that were not thoroughly to my satisfaction; and I soon began to languish for some new adventure. From platonism to absolute stoicism was an easy transition. In many things indeed they perfectly agreed; but where they differed, the latter was much more agreeable to my humour. I have repeatedly said, that from the time I was old enough to reflect, I had discovered that the government of my passions, so as not to keep my mind in an uproar, was necessary towards attaining any tolerable degree of ease: but this political scheme of avoiding uneasiness or pursuing pleasure, altho' I had endeavoured to follow it, had no dignity, no grandeur in it; nor was it in the least a subject for self−admiration: for I considered that the child who keeps its fingers out of the fire for fear of being burnt, and the dog that obeys his master to avoid the stroke of the whip, use the same policy of avoiding evil with myself. I wanted some higher, some mental gratification of my own dignity: and here the stoical scheme broke in upon me with all the eclat of philosophy. Yet even this doctrine of the stoics, whilst it kept within any bounds of sense and reason, did not satisfy me; for as I never did things by halves, I ran into the most extravagant and enthusiastic parts of it. Because the government of my passions was necessary, I would have no passions at all; and as mental pleasures were supposed to be the highest, I would not allow my body to have any sensations.

The platonic doctrine admitted, that some things are better and some worse, as that riches are better than poverty, ease than pain, *&c.* A virtuous man therefore surrounded with worldly blessings, they deemed more happy than a virtuous man loaded with misfortunes. This would not do for me, this was allowing a dependence upon sense, and some things without me, whereas I would be entirely independent, and my mind should sit enthroned in its own world. The stoics held that there was no MEAN in any thing, no degrees of good or ill. Some things indeed, they say, are good, some ill, and some indifferent: for virtue they assert to be A GOOD, VICE AN EVIL, and all other things, as riches, poverty, ease, pain, *&c.* are according to their doctrine meerly INDIFFERENT. They affirmed therefore that a virtuous man upon a rack was as happy as a virtuous man off a rack; and how was I charmed with the greatness of mind which *Possidonius* possessed, who in reading lectures with *Pompey* the great, whilst he lay racked with rheumatic pains, could in their most violent attack cry out, "I acknowledge, oh pain! that thou art troublesome, but no real evil!"

I had now no outward object to grieve me; I had fortune sufficient for all my desires; for I had no ambition or avarice; I had no person living to contradict me, and might, if a political regard to myself had not restrained me within the bounds of temperance, have revelled in all the delights of luxury: but I scorned to own even to myself, that I could receive any pleasure from things which my philosophy had pronounced to be purely indifferent; and oftentimes as I have been sitting in an arbor at the bottom of my garden, from whence (as it was formed on the declivity of a hill) I had a prospect most agreeably variegated with woods, lawns, and the winding of a large river, whilst I was breathing the sweets of a calm summer's evening air, hearing the melody of various birds, reclined on a bed of the softest chamemiel, and covered with a canopy of roses, jasmine, and honeysuckle, I used to cry out, "Oh pain! I will never acknowledge thee to be a real evil." Nor did I exult a little, that I had gone one step farther

than my philosopher: for; as pain was absent, I would not, as *Possidonius* did, even allow it to be troublesome.

As to the common people in my neighbourhood, who were afflicted with sickness or any other misfortune, I did my utmost to relieve their distress, and to alleviate their sufferings: for I considered that they, poor creatures, had not learning enough to find out that pain was no evil; and therefore it could not be wondered at, that they should feel its utmost force. But with what contempt did I look down on those of a higher education, who complained of ill health, losses or disappointments of any kind! How mean−spirited, and how much below the dignity of their natures, did I esteem such complaints! I could have told them that they had nothing to do but to turn stoics, which, by a kind of magic charm, would extract all the evil from human miseries, and shew them that it was quite an indifferent thing whether they were in pain or at ease. Thus did I indulge myself in all the resveries and highest enthusiasm of the stoical doctrines; for on a very small foundation I could build what superstructure best pleased my fancy, and give to every thought the turn which my inclination judged proper for its purpose. But I was suddenly cured of this stoical phrensey by a violent fever, which left me so very weak, that my imagination had no force to raise any mental pleasures; my mind consequently was come to another interregnum, and thus ended the monarchy of stoicism.

*End of the Second Volume.*

# Vol. 3

# PART the FOURTH.

## SCENE VI.

*Atheists have been but rare, since Nature's birth;*
*'Till now, She Atheists ne'er appear'd on earth.*

Universal Passion.

# Portia. Cylinda. Una. The Cry.

## *CYLINDA.*

No sooner was the health of my body restored, than all my mental heroism flew back with fresh vigour. Stoicism was deposed, and I was at a loss for some new monarch which at my command should be placed in its stead. Even in my most enthusiastic admiration of the platonic philosophy, I found from within very frequent contradictions to the happiness of this contemplative life; for I was in truth pretty well stock'd with social inclinations, and my mind would often spontaneously wander in search of the gratification of some affection. Yet the despotic power with which I invested every monarch that was to preside over my bosom, never suffered any notion in the least contradictory to its absolute government, to be heard or attended to. But as in all states the natural successor of tyranny is a popular government, so did it happen in mine; and those notions which had been silenced whilst I upheld the reign of stoicism, now all at once raised such a clamor in my bosom with their different opinions, that I unawares slid into a doubt of all things, and was unavoidably driven into scepticism. Here also, according to my usual custom, my imagination fled to the utmost extravagance of the sect which I embraced; and I adhered to that a philosopher, who declared that there was no certainty in any thing, not even in our senses; and in consequence of which he walk'd strait forward, over dogs or men, into the water, or down a precipice, and was saved from destruction only by the care of his friends. I also, whenever I went out, walk'd strait forward, enjoying the discovery that there was no certainty in any thing, and I was not therefore to believe my eyes. But in these sort of freaks I never wanted the care of my friends, nor did I ever come by the least misfortunes in indulging my present fancy; for my walks were all in my own pleasant garden, where there was no danger of meeting with ditches or precipices, or any sort of bar to my free passage. But when I was far advanced in this doubting system, eager to settle myself in this unsettled state of mind, and wavering of opinion, I study'd the doctrine of the sceptics, as collected by *Sextus Empiricus*; and found that the chief ground of scepticism is, "That to every reason there is an opposite reason equivalent." In this mental pair of scales do the sceptics hold themselves suspended and free, they say, from the disturbances which attend on decision. For they tell you, that if you determine such a thing to be good, and such a thing to be ill, then every appearance afterwards which puts you in doubt, must give you a disturbance; whereas, suspence being their element, they are therein undisturbed.

But this was so far from keeping me undisturbed, that it raised a civil war amongst the democracy which I had establish'd in my bosom; one part being resolute in the admiration of this serenity; the other as obstinately adhering to the absurdity of it, and plainly perceiving that the minds of these sceptics are literally hung up in castles of their own building in the air, like the philosophers of *Swift's* flying island. When I perceived therefore, that all their assiduity was employed in laboriously endeavouring to demonstrate that there was no such thing as a demonstration, the strange absurdity set me into a violent fit of laughter, and thoroughly cured me of all my admiration of scepticism.

And now indeed I grew half weary of all philosophy, and began to wander after some other pursuit, some outward object of entertainment; and when the mind once wanders out of itself, and seeks foreign amusement, it is very apt to imagine every thing it meets with an object fitted for its purpose. But at present I had very little opportunity to employ my own imaginations; for I met with a young gentleman whose name was *Millamour*; his person was genteel, his countenance pleasing, he was well read in the classics, and altho' he had no great depth of understanding, yet his conversation was so sprightly and agreeable, as perfectly answer'd to the idea I had formed of pleasure. On hearing me mention *Virgil, Horace, Ovid,* &c. he said he wondered I had not read *Lucretius,* which he recommended in such terms as raised all my curiosity; and the moment my fancy was fired with the thoughts of any author, I could never rest till I had gone through his works. I was extremely charm'd with the fire of *Lucretius's* poetry, and my curiosity was further awakened to learn all that was possible to be known of that philosophy, so great a part of which is to be found in the above *latin* poet. Nor was it long before I made myself acquainted with the doctrines of *Epicurus,* so as to become an absolute epicurean. This answered *Millamour's* purpose; for on reflexion since, I easily perceived what his design was in making me read *Lucretius*: but it always was my characteristic to pursue my own designs, without giving myself any trouble about those of others; for there is no subsequent advantage in this world, which could have paid me for undertaking the laborious task of cunningly prying into the plots of my companions. I had too much employment, too much pleasure in the

enjoyment of my own mind, to exchange it for so painful, so disagreeable, and so uncertain a study. Whether it might be deduced from the doctrines of *Epicurus*, that there are no gods, or that the gods, wrapp'd up somewhere at a great distance in their own indolence, trouble not themselves about natural affairs; it appear'd equally evident to me, that we had no need to trouble our heads about them. But with the utmost warmth and zeal did I embrace the following epicurean canons.

First, "That all pleasure which hath no pain join'd with it, is to be embraced."

Secondly, "That all pain which hath no pleasure, is to be shunned."

Thirdly, "That all pain which prevents a greater pain, or brings a greater pleasure, is to be embraced. And,

Fourthly, "That all pleasure which hinders a greater pleasure, or brings pain, is to be shunned."

Then how delighted was I with this conclusion, that pleasure is to be sought because 'tis pleasure, and pain to be avoided because 'tis pain!

All the virtues which I once so much admired, were by the precepts of my new teachers still to be retain'd; but so far from being lords and governors, they were to attend as absolute servants, and to be embraced only as they promoted the interest of their sovereign lady Pleasure. My own prudential policy from my youth, had led me often to wander into this way of thinking; but now it blazed forth with the dignity of a system, it came with redoubled force, and carry'd me off in triumph as its captive; with all my former systems led in chains, gracing its chariot wheels.

*Millamour* from the first of our acquaintance had tryed every method in his power to engage my inclinations, but delayed the declaring himself my lover, till he found that his conversation joined to my new study, had moulded me into a thorough epicurean; for then he did not doubt but my own disposition (he being the only object of pleasure present) would greatly contribute to the facility of his conquest. b Temperance I considered as merely political, and therefore not design'd as the restraint to any indulgence that I could give myself, which brought no disease to the body, or remorse to the soul. And as to Virtue confined to chastity, I laugh'd at the narrow feminine expression; nor from the time that my cousin *Phaon* had fix'd it in my mind that my genius was too sparkling, and my understanding too liberal to be confined by such slavish rules, had I considered it as worthy my regard. That universal moral virtue which I had so often admired, did not at all forbid my accepting or returning *Millamour's* affections: for as he was no woman's husband, I was satisfied that I should do none of my fellow−creatures any wrong; but if my first idea of moral virtue had pretended a little to interfere, yet had I lately learnt, "That all good consisted in pleasure, and virtue itself therefore could be no otherwise laudable than as it conduced to that end." The remarkable continence and abstinence of *Epicurus* himself, I imputed to the weakness of his constitution; and I rather therefore (altho' my system took its name from that philosopher) chose to make the chearful *Aristippus* my guide, especially too as I supposed that the precepts of this *Aristippus* gave some small delight to my favourite *Horace* c himself. Thus was I led into an intrigue with *Millamour,* all things without and within corroborating towards my yielding to his addresses, much more than any violence of my own affections for him. *Millamour's* good humour was equal with my own; joy, mirth and pleasantry therefore, were our eternal entertainment, which we indulg'd to such a height, that he often afterwards told me how excessively astonished he was at my uncommon conduct: for after some months he confessed, that he lived in fearful expectation, when all his pleasure would be lost, from my turning gloomy and fretful, when upbraidings, reproaches, and all their train of unavailing words, such as villain, betrayer, seducer of my virtue, &c. would like thunder break from my lips: nor could he for a considerable time be convinced, but that in the end I should pine, grow uneasy and vexatiously teazing to him, by my desires of turning him into an husband— Mistaken *Millamour*! nothing could be farther from my heart, or more repugnant to my inclinations.

There was such a spirit in the manner of *Cylinda's* speaking those last words, and such a joy seemed to be diffused over all her features, on the recital of this free libertine part of her life with *Millamour,* that *Una* sighed, dropped her eyes on the ground, and seemed half inclined to stop *Cylinda's* narration, and to desire *Portia* to proceed with her story: but as she was unwilling willing to condemn any without hearing all they had to say, she checked her rising intention, and restrained not *Cylinda* from proceeding.

Poor *Portia* looked also extremely disappointed; for her truly kind and benevolent heart had conceived strong hopes, from the manner in which *Cylinda* had described the unbridled rovings of her wild imagination, that she herself now considered them as past errors, from whose influence she was freed. But *Portia* at present lost those pleasing hopes, and doubted not but she saw standing before her, a deplorable instance of the clearest parts, and

the most lively apprehension, being led by vanity and self−admiration into the worst of delusions.

These were the thoughts which passed in the mind of both *Una* and *Portia*; yet they gave no interruption to *Cylinda*, but suffered her to continue her story.

*Cylinda*. But it was remarkable, that in leading this life with *Millamour*, I preserved myself from being talked of in the neighbourhood, and my reputation was not in the least sullied. Which convinced me that it is the vanity of women, in making it appear to the world that they have an admirer which generally betrays them; unless they happen to make choice of a very silly coxcomb indeed. For first, a woman takes pains to make her lover particular with her in all companies, and then she will not suffer him to cast his eyes upon any one besides herself, without tormenting him, and taking away all his peace and usual enjoyment in her conversation. When a woman by her own behaviour hath thus made both herself and her lover remarkable in all assemblies for their intimacy, and no matrimony ensues to give a new subject of discourse; the tattling world, baulked by this disappointment, will be revenged, and substitute by their guesses another discourse, not highly to the lady's honour. For it is not easy to make the world believe, that the days of romance are so far returned, as for admirers to dangle after their adored mistresses, only for the honour at last of kissing the hem of their garments. And *Millamour* often said, that as he did not chuse the reputation of a man of intrigue, he had frequently been deterred from making his addresses to women he liked, from seeing them possessed of so foolish a vanity, that it would be impossible for him to keep an amour with them a secret.

Here the highest indignation imaginable seized the *Cry* against *Millamour*; and they pronounced him the most impertinent coxcomb they had ever heard of.

*Cylinda*. As I was not actuated by any of this kind of vanity, I indulged myself in my intercourse with *Millamour*, without being the subject of popular rumor; and by a little prudence in our conduct, we contrived not to give the least opportunity for scandal.

The *Cry* were all confounded, amazed, and puzzled, concerning the life which *Cylinda* had led with *Millamour*; for on hearing that she had no vanity to gratify in her love, they suddenly felt themselves disgraced and contaminated by her presence, like an audience at the theatre, with loud vociferation they cry'd, Off—off—till a sudden rumor buzz'd amongst them, that she had strictly preserved her reputation (which was indeed the very essential of the virtue they admired) all their wrath was immediately appeased, their clamor stopped, and by degrees they subsided into their former eager and gaping attention. The babble and uproar amongst themselves had been so great, that *Cylinda* could not hear one word of its purport; but having waited till they were pleased to be silent, she thus proceeded.

*Cylinda*. Having lived in this manner with *Millamour* for half a year, he was obliged to leave me, in order to look into an estate in *Westmoreland*, which was just fallen to him by the death of his elder brother. Whilst *Millamour* was absent, I sought other amusements to entertain myself; for there was nothing I so much scorned, as making my mind dependent by anxious solicitude for the presence of another. My books and my own fancies of themselves could very agreeably take up every part of the day; for I was ignorant of what it was to make time a burthen, unless when outward intrusions snatched me from all my favourite delights: yet I was not averse, but rather delighted with any outward object on which I could exemplify, and throw into action (if I may so express myself) my now prevalent and all−conquering epicurean philosophy. One of the chief pleasures of the original followers of this doctrine was, friendship, insomuch that *Epicurus* called himself the friend, and not the master, of his numerous scholars. Besides I had been all my life so much in earnest, in every system I had embraced, and so strictly conformant (in imagination at least) to all its rules; that altho' for some reason, or some shadow of a reason, I had given it up, or exchanged it for another, yet would some traces remain behind: nor were my lord *Shaftbury's* voluntary uncommanded virtues, in which number friendship held the foremost rank, totally eradicated from my bosom. Naturally too I was endued with a friendly disposition; the desire therefore of an intimate friendship at this time warmed my imagination; and what gave my present friendly inclination full scope, was my fresh acquaintance with a widow lady, and her daughter, a girl of twelve years old: the tender years of this amiable girl were no objection to my bestowing on her all my friendship; for I have known few persons, who, in the maturity of their age, have been endued with half her penetrating understanding: joined to which, she had so chearful a vivacity in her manner of expressing herself, as rendered her the most delightful of companions. She seemed equally pleased with the preference I visibly gave to her conversation, in comparison with that of the whole neighbourhood. I enjoyed a great deal of her company, and was doubly happy, in hearing that the mother of

my young *Sappho* (for so I term'd her) liked that country so well, as to intend settling thereabouts for the remainder of her life. I loved to communicate knowledge, and to parcipitate pleasure, and intended therefore to make a pupil of this my young friend, and to lead her, as I saw the greatness of her capacity, through all my own admired philosophy.

*Portia*, on this part of *Cylinda's* story, gave a deep sigh, and a tear started suddenly from her eye; whilst *Una* shewed by her countenance, an anxious concern for the poor girl; lest her flexible and tender years should be led astray and bewilder'd, in such a heap of imaginary knowledge.

*Cylinda*. But I had not long enjoyed this pleasure, before my little friend informed me, that she was the next morning to set out for *London* with her mother, and to return into that country no more. She parted from me with tears in her eyes, and begged my correspondence: I promised to comply with her request, and in consequence wrote her a long letter; but receiving no answer, I wrote to her again. This second letter also being fruitless, I was a little grieved at the loss of my delightful companion; yet I concluded that the girl, by the levity of youth, and the diversions of *London*, had turned her thoughts for the present into another channel; and doubted not, but the first flight of her fancy for public amusements being over, she would renew my acquaintance. But whether the pleasures of the gay and polite circle had such charms as wholly to engage her mind, whether marriage or some other friendship attached her affections, or whether she was snatch'd away by an early death from me and all the world, is to this moment unknown to me; I can only with regret declare, that from that time I never heard of her more. Thus ended my first and last attachment, in which friendship alone was concerned; for I never afterwards met with any woman half so agreeable to my fancy.

*Millamour* soon after this returned; and altho' his stay had much exceeded the time he appointed, yet I never enquired the cause, till he thought proper to tell it me; but received him with my usual lively good−humour; and when we met again, without the former thread seemed to join, leaving the least appearance where it had been broken off. The force of reciprocal good−humour, where the mind is not so diseased as to have lost all relish for true pleasure, is almost incredible; and such was the effect it had on *Millamour*, that he was even solicitous to make me his wife.

I had nothing the least profligate in my behaviour, and although the philosophic whims of my brain had suffered me to follow every the least idea of pleasure; yet did I never give my present lover any reason for jealousy. He knew me in one sense truly constant to him, and he failed not to pay himself the compliment to think, that of all mankind I chose but him alone. But to confess a truth which was never discovered by *Millamour*, (for from easiness of temper, and vivacious good−humour, I was all that a man could wish in a mistress) I had not for him, nor imagined that I could have for any man breathing, one grain of that kind of affection, which enslaves the inclinations, alarms the passions, and makes our happiness depend on the smiles or frowns of another: and the chief motives for my complying with my lover's solicitations, were found in my third epicurean canon, namely, the conceding to an article not perfectly agreeable in order to avoid a much worse evil, which was the opposing continual importunity.

*Millamour's* brother dying without children, he became now possessed of a very large estate. He was the last of six sons; and on his marriage alone depended the continuance of heirs to his family. He told me that he intended to marry, and declared at the same time, that of all womankind he would chuse to spend his life with me, if I would consent to be his wife. But in this point *Millamour* could not stagger my resolution. I grew masculine in my thoughts, and (in the words of *Lothario* to *Calista*, in the *Fair Penitent* ) I told him,

*That I would still retain him in my heart,*
*My ever gentle lover, and my friend:*
*But for those other names of wife and husband,*
*They only meant ill−nature, cares, and quarrels;*

and I wondered how it was possible for him to imagine, that, free and unbounded as was my scheme of life, I could ever think of binding myself in chains, and of parting for ever with my darling liberty. When he found he could by no means prevail on me to consent to marriage, he fairly told me, that he was resolved not to let his name and family sink; and although it would be with the utmost force upon his inclination, as I was sincerely his choice, yet he must, if I would not be his for life, fly from my company for ever.

It was, I confess, with some little difficulty on my side that I could bring myself to part with so

good−humoured, so agreeable a companion as *Millamour*. But as I closely embraced that cannon of *Epicurus* which says—"that all pleasure which bringeth a greater pain is to be shunned;" I assured *Millamour*, that as much as I liked him, I would not be caught in the snares of matrimony, by my fears of losing him. I supported this my fixed resolution by many arguments, drawn from the nature of things: such as, that restraint always excites an uneasy desire after freedom; and that our very confinement to each other must naturally bring disgust. But *Millamour* was as fix'd in his resolution, as I was in mine; and I found it more eligible to part with my lover, than to bring on myself what I believed would be certain misery. Nay it was astonishing to me, that all women of beauty and spirit, and consequently of power, did not keep up to this charming scheme of independence, and (turning the tables on them) should not consider men as meer objects of their pleasure, and not worth any serious consideration. For in marriage there seemed to me only this alternative, to live a commanded wife, which my very soul abhorred, or to live a neglected wife, the bare supposition of which I would have parted with the whole world to have avoided.

The female part of the *Cry*, who look on men as their natural enemies, (and as such would look on angels if ordain'd to be their masters) and who out of zeal for the Sex would hold out in an argument whether man was superior to woman, or woman was superior to man, even to the very extent of their breath, were greatly delighted with the picture *Cylinda* had drawn of youth and beauty, openly triumphing by independence over these their common enemies, whom they themselves had never yet been able to annoy, but by juggling arts and paltry cunning. On her naming a neglected wife, with dread they each glanced their eyes from one side to the other, over their own persons, and by a conscious bridle of the chin shewed how little they thought themselves from their own charms in fear of such a fate. But on *Cylinda's* expressing her abhorrence of the state of a commanded wife, they sympathised with her with all their souls; and starting with terror at the very idea, as if they had beheld a ghost, cried out, *O horrible, horrible, most horrible*!

## SCENE VII.

*It were better to be eaten to death with a rust, than to be scoured to nothing with perpetual motion.*

Shakespear.

# Portia. Cylinda. Una. The Cry.

## *Cylinda.*

*Millamour* seeing me persist unalterably in my resolution against matrimony, abandoned me (as he called it) to my own whims, settled on his own paternal estate, and chose him a wife, in order to continue his name and family to posterity.

I had in a great measure vented my ardent thirst after philosophy, by running through such a variety of principles and opinions; and even my admiration of the epicurean system, by having without restraint or stop run its full career, was come to its ultimate point; and the effects of it only remained: yet I must have either some outward object, or some inward pleasure to follow. Being come therefore to a kind of nonplus, as to the pursuit of mental adventures, I took a resolution to leave my retirement, and at least for some time to make an experiment what pleasures I could meet with in the gay part of our great metropolis. I had a fortune sufficient to bear the expence; and therefore no sooner was the resolution taken than it was executed: for as I hated all perplexity, nothing was so contrary to my humour as a long deliberation. I had a relation who lived in what is called the circle of high life, and who had frequently by letter sollicited me not to waste my time and youth in *poking* in the country, and *poring* over musty books (such were her expressions) but to come to *London* and see the world, which would give me, she said, a true taste of pleasure, and a relish of life. As soon as I arrived in town, I took a genteel lodging in one of the little streets near my cousin's house, which was in *Grovesnor−square,* and depended on her to introduce me into polite company. And I was determined (at least for one winter) to examine the utmost of the whole round of diversions, which are so enchanting to numbers of the human race, that they spend their whole lives in the pursuit of them. But I had not been long in this giddy scene, before I thought the philosophers need not seek farther to find a *vacuum*. I was no sooner spied out as one that would play at cards (for I found this the only passport into company) than I was pester'd with drums, routs, hurricanes, &c. and could not enjoy one moment's peace. I found my liberty quite gone; for I was always engaged. 'Twas like matrimony—in sickness or in health I was obliged to attend every summons; otherwise I was pester'd with visits and messages to know whether I was dead or alive; and if I was catch'd out of my bed and able to speak, away was I dragg'd, in order to make up a party, like a victim to a sacrifice. As nothing was more hateful to me than to resist sollicitation, it was very seldom that I attempted to excuse myself; but if ever I did muster up resolution enough to refuse my attendance where it was desired, I always found that shy looks, and polite reproaches, were the certain consequence of this small exertion of my liberty of choice: so that I was an absolute slave, and by the help of a few magic words placed on a card, was bound in chains; or like *Don Quixot,* was under the influence of enchantment: nay, what was worse, this enchantment had no end; for by strings of these cards, properly called chains, I was sometimes bound for three weeks or a month forward; then would come other invitations, other claims of a promise given, of being at such a rout, such a drum, &c. whenever I should be called on for that purpose, that, unless I could have been endued with ubiquity, so as to have been at several places at once, I was thrown into as hateful a perplexity to contrive in what manner, without giving offence, to answer all these appointments, as if I had undertaken the management of a state. The public entertainment of plays or operas seldom made a link in the chains by which I was bound; for the circle that I had been unfortunately conjured into, looked on cards, and cards only, to be the necessary employment of life. I had not been long in town before it began to be buzz'd about, that I was a woman of deep understanding and a great deal of wit: but an insupportable tax was I forced to pay for this honour. I immediately became a mark for every pretender to wit, to shoot away that burthen, his time, upon; and by these means my mornings, the season in which I used ever to delight myself in my books, or in recollecting some images which they had left impressed on my memory, were all stolen away from me, and my time was most barbarously murdered. Thus was I thrown into almost the same condition as if I had been guilty of intemperance in wine; for by never having a moment's leisure for reflexion, my senses were all in a bustle, my brains were in a perpetual hurry and confusion; nor was I very far from being reduced to the same state with that poor old woman, who lived till she had so totally lost her memory, that she used to ask her neighbours, "Pray who am I, and what is my name?" for she had perfectly forgot the very last thing which the human mind is apt to forget, even herself.

*Portia* could not help smiling with pleasure at the liveliness of *Cylinda's* observations, and the justness of some

of her sentiments: whilst *Una's* bosom heaved with a benevolent sigh, to think that any living creature, who seemed so thoroughly to know the value of time, should all her life hitherto have made so wrong a use of so inestimable a blessing.

*Cylinda*. These triflers, these time−stealers, who, although they visited me because I had attained the reputation of a wit, never gave me an opportunity of speaking a word (had I had ever so great an inclination for talking) always went away in high praises of my great sense and understanding, and declared that they never were so well entertained in their lives. And thus because it was imagined that I possessed some understanding, I was doomed to be persecuted with nonsense without end. Besides, had I not quietly submitted to this servitude, the rage of those persons who think themselves slighted I knew was inexorable; and good manners forced me to keep my thoughts from wandering whilst under the oppression of their trifling impertinence: otherwise they would have imagined that I treated them with apparent neglect. There is not a leaf of a tree, or a flower of the field, from which I could not produce more matter for contemplation, than from the very brightest of such conversations as I was now accustomed to; which consisted chiefly of stupid matters of fact which concerned neither me nor the relaters, and seemed uttered only from an immoderate delight of talking, and a total barrenness of imagination. I never escaped from these sort of scenes, but I was in amazement by what enchantment I came thither; and the continual repetition of them were daily so tiresome and fatiguing, that I constantly retired to my repose more weary than if I had undergone a hard day's labour. All that I could do to get rid of this troublesome life was, like lady *Love−rule* in the farce, to fly from it: and if this was seeing the world, it might be made for *Cæsar* or whoever chose it, for I would none on't.

The *Cry* were for the most part of them excessively delighted with *Cylinda's* description of the extreme triflingness of what she called high life; for to laugh at their superiors in rank and fashion, was always the highest pleasure to the *Cry*. —But *Una* thinking that *Cylinda's* representation of the polite circle was too much in the spirit of general satire (to which she had an utter abhorrence) check'd her by a frown. — *Cylinda* modestly owned the justice of the reproof, confessed that her vivacity had carried her into that unfair practice of condemning a whole class, although she was conscious there were amongst them several exceptions to the general picture she had drawn: and *Una* then with a smile permitted her to proceed with her story.

## SCENE VIII.

*Je diray un monstre: mais je le diray pourtant. Je trouve par là en plusieurs choses plus d' arrest et de regle en mes moeurs qu' en mon opinion: et ma concupiscence moins desbauchée que ma raison.*

Montaigne.

# Portia. Cylinda. Una. The Cry.

## *CYLINDA.*

I was now preparing with the utmost expedition to return to my moral pleasures, when my design was retarded by my accidentally meeting in a visit with a middle−aged gentleman named *Nicanor,* who on this our first interview was so pleased with my conversation, that he earnestly desired to pay me a visit, and to cultivate my acquaintance; which, in the most polite terms, and without the least fulsome flattery, he assured me would be to him the highest pleasure.

On the mention of *Nicanor's* name, *Portia* could scarcely refrain from shewing a violent emotion, as she had reason to believe that she now saw standing before her eyes the lady who, she had heard, was the ruin of *Nicanor,* and by that means of his whole family. The whisperers of that story (for she had never heard it mentioned by *Cordelia*) had, not through compassion to *Nicanor,* but a love of blackening characters, added such dark aspersions on the lady, and had represented her in such a deform'd profligate light, that *Portia* on that reflexion was yet in some doubt whether the agreeable, the sprightly *Cylinda,* could be the monster she had heard of. She therefore a little suspended her judgment, and suffered *Cylinda,* without any interruption, to proceed in the following manner.

*Cylinda*. As I have no reserve in my temper, and am not therefore hard of access, *Nicanor's* conversation and mine was soon with all the freedom of old acquaintance. His company and discourse was perfectly delightful to me, as being the most agreeable relaxation possible to my mind, after the fatigues of cards and idleness that I had undergone. I found my old love of philosophizing strongly return, when *Nicanor* began to lead me through a new field of knowledge. For he had travelled not only quite through *Europe,* and ancient *Greece*; but into *Egypt* also, and his descriptions were all so lively, that my imagination was warm'd, and bore me on the wings of fancy to these academic shades where *Plato* taught his divine philosophy, and where my present master *Epicurus* enjoyed the company of his friends and scholars. In reading the writings of those ancient sages, I had look'd up to them as seated in the clouds, and at a vast distance; but in those local accounts, where they walk'd, where they held their discourses, and did as other mortals do, I in a manner confined them within limited bounds, and familiarized them into my acquaintance.

*Nicanor* was so agreeable, furnish'd me with so many new ideas, and was so substantial a contrast to the wearisome nothingness I had for a whole winter labour'd through, that my only pleasure was in his company. As he had his reasons for not quitting *London,* I without hesitation entirely put off my design of going into the country: but having given out that leaving town was my positive determination, I had already, by that means, dropp'd most of my rout and drum acquaintance, and I stole from the rest, taking a lodging in another part of the town.

But now a new perplexity arose: for *Nicanor* express'd such a real passion for me, and so earnestly press'd me to marriage, that several positive denials could not for some time prevent his repeated ardent sollicitations on that head. I was resolved that I would not for the enjoyment of his company pay such a tax as matrimony, and was firmly bent rather to lose any pleasure whatever, than submit to such hateful terms. I at last solemnly declared to *Nicanor,* that if he would continue my acquaintance, it must be on the condition of never again mentioning so disagreeable a subject as marriage. He with some difficulty, and expressing by his countenance no small astonishment at meeting with a woman of so uncommon a disposition, submitted to the conditions; and I lived in an agreeable friendship with him for five years. But as I would on no account pollute the ears of *Una* with a falshood, or endeavour to palliate any part of my conduct, I must confess that *Nicanor* was too warm in his passions, to suffer me long to continue a mere platonic friendship. I was not of a humour (except in that one point of matrimony, against which I bent the whole force of my resolution) to resist continual importunity. *Nicanor,* by the new field of knowledge he had led me into, by the introducing me, as I may call it, into the personal acquaintance of all my favourite authors, gave me such delight, that to part with him (as I had besides no other sort of attachment) appear'd to me by no means eligible: yet with the utmost truth can I solemnly declare, that the blameable part of the manner in which I lived with him, was owing to the uncontroulable warmth of his passions, and not of mine: for could I have had my choice, it would have been to have considered him purely as my friend and companion.

I continued in my own lodgings which I had last taken (except sometimes going for a month or two into country lodgings in the summer) for the whole five years of our acquaintance; and *Nicanor* was almost my constant guest.

This part of *Cylinda's* account so exactly agreed to *Nicanor,* the father of *Ferdinand* and *Cordelia,* that *Portia* could not help (with some apology for her interruption) asking *Cylinda* whether the gentleman she was mentioning was a batchelor or a widower, and whether he had any family?

*Cylinda*. After I parted with *Nicanor,* I was told that he had sons and daughters, men and women grown; but whilst I lived with him, I had not the least knowledge of any of his connexions. That he was unmarried I knew, by his repeated offers to make me his wife; but he had such a peculiar reserve of temper on the point of his own situation, or what might be called family affairs, that if I ever chanced to ask him the most trifling question of that kind, it would put him thoroughly out of humour, and he would be gloomy and uncomfortable for a whole day together. His good−humour was so agreeable and entertaining, that I thought it very little worth my while to lose it only for a curiosity which did not concern me; and so far was I from enquiring of others any thing concerning him, that I never whilst I lived with him would suffer the least gossiping discourse to me from any person on that subject. I had the highest reason from his behaviour in one respect, to believe him possess'd of an affluent fortune (altho' I have since also heard, how true I know not, that in that circumstance I was mistaken) for money always seemed to come in such abundance from him, as if he had an inexhaustible fund. As I was not mercenary, and had really an easy fortune of my own, I at first endeavoured to put a stop to his vast profusion of expence: but in this point also, if I cross'd his humour, he grew sullen, and I therefore let him go on in his own way, without any contradiction. *Nicanor* was in practice an epicurean, or rather what is truly called in the vulgar acceptation of the word, an excessive great epicure. He took the highest delight in gratifying his palate with the most luxurious rarities for the table, and the most costly and rich wines: and as 'tis very natural to think that you highly gratify another by giving them what you most delight in, he forced me partly against my inclination to double all his expences in those articles. Altho' the vanity of dress was entirely beneath my thoughts, yet was I forced to submit to being array'd in the richest silks, and loaded with the most costly ornaments, to keep *Nicanor* from being out of humour, as he would certainly have been, had I refused his presents. As there appeared not any other signs of madness in *Nicanor,* I could not believe that he was so far beside his senses, as to throw away money on superfluities, which he, or any that belonged to him, could want for necessaries; I therefore, without remonstrance or enquiry, conformed to his humour, smiled to see him indulge his whims, and added all the relish in my power to his little elegant feasts, by the spriteliness and chearfulness of my conversations. *Nicanor* put me extremely in mind of *Mark Antony*. I doubt not, if he could have purchased it for me, but I might have swallowed a pearl of the value of three kingdoms.

But now an accident happened, which had not a very pleasing aspect: for my agent, with whom was entrusted my whole fortune, broke, and ran away, very much in debt; but, as it was reported, very well stock'd with the money of all those who had been so unlucky, as from his fair character to trust him with their fortunes. As I hated all business where money was concerned, I had trusted this man for some years to buy and sell, and manage my affairs, just as he told me was most for my advantage. About two years before, he had inform'd me, that there was an exceeding good estate which he had found out, which would come very cheap, but wanted a thousand pound more than all my effects for the purchase; but that 'twas very easy for me to take up that money upon bond, or if I lik'd it better, upon a mortgage on the very estate. He reckon'd up also many other ways of joint−security, insuring my life, and the lord knows what; but to get rid of the discourse, I bid him take his own method. He soon brought me a bond for a thousand pound, which I sign'd: and to confess the real truth, so great was my indolence, that I never enquired afterwards whether the purchase had been made, or the bond discharged, but was contented with receiving from him my yearly income, just as usual.

On *Cylinda's* both declaring, and proving by her actions, her hatred of all mercenary transactions, an orator amongst the *Cry,* who had never in his life considered any thing as worthy of his regard but pecuniary views, rose up, spread wide his hand, stroked his chin, humm'd thrice with great importance, and very sententiously and laconically brought forth these words, "Imprudence is the most imprudent thing in the world." He then retired with a stately pace back to his seat, as if he had given birth to some mighty great discovery. *Cylinda* suppress'd her laughter at such a piece of formal nothingness, and thus proceeded.

*Cylinda*. But it was not long before I found that my agent had not only run off with all my effects in his hands,

but had left me this thousand pound in debt. For together with the account of his flight, I received a letter from a young lawyer, to say, that if the thousand pound bond which I owed to mr. *Gripley* was not immediately paid, he had orders to put the same in suit. The sudden change from thinking myself in such easy circumstances as to be in a manner excused from all thought on that head, to the being a thousand pound in debt, and threatened with a prison, could not but strike a little thoughtfulness into my countenance, on the receipt of two such letters; which *Nicanor* perceiving, earnestly entreated me to tell him what could thus affect me. I had hitherto never said any thing to *Nicanor* of my circumstances; but it was very easy for him to perceive, that I accepted his presents, and suffered him to bear the largest part of our joint expences, more from the desire of gratifying him in the bent of his humour, than from the least need of any additional support. But as I fear'd the denying his request of knowing the purport of my two letters might look like a reserve, which I had never yet practised, throwing the sudden concern off my brow, I with a smile gave him both the letter which informed me of the bankruptcy of my agent, and the other from the lawyer, threatening me with an arrest. *Nicanor* appear'd perfectly thunderstruck. He fixt his eyes upon the ground, as in deep thought; then asked me if my agent was run away with my All. I answered it was certainly so, but I begged he would not be so deeply concerned at what I look'd upon as a mere trifle. For any real anxiety about money, and such kind of outward circumstances, could not long dwell in my mind.

Here the orator was again coming forward to make another harangue; but *Cylinda,* before he could finish his formal preparations, so as to begin his speech, went on with her narration.

*Cylinda*. The behaviour of *Nicanor* perfectly astonish'd me; for I thought I read in his countenance more of anger than concern; yet with the most seeming anxious affection, he cry'd out, "I cannot live an hour with the thought that my *Cylinda* should again be liable to the insults of the law; I will this minute fetch you the money to discharge the bond." I begg'd him not to give himself any such trouble, for perhaps I should for some time hear no more of the matter; or some days hence would be time enough. I used also every method in my power to raise some chearfulness in his mind, and to turn the discourse on sprightly subjects; but all in vain, for in less than an hour he left me, and declared he would see my face no more till he returned with the money.

*Nicanor* was scarcely gone before I received a visit from a widow named *Artemesia,* who had always appeared much pleased with my company, and was continually obliging me with every little mark of civility in her power. These marks of her kindness, and her importunities (if I may so express myself) for my conversation, engaged me in a much greater intimacy with her, than I should naturally have been led into by my own inclinations: nothing being so much the reverse to each other, as her disposition and mine; for she delighted in business and bustle, as much as I abhorred them.

The thoughtfulness which my letters first caused, and which was much more encreased by *Nicanor's* odd behaviour, was still so visible in my countenance, and was indeed so unusual, that it presently caught the eyes of *Artemesia*; and she begg'd me to tell her what could possibly have cast such a cloud over a brow, which had hitherto appeared to possess perpetual serenity.

The way that most people take of proclaiming their own distress of circumstances, by vociferous lamentations over their misfortunes, in hopes to raise pity and compassion, and which generally produces nothing but scorn and insult, was the last thing that I should have practised. But as *Artemesia* was really a good−natured friendly woman, and was rather fond of the management of difficulties, thinking she might be of service to me, I told her the whole story, and what securities I had for my money, should my agent ever be forthcoming. She told me that she had before heard of the going off of that gentleman, but did not know I had any concerns with him. She knew several people, she said, that had sent spies out after him, and 'twas not doubted but in time he would be taken, and I might then retrieve my whole fortune. But as I had told her also (for I was not open by halves) of the threatening letter from the lawyer, she begg'd and entreated me, in order to avoid the danger of an arrest, to go with her into *Yorkshire,* where she had a house in an exceeding pleasant situation, and to which place she was setting out as the next week. I heartily thank'd her for her offer, but assured her there was no occasion for my leaving *London* on that account; for I had a friend who had just left me, and had promised to bring me the money to discharge that debt; nor did I scruple to tell her who the person was, that was gone on that errand. *Artemesia* had sometimes met *Nicanor* at my lodgings, and had heard me speak of him as my very particular friend, but had not, I believe, the least suspicion of our having any farther intimacy: for to do her justice, altho' she lov'd stirring and bustling in other people's affairs, in order to do them service, yet no woman was less meddling in curious tittle−tattle; and from a good−natur'd love of believing the best she could, of every body, she never hearken'd after

private scandal. On my saying *Nicanor* was gone to fetch the money, she shook her head, and said, I knew little of the world, to believe that a friend would part with a thousand pound in such a manner; and I might trust to her knowledge and experience, when she assured me, that I should find an excuse arrive instead of the money, or should never hear of *Nicanor* any more.

Before *Artemisia* left me, I received a note from *Nicanor,* to say, that a little accident had happened to prevent his return so soon as he intended; but before the evening was over, he would certainly bring me the money. I read this note to my friend, which, instead of convincing her of my having reason to depend on *Nicanor's* friendship, made her more urgent with me immediately to quit my house and go to hers, till she set out for *Yorkshire*; but seeing me positively bent on refusing her offer, and waiting for *Nicanor,* she took her leave of me for the present, but kindly said that she would call on me on the morrow evening, to know my final resolution about accepting her invitation.

I had very little notion of the possibility of *Nicanor's* disappointing me, and inwardly smiled at *Artemisia's* suspicions; but it growing very late, and hearing nothing of *Nicanor,* I cannot say but I spent the night in more perplexing thoughts than I had ever before experienced. I waited that whole night, but early the next morning sent a porter to *Nicanor's* house with a note, to desire to know what had detain'd him. The man came back, and told me that the gentleman I had sent to was an odd sort of a man, and was both abroad and at home at the same time: for one person that he spoke to told him the gentleman was abed, and did not love to be disturbed so early in the morning; and that another maid servant calling this man a fool, said that the gentleman was gone out of town. As the porter appeared drunk, I took my note out of his hand, and did not much mind what he said; but at noon, when I heard no news of *Nicanor,* having no longer patience, I sent my own maid servant with a letter to his house, charging her, if possible, to deliver it into his own hands; or if she could not obtain the favour of speaking to him, to make every enquiry possible to know what was become of him. But what was my amazement, when my servant returned and gave me back my letter! for she did not leave it, she said, as *Nicanor's* servant told her that her master went out of town the night before, without saying to what place he was gone; and had left word that the time of his return was perfectly uncertain. When I reflected on *Nicanor's* very odd behaviour on my telling him of the loss of my fortune (for very strange was it to me, that a man of his apparent affluent circumstances should not say what I thought would be so natural on that occasion: and that his want of money could not be the cause, I judg'd, from his readiness at last to fetch me such a sum as a thousand pound) when I considered the equivocal answer which I received in the morning, and which I imputed to the blundering ignorance of the messenger, with the account of his abruptly leaving *London,* which I had just heard from my own maid; I could not withstand so many concurring evidences of a truth which startled me not a little; namely, that *Nicanor,* on hearing of my loss of fortune, was determined to leave me; that he had artfully made that shew of generosity, the offering to fetch me the money, in order for a fair pretence for going from me; and that he had cruelly abandoned me in my distress. I began to think that *Artemisia* really knew much more of mankind than I did, and that it really might require more friendship than any man ever yet possessed for another, to part with such a sum as a thousand pounds. Experience had convinced me, that *Nicanor* would spare no expence on me in which he could partake; but that he would not part with any money without such participation, was too plain on the other hand. Such an instance therefore of paltry selfish treachery as appeared to me in the behaviour of *Nicanor,* made me almost wish to behold the face of mankind no more.

*Artemisia* came punctually to her appointment, and found me much more ready to give attention to her friendly proposal than I was the day before. She told me that whilst I was enjoying myself at her country house, under her protection, she should by letters to some friends of hers in town, transact the whole business for me of receiving my fortune, and save me any sort of trouble in the affair. This, I own, was very agreeable to my inclination and disposition; for to be solicitous and anxious about a law−suit, was what I would not willingly have undergone, altho' success was sure to have followed my undertakings. One thought about *Nicanor* had not any chance for stopping my journey into *Yorkshire*: for he had to me proved himself so very unworthy my farther consideration, that I had with all my might cast his remembrance from my bosom. The only thing which stuck with me at present, was the dishonourable appearance of flying from a debt, which altho' contracted by the roguery of my agent, was in justice due. But *Artemisia* convinced me, that to fly from a prison till I could be enabled to pay the debt, which I really, as soon as I had the means, intended to do, could be no breach of either honour or honesty, and was only taking a step to which common prudence must excite me.

As soon as I consented to accept her kind protection, she insisted upon it that I should not lie another night at my own lodgings, but should be with her at her house in *Golden−square*; she was obliged, she said, to go home herself directly, to an appointment about business; but in two or three hours time she would send her coach, and would never forgive me if I did not return in it.

With all the hurry I could make, my few little affairs were scarcely managed before *Artemisia's* coach arrived, and in it her nephew *Eugenio,* a young gentleman about twenty years of age, whom she sent out of civility to conduct me in safety to her house. *Eugenio* on his first seeing me, blush'd like a girl of fifteen; and during the week I staid at his aunt's house in town, I plainly discovered the cause of his first bashfulness; for he got courage enough afterwards, to declare how much at first sight he was struck with a violent passion for me; and he was warmly solicitous in every opportunity he could find me alone, that I should marry him. He was to come into possession of a good fortune as soon as he was of age, and was heir also to his aunt's large jointure. My resolution of not being bound in marriage chains, I was never in much likelihood of breaking; but my present circumstances added double force to that resolution; for to sell my person either with or without the sanction of matrimony, was abhorrent to my thoughts; and I would, as *Othello* says, have been steep'd in poverty to the very lips, and enjoy'd the thoughts of a prison, rather than have submitted to so paltry a traffic.

The *Cry* did not think proper to interrupt *Cylinda,* but wink'd, nodded, and whispered to each other, that she was little better than a fool for refusing such a good offer: and as to the selling her person in marriage to an agreeable young fellow, it sounded to them little less than some of *Portia's* stark nonsense. They sound no such scruples within their own bosoms, and thought therefore that *Cylinda* lost a charming opportunity of retrieving all the false steps they could spy in her past life; and, with a small share of the cunning which they were possessed of, it would have been very easy, they thought, to have kept the boy in ignorance of the truth of her history.

*Cylinda*. To have imposed on a young fellow who was lively and handsome, such a chain as a wife so much older than himself; to have obtruded on his innocent affections a woman of intrigue, had malice never inform'd him of my past conduct; adding also the black ingratitude of making such a return to *Artemisia's* kind protection of me in distress; would have made me truly detestable in my own eyes: for in my assuming the masculine character, I always resolved to play the part of a man of strict honour; altho' I must confess that the military part of a man of honour, which puts him in daily danger of killing his man, or being run through the body, I was heartily rejoiced to escape by the consideration of being a woman.

## SCENE IX.

*Et nunc omnis ager, nunc omnis parturit arbos:*
*Nunc frondent sylvæ, nunc formosissimus annus.*

Virg.

# Portia. Cylinda. Una. The Cry.

## *CYLINDA.*

We left *Eugenio* in *London* in order for his returning to the university; and to a most delightful rural situation indeed did *Artemisia* carry me. I pass'd my time there very tolerably; for she busied herself all the morning in looking over papers, and setting accounts with her steward, whilst I enjoyed my books, and was either roving about in the fields and garden (which latter was very extensive) or was sitting undisturbed by myself in my own apartment, as it best suited my fancy. My afternoons were entirely devoted to the friendly *Artemisia,* which when the days were long and the weather fine, we generally spent in pleasant excursions to view some pleasant prospect, to see some fine seat, or to pay a short visit to her distant acquaintance. When we were confined at home, *Artemisia* used generally to entertain me with long stories of law suits, and how she wherretted the lawyers in such and such causes; to which, as she was not in the least captious, I payed her only the civility of attention; sometimes answering yes, and sometimes no, just as I caught the sense of the story, enough not to give her any cause for offence by a supposed neglect, and employed my own thoughts on *Lucretius, Virgil,* or any of my favourite authors. Could my thoughts and her words have been legible on paper, I fancy they would make a comical figure: for whilst she was exclaiming against the dilatoriness of lawyers, and telling the history of her rising early in the morning to be at one person's chambers before he was up, in order to be sure to speak with him; of her watching another home to his dinner time for the same purpose; and affirming that no business was to be done without industry: I was thinking on the uncertain lights which are left us by philosophers to form any fix'd system; my thoughts were travelling through *Lucretius's* succession of atoms in their forming, disolving, and again renewing this universe; or I was amusing my fancy with the noble poetic flights of *Homer,* or the harmonious *Virgilian* numbers; determining at the same time that no entertainment from outward objects was half equal to the imagined company of these ancient poets and philosophers.

The *Cry* now stood preponderating with great exactness, whether it would be a proof of their wisdom to laugh at this whimsical contrast drawn by *Cylinda,* or whether they should toss up their noses with contempt; nor could they possibly determine till they perceived that it had moved a dimpled smile on *Portia's* countenance, which smile was their cue to the exerting their scornful sneers and their supercilious contempt.

*Cylinda*. Our only near neighbour in the country was an old maiden lady, her name *Brunetta,* and her niece a good−humoured sprightly girl of nineteen. *Brunetta* had been in her youth possessed of all the beauty a regular set of features and a fair complexion could bestow. She had many offers of marriage, of which she had not refused one, and yet was at this time a single woman of threescore: for she no sooner obtained a lover, than by the affectation of cold indifference, and the tyranny of scornful beauty, she lost him. From the period of the decay of her personal charms, and her ceasing to gain new admirers, it would hardly be improper to say she ceased to exist; and, as if conscious of her loss of existence, she talked the language of one long since dead. For her manner of reprimanding her niece *Maria,* was in the terms of a person who had formerly lived; for she used frequently to say—In *my time* young girls were not so flirting and forward— in *my time* young women sat eight hours a day at their needle, or employed their time in studying the arts and sciences of house−wifry and cookery. —And thus would she run on about her time in a manner confessing she had been long dead; and had she but a little changed her phrase by calling it her *life−time* she had indeed talked the language proper to a departed ghost.

The *Cry* could not but enjoy the ridiculous picture *Cylinda* had drawn of *Brunetta*; yet, as nothing can thoroughly please them either in writing or conversation but a satire on their own particular friends, they again nodded and winked, and one thought this is my aunt—another, this is my old godmother—and others, this is my friend mrs. —And thus each one having the picture of some one of their acquaintance before their eyes, they deign'd to honour *Cylinda* with an hearty fit of laughter.

*Cylinda*. Had *Maria* attended to the advice of her aunt *Brunetta,* she had followed her steps; but on the contrary, she had acknowledged a reciprocal affection for a young gentleman of a very good fortune in the neighbourhood whom she really liked, and the match only waited for writings and settlements proper for the occasion, as they were in age and fortune suitable to each other.

Although *Maria* lived with her aunt, yet her real guardian was her brother, a man many years older than herself, who from a considerable post under the government lived most part of his time in *London*. He was now

daily expected, his sister being under age, as a necessary party to this marriage. *Artemisia* also told me with great joy, that this gentleman, who at her request had undertaken the trouble of my affairs, would bring me down securities for my whole fortune; as the agent, who had robbed me and others, was taken, and had been forced to refund all his ill gotten wealth. She was very minute in all the particulars of the whole transaction; but I confess my usual indolence of temper, and hatred of all money matters, continued so strong upon me, that I attended to no part of the account but that my fortune was recovered; my debts would be paid; and I should be bound no longer to trespass on her hospitable good−nature. Not that I at that time in the least intended leaving her house till she herself removed to town, or could I bear the thought of a making a convenience of any person from their own generosity, and then cast them off as being of no farther use. But whatever were then my thoughts and intentions, the following scene shewed me that—

Here *Cylinda* stopped: a sudden tremor run through all her limbs, the blood forsook her cheeks, and such a languid paleness overspread her countenance, that *Portia* imagined she would have fainted, and begged that she might have some assistance. *Cylinda* soon recovered herself, enough to say she wanted only a short pause before she began that part of her story, which she owned she could not call to remembrance without the greatest emotion.

## SCENE X.

*Of all the tyrants that the world affords,*
*Our own affections are the fiercest lords.*

Old play of *Julius Cæsar*.

## Portia. Cylinda. Una. The Cry.

## *CYLINDA.*

My fortune being retrieved, and I retired into so pleasant a situation in the country, I enjoyed such a serenity of mind as might properly be called the tranquillity recommended by the Epicurean doctrine. All the fine poetical descriptions of peaceful rural scenes were now my chosen study; and as the strength of my imagination always gave me a kind of participation in the objects that presented themselves before me, I could not lye on the banks of silent rivers without my mind's sharing their calm serenity: when I beheld the freedom of the animal creation, who following the dictates of their nature, were all exempt from imaginary ills and vain solicitude on the account of ambition or avarice, I was led to believe that in such an unrestrained easy life alone was to be found real happiness. Whilst sitting under the shade of spreading oaks and lofty pines I conversed with the nymphs and dryads of the grove, I by the magic of my fertile fancy metamorphosed *Artemisia's* gardens into the pleasing plains of *Arcadia*.

This was the situation of my mind when *Eustace* the brother of *Maria* first resided at his aunt's house. In all parties whatever, as *Artemisia* selected out *Brunetta,* and as *Maria* and her lover were inseparable, it came to my share to entertain *Eustace*; and so pleasing was the task, that I rose each morning with such an alacrity on the prospect of enjoying his conversation, as was unknown to me before. *Eustace* seemed equally pleased with my company; and from the calm I have already described, this sudden gale of pleasure was the most seasonable refreshment possible to my mind; which otherwise might have grown weary of its own stagnation. My search into philosophy had been gratified to its full scope, and the softening images of every thing around me fitted my heart for some new impression. When our fancy is employed in making us believe that we resemble the shepherdesses of *Arcadia,* the finding a shepherd suited to our taste must be a pleasing discovery. In short, as I had no guard upon myself, no apprehensions of being caught by a passion from which I had hitherto been perfectly free (notwithstanding the pains I had taken to fancy myself in love with my cousin *Phaon,* at an age when girls are supposed most susceptible of that passion) I soon found myself involved as an actor in a scene, which I had all my life determined if possible to avoid. For I perceived my heart so entangled in its attachment to *Eustace,* that on his rendering my passion reciprocal was centered all my happiness. Of this I confess at first I had not the least doubt, as I had never yet had occasion, could it have been in my inclination, to make the least advance to any man; but when I heard that *Eustace* had a wife, my whole soul was in such an alarm and perturbation, that I was almost driven to distraction. I was truly convinced, that to the boisterous waves of passion no one can say, "Hitherto shall ye go, and no farther." My beloved serenity was flown, and all my philosophy was as inadequate to restore my tranquillity as an old woman's tale. Every sentiment which I had imbibed from ancient or modern writers, in order to prove the wisdom of keeping myself independent, now gained not my least attention; and I was ready to say as *Macbeth* doth of physic, that if it cannot cure the diseases of the mind;

*Throw reasoning to the dogs; I'll none on't.*

I am thoroughly convinced by experience, that the system of philosophy form'd by us when we mean only to gratify our pride by fixing our thoughts on our own superior wisdom, hath a much stronger effect upon us in youth, when our passions are highest, and before we have found out the fallacy of our own hearts, and the real foundation of our fancy'd philosophy.

In the life I had led with *Millamour,* and with *Nicanor,* I was often forced to read *Ovid* and other softening books, in order to impose on myself a belief that such a way of life was agreeable to me; but I now found the wide difference between the fancy'd love which I encouraged in my heart for my cousin *Phaon,* and one of those frantic desires which, if not stopped in the beginning, will mount and blaze into a flame too great to be controul'd. By my own experience I perceived, that fifteen is not the age when the passion of love is most apt to be predominant; and although young girls are often betrayed into indiscretions, yet I believe that vanity, and a delight in being admired, generally stands truly accountable for the charge.

The *Cry* thought that they recollected some observation of *Portia's* very like what *Cylinda* now said; and consequently they all knit their brows, and frowned on *Cylinda* with indignation.

*Cylinda*. On reflexion I found that writers of the deepest penetration into the human mind, had generally chose

to exemplify the violent passion of love in women grown to full maturity, of which I gathered many examples; and in the foremost rank is that lest us by *Virgil* of *Dido* towards *Æneas*, who was not only in the full meridian of her life, but had been married, and afterwards had lived for some years in a state of widowhood.

No reading could I now attend to with pleasure, but such as presented me with the image of my own thoughts. The tumultuous conflicts of *Medea's* passions, the mad love of *Phœdra* for her husband's son *Hippolytus*, and the raging flame of *Dido's* bosom, sympathizing with what dwelt within my own breast, served at once to soothe and inhanse my inclination for *Eustace*. But that he was a married man I confess struck me with some horror; for all the philosophic rules of virtue I had ever formed for the regulation of my conduct, must be now transgressed by my injuring another person. I was in a manner painfully rent asunder; and in the short moment whilst moral virtue bore the sway, I could rant as well as a *Dido*; I could invoke the earth to open its wide jaws and sink me in its lowest gulph; or I could with her call on omnipotent *Jove* to hurl me headlong with his thunderbolts to the shades, to the pale shades of *Erebus*, rather than I would transgress those laws of moral rectitude which I had prescribed to myself, and which hitherto I never had transgressed. But all such rants served only to enflame rather than subdue my passion: and as I could not bear to live self−condemned, I soon employed my imagination to prove, that from the law of nature and reason polygamy was lawful. The laws and customs of many wise nations where it is allowed, justified by their approbation my present decision of its being not contrary to moral fitness: and I remember once to have heard a gentleman say, that every man had a right to every woman whose consent he could obtain, was it not for the municipal laws of his country. But such laws were chains too weak to bind me, who considered myself as a citizen of the world, and far above being confined by such narrow obligations. The injury I should do the wife of *Eustace*, was all I had now to contend with; but that I soon fritter'd away, by reasoning on the impossibility of her being hurt by the loss of a man to whom she had been bound in the chains of matrimony for eight years, of whom consequently she must be heartily tired, and from whom therefore she must rather rejoice to be released. Yet were it otherwise, I immediately proved to my satisfaction, that I had the most indubitable right to *Eustace's* love from the violence of my affection for him. The legal claim of a wife was dull, was spiritless; and in this contention I would yield to none. I could have turned an *Amazonian* heroine, tho' nothing was more opposite to my nature; and, like *Hamlet*, I could have said,

*I will fight with her on this score,*
*Until my eye−lids will no longer wag—*
*—For, I love Eustace—forty thousand wives*
*Cannot, with all their quantity of love,*
*Make up my sum—*

I was now an Epicurean only in practice, and a sceptic as to all systems, if in any degree they contained a contradiction to my present pleasure. The conflict being over in my mind, some degree of tranquillity returned; and I formed to myself pleasing pictures of my future triumph, when like *Cleopatra* I should engage my *Antony* to remain with me far from the arms of his neglected wife. But I met with an opposition from a very unexpected quarter; for *Eustace* most affectionately loved his wife, and regarded his children with a true fatherly fondness. He was at first so pleased with my company, and we conversed with such an agreeable freedom, that I had reason to believe that I was not indifferent in his eyes; but he was too sensible of the consequence of an engagement with an agreeable woman, to suffer himself to be easily entangled or ensnared into such an attachment; as soon therefore as he perceived that my inclination for him was rising to an uncontroulable height, he suddenly left us, and in a manner fled to his wife for refuge.

Here the *Cry* looked excessively baulk'd: for *Cylinda* in describing the late tumultuous passions which had resided in her breast, had given them such hopes of her being most truly one of their own train, that notwithstanding the pretended dislike they had professed for her free manner of life, yet they felt such a secret sympathizing regard for her since her serenity was fled, that they could not help being vexed at her disappointment for the loss of *Eustace*.

*Una* had for some time kept her eyes averse from *Cylinda* ; and looked under such uneasiness, as made *Portia* expect every moment when she would by an indignant frown silence *Cylinda's* farther narration: but on the escape of *Eustace, Una's* eyes a little brightened with pleasure, and she cast them on *Cylinda* with a look expressive of some hope, that her passions might yet subside or take a proper turn.

*Cylinda*. The precipitate departure of *Eustace* so long before his appointed time, with the remembrance of a soft confusion mixed with wildness in his countenance the last time I saw him, convinced me that his flight was a flight from his own inclination. Encouraged by this hope, all other thoughts in my mind, but my intended compleat conquest of *Eustace*, vanished; and I found myself engaged in a pursuit, in which no consideration had the least chance of stopping me even for a single moment. Without taking leave therefore of any creature, or doing more than leaving a note behind me to say that hasty business of importance had called me away, I left *Artemisia's* house the morning after *Eustace's* departure, and was a near neighbour to him in *London* almost as soon as he arrived at his own house there.

Here the *Cry* strove with emulation who should first embrace *Cylinda*. They honoured her with the appellation of a woman of spirit, called her their dear friend, and gave an applause as loud as that which generally rattles from the gallery in the theatre, on the tagging a scene with some unmeaning rant about liberty.

But *Una* rising from her seat with an earnest accent pronounced these words, "O fie! *Cylinda*;" and then taking *Portia* by the hand would have led her from such company, declaring that she had heard enough, and that the *Cry* had judiciously seized on *Cylinda* as their own.

*Cylinda* disentangled herself as fast as possible from the *Cry*; and with a supplicating voice begged *Una* for compassion's sake to hear her. *Portia* also, although she never refused yielding the strictest obedience to the commands of *Una,* yet for some private reasons had so uncommon a curiosity to hear the end of this story, that she humbly seconded *Cylinda's* request. *Una,* trusting that *Portia's* mind was too well regulated to suffer the gratification of her curiosity to bring with it any ill consequence, complyed, with that smile of benignity which is the characteristic mark of her amiable countenance.

There are some actions for which, deep in the bosoms of the *Cry,* dwells a positive applause: but as it is the business of their lives to conceal this from others, and scarcely to own it to themselves, they generally are the foremost by the utmost strength of abusive words to condemn such actions. However it sometimes happens, as was at present the case, that such their applause will inadvertently escape from their lips. Their joy at *Cylinda's* greatness of mind (as they chose to term it) in obstinately adhering to a point on which she had fixed her inclination, made them at first overlook, that in her pursuit of *Eustace* she was following a married man: terrified therefore that they had discovered their secret approbation of those women, whom they never mentioned but by the name of Creatures, they shrunk far from *Cylinda*; changed their applauses into abuse, and call'd up into their countenances all their scorn and contempt.

*Cylinda*. The next morning after I arrived in *London,* I dispatched a note to *Eustace,* acquainting him where I lodged, and desiring to see him. It would be end less and insipid to repeat all the various alluring arts I made use of to inveigle him from his wife: be it sufficient to say, that at last I conquered, and with great propriety may it be said that *Eustace* yielded; for I was the pursuer, and still maintained the masculine freedom of character which I originally had assumed. But I could no longer divert myself by *Proteus*−like putting on that character which best suited my fancy; for I was now chain'd down and enslaved to the most rigid of all tyrants, an uncontroulable passion; and for near a twelvemonth I led, or rather endured, a life I cannot describe, and hate to remember. I had constantly been told by all my lovers, that my understanding and spirit scorning to be confined within limits, had soared above an effeminate character, and struck out a new and uncommon road of life. That the beauty of my own person, join'd to the sprightliness of my imagination, gave me the power of bestowing the the most exquisite pleasure, so that I feared no rival; besides that I had hitherto never put it in any man's power to draw a tear from my eyes, or a sigh from my bosom, for his neglect: but *Eustace,* altho' the steadiness of his mind failed him, and suffered him to be ensnared by the alluring temptations I threw in his way, yet he would live decently with his wife. This was the only kind of rival I could have dreaded; and the place I found she held in his esteem in preference to me, struck me to the heart. He, conscious he was doing wrong, lost that good−humour which had rendered him more exquisitely pleasing than any man with whom I had been before acquainted: so that I found I had given a loose to a passion which had no other end but to make me frantic, and consequently miserable; and yet insupportable as my life was, and altho' the alteration of *Eustace* had taken from me the gratification of this whirlwind of passion, yet was I caught in such a snare, that I had no power left even to endeavour at the conquest of it. The jealousy I was possessed of concerning his wife, found full employment for all my thoughts, and kept me in too tumultuous an uproar to give me any leisure for reflexion, or opportunity to form any resolution for my own peace. My self−admiration was lost; I found all my boasted strength was nothing more than a defence against

enemies, too weak to overcome an infant. But the moment my temptation became real and dangerous, it failed, and was found good for nothing: my learning and philosophy too I now easily perceived were inadequate to any other purpose than mere amusement; so that I had no refuge to fly to, but yielded myself up as a sacrifice to a passion which was a continual torment, and which by the unlucky situation of both *Eustace* and myself, produced very little pleasure to either of us. Under the dominion of this torturing love or racking jealousy, for it was such a mixture of contradiction that I hardly know what name to give it, I continued, till *Eustace* once failing his appointed time for twenty minutes, which my imagination as easily enhanced to as many hours, I with impatience sent a servant to his own house, to enquire privately concerning him; but when the messenger returned, with an account that *Eustace* and his whole family had set out from *London* the day before, and had endeavoured to conceal where they were going, the confusion of my mind was beyond description: his absence filled my soul with grief; his flight called forth all my indignation; and my ignorance where to follow him threw me into the most raging despair. I had ranted with *Dido* on the beginning of her passion for *Æneas*, and now her ravings for his flight were full as well adapted to my present circumstances. My whole soul being thus alarm'd, my imagination could rove in no path but in that of *Dido's* death. Her example struck me with admiration; and in such a situation as her's (as well as my own) I began to think that death alone was eligible. This was no sooner settled in my mind, than many arguments from the remembrance of my philosophic days presented themselves to confirm my opinion; which were all strongly corroborated by my present abhorrence of life. Philosophy had told me that death was no evil; my own immediate sensations informed me that life was no good: how naturally then did I draw a conclusion, that to death alone the preference was justly due!

From this way of thinking, a glimmering ray of comfort returned to my long gloomy mind. My usual love of liberty and independence began in a small degree to exert itself; and I was pleased in the thought that I would not be constrained longer to endure the ills of life, than suited with my own will and free determination. My thoughts even of *Eustace* began to subside, and my present favourite pursuit was death. Yet this pursuit I follow'd not with my usual velocity, but took time to deliberate on the various ways I must make use of, in bringing my life to an end. Poison, daggers, and many other methods presented themselves to my view; but I really loved pleasure, and, notwithstanding all my former boasted stoicism, held bodily pain in such utter abhorrence, that I never could submit to being blooded without shrinking with fear, and trembling at the approach of the surgeon. Little therefore could I endure the thought of cruelly mangling and butchering my own person. I was also at some loss to determine what hero, heroine, or philosopher I should imitate in my death. Sometimes I determin'd like *Cleopatra* to put *aspics* to my veins, and *as in a slumber breathe my soul away*. Would my fear of bodily anguish have given me leave, I should soon have built my funeral pile after the example of my favourite *Dido*; and phoenix−like been consumed in my own fires. Then did my imagination ramble from one philosopher to another, and by turns I was willing to resemble them all in my death. But still I found something in my own circumstances or mind so different from them all, that I no sooner formed one determination than I suddenly changed it for another. My perplexity was so great, that I could fix no resolution: but this employment of my mind joined to the absence of *Eustace*, greatly abated my love. Nay, so long did I keep my thoughts bent on the various methods of dying, that at last I lost all inclination for death itself; and thus, by a whimsical turn in my own mind, was I (as I then thought) cured of a passion which had given me inexpressible torment. But in what a condition did it leave me! I became so insipid and languid, that I seemed to have no spur to action; no motive to rouse me to the least alacrity, nor had I any inclination left for either death or life. I was indeed now become a practical stoic, for I was indifferent to all things. But whilst I was in this languid state, hardly having spirit enough to give a propriety to the saying I was alive, a servant one day brought me a small pacquet. It was with difficulty that I prevailed with myself to take the trouble to open it; for I cared for no one creature, nor wished to hear from any of the race of mankind: when casting my eyes on the superscription, I knew it to be the hand−writing of *Eustace*.

On the sight of *Eustace's* hand, my languid state of calm was suddenly metamorphosed into a tumultuous tempest. I fluctuated between hopes and fears of I knew not what. I fancy'd this might be a request from *Eustace* of renewing our intimacy. Then suddenly did the pleasure of his conversation at our first acquaintance rise uppermost in my memory; my wishes and imagination flew to the ends of the earth to fetch him back again, and I would have sacrificed the world for his return. But yet the torments I had suffered from jealousies and disappointments, even whilst I might be thought to be gratifying the highest desire of my heart, made me shudder at the thought of renewing such a scene; and I dreaded what but the instant before was my most ardent wish; nor

could I possibly tell whether I was pleased or grieved at the sight of this pacquet: but with a terror that would scarcely suffer me to break the seal, I opened it, and in it found the two following letters. The first which I shall read is from *Eustace,* the other (and which was inclosed in it) is from his wife to her own sister.

## *The Letter from Eustace to Cylinda.*

"Dear Madam,
I thank God, I am at last returned again to my reason, and have gained strength enough to break from my inclination to you, and to fly back to the ever−endearing and faithful arms of my truly estimable wife; but still my affection for you is enough rooted in my bosom, for me ardently to wish your happiness; which, believe me, *Cylinda*, is not to be found in a frantic ravery for a state of independence on God or man. The weakness of our state in this world, makes it necessary for us all to fly for protection to a superior power; but women want a double protection, as being encompassed round with snares and temptations of every kind. How often have you in your hours of love wish'd yourself my wife! I could then, *Cylinda*, have unfolded to you a secret that would have informed you, that had you not from your youth delighted to tread in an unbeaten path, and placed all your joy in being independent, such would have been your fate. I wanted resolution to stand thus shocking you; nor would I do it now, if I did not see it necessary to open your eyes on the consequence of indulging yourself in such a whimsical life, and to probe the wound to the bottom, in order to cure it. Perhaps you may remember, *Cylinda*, that in your youth your father told you he had received a proposal of marriage for you from a man whom he favoured with his esteem: he would kindly have persuaded you to accept it, but you persisted resolutely in your refusal. That proposal came from *Eustace*. You might have been the faithful partner of my vows; I might have cherished you in my bosom; I might have esteemed and loved you without being guilty of any treachery to a wife. O *Cylinda*, that title to my affections which by so many fallacious arguments you have frequently endeavoured to urge, might have been justly yours! In speaking this I know I shall strike daggers to your heart; but I am conscious that nothing could force me to give you this pain, but the hope that it may be for your future tranquillity. The inclosed letter was given me by my wife's sister. Wretch that I am, to have given cause for such heart−rending contents! What should I have deserved, had not this letter wrought the effect on me which is visible from the step I have taken! I send it with the hopes of its answering the same purpose towards you; and let me beg it as the highest of favours, that you would make it your only study for one whole week. Let every sentiment sink into your heart, and see there the only road to happiness: and oh *Cylinda*! see there the pain our gratification of a wild appetite hath given the best of women, my best of wives. I could not but tell her our story, to clear up my late behaviour; she says she pities you from her heart, and hopes you will open your eyes on your own true happiness, and never again give a loose to raging passions, whose end must be misery. I know it is too late now for you to think of a protector in a husband, as you are too generous, after the life you have led, to be guilty of deceit, and to conceal in your heart a secret from any man you would marry. Therefore, oh *Cylinda*! seek a higher protection, and let the remainder of your penitent life be spent in a trust in God, and a dependence on his goodness. If this letter hurts you, forgive me, impute it to my zeal for your service; and I beseech and beg you let it have the effect proposed: for by that means alone, it still remains in your power to give great pleasure to your sincere friend"
EUSTACE.

## *The Letter from Eustace's Wife to her own Sister.*

"My dearest Sister,
Why will you by your tender enquiries draw from my breast what ought to remain there in faithful silence? nothing but your surmise that I had reason to suspect my dearest husband of an attachment to some other woman, could have forced me freely to declare the real thoughts of my heart, rather than suffer you to believe him guilty of a fault, or that I could harbour the least suspicion of his infidelity. But since you have in a manner engaged me to lay open my whole heart; bear with me, my dearest *Isabel*, whilst I expose to you every secret thought, every wish; and in return, chide this impatient spirit if you find it not sufficiently submissive to a lot so unexpected, and therefore a little hard to bear."

"You have partly been a witness to the happy days I have enjoyed with my beloved *Eustace*: but you saw only the outward appearance and harmony subsisting between two minds, to all appearance so formed as ours were for each other: you could not thoroughly feel the unbounded inward joy my heart exulted with, in my kind husband's fond indulgence! 'Tis almost impossible for any one to conceive the pleasure I enjoyed from that subordinate dependence, which gave me daily opportunities of exerting the highest gratitude. That I was so happy as to be agreeable to my *Eustace*, and that by my real endeavours to please him, he seemed also to enjoy the highest felicity, as it filled my heart with transport, could do no other than shew itself in the chearfulness of my countenance: but too truly have you pryed into my soul, when you tell me that you plainly perceive that for this last twelvemonth my chearfulness is partly clouded, and a secret melancholy is crept into my bosom. —Oh, my dear sister, how should it be otherwise, when from that time I found my husband's delight in me was gone!"

"Had the cause been as you guessed, had a new mistress engaged his affections, I should have hoped that time and my constant endeavours to please him might have restored me his heart. But I fear I have discovered what hath made me the most wretched of human beings. I fear that from some unfortunate minute I became the object of my *Eustace's* disgust! I know he could not bring himself to do an unjust or a dishonourable action: I know that he is conscious I have never done any thing to forfeit his love and esteem, nor can he therefore bear to treat me otherwise than as the virtuous and faithful partner of his vows. But his sometimes pensive melancholy, and his wild looks, when I say any thing tender or endearing to him, are but too convincing proofs that he finds a distaste to me in his mind, which his tenderness and good−nature makes him desirous to conceal. His children too seem, with their wretched mother, to have lost that place which they once held in his affections. For instead of looking on them with that paternal delight which used to sparkle from his eyes, when they endeavoured to amuse him with their innocent prattle, he now starts from them when they cling about his knees, and his gushing tears express some hidden sorrow. I try as much as possible to conceal from him my own unhappiness, on perceiving this loss of his affection; but he has too much sagacity not to observe it, and the discovery seems to pierce him to the soul. I think I just now styled myself the most wretched of human beings; but I am convinced that my dear husband is a greater object of compassion than myself: for to be compelled by good−nature to express an affection which you have not, to act always upon your guard in order not to grieve and afflict a person who lives but upon your smiles, is a situation worse than any torment that can be imagined to a generous mind."

"To deliver my *Eustace* from this wretched situation, how willingly would I remove myself into some remote corner of the earth! But this I dare not propose, as I know it would shake his generous soul almost to madness: and was he even to consent that I should banish myself for his sake, my ghost would every day haunt his imagination, and we should be equally as miserable when separate, as we are now by being united. Good God! support me to bear with patience the thought that our union is our misery! How sometimes doth my stubborn heart rebel, when my imagination hath presented me with a certain method by which I could relieve my husband's misery, and my own intolerable anguish! But how can I dare, even for a moment, impiously to think of taking the power of life and death out of the hands of the disposer of life and immortality? yet such horrid thoughts, my sister, have risen in your *Amanda's* breast; but thanks to the mercy and grave of my redeemer, they past hastily through my bosom, and from the extreme wretchedness of my earthly situation (for surely no torment can be greater to a tender heart, than the breaking up an affection that was reciprocal) I found a beam of hope dart in upon my mind, that this affliction was sent me in order to wean my heart from being too strongly fixed on any

happiness this world can bestow; and to teach me that our chief views in this our christian calling, must be centered in the promises we have of happiness hereafter. This christian hope, cherished and cultivated, hath restored some degree of calmness to my mind. 'Tis true my heart is still greatly hurt when I see my dear *Eustace* unhappy, yet no transitory evils can render that mind compleatly wretched which is endued with this animating hope. By this I can look with pleasure on the approach of death; and by this I can with patience submit to wear out the number of days allotted me by infinite wisdom."

"Thus have I as I promised, my dearest sister, laid before you the inward picture of my mind. I found I could more freely, and with less emotion discover to you my thoughts in writing, than by trusting myself with entering on a conversation which I beg may never more be mentioned between us. And I charge you also by our long and faithful friendship, that you on no account let my husband know of this letter; lest he imagine that I intend to reproach or complain of him. Heaven is my witness I intend neither! Could I recall his former affections (but that I fear is utterly impossible) he should still experience my utmost endeavours to contribute to his ease and pleasure. Our children then might once more become our usual joy and comfort. My little *Julia* should not daily draw tears from those eyes by asking what she hath done, that her father should look so severely upon her. My *Eustace* shall again smile on his blooming offspring, and with fond attention hear me repeat to him the mimic actions of his little son. —But whither have my vain thoughts and wishes led me! I had indeed for a moment banished from my mind the cruel reflexion, that the power of pleasing and delighting my dearest husband is fled from me: and had forgot that I have nothing left but prayers for his future felicity both here and hereafter! Join also your prayers with mine, my gentle sister, for my husband's happiness and prosperity, and for a continuance of patience and proper resignation in"

your AMANDA.

The grave severity of *Eustace's* expressions filled me with a sort of sudden awe, which suspended all other passions towards him; and that part of his letter which he said would strike daggers through my heart, employed the least of my thoughts. I was filled with astonishment at *Amanda's* letter; and knew not whether I should despise her as the most mean−spirited creature breathing, or fix my whole love and admiration on such an uncommon picture of patience and unmoved affection in a wife.

Now many feminine voices from amongst the *Cry* broke forth in their shrillest notes, asserting that *Amanda* was truly an object of the highest contempt: every woman with an enraged countenance saying, "Had *Eustace* been *my* husband!— or had he been *my* husband"! —There they made a full stop; for daggers, poisons, &c. &c. were for once to be supplyed by the hearers.

But *Una* and *Portia* were here all attention to *Cylinda,* hoping that the remonstrances of *Eustace,* joined to *Amanda's* letter, would have their proper effect on her mind.

*Cylinda*. The earnest recommendation of *Eustace,* that I would make the letter he had enclosed my study for one whole week, and try by that means whether I could subdue a passion which had been so long fatal to the peace of both our minds, I comply'd with; and made it so much my whole employment to study his wife's letter, that every sentiment sunk deep into my breast. I was by degrees awakened as from a dream; and feared that my whole life could properly be counted nothing else but a fantastic vision. Tears flowed from my eyes at the tragic scene my ungovern'd passions had caused in the before happy family of *Eustace*; and I now beheld the fallacy of those arguments, by which I fancy'd myself persuaded that I did the wife of *Eustace* no harm in withdrawing from her his affections. I considered that with the strongest and tenderest affection for him, with the greatest reason for many years to believe that affection reciprocal, cemented also by the yet stronger tye, one common offspring, her gentle spirit could with the most exemplary patience submit to an unexpected cold neglect, and center all her cares in anxious fears, lest her husband should be unhappy. She could talk of hope in a situation wretched enough to drive almost the strongest mind to distraction; whilst I with all my boasted philosophy, for the meer gratification of a wild appetite, had from raging jealousy suffered inexpressible torments. From her christian faith and dependence on the promises of God, she had formed (she said) that hope on the surest and strongest foundation: she declared too, that although her heart could not but feel when she saw her husband unhappy, yet whilst she preserved that hope entire, no transitory evils could have power to sink her into a miserable despair.

I first learnt to read, 'tis true, out of the Bible; and had in my childhood read enough to remember some of the principal facts: but as in all my conversation which by my father's acquaintance fell chiefly amongst men of learning, and great literature, I had never heard the sacred writings mentioned with half the reverence which was

paid to the heathen authors; I looked on christianity as well as every other religion, only as a piece of policy invented to keep the ignorant vulgar in awe; and I should have prided myself more in remembering a verse of *Homer, Virgil,* or *Horace,* or a sentiment in *Plato,* than in knowing the whole doctrine of the old and new testament. When I lived in the country I went often to church, for my father thought it decent; and I pleased myself with being of consequence enough to bear a part in this policy, as I assisted by my example to deceive the vulgar into good manners. But I was perfectly satisfied of being myself let into the secret of which they poor souls were ignorant: and if I attended to the sermons, I sagaciously separated every word that was peculiar to the christian doctrine, from those which treated of the beauties of morality. The former I thought properly enough adapted to the mob, whilst I acknowledged myself a party concerned only in the latter. As to that part of *Amanda's* letter in which she declares, "that her subordinate dependence on her husband was her pleasure, as his indulgence was food for the most pleasing gratitude;" I confess it appeared at first sight perfectly unintelligible: for to a mind which had never admitted the least idea of pleasure, but what arose from independence; such a declaration could sound only like a jargon of gibberish. But on often reading and considering it over, a faint notion from within (which my continual whims had never yet given me leisure to exert) told me that it was not altogether nonsense. As this notion gathered strength in my mind, I began to wish that, like *Amanda,* I had in my youth and bloom of beauty chose a man of true understanding and steady principles, who might kindly have guided my wandering imagination, and been my protector from the idle and mischievous rovings of my own whimsical brain. And now did the whole force of *Eustace's* discovering himself in his letter to have been the rejected offer of my youth, break in upon my mind, and most sensibly strike daggers through my heart. Yet the true affection he expressed in his zealous wishes, that my tranquillity might be restored, melted me into a kindness for him which I had never felt before: for nothing is generally so absent from the most violent passions, as one grain of real kindness. Now clearly was it opened to my view, that had I suffered my unbridled imagination to have been restrained in its proper curb, a tender parental direction, I might have found this now wished−for guide and protector in the only true and real object of my choice. This reflexion was poison to all my peace; and showers of repentant tears cannot wash away the excruciating thought. Shame and remorse are doomed to be my companions, and comfortless and friendless must I wear out the remainder of my wretched days. Here a flood of tears fell from the eyes of *Cylinda*; but *Portia* coming forward, addressed her in the following manner.

*Portia*. O *Cylinda,* in *Portia* you now see standing in your presence your formerly much coveted friend; and during my whole youth, I never from my own inclinations felt so strong an opposition to the commands of the best of mothers, as when I was torn from your conversation, and forbid the continuance of your correspondence, or even the answering one of your friendly letters. Take it not as a reproach that I here reflect with the highest thanks and gratitude on that parental care over my tender mind, which I then esteemed little less than harsh severity. Young as I was at that time (for I think my age did not exceed twelve years) you treated me as a fit companion of your studies, and preferred my company to that of men and women twice my age, and who were esteemed both wise and learned. Your spritely conversation was peculiarly adapted to my disposition; and to what pernicious length my joy and delight in you might have carried me, I now shudder to think of.

*Cylinda*. Oh *Portia,* I would have ruin'd you—I would have led your docile mind through all the puzzling mazes and roving fancies which I wildly traversed, and made you as great a wretch as now begs your forgiveness.

*Portia*. It was the error of your judgment, *Cylinda,* and not a malicious heart, that caused your desire of leading my imagination in the same road with your own: but thankfully must I again applaud the goodness and wisdom of the parent under whom I was educated, and the mercy of God in preserving me from such evils. At the early age of six years old I lost my father; yet his precepts were the principal foundation of all the instructions I afterwards received: for young as I was, he perceived (he said) the openings of a lively imagination; which, if directed into a right channel, would turn to my advantage, and be a real blessing; but if left to rove in the bewildered paths of error, would only serve to render my life a tumultuous hurricane, and would be indeed my greatest curse. He left it as a request to my mother, that I might have all the learning I was capable of attaining, and this for a very uncommon reason; namely, that I might not look up to it with a preposterous admiration as if it was something dwelling in the clouds, and the whole center of true wisdom. To persuade men against too high an admiration of any worldly and transitory advantages seems the whole drift of an eminent b ethical heathen writer; how much more then should a christian look with indifference on the trifling acquisitions which are no way productive of the happiness promised by his Saviour! My father kindly resolved that I should not have the *Herculean* labour of

cleansing the *Augean*: stable, or what is much worse, a corrupted mind. He took care therefore in the beginning, that wrong principles, the foulest of corruption, should not be planted in my young and tender bosom. My mother made it her whole employment to follow the directions of a beloved husband, in her care of the only offspring of their mutual love. She taught me to cultivate simplicity, and to guard my mind against every the smallest degree of affectation. The fear of false ridicule was from my infancy plucked up by the roots; for such a fallacious timidity puts it in the power of every buffoon delighter in burlesque to damp each rising virtue, and to drive us into vice by our want of courage to stand an ill−placed laughter. Altho' a wilful ignorance, and the perversely shutting my eyes against any instruction, would have been highly reprimanded in me, yet was I taught fearlessly and without a blush, where no such obstinacy was in the mind, to use the words "I cannot tell." For indeed it is the fear of pronouncing these few dreaded words, that frightens half mankind from ever attaining any real knowledge. Instead of being terrified with the fear of being made a dupe, I was told that shame only properly belonged to the having acted a cunning and treacherous part towards another. It was my father's desire and my mother's practice to prevent the entrance of error, and then they made no doubt but truth would find room to inhabit my well−taught mind. Another reason which my father gave for having me instructed in as many languages as my memory could retain, was, that I might be a real agreeable companion as a wife, to any man of sense.

It was impossible for *Portia* at present to proceed one word farther; for the *Cry* in a loud horse laugh all at once clamour'd forth—Absurd! ridiculous! a learned woman a fit wife for any man! Then *Clodio* stepping forward from the crowd, with a sneer ask'd *Portia,* since she had now profess'd herself (as he said) a *learned* lady, whether she remembered the following wish of *Martial,*

*—sit non doctissima conjux!*

"Aye, cry'd another—so say I,"

*—sit non doctissima conjux!*

The same trite quotation was echoed by every one amongst them who had retained enough of his school learning to understand its meaning: and the women, as soon as by a whisper they had got the interpretation of *Clodio's* latin sentence, join'd also in the chorus, by saying—"If I was a man I am certain I should ardently cry out,

*Good heaven defend me from a learned wife!*

If our readers have a curiosity to know what answer *Portia* made to all the trifling stuff which was at present uttered by the *Cry,* we cannot give them that satisfaction. But if they would know some of her real thoughts, and the answer she could have made to *Clodio,* had it been possible for her to have been heard, it had been as follows—

Very little advantage (thought *Portia*) should I have gained by my learning or knowledge of any kind, if to every retailer of such common−place wit (with quotations misunderstood also and misapply'd) I could not with the utmost pleasure say nearly in the words of *Cordelia* in *Shakespear's* King *Lear,*

*—Peace be with Burgundy,*
*Since that respects of ignorance are his love;*
*I shall not be his wife!*

But these were only the thoughts which pass'd within *Portia's* mind, for she deem'd their rude mirth not worthy an answer. As soon therefore as the *Cry* had enjoyed all their jokes, and laugh'd themselves weary, she, without taking the least notice of their observations, continued the account she had began of her own education.

*Portia*. My father not only designed my learning as a means of being a companion to a man of *real* understanding, but to prevent my being sought after by any other. Or should it be my fate, he said, not to meet with any man that had discernment enough to know, that real well−chose learning and true understanding must as surely direct the mind to a proper behaviour, as half learning and half understanding must drive it on to affected impertinence; or who had not greatness of mind enough to rejoice in a wife's perfections, without any mixture of paltry envy; that I might not, when the natural vivacity of youth was flown, grow into a stupid lump of inanity: that from want of means to employ my own mind agreeably, I might not be forced on the trifling practice of

gossiping about other peoples affairs, and become not only a burthen to myself but a pest of society. These were my father's reasons for his directions concerning my education in that point, and most religiously did my mother observe them. Yet as my learning languages (especially as it was my chief delight) must naturally lead me into reading the most admired ancient authors, the greatest care was taken to shut out from my bosom philosophic pride; and I was early instructed to place the height of my admiration of meer human wisdom in *Socrates,* who without divine assistance had discovered the fallacy and narrow bounds of all mortal knowledge. My home was to be the christian faith into which I was baptized; and all my trust was to be placed in the revelation of God. As this simple truth was to be the sum of all my wisdom, you cannot wonder, O *Cylinda,* at my mother's flying with me even to the ends of the earth, that I might avoid the alluring bait of your agreeable friendship. But if you attend to the remainder of what I promised to impart to this assembly, I may, as I think I see your heart softened and willing to receive the impression of truth, happily lead you from all your perplexing errors, and be truly your friend in the most valuable sense of that poor word, so often prostituted by coming from the mouths of those who know no other leagues but such as are built on deceitful flattery and treacherous cunning.

*Cylinda* was able to answer *Portia* for some time only by flowing tears: but as soon as her words could find a passage, she express'd herself most highly interested in any thing that could concern her kindest friend; for such, with her permission, she now presumed to call her. She was not, she said, so lost to misery, but she hoped she could receive some pleasure in hearing of that happiness in *Portia,* which she had like to have destroyed.

But as well might the sweet nightingale attempt to be heard by his listening mate, when the loud thunder and the dashing rain is spouting from the heavens, as for *Portia* to proceed with her narration, or *Cylinda* to give the wish'd attention. For the *Cry* had been so stung to the quick by *Portia's* account of her education, which baffled and contradicted their frequent decisions, that she was not that disturber of their peace a learned woman, that they again rose into the most violent of uproars. They forgot their eager expectation of holding *Cylinda* in their grasp; and unmindful of some of their former commendations, fell into as strong an abuse of her, as if she had been even *Portia* herself; and this for no other part of her fantastic life, than her having that learning, which while she made no other use of it than the gratification of her pride, was their highest admiration. They again repeated all their trite reflexions on womens having more knowledge than they themselves thought proper to allow them; (for 'tis an invariable custom with the *Cry,* never to let some particular subjects pass in conversation, without uttering the same worn−out witticisms which they have before twenty times repeated) and they ended their observations with an affirmation, that learning ever was, and ever would be, the ruin of *all* women who possessed it; which *all* they intended solely to mean *Portia,* that one woman whose very presence was hateful to their eyes. The bustle and hum amongst the *Cry* was so great, their clamor rose to such an height; and they chaff'd about the hall in such a manner, that even *Una's* voice would with difficulty have collected them again into one body. The discourse at this time therefore broke off. *Una* retired, and the scene closed till the next meeting of the same assembly.
*End of Part the Fourth.*

## PROLOGUE to Part the Fifth.

The learned *French* critic in his treatise on epic poetry, hath given the preference to the writer of the epopeé before either the historian or the philosopher; and this under the sanction of *Aristotle's* own opinion: who mentions also such a species of writing as the comic epic, of which *Homer* himself is said to have left an example which was unhappily lost. "And that we have no more instances of it amongst the writers of antiquity (says an ingenious a author) is perhaps owing to the loss of this great pattern; which, had it survived, might have found its imitators equally with the other poems of this great original."

The comic epic (says the beforemention'd *French* writer) differs from the grave epic, inasmuch as it requires not such importance of subject, nor need it be founded on a known fact: the story as well as the characters being left to the invention of the comic poet. "b Character (continues he) is no less the soul of the hero and of the action (in the epopeé) than the fable is of the poem, and consequently seems to require a unity no less exact."

As our readers are to be found amongst mankind alone, what can we offer to their view so agreeable as a true and natural representation of themselves? Both the poet and the painter may diversify the situation and embellishments of their pictures at pleasure; but when the one copies human countenances, and the other human minds, they must each take care to preserve an exact resemblance to their originals.

When we see a picture where the features and the due proportions all combine to represent a human face, we acknowledge the truth of the portrait; that is, its likeness to nature, the grand original, altho' we are unacquainted with the individual for whom it was drawn. But if the painter should animate the countenance to such a height, that the characteristic he intends should breathe from the canvas, then hath he top'd his art.

The analogy which the poet, in this respect bears to the painter, is too obvious to require an application.

It is declared by the above critic (whose authority we believe will be esteemed very little disputable) "That one of the necessary parts of the epic consists in the c virtue and excellence of the chief personage." But as the characters of the comic epic are not like those of the grave epic, to be known persons or heroes, but the invention of the poet, 'tis to the writers of the latter that this precept seems to be peculiarly address'd.

That the chief personage of the comic should be endued with virtue and excellence, seems most palpably evident, in order to gain the attention of the reader; as also to give him the opportunity of energizing the pleasing sensation of love and affection. Whatever of the ridiculous is to be admitted into such works, should be found amongst the under characters, or what is properly called episodes. The principal figures in our view should give us leave to exercise our esteem; otherwise by what means can we be concerned for their distress, rejoice at their prosperity, or be anxious for the event of their story?

To travel through a whole work only to laugh at the chief companion allotted us, is an insupportable burthen. And we should imagine that the reading of that incomparable piece of humour left us by *Cervantes*, can give but little pleasure to those persons who can extract no other entertainment or emolument from it than laughing at *Don Quixote's* reveries, and sympathizing in the malicious joy of the maid at the inn, when she had confined the poor knight in painful durance, by tying him up to the window by the hand, and letting the weight of his whole body hang on that small hold: and that strong and beautiful representation of human nature, exhibited in *Don Quixote's* madness in one point, and extraordinary good sense in every other, is indeed very much thrown away on such readers as consider him only as the object of their mirth. Nor less understood is the character of parson *Adams* in *Joseph Andrews* by those persons, who, fixing their thoughts on the hounds trailing the bacon in his pocket (with some oddnesses in his behaviour, and peculiarities in his dress) think proper to overlook the noble simplicity of his mind, with the other innumerable beauties in his character; which, to those who can understand *the word to the wise*, are placed in the most conspicuous view.

That the ridiculers of parson *Adams* are designed to be the proper objects of ridicule (and not that innocent man himself) is a truth which the author hath in many places set in the most glaring light. And lest his meaning should be perversely misunderstood, he hath fully displayed his own sentiments on that head, by writing a whole scene, in which such laughers are properly treated, and their d characters truly depicted. But those who think continual laughter, or rather sneering, to be one of the necessary ingredients of life, need not be at the trouble of travelling out of their depths to find objects of their merriment: they may spare themselves the pains of going

abroad after food for scorn; as they may be bless'd with a plenteous harvest ever mature and fit for reaping on their own estates, without being beholden to any of their neighbours.

The greatest men, 'tis true, may have some oddnesses and peculiarities, which are indeed food for mirth and pleasantry: but the honest laughs which they create in the judicious and benevolent mind are such, as their own candor (if they are truly great men) will readily excuse; and their good−humour, if they have any, will then induce them to join the mirthful chorus: and the result must be the charm of universal chearfulness and innocent mirth. We are very apt to do as manifest an injury to comic writers, as we do to the characters they represent; and because they here and there properly embellish their pictures with risible figures, we want to turn the whole into farce, by desiring to see nothing but the grotesque: we expect in every page to meet with such jests as shall distort our features into a broad grin; otherwise, let them paint the most agreeable images of human nature, let them ever so accurately search the inmost recesses of the human heart, there is a general outcry set up against them, that they are spiritless and dull.

But indignation at the malicious rather than ignorant absurdities which we have heard vented on honest parson *Adams*, hath led us into a much wider digression than we at first intended. To return therefore to the subject of character in general.

When an author introduces his reader to the acquaintance of a character with which his imagination is warmed, his whole soul is delighted; and with whom he cannot avoid for the time playing at a kind of fancy'd friendship: how sensibly must he feel the disappointment, if on a sudden he should find this his friend acting a part contradictory to every idea he had conceived of him, and should see him really metamorphosed into another kind of being! Would he not believe that the author was grown as wild thus to scandalize and throw dirt at the character which he at first represented in so fair a light, as he would think of the painter who having exerted his utmost skill to draw a beautiful picture, should on a sudden bespatter it with dirt and mire till the features were all lost in a heap of most monstrous deformity? 'Tis barbarous in an author to tantalize his readers with a pleasure which he intends thus inhumanly to take from them; and by such a proceeding he is from self−contradiction convicted of falsehood. When such an incongruous piece as the *mulier formosa*, &c. mentioned by *Horace* with just derision, is the produce of the pen or pencil, any one who is the least conversant with nature, may safely swear that she sits not for the picture; and it is a most atrocious perjury to bring against her so false an accusation.

The most famous of the Grecian statues was said to be formed by collecting all the various female beauties of *Greece* into one figure, which when finished greatly surpassed any one single living beauty. Yet as every feature was taken from nature, it could not be called any other than a true representation of natural beauty. If a painter in finishing a human face should with a skilful hand touch and re−touch his portrait, till by the utmost force of his imagination he had given such exquisite grace and beauty, that every one who saw it should cry out that it had the face of an angel; yet whilst the human features were preserved, it would still resemble the human countenance: but should he exert his art only a little way in the road to deformity, the human countenance would soon be lost, and we should pronounce the hideous caricature strongly to resemble some beast: we should be struck with the idea of the fierceness of a lion, the slyness of a fox, the lasciviousness of a goat, &c. As we find therefore, that the characteristic of the outward man will be much easier preserved when joined to the highest beauty, than when tack'd to deformity below his specific nature; and that 'tis a much more difficult task to paint above nature than below it: why should we not readily suppose it to be just the same in painting the mental features of the human race?

Were we carefully to examine and extract the opinions from the greatest geniuses and the most accurate judgments, we should perhaps find them all agree, that characters are not so mix'd as on a cursory view they may appear. And altho' it might be absurd to assert that any man is intirely bad, or completely good; yet there is surely no absurdity in declaring, that every individual possessed of rationality is absolutely in the path to goodness, or in the road to corruption.

*Bossu* e from *Aristotle* says, that what constitutes the good or evil actions of a man, is the choice which he makes, and that desire which he gratifies from the result of deliberation. Thus, continues he "the manners are evil when the resolutions on which they are formed are evil; and the manners are good when the resolutions are good."

If then it be true, that man is left at liberty by choice and deliberation to fix on his own path, nothing is more demonstrable than that he can choose but one road at a time. An illustration from the objects of our senses will make this yet more clear and intelligible. Was a man to mount on horseback in order to go from *Cobham* to

*London,* whilst he pursues his proper path he by every step arrives nearer his purposed end: but if on first setting out he turns his horse's head towards *Guilford,* and spurs on in the *Portsmouth* road, altho' he should swear with the utmost vehemence that his journey would end in *London,* yet will he never arrive thither, till by conviction of being in the wrong he is prevailed on to turn into the right road. The traveller in this case would be called mad, who whilst he was visibly spurring his horse towards *Portsmouth,* should assert that he was journeying full speed towards *London*: yet in what concerns the human mind, every man expects to be allow'd in his perfect senses, whilst by various fallacies he endeavours to prove that to be the only true path to perfection which he himself through some favourite passion or inclination hath chosen: There appears to be but two grand master passions or movers in the human mind, namely, Love and Pride. And what constitutes the beauty or deformity of a man's character, is the choice he makes under which banner he determines to enlist himself: but there is a strong distinction between different degrees in the same thing, and a mixture of two contraries. Thus a man may be more or less proud; but if Pride be his characteristic, he cannot be a good man. So a man may be more or less attracted by love, and rouzed to benevolent actions; but whilst he preserves Love as the characteristic of his mind, he cannot be a bad man.

But we here speak of the inherent and predominant passion in his soul; for the being ensnared by temptation into the temporary gratification of appetites, is entirely foreign to the present purpose.

The appearance of an incongruous mixture in real characters, arises from the narrow limits of mortal perfection. It is an old observation, that the extremes of vice border on virtue, and the extremes of virtue run into b vice. There are certain exuberances or excrescences in the mind, as well as in the body, which flow from overfulness, and, in both cases, are the cause of hurtful diseases: but the mental or bodily physician, who cannot distinguish between a distemper arising from too great repletion, and a fault in the vital stamina, would deservedly incur the censure of being an ignorant quack, and no other than a meer mountebank.

The excrescence of love may swell into fond partiality, but still the vital root of the soul may remain clear and uncorrupted. The heart actuated by strong affections may, from a desire of enjoying unallayed social happiness, exuberate into too nice a refinement: for by grasping at more exalted and finer pleasures than fall to the lot of mortals, it oftentimes destroys the very happiness it seeks.

On a careful examination it will we believe be found, that most of the favourite and exemplary characters of *Homer, Virgil, Milton, Spenser,* and *Shakespear,* have no other characteristic but what we call love; and 'tis full as evident, that pride rages in the minds of all those characters which they have marked with their censure, and painted, it may be presumed, as so many scarecrows to fright mankind from following their examples.

Men of learning and judgment, who have written on the subject of character, chiefly insist on the necessity of its congruity and uniformity in all its parts. And that in so eminent a degree, that the judicious reader ought to know what the chief character in any work of the imagination will naturally perform, according to the situation he is thrown into, as well as doth the author himself. Supposing therefore, that after reading through the *Iliad* to the twenty−second book, we should then find the two speeches of *Hector* and *Achilles,* immediately preceding the combat, transposed, and each given to the wrong person: suppose *Hector* was to taunt *Achilles,* and with proud and rageful threats of the ignominy with which he intended to treat his lifeless body, and *Achilles* in gentle terms was to desire that a decent interment might be the lot of the conquer'd; what reader would not think that *Homer* was gone mad, or that a mistake had remained in the copy from *Homer's* days even to this present time? Where the reader cannot thus form an almost unerring judgment, the character drawn by the writer must be vague, and must also baffle all our enquiries concerning its characteristic; for this very plain reason, that there is indeed no such thing to be found.

A proud man, 'tis true, may sometimes let some small sparks of humanity appear in his bosom; but then he must be taken in the instant when his pride is satisfied, before he hath time to start a fresh pursuit: and this carries with it only a proof of the truth of that vulgar observation, "that the d—l himself is good when he is pleased."

A full exemplification of this may be seen in the behaviour of the *Grecian* hero after the death of the noble *Trojan*: for *Achilles,* when he had sated his fury and glutted his raging pride, by inhumanly dragging the dead body of the brave *Hector* at his chariot wheels round the walls of *Troy*; when he beheld the old and feeble king *Priam* prostrate at his feet, imploring with a suppliant's voice, that he might be permitted to lay this the last of almost of fifty slaughtered sons decently in the grave, he was touched with just compassion enough to make him condescend to grant the mighty boon! But *Homer* was too judicious to suffer even this mite of compassion to

creep into his furious breast till his rage was glutted, and his whole mind filled with the thoughts of *Priam's* misery caused by his own superior force of arms. I would not wish (as *Cordelia* says in king *Lear*) that *my enemy's dog that had bit me* should suffer the misery which is necessary to kindle a spark of compassion in such minds: and altho' *Achilles* seems to have a strong friendship for *Patroclus*, yet had *Patroclus* by any inadvertent step, and without the least design, piqued the pride of this his friend; I would not (as the children say) have been in his coat for the whole price at which I value my life itself.

Poets and philosophers undoubtedly formed their images of characters from experience and observation on nature. From the highest geniuses amongst the poets, and the most penetrating judgments amongst the philosophers, it might, we believe, be fairly deduced, that it was their opinion that the principal bent of a man's mind, which we properly call his characteristic, and which necessarily hath an influence on all his actions, is intirely *good* or *bad*.

But to leave seeking testimony from poets or philosophers, and to fly to a more indubitable sanction.

God is Love, says the sacred writings, and that the essence of the devil is Pride may fairly, and without any far−fetch'd strain, be deduced from the same divine authority. The same Spirit also testifies, that we cannot serve God and Mammon.

Let this be but illustrated by sensible objects, and all its force will be immediately apparent: for whilst the kings of *France* and *England* (altho' both of the same species) are engaged in a mutual war, would it not be the highest absurdity for any soldier to attempt to enlist himself at the same time into the service of both? How much less then is it in the power of any man to enlist himself at the same time under the banner of two beings, whose very natures are in eternal and diametrical opposition to each other!

# PART the FIFTH.

## SCENE I.

*—To some kind of men*
*Their graces serve them but as enemies.*
*—Oh what a world is this, when what is comely*
*Envenoms him that bears it!*

As you like it.

## Portia. Cylinda. Una. The Cry.

*Portia* having apart related to *Cylinda* as briefly as possible the circumstances of her life, which were necessary for her understanding the ensuing part, she thus proceeded in her narration.

*Portia*. But now we must change the scene, for *Ferdinand* is no longer in *England*. His brother *Oliver* had for a long time daily encreased in his murmurs, that *Ferdinand* and *Cordelia* robbed their father of his allowance; yet nothing could have less foundation than such a surmise. The unhappy straitness of their circumstances sometimes embittered the chearfulness which would otherwise have reigned in their conversation. For *Nicanor,* who had been used to the indulgence of all his passions and appetites, could not well bear the least restraint in his pleasures without a peevish moroseness of temper; to prevent which the vigilant *Cordelia,* by her prudent management, often made the appearance of plenty in the house of Penury: she denied herself any gratification, in order to enable her to delight and gratify her father: and as one of his chief pleasures seemed to arise from the goodness of his son *Oliver* in making him a yearly allowance; *Cordelia,* whenever 'twas in her power, hid from her father's knowledge the extreme straitness of their pattern, or the insufficiency of *Oliver's* allowance for even bare necessaries. This indeed she was in some measure enabled to do by the assistance of a a friend of hers, who to the utmost of her small abilities (which equalled not a tenth of *Oliver's* opulence) and with a sincere injunction of secrecy, supplied *Cordelia* with the means for their more comfortable subsistence.

*Oliver* ceased not his murmurs and reproaches against *Ferdinand,* nor failed to take every opportunity of venting his inward malignity, till *Nicanor,* who was too indolent to make any strict examination, partly gave credit to the insinuations of *Oliver* ; and the world in general greedily swallowed any censures on a character so peculiarly amiable as that of *Ferdinand*.

So subtil was the management of *Oliver,* that he could swell a trifle bestowed from ease and plenty, into the appearance of the greatest generosity. *Ferdinand* could never talk the language of *giving* to his father: whilst *Oliver* could never for one moment drop the idea of his own property, and consequently held always ready at hand some contrivance to raise the same idea in the minds of others.

*Ferdinand* thus reproached, distressed, and calumniated, resolved on a trial of enhancing his fortune in another climate, where he hoped at least that he should not be persecuted by any human creature resembling *Oliver*. For altho' he was possessed of as great a degree of candor as ever yet inhabited a human breast; yet could he not avoid seeing, and consequently grieving from his soul, at the heavy load of the *sinistra* which reigned and triumphed in his brother's bosom. He had laboured with his utmost abilities to open his brother's eyes: he had set before him in all the various shapes that ever was invented, man's true interest, and the only pursuit which is really worth his care. But *Oliver* resolutely baffled all such endeavours; and when he was desired to fly the wretched slavery which was inflicted by harbouring the *turba* in his breast, he only embraced them the closer: and when *Ferdinand* from the sincerity of his heart was willing to have introduced the *dextra* into his brother's bosom, and to have shewn him how much more solid happiness it would produce, than even the success of ten thousand sinister views; *Oliver,* instead of being convinced, stirred up the *turba* to outward rage against him: yet whilst he felt their sharpest stings within, he positively abjured their acquaintance.

*Portia* in her last description of what passed in the mind of the two brothers, purposely used all the expressions of the *dextra,* the *sinistra,* and the *turba,* in order, out of an innocent curiosity, to see how *Cylinda* would receive those uncommon terms, as they had never been explained to her, and as 'tis very probable she never heard them in that manner applied before.

*Portia* was not in the least deceived in her expectations; for she observed that *Cylinda* hearkened to her with a sort of earnest attention, as if she could not at first quite follow her ideas; but it was not long before she shewed by an intelligent smile, that *Portia's* meaning, in her new and expressive words, was perfectly clear and intelligible. For *Cylinda* had too penetrating a head to want any farther explanation than the context for new terms properly applied; and too much real good−humour not to be pleased with any such innocent exertion of the fancy.

*Portia. Ferdinand* had by reiterated kindness heaped coals of fire on his brother's head.

Great kindness indeed (burst forth from the mouth of the *Cry*) could a beggar bestow on a man who supported him with bread!

*Portia*. Great kindnesses are very possible to be bestowed, where the power of conferring pecuniary favours are absolutely wanting; and sordid are those minds which make Mammon so much their god as to worship no other deity. No friendly offices that were in his power did *Ferdinand* ever omit towards his brother; but the *sinistra* within *Oliver's* breast so changed their property, that instead of melting they rather served to harden his stubborn heart. *Ferdinand* therefore judiciously resolved, for the future part of his life, to avoid company in which he could neither give nor receive any pleasure. He had a friend named *Sebastian*, whose first cousin *Alcander* was in an eminent and opulent station in *Barbadoes*: this friend offered to furnish *Ferdinand* with all necessaries, and to give him letters of recommendation to his cousin *Alcander*, if he would undertake such a voyage in order to seek his fortune. This proposal was highly agreeable to *Ferdinand*: for as he could not help knowing himself to be the principal object of *Oliver's* malice (altho' he could not trace all its deep workings against him) he rejoiced in an opportunity of removing as far as possible from the place, where he must be daily reflecting on so melancholy a consideration as that of a brother's unworthiness. The truth of which nothing but glaring instances could have forced into his unsuspecting bosom, and absence alone was capable of banishing it from his thoughts. But notwithstanding all the outcries that *Oliver* thought fit to make that *Ferdinand* was a burthen to his father, and that he himself was the old gentleman's only support; yet all these outcries were intended for no other purpose than to make *Ferdinand*, if possible, feel the sharpness of such reproaches. The removal of *Ferdinand*, therefore, must be the greatest disappointment to *Oliver's* schemes; for it was not his brother's absence, but his misery that he sought. That *Ferdinand* should be poor was his delight, as he flattered himself he could by that means reduce him to dependence and slavery. The only happiness *Oliver* could propose to himself in this life, was the making his brother acknowledge him his superior. Minds directed by the *sinistra*, are actuated by no other motive but that of executing some design on the objects of their envy; nor can they enjoy the least pleasure by any other method. Altho' *Oliver* in his brother's poverty and want of outward advantages, could pick up a few crumbs of comfort, yet his envy had taken deeper root. The true *sinistra* soars above, and leaves the little misses the paltry vanity of envying outward ornaments. It was his honesty of heart, his generosity of temper, and his other amiable qualities, that rendered *Ferdinand* the fittest object in the world for the employment of the *turba* within the breast of *Oliver*. And that *Ferdinand* chanced to be his brother, was a strong additional incitement to his malice; for the *sinistra* is always

*The nearer in blood, the nearer bloody:*

and ever since its first introduction into the world, by which the innocent *Abel* fell a victim to the envy of his brother *Cain*, it never hath sought any other object on which to exercise its cruelty, but the *dextra*.

*Oliver* now exerted his utmost art to prevent *Ferdinand* from setting out on his intended voyage: for, besides losing him out of his sight, and being therefore not able to plague and torment him, he considered that his brother's prosperity might possibly be the event of such a step. This must be a dreadful consideration to *Oliver*; for the everlasting motto of a mind inhabited by the *turba* is, "Evil, be thou my good." And the man who says, Evil, be thou my good, and, Pride, be thou my pleasure; must say at the same time, Misery, be thou my happiness.

One of the stratagems *Oliver* made use of to deter *Ferdinand* from his purpose was, changing the outcry of his being a burthen to his father, into an accusation that he cared for no one but himself; and from a narrow selfish desire of removing far from the distress of his family, that he intended cruelly to abandon his father in his old age, without the least compassion or remorse; just at a time too, as he farther insinuated, when *Ferdinand* knew that he himself could not much longer support his family: he had struggled to the utmost, he said, and had ruined himself to keep them all in idleness. This falsehood *Oliver* impudently asserted, altho' 'twas well known that he indulged himself frequently at his own chambers, or at a tavern, in the most voluptuous repasts; for he was rather in his disposition extravagant than covetous: but not less than four or five days in a week would he pass in his father's house, denying himself the luxurious way of life he loved, and partaking of those scanty meals which his allowance afforded to his family, rather than he would suffer them to enjoy themselves from his absence.

*Melantha* (altho' for different reasons) was as earnestly desirous as *Oliver* himself to prevent *Ferdinand* from going abroad. She apprehended that my heart was too constantly fixed on *Ferdinand*, for her easily to find any other object of my affections on whom to fix her pursuit in order to gratify her vanity, and, as she still hoped, to triumph over me as a rival: without such a pursuit *Melantha* would think herself quite undone. Besides, the mixture of her inclination for *Ferdinand* (which accompanied her vanity) intirely swallowed up all consideration

for his welfare; and like the famous *Ægyptian* queen she would have said, (had it been put to her choice) Stay here with me and die, rather than go to the enjoyment of the utmost worldly prosperity. Oh love! can such a selfish wish claim thee as its author? But *Melantha* had no *Mark Antony* to deal with, and therefore dared not speak out such glaring fallacies. She was sensible that the esteem of *Ferdinand* was not in that manner to be gained. She was forced therefore to submit to the torment of struggling to suppress any appearance of the natural bent of her own inclinations. Perhaps it would be difficult for the most artful of men and women, who invite the *turba* to their bosoms, to find out a more uneasy situation than this, of continually struggling under a heavy robe of disguise. Oh Bedlam, how often could I invite thee to open all thy gates, to pour forth all thy present inhabitants, to enlarge thy territories, and to encompass all that part of mankind who say, "Evil, be thou my good!"

But the steadiness of *Ferdinand* baffled every inveigling attempt of *Melantha's*, and every sinister stratagem of *Oliver's*. *Ferdinand* had a corner in his bosom in which he, like the rest of mankind, accustomed himself to hide away faults and frailties: but as he could not fill it with his own, the failings of his friends filled up the vacancy. Yet would not he suffer his understanding to be so totally blinded as to put any trust in *Oliver* : for by reiterated experience, the knowledge of his brother's malice was not concealed from him, and he resolved by flight to avoid its power.

*Ferdinand* talked freely with me of his intentions of going abroad, and I as freely advised him to persist in those intentions.

The *Cry* had been a long time silent, for they had inwardly been sympathizing with *Oliver* and *Melantha*, and greatly approving all the steps taken by the *sinistra* in their bosoms. But as applause, even of their dearest friends, is not very apt to burst from their lips, this their inward approbation rendered them dull and stupid, till an imaginary discovery of an opportunity for insulting *Portia* restored them to their usual pert vivacity: and with several distorted nods and sneers, they all at once signified their contempt by uttering the words. "Oh! now our platonism is come again! now we are to pretend a joy at being rid of *Ferdinand*!"

*Portia* thought to herself that they were all a little mad by their strange conclusions drawn from her last words: for had not the ruin of *Ferdinand* depended on his stay, nothing could have been so pleasing to her (and that she had often declared) as enjoying his company.

## SCENE II.

*—Play with your fancies.—*

Shakespear.

## Portia. Una. The Cry. Cylinda.

## *PORTIA.*

*Ferdinand,* as soon as he could possibly make the necessary preparations, set forth on his voyage. The morning that he departed, *Nicanor, Oliver, Cordelia, Melantha,* and myself, assembled all together to take our leave of him. *Nicanor* blessed him; but the frequent babble of *Oliver* in the old gentleman's ears, that *Ferdinand* was wanting to him in filial affection and duty, had made such an impression on his mind, as damp'd that blessing, and render'd it cold and spiritless. *Oliver* inwardly rejoiced at it, but chose himself that day to play the part of brotherly fondness. He was indeed inwardly vexed, not at parting with an amiable brother, but at losing an object of his malice. His words therefore were not the words of love; they were mix'd with insinuated reproaches against *Ferdinand* for his being so resolute in his purpose: and altho' *Oliver* went so far as to muster up a great quantity of tears, yet were they accompanied with too much wailing and self−lamentation to flow from the only true source, a soften'd and gentle heart. *Oliver* was in truth acting a part which he was so very unqualified to perform, that the most common penetration could not well be imposed on by so glaring a deception.

We once thought, said the *Cry* with their usual sneers, that 'twas a sign of simplicity to be duped! but now truly, all wisdom consists in not being imposed on by counterfeits!

*Portia*. I should be very sorry if I could not be imposed on by a judicious actor, as that would imply a suspicion of mind which I abhor: but raving and ranting, however it may on the stage attain a thundering acclamation from the upper gallery, will never pass for soft sensibility of heart, except on those who have never experienced what that sensibility really is. *Ferdinand* sigh'd at his father's coldness, and plainly indicated by his looks his excessive weariness of his brother's unmeaning lamentations: for however ill calculated noise may be to penetrate the heart, 'tis certainly very well adapted to stun the senses and confuse the understanding.

*Melantha,* whose uppermost passion at present was the highest indignation against *Ferdinand,* for the double disappointment of both her vanity and inclination, must have acted suitably to that indignation, had she pursued the dictates of her own heart. She must have raved with passion, have loaded *Ferdinand* with all the bitter reproaches which the conjunction of two such associates as vanity and inclination generally produces. When those were exhausted, she must have invoked the aid of tears to assist her in venting her rage; but she forgot not her resolution of being my shadow, and therefore thought that

*—this eternal blazon must not be.*

Whilst I stood pale I believe with languid sorrow, exerting my utmost strength to suppress my heaving sighs and rifing tears that struggled for a vent, having from the fulness of my heart quite lost the power of speech, *Melantha* resolved that the shadow should exceed the substance: and because I did not complain, and chose rather to force a smile in order to chear the spirits of my poor *Cordelia, Melantha* put on the mask of boisterous mirth, and affected gaiety.

*—Alas!*
*This was but noise and tumult, 'twas not love!*

*Cordelia* standing close by my side, was indeed a true picture of grief unmix'd with rage, of sorrow without repining. She felt the separation from her brother, like one endued with the sincerest affection; but yet she remembered it was her duty to keep her mind in a proper submission to unavoidable events.

*Ferdinand* took his last leave of us, like one who could not trust himself with pronouncing the word *farewel,* lest the very bidding adieu should dissolve his resolution of parting with those he loved: he rather flew than walk'd out of the room, and the coach which convey'd him to the water−side was out of sight in a moment. *Melantha* and *Oliver* followed him to the coach side, one wringing his hands, and the other affecting the highest gaiety, whilst neither *Cordelia* nor I stirred from our places. We stood some moments motionless; we wish'd for tears, but none came to our relief: at last *Cordelia* threw her arms about my neck: "My dearest *Portia,* (said she) let us thank God that for the present at least my brother is escaped from the malice of *Oliver*." This thought mingled pleasure with our grief, and at last our tears found a passage, and flow'd as due to the present loss of *Ferdinand*.

The minds of *Melantha* and *Oliver* when they had lost *Ferdinand,* were differently employ'd: the *turba* in their bosoms had lost that outward food for their malice, the innocent *Ferdinand*; and were therefore resolved to be revenged on those who thought proper to entertain them. Indeed the minds of *Oliver* and *Melantha* might both in a metaphorical sense be justly said to be on a rack, and to suffer all the pains of dislocation. This produced the common and natural effect, and they sought relief by mutual accusations and malignant reproaches of each other, for not preventing this their reciprocal disappointment. "Why did not you say this? and why did not you do that?" burst with impetuosity from either's lips: and had they not by pride, the leader of the *turba,* been a little restrained, from the consideration of the politeness which was expected in a gentleman and lady of fortune, *Billingsgate* could not have produced a more virulent altercation. Oh had they been but man and wife, and as in that case pride generally waves this consideration of politeness, the *turba* themselves only know how unbounded would have been their scurrility! Their extreme ill opinion of each other they express'd only in general terms: for *Melantha* knowing in her heart the ill−will of *Oliver* to his brother, and having a suspicion that he was really glad of his absence, because he was ashamed of that poverty in him which he would not relieve, took occasion often to declare before him, and with a pointed fierceness in her eyes, that *all* men without exception would let their dearest friends, nay their brothers, go to the ends of the earth, rather than part with one mite of their own property.

The *turba* in *Oliver's* breast knew the language of its kindred too well, to be at a loss for *Melantha's* meaning; and suspecting in his mind that *Melantha* had encouraged the departure of *Ferdinand,* because she imagined him to have given me the preference, he returned her general observations on men by pronouncing, that *all* women would send their lovers to the d—l, provided they could rob their rivals of them. And now ALL women and ALL men were abused with such vehemence, that a by−stander would have imagined that *Oliver* and *Melantha* were actuated by the highest indignation against their whole species. It might also have been some time before such a by−stander would have guess'd that all this general abuse was only a contrivance to vent their anger against each other, without calling names. For, altho' excepting the company, is a very polite invention, yet rancour will take care to shew itself by implication, whatever methods may be taken for pretending to conceal it.

The *turba* in *Melantha's* breast had contrived for the present to lull fast asleep the soothing thought, that I as well as herself had lost the sight of *Ferdinand*: but after some days of torment, they suffered that pleasing reflexion to return into her mind, in order to give a seasonable relief to such an anxiety, as might without any interval have worn away her very life: but it was more out of policy than kindness, that they abated the rigour of their stings; for they were in truth too well pleased with their situation, to wish her death. They might not readily have found another bosom so fitted to receive them; and easily could my fancy form a lamentation proper for the *turba* to make, was such a tragical event to happen.

The *Cry* now put on their most lowring looks.

*Cylinda* cast an eye of chearful expectation on *Portia,* for such a whimsical exercise of her fancy: and *Una* cast on her such a benignant look of approbation, as encouraged *Portia* to proceed in her innocent flights of a youthful imagination.

*Portia*. How is my soul delighted, and how agreeably are my spirits elevated, O ever revered *Una,* at the kind liberty you give me! for where instead of endeavouring to amuse and entertain, I am forced to suppress every image that arises in my mind, for fear of giving offence, all conversation is painful to me. Suppose then that *Melantha* had been overcome by the intolerable struggles in her own bosom; and behold the *turba* thus grieving over her lifeless remains.

"Alas, is that beloved bosom cold, which we have received such joy and pleasure in tormenting! will that dear heart for ever cease to beat! that kind, that indulgent heart, which never refused receiving any of our stings or arrows! which was always ready to flutter and swell as if it had been poisoned! and to suffer the most agonizing perturbations only for our delight and gratification! Ah most wretched wretched we! shall we never again, our much lamented *Melantha,* work thee up to rage and indignation! and set those dear eyes a blubbering, our sovereign will and pleasure being the only actuating motive! Shall we never more deceive thee, and make thee believe that a thousand tragic catastrophes are thy unhappy lot, when thou hast not one real cause for grief but our tyrannical command! Oh *Melantha* ! thou hadst the most obedient heart we ever inhabited. We have tried thee to the utmost, and thou hast submitted to our controul with a constancy of mind almost incredible. Oh shall we never more behold thee rave and tear thy hair! nor ever again hear the delightful music of thy screaming! shall we for ever lose that most agreeable of all sensations, feeling thy heart swelling with rage and vanity! with rage and

vanity which we prompted thee to call love, and which thou our most docile scholar didst use many fallacious arguments to prove to be a sincere affection!"

This lamentation ended, behold the *turba* howling on the ground, seized with the height of pity for themselves, and wishing for all their friends to be partakers in their clamorous grief. But should their friends arrive they will take no comfort, till some other woman as wise as *Melantha* will generously invite them to her bosom. For without an invitation they seldom pay their visits; but being once admitted and cherish'd, they are never to be driven out again without the same assistance as was given to the man in the gospel, from whose breast a whole legion of evil spirits were cast out.

## SCENE III.

*—Vix credere possis*
*Quam sibi non sit amicus.—*

# Portia. Cylinda. Una. The Cry.

## *PORTIA.*

But to leave *Melantha* and return to *Oliver,* in whose breast the *turba* were crying out,

*Havock, and let slip the dogs of war:*

bewilder'd in his own wisdom, haunted with the idea that his beloved guides, his political maxims had failed him, persecuted by the most poignant grief that *Ferdinand* had escaped his snares, he lost his appetite, and seem'd wasting even to his marrow. Vainly did he seek repose; slumber forsook his eyes; (for in this sense God giveth only his beloved sleep) and he fell into a lingering disease, which tended strongly to his dissolution.

*Nicanor* was greatly alarmed with the fear of losing a son, who had not only fix'd it in his father's mind, that he was not only a prodigy of duty and affection, but that he was the only child he had who deserved from him any degree of love. From many things too that *Oliver* had dropp'd, *Nicanor* fear'd that his illness arose from some difficulties in his circumstances, and a filial anxiety lest he should be disabled from supporting his father; and this still farther engaged all his paternal affection.

*Melantha,* who judged me by herself, fancied that now *Ferdinand* was gone, my eagerness to have a lover would make me accept of *Oliver* in that light: but she was in this resolved to be before−hand with me; and in order to induce him once more to become her flatterer, she in a manner became his nurse during his illness: in which time his behaviour would have fill'd any mind inclined to indulge contempt with the highest degree of it imaginable.

Now the *Cry* all shook their heads, lifted up their hands and eyes, and by every method in their power express'd their detestation of *Portia's* ill−nature, in having a contempt for a poor sick wretch in such a miserable situation. All her malicious stuff about the *turba,* and a parcel of unintelligible gibberish, which no one could understand, should not impose upon them. Then being seized with a strong fit of compassion, they joined in lamenting the misery of poor *Oliver*: and after they had for some time sigh'd and lifted up their eyes, in token of the highest pity, they renewed their rhetoric in praise of benevolence and good−nature; the whole purpose of which was visibly aimed at the condemnation of *Portia,* for her exceeding hardness of heart.

*Portia*. I say, the behaviour of *Oliver* would have fill'd any mind that chose to harbour contempt, with the highest degree of it: yet so wide was such a thought from my disposition, that I heartily wish'd him to open his eyes, and to see his true interest. But the *turba* have iron claws, and it is not easy to make them quit their grapple. They raised horrors in the mind of *Oliver* by the fears of death; they terrified him with the apprehensions of being forced to own he had any such fears, and of losing the appearance of a magnanimity which was to set him above the hopes of heaven, or the fears of an almighty power: they upbraided him with the escape of his brother, and threatened him with future tortures if he did not contrive to give them their old favourite employment, of endeavouring by injuring *Ferdinand* to insinuate themselves into my bosom. For the *turba* not only consider evil as their good, but of that good are very communicative.

It cannot appear strange, that the uneasiness of *Oliver's* mind for the loss of his brother, on whom to wreak his malice, should throw him into bodily disorders, when 'tis so common for bodily disorders to be the consequence of the absence of any thing in which a person greatly delights. But *Oliver,* having perhaps a dawn of comfort breaking in upon his mind, that his brother might fail in his expectations abroad, or that he might by some stratagem be reduced again into his power, pluck'd up at last some spirit; threw off in a manner his distemper, and resolved not to be baffled in his plots upon *Ferdinand* by so obvious a measure as change of place. He had not yet form'd any compleat scheme for mischief, but he directly bribed the postman to deliver no letters that came to any of his circle from *Barbadoes,* into any hands but his. In due time a letter came from *Ferdinand* to *Nicanor*; and another for *Cordelia*. These *Oliver* intercepted. They were wormwood to him, for they contained an account of *Ferdinand's* health and prosperity. He sunk the receipt of these letters, and for the present enjoy'd the gratification of seeing his whole family uneasy, for not having heard from *Ferdinand*. In some time that uneasiness grew so high, that *Oliver* feared some enquiries might be made which would detect his practices. He came home therefore one day in high spirits, and said, he had met a gentleman in the coffee−house, who had inform'd him that he had lately left *Ferdinand* extremely well at *Barbadoes,* and in a very prosperous way. The joy of this news, as it

seemed not to be larded with malice, for the present took off our uneasiness; and both *Cordelia* and I made a hundred excuses for the receiving no letter. And as *Oliver* had not yet vented one spiteful innuendo on his brother's not writing, we had not the least clue to any suspicion of his receiving letters from *Ferdinand,* and suppressing them.

The absence of *Ferdinand,* made the task of hurting him, or hurting me through him, very difficult; therefore deep laid must be the wiles of *Oliver,* and slowly must they work. To prevent his brother from supposing that his letters were not received, *Oliver* answered them himself; giving some artful reason or other for his being thus deputed the general secretary of the family: and as he took care to insert no bitterness nor gall, (his own true colours) but fill'd his letters with strong expressions of affection, and the pleasing account that all whom *Ferdinand* loved were well and happy, the unsuspicious *Ferdinand* received pleasure from the account of his friends being in health, and contented himself with submitting to a correspondence, which he thought was by his father's appointment and approbation.

A twelvemonth pass'd in this manner, and nothing yet offered of any consequence, on which *Oliver* could pursue the chief bent of his malignant mind, till an accidental conversation of a young gentleman, who came from *Barbadoes,* help'd him to a hint, on which he form'd most pregnant mischief. One day, when I was at *Nicanor's,* a servant came up and said there was a gentleman below who came from *Barbadoes,* and desired admittance. He was soon introduced. *Oliver* then was from home, but entered *Nicanor's* house in so short a time, that the young gentleman, named *Lucio,* was scarcely seated before *Oliver* came into the room. When he heard us ask the young gentleman how he left *Ferdinand, Oliver,* with the apprehensions of what might follow, started from his chair: but to account for this sudden motion, he ran up to *Lucio,* heartily embraced him, and begg'd pardon for such his sudden profusion of joy, on the sight of a person who could give him any information of his dearest brother, and his best beloved friend. I will not dwell long on the condition which the paltry mind of *Oliver* was in through his fears: as they were soon removed by *Lucio's* saying that he had been in *Barbadoes* but one week; and spending the last evening there in company with *Ferdinand*; he was desired by him, on his return to *London,* to let his family know that he was extremely well.

We ask'd several questions, but could get no satisfactory answers; for this *Lucio* was one of those rattle headed young fellows who are seldom sober, and who entertain all companies with accounts of their own profligate exploits. He talk'd on in this strain the whole time of his visit; and if he was ask'd any question concerning *Ferdinand,* his answer was, "Never fear him, he'll take care of himself; the rogue rolls in riches; is a fellow of spirit, and as jolly a dog as any in the island." These were words of course with *Lucio* ; and the common manner of commendation used by such characters; who, not distinguishing time or place, introduce their levity into all companies. His visit was but short, for, we got rid of him as soon as 'twas possible with any good manners. Yet from his trifling discourse, and unmeaning expressions, did *Oliver* begin to hum and ha, to shake his head, and to insinuate, that if *Ferdinand* rolled in riches, it would not misbecome him to let his family share some part of his affluence. *Oliver* allow'd, he said, that much was not to be depended upon from such a young fellow as *Lucio,* who was very silly, and very profligate; but yet 'twas plain his brother *Ferdinand* did not dislike such company.

*Nicanor* soon caught the clue *Oliver* intended to give him; he harshly reproved *Cordelia* for endeavouring to excuse her absent brother, and peevishly said, he desired to hear no more of such a son as *Ferdinand,* unless he could hear better things of him. Besides, the old gentleman found his love greatly increase towards *Oliver,* by the increase of the allowance he had lately received from him, it being near doubled: and what enabled *Oliver* to make this bountiful addition was, that he had more than once received large remittances from *Ferdinand;* for which, in the name of his father, he had thank'd him. But part of the money he converted to his own use, and with the other part he increased his father's income, and heighten'd the appearance of his own generosity.

But now did *Oliver* put in practice the strangest contrivance that ever entered into the head of an artful man. He went to make a visit to *Sebastian,* by whose means and with whose recommendation *Ferdinand* went abroad. *Sebastian* was an honest friendly man, loved books and retirement, and held little converse with the world: he was greatly afflicted with the gout, and in such intervals from pain, as admitted the pleasure of society, *Oliver* used frequently to sit with him, and by his conversation (which when he pleased could be very agreeable) had wrought himself greatly into his favour and confidence. *Oliver* in this visit look'd a good deal uneasy, often seem'd to begin some discourse about his brother *Ferdinand,* and then to drop it, as if he had great matters labouring in his mind. This at last raised the attention of *Sebastian,* enough to make him enquire into the cause of that uneasiness

which appear'd in *Oliver*: and as it seem'd also to be something concerning *Ferdinand*, whom he dearly loved; he insisted on an explanation of those hints, which had given him great apprehensions for his friend.

*Oliver* then told him, that he had indeed received a letter from his brother, which had greatly perplex'd him; that he did not love to expose the most trifling failings of his friends; but as he knew *Sebastian's* love to *Ferdinand* was so great, that he would let the thing remain a secret between them, he would impart to him the contents of his brother's letter, and beg his advice how to act in so difficult and delicate an affair. The letter which he produced to *Sebastian*, was as follows.

## *Letter from Ferdinand to Oliver.*

"Dear brother, &c.
You know that one of my principal reasons for going abroad, was to avoid *Portia*. I see her fond affection to me; but as my heart will not let me marry her (for you know 'tis devoted to *Melantha* ) I would willingly out of compassion cure her of this unhappy love. I beg it therefore as a favour, that you would vilify me to her, and paint me in the blackest colours you can invent, in order to root this unlucky passion from her breast. I have a weakness in my heart which makes me wish, if possible, to decline the very appearance of rejecting the love of a woman who is almost my aversion; and that must be the case on my return to *England,* unless you contrive to rid me of that trouble. I have duly weighed the method I propose, and I intreat you, as you have any friendship for me, to comply with my request: I know the task is hard to your generous mind, but the peace of your brother's future life depends on your compliance."

Yours, &c. FERDINAND.

"*P. S.* On no account let my father know of this my design."

*Sebastian* on reading the letter, pronounced the measures to be absolutely wrong, and unfit to be comply'd with. *Oliver* answered, that on first view he also was strongly of that opinion, and his great abhorrence of all deceit made him hastily condemn his brother for such a request. But when he gave himself leave to reflect, he could not but acknowledge that his *dear* brother's motives to that request were no other than the highest degree of tenderness, compassion, and generosity. Was his *beloved Ferdinand* present, he would with *Sebastian* endeavour to persuade him to some other method; but at the distance they now were, such persuasion by letter was almost impracticable. He saw (he said) that his brother was so positively determined on the point, that no persuasion would turn him; this was indeed a small fault in his temper, which unwillingly he revealed. All these things considered, he could not but be of opinion, that a strict adherence to truth might be dispensed with, and that following the directions of the letter would be an honest fraud. To vilify his *dear* brother was (he said) a severe task upon him; and nothing but his own commands could have made him undertake it: yet as he knew 'twas the only method which could cure my unhappy passion, pity for me and friendship for his brother made him consent to undertake a work against his nature. In short, by the words pity, friendship, generosity, &c. he talked *Sebastian* into such an opinion of his brotherly affection for *Ferdinand,* and his compassion for me, that he consented to assist *Oliver,* by any means in his power, in carrying on so laudable a design.

*Oliver* before *Sebastian's* face wrote a letter as from *Alcander* (to whose house in *Barbadoes Ferdinand* first went) which he begged him to shew to me if I should come o him on any enquiries about *Ferdinand*.

*Sebastian* once objected to this scheme because of the grief it would give *Nicanor,* should he hear from me the bad report of his son *Ferdinand*. To which *Oliver* answered, that he was positive my pride would be too much piqued on the discovery of my own weakness of judgment in my choice of *Ferdinand,* to suffer me to reveal what I had heard.

*Oliver* having laid his plan, began now to talk to me and *Cordelia* in many dark hints about the strange life his brother lived in *Barbadoes*. And when with some indignation and resentment I let him understand, that I was not to be moved by stories of *Ferdinand* which came from his enemies; he asked me whether I thought *Sebastian* was an enemy to *Ferdinand*; but refused to explain himself any farther at that time. The next day beginning the same discourse before *Melantha, Cordelia,* and myself, he said, that to convince us of the grounds that he had for what he hinted concerning *Ferdinand,* he could produce a letter which he had copyed from one now in the possession of *Sebastian*. This letter, (said he) which out of friendship *Sebastian* communicated to me, and begged I would keep a secret from my father, will plainly account for his never writing to any of his friends, nor ever remitting his poor father any money." Then taking a letter out of his pocket, a copy of that which was left in the hands of *Sebastian,* he read as follows.

## *A letter from Alcander to Sebastian.*

"My dear friend,
I acquainted you in my last letter, above ten months ago, of the arrival of the gentleman you recommended to me; and very glad was I to give him all the countenance you desired: but surely you was greatly mistaken in the character you gave me of him; or this climate has totally changed his disposition. The *Ferdinand* you recommended, I countenanced; but the *Ferdinand* who is now the talk of the whole island for his profligacy and debaucheries, I have endeavoured for some time to avoid; and have indeed at last totally broke off from his acquaintance. Nor was this difficult, as he makes it his own choice to associate himself with the most abandoned libertines he can meet with; and those who were not so before, soon become by his persuasions and example fit companions of his riots, &c."

Poor *Cordelia,* although she believed the letter a forgery, was softened into tears to hear her brother so vilified. *Oliver* fixed his whole attention on my countenance, which did not I believe alter in the manner he expected; for I felt not the least emotion. *Ferdinand* stood too high in my opinion to be hurt by such scandal. I saw the hand of malice in very intelligible characters, altho' I could not immediately trace from whence those characters came. At last I declared, that should letters arrive from every part of the world to the sam effect, they would appear to me as so many unintelligible cyphers; for my opinion of *Ferdinand* was too unalterably fixed for the breath or pen of slander to shake it.

*Melantha,* as my shadow, declared on my side of the question: but as affectation, when guided by the *sinistra,* if it attempts to meddle with the truth always runs into absurdity, so she added a declaration also, that was the report in this letter to be proved true, and was *Ferdinand* still more changed, yet nothing should alter her affection for him if she had once loved. For 'twas not in the power of change to shake her constancy.

Nobly resolved! said the *Cry,* and nothing but ill−nature could tax so fine a sentiment with affectation.

*Portia. Melantha* expected that I should, like you, O ye *Cry,* applaud her sentiment; for 'twas indeed founded on what she had often heard me say of true constancy. But the *turba* in her mind would not suffer her to distinguish what to me is easily distinguishable, namely, an unshaken fidelity, notwithstanding the outward accidents of diseases, poverty, or other misfortunes; or a stubborn pursuit of our own capricious inclinations, where the real foundation for esteem is wanting. But *Melantha,* as 'tis usual in imitation, in her eager pursuit of me, trod under foot, over−run, and mangled all my sentiments.

Here the *Cry* all at once screamed out, "Oh intolerable vanity! our sentiments truly are so refined, so delicate, that no one can touch them without sullying or defacing their lustre!" Then shrugging their shoulders, and shaking their heads, they muttered themselves into silence.

*Portia*. I was so well satisfied as I thought of the forgery of the letter which *Oliver* read, that I determined to make a visit to *Sebastian,* in order to detect such barefaced malice: nor was it longer than the next day before I waited on *Sebastian* . After some apology for the intrusion, I told him my name and intimacy with *Cordelia,* then begged the favour of knowing whether he had lately heard any thing of her brother *Ferdinand* now at *Barbadoes*.

*Sebastian* believing that he was acting the part which *Ferdinand* desired, and having been persuaded by *Oliver* that he should do a good−natured action, gave me the letter supposed to have come from *Alcander*: but not before he made me promise that I would not afflict *Nicanor* with this report of his son. In this letter writ in a strange character, I read the same words which I before saw copyed by *Oliver*. I could not well suspect *Sebastian* of a plot, and yet I found that I could not give credit even to my own eyes against the long−try'd goodness of *Ferdinand* .

True constancy this! said the *Cry* with a sneer: no obstinacy undoubtedly in such a resolution!

*Portia*. When I came to reflect seriously on the affair, when I considered the character of *Sebastian,* I began to think that 'twas just possible that the account might be true, from the change of climate's having turned the head of *Ferdinand* and made him mad. This thought filled my soul with grief and horror, and I was resolved to be thoroughly satisfied of the truth. I told not *Cordelia* of my visit to *Sebastian,* as 'twas so very unsatisfactory; but suffered her to go on in the supposition we had both at first agreed in, namely, that the letter was an impudent forgery of *Oliver's*. I was resolved, if possible, to prevent being deceived by the artful malice of *Oliver,* in my

farther intended enquiry. I sought out therefore for some person who was going to *Barbadoes,* to whom I might entrust a letter. Such a one I found in *Adolphus,* a man of credit and reputation, who was going thither; and was to return again in a very short time. I begged him to carry a letter from me to *Alcander,* and to return me an answer from his own hand. The purport of my letter to *Alcander* was, that I had heard a strange report concerning the behaviour of *Ferdinand,* and I begged him to tell me the real truth concerning him. *Adolphus* returned from *Barbadoes* in as short a space of time at the fairest winds and the most prosperous voyage could possibly admit: but he must have cut the air quicker than thought to have answered my anxious expectations. As soon as he arrived, he delivered me a letter, assuring me that he himself received it from the hand of *Alcander,* and in which there could be no deceit, for he sat by him whilst it was written. Dreadful was the moment in which I burst it open: for as I loved *Ferdinand* with a most fervent affection, on that instant depended, more than his life or his death, the confirmation of my esteem for him, or the having that treasure of my heart forcibly plucked up by the roots, and torn from me for ever: but what power is there in language to express my sensations, when I read the following words!

## *The letter from Alcander to Portia.*

"Madam,
Your anxious enquiry concerning *Ferdinand,* makes it a grievous task to me to relate his behaviour since his arrival in *Barbadoes*: but to deceive you, as your heart seems truly interested in your enquiry, however it might for the present soothe your wishes, or relieve me from a painful undertaking, would be but real cruelty."

"The use he makes of the large and ample fortune he hath acquired, is to squander it in riot and debauchery: he not only gives an unbounded loose to the gratification of his licentious desires towards wine and women; but his very principles are corruption. Nothing scarcely but blasphemy and obscenity flow from his mouth. He is, in short, a prodigy of wickedness and profligacy, and the abhorrence of all good men. His first appearance here promised much better things: and the character I then received of him from my kinsman *Sebastian,* together with the account you gave me of his former life, there must be either a total change in his disposition, or you were all deceived; and his whole former conduct was owing to a deep hypocrisy. He hath no other signs of madness, except (what in my opinion are indelible marks of it) the perpetrating all kinds of villainy; but what is generally called the distemper of the brain, he is totally free from. I am sorry it falls to my share to give you this melancholy account, and heartily wish I could with any the least degree of sincerity have avoided it. I am, madam, &c.

ALCANDER.

This was indeed the unfolding of a tale that *harrowed up my soul,* that shattered to pieces every pleasing image, and brought every cherished idea to sudden destruction. I stood motionless with horror; and in the vehement struggles between grief and astonishment, my darken'd mind was become the seat of sorrow and confusion. All my joy, all my tranquillity was gone, when the hateful idea forced itself into my mind, that my loved *Ferdinand* was false.

The *Cry* now wink'd and nodded on one another, and with a kind of insulting sneer, declared they could not imagine what *Portia* meant by using the expression, that *Ferdinand* was *false*; when to the best of their memory, he had never declared himself her lover. Then without desiring an explanation of her meaning, they arraign'd and condemn'd her of vanity and absurdity, and executed on her the sentence of a loud horse laugh of insult and contempt.

*Portia*. Such kind of falsehood, O ye *Cry,* as you have fix'd in your thoughts, would have been too trifling to have been mention'd by me, in comparison of the falsehood *Ferdinand* now appeared to be guilty of. He had been false to himself, he had transform'd that innocent bosom, which before it was my delight to contemplate, into a seat for the *turba* to rage in and inhabit. He had torn from me the greatest treasure of my heart, the only pleasing pursuit of my life; namely, an object on which I could justifiably, and with my own approbation, energize all my affections. He had overturn'd and destroy'd my power of ever again enjoying the pleasure of placing an unlimited confidence in any of my fellow−creatures; he had (as *Shakespear* terms it)

*—with jealousy infected*
*The sweetness of affiance,—*

and in its stead introduced into my mind anxious doubts and gloomy suspicions; he had envenom'd all the sources of my bosom, from whence generous pleasure ever flow'd; and firmly proved, that in my future life I had no refuge left, but in total solitude. My whole misery or happiness was so entirely dependent on the truth or falsehood of this change in *Ferdinand,* that my wandering thoughts presented me with such numerous questions to propose to *Adolphus,* that they crowded in confusion on each other; and, without pausing for an answer to every separate question, I hastily asked him, whether he himself had seen *Ferdinand*? what character *Alcander* bore in the island? if that of an honest man, why he would converse with so infamous a wretch as—? I could not utter the word *Ferdinand*; but there broke off my enquiries; and hung with impatience on the reply of *Adolphus,* hoping every moment to discover some fallacy in his detested account. *Adolphus* answered, that he had both seen and conversed with *Ferdinand,* and that the description *Alcander* in his letter had given of the profligacy of his behaviour, fell far short of the real truth. The character of *Alcander,* he said, was unexceptionable, whilst *Ferdinand* had deservedly made himself the public contempt, and the abhorrence of all the honest men in the

island. That *Alcander* at first did honour to *Sebastian's* recommendation; but was now endeavouring, as fast as possible, to shake off so unworthy an acquaintance.

It would be endless to recount the various evasions and subterfuges to which my mind was tempestuously driven, to avoid yielding to a belief so absolutely destructive of every scheme of happiness it had ever form'd. At last a thought struck me, by which I hoped at once to prove the story too inconsistent to gain credit.

"*Alcander* in his letter mentions *Ferdinand's* having acquired an ample fortune: How, sir, (said I to *Adolphus*) is it possible for such a behaviour as you represent to have gained any riches? the story is fallacious and incongruous. Poor *Ferdinand,* wretched man, seems by his conduct, to have calculated rather how to have wasted, than to have attain'd a large fortune!"

*Adolphus* earnestly intreated me to cease my enquiries; assuring me, that by a farther indulgence of my curiosity, I should only pull heaps of sorrow on my own head.

This more alarmed my whole soul, and instead of appeasing, heighten'd all my curiosity. I begg'd to know the worst, for nothing could add to the pain I at present suffered from suspence.

"*Ferdinand* (says *Adolphus*) you know hath a very agreeable person, and amiable address. *[I sigh'd from the very bottom of my soul, made no answer, but the gentleman proceeded.]* These gifts of nature he converted to the wicked purpose of ensnaring the heart of a young and beautiful creature, whose father was just dead, and had left her mistress of a very large plantation. Her beauty became the object of his desire, and he took the advantage of her affection for him to gratify his inclinations. Then he inveigled away her whole property, now ranges through the island in search of other women, and hath abandon'd this poor helpless victim of his love to penury and self−reproach. Her relations and friends load her with their reproaches also, and treat her with contempt and neglect. Her conscience accuses her, for being caught in the snare of her own affections: her beauty is wither'd in its bloom, and she is the most pitiable monument that eyes ever beheld, of the height of wanton barbarity to which the cruel *Ferdinand* is arrived."

The force of this deformed and horrid picture baffled all my strength, conquered all my resolution, debilitated every faculty of my mind, roused all my passions into a tumultuous uproar, and in the rending agonies of my heart I cry'd out: "The story, sir, is all an invention;—'tis a forged tale of falshood: the man is not my friend, who can thus wanton in such a cruel misrepresentation." Nor did I forbear accusing *Adolphus* with taking a malicious pleasure in my torments.

At these words *Una* sigh'd, and with a compassionate sorrow in her countenance, removed herself at a greater distance from *Portia* ; whilst the *Cry* began to dance and caper, and by various gestures to intimate their joy at the hope of an approaching discovery, that *Portia* was one of their own society.

*Portia*. My agonizing torment was beyond expression. I at that moment felt strangers in my breast, distracting and tearing me asunder; and I begg'd *Adolphus* to leave me to the horror of my own reflexions.

And now with triumphant voices the *Cry* broke forth into a loud huzza; declaring, that they were not ignorant who these strangers were, that had enter'd *Portia's* breast. The *turba* cry'd, they are come a visiting: now where is all our *dextra* fled? who is now directed by the *sinistra*? For; as soon as the *Cry* found that they could apply *Portia's* own words to her disadvantage, they forgot their own decision of them to be unintelligible gibberish, and shew'd all at once how capable they were of applying them properly, whenever they served their own purposes, and when the making use of them suited their own inclinations.

*Portia*. Most rightly have ye judged, O ye *Cry*; for the *turba*, ever watchful for an opportunity to invest the human mind, no sooner discovered an unguarded moment, than, like a nest of hornets arm'd with all their stings, they enter'd my once peaceful bosom.

This confession of *Portia's* somewhat abated the exultation of the *Cry*; for to have given them full satisfaction, she should obstinately have denied their charge against her; and whilst she had swell'd with rage and resentment at their discovery, should have averr'd that her mind was perfectly calm and unruffled.

*Portia*. My peace and sweet serenity were fled: dark suspicion and rageful anger succeeded. I grew still more unreasonable; and forgetting that *Adolphus's* trouble had been taken wholly from a friendly desire of complying with my request, I ungratefully condemn'd him in my mind of an officious desire of prying into a private character, in order to gratify the spirit of detraction. Whilst the labour of my soul was bent on justifying *Ferdinand,* and believing him innocent, I would not so much as bend my eyes towards the heart−breaking proofs of his guilt, but searched heaven and earth for a pretence to preserve his image untainted with guilt next my heart;

where it was so deeply rooted, that plucking it from thence was rending my heart asunder. During this painful struggle in my mind, my enemies could not have condemned me with more rigour than I condemned myself.

Here the *Cry* lost another small degree of their transport: for they fear'd *Portia* was again stealing off from their society.

*Portia*. Although by the painful sensations I endured I plainly perceived the *turba* in my bosom, yet did I by no means cherish them, but try'd every method in my power to throw them off. I begg'd the grace of God to remove this torment from my breast.

Here the *Cry* gave a play−house groan; and *Una* cast on *Portia* an eye of complacency.

*Portia*. My anger subsided: I stood self−condemned: remorse succeeded, and soften'd sorrow found a vent at my flowing eyes. I sought *Adolphus*, I implored his pardon, and was again myself. For it was not the humbling myself, and acknowledging my folly, but the remembrance of having basely treated him so ungratefully, that was my merited mortification and my shame.

And now there was not one spark of exulting joy remaining in the *Cry*. All their pleasure at the hope that *Portia* would be totally conquer'd by such a temptation, vanish'd: for if the *turba* was unable to fix in her bosom, on this trying occasion, they could not flatter themselves that it could ever gain such another opportunity. Being forced therefore to suffer *Portia* to slide from their gripe, they without the least shame or confusion, fell into their old employment of abusing her with great virulence, for having amused them with a parcel of nonsense, which 'twas impossible for any one to understand.

*Portia*. Altho' all raging and tumultuous passions were now driven from my bosom, yet a deep−felt grief remain'd. For *Adolphus* in the most solemn manner confirm'd the truth of all he had utter'd. There was not the least reason, from his character, to suspect him of baseness or forgery; nor was *Oliver* so much as personally known to him, so that 'twas impossible he could be an instrument of his malice. I was forced therefore to give an unlimited credit to his words, by which all the little treasure I had hoarded and cherish'd in my heart, from the pleasing reflexion on the merit of *Ferdinand*, was in a moment forcibly rent away. A treasure which I had surveyed and reflected on with a higher degree of delight, than ever the miser enjoyed from viewing and counting his amass'd heaps of wealth. The death of *Ferdinand* would have been trifling in the comparison. By such an event my own loss was the utmost I could have lamented; but by such a life as he now lived, I deplored his loss of himself. He was dead to all goodness, and consequently to every degree of happiness. His mind was wrested into the *sinistra*, his bosom was become the habitation of the *turba*; and from the insupportable torment I had lately undergone by the sharpness of their stings, I could not resist the impulse of compassion for my once−loved *Ferdinand*. Now indeed I had reason to be thankful, that from my infancy I had been taught to keep a strong rein over my passions, and that my principles had led me, by constant habit, to render those instructions practicable: for to lose *Ferdinand*, and to lose him in such a manner, required all my resolution to support with any degree of patience.

Now did the *Cry* begin again to wink and nod; and a general titter of contempt was heard amongst them, on the impropriety (as they deem'd it) of *Portia's* saying she had lost *Ferdinand*; when to their certain knowledge she had never found him. The liberality of *Portia's* mind, in thinking that *Ferdinand* could not be lost to her, whilst he was true to himself, soar'd far out of their comprehension. The *Cry* also were strongly tempted to fall on *Portia* on the old score of partiality, since *Ferdinand* was at present so apparently condemn'd; but fearing a rebuke from *Una*, they were resolved to be sure of their game before with a full−mouth'd yelp they would endeavour to run her down.

*Portia*. I was hurt to my very soul by the consideration of the misery of the poor young creature, who was languishing away her days in wretchedness and want, whilst *Ferdinand* was the willing and treacherous cause of her misfortunes. Small as my fortune was, I could not eat the plainest meal in quiet, till I had endeavoured a little to mitigate what was not in my power to remove. I asked *Adolphus* if he could by any means privately convey a bill for money to the unhappy planter's daughter, whose misery he had so pathetically described. He reply'd, that he could do it with great ease, and, if I desired it, with great secrecy. I then gave him a bank note of an hundred pounds, and begg'd him to convey it to her hands with as much speed as possible. The office was agreeable to his friendly disposition, and he undertook it with great chearfulness.

Now a *Fribble* amongst the *Cry* rose up, and, playing with his fingers, adjusting his dress, turning his eyes over himself, solemnly declared, that he was positive *Portia* had told a *fib*, for it was his *serous* opinion that so

generous an action was not in *hoomae nater*. On this there arose amongst the *Cry* a kind of clamor, which is often dignify'd with the name of argument. The subject which they at present chose to make a matter of debate, was the capacities and dispositions of women: how far their understandings could reach, and to what limits they were bounded: whether women were generally cold or amorous, proud or humble, sordid or generous: with many more questions of dispute, not worth relating: which clamor or argument experienced the accustomary fate, was maintained with noisy vociferation, and ended in an undecided unintelligible confusion.

*Portia*. Could I, without appearing to act an unaccountable, and indeed an unkind part towards my *Cordelia*, I would willingly have stolen away to some remote place by myself; as solitude, I began to think, was the best choice I could possibly make. For *if Ferdinand*—'tis amazing how many evasions I found out yet to cherish and nourish that word IF—I would not have parted wholly with that little word IF for all the oratory in the world: for notwithstanding the almost undeniable evidence I had heard of *Ferdinand's* behaviour, yet nothing less than the testimony of my own senses could have the force totally to tear this comfortable IF from my imagination.

Well done, obstinacy! said the *Cry*.

*Portia*. Altho' I concealed from *Cordelia* my having seen the letter from *Alcander* that was in the possession of *Sebastian*, and which we both at first believed to be the forgery of *Oliver*; yet such convincing proofs of the wretched change of *Ferdinand* had appeared both to my eyes and ears from the return of *Adolphus*, that my uneasiness became too great to be any longer suppress'd: and my *Cordelia* would not suffer me to elude her enquiries, till she had drawn from me the knowledge of my intelligence from *Adolphus*. But little did I find that participation lessen'd grief; for we were both too much affected with the unpleasing account, to enjoy those sweet conversations which we innocently used to partake when *Ferdinand*, the brother and the friend, was the delightful theme. Yet this subject (changed as it was to discord) was so much uppermost in our minds, that no other could scarcely ever find a passage to our lips: but as this was as much as possible suppress'd, each kindly fearing to afflict her friend, we appeared little other than as two gliding ghosts.

*Oliver* seemed inwardly to triumph in beholding our dejection; yet as his spleen was fully gratified, he ceased throwing out any more invectives against his brother. This was to me another sad proof of the truth of *Alcander's* horrid account; for I imagined that nothing but the knowledge of such a change in *Ferdinand* could have abated the envy, and consequently the malice, of *Oliver* towards him.

*Melantha*, from the real pleasure she took in seeing me grieved, could not well put in practice the being my shadow in that point. She knew not the cause of that grief to be more than from the first letter which we all heard read by *Oliver*: but trusting for once to her own judgment, and thinking to outshine me, instead of servily following my steps, she affected an unusual gaiety, and frequently wished for the return of *Ferdinand*, in order to exemplify that boasted constancy, which no change was to shake or alter.

*Melantha* soon enjoyed her wish, for it was not long before *Ferdinand* arrived in *London*.

And now the *Cry* were seized with a sudden fit of laughter, and were in the highest rapture, at enjoying a fancied ridicule on *Portia*. They asked her various rude questions, which they were pleased to think imply'd much humour; and lost all their good manners, whilst they imagined they preserved their good breeding. Pray how did *Ferdinand* come? did he swim across the ocean? had he wings to fly like a bird through the air? or, did he ride on the strength of your own imagination? — For they supposed that she was again indulging her whims, and growing wild with her own fancies.

*Portia*. Since I relate not impossibilities, I beg permission to say at once *Ferdinand* was arrived, instead of entering into a minute detail of every circumstance of his voyage; such as where he went aboard, the name of the vessel, and that of the master, with all the various changes of the weather; what capes they doubled, what harbours they touched at, with many other particulars, troublesome to the relater, and tiresome to the hearer; all which uninteresting circumstances convey no other knowledge but that there are ships, men, storms, calms, capes, harbours, &c. and the insisting on a minute rehearsal of such particulars not necessary to a story, to me savours more of a too rigid criticism, than of the candor of an attentive hearer.

The *Cry* had enjoy'd their joke, nor so much as hearken'd to *Portia's* answer, but suffered her to proceed with her story.

*Portia*. The day that *Ferdinand* arriv'd at his father's house, it happened (a thing very unusual with me) that I had not pass'd any part of it with *Cordelia*. The next morning early she came to my bed−side, and with a mingled joy and sorrow in her countenance, informed me of the arrival of her brother from *Barbadoes* . My earnest look

seemed to imply a question, which she answered only by an averted eye and falling tear. We entered not therefore further on the subject, and, resolving to trust to the evidence of my own senses only, I as usual join'd myself as one of *Nicanor's* family at dinner.

On the first sight of *Ferdinand*, how was my whole soul alarmed with various sensations! I thought that I perceived an honest joy sparkle from his eyes on my giving him a welcome, which I confess fell with a doubtful faltering accent from my tongue; but this pleasing imagination lasted not long, for he answered me with a formal compliment and strain'd civility. With a swiftness like lightning, I traversed back in my thoughts every past scene of pleasure in his conversation, which used to gladden all around him; but, instead of innocent pleasantry and that warmth of heart which used to express itself in the simple terms of true affection, his discourse consisted of labour'd accounts of the manners and customs of foreign nations, and forced ceremonial compliments to his family. There was no agreeable interchange of discourse amongst us, for grief and astonishment, which had tied the tongues of *Cordelia* and myself, made us appear to *Ferdinand* as much alter'd as he himself was in our eyes. Every feature of his face seem'd to me to have undergone a total change; all the harmony of his countenance was ruffled into a guilty confusion, and his eyes appeared to glare with wild desire. I dared not look on *Cordelia*, for in her face I knew I should behold, to me a most painful sight, the deepest sorrow. *Oliver* seemed almost as much changed as *Ferdinand*; the *sinistra* disappeared, his hatred to his brother seemed vanish'd, and he failed not to bestow on him all that faint shadow of love which he possessed.

The scene was quite reversed, *Ferdinand* was turned into a common flatterer. The fulsome language which you, O ye *Cry*, call love, address'd to me, fell from his tongue; and altho' the truest reserve of my conduct at that time somewhat disconcerted him, yet the innocence of his behaviour was gone, and he seemed desirous of taking every opportunity to treat me with a freedom which he had ever before kindly and assiduously avoided.

On this visible preference of me, the *turba* in the breast of *Melantha* gave her no respite, but threw her into such inward convulsions as almost destroyed her. The alteration in *Ferdinand* (to me so shocking) increased her passion for him; and his bestowing all his flattery on me, piqued her pride, and almost distracted her with envy. Oh could she have seen the inmost thoughts of my heart, how much rather would she have perceived me the fit object of her compassion! That *Ferdinand* should like me best, would at any time have been wormwood to *Melantha's* peace, even when she pursued him only for the eligible gratification of being my rival. But he was at present became her real inclination, and she took delight in his conversation. The minds of *Ferdinand* and *Melantha* formerly were strangers to each other, but now they might be said to become first acquainted; yet he disregarded all her advances, and persecuted me with his addresses. As *Oliver* also had at this time no end to answer in flattering her, she felt what was to her the highest of all misery, the being totally disregarded, and the not being able to persuade herself that she had one lover in the world: but the *turba*, for fear of her dying, and escaping their clutches, granted her some small degrees of comfort by pointing out to her, that from my so assiduously shunning *Ferdinand*, there was no danger of my being his wife. Such apprehensions would indeed have been needless, for of all mankind *Ferdinand* was now become the last man whom I should have chosen to have called by the name of husband. A woman may reasonably perhaps hope to reclaim a man naturally wild, and thoughtlessly vicious; but the man who hath once tasted the pleasure of possessing those two constant companions, wisdom and happiness, and yet can make choice of folly and misery, who can wilfully, and with his eyes open, shut out the *dextra*, and embrace the *sinistra*, is lost to every glimpse of hope; and wretched must be the woman who trusts him with power.

I avoided as much as possible the being ever alone with *Ferdinand* : for; his behaviour was now so totally changed, that I was afraid he was grown even capable of affronting me by endeavouring to gratify his licentious desires; and he as industriously sought opportunities of finding me alone, as I did to shun so disagreeable an interview. At last he sent me a letter, begging an hour's conversation with me alone; and assuring me that his intentions were perfectly honourable. But as a true picture of the paltry thoughts which could now inhabit his bosom, I will repeat to you the very words of his odious letter.

"Dear creature,
Why should you so assiduously shun a man who languishes and dies but for an opportunity of offering at your feet his life and ample fortune? Why, blind to your own commanding charms, should you seem fearfully to doubt their power of awing into due distance and respect, your ardent lover? Believe me, madam, my designs are perfectly honourable; and I flatter myself, that my proposals will be worthy your acceptance, as I am now able to

support you in affluence and splendor. I beg only an opportunity of declaring to you in person, how much I am"

"your devoted and
adoring humble servant
FERDINAND."

The *Cry* now express'd their highest astonishment and admiration at *Portia,* for finding fault with such a letter. They declared they saw nothing but what was perfectly polite in his address; and since he declared his intentions honourable, they wondered what *Portia* would have had.

*Portia*. I would have had *Ferdinand* such as he appeared when first I cherished his image as the highest treasure of my heart: when in my own imagination, I beheld his mind the seat of chearful innocence, actuated by every christian principle, and endeavouring to practise every christian virtue: resolutely holding fast the *dextra,* and barring the least entrance of the *sinistra*: when in thinking of him as my husband, it would have been my greatest pleasure to obey him, and my duty and inclination would have been so strongly connected, that they must have been inseparable. But now his declaration that his intentions were honourable, had very little chance of prevailing with me to grant him a private interview: for what he called *honourable,* was become my highest aversion; and if my personal inclination for him had been really unconquerable, I would rather have consented to have lived with him as his mistress than his wife.

The *Cry* now in their own imaginations cast *Portia* on the ground beneath their feet, stretch'd up their necks to their utmost height, in token of self−approbation, and casting their eyes down from this their elevation, audibly pronounced the word wh−re, and declared that they should think themselves eternally disgraced were they to be seen in polite assemblies in company with such a *creature*.

*Portia. Ferdinand* had put it out of my power to become his lawful, his faithful wife; for whilst I inwardly harboured an ill opinion of him, how could I honour, how could I respect him! 'Tis true he had left me the power of giving him my hand, but he had cruelly robb'd me of the power of bestowing on him my heart. Whilst he was acting thus preposterously, I knew too much of the human mind to attempt expostulating with him on his change; I gave therefore the most positive refusal to granting him a private interview, and in such terms as plainly shew'd that no proposal he could now make would be accepted by me. What cruel sensations did my heart in that moment suffer! to be forced by his own change on the refusal of *Ferdinand,* was like the being forced to shun the ghost of a long−loved husband, whose death had been deeply deplored.

The *Cry,* notwithstanding all *Portia* had just said, seemed still in great perplexity; for they could not help imagining that instead of her being in any distress, she had now cause for the highest joy. — If she had an inclination to marry *Ferdinand,* it was at her own option. If such marriage was not her choice, she had now an opportunity of insulting and triumphing over her rival *Melantha,* by refusing the man who was become her real inclination. For the power of refusing a lover struck the *Cry* with a much stronger image of delight, even than becoming a wife, especially as *Portia* had (in their opinion) so abjectly painted that station. That *Melantha* had at this time cause to grieve, they easily comprehended; but that *Portia* under the exultation of refusing an offer of marriage should talk of cruel sensations, was not within the bounds of credibility. They started the hare therefore of a favourite discovery, and again declared that *Portia* was mad. So−ho was the word, and joyful acclamations succeeded. This is one of the noblest privileges of the *Cry*: they fill Bedlam in imagination with the persons of others, instead of taking up all the apartments for themselves, which would be much more proper, as it is their own true and natural home.

*Portia. Ferdinand* finding me unmoved to grant him an interview, changed his behaviour into the utmost neglect, and bestowed all his flattering language on *Melantha*. She exulted in the raptures of her heart, and I lamented in the agonies of mine.

Now the *Cry,* all big with expectation, stretched their ears wide open, fancying they should suck in the pleasing sound that *Portia* was conquered by a jealous fear, lest *Melantha* rob her of *Ferdinand*: nay they flattered themselves that the *turba* must now fix in her bosom, and drive her to any meanness rather than suffer her rival to enjoy such a triumph.

*Portia*. That I lamented is certain—but it was not because I feared *Melantha* should become the wife of *Ferdinand,* but because the opinion that she was the fittest wife for him had forcibly taken possession of my mind.

The *Cry,* all baulked and disappointed, shut up their ears, returned to their accustomed sneers, and without any shame, or (as they thought) any impeachment of their civility, boldly gave *Portia* the lye; covered up indeed

under a general reflexion: for they asserted that *all* women are piqued by the preference of a rival, and that *no* woman was ever free from jealousy.

*Portia. Melantha* seeing me grieved, gave the same turn to it; and hoped my affliction arose from the same cause, which you, O ye *Cry*, endeavour to impose upon your belief.

And we do not only believe it, replied the *Cry*, but know it for certain; neither shall any cunning evasions conceal the truth of it from our view.

*Portia. Melantha* on this thought enjoyed such a triumph in her mind, as no words can express. Yet this triumph she chose to dress in the highest of all insolence; namely, a pretended pity: and whilst she knew the failure of my usual chearfulness and vivacity, had no other source but the deep affliction of my heart; she was continually expressing her fears that I was not well, persecuted me with advice how to preserve my health, wanting to debar me from every little indulgence, under the pretence that it might be hurtful to one in my weak state of body, and this with her eyes wide open, and well knowing that I had no bodily disease whatever. Sometimes she would go so far as to say, she feared I was in love; and, as she now imagined that she should certainly succeed with *Ferdinand*, and doubted not but she should soon induce him to turn his common gallant flattery to her into a serious declaration of love, there was no longer any necessity of her imitation of me: she fell therefore into her own natural way of talking; she declared that for her part she could not feel the torment of being unsuccessful in love, because she could never bestow her heart till she had been *persuaded to love*, and then she need not fear, she said, meeting with a return of her generous affection.

The *Cry* could not help in imagination enjoying with *Melantha* this triumph over *Portia*; and laughed and chuckled from every corner.

*Portia*. But this triumph of *Melantha* was all imaginary; for it did not in the least affect my mind, or obtain over it one degree of the influence she desired. I was really glad to be in a manner relieved from being haunted by the ghost of my beloved *Ferdinand*. It was the loss of that *Ferdinand* which I lamented, whilst the escaping the persecutions of the *Ferdinand* best suited to *Melantha's* taste, and fittest to be her husband, afforded me some small degree of comfort. Yet disappointed of my only prospect of enjoying any worldly happiness, seeing daily before my eyes the only scene that had ever given me any pleasure totally reversed, I took a fixed resolution of returning into the country. I had naturally a love of reading, and time could never be a burthen to me whilst I was at liberty to employ it as I pleased for my own amusement. I now began therefore to think of retirement from the world; and the utmost solitude was my only resource. Every glimpse of hope was utterly banished: I had no refuge to fly to against the evidence of my own senses. All those circumstances in which I still hoped to find some mistake or fallacy, were confirmed under the hand−writing of *Ferdinand*, and also by his own behaviour: nor had I the least doubt but that he was changed into one of the most worthless of mankind.

The most cunning part of the *Cry* had for a long time purposely waited to see whether any circumstance would turn out to excuse *Ferdinand*, and to confirm the account which *Portia* had given of *Oliver's* under−hand transactions. But it plainly appeared at present, that such her relation of *Oliver's* forgery and contrivance was a meer surmise between her and *Cordelia*: and as they had heard her repeatedly confess, that she herself was out of all doubt of the change of *Ferdinand*, and of his being as she last said the most worthless of mankind; they were actuated with the utmost vehemence, who amongst them should be the first speaker in proclaiming their own great sagacity in that important discovery which they were repeatedly ready to utter, namely, that *Portia* had shewn not only the highest degree of partiality towards *Ferdinand*, but the most inveterate prejudice against *Oliver*. They now added the heavy charge of her having falsly charged *Oliver* with forging lies against his brother, and that what she had termed calumny was (as she was now convinced) only the plain truth. They declared that *Portia's*!cunning evasions to disguise her partiality and prejudice should no longer pass unreproved; and they boldly appealed to *Una* whether they had made a wrong judgment, in their discovery that *Portia* had been for a long time amusing them with nothing but falsehoods and partial misrepresentations.

It may appear perhaps a little strange that the *Cry* should venture to make an appeal against *Portia* to *Una*: but the truth of that part of their charge which accused her of wilfully throwing on *Oliver* a forgery in which he had no hand, appeared so strong at present, that they doubted not but they should have the triumph of a sentence against her, even from the decision of *Una* .

The countenance of *Una* was overspread with a languid and benign sorrow. It was her pleasure to cherish whatever esteem she had once on a reasonable foundation admitted. Yet the discovery of *Portia's* prejudice and

partiality bore so much the appearance of truth, that altho' she was displeased with the *Cry's* boisterous behaviour, yet she confessed they had great reason for the judgment they had formed; but added, that common candor demanded that *Portia* should be heard to the end of her story, before they attempted to settle any final determination.

*Una's* kindness sunk deeply into the heart of *Portia,* and she would have poured forth her thanks in terms most adequate to express her gratitude, had there appeared the least probability of her being heard. But the *Cry* being enraptured with *Una's* decision that they had great reason for the judgment they had formed, closed their ears to the latter part of her sentence, which pronounced that she ought to be heard to the end of her story before a final determination; and bursting forth into a general exclamation of joy, they clapp'd their hands, threw up their caps, huzza was again the word, and loud was their triumphal shout of victory. The inexorable *Achilles* could not drag the dead body of the gallant *Hector* at his chariot wheels round the walls of *Troy* with more overbearing insolence, than they exerted towards the apparently conquered *Portia*. But when they had vented all their stock of barefaced insolence, they chose, by way of vanity, to clothe their contempt in the borrowed veil of pity. They sigh'd, shook their heads, cryed out, Poor *Portia*! 'tis pitiful! 'tis wondrous pitiful! but 'tis the frailty of the sex to be overcome by violent passions, and to make an angel of a fiend! *Portia* indeed is but young—her youth must plead her excuse. —Then bursting into a loud fit of laughter, they for the present concluded their malicious insults, and a silence ensued in which *Portia* proceeded in her relation.

## SCENE IV.

*O friendship, of all things the most rare! and therefore most rare because most excellent! whose comforts in misery are always sweet; and whose counsels in prosperity are ever fortunate.!*

Old Play.

## Portia. Cylinda. Una. The Cry.

## *PORTIA.*

Having fixed in my mind the resolution of retiring into the country, the only reason could possibly have staggered that resolution was the parting with *Cordelia*. Her filial duty required her attendance on her father: she could not therefore accompany me; nor would she indeed have held the same place in my esteem had she thought of such a self−gratification, in opposition to being a help and comfort where her duty demanded such attendance. But there was no danger of *Cordelia's* deviating in this point from the constant tenor of her actions. If there ever was a human creature born without selfishness, or rather whose social affections had quite eradicated all consideration for herself, it was my *Cordelia*. Reciprocal esteem was the solid basis of our affection for each other; and, if it may not be thought too bold an expression, I could say, that we revelled in friendly delights: for we made a miracle in nature, and gathered the sweet and pleasing roses of friendship without their thorns. When I informed *Cordelia* of my inclination to retire into the country, she was so far from desiring me to stay with her, or from intimating the regret my absence must naturally give her, that she earnestly persuaded me to pursue my intentions, as she judged it the most likely method of restoring my mind to that tranquillity, which with grief she observed had been for some time lost.

The *Cry* were now pleased to determine, that as *Cordelia* was so generous as to advise *Portia* to retire, altho' it was certainly against her own inclinations, *Portia* ought not to have been outdone in generosity, but should have staid with *Cordelia*; because *Cordelia* desired her for her own sake to leave her. Then they tossed about the words *friendship, generosity, delicacy, greatness of mind,* &c. till they made such an intricate jumble of affected overstrained refinement, as 'twas impossible to unravel.

*Portia*. When the solidity of friendship is transformed into the froth of compliment, it may then indeed properly be called too refined. I knew that my *Cordelia* spoke the honest and affectionate dictates of her heart in advising my retreat: and although the keeping me with her, whilst it was not hurtful to my peace, was her highest joy; yet my absence, when such absence was for my welfare, was her real pleasure, much rather than beholding me uneasy. And this I could easily believe from knowing in myself the same sensations towards my *Cordelia*. I begged her to keep my intentions an absolute secret till I put them in execution, which was with all the expedition the settling a few trifling affairs would permit: and altho' my choice would have been to have removed to some far distant place, yet my impatience to quit *London* made me take up with the first tolerable retired place I could hear of, which was about twenty miles from town. The house was small, but neatly furnished: it was situated in the midst of a garden on the side of a hill, and adjoining to it was an agreeable coppice−wood, in which, by permission of the owner, I had full liberty to amuse myself by walking. The place was very much suited in all respects to my circumstances and fancy: and I had great hopes that in this rural recess, by exerting all my resolution, I should in time recover my peace, and reinstate my mind in tranquillity. As soon as I had escaped the mortifying sight of the metamorphosed *Ferdinand,* 'tis amazing in how short a time my spirits subsided into a calm. And as soon as I found leisure for reflexion, I considered over the utmost value of every worldly advantage, and found that they signified roundly nothing. The only pleasure I had ever proposed in my life, was being blessed with such a companion as *Ferdinand:* in that I was disappointed, and those flattering hopes were changed into an absolute despair. I now therefore calmly resigned the world, sought not its enjoyments, and desired nothing more than to make the preservation of my own innocence the sure foundation of my tranquillity, and spending even the latter part of my life in chearfulness.

Now were the bosoms of the *Cry* tormented with the sharpest stings of the *turba,* lest *Portia* should so subdue her mind as patiently to bear even the loss of *Ferdinand*. Then burst forth the discovery, that *Portia* had retired in sullen anger, because *Ferdinand* had flattered *Melantha*; and a heap of trite observations they uttered about disappointed women—of such women's pretended weariness of the world when it was not in their power to enjoy it—and many more of the same kind: for composing tritical essays (not like the ingenious Dr. *Swift* to amuse and entertain, but in order to vent the highest malignity) is one of the favourite employments of the *Cry*.

*Portia*. Little can you conceive, O ye *Cry,* the pleasures which flowed in upon my mind, whilst you suppose that the least rage and anger found a place there. In a bosom inhabited by the *dextra* some comfort arises, even from despair of any pleasure which was once a favourite pursuit: for the very impossibility of obtaining our wish,

makes us in earnest endeavour to conquer such a fruitless inclination: whereas on the contrary, in the bosom inhabited by the *sinistra*, the heart labouring with the knowledge of its own fancy'd desert, swells with tumultuous rage on being disappointed. I was so far from being perplexed with any anxiety lest *Ferdinand* should even marry *Melantha*, that in a very short time it became perfectly indifferent to me whom he married, provided I myself escaped the misery, as I now thought it, of being his wife.

Whilst rage, or the least spark of anxiety remains in our retreat, we vainly deceive ourselves, if we imagine that we have given up the world. This is only behaving like wayward children, who, if they are contradicted in the bent of their humour will no longer continue their play: but if their companions take them at their word, and play on, and seem as well pleased without them; how do their little hearts swell with rage and disappointment! nor will they rest till by some means they have destroyed the diversion of their former play−fellows.

To give up the world with a submissive spirit, to detach ourselves from outward objects from a well−weighed consideration of their inanity, must be accompanied with calm humility and patient resignation; the consequence of which will always be a pleasing chearfulness.

'Tis a vain pretence therefore, a playing the hypocrite with ourselves or others, to say we have given up the world whilst we harbour in our bosoms repining envy, meditated malice, and murmuring discontent; or even if we indulge ourselves in grief, or give a loose to affliction.

By the help of continual reflexion I had, in a very few days, scarce an anxious thought remaining in my bosom. I was provided with necessary food, convenient raiment, was free from bodily pain, and so satisfied, that I possessed more blessings than I deserved. I could even thankfully contemplate my own happiness in seeing how much every thing turned out to my advantage. For could I have enjoyed my utmost wish, the marrying *Ferdinand*, I should from such a desired detachment have been filled with anxious cares for the welfare of *Ferdinand* and his children: whereas now my mind was free; I could amuse myself innocently through this world, and wait with patient resignation for another. Nay so far did I carry these reflexions, and so sensible did I imagine myself of my happiness, that I thought, should a miracle be wrought, and should the former *Ferdinand* I once loved be restored to me, altho' my love would be the same, yet I should prefer my present state even to the being his wife.

Here the *Cry* were all up in arms with the words *romantic! refined! affectation*, &c.

*Portia* smiled, and thus proceeded.

*Portia*. The time I had passed in *London* since the return of *Ferdinand* from *Barbadoes*, appeared from its irksomeness a tedious century, altho' no more than a fortnight. The excessive freedom and ease of mind which I now enjoyed, expanded also a small week into an age: for 'tis giddy pleasure, and not calm serenity, that gives wings to time and shortens the fleeting hours. It seemed to me that I had lived my whole life in my then present peaceful manner. But on that day se'ennight in which I entered on my retirement, as I was sitting on a bench in the wood adjoining to my garden, from whence I had an extensive and agreeable prospect, I heard the footsteps of a man pretty near me: but how great was my amazement, when I perceived it to be no other than *Ferdinand* himself advancing towards me! To avoid him was impossible, and to converse with him was most irksome to me. However, he approached me with respect, and assured me that if I would not fly from him, but would keep my seat, he would not offend me with a word or action which should be any the least trespass on the strictest modesty.

I thought as we were alone in a rural place, I had no remedy but to trust him; as even profligacy will sometimes be stopped by that sop being thrown to pride, namely, a seeming confidence. For I had just been reading in *Clarissa* the letter from *Loveless* to *Belford* about his rose−bud. *Ferdinand* made some slight apology for such an intrusion as this visit, which he confessed he knew to be totally against my consent, or I should not in such a manner have fled from him and all the world; but as the happiness of his future life depended on such a private personal interview, he was determined not to be baffled in it, and therefore had resolved to receive his final sentence from my own lips. "I once flattered myself, *Portia*, (said he with a sigh) that I was not indifferent to you."

"You did not flatter yourself, *Ferdinand*, (replied I) for I loved you with the sincerest and most ardent affection; with a love so liberal and unbounded, that the power of rooting it from my breast was confined to yourself alone. No outward circumstances, no diseases or infirmities, no depth of misery which the most uncontrouled imagination can form, had you been but true to yourself, could have staggered my faithful constancy. I thought myself the natural wife of your bosom; and whatever accident might have intervened to

prevent the joining of our hands, my heart could never have been bestowed on another. The painful knowledge that I should have reason to refuse, what I once thought my greatest happiness, the being yours, had not then reached my wretched bosom."

*Ferdinand* with an averted countenance turned from me, in order, as I thought, to swallow his resentment on my refusal; then fixing his eyes steadily on me with the utmost attention, he said: "Is it possible, *Portia,* that whilst my fortunes were so wretched as to drive me from my native country, you should think with pleasure of being my wife?"

Here he paused;—then thus proceeded.

"Nor time nor place (as lady *Macbeth* says) did then cohere: but *now* that things do make themselves, *their making unmakes you*! Why should you deprive me of the power of supporting you in a magnificence and grandeur which might render you the object of envy?"

"Oh *Ferdinand,* (interrupted I) how preferable were you in my eyes when sunk in the lowest abyss of poverty! For how you came by that boasted fortune —but reproaches are abhorrent to my nature; and my grief that *Ferdinand* should ever deserve them, is too deep and poignant to suffer my tongue to give them utterance. —You have murdered my once−loved *Ferdinand*; for pity sake persist not in your barbarity by thus cruelly, like *Aaron* b the *Moor,* placing the dead body of my friend continually in my sight; for by so shocking a spectacle I shall blind myself with weeping. If one grain of soft compassion yet remains in your breast, leave me to that tranquility which solitude alone can bestow. For my mind is not so conquered, but in this retirement, supported by innocence, I can find such enjoyments as I fear (with the deepest sorrow I express myself) you, O *Ferdinand,* can never taste again."

At this instant I thought I saw a silent tear stealing from his eyes. I hoped it was remorse, but with resumed assurance he thus pursued his hated discourse.

"Why, *Portia,* should you condemn me for a few trifling gallantries, in which I am countenanced by the general practice of the men, and which are seldom a bad recommendation to women? for as I prefer you to any other woman, they are only sacrifices to your beauty. Whilst I was poor 'tis true I lived soberly, because I had not the means of enjoying luxurious pleasures; but when fortune flowed in upon me, why should I not make use of it, and enjoy myself like a gentleman?"

I could not answer, but with sighs and groans from my very inmost soul; and *Ferdinand* thus went on: "As I have an ample fortune, I resolve to marry; and altho' I thus willingly lay it at your feet, yet if you are obstinately bent on your refusal I will marry *Melantha,* who I have some reason to think will willingly accept my proffered heart."

"Oh *Ferdinand,* (cryed I, for I could no longer contain my indignation) spare me the pain and confusion of beholding any longer in my sight one of the most abject of wretches. Surely your fatal transformation hath robbed you of every judicious thought, since you can imagine me to be piqued into consent by the fear of your marrying another! As you are lost to me by having fallen from the esteem once so much your due, 'tis equal to me whom you marry, or what you do, provided you will relieve me from this horrid persecution. My resolution never to call so detestable a creature husband is unalterably fixed; nor from this day hope I ever again to be haunted with so melancholy a spectre." *Ferdinand* made me no answer, but seemed deep fixed in thought; he withdrew some steps, then turned as if he was going to renew his discourse; but seeing my eyes bent on him with a steady indignation, he suddenly started back and was out of sight in a moment.

I returned to my house trembling, and half dead with the anxiety I had undergone. I asked my servant if she had seen *Ferdinand*. She answered, that he stopt at the door and enquired for me; but on being told I was walked into the wood, he tied his horse to the gate and went thither; that he returned about five minutes before me, said not a syllable to any creature, but getting on his horse rode with full speed towards *London*.

His doubtful manner of leaving me, altho' I had given him such an absolute refusal, left me in no certainty that he would not renew his visit. My retreat was discovered, for which in my mind I half accused my *Cordelia,* altho' at the same time I made twenty excuses for her from the importunity of her brother. I had no security of enjoying one peaceful day more; and to stand such another scene as I had just experienced, was more than my strength would bear. I therefore without the least deliberation determined instantly to leave my house, and taking my maid with me in a post chaise, I set out that evening I scarcely knew whither; but ordered the boy to go as far in the road to *Dover* as we could reach before night. My intention was to go directly into *France,* to find some agreeable

retirement there, and by concealing my retreat from every living creature, to endeavour at the recovery of that calm which I found was so very pleasing. I resolved not to let even *Cordelia* know what spot I inhabited, as such knowledge would only make her liable to be again intreated to discover me to *Ferdinand*. But I was prevented from quitting *England* by the hand of providence; for no sooner had I reached *Dover* than I was seized with a fever, attended with so strong a delirium, that I was perfectly insensible for one and twenty days. The very first attack of this fever was so violent, that I immediately apprehended it to be mortal; I therefore charged my maid, that if I died she should send notice of it to *Cordelia,* together with a sealed paper which I gave into her hands, and was indeed the disposition of my small fortune to my beloved friend. On the two and twentieth day of my illness, the physician having for some time given me over, I fell into a fit so strongly resembling death, that my servant, hasty to execute my orders, dispatched a messenger to *London* with the news that I was dead, and by him also she sent the paper before−mentioned. That I recovered out of my fainting fit is needless to declare, as you see me now before you, and at the same time also I in some degree recovered my senses. The girl finding me come back to life, and the physician also saying that by a sudden turn in my distemper he had hopes of my recovery, was so excessively frightened at having discovered the place I was in, that she concealed the knowledge of it from me; and, in order to patch up the mischief she had done, her officious invention helped her to a contrivance which she thought would set all matters right, and for which she expected from me great commendations. She bribed the messenger who was sent from *London* by *Cordelia* to report that he saw me buried, and to say that she, my maid, would be in *London* in a few days, or a week at farthest. In this time she hoped I should be well enough to pursue my voyage, and when I was once crossed the seas, she intended to have declared the whole transaction.

The *Cry,* who had before fallen on *Portia* for omitting to relate in what manner *Ferdinand* had made his voyage from *Barbadoes,* now all at once declared that they were tired with a parcel of minute particulars; and wished people would not be so fond of enlarging on every trifle that happened to themselves or servants.

*Portia* modestly replied, that she should be extremely sorry to detain the ears of her auditors with facts that were impertinent to the story. But as she presumed it would appear that the whole of her future life really turned on those seemingly trifling circumstances, she begged their patience for being more minute in this part than in any other of her narrative.

*Una* bent her head in sign of her permission to *Portia* to proceed in her own manner; and the *Cry* shrunk back into their sullen silence.

*Portia*. In about a fortnight I began to be pretty well recovered, and was considering of my best method in the pursuit of my scheme, when the servant of the house where I lodged, in the absence of my own maid, brought up a post letter, which as she could not read she delivered into my hands. I immediately knew the handwriting to be *Cordelia's,* and seeing it directed to my own servant, I appeared to have such convincing proofs of something underhand with regard to my maid, that without any scruple I broke open the seal. It was indeed signed by my *Cordelia*; but the contents were perfectly astonishing, and the tender sorrow she expressed for my supposed death drew tears from my eyes. The purport of the letter was to enquire what had detained my maid so much beyond the time she promised to come to town; and expressing great concern for fear the poor girl should be taken ill, desiring also, if that was the case that she would want for nothing, saying, that her kindest regard was due to every one that once belonged to her much−loved *Portia*. I had scarce finished reading these strange contents before my maid came into the room, and on my shewing her the letter she fell on her knees, confessed all she had done, and implored my pardon. As there appeared no malice or real ill intention in her proceedings, I could not long be angry with the poor girl; but I could by no means consent to conceal myself by coming into the measures she, poor silly creature, had designed. I could not bear even the appearance of having feigned death only to afflict my best friend; I therefore dispatched a letter to *Cordelia,* acquainting her with the real truth of every circumstance as I have already related, adding, that I was resolved to pursue my intentions of leaving *England*; and as I was, I thanked God, recovered enough to undertake the voyage, I should only wait to hear from her of her health before I set out; and if she really desired it, I would continue to her the knowledge of my retreat, and enjoy her correspondence, which I at first intended to avoid out of a tender regard to her, and not from any failure of affection. My *Cordelia's* answer was filled with the highest expressions of joy for this my being restored again to life, in order, as she hoped, to bless her and all that was dear to her. She was restrained, she said, from fully explaining herself on that expression; but she would not be refused the request, that her brother should pay me a visit in as short a time after my receipt of that letter as my hurry of spirits would give leave. —"Poor *Ferdinand*

(said she) will be the bearer himself of this letter, and will only wait for your permission to appear before you." I had such an unlimited confidence in my *Cordelia,* that I no more hesitated on admitting *Ferdinand* (who I was informed by my maid was waiting at an inn in the town) into my company, notwithstanding all my former resolutions, than if he had never appeared other to me than the gentle, the amiable *Ferdinand* of my first acquaintance.

Here the *Cry* were pleased to be extremely witty, on *Portia's* saying that she admited this visit from *Ferdinand* out of her confidence in his sister *Cordelia's* friendship. They believed, they said, that every woman who was madly in love with a worthless fellow, would have the same *confidence* in any one that persuaded her to admit him into her presence; and then an insulting laugh re−echoed through the whole assembly.

*Portia*. Altho' my unbounded and liberal friendship for my *Cordelia,* which you, O ye *Cry,* have interpreted into an unconquerable passion for her brother, made me apprehend no ill consequence from an interview that was to be the result of her request, yet could I not in the least flatter myself with its being any more than a final adieu to *Ferdinand,* which was no such mighty boon to grant to a man I had once so sincerely loved. But whilst I was ruminating in my mind a thousand reasons for *Cordelia's* making a request which appeared to me so trifling, *Ferdinand* entered the room.

He approached me with a diffident respect, and my pleased imagination presented him to my eyes in the true form of my once−loved *Ferdinand.* A sudden joy seemed to sparkle from his eyes, unmixed with that wildness which of late had dispersed their benign beams, and he accosted me in a manner that engaged all my attention, nor will the minutest word he spoke be ever blotted from my memory.

"*Portia,* (said he) you are now risen from the dead; and as faithfully as I would speak to one of those blessed spirits before whom no falsehood can remain undiscovered, will I lay open to your view every action, every thought that hath passed in this unhappy breast, since I first was capable of reflexion. 'Tis scarcely with less awe that I shall, if I have your permission, render to you this account, than if I was waiting my final doom; nor will I murmur at your sentence, let it exercise the most rigorous punishment, as I know I am deserving much more than you can possibly desire to inflict."

The solemnity of this address filled me with a kind of terror; and I dreaded a recital from his own mouth of those crimes, which from report alone I had hitherto learnt, and of which at present he seemed truly repentant: but his appeal to me was so earnest, that I could not reject the confession of such a penitent; and promising him the utmost attention I begged him to proceed, which he did in the following manner, and which, if I have permission, I will repeat in his own words.

*Una* told *Portia* that she would on no occasion refuse her the liberty of taking her own method, provided she was but clear and intelligible in her narration.

*Portia*. "As soon as I was capable of reflexion (said *Ferdinand*) or of forming any scheme for the regulation of my conduct, I resolved, if ever I should marry, to wave all other considerations in the choice of my wife but an esteem built on the solid foundation of her deserving my highest approbation. To barter my true happiness for money, was too sordid to have any place in my mind; and to make a god of my appetite, by suffering a capricious desire for beauty to enslave me for life to a companion every way unqualified to give the least pleasure, as soon as the charms of her person ceased to enthrall me, was abhorrent to my thoughts. I saw various women; some also pleased me in a short and transitory conversation: but when I had first the pleasure of your acquaintance I was at once absolutely determined in my choice. —Do not weep, *Portia,* for your tears will dissolve all my resolution. —I could not, like a coxcomb, immediately fancy myself the object of your love, but soon your generous and undisguised openness of heart left me so very little doubt of it, that I must have been perversely blind to my own happiness, if I had shut my eyes against such a pleasing knowledge. I watched every turn of your mind; I led you through every sort of conversation, approved all your sentiments, and could not find a fault in your conduct. But your honest candor in readily seeing and acknowledging truth the moment it was proposed, and, if any slight error had heedlessly crept into your mind, the yielding it up on the first conviction was what I chiefly admired. Thus your very errors, in my opinion, turned out to your honour. Women who call themselves in love, whilst they alternately rave with fondness and jealous fury, could never be the objects of my affection. The having a command over the passions, and not the raising and enflaming them into continual tumults, was to me the basis of esteem: then where could I be so fully gratified as in my *Portia*! Altho' I was not originally what might be call'd in love with you, yet the strongest liking soon followed such an approbation; and in you I met an object towards

whom I could energize all my affection, and in whom I could place all my delight. But yet there lay in our road to happiness an obstacle that appeared insurmountable. Such a want of fortune on both sides! my family too in the highest distress! that when I have been upon the point of opening to you my whole heart, I have been so confused in my thoughts that I have not dared to execute such a purpose; for in what terms could I have made my address? how could I ask you to come aboard a vessel in which you must be inevitably sunk? or how could I make so preposterous a request as to say, *Oh Portia, I am desirous that for my sake you should leap down a dangerous precipice because I love you* ? My heart would not suffer me to utter such fallacious language; and I was therefore forced to avoid the coming to any explanation. But the pains I underwent to act with a reserve so contrary to my nature, were they known, would be the highest proofs of the sincerity of my love. In this uneasy situation of my mind I was forced, by absolute necessity, and the malice of *Oliver*, to separate myself from all my soul held dear, and to seek a refuge from dire poverty, and its constant attendant reproach, in a foreign climate. But the utmost force of my resolution was almost baffled at the cruel moment of our separation: and had I not in a manner fled from you, and had not the swiftness of the motion whirled away my thoughts, nor gave me leisure to exert my power of reflexion, I doubt not but I should have experienced the truth of the poet's observation, who says, that−−

*"Whoever stands to parly with temptation*
*"Does it to be o'ercome—*

"Oh *Portia*, do not thus melt my soul with tears, you weaken me to the state of a new−born infant, I shall be disabled from proceeding, and you will still remain in ignorance of what it is the strongest wish of my heart it will be your highest joy to know. —When I arrived at *Barbadoes*, (my *Portia* being as I hoped the reward in view) the most assiduous labouring hind never surpassed me in industry: by these means, and by the friendly assistance of *Alcander*, I succeeded in increasing my fortune beyond my most sanguine expectations; I joyfully wrote my father an account of my success, remitting him such sums as I hoped would in some measure change his penury to plenty. I wrote to you, *Portia*, and opened to you without reserve every thought as they arose in the sincerity of my heart. As all the pleasure it could be in the power of fortune to bestow on me must arise from another's participation, and not by confining it to myself, I declared my hope that you would indulge me in being my companion for life. I dwelt on the thought of our mutual pleasure when the scene of poverty should be quite reversed, when my father should pass his remaining days in affluence, and my dearest sister *Cordelia* should enjoy the friendly rapture of seeing her *Portia* blessed, and blessing all around her."

This last picture drawn by *Ferdinand* (vain picture as I thought of vanished happiness!) forced from my breast this sudden exclamation, "Oh *Ferdinand*, whither can this tend? I received no such letter from you; your father's heart was gladdened with no needful supply; don't abuse my ears with falsehoods—or into what strange delusions are you leading my unwary heart?"

"Into no delusions, (replied *Ferdinand*) I speak no falsehoods, nor utter any other than the honest dictates of my soul. And by the wanton cruelties I am going to confess myself guilty of towards the brightest pattern of generous love that ever was bestowed on an unworthy object, you will have no cause to think that I endeavour to conceal, or artfully to disguise the truth."

The story of the planter's daughter suddenly forced itself on my imagination, and I would willingly here have stopped *Ferdinand* from wounding my ears with the sad recital, but I had promised him my attention. He had also by the music of his voice, which hitherto had uttered no discordant sounds, charmed my fancy into a pleasing hope of things almost incredible! With no farther interruption therefore than a deep sigh, I suffered him to proceed in the following manner.

"I could obtain (says *Ferdinand*) no answer to any of my letters, except some formal thanks from *Oliver* in the name of my father; nor did I by any other method hear from *England* till *Adolphus* came abroad, and brought to *Alcander* your letter filled with anxious enquiries concerning my behaviour. I was astonished to find that I lay under such heavy and undeserved censures. I traced the hand of malice exerting all its shuffling artifices, and I am sorry to say that I suspected my own brother of being the mischievous plotting engine. Now a new scene opened to my view, and tempted me to give an uncontrouled liberty to one part of my natural disposition, which I had hitherto had little opportunity to exert, and which to my confusion I confess, is no other than a curious love of refinement on my pleasures. I was overjoyed to read in my *Portia's* anxious concern for me the sincerest love. I always wished to have my wife's warmest affection, but I could not bear to have that affection built on a

capricious fancy. I was well assured that the woman who would consent to be my wife in contradiction to her better judgment, and only to gratify her present humour, would from the same indulged capriciousness yield to the first change of her inclinations, and follow any new object of her varying fancy. My mind at ease from the assurance of my *Portia's* constant affection for me, grew wanton; and I resolved to make the experiment whether you could conquer your passion when your esteem was lost—"

"Was I so little known then, *Ferdinand*? or is there no force in the most innocent as well as the most ardent affection, to banish all doubt and suspicion from the mind?

"So well, *Portia,* were you known, (replied *Ferdinand*) that I looked no otherwise on such a trial than as a certain method to make my *Portia* shine out with added lustre; and by thus confirming my opinion of your noble heart, to give peace and joy to all our days to come. I warmed my imagination with this my new scheme, and communicated my thoughts to *Alcander*: he unfortunately sympathized with me in my idle love of refinement, and encouraged me to proceed. We joined in dictating his reply to your letter. We invented together the story of my inhuman treatment of the planter's daughter which he related to *Adolphus*; and we made no doubt but *Adolphus* would convey the cruel report to your ear. The better to carry on our stratagem, I personated before *Adolphus* the new character I had assumed: for altho' to perform the part of sense and sobriety would be an impossible task to a silly profligate; yet on the contrary the receipt to personate a silly profligate lies in a few words, and requires a small quantity of ingredients. 'Tis only to talk a rhapsody of nonsense properly larded with oaths; to brag of leading a life of intrigue, and to talk of women only as the natural prey of men: to boast therefore of every successful snare you have laid for the innocent, and to declare yourself above being restrained from acting such a cruel part by any laws either human or divine; to throw into your discourse over a bottle a good quantity of obscenity, and the more blasphemy is added, the more shining will be the part; and thus the whole character may be most fully compleated. The last mentioned ingredient I totally omitted before *Adolphus*; but that nothing might appear wanting, I suffered *Alcander* to accuse me of this also in his letter to you. *Adolphus's* stay at *Barbadoes* was so short, being only five days, that 'twas easy for me always to appear before him in this transformed light: but when he set forward on his return to *England,* nothing could equal my impatience for his account to *Alcander* of your reception of that news, which like a thoughtless cruel wretch I considered not was to rob you of all the generous pleasure of your heart. But when I read in *Adolphus's* letter to *Alcander* an account of your behaviour, how in the most pathetic terms you had deplored your piercing sorrow, I was shocked at my own barbarity, and was impatient at the wide ocean which with my utmost speed must so long delay my throwing myself at my *Portia's* feet, and relieving the bitter pangs I had caused in that gentle bosom. *Adolphus* inclosed to *Alcander* your note of an hundred pounds, begging him to give it to the planter's daughter who had really no more existence than the *Dulcinea* of *Don Quixot* ."

*Ferdinand* on this produced the note out of his pocket−book; on the sight of which, as being an outward evidence of the falsehood of that horrid barbarous story, and fully proving to my satisfaction that the planter's daughter was only an hideous phantom, that had frightened away every peaceful thought from my soul, I was overcome with a profusion of joy, and wished for an hundred ears to suck in the pleasing sounds which now flowed in such abundance from the mouth of my beloved *Ferdinand.*

Here the *Cry* were ready with their accusation against *Portia* of being jealous, in the common acceptation of the word, of the planter's daughter: but *Una,* who was very desirous of hearing the remainder of *Ferdinand's* story, awed them by a frown from giving her at this time any interruption.

*Portia*. "This generous, this humane action (continued *Ferdinand*) was like my *Portia*. No hope of farther gain, as I had a fortune sufficient to satisfy the utmost of our moderate wishes, should have withheld me from embarking in the first ship which set sail for the *English* coast. Sleeping or waking my imagination dwelt on nothing but the pleasure of seeing you undeceived, and rejoicing over your conviction of my innocence. On my arrival I soon sound, by the countenance of my *Cordelia,* what credit my fooleries had found; and on my first beholding you, I felt the difference of your reception from what I have experienced even from the shortest absence; for those eyes which used to brighten into joy, were now depressed with languid sorrow. My heart bled with compassion, and I resolved the next morning to pour forth my soul before you: but the natural bent of the mind being once uncurbed, and suffered to rove with an uncontrouled licence, generally knows no bounds, but will wander and lead us into paths which were at first unthought of, nay, will sometimes ensnare us into actions which would startle humanity.—"

"Did you never, *Ferdinand,* read the tragedy of the *Fatal curiosity*?"

"Too plainly (replied *Ferdinand*) do I see my own picture in that of young *Wilmot,* and often with him have I said within myself;"

*"How has my curiosity betray'd me*
*"Into superfluous pain! I faint with fondness.*

"Yet like him I still persisted in my foolish refinements. There being now no seas betwixt us, but the blessing so near my reach, that I imagined I had no more to do than to extend my hand to take it, I was resolved to be an eye−witness to my *Portia's* steadiness of mind: and my forced behaviour from the cruel whim of endeavouring to persuade you to be my wife whilst I appeared thus changed and abandoned to every villainy, dwells I fear too strongly on your memory to need a repetition. When I found that you was fled from town, in the sudden fear of my heart that I had lost you, I laid open to *Cordelia* all the circumstances I have now related, and begged her kind assistance to recover a treasure which I had wantonly cast away. *Cordelia* would not reproach me, but by her countenance I saw how much she disapproved all my management. But not doubting that by an interview with you every fatal mistake would be cleared up, she readily discovered to me the place of your retirement. She would have accompanied me to have shared in the joy of our meeting, but my father was too bad with a violent fit of the gout to spare her even an hour from his bedside. I set out with the most fixed resolution to remove if possible from your mind all those torments I had cruelly inflicted, and to relieve myself from the highest uneasiness. But I had not yet felt sufficient punishment for my folly! some over−ruling power seemed to infatuate my mind with little less than madness; and, as if I was under the power of enchantment from my own accursed trifling, I fell into the error I intended to renounce, and pursued you as you know with flattering persecutions, paltry allurements, and the mean artifice of threatening on your refusal to marry *Melantha*. I was like a bird entangled in a snare of my own weaving, and knew not how to extricate myself from the foolish maze in which I was bewildered. Your steady refusal of me was my joy, my triumph! nor can words express how my soul exulted to find, that the more I try'd you, the brighter shone forth all your excellence! Yet so sudden a shame overtook me when I considered the mean figure I at that time made in your eyes, that I had not the power to contradict what I had utter'd, to fall at your feet imploring forgiveness, and to say,"

*—"a All thy vexations*
*"Were but my trials of thy love, and thou*
*"Hast strangely stood the test—*

"I once turned back, having, as I thought, gained courage to resume my former self; but the severe look which you too properly cast on a wretch so abject as I appeared, baffled my resolution, and I hastily fled back to my *Cordelia* in order to make her my mediator, and to pave my way for reconcilement with my *Portia*. The next day, my father having a small interval from pain, my sister *Cordelia* was enabled to comply with my request, and to set out with me for the place of your retreat: but on our arrival we found the house entirely shut up, nor the least traces in all the village could we find of the way that you had bent your course. This was indeed an unexpected stroke, and now were my eyes forced wide open on my own folly. My *Cordelia* was too sensibly afflicted herself to give me any comfort. I dispatch'd messengers every way that I could think of, but they all return'd with an account that their search after you had been fruitless. Some hope still remained in my mind, that after I had sufficiently been punished, a lucky chance might bring me information of your abode: but when the letter from your servant arrived, giving an account that your gentle spirit was indeed fled out of the reach of human barbarity, and when the second messenger confirmed the fatal tidings by declaring himself to have been an eye−witness of the sad procession to your tomb; the shaft which pierced my heart was truly shot, and I abandon'd myself to the utmost depth of despair. Those cruel words, *Portia is dead,* would at any time have had the force to have cleft my soul asunder; but when from the strongest inward conviction I was forced to add; *and I stand here her murderer*! —Oh *Portia* can your imagination form the torments of sinful spirits doom'd to eternal perdition greater than those which at that time rent and excruciated my self−condemned, my guilty bosom?"

I begged *Ferdinand* not to dwell on this part of his narration: I assured him that I delighted not in the idea of his sufferings, but intreated him to proceed.

"My dearest *Cordelia,* (proceeded he) altho' she had a load of grief on her mind, sufficient to have sunk a less

steady breast, by her gentle soothing and kind mitigations of my crimes brought me at last to some small degree of composure. Besides, I could not bear to be such an additional weight to her sorrow. I therefore at once determined to follow my *Portia's* example, and to seek a refuge in total retirement from the world. Fool that I was, to imagine that solitude would give to a guilty mind, which could not fly from its own thoughts, the calm tranquillity which innocence enjoys when escaped from the persecutions of others! In pursuance of this resolution I settled all my affairs. I intended to leave with my *Cordelia* means sufficient for an easy maintenance for life for herself and whole family, and to take for myself only enough to provide the plainest necessaries, so as not to be troubled in my retreat with the daily thoughts of supporting my wretched life as long as I was doom'd to endure it. Every thing was now thoroughly settled for my setting out, and I intended only to stop and pay the tribute of some heart−felt groans and tears of repentant sorrow at my *Portia's* grave, and then fly to the remotest part of the earth, when a strange cloudiness overspread the countenance of *Oliver,* and his lowring eyes seemed to threaten some impetuous storm. During the excess of my sorrow from the time I first feared I had lost the only treasure of my soul, my brother had seemed to enjoy a pleasure unusual to him; but my thoughts were too busily employed to bestow on him much observation: but from the time that my spirits seemed a little calm'd, or at least that I had exerted strength of mind enough to hide my sorrows, in compassion to my *Cordelia,* more within my own breast, this storm in the bosom of *Oliver* seemed to have been gathering, and now seeing me fixt in my purpose of flying for ever from the sight of him and all mankind, he began to wrangle and dispute with me on some mere trifles, which he would impose upon my unwilling ears, and with continual galling and fretting me, sometimes also barbarously touching the part which was but too tender, he forced from me this reproof: *Oh* Oliver! *I am sorry that I cannot say with pleasure, Oh my brother! why will you delight to wound a heart already mangled with deep−felt sorrow? yet am I not fallen so low, but I can with pity look down on a wretch who hath wasted his whole life in the mistaken pursuit of seeking happiness from the misery of others: whose deep−laid plots have ever redounded on his own head, and whose malicious inventions have fixed no torments in any bosom but his own. Think not, mistaken Oliver, that because I have never declared my knowledge of the base malignity of your heart (which I would gladly have hid even from myself) that I have not perceived your vain efforts of conquering my mind and rendering me miserable. I have seen all your wiles and artifices; I have escaped them all; nor ever could have been reduced to the wretched state in which you now behold me, but from the folly of my own inventions. In this thought I feel a contrite pleasure arising from the very punishment I now undergo.* —I should have proceeded farther, but *Oliver* suddenly interrupted me with a fury darting like lightning from his eyes: *Vain wretch, (said he) if from that thought arises any satisfaction, soon will I wrest it from thy grasp, by shewing thee that thou hast been no other than the deluded dupe of my machinations throughout the whole course of thy fancy'd sagacious life.* He then with an insulting sneer (hoping as he declared that it would fill my soul with fresh torments) laid open from the beginning all the deep−wrought contrivances of his life."

Here, said *Portia, Ferdinand* repeated to me the black account of *Oliver's* past actions, uttered by himself in rage, despair of future success, and a hope of hurting his brother to the quick. It contained an impudent undaunted avowal of that hatred and malice towards his brother *Ferdinand,* which I have so repeatedly, and with no less than bare justice imputed to him. He boasted of his intercepting all *Ferdinand's* letters, of his artfully drawing in the good−natured *Sebastian* to be an assistant in his forgeries, in the manner I have already related, and expressed, he owned, great astonishment at the strong appearance there was at one time of all his calumnies being no more than truth. He burst into the highest fit of exultation on finding, as he said, that *Ferdinand* had been so thoroughly his dupe as to have dug a much deeper pit for himself from his own refinement of disposition, than that into which he intended him to fall. His triumph he professed was now perfectly compleat, since duped by his artifices his brother was led into such deep misfortunes as it was not in the power of fate to remedy. Many other particulars did *Oliver* declare, which it would be tautology in me to repeat, and I will therefore go on with the address of *Ferdinand,* who proceeded in the following manner.

"*Oliver* (said *Ferdinand*) concluded this his black confession, if words uttered in rage and insult may bear that name, with bidding me not vent my sorrows like a child in blubbering tears, but boldly exert the man, revenge my mighty wrongs, and then I might retire to my desired solitude, he said, with the load of a brother's murder, added to that of a woman who so sincerely loved me. He ended with an insulting laugh, or rather, as *Milton* so well expresses it,"

*—"grinn'd horribly a ghastly smile.*

"Had the desire of revenge really possessed my bosom, I could not more completely have executed it than by suffering such a wretch still to continue his own torments, by lengthening, if possible, rather than shortening his life. But grief on all sides had so weigh'd me down, that I had no strength either to move or speak. The sight of so deform'd a monster as *Oliver* had now display'd himself to my view, made me wish for ever to lose the power of sight. I made him no answer: I threw myself on the ground enfolding my face with my arms, and know not how long I should have continued in that posture, or whether I should not thro' sighs have forced my soul to have quitted its cumbrous load, had not my *Cordelia* entered the room, and flying to me with sounds more sweet than the most heavenly musick recalled my spirit back to life, by shewing me the letter which you wrote to her. It seem'd as if I was new waked into Elysium; I would that instant have flown to my *Portia,* but *Cordelia* feared it might too much ruffle your spirits without the kind passport which she gave me. And now you see before you either the most miserable or the most happy of mankind. You are acquainted with my whole soul; its very inmost thoughts have been honestly exposed to your view. Is it possible *Portia,* that you can let your generosity soar to such an amazing height, as to forgive my wanton cruelty in having voluntarily tormented your kind and honest heart?"

"Forgive you, *Ferdinand*! (said I) I never can forgive you." —He readily acknowledged, he said, the justice of the sentence, altho' its rigor was more, he feared, than he could be able long to support.

"Conclude not too hastily, (cried I) you quite mistake my meaning. The notion of forgiveness implies the acknowledging a crime. A little too much refinement on true and delicate love should not be loaded with the name of guilt. No such thought is harboured in this breast: and tho' human frailty hath so far overcome a generous mind as to shew me that mortality and perfection cannot be joined in one subject, yet from henceforth may it be buried in oblivion; nor ever again shall it live in my remembrance: let it be also banished for ever from your breast, my *Ferdinand,* and for my sake suffer not the gloom of self−reproach ever to steal in and interrupt our future happiness."

Now the *Cry* were all in an uproar of criticism on the part that *Portia* ought to have acted towards *Ferdinand*. One said she should have banished him for ever from her presence; another, that she should have invented some trial of his constancy to have been even with him; but the generality agreed, that for the dignity of the sex she ought on no account to have forgiven the suspicion he had shewn of her in making such a trial.

*Portia*. Notwithstanding your critical and various remarks, O ye *Cry*, of what I ought or ought not to have done, I fairly confess that, acting as nature and simplicity dictated, no sooner did I see the once loved bosom of my *Ferdinand* free from those deformed demons which had crept in and filled up the vacant space, than beholding my natural home once more the seat of innocence and truth, my heart joyfully danced into its delightful abode, quite forgetting that I had ever in my retirement decided it to be much better for me not to marry *Ferdinand*.

Thus, O *Una,* (as *Milton's Adam* says to the angel)

*—have I brought*
*My story to the sum of earthly bliss*
*Which I enjoy—*

And to your judgment I appeal, whether I have made a vain boast of keeping a due command over my passions; whether I have made the precepts learnt in my education the only rule of my life, and formed my practice from my principles; or whether I am guilty of the heavy charge of prejudice and partiality which the *Cry* so repeatedly and vehemently brought against me.

*Una* declared that *Portia* had intirely justified herself from the appearance of prejudice and partiality, which she must confess at one time lay against her; and added, that she was perfectly satisfied with her conduct in every point. Then taking *Portia* by the hand, *Una* was going to dismiss the assembly, who were quite stupid and motionless with their disappointment in seeing their enemy thus honourably acquitted. But *Portia,* with a soft compassion in her look, modestly said, Suffer me, O *Una,* to enquire for a poor penitent who was just now standing before us, and who I had some pleasing hope would not have been carry'd off by that gloomy crew. Then darting her penetrating eyes through the croud in search of *Cylinda,* she at last perceived her sitting retired in the remotest corner, fixing her looks stedfastly on the ground, seeming as if she dared not lift them higher; her countenance was overspread with a soft sorrow, yet mixed with a confused shame. *Portia* called to her, begged

her to come forward, and, with *Una's* permission, to declare what she thought of the conclusion of her story.

*Cylinda* encouraged by this friendly call, came forward, and bending her eyes on *Portia*, thus answered.

*Cylinda*. O *Portia*, your story is such a contrasting picture to my own follies, and sets them all so glaring to my view, that the hateful sight fills me with horror, and makes me wish to hide myself for ever from all human eyes. My life hath been (without a metaphor) a tale told by an idiot, and my imagination a strutting player, full of sound and fury signifying nothing. I have from my youth been playing juglers tricks with my mind, instead of planting there any seed which could produce me pleasure or real advantage. For whilst in my own wild ravings I was erecting monarchies in my breast, and placed there kings and emperors agreeable to my unbridled fancy, I now too plainly see that I was inviting cruel tyrants into my bosom; and whilst I rejoiced in my unbounded liberty, I was under the most abject thraldom. My life may properly be called the triumph of the imagination, as yours, *Portia*, is of the judgment: the errors of my past principles and vain philosophy being renounced, I might hope to tread a more secure and ready path to happiness. But there is one part of my unhappy story which I would wish to blot for ever from my memory; for how can I bear, O *Portia*, to reflect, that by ruining *Nicanor* I was the cause of all the ills you have undergone! Had not that unhappy man's passion for me so blinded his eyes as to make him impoverish the best of sons, *Ferdinand* would have married you, without having been ensnared by strange incidents and circumstances into indulging that only fault of his nature, his refined bent of humour. You and your beloved *Ferdinand*, had I not engaged *Nicanor's* heart, would have enjoyed the uncommon fate of indulging a reciprocal affection without passing over sharp briers and thorns, by which too often the mind is disabled from tasting any happiness even in its utmost wish. Thus whilst I vainly cherished that favourite principle, that I injured no one by my fantastic conduct but myself, I laid the foundation for a scene of misery for the only human creature I ever wish'd to call by the name of friend. With shame and remorse I own my error; and by fatal experience am convinced, that no creature placed in a social community can injure himself alone. Should you, *Portia*, have generosity and greatness of mind enough to forgive me this injury I have done you, yet can I never forgive myself. —Here interrupting *Cylinda*, *Portia* thus addressed her.

*Portia*. We ought not too nicely to scrutinize events, so as to blame ourselves for the consequence of actions which were not ill intended; and not to forgive ourselves, *Cylinda*, when pardoned by another, shews some mixture of pride in our repentance.

O *Portia*, (cried *Cylinda*) your words forcibly bring to my remembrance these verses in *Milton*;

*So spake the cherub; and his grave rebuke,*
*Severe in youthful beauty, added grace*
*Invincible: abash'd the devil stood,*
*And felt how aweful goodness is, and saw*
*Virtue in her shape how lovely, saw, and pin'd*
*His loss—*

Thus abash'd stands here before you the intended seducer of your youth, the veryest wretch! —Yet I have one ray of pleasure beaming on my soul—*Eustace* hath escaped my wiles, and lives, I doubt not, blessed, in blessing his wife and happy family. —You also, oh ever−admired *Portia*, have at last met the deserved reward of your faithful love. —That I am left the only sufferer most truly is my comfort.

Here another shower of softened tears fell from the eyes of *Cylinda*, whilst the *Cry* thinking they fell for the cause of bemoaning her own wretchedness, seized her in their grasp: whilst some of them begged her to resume her former entertaining vivacity; and others by all the force of scorn and contempt endeavoured to rally and frighten her out of such a meanness of spirit (as they called it) as that of owning she had led a life of error. But she resolutely disentangled herself from their hold: and encouraged by *Portia's* desiring her to come nearer, telling her also that she hoped there might be some happy days for her yet, thus proceeded.

*Cylinda*. Yet wretched as I now appear, and self−condemned, I cannot quite lose the pleasing impression which I received from *Amanda's* letter of a future hope, and a dependence on a God of goodness. This is a prospect so inviting, that I cannot quite close my eyes upon its beauties. It appears to me but too evident, that all my former air−built castles were formed on a false and fleeting foundation; and altho' I ever retained candor, or the shadow of candor, enough to preserve me from obstinately adhering to one error on discovery of its being such, yet even this small share of candor, which properly managed might have conduced to my happiness I have

hitherto contrived to turn into food to cherish my grandest error. For instead of gaining humility by perceiving how apt I was to wander into mistakes, I only added another gratification to my pride, in daring to confess that I had been in the wrong. But now my humbled heart truly takes shame to itself. I would willingly turn my steps into the right road, but am so unacquainted with the paths of truth, that I know not where to find an entrance. I would fly to revelation as my refuge; I would embrace the animating hope enjoyed by *Amanda*; but conscious shame tells me that hope is the lot of the innocent, and not of the guilty. This drives me back again into despair: I consider myself like the first deceiver of mankind, and as having all my life been guilty of mental idolatry; abusing my understanding, misemploying the strength of my imagination, only to gratify my own pride in endeavouring to think myself equal with God. This is the sin for which I fear showers of contrite tears cannot atone. As to the life of vice which I was betrayed into by that tyrant self−adoration, and to prove that I had a genius and spirit which soar'd above being restrained by common laws of decency, as it proceeded not from profligacy of disposition, with more pleasure could I quit it than ever I found in its empty enjoyment. Yet difficult will be the labour to set my mind to rights; to regain the lost and true path to peace and tranquillity, unassisted by any kind hand I must undertake the arduous task: for I dare not seek a friend, I can have no hope of any protector.

*Portia*. God forbid that true and humble repentance should ever want assistance or protection! It is now two years since I was married to my *Ferdinand*. Poor *Nicanor* lived not to give us his blessing on our marriage. My *Cordelia*, (ever from our first acquaintance the sister of my heart, but now dearly connected by alliance) makes one of our happy family. We have all one heart, one mind; therefore I am certain of doing nothing that is disagreeable either to my husband or my *Cordelia* when I offer you an asylum in our sweet retreat.

Now the *Cry* with the utmost virulence fell on *Portia* for encouraging CREATURES, and being by her behaviour a scandal to all virtuous women, and as having committed the highest outrage to modesty and reputation.

*Portia*. I would willingly avoid harbouring such an insolent contempt of my fellow−creatures, as to be careless of their censures, or give them real cause to be offended at my behaviour. Yet I look on it as my duty to be as watchful on the other hand, lest I should be terrified by the dread of malicious tongues from exerting that compassion and forgiveness which is due to a sincere penitent. Such a paltry dread can terrify none but such, whose reputations are built on so tottering a foundation that the least breath of wind may easily blast and destroy them. The only honest dread is, lest a narrow selfishness should actuate us to abandon the repentant to despair and misery.

Notwithstanding all *Portia* last said, the *Cry* continued to abuse her with the most envenom'd reproaches. Then flying into rapturous encomiums on justice, they called aloud for it on *Cylinda*, who deserved they said to be abandon'd by all mankind.

*Cylinda* pale and trembling, with her eyes fixed on the ground, and almost over−powered with *Portia's* goodness to her, faintly gave utterance to the following words.

*Cylinda*. The blessings, *Portia*, you would confer on me are too generous, too great! For this punishment doth justice exact for such a life as mine, that I must either associate myself with prostitute hirelings, or fly the trace of human steps for ever.

This humble confession from *Cylinda* only moved the *Cry* to taunting insults, and they with one consent exclaim'd, Hear her, *Portia*, hear her, she calls for justice. — Then *justice, justice, justice* resounded through the numerous rout.

*Portia*. Most truly doth *Chaucer* say

*That pité renneth sone in gentil hert.*

And in the character of *Theseus* in his *Knight's tale*, these are his words;

*And soft unto himself he said fie, fie,*
*Upon a lord that woll have no mercy.*

In those two words *fie, fie*, a stronger image of *Theseus's* thoughts is at that instant conveyed to the reader, than a thousand sounding phrases pick'd and cull'd by the most able orator are capable of conveying. *Chaucer* doth not represent *Theseus* as labouring to prove the necessity of mercy, or in florid expressions painting its beauty, but he makes him throw the man of power, the lord who wants it, with scorn from his bosom; and in such words as

would have been proper towards a man guilty of the most shameful action. Oh that all mankind would join in condemning this want of mercy, and in a general chorus call out *fie, fie,* upon a human form that is destitute of so divine an attribute.

*Una* expressed the most hearty conjunction with *Portia,* and again repeated with her, her foregoing exclamation: adding also that it was the only road pointed out by which mankind could hope to arrive at happiness hereafter.

*Portia*. This mercy must dwell in our hearts, it must regulate every common conversation; otherwise insult on the one hand, and malice on the other, will render all intercourse between the nearest kindred or the greatest professors of friendship, but so many various scenes of heart−burning, strife, and fierce emulation. Mercy must be felt, description hath no force to reach it: for (as *Shakespear* says).

*It droppeth as the gentle dew from heaven*
*Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest;*
*It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes.*

*Portia's* quotation had just as much weight with the *Cry* as the same speech coming from her namesake in the *Merchant of Venice* had on *Shylock* the *Jew*: for so inveterate was the rancor of their unmerciful hearts against her, that, had they been possessed of *Shylock's* inhuman bond, like him they would not willingly have abated one scruple of its full forfeit and penalty. Yet had they at present no scope for venting their malice; but whilst mercy was her theme, they had been scowling at *Portia* from under their lowring brows, and had given her a sullen attention.

Tears of sincere repentance and joy continued to fall from the eyes of *Cylinda,* and the face of *Una* had been overspread with a benignant smile. But, fully to express her approbation of *Portia's* sentiments, and thoroughly to quell the insolence of the *Cry,* she arose from her seat, waved her hand for profound silence, and thus herself pursued the theme of mercy.

*Una. Mercy descends like the dew from heaven on the just and on the unjust.* And when men love *justice* so well as to withhold their hands from *mercy*, they reverse the acting up to the dictates of the law and the prophets: they *love* justice; they labour to *do* mercy; and, instead of walking *humbly*, walk *proudly* with their God, by thus attempting to take vengeance out of his hand and executing it themselves. What the royal psalmist divinely inspired says of his Creator, is, that he is exorable, merciful, slow to wrath, inclined to clemency and to assist his creatures. But the effects of this divine attribute of mercy in its fullest extent, are too great to be wielded by a feeble human arm: what is mercy therefore in the Most High, can only be exemplified by kindness and charity in man. Yet shall those men, who (professing themselves followers of the God of mercy) after they have gratified their own pride by pretending to a nice examination of the merits of their fellow−creatures, presume to call a small relief, in a manner squeezed out from the hardness of their hearts, by the sacred name of charity or mercy! It is the nature of mercy to flow in large abundance like the vivifying gifts of our Creator, which are showered down from heaven; and not to come in scanty drops, as if produced from a rock too hard to be melted by any human power. By human mercy in its full extent, I mean that christian charity spoken of by St. *Paul,* without which he pronounces all other virtues to be as *sounding brass and tinkling cymbals*.

*Una* ceased; and *Portia* thus encouraged (unheeding of the *Cry's* continued clamor for strict justice) now led *Cylinda,* whose countenance expressed a modest compulsion, up to *Una*.

*Una* received *Cylinda* with a benignity peculiar to her manner, and smiled with pleasure on her new−made convert; telling her also, that if her penitence was real, and her heart truly reclaim'd, that she should not want encouragement to persevere in the road to virtue, and consequently to lasting happiness.

The *Cry,* who during *Cylinda's* relation of her life had often held her in high admiration, and frequently had been on the very brink of receiving her as their best friend, from the moment they beheld her humbled look with tears of penitence, remorse, and diffidence on her approach to *Una,* were outrageous in their abuse of her. But as they could reproach and upbraid her with nothing for which she did not with the most poignant sorrow reproach herself, they could not find much gratification for their malicious clamor. They had no resource therefore from the mortifying sight of *Una's* reception of *Cylinda,* but to deny the evidence of their own senses, and boldly to swear that it was not in the nature of things for *Una* to suffer such a wretch as *Cylinda* to come within her touch. But this matter was soon decided by the falling of a large curtain, which on one side left *Una, Portia,* and *Cylinda,* and on

the other side the *Cry*: who were no sooner without a common enemy on whom to vent their spleen, than they began to wrangle, contend, and abuse each other in such a manner that it was impossible for them to remain in one collective body. They separated therefore for the present, but continue ever restless in seeking for mischief. They roam about upon the earth sometimes single (each closely embracing that favourite motto of their leader

*"Evil, be thou my good")*

and sometimes in small parties. They know each other's voice, nor ever fail resolutely and unanimously to support affectation and fallacy, and to oppose simplicity and truth.

*Portia* and *Cylinda,* after many friendly instructions given them, were kindly dismissed by *Una,* who quitting her mortal form, ascended all bright and glorious to her native blest abodes.

*End of the Fifth Part.*

# EPILOGUE.

As we have divided our work into scenes, and introduced each part by a prologue, we think it necessary, in order to preserve the uniformity of our piece, to conclude it by an epilogue.

The common idea annex'd to this word taken from our stage representations, is (we are sensible) a certain number of verses spoken very archly by some celebrated actor or actress, when the play is at an end; describing with double entendre something transacted behind the scenes, or elsewhere, which ought no more to be mentioned than exhibited before a modest and polite audience. But in this our epilogue we design only to inform our reader what became of the principal characters introduced in our story, during the remaining part of their lives.

*Portia,* in the description of the married life she wished to live with her *Ferdinand,* hath very truly informed the reader in what manner she behaved when her wishes were compleated, by her happy nuptials with the only man she ever desired to call by the name of husband. She found not the least difficulty in connecting the ideas of obedience and affection. Her life was a life of true pleasure. The serenity of her mind cast such a lustre over her countenance as joyed the heart of *Ferdinand,* and the most pleasing mirth and innocent chearfulness was diffused throughout their agreeable family.

That dangerous love of refinement in *Ferdinand's* temper, which had like to have lost him his *Portia,* and to have destroyed all his worldly happiness, was by such a mortifying reflexion rooted from his heart. His confidence in his amiable companion was unalterably fixed; and his indulgence to the wife of his deliberate choice was unbounded: whilst *Portia,* with the utmost gratitude and sensibility of heart could receive such indulgence, and extract from thence the highest human felicity. The hearts of this truly happy couple harboured no clandestine purposes; they had nothing to conceal from each other; painful suspicions and anxious doubts could not approach their peaceful bosoms.

Very different was the sequel of the lives of *Oliver* and *Melantha,* who bound themselves to each other by the irrevocable chains of marriage, from far other motives than those which cemented the hearts of our *Ferdinand* and his *Portia*.

*Oliver,* who knew no joy but such as successful malice could inspire, had been in the highest raptures on the supposition that his arts and stratagems had for ever ruined his brother's peace of mind, and had rendered him wretched by the loss of such a wife as *Portia* : altho' in fact all the plots of *Oliver* against *Ferdinand* would have been totally ineffectual, if the *dram of base* (as *Shakespear* expresses it) within his own bosom, his over−refinement and too restless curiosity had not joined to assist his brother's mischievous machinations against him. But when *Portia's* steady conduct and faithful love had, notwithstanding *Ferdinand's* frailty, generously compleated his happiness; the gnawing envy which preyed on the wretched heart of *Oliver* swelled his misery to such a height,

*As bars all words and cuts description short.*

*Melantha* on the marriage of *Ferdinand* with *Portia* was at first driven almost to distraction. She avoided the sight of every human face, lest the wretchedness of her own heart, and (what was torture to her thoughts,) the cause of that wretchedness, should be discovered. She for some time therefore confined herself to the company in the world which her invidious malice had rendered most truly disagreeable to her, namely, her own: but she raved, she blubbered out the tears of passion, and gave such a vociferous vent to her griefs that they began at last a little to subside. She no longer affected to be *Portia's* shadow, but resuming her natural character, she on every occasion gave a loose to the most violent passions, and asserted that such a conduct was the highest proof of a superiority of understanding, and an honest goodness of heart. And often also would she declare, that she would not for the world be such a stupid unanimated creature as *Portia*.

It is a known observation, that there is nothing so agreeable to lovers when they are absent from each other, as a companion who will continually sound forth the praises of the beloved object: and those persons who, from the depth of fancy'd wisdom, chuse to harbour rancorous hatred in their bosoms, are perhaps equally pleased with companions who will continually entertain their ears with invectives and abuse on the objects of their hatred. The abuse of *Ferdinand* and *Portia* was to *Oliver* and *Melantha* their never−ceasing theme; and the delight which they

took in such conversation, unfortunately led them into a small mistake, and made them once more imagine that they were reciprocally inspired with a passion for each other, to which they gave the name of love. Such were the means by which *Melantha* and *Oliver* became husband and wife! and how they lived need not be related to those who thoroughly know their characters.

*Cordelia* never married, but lived with her brother *Ferdinand* and *Portia* to the end of her life. She honoured the married state, and would not have refused a lover who had been agreeable to her inclinations, and whom her judgment could have approved: but, altho' she had many proposals, yet it happened to be her fate never to meet with a man with whom she could have chose to have entered into so solemn and irrevocable an engagement as marriage. And she always declared that she was too happily situated to change such amiable companions for any riches, rank, or honour, which are to be obtained by matrimony.

*Cylinda,* whose life had been one continued scene of error, not either from profligacy of disposition or malice of heart, but from a self−sufficient philosophic pride, and a lively imagination triumphing in the fancied raptures of her own independence, (the most dangerous rock a human mind can split on) was no sooner convinced of her own imbecillity and her former follies, than she led the most exemplary life. Her heart was warmed with gratitude towards *Portia,* to whom she made it her study to become the most agreeable companion. She was sincerely penitent without the least tincture of despondency, and innocently chearful without indulging any farther dangerous wild flights of fancy: and oftentimes did she declare, that the latter part of her life was infinitely happier than the bloom of youth and elegance of beauty, joined to the highest worldly prosperity, could formerly have rendered her. That learning which had before been one of the instruments of her delusion, now became only an innocent and delightful amusement. She set not too high a value on any thing in this world, yet was *Portia's* true friendship to her a cordial to her softened heart. She passed her time free from anxious cares, and in a manner slid to her tomb in peace.

*Ferdinand* and *Portia* tenderly lamented her death, saying in the words of their admired *Shakespear,*

*Adieu, and take thy praise with thee to heav'n*
*Thy ignominy sleep with thee in the grave.*

They ever kindly cherished her memory, whilst the unhappy part of her story was quoted or applied by them as a check to the wildness of youthful imaginations, and her latter days as the most comfortable incitement to a sincere repentance of heart.

*Portia* and *Ferdinand* to the end of their lives enjoyed a state of uninterrupted peace and prosperity. They lived to see their childrens children, and possessed every blessing which this world can possibly bestow.
*End of the Third Volume.*