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ALL FOR LOVE

BY
JOHN DRYDEN

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY
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PREFACE

THIS edition of Dryden's *All for Love* has been prepared in the hope that it may prove useful to all types of reader, both those who are reading it without any special purpose except to understand and enjoy it, and to make the natural comparison with Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, and those who are making a more intensive study of its intrinsic and historical importance.

In the Second Edition the Introduction has been completely rewritten. The omission of biographical detail which can readily be found in *The Dictionary of National Biography*, or in a good encyclopedia, has made it possible to give a somewhat fuller and more interpretative account of the curious dramatic complex which is responsible for the period features of *All for Love*, and also to include a representative bibliography.

Besides throwing light on difficulties of meaning and allusion, the Notes offer a kind of running commentary on the action and characters, and give generous citations of parallel passages from other plays.

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INTRODUCTION

All for Love is classed most often as an imitation of Shakespeare, sometimes as a Heroic Poem, and, rarely, as a neo-classical tragedy. In fact it is all three, but as the second class was dominant during the Restoration period, *All for Love* is predominantly a Heroic Play.

This entails a consideration, but not a history proper, of that curious *genre*. Its most interesting aspect is its theory, which it failed to embody. That theory was a product of the late Renaissance cult of the heroic, which itself must have some connection with the rise of the Nation State and the Absolute Monarch. As, nowadays, a national sports team carries the reputation of its country amongst the gear in its travelling bag, so, then, a writer could, it was believed, advance his country's reputation by producing a competitively heroic poem. Hobbes, not at all a literary man, treats the Heroic Poem as if it were as huge as leviathan itself.

In England, unfortunately, the heroic poems produced did not advance even their author's reputations, and Spenser's, which was the exception, was precluded from entering the international competition by its perversely archaic spelling. Tragedy, however, did flourish, mostly in happy ignorance of such heroic issues.

At the apparent Restoration of absolute monarchy, these last came up for reconsideration. At one time both the comedy and the tragedy of the period were attributed to French influence. Now we have gone to the other extreme: perhaps to explain their inferiority to Molière and to Racine, we have found English sources for both. In tragedy we correctly trace a line of heroics

from Marlowe to Dryden, calling at Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger (a request stop), and D'Avenant. But Charles and his merry men had experienced both the growing scenic magnificence of the French monarchy, and the witty cynicism that is the compensation of those whose interest it is to acquiesce in what they know to be factitious heroics (the cynical journalist of the modern entertainment industry is a parallel). And on his reinstallation, the two voices were also heard in this land, the one re-echoing from grandiose facades of valour, love, and duty, the other derisively undermining them with an epigram and a sneer.

It is perhaps in the separation of the two voices that the main debt to France lies. Previous English practice had combined them. As early as 1608, in their first representative romance, *Philaster*, Beaumont and Fletcher, had produced, without benefit of the impressive theory of later days, what is in most ways a Restoration heroic play. But an important difference is that the derision accompanies the heroics and is not siphoned off into a separate play, where it can divert itself with the safe themes of sex and fools. Although the Restoration heroic play, which contains a surprising amount of contemporary thought, may be, in a polite Debating Society way, sceptical in some matters—possibly in religion—it is cautious enough on political concepts. But in *Philaster* we have things like this (IV. ii):

King. 'Tis the King.
Will have it so; whose breath can still the winds,
Uncloud the sun, charm down the swelling sea,
And stop the floods of Heaven.

So far this might be Restoration rant; so far but no further:

Dion. No. Speak, can it not?

This monosyllable brings royalty to its knees:

King. Alas! What are we kings?

Why do you, gods, place us above the rest,
To be served, flatter'd, and adored, till we
Believe we hold within our hands your thunder;
And, when we come to try the power we have,
There's not a leaf shakes at our threatening.
I have sinn'd, 'tis true, and here stand to be punish'd;
And yet would not be punish'd. Let me chuse
My way, and lay it on.

Dion. He articles with the gods. 'Would somebody would
draw bonds, for the performance of covenants betwixt
them. *[Aside.*

To Dion's mocking accompaniment the King is later reduced to prose abjectness by a civic mutiny, which threatens his captured heir with the most intimate mutilations, the insult being in not their horrific but their derisive nature. In Dryden's *Aureng-Zebe*, the Emperor is environed by four several mutinies led by four several sons, any one of which will overthrow him. A fifth son slips quietly out of the palace to defeat these severally, in intervals between meek imprisonments caused by amorous rivalry with his father. The situations are roughly parallel to those in *Philaster*, except that the Indian emperor is in a far more humiliating and degraded position than the King, but there is no mocking accompaniment. Flippancy and mockery were diverted into comedy.

If they appear anywhere near the heroic precincts, it is in the Prologues and Epilogues. These sometimes do give the impression of being intended for safety valves, into which the audience can blow off its sophistication and leave the stage clear for naive solemnity; or as cloakrooms where divested levity can be resumed: and occasionally they are so irreverent as to suggest that the play was being handed over unprotestingly to the audience's amusement, like some modern revivals of melodramas. The Prologue to *All for Love* is of this kind:

His hero, whom you wits his bully call,
Bates of his mettle, and scarce rants at all;
He's somewhat lewd; but a well-meaning mind;
Weeps much; fights little; but is wondrous kind.
In short, a pattern, and companion fit,
For all the keeping Tonies of the pit.

It is hard to take the heroics of the play seriously after this, unless one can consider the Prologue as one of those advertisements that pretend to run down what is to be sold, which would imply an extremely sophisticated audience. Dryden seems to be at once accepting, and cleverly obviating, Shadwell's contemptuous criticism, in the Epilogue to *The Virtuoso*, that the heroes of the heroic tragedies were not supermen but drivellers and snivellers.

Similarly in the Epilogue to *All for Love*, he makes fun of the idea that the play is an imitation of Elizabethan drama; yet in his Preface he says:

In my style, I have professed to imitate the divine Shakespeare . . . I hope I may affirm, and without vanity, that, by imitating him, I have excelled myself throughout the play.

The further possibility, that the hyperboles in heroic plays were not meant to be taken seriously, has been advanced by one critic, who regards Dryden's as anticipations of the mock-heroics of this satires. But this cannot apply to other dramatists who did not write satires, and it is unlikely Dryden meant his plays to be taken as burlesques: to do so would be to make *The Rehearsal* pointless. On the evidence, they were presented solemnly, with the help of a willing suspension of sophistication by his audience which, if it asked awkward questions about the degree of seriousness of the presentation, was fobbed off by a disarmingly sophisticated prologue and epilogue. After all, the vogue for opera and oratorio would encourage it to swallow apparent absurdities as the conditions of other satisfactions—though it is not easy for us to say what these

last were in the case of the heroic plays. The fact that most of them were about the East must have some significance, yet it is a curiously wan and colourless East, compared with the exotic appeal of *Chu Chin Chow* or even of *The Desert Song*. The sophisticated attitude to the East found in contemporary imitations of the *Arabian Nights* is far richer in evocation.

The experiences of the exiles in the court of Louis XIV may, then, help to explain why the heroic play, most of the elements of which had been present in the drama of the previous age, became a self-conscious and conventional form in the Restoration period, and why the "superior" cynicism that accompanies such impressive opulence was kept out of the dramatic representation of impressiveness. Other French accompaniments, the sentimental and the heroic romances (the latter often nominally Eastern), no doubt contributed to the form and content of the heroic play. The endless discussions in the romances on often-serious subjects (themselves deriving from Castiglione's *The Courtier*) may well be the reason why Dryden's heroic plays read like debates rather than plays. The topics seem often to be discussed in general rather than in relation to situation. This makes them useful repositories for contemporary thought but is not without its dramatic disadvantages. On the other hand, as the situations themselves so twist and double back from scene to scene that it is nearly as impossible to narrate the story coherently as it is in the case of a musical comedy or an opera, there is perhaps some point in having a comparatively coherent flow of discussion which seems to continue above, and despite, the mellay.

The influence of the French heroic romances and tragedies no doubt also explains why most of the themes turn on the conflict between love and honour. The conflict is found in Beaumont and Fletcher, but, as in the case of other native elements, it was the Restoration that isolated and formulated and rationalised it.

Isolated and rationalised it to death, as Dryden came to realise:

Having been longer acquainted with the Stage, than any poet now living and having observed how difficult it was to please; and that the Humours of Comedy were almost spent, that Love and Honour (the mistaken Topicks of Tragedy) were quite worn out . . . all these Discouragements had not only wean'd me from the Stage, but had also given me a loathing of it. [The Preface to *Don Sebastian*, 1690.]

The fact that the Restoration period was over accounts for more than the personally discouraged tone. The conditions favourable to heroic drama were also over. Despite its English elements it had never been quite English. Possibly the French seasonings had given it an alien flavour. It was an acquired taste.

The particular kind of baroque it embodied had not quite established itself in English architecture, either. The Saracen-flavoured Spanish element seemed out of place in England and took refuge in unconvincing and unconvinced grandiosity and attempts to impress by size and gesture and elaboration of inessentials, and, although inertia persists longer in brick and stone than in canvas scenery, it died almost as soon as its dramatic counterpart. The connection between the two is amusingly seen in Vanbrugh, who, after writing his cynical comedies, turned to not baroque drama but baroque architecture. But even (or especially) Blenheim failed to please the next age, and a facetious epitaph on him ends with

Lie heavy on him, earth! for he
Laid many heavy loads on thee.

Impressiveness for its own sake means, in architecture as in drama, the exclusion of wit, which is partly why the use of "baroque" to classify the Metaphysical poets (even Crashaw) seems ill advised. The term is partly applicable to Milton's three Restoration poems, but wholly, and uniquely in English literature, to Restoration heroic drama.

To distinguish their narrative poems from the medieval romances, the Italian poets of the Renaissance called them epics, and to distinguish their epics from those of classical antiquity they called them romantic epics. They claimed both the prestige of the classical epic and the privilege of romance to wander, in structure and story. The formulations of this theory left the door open* for drama, and as drama and not narrative was the characteristic form of the later Renaissance, it gratefully stepped inside—but on its own terms. In his preface to *Gondibert*, D'Avenant says:

I cannot discern . . . that any Nation hath in representation of great actions (either by *Heroicks* or *Dramaticks*) digested story into so pleasant and instructive a method as the English by their *Drama*: and by that regular species (through narratively and not in dialogue) I have drawn the body of an Heroick Poem.

The use of "Heroic Play" to include the best in epic and drama was of great convenience, for then one could affirm Aristotle's high esteem for both without having to worry about his preference for tragedy. The process of incorporation can be seen in Dryden's *An Essay on Heroick Plays*:

. . . an Heroick Play ought to be an Imitation (in Little) of an Heroick Poem; and consequently that Love and Valour ought to be the Subject of it . . . The Laws of an Heroick Poem did not dispense with those of the other, but rais'd them to a greater height; and indulg'd him a farther Liberty of Fancy, and of drawing all things as far above the ordinary Proportion of the Stage, as that is beyond the common Words and Actions of Human Life.

That the themes of heroic literature are *necessarily* love and valour (he has just quoted Ariosto's *Le Donne, I Cavalier, L'arme, gli amori*) may not be self-evident and may indeed, in that order, suggest a lowering rather than a heightening of the tragic tone—which is the adverse view of Rymer in *A Short View*, and, earlier,

* Hobbes propped it open by ingeniously subdividing *epic* into *narrative*, and *dramatic*, epic.

of Crowne, who, in the Epistle to the Reader in his *Destruction of Jerusalem* (itself a heroic play), attributes the whining heroes already attacked by Shadwell to the predominance of love. The relevance of this to *All for Love* is, as we have seen above, admitted by Dryden the wit, who wrote the Prologue to *All for Love*, if not by Dryden the Heroic Dramatist.

It is no longer taken for granted that *All for Love* is not a Heroic Play. The older view seems to have been based rather on what Dryden said about the play than on the play itself. In the Preface he says he has imitated Shakespeare's style and elsewhere that he wrote *All for Love* to please himself. This no doubt sanctioned the former view that explicitly the play is an imitation (or even an adaptation) of Shakespeare, and implicitly a criticism of Shakespeare in that there is very little left of *Antony and Cleopatra* in *All for Love*. A word or two in the latter play may represent a scene or two in the former. It was even possible to prefer *All for Love* in at least this respect. But more recent accounts (and they are many) of Dryden's Heroic Plays are likely to include *All for Love* without comment. Nor is it likely to be given a special classification in a general consideration of Restoration tragedy such as Bonamy Dobrée's.

The relevance to *All for Love* of much of what has been said above about the theory and practice of the Heroic Play will have been obvious. Antony is a superman who nevertheless whines; he gives all for love after a series of struggles with duty, each of which takes up an Act, and, turn and turn about, gains a temporary mastery, the whole suggesting a formal debate rather than a play which rises to and falls from a central climax. The setting is in the near East. But it is not either in theory or effect a strict example. The hero of the romantic epic was blameless. The hero of the classical epic was not, but it was the romantic epic that was adapted to drama, and it is difficult to make a

hero *sans peur et sans reproche* into the hero of tragedy, who, according to Aristotle, must have a flaw in his character, which, if it does not exactly cause the tragedy, allows the virus to "take". The Heroic Play usually called itself a tragedy but preserved the hero's life. Antony on the other hand, as Dryden points out, has a flaw, and dies. But the exception proves the rule, for Antony's one human frailty proves by contrast that he is otherwise superhuman:

Vent. Just, just his nature.
 Virtue's his path; but sometimes 'tis too narrow
 For his vast soul; and then he starts out wide,
 And bounds into a vice, that bears him far
 From his first course, and plunges him in ills:
 But, when his danger makes him find his fault,
 Quick to observe, and full of sharp remorse,
 He censures eagerly his own misdeeds,
 Judging himself with malice to himself,
 And not forgiving what as man he did,
 Because his other parts are more than man.

[I, i, 122-132.]

Indeed, by the standards of the Heroic Play, this makes Antony a super-superman, for the ordinary superman is meanly content with virtue.

Furthermore, Antony "fights little". Not of course from lack of valour (though we do first hear of him as doubting whether fighting, like everything else, is worth while), but from the policy of curbing heroics hard in this play. There is the usual state of siege, convenient for the hero's army-killing excursions and for saving appearances in the matter of the unity of time, but Antony is allowed only one Hotspur sally, and even then Ventidius pours cold water on his exultation:

'Tis well; and he,
 Who lost them, could have spared ten thousand more.

The verbal hyperbole that usually accompanies the hyperbole of exploit is also under house-arrest: Ventidius' theory that Antony's vice proceeds from the

unmanageable size of his virtue is one of the few parallels to Almanzor's

Stand off; I have not leisure yet to die
or

It (the bull's head) fell so quick, it did even Death prevent:
And made imperfect Bellowings as it went

or

The *Moors* have Heav'n and me t'assist their Cause.

Moreover, the fact that Ventidius's paradox is offered not as a universal truth but as a peculiarity of Antony's, suggests the further point that the ruminations on life which occur often enough in the strict Heroic Plays for studies of their sources to have been made, are absent from *All for Love*, as is everything else not bearing on the situation, including the songs. Concomittantly the structure has been tightened. But this process is observable also in *Aureng-Zebe*, the last of the strict plays, where the compression enforced by the neo-classical Unities makes for bewilderment rather than for clarity. Two other pointers to *All for Love* are to be found in the Prologue of this immediately preceding play: Dryden

Grows weary of his long-lov'd Mistress, Rhyme,
and

a secret Shame
Invades his Breast at Shakespear's sacred Name.

But instead of the retirement from the stage which he goes on to announce, he drops his long-lov'd mistress for Shakespeare's sacred style. In any case, the use of the heroic couplet with which the strict Heroic Plays are always associated, is not invariable.

On this showing it seems reasonable to take *All for Love* as the last of Dryden's Heroic line. His resentful resumption of the tragic robe in 1690 is directly due to the abrupt advent of a new age, that of constitutional monarchy in politics and bourgeois absolutism in the theatre. Dryden had realised from the first that

Heroic drama was an emanation of the Court. In his first independent attempt, *The Indian Emperor*, he says:

The Favour which Heroick Plays have lately found upon our Theaters, has been wholly deriv'd to them from the Countenance and Approbation they have received at Court.

The dedication of which this is the opening is to the wife of "the most Illustrious and High-born Prince, JAMES, Duke of *Monmouth*", and it was in the stormy years of the Succession troubles that Charles's show of absolute power, which he was able to put up by trying to ride, as it were, the resultant of the divergent pulls of real power, lay an unconscionable time a dying, and with it, its offspring at a near remove, the strict Heroic Play.* Although Dryden prospered in these years as the poetic champion of Charles's lost causes—an even closer identification with the Court—he knew the old age was out, and when in the first days of the new, his fall from prosperity compelled him to return to the drama, he declared that it had all been a mistake—"Love and Honour (the *mistaken* Topicks of Tragedy) were quite worn out". It is just possible that the state of siege (the first play of the kind was called *The Siege of Rhodes*) which characterises his Heroic Plays was more than a convenience for the instantaneous slaughter of armies off stage by Heroic Valour, which left the hero plenty of time for Virtuous Love. It might also be an unconscious awareness of the impossible odds encircling, almost like an audience, Charles's precarious but brave one-man show, and a more conscious awareness that his other main theme also distinguished Charles's Court, though it was not exactly Virtuous.

Whether or not the plays reflect an external uncertainty, and echo a whistling in the dark, their

* Only the term of their natural life is here considered. Sporadically, plays with Eastern themes and a fair share of rant continued to be written for another half century, but they represented nothing but themselves.

heroics certainly show an internal lack of conviction. Tamburlaine's rant, of which they are sometimes reminiscent, was full of conviction, and though they are less naive than Tamburlaine, they have not the ironic sophistication of that rant which Jonson uses on his Mammons and Volpones. Similarly, Shakespeare, when he makes Hotspur think lightly of a leap to the moon, or Julius Caesar declare himself more dangerous than Danger, is "placing" their character, and it was wrong of his contemporaries to make Hotspur's trip to the moon as notorious for its rant as Tamburlaine's pampered jades of Asia, and Jonson had no excuse at all, in view of his own practice, for ridiculing Caesar's saying he did no wrong but with just cause, which is perfectly in character and preferable to the received version. Dryden's heroics are sophisticated only in that they are willed and ingenious and factitious. He largely discarded them in *Aureng-Zebe* and *All for Love* is still freer from their absurd aspects. Instead, he sometimes uses the image of a shrunken globe to make his hero look larger, and this he takes from *Antony and Cleopatra*.

But despite the pruning and the restraint, *All for Love* is basically one with its stricter brethren in the band of Valour, Love, and Duty. The conditions which produced the siege of Granada produced the siege of Alexandria. *Venice Preserv'd* is often called the last Elizabethan tragedy. By another half-truth, it could be called, with *All for Love*, also known as a throw-back, the last Heroic tragedy. Their atavism consists in their comparative concentration on the dramatic and the particular, rather than on the recitative and the general, and in the freer display of imagery which the absence of the heroic couplet facilitates. They have also forward-looking elements in that their indulgence in unmodulated emotion—particularly in abject pity—anticipates the sentimentality of the next phase of drama. But, their central area is Heroic ground. This shaded area, though lighter than the

gloomy broodings and claustrophobic interiors of the strict plays, has the same conception of drama as a conscious contrivance, a presentation, in a buskin promoted to a stilt by the elevating epic treatment, of an orderly alternation of contrast on a single theme, a strained debate which, not least in its very specialised morality, is reminiscent of Seneca's plays, which, significantly, were meant to be recited rather than acted.

The morality was likely to be specious and opportunist rather than advocated, or even held, by the author, and when a character underwent a periodic *volte face*, he was surprised and pained if all the others did not turn with him. Thus Jaffeir, having abjectly confessed his treason to the other conspirators, is indignant when they accept his low view of his action, instead of praising him for confessing. Similarly, Dolabella is outraged at being accused of perfidy by Antony when he has just repented of that perfidy. It is the morality of convenience noted by Coleridge in Beaumont and Fletcher, which is carried about like a suit-case, and which costs only a copper or two to retrieve when deposited. The spectator is at ease with the *genre* only when he can be sure the dramatist's offering is frankly factitious, an exploration of hypotheses within a given field of unreal reference. When, as in *Venice Preserv'd*, and to a less extent in *All for Love*, there is a flagging of this interest in the possibilities of the artificial, and an infusion of serious illusion: when the artificial half pretends to be the organic: then acceptance is less easy and appreciation of the finest passages of sentiment may be tainted. To put it another way, one does not mind *All for Love's* being inferior to Shakespeare but one does mind its suggesting Beaumont and Fletcher.

The Notes deal with the nature of the debt to Shakespeare in style, and the correspondences in material, as they arise. More interesting than the obvious conclusion

that, although Dryden uses the world images of *Antony and Cleopatra* as appropriate to his theory of the epic enlargement of drama, in general he is much more at home with the style of the comedies, is a point to be noticed here in connection with that theory. *Antony and Cleopatra* has a large episodic, rather than a tight dramatic, structure, in keeping with its large and leisurely theme. It has a sufficiently Eastern setting, and supermen as characters, who kick the world about like a football and whose very names defeat an enemy (How did Dryden come to miss this?). Coleridge's phrase for its style,—a "happy valiancy" (*feliciter audax*),—sufficiently indicates its appropriateness to its Heroic theme of love and valour. *Antony and Cleopatra* seems, in short, the play that Dryden's epico-dramatics should have produced. One is amused; at first to think how blinkered his vision of his own theory must be not to recognise in the play such a glorious exemplar; still more so at the further realisation that the unspoken conditions of the theory would have prevented his acknowledgement of the exemplar, since its heroics are full of the irony whose presence would be fatal to Dryden's conception; and most of all by the irony of his own heroic attempt to reduce the exemplar to such manageable proportions of grandeur as would be agreeable to the theory.

Of characters so simplified as to be rôles rather than individuals, the Notes say *passim* perhaps more than is necessary. The unification of the infinite variety of Shakespeare's Cleopatra into Faithful Love, which shrinks from Octavia's scratches and even from a politic flirtation intended to win back Antony by jealousy, is a thing to be noted rather than of interest: Octavia is almost complex by comparison, but only because changes in situation require shifts in her rôle. Situation exacts the appropriate rôle from all the characters. Alexas, who is potentially the most interesting *qua* character, has unity of motive but is put to a variety of shifts

which if not infinite is bewildering: it is his celerity in machination, as much as the regular reversal in each Act, turn and turn about, that enforces the similarity with the scene-by-scene palace revolutions and realignments which make the strict Heroic Plays so fevered and difficult to follow.

But a Restoration tragedy like *All for Love* depends for its effect not on character interest or on situation, and least of all on exploit. The last is always off stage, and the others are contrivances for exhibitions, in fine rhetoric, of emotions which, although they are (in *All for Love*) invariably pertinent to situation and rôle, are there for their own sake. Dryden's Heroic Plays are enlargements not so much of a dramatic theory as of *Alexander's Feast*, with the author as Timotheus. Unless one can accept this situation, they are likely to prove a barmecide's feast.

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Notes on the Bibliography

This bibliography is selective but, it is hoped, representative. The earlier biographies need checking by Osborn's historiography: a sizable biography incorporating modern investigations is still to seek. Nicoll's exhaustive work of classification is needed for any perspective view of Restoration drama.

Dobrée's concern with the homogeneity of the tragedy of this period is a useful correction to over-classification. Dobrée's is an attitude representative

of the 'twenties: it was felt that the weaknesses of Restoration tragedy had, like the dram of eale, caused blindness to its virtues; Dobrée, although he feels he has seen the light, works more convincingly in the dark.

Other citations concern the theory, and the debated origins, of Heroic Drama. Views and works not cited in the bibliography will be found referred to in those cited. There is no doubt that Beaumont and Fletcher, who themselves drew on French and Spanish sources, are the raw materials of Restoration Heroic Drama. But the materials would probably have remained uncooked had there been no French cuisine at the Restoration. Jefferson thinks Dryden's heroics are mainly mock-heroics, and Mildred Hartsock has a section on the monarchic proclivities of his Heroic Plays. Verrall represented the once common view that Dryden's form is in some ways an improvement on Shakespeare's. Leavis and Muir analyse the language of *All for Love* destructively, Prior favourably. Ruth Wallerstein's is one of quite a number of monographs on Dryden's use of Shakespeare in his plays: it is perhaps of interest that she considers Alexas the most interesting character in *All for Love*. Prior notes the Heroic stamp on Restoration imitations of Shakespeare.

John Dryden, 1631-1700

- 1631. Born at Aldwinkle All Saints, Northants.
- 1650-1654. Trinity College, Cambridge (previously at Westminster School).
- 1658. *Heroic Stanzas* mourning Cromwell's death.
- 1660. *Austræa Redux* celebrating Charles's accession.
- 1662. Member of the Royal Society: served on a committee to reform English prose, which never sat.
- 1663. Marriage (Lady Elizabeth Howard, sister of Sir Robert Howard).

- 1663-1681. The man of the theatre. Among his plays were: *The Indian Emperor* (1665), *Tyrannic Love* (1669), *Almanzor and Almahide* (or, *The Conquest of Granada*, in two parts, 1670), *Aureng-Zebe* (1676), **All for Love** (1678), *The Spanish Friar* (1681), and many comedies, such as *Marriage à la Mode* (1673), *Limberham* (1678), which was considered licentious even for those days.
1667. *Annus Mirabilis*.
1668. *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*. Dryden made Poet Laureate.
- 1681-1700. The poet. Among his poems were: *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681 and 1682), *The Medal*, *Religio Laici* (a defence of the Church of England), and *Mac Flecknoe* (1682), *To the Memory of Mrs. Anne Killigrew* (1686), *The Hind and the Panther* (a defence of Roman Catholicism), and *A Song for St. Cecilia's Day* (1687), *Alexander's Feast* (1697).
1686. Converted to Roman Catholicism (James II succeeded to the throne 1685).
1689. Deprived of his Laureatship on the accession of William III.
- 1690-1694. Returns to the drama in, e.g. *Don Sebastian* and *Amphitryon* (1690), *Cleomenes* (1692), *Love Triumphant* (1694).
- 1684-1800. Dryden the translator of parts of Ovid, Theocritus, Lucretius, Horace, Homer (published in *Miscellanies*), and of the whole of Virgil (1697).

ALL FOR LOVE
OR THE WORLD WELL LOST
A TRAGEDY

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
THOMAS, EARL OF DANBY

Viscount Latimer, and Baron Osborne of Kiveton, in Yorkshire ; Lord High Treasurer of England, one of His Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, and Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter.

MY LORD,—The gratitude of poets is so troublesome a virtue to great men, that you are often in danger of your own benefits: for you are threatened with some epistle, and not suffered to do good in quiet, or to compound for their silence whom you have obliged. Yet, I confess, I neither am nor ought to be surprised at this indulgence; for your lordship has the same right to favour poetry, which the great and noble have ever had—

Carmen amat, quisquis carmine digna gerit.

There is somewhat of a tie in nature betwixt those who are born for worthy actions, and those who can transmit them to posterity; and though ours be much the inferior part, it comes at least within the verge of alliance; nor are we unprofitable members of the commonwealth, when we animate others to those virtues, which we copy and describe from you.

It is indeed their interest, who endeavour the subversion of governments, to discourage poets and historians; for the best which can happen to them, is to be forgotten. But such who, under kings, are the fathers of their country, and by a just and prudent ordering of affairs preserve it, have the same reason to

cherish the chroniclers of their actions, as they have to lay up in safety the deeds and evidences of their estates; for such records are their undoubted titles to the love and reverence of after ages. Your lordship's administration has already taken up a considerable part of the English annals; and many of its most happy years are owing to it. His Majesty, the most knowing judge of men, and the best master, has acknowledged the ease and benefit he receives in the incomes of his treasury, which you found not only disordered, but exhausted. All things were in the confusion of a chaos, without form or method, if not reduced beyond it, even to annihilation; so that you had not only to separate the jarring elements, but (if that boldness of expression might be allowed me) to create them. Your enemies had so embroiled the management of your office, that they looked on your advancement as the instrument of your ruin. And as if the clogging of the revenue, and the confusion of accounts, which you found in your entrance, were not sufficient, they added their own weight of malice to the public calamity, by forestalling the credit which should cure it. Your friends on the other side were only capable of pitying, but not of aiding you; no further help or counsel was remaining to you, but what was founded on yourself; and that indeed was your security; for your diligence, your constancy, and your prudence, wrought most surely within, when they were not disturbed by any outward motion. The highest virtue is best to be trusted with itself; for assistance only can be given by a genius superior to that which it assists; and it is the noblest kind of debt, when we are only obliged to God and nature. This then, my lord, is your just commendation, that you have wrought out yourself a way to glory, by those very means that were designed for your destruction. You have not only restored but advanced the revenues of your master, without grievance to the subject; and, as if that were little yet, the debts of the exchequer, which

lay heaviest both on the crown, and on private persons, have by your conduct been established in a certainty of satisfaction. An action so much the more great and honourable, because the case was without the ordinary relief of laws; above the hopes of the afflicted and beyond the narrowness of the treasury to redress, had it been managed by a less able hand. It is certainly the happiest, and most unenvied part of all your fortune, to do good to many, while you do injury to none; to receive at once the prayers of the subject and the praises of the prince; and, by the care of your conduct, to give him means of exerting the chiefest (if any be the chiefest) of his royal virtues, his distributive justice to the deserving, and his bounty and compassion to the wanting. The disposition of princes towards their people cannot be better discovered than in the choice of their ministers; who, like the animal spirits betwixt the soul and body, participate somewhat of both natures, and make the communication which is betwixt them. A king, who is just and moderate in his nature, who rules according to the laws, whom God has made happy by forming the temper of his soul to the constitution of his government, and who makes us happy, by assuming over us no other sovereignty than that wherein our welfare and liberty consists; a prince, I say, of so excellent a character, and so suitable to the wishes of all good men, could not better have conveyed himself into his people's apprehensions, than in your lordship's person; who so lively express the same virtues, that you seem not so much to copy, as an emanation of him. Moderation is doubtless an establishment of greatness; but there is a steadiness of temper which is likewise requisite in a minister of state; so equal a mixture of both virtues that he may stand like an isthmus, betwixt the two encroaching seas of arbitrary power, and lawless anarchy. The undertaking would be difficult to any but an extraordinary genius, to stand at the line, and to divide the limits; to pay what is due to the

great representative of the nation, and neither to enhance, nor to yield up, the undoubted prerogatives of the crown. These, my lord, are the proper virtues of a noble Englishman, as indeed they are properly English virtues; no people in the world being capable of using them, but we who have the happiness to be born under so equal, and so well-poised a government;—a government which has all the advantages of liberty beyond a commonwealth, and all the marks of kingly sovereignty, without the danger of a tyranny. Both my nature, as I am an Englishman, and my reason, as I am a man, have bred in me a loathing to that specious name of a republic; that mock appearance of a liberty, where all who have not part in the government, are slaves; and slaves they are of a viler note, than such as are subjects to an absolute dominion. For no Christian monarchy is so absolute, but it is circumscribed by laws; but when the executive power is in the law-makers, there is no further check upon them; and the people must suffer without a remedy, because they are oppressed by their representatives. If I must serve, the number of my masters, who were born my equals, would but add to the ignominy of my bondage. The nature of our government, above all others, is exactly suited both to the situation of our country, and the temper of the natives; an island being more proper for commerce and for defence, than for extending its dominions on the Continent; for what the valour of its inhabitants might gain, by reason of its remoteness, and the casualties of the seas, it could not so easily preserve. And, therefore, neither the arbitrary power of One, in a monarchy, nor of Many, in a commonwealth, could make us greater than we are. It is true, that vaster and more frequent taxes might be gathered, when the consent of the people was not asked or needed; but this were only by conquering abroad, to be poor at home; and the examples of our neighbours teach us, that they are not always the happiest subjects, whose kings extend their

dominions farthest. Since therefore we cannot win by an offensive war, at least a land war, the model of our government seems naturally contrived for the defensive part; and the consent of a people is easily obtained to contribute to that power which must protect it. *Felices nimium, bona si sua nōrint, Angligenae!* And yet there are not wanting malcontents among us, who, surfeiting themselves on too much happiness, would persuade the people that they might be happier by a change. It was indeed the policy of their old forefather, when himself was fallen from the station of glory, to seduce mankind into the same rebellion with him, by telling him he might yet be freer than he was; that is more free than his nature would allow, or, if I may so say, than God could make him. We have already all the liberty which freeborn subjects can enjoy, and all beyond it is but licence. But if it be liberty of conscience which they pretend, the moderation of our church is such, that its practice extends not to the severity of persecution; and its discipline is withal so easy, that it allows more freedom to dissenters than any of the sects would allow to it. In the meantime, what right can be pretended by these men to attempt innovation in church or state? Who made them the trustees, or to speak a little nearer their own language, the keepers of the liberty of England? If their call be extraordinary, let them convince us by working miracles; for ordinary vocation they can have none, to disturb the government under which they were born, and which protects them. He who has often changed his party, and always has made his interest the rule of it, gives little evidence of his sincerity for the public good; it is manifest he changes but for himself, and takes the people for tools to work his fortune. Yet the experience of all ages might let him know, that they who trouble the waters first, have seldom the benefit of the fishing; as they who began the late rebellion enjoyed not the fruit of their undertaking, but were crushed themselves by the usurpation of their own

instrument. Neither is it enough for them to answer, that they only intend a reformation of the government, but not the subversion of it: on such pretence all insurrections have been founded; it is striking at the root of power, which is obedience. Every remonstrance of private men has the seed of treason in it; and discourses, which are couched in ambiguous terms, are therefore the more dangerous, because they do all the mischief of open sedition, yet are safe from the punishment of the laws. These, my lord, are considerations, which I should not pass so lightly over, had I room to manage them as they deserve; for no man can be so inconsiderable in a nation, as not to have a share in the welfare of it; and if he be a true Englishman, he must at the same time be fired with indignation, and revenge himself as he can on the disturbers of his country. And to whom could I more fitly apply myself than to your lordship, who have not only an inborn but an hereditary loyalty? The memorable constancy and sufferings of your father, almost to the ruin of his estate, for the royal cause, were an earnest of that which such a parent and such an institution would produce in the person of a son. But so unhappy an occasion of manifesting your own zeal, in suffering for his present majesty, the providence of God, and the prudence of your administration, will, I hope, prevent; that, as your father's fortune waited on the unhappiness of his sovereign, so your own may participate of the better fate which attends his son. The relation which you have by alliance to the noble family of your lady, serves to confirm to you both this happy augury. For what can deserve a greater place in the English chronicle, than the loyalty and courage, the actions and death, of the general of an army, fighting for his prince and country? The honour and gallantry of the Earl of Lindsey is so illustrious a subject, that it is fit to adorn a heroic poem; for he was the proto-martyr of the cause, and the type of his unfortunate royal master.

Yet after all, my lord, if I may speak my thoughts, you are happy rather to us than to yourself; for the multiplicity, the cares, and the vexations of your employment, have betrayed you from yourself, and given you up into the possession of the public. You are robbed of your privacy and friends, and scarce any hour of your life you can call your own. Those, who envy your fortune, if they wanted not good-nature, might more justly pity it; and when they see you watched by a crowd of suitors, whose importunity it is impossible to avoid, would conclude, with reason, that you have lost much more in true content, than you have gained by dignity; and that a private gentleman is better attended by a single servant, than your lordship with so clamorous a train. Pardon me, my lord, if I speak like a philosopher on this subject; the fortune which makes a man uneasy, cannot make him happy; and a wise man must think himself uneasy, when few of his actions are in his choice.

This last consideration has brought me to another, and a very seasonable one for your relief; which is, that while I pity your want of leisure, I have impertinently detained you so long a time. I have put off my own business, which was my dedication, till it is so late, that I am now ashamed to begin it; and therefore I will say nothing of the poem, which I present to you, because I know not if you are like to have an hour, which, with a good conscience, you may throw away in perusing it; and for the author, I have only to beg the continuance of your protection to him, who is, my lord, your lordship's most obliged, most humble, and most obedient servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

PREFACE

THE death of Antony and Cleopatra is a subject which has been treated by the greatest wits of our nation, after Shakespeare; and by all so variously, that their example has given me the confidence to try myself in this bow of Ulysses amongst the crowd of suitors; and, withal, to take my own measures, in aiming at the mark. I doubt not but the same motive has prevailed with all of us in this attempt; I mean the excellency of the moral. For the chief persons represented were famous patterns of unlawful love; and their end accordingly was unfortunate. All reasonable men have long since concluded, that the hero of the poem ought not to be a character of perfect virtue, for then he could not, without injustice, be made unhappy; nor yet altogether wicked, because he could not then be pitied. I have therefore steered the middle course; and have drawn the character of Antony as favourably as Plutarch, Appian, and Dion Cassius would give me leave; the like I have observed in Cleopatra. That which is wanting to work up the pity to a greater height, was not afforded me by the story; for the crimes of love, which they both committed, were not occasioned by any necessity, or fatal ignorance, but were wholly voluntary; since our passions are, or ought to be, within our power. The fabric of the play is regular enough, as to the inferior parts of it; and the unities of time, place, and action, more exactly observed, than perhaps the English theatre requires. Particularly, the action is so much one, that it is the only of the kind without episode, or underplot; every scene in the tragedy conducing to the main design, and every act concluding with a turn of it. The greatest error in the contrivance seems to be in the person of Octavia; for, though I might use the privilege

of a poet, to introduce her into Alexandria, yet I had not enough considered, that the compassion she moved to herself and children was destructive to that which I reserved for Antony and Cleopatra; whose mutual love being founded upon vice, must lessen the favour of the audience to them, when virtue and innocence were oppressed by it. And, though I justified Antony in some measure, by making Octavia's departure to proceed wholly from herself; yet the force of the first machine still remained; and the dividing of pity, like the cutting of a river into many channels, abated the strength of the natural stream. But this is an objection which none of my critics have urged against me; and therefore I might have let it pass, if I could have resolved to have been partial to myself. The faults my enemies have found are rather cavils concerning little and not essential decencies; which a master of the ceremonies may decide betwixt us. The French poets, I confess, are strict observers of these punctilios. They would not, for example, have suffered Cleopatra and Octavia to have met; or, if they had met, there must have only passed betwixt them some cold civilities, but no eagerness of repartee, for fear of offending against the greatness of their characters, and the modesty of their sex. This objection I foresaw, and at the same time contemned; for I judged it both natural and probable, that Octavia, proud of her new-gained conquest, would search out Cleopatra to triumph over her; and that Cleopatra, thus attacked, was not of a spirit to shun the encounter. And it is not unlikely, that two exasperated rivals should use such satire as I have put into their mouths; for, after all, though the one were a Roman, and the other a queen, they were both women. It is true, some actions, though natural, are not fit to be represented; and broad obscenities in words ought in good manners to be avoided: expressions therefore are a modest clothing of our thoughts, as breeches and petticoats are of our bodies. If I have

kept myself within the bounds of modesty, all beyond, it is but nicety and affectation; which is no more but modesty depraved into a vice. They betray themselves who are too quick of apprehension in such cases, and leave all reasonable men to imagine worse of them, than of the poet.

Honest Montaigne goes yet further: *Nous ne sommes que cérémonie; la cérémonie nous emporte, et laissons la substance des choses. Nous nous tenons aux branches, et abandonnons le tronc et le corps. Nous avons appris aux dames de rougir, oyans seulement nommer ce qu'elles ne craignent aucunement à faire: Nous n'osons appeler à droit nos membres, et ne craignons pas de les employer à toute sorte de débauche. La cérémonie nous défend d'exprimer par paroles les choses licites et naturelles, et nous l'en croyons; la raison nous défend de n'en faire point d'illicites et mauvaises, et personne ne l'en croit.* My comfort is, that by this opinion my enemies are but sucking critics, who would fain be nibbling ere their teeth are come.

Yet, in this nicety of manners does the excellency of French poetry consist. Their heroes are the most civil people breathing; but their good breeding seldom extends to a word of sense; all their wit is in their ceremony; they want the genius which animates our stage; and therefore it is but necessary, when they cannot please, that they should take care not to offend. But as the civilest man in the company is commonly the dullest, so these authors, while they are afraid to make you laugh or cry, out of pure good manners make you sleep. They are so careful not to exasperate a critic, that they never leave him any work; so busy with the broom, and make so clean a riddance that there is little left either for censure or for praise. For no part of a poem is worth our discommending, where the whole is insipid; as when we have once tasted of palled wine, we stay not to examine it glass by glass. But while they affect to shine in trifles, they are often careless in

essentials. Thus, their Hippolytus is so scrupulous in point of decency, that he will rather expose himself to death, than accuse his stepmother to his father; and my critics I am sure will commend him for it. But we of grosser apprehensions are apt to think that this excess of generosity is not practicable, but with fools and madmen. This was good manners with a vengeance; and the audience is like to be much concerned at the misfortunes of this admirable hero. But take Hippolytus out of his poetic fit, and I suppose he would think it a wiser part to set the saddle on the right horse, and choose rather to live with the reputation of a plain-spoken, honest man, than to die with the infamy of an incestuous villain. In the meantime we may take notice, that where the poet ought to have preserved the character as it was delivered to us by antiquity, when he should have given us the picture of a rough young man, of the Amazonian strain, a jolly huntsman, and both by his profession and his early rising a mortal enemy to love, he has chosen to give him the turn of gallantry, sent him to travel from Athens to Paris, taught him to make love, and transformed the Hippolytus of Euripides into Monsieur Hippolyte. I should not have troubled myself thus far with French poets, but that I find our *Chedreux* critics wholly form their judgments by them. But for my part, I desire to be tried by the laws of my own country; for it seems unjust to me, that the French should prescribe here, till they have conquered. Our little sonneteers, who follow them, have too narrow souls to judge of poetry. Poets themselves are the most proper, though I conclude not the only critics. But till some genius, as universal as Aristotle, shall arise, one who can penetrate into all arts and sciences, without the practice of them, I shall think it reasonable, that the judgment of an artificer in his own art should be preferable to the opinion of another man; at least where he is not bribed by interest, or prejudiced by malice. And this, I suppose, is

manifest by plain inductions. For, first, the crowd cannot be presumed to have more than a gross instinct, of what pleases or displeases them. Every man will grant me this; but then, by a particular kindness to himself, he draws his own stake first, and will be distinguished from the multitude, of which other men may think him one. But, if I come closer to those who are allowed for witty men, either by the advantage of their quality, or by common fame, and affirm that neither are qualified to decide sovereignly concerning poetry, I shall yet have a strong party of my opinion; for most of them severally will exclude the rest, either from the number of witty men, or at least of able judges. But here again they are all indulgent to themselves; and every one who believes himself a wit, that is, every man, will pretend at the same time to a right of judging. But to press it yet further, there are many witty men, but few poets; neither have all poets a taste of tragedy. And this is the rock on which they are daily splitting. Poetry, which is a picture of nature, must generally please; but it is not to be understood that all parts of it must please every man; therefore is not tragedy to be judged by a witty man, whose taste is only confined to comedy. Nor is every man, who loves tragedy, a sufficient judge of it; he must understand the excellences of it too, or he will only prove a blind admirer, not a critic. From hence it comes that so many satires on poets, and censures of their writings, fly abroad. Men of pleasant conversation (at least esteemed so), and endued with a trifling kind of fancy, perhaps helped out with some smattering of Latin, are ambitious to distinguish themselves from the herd of gentlemen, by their poetry—

*Rarus enim ferme sensus communis in illâ
Fortunâ.*

And is not this a wretched affectation, not to be contented with what fortune has done for them, and sit down quietly with their estates, but they must call their

wits in question, and needlessly expose their nakedness to public view? Not considering that they are not to expect the same approbation from sober men, which they have found from their flatterers after the third bottle. If a little glittering in discourse has passed them on us for witty men, where was the necessity of undeceiving the world? Would a man who has an ill title to an estate, but yet is in possession of it; would he bring it of his own accord, to be tried at Westminster? We who write, if we want the talent, yet have the excuse that we do it for a poor subsistence; but what can be urged in their defence, who, not having the vocation of poverty to scribble, out of mere wantonness take pains to make themselves ridiculous? Horace was certainly in the right where he said, "That no man is satisfied with his own condition." A poet is not pleased, because he is not rich; and the rich are discontented, because the poets will not admit them to their number. Thus the case is hard with writers. If they succeed not, they must starve; and if they do, some malicious satire is prepared to level them, for daring to please without their leave. But while they are so eager to destroy the fame of others, their ambition is manifest in their concernment; some poem of their own is to be produced, and the slaves are to be laid flat with their faces on the ground, that the monarch may appear in the greater majesty.

Dionysius and Nero had the same longings, but with all their power they could never bring their business well about. 'Tis true, they proclaimed themselves poets by sound of trumpet; and poets they were, upon pain of death to any man who durst call them otherwise. The audience had a fine time on't, you may imagine; they sat in a bodily fear, and looked as demurely as they could: for it was a hanging matter to laugh unseasonably; and the tyrants were suspicious, as they had reason, that their subjects had them in the wind; so, every man, in his own defence, set as good a face upon

the business as he could. It was known beforehand that the monarchs were to be crowned laureates; but when the show was over, and an honest man was suffered to depart quietly, he took out his laughter which he had stifled, with a firm resolution never more to see an emperor's play, though he had been ten years a-making it. In the meantime the true poets were they who made the best markets: for they had wit enough to yield the prize with a good grace, and not contend with him who had thirty legions. They were sure to be rewarded, if they confessed themselves bad writers, and that was somewhat better than to be martyrs for their reputation. Lucan's example was enough to teach them manners; and after he was put to death, for overcoming Nero, the emperor carried it without dispute for the best poet in his dominions. No man was ambitious of that grinning honour; for if he heard the malicious trumpeter proclaiming his name before his betters, he knew there was but one way with him. Maecenas took another course, and we know he was more than a great man, for he was witty too: but finding himself far gone in poetry, which Seneca assures us was not his talent, he thought it his best way to be well with Virgil and with Horace; that at least he might be a poet at the second hand; and we see how happily it has succeeded with him; for his own bad poetry is forgotten, and their panegyrics of him still remain. But they who should be our patrons are for no such expensive ways to fame; they have much of the poetry of Maecenas, but little of his liberality. They are for persecuting Horace and Virgil, in the persons of their successors; for such is every man who has any part of their soul and fire, though in a less degree. Some of their little zanies yet go further; for they are persecutors even of Horace himself, as far as they are able, by their ignorant and vile imitations of him; by making an unjust use of his authority, and turning his artillery against his friends. But how would he disdain to be copied by

such hands ! I dare answer for him, he would be more uneasy in their company, than he was with Crispinus, their forefather, in the Holy Way; and would no more have allowed them a place amongst the critics, than he would Demetrius the mimic, and Tigellius the buffoon;

——— *Demetri, teque, Tigelli,
Discipulorum inter jubeo plorare cathedras.*

With what scorn would he look down on such miserable translators, who make doggerel of his Latin, mistake his meaning, misapply his censures, and often contradict their own? He is fixed as a landmark to set out the bounds of poetry—

——— *Saxum antiquum, ingens,—
Limes agro positus, litem ut discerneret arvis.*

But other arms than theirs, and other sinews are required, to raise the weight of such an author; and when they would toss him against enemies—

*Genua labant, gelidus concrevit frigore sanguis.
Tum lapis ipse viri, vacuum per inane volutus,
Nec spatium evasit totum, nec pertulit ictum.*

For my part, I would wish no other revenge, either for myself, or the rest of the poets, from this rhyming judge of the twelve-penny gallery, this legitimate son of Sternhold, than that he would subscribe his name to his censure, or (not to tax him beyond his learning) set his mark. For, should he own himself publicly, and come from behind the lion's skin, they whom he condemns would be thankful to him, they whom he praises would choose to be condemned; and the magistrates, whom he has elected, would modestly withdraw from their employment, to avoid the scandal of his nomination. The sharpness of his satire, next to himself, falls most heavily on his friends, and they ought never to forgive him for commending them perpetually the wrong way, and sometimes by contraries. If he have a friend, whose hastiness in writing is his greatest fault, Horace would have taught him to have minced the matter, and

to have called it readiness of thought, and a flowing fancy; for friendship will allow a man to christen an imperfection by the name of some neighbour virtue—

*Vellem in amicitia sic erraremus ; et isti
Errori nomen virtus posuisset honestum.*

But he would never have allowed him to have called a slow man hasty, or a hasty writer a slow drudge, as Juvenal explains it—

—— *Canibus pigris, scabieque vetusta
Laevibus, et siccae lambentibus ora lucernae,
Nomen erit, Pardus, Tigris, Leo ; si quid adhuc est
Quod fremit in terris violentius.*

Yet Lucretius laughs at a foolish lover, even for excusing the imperfections of his mistress—

*Nigra melichroos est, immunda et faetida δκοςμος.
Balba loqui non quit, τραυλιζει ; muta pudens est, etc.*

But to drive it *ad Aethiopem cygnum* is not to be endured. I leave him to interpret this by the benefit of his French version on the other side, and without further considering him, than I have the rest of my illiterate censors, whom I have disdained to answer, because they are not qualified for judges. It remains that I acquaint the reader, that I have endeavoured in this play to follow the practice of the ancients, who, as Mr. Rymer has judiciously observed, are and ought to be our masters. Horace likewise gives it for a rule in his Art of Poetry—

—— *Vos exemplaria Graeca
Nocturna versate manu, versate diurna.*

Yet, though their models are regular, they are too little for English tragedy; which requires to be built in a larger compass. I could give an instance in the *Œdipus Tyrannus*, which was the masterpiece of Sophocles; but I reserve it for a more fit occasion, which I hope to have hereafter. In my style, I have professed to imitate the divine Shakespeare; which that

I might perform more freely, I have disencumbered myself from rhyme. Not that I condemn my former way, but that this is more proper to my present purpose. I hope I need not explain myself, that I have not copied my author servilely. Words and phrases must of necessity receive a change in succeeding ages; but it is almost a miracle that much of his language remains so pure; and that he who began dramatic poetry amongst us, untaught by any, and as Ben Jonson tells us, without learning, should by the force of his own genius perform so much, that in a manner he has left no praise for any who come after him. The occasion is fair, and the subject would be pleasant to handle the difference of styles betwixt him and Fletcher, and wherein, and how far they are both to be imitated. But since I must not be over-confident of my own performance after him, it will be prudence in me to be silent. Yet, I hope, I may affirm, and without vanity, that, by imitating him, I have excelled myself throughout the play; and particularly, that I prefer the scene betwixt Antony and Ventidius in the first act, to anything which I have written in this kind.

PROLOGUE

WHAT flocks of critics hover here to-day,
As vultures wait on armies for their prey,
All gaping for the carcase of a play !
With croaking notes they bode some dire event,
And follow dying poets by the scent. 5
Ours gives himself for gone; y' have watched your time:
He fights this day unarmed,—without his rhyme;—
And brings a tale which often has been told;
As sad as Dido's; and almost as old.
His hero, whom you wits his bully call, 10
Bates of his mettle, and scarce rants at all:
He's somewhat lewd; but a well-meaning mind;
Weeps much; fights little; but is wond'rous kind.
In short, a pattern, and companion fit,
For all the keeping Tonies of the pit. 15
I could name more: a wife, and mistress too;
Both (to be plain) too good for most of you:
The wife well-natured, and the mistress true.
Now, poets, if your fame has been his care,
Allow him all the candour you can spare. 20
A brave man scorns to quarrel once a-day;
Like Hector's in at every petty fray.
Let those find fault whose wit's so very small,
They've need to show that they can think at all;
Errors, like straws, upon the surface flow; 25
He who would search for pearls, must dive below.
Fops may have leave to level all they can;
As pigmies would be glad to lop a man.
Half-wits are fleas; so little and so light,
We scarce could know they live, but that they bite. 30
But, as the rich, when tired with daily feasts,
For change, become their next poor tenant's guests;
Drink hearty draughts of ale from plain brown bowls,

And snatch the homely rasher from the coals:
So you, retiring from much better cheer, 35
For once, may venture to do penance here.
And since that plenteous autumn now is past,
Whose grapes and péaches have indulged your taste,
Take in good part, from our poor poet's board,
Such rivelled fruits as winter can afford. 40

ALL FOR LOVE
OR THE WORLD WELL LOST
A TRAGEDY

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

MARK ANTONY.	<i>Servants to Antony.</i>
VENTIDIUS, <i>his General.</i>	CLEOPATRA, <i>Queen of Egypt.</i>
DOLABELLA, <i>his Friend.</i>	OCTAVIA, <i>Antony's Wife.</i>
ALEXAS, <i>the Queen's Eunuch.</i>	CHARMION, } <i>Cleopatra's</i>
SERAPION, <i>Priest of Isis.</i>	IRAS, } <i>Maids.</i>
MYRIS, <i>another Priest.</i>	<i>Antony's two little Daughters.</i>

SCENE—ALEXANDRIA.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *The temple of Isis.*

Enter SERAPION, MYRIS, Priests of Isis.

Serap. Portents and prodigies have grown so frequent,
That they have lost their name. Our fruitful Nile
Flowed ere the wonted season, with a torrent
So unexpected, and so wondrous fierce,
That the wild deluge overtook the haste 5
Even of the hinds that watched it: Men and beasts
Were borne above the tops of trees, that grew
On the utmost margin of the water-mark.
Then, with so swift an ebb the flood drove backward,
It split from underneath the scaly herd:
Here monstrous phocae panted on the shore; 10
Forsaken dolphins there with their broad tails,
Lay lashing the departing waves: hard by them,
Sea horses floundering in the slimy mud,
Tossed up their heads, and dashed the ooze about them.

Enter ALEXAS *behind them.*

Myr. Avert these omens, Heaven ! 15

Serap. Last night, between the hours of twelve and one,
In a lone aisle of the temple while I walked,
A whirlwind rose, that, with a violent blast,
Shook all the dome: the doors around me clapt;
The iron wicket, that defends the vault, 20
Where the long race of Ptolemies is laid,
Burst open, and disclosed the mighty dead.
From out each monument, in order placed,
An armed ghost starts up: the boy-king last
Reared his inglorious head. A peal of groans 25

Then followed, and a lamentable voice
 Cried, Egypt is no more ! My blood ran back,
 My shaking knees against each other knocked ;
 On the cold pavement down I fell entranced,
 And so unfinished left the horrid scene. 30

Alex. And dreamed you this ? or did invent the story,
 [Showing himself.

To frighten our Egyptian boys withal,
 And train them up, betimes, in fear of priesthood ?

Serap. My lord, I saw you not, 34
 Nor meant my words should reach your ears ; but what
 I uttered was most true.

Alex. A foolish dream,
 Bred from the fumes of indigested feasts,
 And holy luxury.

Serap. I know my duty :
 This goes no further.

Alex. 'Tis not fit it should ;
 Nor would the times now bear it, were it true. 40
 All southern, from yon hills, the Roman camp
 Hangs o'er us black and threatening, like a storm
 Just breaking on our heads.

Serap. Our faint Egyptians pray for Antony ;
 But in their servile hearts they own Octavius. 45

Myr. Why then does Antony dream out his hours,
 And tempts not fortune for a noble day,
 Which might redeem what Actium lost ?

Alex. He thinks 'tis past recovery.

Serap. Yet the foe
 Seems not to press the siege.

Alex. Oh, there's the wonder. 50
 Maecenas and Agrippa, who can most
 With Caesar, are his foes. His wife Octavia,
 Driven from his house, solicits her revenge ;
 And Dolabella, who was once his friend,
 Upon some private grudge, now seeks his ruin : 55
 Yet still war seems on either side to sleep.

Serap. 'Tis strange that Antony, for some days past,

Has not beheld the face of Cleopatra;
But here, in Isis' temple, lives retired,
And makes his heart a prey to black despair. 60

Alex. 'Tis true; and we much fear he hopes by absence
To cure his mind of love.

Serap. If he be vanquished,
Or make his peace, Egypt is doomed to be
A Roman province; and our plenteous harvests
Must then redeem the scarceness of their soil. 65
While Antony stood firm, our Alexandria
Rivalled proud Rome (dominion's other seat),
And Fortune striding, like a vast Colossus,
Could fix an equal foot of empire here.

Alex. Had I my wish, these tyrants of all nature, 70
Who lord it o'er mankind, should perish,—perish,
Each by the other's sword; but, since our will
Is lamely followed by our power, we must
Depend on one; with him to rise or fall.

Serap. How stands the queen affected?

Alex. Oh, she dotes,
She dotes, Serapion, on this vanquished man, 76
And winds herself about his mighty ruins;
Whom would she yet forsake, yet yield him up,
This hunted prey, to his pursuer's hands,
She might preserve us all: but 'tis in vain— 80
This changes my designs, this blasts my counsels,
And makes me use all means to keep him here,
Whom I could wish divided from her arms,
Far as the earth's deep centre. Well, you know
The state of things; no more of your ill omens 85
And black prognostics; labour to confirm
The people's hearts.

Enter VENTIDIUS, talking aside with a Gentleman of
ANTONY'S.

Serap. These Romans will o'erhear us.
But, who's that stranger? By his warlike port,

His fierce demeanour, and erected look,
He's of no vulgar note.

Alex. Oh, 'tis Ventidius, 90
Our emperor's great lieutenant in the East,
Who first showed Rome that Parthia could be conquered.
When Antony returned from Syria last,
He left this man to guard the Roman frontiers.

Serap. You seem to know him well. 95

Alex. Too well. I saw him at Cilicia first,
When Cleopatra there met Antony:
A mortal foe he was to us, and Egypt.
But,—let me witness to the worth I hate,—
A braver Roman never drew a sword; 100
Firm to his prince, but as a friend, not slave.
He ne'er was of his pleasures; but presides
O'er all his cooler hours, and morning counsels:
In short the plainness, fierceness, rugged virtue,
Of an old true-stampt Roman lives in him. 105
His coming bodes I know not what of ill
To our affairs. Withdraw to mark him better;
And I'll acquaint you why I sought you here,
And what's our present work.

*[They withdraw to a corner of the stage; and
VENTIDIUS, with the other, comes forward
to the front.]*

Vent. Not see him, say you?
I say, I must, and will.

Gent. He has commanded, 110
On pain of death, none should approach his presence.

Vent. I bring him news will raise his drooping spirits,
Give him new life.

Gent. He sees not Cleopatra.

Vent. Would he had never seen her!

Gent. He eats not, drinks not, sleeps not, has no use 115
Of anything, but thought; or if he talks,
'Tis to himself, and then 'tis perfect raving:
Then he defies the world, and bids it pass;
Sometimes he gnaws his lip, and curses loud

The boy Octavius; then he draws his mouth
Into a scornful smile, and cries, "Take all,
The world's not worth my care." 120

Vent. Just, just his nature.
Virtue's his path; but sometimes 'tis too narrow
For his vast soul; and then he starts out wide,
And bounds into a vice, that bears him far 125
From his first course, and plunges him in ills:
But, when his danger makes him find his fault,
Quick to observe, and full of sharp remorse,
He censures eagerly his own misdeeds,
Judging himself with malice to himself, 130
And not forgiving what as man he did,
Because his other parts are more than man.—
He must not thus be lost.

[ALEXAS and the Priests come forward.]

Alex. You have your full instructions, now advance;
Proclaim your orders loudly. 135

Serap. Romans, Egyptians, hear the queen's command.
Thus Cleopatra bids: Let labour cease;
To pomp and triumphs give this happy day,
That gave the world a lord: 'tis Antony's.
Live, Antony; and Cleopatra live ! 140
Be this the general voice sent up to heaven,
And every public place repeat this echo.

Vent. Fine pageantry ! [Aside.]

Serap. Set out before your doors
The images of all your sleeping fathers,
With laurels crowned; with laurels wreath your posts,
And strew with flowers the pavement; let the priests 146
Do present sacrifice; pour out the wine,
And call the gods to join with you in gladness.

Vent. Curse on the tongue that bids this general joy !
Can they be friends of Antony, who revel 150
When Antony's in danger ? Hide, for shame,
You Romans, your great grandsires' images,
For fear their souls should animate their marbles,
To blush at their degenerate progeny.

Alex. A love, which knows no bounds, to Antony, 155
 Would mark the day with honours, when all heaven
 Laboured for him, when each propitious star
 Stood wakeful in his orb, to watch that hour,
 And shed his better influence. Her own birthday
 Our queen neglected like a vulgar fate, 160
 That passed obscurely by.

Vent. Would it had slept,
 Divided far from this; till some remote
 And future age had called it out, to ruin
 Some other prince, not him !

Alex. Your emperor,
 Though grown unkind, would be more gentle, than 165
 To upbraid my queen for loving him too well.

Vent. Does the mute sacrifice upbraid the priest ?
 He knows him not his executioner.
 Oh, she has decked his ruin with her love,
 Led him in golden bands to gaudy slaughter, 170
 And made perdition pleasing: She has left him
 The blank of what he was.

I tell thee, eunuch, she has quite unmanned him.
 Can any Roman see, and know him now,
 Thus altered from the lord of half mankind, 175
 Unbent, unsinewed, made a woman's toy,
 Shrunk from the vast extent of all his honours,
 And cramped within a corner of the world ?

O Antony !
 Thou bravest soldier, and thou best of friends ! - 180
 Bounteous as nature; next to nature's God !
 Couldst thou but make new worlds, so wouldst thou give
 them,

As bounty were thy being ! rough in battle,
 As the first Romans when they went to war;
 Yet after victory more pitiful 185
 Than all their praying virgins left at home !

Alex. Would you could add, to those more shining
 virtues,
 His truth to her who loves him.

Vent. Would I could not !
 But wherefore waste I precious hours with thee ?
 Thou art her darling mischief, her chief engine, 190
 Antony's other fate. Go, tell thy queen,
 Ventidius is arrived, to end her charms.
 Let your Egyptian timbrels play alone,
 Nor mix effeminate sounds with Roman trumpets.
 You dare not fight for Antony; go pray 195
 And keep your cowards' holiday in temples.
 [*Exeunt* ALEXAS, SERAPION.]

Re-enter the Gentleman of M. ANTONY.

2 *Gent.* The emperor approaches, and commands,
 On pain of death, that none presume to stay.
 1 *Gent.* I dare not disobey him.

[*Going out with the other.*

Vent. Well, I dare.
 But I'll observe him first unseen, and find 200
 Which way his humour drives: The rest I'll venture.
 [*Withdraws.*

Enter ANTONY, walking with a disturbed motion before he speaks.

Ant. They tell me, 'tis my birthday, and I'll keep it
 With double pomp of sadness.
 'Tis what the day deserves, which gave me breath.
 Why was I raised the meteor of the world, 205
 Hung in the skies, and blazing as I travelled,
 Till all my fires were spent; and then cast downward,
 To be trod out by Caesar ?

Vent. [*Aside*] On my soul,
 'Tis mournful, wondrous mournful !

Ant. Count thy gains.
 Now, Antony, wouldst thou be born for this ? 210
 Glutton of fortune, thy devouring youth
 Has starved thy wanting age.

Vent. How sorrow shakes him ! [*Aside.*
So, now the tempest tears him up by the roots,
And on the ground extends the noble ruin.

[*ANTONY having thrown himself down.*

Lie there, thou shadow of an emperor; 215
The place thou pressest on thy mother earth
Is all thy empire now: now it contains thee;
Some few days hence, and then 'twill be too large,
When thou'rt contracted in thy narrow urn,
Shrunk to a few cold ashes; then Octavia 220
(For Cleopatra will not live to see it),
Octavia then will have thee all her own,
And bear thee in her widowed hand to Caesar;
Caesar will weep, the crocodile will weep,
To see his rival of the universe 225
Lie still and peaceful there. I'll think no more on't.

Ant. Give me some music: look that it be sad:
I'll soothe my melancholy, till I swell,
And burst myself with sighing.— [*Soft music.*
'Tis somewhat to my humour: stay, I fancy 230
I'm now turned wild, a commoner of nature;
Of all forsaken, and forsaking all;
Live in a shady forest's sylvan scene,
Stretched at my length beneath some blasted oak,
I lean my head upon the mossy bark, 235
And look just of a piece as I grew from it;
My uncombed locks, matted like mistletoe,
Hang o'er my hoary face; a murmuring brook
Runs at my foot.

Vent. Methinks I fancy
Myself there too.

Ant. The herd come jumping by me, 240
And, fearless, quench their thirst, while I look on,
And take me for their fellow-citizen.
More of this image, more; it lulls my thoughts.

[*Soft music again.*

Vent. I must disturb him; I can hold no longer.

[*Stands before him.*

Ant. [*Starting up*] Art thou Ventidius?

Vent.

Are you Antony?

I'm liker what I was, than you to him

246

I left you last.

Ant. I'm angry.

Vent.

So am I.

Ant. I would be private: leave me.

Vent.

Sir, I love you,

And therefore will not leave you.

Ant.

Will not leave me!

Where have you learnt that answer? Who am I? 250

Vent. My emperor; the man I love next Heaven:

If I said more, I think 'twere scarce a sin:

You're all that's good, and god-like.

Ant.

All that's wretched.

You will not leave me then?

Vent.

'Twas too presuming

To say I would not; but I dare not leave you: 255

And, 'tis unkind in you to chide me hence

So soon, when I so far have come to see you.

Ant. Now thou hast seen me, art thou satisfied?

For, if a friend, thou hast beheld enough;

And, if a foe, too much. 260

Vent. Look, emperor, this is no common dew.

[*Weeping.*]

I have not wept this forty years; but now

My mother comes afresh into my eyes;

I cannot help her softness.

Ant. By heaven, he weeps! poor good old man, he

weeps!

265

The big round drops course one another down

The furrows of his cheeks.—Stop them, Ventidius,

Or I shall blush to death: they set my shame,

That caused them, full before me.

Vent.

I'll do my best.

Ant. Sure there's contagion in the tears of friends: 270

See, I have caught it too. Believe me, 'tis not

For my own griefs, but thine.—Nay, father!

Vent. Emperor.

Ant. Emperor ! Why, that's the style of victory;
The conqu'ring soldier, red with unfelt wounds, 275
Salutes his general so: but never more
Shall that sound reach my ears.

Vent. I warrant you.

Ant. Actium, Actium ! Oh !——

Vent. It sits too near you.

Ant. Here, here it lies; a lump of lead by day,
And, in my short, distracted, nightly slumbers, 280
The hag that rides my dreams.——

Vent. Out with it; give it vent.

Ant. Urge not my shame.
I lost a battle,——

Vent. So has Julius done.

Ant. Thou favour'st me, and speak'st not half thou
think'st;

For Julius fought it out, and lost it fairly: 285
But Antony——

Vent. Nay, stop not.

Ant. Antony,—
Well, thou wilt have it—like a coward, fled,
Fled while his soldiers fought; fled first, Ventidius.
Thou long'st to curse me, and I give thee leave.
I know thou cam'st prepared to rail.

Vent. I did. 290

Ant. I'll help thee.—I have been a man, Ventidius.

Vent. Yes, and a brave one; but——

Ant. I know thy meaning.
But I have lost my reason, have disgraced

The name of soldier, with inglorious ease.
In the full vintage of my flowing honours, 295
Sat still, and saw it prest by other hands.

Fortune came smiling to my youth, and wooed it,
And purple greatness met my ripened years.

When first I came to empire, I was borne
On tides of people, crowding to my triumphs; 300
The wish of nations, and the willing world

Received me as its pledge of future peace;
 I was so great, so happy, so beloved,
 Fate could not ruin me; till I took pains,
 And worked against my fortune, chid her from me, 305
 And turned her loose; yet still she came again.
 My careless days, and my luxurious nights,
 At length have wearied her, and now she's gone,
 Gone, gone, divorced for ever. Help me, soldier,
 To curse this madman, this industrious fool, 310
 Who laboured to be wretched: Pr'ythee, curse me.

Vent. No.

Ant. Why?

Vent. You are too sensible already
 Of what you've done, too conscious of your failings;
 And, like a scorpion, whipt by others first
 To fury, sting yourself in mad revenge. 315
 I would bring balm, and pour it in your wounds,
 Cure your distempered mind, and heal your fortunes.

Ant. I know thou would'st.

Vent. I will.

Ant. Ha, ha, ha, ha !

Vent. You laugh.

Ant. I do, to see officious love
 Give cordials to the dead.

Vent. You would be lost, then? 320

Ant. I am.

Vent. I say you are not. Try your fortune.

Ant. I have, to the utmost. Dost thou think me
 desperate,

Without just cause? No, when I found all lost
 Beyond repair, I hid me from the world,
 And learnt to scorn it here; which now I do 325
 So heartily, I think it is not worth
 The cost of keeping.

Vent. Caesar thinks not so;
 He'll thank you for the gift he could not take.
 You would be killed like Tully, would you? do,
 Hold out your throat to Caesar, and die tamely. 330

Ant. No, I can kill myself; and so resolve.

Vent. I can die with you too, when time shall serve;
But fortune calls upon us now to live,
To fight, to conquer.

Ant. Sure thou dream'st, Ventidius.

Vent. No; 'tis you dream; you sleep away your hours
In desperate sloth, miscalled philosophy. 336

Up, up, for honour's sake; twelve legions wait you,
And long to call you chief: By painful journeys
I led them, patient both of heat and hunger,
Down from the Parthian marches to the Nile. 340
'Twill do you good to see their sunburnt faces,
Their scarred cheeks, and chopt hands: there's virtue in
them.

They'll sell those mangled limbs at dearer rates
Than yon trim bands can buy.

Ant. Where left you them?

• *Vent.* I said in Lower Syria.

Ant. Bring them hither; 345
There may be life in these.

Vent. They will not come.

Ant. Why didst thou mock my hopes with promised aids,
To double my despair? They're mutinous.

Vent. Most firm and loyal.

Ant. Yet they will not march
To succour me. O trifier!

Vent. They petition 350
You would make haste to head them.

Ant. I'm besieged.

Vent. There's but one way shut up: How came I hither?

Ant. I will not stir.

Vent. They would perhaps desire
A better reason.

Ant. I have never used
My soldiers to demand a reason of 355
My actions. Why did they refuse to march?

Vent. They said they would not fight for Cleopatra.

Ant. What was't they said?

Vent. They said they would not fight for Cleopatra.
Why should they fight indeed, to make her conquer, 360
And make you more a slave? to gain you kingdoms,
Which, for a kiss, at your next midnight feast,
You'll sell to her? Then she new-names her jewels,
And calls this diamond such or such a tax;
Each pendant in her ear shall be a province. 365

Ant. Ventidius, I allow your tongue free licence
On all my other faults; but, on your life,
No word of Cleopatra: she deserves
More worlds than I can lose.

Vent. Behold, you Powers,
To whom you have intrusted humankind! 370
See Europe, Afric, Asia, put in balance,
And all weighed down by one light, worthless woman!
I think the gods are Antonies, and give,
Like prodigals, this nether world away
To none but wasteful hands.

Ant. You grow presumptuous.

Vent. I take the privilege of plain love to speak. 376

Ant. Plain love! plain arrogance, plain insolence!
Thy men are cowards; thou, an envious traitor;
Who, under seeming honesty, hast vented
The burden of thy rank, o'erflowing gall. 380
O that thou wert my equal; great in arms
As the first Caesar was, that I might kill thee
Without a stain to honour!

Vent. You may kill me;
You have done more already,—called me traitor.

Ant. Art thou not one?

Vent. For showing you yourself, 385
Which none else durst have done? but had I been
That name, which I disdain to speak again,
I needed not have sought your abject fortunes,
Come to partake your fate, to die with you.
What hindered me to have led my conquering eagles 390
To fill Octavius' bands? I could have been
A traitor then, a glorious, happy traitor,
And not have been so called.

Ant. Forgive me, soldier;
I've been too passionate.

Vent. You thought me false;
Thought my old age betrayed you: Kill me, sir, 395
Pray, kill me; yet you need not, your unkindness
Has left your sword no work.

Ant. I did not think so;
I said it in my rage: Pr'ythee, forgive me.
Why didst thou tempt my anger, by discovery
Of what I would not hear?

Vent. No prince but you 400
Could merit that sincerity I used,
Nor durst another man have ventured it;
But you, ere love misled your wandering eyes,
Were sure the chief and best of human race,
Framed in the very pride and boast of nature; 405
So perfect, that the gods, who formed you, wondered
At their own skill, and cried—A lucky hit
Has mended our design. Their envy hindered,
Else you had been immortal, and a pattern,
When Heaven would work for ostentation's sake 410
To copy out again.

Ant. But Cleopatra—
Go on; for I can bear it now.

Vent. No more.

Ant. Thou dar'st not trust my passion, but thou may'st;
Thou only lov'st, the rest have flattered me.

Vent. Heaven's blessing on your heart for that kind
word! 415
May I believe you love me? Speak again.

Ant. Indeed I do. Speak this, and this, and this.

[*Hugging him.*

Thy praises were unjust; but, I'll deserve them,
And yet mend all. Do with me what thou wilt;
Lead me to victory! thou know'st the way. 420

Vent. And, will you leave this—

Ant. Pr'ythee, do not curse her,
And I will leave her; though, Heaven knows, I love

Beyond life, conquest, empire, all, but honour;
But I will leave her.

Vent. That's my royal master;
And, shall we fight?

Ant. I warrant thee, old soldier. 425
Thou shalt behold me once again in iron;
And at the head of our old troops, that beat
The Parthians, cry aloud—Come, follow me!

Vent. Oh, now I hear my emperor! in that word
Octavius fell. Gods, let me see that day, 430
And, if I have ten years behind, take all:
I'll thank you for the exchange.

Ant. O Cleopatra!

Vent. Again?

Ant. I've done: In that last sigh she went.
Caesar shall know what 'tis to force a lover
From all he holds most dear.

Vent. Methinks, you breathe 435
Another soul: Your looks are more divine;
You speak a hero, and you move a god.

Ant. Oh, thou hast fired me; my soul's up in arms,
And mans each part about me: Once again,
That noble eagerness of fight has seized me; 440
That eagerness with which I darted upward
To Cassius' camp: In vain the steepy hill
Opposed my way; in vain a war of spears
Sung round my head, and planted on my shield;
I won the trenches, while my foremost men 445
Lagged on the plain below.

Vent. Ye gods, ye gods,
For such another honour!

Ant. Come on, my soldier!
Our hearts and arms are still the same: I long
Once more to meet our foes; that thou and I,
Like Time and Death, marching before our troops, 450
May taste fate to them; mow them out a passage,
And, entering where the foremost squadrons yield,
Begin the noble harvest of the field. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Enter CLEOPATRA, IRAS, and ALEXAS.

Cleo. What shall I do, or whither shall I turn?
Ventidius has o'ercome, and he will go.

Alex. He goes to fight for you.

Cleo. Then he would see me, ere he went to fight:
Flatter me not: If once he goes, he's lost, 5
And all my hopes destroyed.

Alex. Does this weak passion
Become a mighty queen?

Cleo. I am no queen:
Is this to be a queen, to be besieged
By yon insulting Roman, and to wait
Each hour the victor's chain? These ills are small: 10
For Antony is lost, and I can mourn
For nothing else but him. Now come, Octavius,
I have no more to lose! prepare thy bands;
I'm fit to be a captive: Antony
Has taught my mind the fortune of a slave. 15

Iras. Call reason to assist you.

Cleo. I have none,
And none would have: My love's a noble madness,
Which shows the cause deserved it. Moderate sorrow
Fits vulgar love, and for a vulgar man:
But I have loved with such transcendent passion, 20
I soared, at first, quite out of reason's view,
And now am lost above it. No, I'm proud
'Tis thus: Would Antony could see me now
Think you he would not sigh, though he must leave me?
Sure he would sigh; for he is noble-natured, 25
And bears a tender heart: I know him well.

Ah, no, I know him not; I knew him once,
But now 'tis past.

Iras. Let it be past with you:
Forget him, madam.

Cleo. Never, never, *Iras.*
He once was mine; and once, though now 'tis gone, 30
Leaves a faint image of possession still.

Alex. Think him inconstant, cruel, and ungrateful.

Cleo. I cannot: If I could, those thoughts were vain.
Faithless, ungrateful, cruel, though he be, 35
I still must love him.

Enter CHARMION.

Now, what news, my Charmion?
Will he be kind? and will he not forsake me?
Am I to live, or die?—nay, do I live?
Or am I dead? for when he gave his answer,
Fate took the word, and then I lived or died. 40

Char. I found him, madam—

Cleo. A long speech preparing?
If thou bring'st comfort, haste, and give it me.
For never was more need.

Iras. I know he loves you.

Cleo. Had he been kind, her eyes had told me so,
Before her tongue could speak it: Now she studies, 45
To soften what he said; but give me death,
Just as he sent it, Charmion, undisguised,
And in the words he spoke.

Char. I found him, then,
Encompassed round, I think, with iron statues;
So mute, so motionless his soldiers stood, 50
While awfully he cast his eyes about,
And every leader's hopes or fears surveyed:
Methought he looked resolved, and yet not pleased.
When he beheld me struggling in the crowd,
He blushed, and bade make way.

Alex. There's comfort yet. 55

Char. Ventidius fixed his eyes upon my passage
 Severely, as he meant to frown me back,
 And sullenly gave place: I told my message,
 Just as you gave it, broken and disordered;
 I numbered in it all your sighs and tears, 60
 And while I moved your pitiful request,
 That you but only begged a last farewell,
 He fetched an inward groan; and every time
 I named you, sighed, as if his heart were breaking,
 But, shunned my eyes, and guiltily looked down; 65
 He seemed not now that awful Antony,
 Who shook an armed assembly with his nod;
 But, making show as he would rub his eyes,
 Disguised and blotted out a falling tear.

Cleo. Did he then weep? And was I worth a tear? 70
 If what thou hast to say be not as pleasing,
 Tell me no more, but let me die contented.

Char. He bid me say,—He knew himself so well,
 He could deny you nothing, if he saw you;
 And therefore—

Cleo. Thou wouldst say, he would not see me?

Char. And therefore begged you not to use a power, 76
 Which he could ill resist; yet he should ever
 Respect you, as he ought.

Cleo. Is that a word
 For Antony to use to Cleopatra?
 O that faint word, *respect*! how I disdain it! 80
 Disdain myself, for loving after it!
 He should have kept that word for cold Octavia.
 Respect is for a wife: Am I that thing,
 That dull, insipid lump, without desires,
 And without power to give them?

Alex. You misjudge; 85
 You see through love, and that deludes your sight;
 As, what is straight, seems crooked through the water:
 But I, who bear my reason undisturbed,
 Can see this Antony, this dreaded man,
 A fearful slave, who fain would run away, 90

And shuns his master's eyes: If you pursue him,
My life on't, he still drags a chain along
That needs must clog his flight.

Cleo. Could I believe thee !—

Alex. By every circumstance I know he loves.
True, he's hard prest, by interest and by honour; 95
Yet he but doubts, and parleys, and casts out
Many a long look for succour.

Cleo. He sends word,
He fears to see my face.

Alex. And would you more ?
He shows his weakness who declines the combat,
And you must urge your fortune. Could he speak 100
More plainly ? To my ears, the message sounds—
Come to my rescue, Cleopatra, come;
Come, free me from Ventidius; from my tyrant:
See me, and give me a pretence to leave him !—
I hear his trumpets. This way he must pass. 105
Please you, retire a while; I'll work him first,
That he may bend more easy.

Cleo. You shall rule me;
But all, I fear, in vain. [*Exit with CHARMION and IRAS.*]

Alex. I fear so too;
Though I concealed my thoughts, to make her bold;
But 'tis our utmost means, and fate befriend it ! 110
[*Withdraws.*]

*Enter Lictors with Fasces ; one bearing the eagle ; then
enter ANTONY with VENTIDIUS, followed by other
Commanders.*

Ant. Octavius is the minion of blind chance,
But holds from virtue nothing.

Vent. Has he courage ?

Ant. But just enough to season him from coward.
Oh ! 'tis the coldest youth upon a charge,
The most deliberate fighter ! if he ventures 115
(As in Illyria once, they say, he did,

To storm a town), 'tis when he cannot choose;
 When all the world have fixt their eyes upon him;
 And then he lives on that for seven years after;
 But, at a close revenge he never fails. 120

Vent. I heard you challenged him.

Ant. I did, Ventidius.
 What think'st thou was his answer? 'Twas so tame!—
 He said, he had more ways than one to die;
 I had not.

Vent. Poor!

Ant. He has more ways than one;
 But he would choose them all before that one. 125

Vent. He first would choose an ague, or a fever.

Ant. No; it must be an ague, not a fever;
 He has not warmth enough to die by that.

Vent. Or old age and a bed.

Ant. Ay, there's his choice,
 He would live, like a lamp, to the last wink, 130
 And crawl upon the utmost verge of life.
 O Hercules! Why should a man like this,
 Who dares not trust his fate for one great action,
 Be all the care of Heaven? Why should he lord it
 O'er fourscore thousand men, of whom each one 135
 Is braver than himself?

Vent. You conquered for him:
 Philippi knows it; there you shared with him
 That empire, which your sword made all your own.

Ant. Fool that I was, upon my eagle's wings
 I bore this wren, till I was tired with soaring, 140
 And now he mounts above me.

Good heavens, is this—is this the man who braves me?
 Who bids my age make way? Drives me before him,
 To the world's ridge, and sweeps me off like rubbish?

Vent. Sir, we lose time; the troops are mounted all. 145

Ant. Then give the word to march:
 I long to leave this prison of a town,
 To join thy legions; and, in open field,
 Once more to show my face. Lead, my deliverer.

Enter ALEXAS.

Alex. Great emperor, 150
In mighty arms renowned above mankind,
But, in soft pity to the opprest, a god;
This message sends the mournful Cleopatra
To her departing lord.

Vent. Smooth sycophant !

Alex. A thousand wishes, and ten thousand prayers, 155
Millions of blessings wait you to the wars;
Millions of sighs and tears she sends you too,
And would have sent
As many dear embraces to your arms,
As many parting kisses to your lips; 160
But those, she fears, have wearied you already.

Vent. [*Aside*] False crocodile !

Alex. And yet she begs not now, you would not leave her;
That were a wish too mighty for her hopes,
Too presuming 165
For her low fortune, and your ebbing love;
That were a wish for her more prosperous days,
Her blooming beauty, and your growing kindness.

Ant. [*Aside*] Well, I must man it out:—What would
the queen ?

Alex. First, to these noble warriors, who attend 170
Your daring courage in the chase of fame,—
Too daring, and too dangerous for her quiet,—
She humbly recommends all she holds dear,
All her own cares and fears,—the care of you.

Vent. Yes, witness Actium.

Ant. Let him speak, Ventidius.

Alex. You, when his matchless valour bears him 176
forward,
With ardour too heroic, on his foes,
Fall down, as she would do, before his feet;
Lie in his way, and stop the paths of death:
Tell him, this god is not invulnerable; 180
That absent Cleopatra bleeds in him;

And, that you may remember her petition,
 She begs you wear these trifles, as a pawn,
 Which, at your wished return, she will redeem

[*Gives jewels to the Commanders.*]

With all the wealth of Egypt: 185

This to the great Ventidius she presents,
 Whom she can never count her enemy,
 Because he loves her lord.

Vent. Tell her, I'll none on't;
 I'm not ashamed of honest poverty;
 Not all the diamonds of the east can bribe 190
 Ventidius from his faith. I hope to see
 These and the rest of all her sparkling store,
 Where they shall more deservingly be placed.

Ant. And who must wear them then?

Vent. The wronged Octavia.

Ant. You might have spared that word.

Vent. And he that bribe.

Ant. But have I no remembrance?

Alex. Yes, a dear one; 196
 Your slave the queen—

Ant. My mistress.

Alex. Then your mistress;
 Your mistress would, she says, have sent her soul,
 But that you had long since; she humbly begs
 This ruby bracelet, set with bleeding hearts, 200
 The emblems of her own, may bind your arm.

[*Presenting a bracelet.*]

Vent. Now, my best lord,—in honour's name, I ask you,
 For manhood's sake, and for your own dear safety,—
 Touch not these poisoned gifts,
 Infected by the sender; touch them not; 205
 Myriads of bluest plagues lie underneath them,
 And more than aconite has dipt the silk.

Ant. Nay, now you grow too cynical, Ventidius:
 A lady's favours may be worn with honour.
 What, to refuse her bracelet! On my soul, 210
 When I lie pensive in my tent alone,

'Twill pass the wakeful hours of winter nights,
 To tell these pretty beads upon my arm,
 To count for every one a soft embrace,
 A melting kiss at such and such a time: 215
 And now and then the fury of her love,
 When—And what harm's in this?

Alex. None, none, my lord,
 But what's to her, that now 'tis past for ever.

Ant. [*Going to tie it*] We soldiers are so awkward—help
 me tie it.

Alex. In faith, my lord, we courtiers too are awkward 220
 In these affairs: so are all men indeed:

Even I, who am not one. But shall I speak?

Ant. Yes, freely.

Alex. Then, my lord, fair hands alone
 Are fit to tie it; she, who sent it can.

Vent. Hell, death! this eunuch pander ruins you. 225
 You will not see her?

[*ALEXAS whispers an Attendant, who goes out.*]

Ant. But to take my leave.

Vent. Then I have washed an Æthiop. You're undone;
 Y' are in the toils; y' are taken; y' are destroyed:
 Her eyes do Caesar's work.

Ant. You fear too soon.
 I'm constant to myself; I know my strength; 230
 And yet she shall not think me barbarous neither,
 Born in the depths of Afric: I am a Roman,
 Bred in the rules of soft humanity.
 A guest, and kindly used, should bid farewell.

Vent. You do not know 235
 How weak you are to her, how much an infant:
 You are not proof against a smile, or glance;
 A sigh will quite disarm you.

Ant. See, she comes!
 Now you shall find your error.—Gods, I thank you:
 I formed the danger greater than it was, 240
 And now 'tis near, 'tis lessened.

Vent. Mark the end yet.

Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMION, and IRAS.

Ant. Well, madam, we are met.

Cleo. Is this a meeting?

Then, we must part?

Ant. We must.

Cleo. Who says we must?

Ant. Our own hard fates.

Cleo. We make those fates ourselves.

Ant. Yes, we have made them; we have loved each other, 245

Into our mutual ruin.

Cleo. The gods have seen my joys with envious eyes;
I have no friends in heaven; and all the world,
As 'twere the business of mankind to part us,
Is armed against my love: even you yourself 250
Join with the rest; you, you are armed against me.

Ant. I will be justified in all I do
To late posterity, and therefore hear me.
If I mix a lie
With any truth, reproach me freely with it; 255
Else, favour me with silence.

Cleo. You command me,
And I am dumb.

Vent. I like this well; he shows authority.

Ant. That I derive my ruin
From you alone—

Cleo. O heavens! I ruin you! 260

Ant. You promised me your silence, and you break it
Ere I have scarce begun.

Cleo. Well, I obey you.

Ant. When I beheld you first, it was in Egypt.
Ere Caesar saw your eyes, you gave me love,
And were too young to know it; that I settled 265
Your father in his throne, was for your sake;
I left the acknowledgment for time to ripen.
Caesar stept in, and, with a greedy hand,
Plucked the green fruit, ere the first blush of red,

Yet cleaving to the bough. He was my lord, 270
And was, beside, too great for me to rival;
But, I deserved you first, though he enjoyed you.
When, after, I beheld you in Cilicia,
An enemy to Rome, I pardoned you.

Cleo. I cleared myself—

Ant. Again you break your promise.

I loved you still, and took your weak excuses, 276
Took you into my bosom, stained by Caesar,
And not half mine: I went to Egypt with you,
And hid me from the business of the world,
Shut out inquiring nations from my sight, 280
To give whole years to you.

Vent. Yes, to your shame be't spoken. [*Aside.*

Ant. How I loved.

Witness, ye days and nights, and all ye hours,
That danced away with down upon your feet,
As all your business were to count my passion ! 285
One day passed by, and nothing saw but love;
Another came, and still 'twas only love:
The suns were wearied out with looking on,
And I untired with loving.
I saw you every day, and all the day; 290
And every day was still but as the first,
So eager was I still to see you more.

Vent. 'Tis all too true.

Ant. Fulvia, my wife, grew jealous
(As she indeed had reason), raised a war
In Italy, to call me back.

Vent. But yet 295
You went not.

Ant. While within your arms I lay,
The world fell mouldering from my hands each hour,
And left me scarce a grasp—I thank your love for't.

Vent. Well pushed: that last was home.

Cleo. Yet may I speak ?

Ant. If I have urged a falsehood, yes; else, not. 300
Your silence says, I have not. Fulvia died

(Pardon, you gods, with my unkindness died);
 To set the world at peace, I took Octavia,
 This Caesar's sister; in her pride of youth,
 And flower of beauty, did I wed that lady, 305
 Whom blushing I must praise, because I left her.
 You called; my love obeyed the fatal summons:
 This raised the Roman arms; the cause was yours.
 I would have fought by land, where I was stronger;
 You hindered it: yet, when I fought at sea, 310
 Forsook me fighting; and (O stain to honour!
 O lasting shame!) I knew not that I fled;
 But fled to follow you.

Vent. What haste she made to hoist her purple sails!
 And, to appear magnificent in flight, 315
 Drew half our strength away.

Ant. All this you caused.
 And, would you multiply more ruins on me?
 This honest man, my best, my only friend,
 Has gathered up the shipwreck of my fortunes;
 Twelve legions I have left, my last recruits. 320
 And you have watched the news, and bring your eyes
 To seize them too. If you have aught to answer,
 Now speak, you have free leave.

Alex. [*Aside*] She stands confounded:
 Despair is in her eyes.

Vent. Now lay a sigh in the way to stop his passage:
 Prepare a tear, and bid it for his legions; 326
 'Tis like they shall be sold.

Cleo. How shall I plead my cause, when you, my judge,
 Already have condemned me? Shall I bring
 The love you bore me for my advocate? 330
 That now is turned against me, that destroys me;
 For love, once past, is, at the best, forgotten;
 But oftener sours to hate: 'twill please my lord
 To ruin me, and therefore I'll be guilty.
 But, could I once have thought it would have pleased you,
 That you would pry, with narrow searching eyes, 336
 Into my faults, severe to my destruction,

And watching all advantages with care,
That serve to make me wretched? Speak, my lord,
For I end here. Though I deserved this usage, 340
Was it like you to give it?

Ant. Oh, you wrong me,
To think I sought this parting, or desired
To accuse you more than what will clear myself,
And justify this breach.

Cleo. Thus low I thank you;
And, since my innocence will not offend, 345
I shall not blush to own it.

Vent. After this,
I think she'll blush at nothing.

Cleo. You seemed grieved
(And therein you are kind), that Caesar first
Enjoyed my love, though you deserved it better:
I grieve for that, my lord, much more than you; 350
For, had I first been yours, it would have saved
My second choice: I never had been his,
And ne'er had been but yours. But Caesar first,
You say, possessed my love. Not so, my lord:
He first possessed my person; you, my love: 355
Caesar loved me; but I loved Antony.
If I endured him after, 'twas because
I judged it due to the first name of men;
And, half constrained, I gave, as to a tyrant,
What he would take by force.

Vent. O Syren! Syren! 360
Yet grant that all the love she boasts were true,
Has she not ruined you? I still urge that,
The fatal consequence.

Cleo. The consequence indeed,
For I dare challenge him, my greatest foe,
To say it was designed: 'tis true, I loved you, 365
And kept you far from an uneasy wife,—
Such Fulvia was.

Yes, but he'll say, you left Octavia for me;—
And, can you blame me to receive that love,

Which quitted such desert, for worthless me ? 370
 How often have I wished some other Caesar,
 Great as the first, and as the second young,
 Would court my love, to be refused for you !

Vent. Words, words; but Actium, sir; remember
 Actium.

Cleo. Even there, I dare his malice. True, I counselled
 To fight at sea; but I betrayed you not. 376
 I fled, but not to the enemy. 'Twas fear;
 Would I had been a man, not to have feared !
 For none would then have envied me your friendship,
 Who envy me your love.

Ant. We are both unhappy: 380
 If nothing else, yet our ill fortune parts us.
 Speak: would you have me perish by my stay ?

Cleo. If, as a friend, you ask my judgment, go;
 If, as a lover, stay. If you must perish—
 'Tis a hard word—but stay. 385

Vent. See now the effects of her so boasted love !
 She strives to drag you down to ruin with her;
 But, could she 'scape without you, oh, how soon
 Would she let go her hold, and haste to shore,
 And never look behind !

Cleo. Then judge my love by this. 390
 [*Giving ANTONY a writing.*]

Could I have borne
 A life or death, a happiness or woe,
 From yours divided, this had given me means.

Ant. By Hercules, the writing of Octavius !
 I know it well: 'tis that proscribing hand, 395
 Young as it was, that led the way to mine,
 And left me but the second place in murder.—
 See, see, Ventidius ! here he offers Egypt,
 And joins all Syria to it, as a present;
 So, in requital, she forsake my fortunes, 400
 And join her arms with his.

Cleo. And yet you leave me !
 You leave me, Antony; and yet I love you,

Indeed I do: I have refused a kingdom;
That is a trifle;
For I could part with life, with anything, 405
But only you. Oh, let me die but with you !
Is that a hard request ?

Ant. Next living with you,
'Tis all that Heaven can give.

Alex. He melts; we conquer.

[*Aside.*

Cleo. No; you shall go: your interest calls you hence;
Yes; your dear interest pulls too strong, for these 410
Weak arms to hold you here. [*Takes his hand.*

Go; leave me, soldier
(For you're no more a lover): leave me dying:
Push me, all pale and panting, from your bosom,
And, when your march begins, let one run after, 415
Breathless almost for joy, and cry—She's dead.
The soldiers shout; you then, perhaps, may sigh,
And muster all your Roman gravity:
Ventidius chides; and straight your brow clears up,
As I had never been. 420

Ant. Gods, 'tis too much; too much for man to bear.

Cleo. What is't for me then,
A weak, forsaken woman, and a lover?—
Here let me breathe my last: envy me not
This minute in your arms: I'll die apace, 425
As fast as e'er I can, and end your trouble.

Ant. Die ! rather let me perish; loosened nature
Leap from its hinges, sink the props of heaven,
And fall the skies, to crush the nether world !
My eyes, my soul, my all ! [*Embraces her.*

Vent. And what's this toy, 430
In balance with your fortune, honour, fame ?

Ant. What is't, Ventidius ?—it outweighs them all;
Why, we have more than conquered Caesar now:
My queen's not only innocent, but loves me.
This, this is she who drags me down to ruin ! 435
" But, could she 'scape without me, with what haste

Would she let slip her hold, and make to shore,
And never look behind ! ”

Down on thy knees, blasphemer as thou art,
And ask forgiveness of wronged innocence. 440

Vent. I'll rather die, than take it. Will you go ?

Ant. Go ! whither ? Go from all that's excellent ?
Faith, honour, virtue, all good things forbid,
That I should go from her, who sets my love
Above the price of kingdoms ! Give, you gods, 445
Give to your boy, your Caesar,
This rattle of a globe to play withal,
This gewgaw world, and put him cheaply off:
I'll not be pleased with less than Cleopatra.

Cleo. She's wholly yours. My heart's so full of joy, 450
That I shall do some wild extravagance
Of love, in public; and the foolish world,
Which knows not tenderness, will think me mad.

Vent. O women ! women ! women ! all the gods
Have not such power of doing good to man, 455
As you of doing harm. [*Exit.*

Ant. Our men are armed:—
Unbar the gate that looks to Caesar's camp:
I would revenge the treachery he meant me;
And long security makes conquest easy.
I'm eager to return before I go; 460
For, all the pleasures I have known beat thick
On my remembrance.—How I long for night !

That both the sweets of mutual love may try,
And triumph once o'er Caesar ere we die. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

At one door enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMION, IRAS, and ALEXAS, a Train of Egyptians: at the other ANTONY and Romans. The entrance on both sides is prepared by music; the trumpets first sounding on ANTONY's part: then answered by timbrels, etc., on CLEOPATRA'S. CHARMION and IRAS hold a laurel wreath betwixt them. A Dance of Egyptians. After the ceremony, CLEOPATRA crowns ANTONY.

Ant. I thought how those white arms would fold me in,
And strain me close, and melt me into love;
So pleased with that sweet image, I sprung forwards,
And added all my strength to every blow.

Cleo. Come to me, come, my soldier, to my arms ! 5
You've been too long away from my embraces;
But, when I have you fast, and all my own,
With broken murmurs, and with amorous sighs,
I'll say, you were unkind, and punish you,
And mark you red with many an eager kiss. 10

Ant. My brighter Venus !

Cleo. O my greater Mars !

Ant. Thou join'st us well, my love !
Suppose we come from the Phlegræan plains,
Where gasping giants lay, cleft by my sword,
And mountain-tops pared off each other blow, 15
To bury those I slew. Receive me, goddess !
Let Caesar spread his subtle nets, like Vulcan;
In thy embraces I would be beheld
By heaven and earth at once;
And make their envy what they meant their sport. 20
Let those, who took us, blush; I would love on,

With awful state, regardless of their frowns,
 As their superior gods.
 There's no satiety of love in thee:
 Enjoyed, thou still art new; perpetual spring 25
 Is in thy arms; the ripened fruit but falls,
 And blossoms rise to fill its empty place;
 And I grow rich by giving.

Enter VENTIDIUS, and stands apart.

Alex. Oh, now the danger's past, your general comes !
 He joins not in your joys, nor minds your triumphs; 30
 But, with contracted brows, looks frowning on,
 As envying your success.

Ant. Now, on my soul, he loves me; truly loves me:
 He never flattered me in any vice,
 But awes me with his virtue: even this minute, 35
 Methinks, he has a right of chiding me.
 Lead to the temple: I'll avoid his presence;
 It checks too strong upon me. [*Exeunt the rest.*]

[*As ANTONY is going, VENTIDIUS pulls him by the robe.*]

Vent. Emperor !

Ant. 'Tis the old argument; I pr'ythee, spare me.
 [*Looking back.*]

Vent. But this one hearing, emperor.

Ant. Let go 40
 My robe; or, by my father Hercules—

Vent. By Hercules' father, that's yet greater,
 I bring you somewhat you would wish to know.

Ant. Thou see'st we are observed; attend me here,
 And I'll return. [*Exit.*]

Vent. I am waning in his favour, yet I love him; 46
 I love this man, who runs to meet his ruin;
 And sure the gods, like me, are fond of him:
 His virtues lie so mingled with his crimes,
 As would confound their choice to punish one, 50
 And not reward the other.

Enter ANTONY.

Ant. We can conquer,
You see, without your aid.
We have dislodged their troops;
They look on us at distance, and, like curs
'Scaped from the lion's paws, they bay far off. 55
And lick their wounds, and faintly threaten war.
Five thousand Romans, with their faces upward,
Lie breathless on the plain.

Vent. 'Tis well; and he,
Who lost them, could have spared ten thousand more.
Yet if, by this advantage, you could gain 60
An easier peace, while Caesar doubts the chance
Of arms—

Ant. Oh, think not on't, Ventidius !
The boy pursues my ruin, he'll no peace;
His malice is considerate in advantage.
Oh, he's the coolest murderer ! so staunch, 65
He kills, and keeps his temper.

Vent. Have you no friend
In all his army, who has power to move him ?
Maecenas, or Agrippa, might do much.

Ant. They're both too deep in Caesar's interests.
We'll work it out by dint of sword, or perish. 70

Vent. Fain I would find some other.

Ant. Thank thy love.
Some four or five such victories as this
Will save thy further pains.

Vent. Expect no more; Caesar is on his guard:
I know, sir, you have conquered against odds; 75
But still you draw supplies from one poor town,
And of Egyptians: he has all the world,
And, at his beck, nations come pouring in,
To fill the gaps you make. Pray, think again.

Ant. Why dost thou drive me from myself, to search 80
For foreign aids ?—to hunt my memory,
And range all o'er a waste and barren place,

To find a friend ? The wretched have no friends,
 Yet I had one, the bravest youth of Rome,
 Whom Caesar loves beyond the love of women: 85
 He could resolve his mind, as fire does wax,
 From that hard rugged image melt him down,
 And mould him in what softer form he pleased.

Vent. Him would I see; that man, of all the world;
 Just such a one we want.

Ant. He loved me too; 90
 I was his soul; he lived not but in me:
 We were so closed within each other's breasts,
 The rivets were not found, that joined us first.
 That does not reach us yet: we were so mixt,
 As meeting streams, both to ourselves were lost; 95
 We were one mass; we could not give or take,
 But from the same; for he was I, I he.

Vent. He moves as I would wish him. [*Aside.*

Ant. After this,
 I need not tell his name;—'twas Dolabella.

Vent. He's now in Caesar's camp.

Ant. No matter where, 100
 Since he's no longer mine. He took unkindly,
 That I forbade him Cleopatra's sight,
 Because I feared he loved her: he confessed,
 He had a warmth, which, for my sake, he stifled;
 For 'twere impossible that two, so one, 105
 Should not have loved the same. When he departed,
 He took no leave; and that confirmed my thoughts.

Vent. It argues, that he loved you more than her,
 Else he had stayed; but he perceived you jealous,
 And would not grieve his friend: I know he loves you. 110

Ant. I should have seen him, then, ere now.

Vent. Perhaps
 He has thus long been labouring for your peace.

Ant. Would he were here !

Vent. Would you believe he loved you ?
 I read your answer in your eyes, you would.
 Not to conceal it longer, he has sent 115
 A messenger from Caesar's camp, with letters.

Ant. Let him appear.

Vent.

I'll bring him instantly.

[*Exit VENTIDIUS, and re-enters immediately with DOLABELLA.*]

Ant. 'Tis he himself ! himself, by holy friendship !

[*Runs to embrace him.*]

Art thou returned at last, my better half ?

Come, give me all myself !

120

Let me not live,

If the young bridegroom, longing for his night,

Was ever half so fond.

Dola. I must be silent, for my soul is busy

About a nobler work : she's new come home,

125

Like a long-absent man, and wanders o'er

Each room, a stranger to her own, to look

If all be safe.

Ant. Thou hast what's left of me ;

For I am now so sunk from what I was,

Thou find'st me at my lowest water-mark.

130

The rivers that ran in, and raised my fortunes,

Are all dried up, or take another course :

What I have left is from my native spring ;

I've still a heart that swells, in scorn of fate,

And lifts me to my banks.

135

Dola. Still you are lord of all the world to me.

Ant. Why, then I yet am so ; for thou art all.

If I had any joy when thou wert absent,

I grudged it to myself ; methought I robbed

Thee of thy part. But, O my Dolabella !

140

Thou hast beheld me other than I am.

Hast thou not seen my morning chambers filled

With sceptred slaves, who waited to salute me ?

With eastern monarchs, who forgot the sun,

To worship my uprising ?—menial kings

145

Ran coursing up and down my palace-yard,

Stood silent in my presence, watched my eyes,

And, at my least command, all started out,

Like racers to the goal.

Dola.

Slaves to your fortune.

Ant. Fortune is Caesar's now; and what am I? 150

Vent. What you have made yourself; I will not flatter.

Ant. Is this friendly done?

Dola. Yes; when his end is so, I must join with him;
Indeed I must, and yet you must not chide;
Why am I else your friend?

Ant. Take heed, young man, 155
How thou upbraid'st my love: The queen has eyes,
And thou too hast a soul. Canst thou remember,
When, swelled with hatred, thou beheld'st her first,
As accessory to thy brother's death?

Dola. Spare my remembrance; 'twas a guilty day, 160
And still the blush hangs here.

Ant. To clear herself,
For sending him no aid, she came from Egypt.
Her galley down the silver Cydnus rowed,
The tackling silk, the streamers waved with gold;
The gentle winds were lodged in purple sails: 165
Her nymphs, like Nereids, round her couch were placed;
Where she, another sea-born Venus, lay.

Dola. No more; I would not hear it.

Ant. Oh, you must !
She lay, and leant her cheek upon her hand,
And cast a look so languishingly sweet, 170
As if, secure of all beholders' hearts,
Neglecting, she could take them: boys, like Cupids,
Stood fanning, with their painted wings, the winds,
That played about her face. But if she smiled,
A darting glory seemed to blaze abroad, 175
That men's desiring eyes were never wearied,
But hung upon the object: To soft flutes
The silver oars kept time; and while they played,
The hearing gave new pleasure to the sight;
And both to thought. 'Twas heaven, or somewhat
more:

For she so charmed all hearts, that gazing crowds 181
Stood panting on the shore, and wanted breath

To give their welcome voice.

Then, Dolabella, where was then thy soul?

Was not thy fury quite disarmed with wonder? 185

Didst thou not shrink behind me from those eyes

And whisper in my ear—Oh, tell her not

That I accused her with my brother's death?

Dola. And should my weakness be a plea for yours?

Mine was an age when love might be excused, 190

When kindly warmth, and when my springing youth

Made it a debt to nature. Yours—

Vent.

Speak boldly.

Yours, he would say, in your declining age,

When no more heat was left but what you forced,

When all the sap was needful for the trunk, 195

When it went down, then you constrained the course,

And robbed from nature, to supply desire;

In you (I would not use so harsh a word)

'Tis but plain dotage.

Ant.

Ha !

Dola.

'Twas urged too home.—

But yet the loss was private, that I made; 200

'Twas but myself I lost: I lost no legions;

I had no world to lose, no people's love.

Ant. This from a friend?

Dola.

Yes, Antony, a true one;

A friend so tender, that each word I speak

Stabs my own heart, before it reach your ear. 205

Oh, judge me not less kind, because I chide !

To Caesar I excuse you.

Ant.

O ye gods !

Have I then lived to be excused to Caesar ?

Dola. As to your equal.

Ant.

Well, he's but my equal:

While I wear this he never shall be more. 210

Dola. I bring conditions from him.

Ant.

Are they noble?

Methinks thou shouldst not bring them else; yet he

Is full of deep dissembling; knows no honour

Divided from his interest. Fate mistook him;
 For nature meant him for an usurer: 215
 He's fit indeed to buy, not conquer kingdoms.

Vent. Then, granting this,
 What power was theirs, who wrought so hard a temper
 To honourable terms?

Ant. It was my Dolabella, or some god. 220

Dola. Nor I, nor yet Maecenas, nor Agrippa:
 They were your enemies; and I, a friend,
 Too weak alone; yet 'twas a Roman's deed.

Ant. 'Twas like a Roman done: show me that man,
 Who has preserved my life, my love, my honour; 225
 Let me but see his face.

Vent. That task is mine,
 And, Heaven, thou know'st how pleasing.

[*Exit VENTIDIUS.*]

Dola. You'll remember
 To whom you stand obliged?

Ant. When I forget it,
 Be thou unkind, and that's my greatest curse. 230
 My queen shall thank him too.

Dola. I fear she will not.

Ant. But she shall do it: The queen, my Dolabella!
 Hast thou not still some grudgings of thy fever?

Dola. I would not see her lost.

Ant. When I forsake her,
 Leave me my better stars! for she has truth 235
 Beyond her beauty. Caesar tempted her,
 At no less price than kingdoms, to betray me;
 But she resisted all: and yet thou chidest me
 For loving her too well. Could I do so?

Dola. Yes; there's my reason. 240

*Re-enter VENTIDIUS, with OCTAVIA, leading ANTONY'S two
 little Daughters.*

Ant. Where?—Octavia there!
Starting back.

Vent. What, is she poison to you?—a disease?
Look on her, view her well, and those she brings:
Are they all strangers to your eyes? has nature
No secret call, no whisper they are yours?

Dola. For shame, my lord, if not for love, receive them
With kinder eyes. If you confess a man, 246
Meet them, embrace them, bid them welcome to you.
Your arms should open, even without your knowledge,
To clasp them in; your feet should turn to wings,
To bear you to them; and your eyes dart out 250
And aim a kiss, ere you could reach the lips.

Ant. I stood amazed, to think how they came hither.

Vent. I sent for them; I brought them in unknown
To Cleopatra's guards.

Dola. Yet, are you cold?

Octav. Thus long I have attended for my welcome; 255
Which, as a stranger, sure I might expect.
Who am I?

Ant. Caesar's sister.

Octav. That's unkind.
Had I been nothing more than Caesar's sister,
Know, I had still remained in Caesar's camp:
But your Octavia, your much injured wife, 260
Though banished from your bed, driven from your house,
In spite of Caesar's sister, still is yours.
'Tis true, I have a heart disdains your coldness,
And prompts me not to seek what you should offer;
But a wife's virtue still surmounts that pride. 265
I come to claim you as my own; to show
My duty first; to ask, nay beg, your kindness:
Your hand, my lord; 'tis mine, and I will have it.

[*Taking his hand.*]

Vent. Do, take it; thou deserv'st it.

Dola. On my soul,
And so she does: she's neither too submissive, 270
Nor yet too haughty; but so just a mean
Shows, as it ought, a wife and Roman too.

Ant. I fear, Octavia, you have begged my life.

Octav. Begged it, my lord?

Ant. Yes, begged it, my ambassadress !
Poorly and basely begged it of your brother. 275

Octav. Poorly and basely I could never beg:
Nor could my brother grant.

Ant. Shall I, who, to my kneeling slave, could say,
Rise up, and be a king; shall I fall down
And cry,—Forgive me, Caesar ! Shall I set 280
A man, my equal, in the place of Jove,
As he could give me being ? No; that word,
Forgive, would choke me up,
And die upon my tongue.

Dola. You shall not need it.

Ant. I will not need it. Come, you've all betrayed
me,— 285
My friend too !—to receive some vile conditions.
My wife has bought me, with her prayers and tears;
And now I must become her branded slave.
In every peevish mood, she will upbraid
The life she gave: if I but look awry, 290
She cries—I'll tell my brother.

Octav. My hard fortune
Subjects me still to your unkind mistakes.
But the conditions I have brought are such,
You need not blush to take: I love your honour,
Because 'tis mine; it never shall be said, 295
Octavia's husband was her brother's slave.
Sir, you are free; free, even from her you loathe;
For, though my brother bargains for your love,
Makes me the price and cement of your peace,
I have a soul like yours; I cannot take 300
Your love as alms, nor beg what I deserve.
I'll tell my brother we are reconciled;
He shall draw back his troops, and you shall march
To rule the East: I may be dropt at Athens;
No matter where. I never will complain, 305
But only keep the barren name of wife,
And rid you of the trouble.

Vent. Was ever such a strife of sullen honour!
Both scorn to be obliged.

Dola. Oh, she has touched him in the tenderest
part;
See how he reddens with despite and shame,
To be outdone in generosity!

Vent. See how he winks! how he dries up a
tear,
That fain would fall!

Ant. Octavia, I have heard you, and must praise 315
The greatness of your soul;

But cannot yield to what you have proposed:
For I can ne'er be conquered but by love;
And you do all for duty. You would free me,
And would be dropt at Athens; was't not so? 320

Octav. It was, my lord.

Ant. Then I must be obliged
To one who loves me not; who, to herself,
May call me thankless and ungrateful man:—
I'll not endure it; no.

Vent. I am glad it pinches there. [*Aside.* 325

Octav. Would you triumph o'er poor Octavia's virtue?
That pride was all I had to bear me up;
That you might think you owed me for your life,
And owed it to my duty, not my love.
I have been injured, and my haughty soul 330
Could brook but ill the man who slights my bed.

Ant. Therefore you love me not.

Octav. Therefore, my lord,
I should not love you.

Ant. Therefore you would leave me?

Octav. And therefore I should leave you—if I could.

Dola. Her soul's too great, after such injuries, 335
To say she loves; and yet she lets you see it.
Her modesty and silence plead her cause.

Ant. O Dolabella, which way shall I turn?
I find a secret yielding in my soul;
But Cleopatra, who would die with me, 340

Must she be left? Pity pleads for Octavia;
But does it not plead more for Cleopatra?

Vent. Justice and pity both plead for Octavia;
For Cleopatra, neither.

One would be ruined with you; but she first 345
Had ruined you: The other, you have ruined,
And yet she would preserve you.

In everything their merits are unequal.

Ant. O my distracted soul!

Octav. Sweet Heaven compose it!— 350

Come, come, my lord, if I can pardon you,
Methinks you should accept it. Look on these;
Are they not yours? or stand they thus neglected,
As they are mine? Go to him, children, go;
Kneel to him, take him by the hand, speak to him; 355
For you may speak, and he may own you too,
Without a blush; and so he cannot all

His children: go, I say, and pull him to me,
And pull him to yourselves, from that bad woman.
You, Agrippina, hang upon his arms; 360

And you, Antonia, clasp about his waist:
If he will shake you off, if he will dash you
Against the pavement, you must bear it, children;
For you are mine, and I was born to suffer.

[Here the Children go to him, etc.]

Vent. Was ever sight so moving?—Emperor! 365

Dola. Friend!

Octav. Husband!

Both Child. Father!

Ant. I am vanquished: take me,
Octavia; take me, children; share me all.

[Embracing them.]

I've been a thriftless debtor to your loves,
And run out much, in riot, from your stock;
But all shall be amended.

Octav. O blest hour! 370

Dola. O happy change!

Vent. My joy stops at my tongue;

But it has found two channels here for one,
And bubbles out above.

Ant. [*To Octav.*] This is thy triumph; lead me where
thou wilt;
Even to thy brother's camp.

Octav. All there are yours. 375

Enter ALEXAS hastily.

Alex. The queen, my mistress, sir, and yours—

Ant. 'Tis past.—

Octavia, you shall stay this night: To-morrow,
Caesar and we are one.

[*Exit leading OCTAVIA; DOLABELLA and the
Children follow.*]

Vent. There's news for you; run, my officious eunuch,
Be sure to be the first; haste forward: 380
Haste, my dear eunuch, haste. [*Exit.*]

Alex. This downright fighting fool, this thick-skulled
hero,
This blunt, unthinking instrument of death,
With plain dull virtue has outgone my wit.
Pleasure forsook my earliest infancy; 385
The luxury of others robbed my cradle,
And ravished thence the promise of a man.
Cast out from nature, disinherited
Of what her meanest children claim by kind,
Yet greatness kept me from contempt: that's gone. 390
Had Cleopatra followed my advice,
Then he had been betrayed who now forsakes.
She dies for love; but she has known its joys:
Gods, is this just, that I, who know no joys,
Must die, because she loves? 395

Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMION, IRAS, and Train.

O madam, I have seen what blasts my eyes!
Octavia's here.

Cleo. Peace with that raven's note.

I know it too; and now am in
The pangs of death.

Alex. You are no more a queen;
Egypt is lost.

Cleo. What tell'st thou me of Egypt? 400
My life, my soul is lost! Octavia has him!—
O fatal name to Cleopatra's love!

My kisses, my embraces now are hers;
While I—But thou hast seen my rival; speak,
Does she deserve this blessing? Is she fair? 405

Bright as a goddess? and is all perfection
Confined to her? It is. Poor I was made
Of that coarse matter, which, when she was finished,
The gods threw by for rubbish.

Alex. She is indeed a very miracle. 410

Cleo. Death to my hopes, a miracle!

Alex. A miracle; [*Bowing.*

I mean of goodness; for in beauty, madam,
You make all wonders cease.

Cleo. I was too rash:
Take this in part of recompense. But, oh!

[*Giving a ring.*

I fear thou flatterest me.

Char. She comes! she's here! 415

Iras. Fly, madam, Caesar's sister!

Cleo. Were she the sister of the thunderer Jove,
And bore her brother's lightning in her eyes,
Thus would I face my rival.

[*Meets OCTAVIA with VENTIDIUS. OCTAVIA
bears up to her. Their Trains come up on
either side.*

Octav. I need not ask if you are Cleopatra; 420
Your haughty carriage—

Cleo. Shows I am a queen:
Nor need I ask you, who you are.

Octav. A Roman:
A name, that makes and can unmake a queen.

Cleo. Your lord, the man who serves me, is a Roman.

Octav. He was a Roman, till he lost that name,
To be a slave in Egypt; but I come 426
To free him thence.

Cleo. Peace, peace, my lover's Juno.
When he grew weary of that household clog,
He chose my easier bonds.

Octav. I wonder not
Your bonds are easy: you have long been practised 430
In that lascivious art: He's not the first
For whom you spread your snares: Let Caesar witness.

Cleo. I loved not Caesar; 'twas but gratitude
I paid his love: The worst your malice can,
Is but to say the greatest of mankind 435
Has been my slave. The next, but far above him
In my esteem, is he whom law calls yours,
But whom his love made mine.

Octav. I would view nearer
[*Coming up close to her.*]
That face, which has so long usurped my right,
To find the inevitable charms, that catch 440
Mankind so sure, that ruined my dear lord.

Cleo. Oh, you do well to search; for had you known
But half these charms, you had not lost his heart.

Octav. Far be their knowledge from a Roman lady,
Far from a modest wife! Shame of our sex, 445
Dost thou not blush to own those black endearments,
That make sin pleasing?

Cleo. You may blush, who want them.
If bounteous nature, if indulgent heaven
Have given me charms to please the bravest man,
Should I not thank them? Should I be ashamed, 450
And not be proud? I am, that he has loved me;
And, when I love not him, Heaven change this face
For one like that.

Octav. Thou lov'st him not so well.

Cleo. I love him better, and deserve him more.

Octav. You do not; cannot: You have been his ruin.
Who made him cheap at Rome, but Cleopatra? 456

Who made him scorned abroad, but Cleopatra ?

At Actium, who betrayed him ? Cleopatra.

Who made his children orphans, and poor me

A wretched widow ? only Cleopatra. 460

Cleo. Yet she, who loves him best, is Cleopatra.

If you have suffered, I have suffered more.

You bear the specious title of a wife,

To gild your cause, and draw the pitying world

To favour it: the world condemns poor me. 465

For I have lost my honour, lost my fame,

And stained the glory of my royal house,

And all to bear the branded name of mistress.

There wants but life, and that too I would lose

For him I love.

Octav. Be't so, then; take thy wish. 470

[*Exit with her Train.*]

Cleo. And 'tis my wish,

Now he is lost for whom alone I lived.

My sight grows dim, and every object dances,

And swims before me, in the maze of death.

My spirits, while they were opposed, kept up; 475

They could not sink beneath a rival's scorn !

But now she's gone, they faint.

Alex. Mine have had leisure

To recollect their strength, and furnish counsel,

To ruin her, who else must ruin you.

Cleo. Vain promiser ! 480

Lead me, my Charmion; nay, your hand too, Iras.

My grief has weight enough to sink you both.

Conduct me to some solitary chamber,

And draw the curtains round;

Then leave me to myself, to take alone 485

My fill of grief:

There I till death will his unkindness weep;

As harmless infants moan themselves asleep. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Enter ANTONY *and* DOLABELLA.

Dola. Why would you shift it from yourself on me?
Can you not tell her, you must part?

Ant. I cannot.

I could pull out an eye, and bid it go,
And t'other should not weep. O Dolabella,
How many deaths are in this word, *Depart!* 5
I dare not trust my tongue to tell her so:
One look of hers would thaw me into tears,
And I should melt, till I were lost again.

Dola. Then let Ventidius;
He's rough by nature.

Ant. Oh, he'll speak too harshly; 10
He'll kill her with the news: Thou, only thou.

Dola. Nature has cast me in so soft a mould,
That but to hear a story, feigned for pleasure,
Of some sad lover's death, moistens my eyes,
And robs me of my manhood. I should speak 15
So faintly, with such fear to grieve her heart,
She'd not believe it earnest.

Ant. Therefore,—therefore
Thou only, thou art fit: Think thyself me;
And when thou speak'st (but let it first be long),
Take off the edge from every sharper sound, 20
And let our parting be as gently made,
As other loves begin: Wilt thou do this?

Dola. What you have said so sinks into my soul,
That, if I must speak, I shall speak just so.

Ant. I leave you then to your sad task: Farewell. 25
I sent her word to meet you.

[Goes to the door, and comes back.]

I forgot;
 Let her be told, I'll make her peace with mine:
 Her crown and dignity shall be preserved,
 If I have power with Caesar.—Oh, be sure
 To think on that.

Dola. Fear not, I will remember. 30

[*Antony goes again to the door, and comes back.*]

Ant. And tell her, too, how much I was constrained;
 I did not this, but with extremest force:
 Desire her not to hate my memory,
 For I still cherish hers;—insist on that.

Dola. Trust me, I'll not forget it.

Ant. Then that's all. 35

[*Goes out, and returns again.*]

Wilt thou forgive my fondness this once more?
 Tell her, though we shall never meet again,
 If I should hear she took another love,
 The news would break my heart.—Now I must go;
 For every time I have returned, I feel 40
 My soul more tender; and my next command
 Would be, to bid her stay, and ruin both. [*Exit.*]

Dola. Men are but children of a larger growth;
 Our appetites as apt to change as theirs,
 And full as craving too, and full as vain; 45
 And yet the soul, shut up in her dark room,
 Viewing so clear abroad, at home sees nothing;
 But, like a mole in earth, busy and blind,
 Works all her folly up, and casts it outward
 To the world's open view: Thus I discovered, 50
 And blamed the love of ruined Antony;
 Yet wish that I were he, to be so ruined.

Enter VENTIDIUS above.

Vent. Alone, and talking to himself? concerned too?
 Perhaps my guess is right; he loved her once,
 And may pursue it still.

Dola. O friendship! friendship! 55

Ill canst thou answer this; and reason, worse:
 Unfaithful in the attempt; hopeless to win;
 And if I win, undone: mere madness all.
 And yet the occasion's fair. What injury
 To him, to wear the robe which he throws by ! 60
Vent. None, none at all. This happens as I wish,
 To ruin her yet more with Antony.

*Enter CLEOPATRA, talking with ALEXAS; CHARMION,
 IRAS on the other side.*

Dola. She comes ! What charms have sorrow on that
 face !
 Sorrow seems pleased to dwell with so much sweetness;
 Yet, now and then, a melancholy smile 65
 Breaks loose, like lightning in a winter's night,
 And shows a moment's day.

Vent. If she should love him too ! her eunuch there ?
 That porc'pisce bodes ill weather. Draw, draw nearer,
 Sweet devil, that I may hear.

Alex. Believe me; try 70
*[Dolabella goes over to Charmion and Iras ;
 seems to talk with them.]*

To make him jealous; jealousy is like
 A polished glass held to the lips when life's in doubt;
 If there be breath, 'twill catch the damp, and show it.

Cleo. I grant you, jealousy's a proof of love,
 But 'tis a weak and unavailing medicine; 75
 It puts out the disease, and makes it show,
 But has no power to cure.

Alex. 'Tis your last remedy, and strongest too:
 And then this Dolabella, who so fit
 To practise on ? He's handsome, valiant, young, 80
 And looks as he were laid for nature's bait,
 To catch weak women's eyes.
 He stands already more than half suspected
 Of loving you: the least kind word or glance
 You give this youth, will kindle him with love: 85

Then, like a burning vessel set adrift,
 You'll send him down amain before the wind,
 To fire the heart of jealous Antony.

Cleo. Can I do this? Ah, no; my love's so true,
 That I can neither hide it where it is, 90
 Nor show it where it is not. Nature meant me
 A wife; a silly, harmless, household dove,
 Fond without art, and kind without deceit;
 But Fortune, that has made a mistress of me,
 Has thrust me out to the wide world, unfurnished 95
 Of falsehood to be happy.

Alex. Force yourself.
 The event will be, your lover will return,
 Doubly desirous to possess the good
 Which once he feared to lose.

Cleo. I must attempt it;
 But oh, with what regret! 100
[Exit Alexas. She comes up to Dolabella.]

Vent. So, now the scene draws near; they're in my
 reach.

Cleo. *[To Dol.]* Discoursing with my women! might
 not I
 Share in your entertainment?

Char. You have been
 The subject of it, madam.

Cleo. How! and how?

Iras. Such praises of your beauty!

Cleo. Mere poetry. 105
 Your Roman wits, your Gallus and Tibullus,
 Have taught you this from Cytheris and Delia.

Dola. Those Roman wits have never been in Egypt;
 Cytheris and Delia else had been unsung:
 I, who have seen—had I been born a poet, 110
 Should choose a nobler name.

Cleo. You flatter me.
 But, 'tis your nation's vice: All of your country
 Are flatterers, and all false. Your friend's like you.
 I'm sure, he sent you not to speak these words.

Dola. No, madam; yet he sent me—

Cleo. Well, he sent you—

Dola. Of a less pleasing errand.

Cleo. How less pleasing? 116

Less to yourself, or me?

Dola. Madam, to both;

For you must mourn, and I must grieve to cause it.

Cleo. You, Charmion, and your fellow, stand at distance;—

Hold up, my spirits. [*Aside*].—Well, now your mournful matter! 120

For I'm prepared, perhaps can guess it too.

Dola. I wish you would; for 'tis a thankless office,
To tell ill news: And I, of all your sex,
Most fear displeasing you.

Cleo. Of all your sex,
I soonest would forgive you, if you should. 125

Vent. Most delicate advances! Women! women!
Dear, damned, inconstant sex!

Cleo. In the first place,
I am to be forsaken; is't not so?

Dola. I wish I could not answer to that question.

Cleo. Then pass it o'er, because it troubles you: 130
I should have been more grieved another time.

Next, I'm to lose my kingdom—Farewell, Egypt!
Yet, is there any more?

Dola. Madam, I fear
Your too deep sense of grief has turned your reason.

Cleo. No, no, I'm not run mad; I can bear fortune: 135
And love may be expelled by other love,
As poisons are by poisons.

Dola. You o'erjoy me, madam,
To find your griefs so moderately borne.
You've heard the worst; all are not false like him. 140

Cleo. No; Heaven forbid they should.

Dola. Some men are constant.

Cleo. And constancy deserves reward, that's certain.

Dola. Deserves it not; but give it leave to hope.

Vent. I'll swear, thou hast my leave. I have enough:
But how to manage this ! Well, I'll consider. [*Exit.*

Dola. I came prepared 146
To tell you heavy news; news, which I thought
Would fright the blood from your pale cheeks to hear:
But you have met it with a cheerfulness,
That makes my task more easy; and my tongue, 150
Which on another's message was employed,
Would gladly speak its own.

Cleo. Hold, Dolabella.
First tell me, were you chosen by my lord ?
Or sought you this employment ?

Dola. He picked me out; and, as his bosom friend, 155
He charged me with his words.

Cleo. The message then
I know was tender, and each accent smooth,
To mollify that rugged word, *Depart.*

Dola. Oh, you mistake: He chose the harshest words;
With fiery eyes, and with contracted brows, 160
He coined his face in the severest stamp;
And fury shook his fabric, like an earthquake;
He heaved for vent, and burst like bellowing Aetna,
In sounds scarce human—"Hence away for ever,
Let her begone, the blot of my renown, 165
And bane of all my hopes !"

*[All the time of this speech, Cleopatra seems
more and more concerned, till she sinks
quite down.]*

"Let her be driven, as far as men can think,
From man's commerce ! she'll poison to the centre."

Cleo. Oh, I can bear no more !

Dola. Help, help !—O wretch ! O cursed, cursed wretch !
What have I done !

Char. Help, chafe her temples, Iras. 171

Iras. Bend, bend her forward quickly.

Char. Heaven be praised,
She comes again.

Cleo. Oh, let him not approach me.

Why have you brought me back to this loathed being,
The abode of falsehood, violated vows, 175
And injured love? For pity, let me go;
For, if there be a place of long repose,
I'm sure I want it. My disdainful lord
Can never break that quiet; nor awake
The sleeping soul, with hollowing in my tomb 180
Such words as fright her hence.—Unkind, unkind!

Dola. Believe me, 'tis against myself I speak;
[*Kneeling.*

That sure desires belief; I injured him:
My friend ne'er spoke those words. Oh, had you seen
How often he came back, and every time 185
With something more obliging and more kind,
To add to what he said; what dear farewells;
How almost vanquished by his love he parted,
And leaned to what unwillingly he left!
I, traitor as I was, for love of you 190
(But what can you not do, who made me false?)
I forged that lie; for whose forgiveness kneels
This self-accused, self-punished criminal.

Cleo. With how much ease believe we what we wish!
Rise, Dolabella; if you have been guilty, 195
I have contributed, and too much love
Has made me guilty too.
The advance of kindness, which I made, was feigned,
To call back fleeting love by jealousy;
But 'twould not last. Oh, rather let me lose, 200
Than so ignobly trifle with his heart.

Dola. I find your breast fenced round from human reach,
Transparent as a rock of solid crystal;
Seen through, but never pierced. My friend, my friend,
What endless treasure hast thou thrown away; 205
And scattered, like an infant, in the ocean,
Vain sums of wealth, which none can gather thence!

Cleo. Could you not beg
An hour's admittance to his private ear?
Like one, who wanders through long barren wilds 210

And yet foreknows no hospitable inn
 Is near to succour hunger, eats his fill,
 Before his painful march;
 So would I feed a while my famished eyes
 Before we part; for I have far to go, 215
 If death be far, and never must return.

VENTIDIUS *with* OCTAVIA, *behind*.

Vent. From hence you may discover—oh, sweet, sweet !
 Would you indeed ? The pretty hand in earnest ?

Dola. I will, for this reward. [*Takes her hand.*]
 Draw it not back. 220
 'Tis all I e'er will beg.

Vent. They turn upon us.

Octav. What quick eyes has guilt !

Vent. Seem not to have observed them, and go on.

They enter.

Dola. Saw you the emperor, Ventidius ?

Vent. No.
 I sought him; but I heard that he was private, 225
 None with him but Hipparchus, his freedman.

Dola. Know you his business ?

Vent. Giving him instructions,
 And letters to his brother Caesar.

Dola. Well,
 He must be found. [*Exeunt Dolabella and Cleopatra.*]

Octav. Most glorious impudence !

Vent. She looked, methought, 230
 As she would say—Take your old man, Octavia;
 Thank you, I'm better here.—
 Well, but what use
 Make we of this discovery ?

Octav. Let it die.

Vent. I pity Dolabella; but she's dangerous; 235
 Her eyes have power beyond Thessalian charms,

To draw the moon from heaven; for eloquence,
 The sea-green Syrens taught her voice their flattery;
 And, while she speaks, night steals upon the day,
 Unmarked by those that hear: Then she's so charming,
 Age buds at sight of her, and swells to youth: 241
 The holy priests gaze on her when she smiles;
 And with heaved hands, forgetting gravity,
 They bless her wanton eyes: Even I, who hate her,
 With a malignant joy behold such beauty; 245
 And, while I curse, desire it. Antony
 Must needs have some remains of passion still,
 Which may ferment into a worse relapse,
 If now not fully cured. I know, this minute,
 With Caesar he's endeavouring her peace. 250

Octav. You have prevailed:—But for a further purpose
 [Walks off.]

I'll prove how he will relish this discovery.
 What, make a strumpet's peace! it swells my heart:
 It must not, shall not be.

Vent. His guards appear.
 Let me begin, and you shall second me. 255

Enter ANTONY.

Ant. Octavia, I was looking you, my love:
 What, are your letters ready? I have given
 My last instructions.

Octav. Mine, my lord, are written.

Ant. Ventidius. [Drawing him aside.]

Vent. My lord?

Ant. A word in private.—

When saw you Dolabella?

Vent. Now, my lord, 260

He parted hence; and Cleopatra with him.

Ant. Speak softly.—'Twas by my command he went,
 To bear my last farewell.

Vent. It looked indeed [Aloud.]
 Like your farewell.

Ant. More softly.—My farewell?
 What secret meaning have you in those words 265
 Of—My farewell? He did it by my order.

Vent. Then he obeyed your order. I suppose [*Aloud.*
 You bid him do it with all gentleness,
 All kindness, and all—love.

Ant. How she mourned,
 The poor forsaken creature ! 270

Vent. She took it as she ought; she bore your parting
 As she did Caesar's, as she would another's,
 Were a new love to come.

Ant. Thou dost belie her; [*Aloud.*
 Most basely, and maliciously belie her.

Vent. I thought not to displease you; I have done. 275

Octav. You seemed disturbed, my lord. [*Coming up.*

Ant. A very trifle.
 Retire, my love.

Vent. It was indeed a trifle.
 He sent—

Ant. No more. Look how thou disobey'st me;
 [*Angrily.*

Thy life shall answer it.

Octav. Then 'tis no trifle.

Vent. [*To Octav.*] 'Tis less; a very nothing: You too saw
 it, 280

As well as I, and therefore 'tis no secret.

Ant. She saw it !

Vent. Yes: She saw young Dolabella—

Ant. Young Dolabella !

Vent. Young, I think him young,
 And handsome too; and so do others think him.
 But what of that? He went by your command, 285
 Indeed 'tis probable, with some kind message;
 For she received it graciously; she smiled;
 And then he grew familiar with her hand,
 Squeezed it, and worried it with ravenous kisses;
 She blushed, and sighed, and smiled, and blushed again;
 At last she took occasion to talk softly, 291

And brought her cheek up close, and leaned on his;
At which, he whispered kisses back on hers;
And then she cried aloud—That constancy
Should be rewarded.

Octav. This I saw and heard. 295

Ant. What woman was it, whom you heard and saw
So playful with my friend?
Not Cleopatra?

Vent. Even she, my lord.

Ant. My Cleopatra?

Vent. Your Cleopatra;
Dolabella's Cleopatra; every man's Cleopatra. 300

Ant. Thou liest.

Vent. I do not lie, my lord.
Is this so strange? Should mistresses be left,
And not provide against a time of change?
You know she's not much used to lonely nights.

Ant. I'll think no more on't. 305
I know 'tis false, and see the plot betwixt you.—
You needed not have gone this way, Octavia.
What harms it you that Cleopatra's just?
She's mine no more. I see, and I forgive:
Urge it no further, love.

Octav. Are you concerned, 310
That she's found false?

Ant. I should be, were it so;
For, though 'tis past, I would not that the world
Should tax my former choice, that I loved one
Of so light note; but I forgive you both.

Vent. What has my age deserved, that you should think
I would abuse your ears with perjury? 316
If Heaven be true, she's false.

Ant. Though heaven and earth
Should witness it, I'll not believe her tainted.

Vent. I'll bring you, then, a witness
From hell, to prove her so.—Nay, go not back; 320
[*Seeing Alexas just entering, and starting back.*
For stay you must and shall.

Alex. What means my lord ?

Vent. To make you do what most you hate,—speak truth.

You are of Cleopatra's private counsel,
Of her bed-counsel, her lascivious hours;
Are conscious of each nightly change she makes, 325
And watch her, as Chaldeans do the moon,
Can tell what signs she passes through, what day.

Alex. My noble lord !

Vent. My most illustrious pander,
No fine set speech, no cadence, no turned periods,
But a plain homespun truth, is what I ask: 330
I did, myself, o'erhear your queen make love
To Dolabella. Speak; for I will know,
By your confession, what more passed betwixt them;
How near the business draws to your employment;
And when the happy hour. 335

Ant. Speak truth, Alexas ; whether it offend
Or please Ventidius, care not: Justify
Thy injured queen from malice: Dare his worst.

Octav. [*Aside*] See how he gives him courage ! how he
fears
To find her false ! and shuts his eyes to truth, 340
Willing to be misled !

Alex. As far as love may plead for woman's frailty,
Urged by desert and greatness of the lover,
So far, divine Octavia, may my queen
Stand even excused to you for loving him 345
Who is your lord: so far, from brave Ventidius,
May her past actions hope a fair report.

Ant. 'Tis well, and truly spoken: mark, Ventidius.

Alex. To you, most noble emperor, her strong passion
Stands not excused, but wholly justified. 350
Her beauty's charms alone, without her crown,
From Ind and Meroe drew the distant vows
Of sighing kings; and at her feet were laid
The sceptres of the earth, exposed on heaps,
To choose where she would reign: 355

She thought a Roman only could deserve her,
And, of all Romans, only Antony;
And, to be less than wife to you, disdained
Their lawful passion.

Ant. 'Tis but truth. 360

Alex. And yet, though love, and your unmatched
desert,

Have drawn her from the due regard of honour,
At last Heaven opened her unwilling eyes
To see the wrongs she offered fair Octavia,
Whose holy bed she lawlessly usurped. 365
The sad effects of this improsperous war
Confirmed those pious thoughts.

Vent. [*Aside*] Oh, wheel you there?
Observe him now; the man begins to mend,
And talk substantial reason.—Fear not, eunuch;
The emperor has given thee leave to speak. 370

Alex. Else had I never dared to offend his ears
With what the last necessity has urged
On my forsaken mistress; yet I must not
Presume to say, her heart is wholly altered.

Ant. No, dare not for thy life, I charge thee dare not.
Pronounce that fatal word! 376

Octav. Must I bear this? Good Heaven, afford me
patience. [*Aside.*

Vent. On, sweet eunuch; my dear half-man, proceed.

Alex. Yet Dolabella
Has loved her long; he, next my god-like lord, 380
Deserves her best; and should she meet his passion,
Rejected, as she is, by him she loved—

Ant. Hence from my sight! for I can bear no more:
Let furies drag thee quick to hell; let all
The longer damned have rest; each torturing hand 385
Do thou employ, till Cleopatra comes;
Then join thou too, and help to torture her!

[*Exit Alexas, thrust out by Antony.*

Octav. 'Tis not well,
Indeed, my lord, 'tis much unkind to me,

To show this passion, this extreme concernment, 390
For an abandoned, faithless prostitute.

Ant. Octavia, leave me; I am much disordered:
Leave me, I say.

Octav. My lord !

Ant. I bid you leave me.

Vent. Obey him, madam: best withdraw a while,
And see how this will work. 395

Octav. Wherein have I offended you, my lord,
That I am bid to leave you? Am I false,
Or infamous? Am I a Cleopatra?
Were I she,

Base as she is, you would not bid me leave you; 400
But hang upon my neck, take slight excuses,
And fawn upon my falsehood.

Ant. 'Tis too much.
Too much, Octavia; I am pressed with sorrows
Too heavy to be borne; and you add more:
I would retire, and recollect what's left 405
Of man within, to aid me.

Octav. You would mourn,
In private, for your love, who has betrayed you.
You did but half return to me: your kindness
Lingered behind with her. I hear, my lord,
You make conditions for her, 410
And would include her treaty. Wondrous proofs
Of love to me !

Ant. Are you my friend, Ventidius?
Or are you turned a Dolabella too,
And let this fury loose?

Vent. Oh, be advised,
Sweet madam, and retire. 415

Octav. Yes, I will go; but never to return.
You shall no more be haunted with this Fury.
My lord, my lord, love will not always last,
When urged with long unkindness and disdain:
Take her again, whom you prefer to me; 420
She stays but to be called. Poor cozened man !
Let a feigned parting give her back your heart,

Which a feigned love first got; for injured me,
 Though my just sense of wrongs forbid my stay,
 My duty shall be yours. 425

To the dear pledges of our former love
 My tenderness and care shall be transferred,
 And they shall cheer, by turns, my widowed nights:
 So, take my last farewell; for I despair 429
 To have you whole, and scorn to take you half. [*Exit.*]

Vent. I combat Heaven, which blasts my best
 designs:

My last attempt must be to win her back;
 But oh! I fear in vain. [*Exit.*]

Ant. Why was I framed with this plain, honest heart,
 Which knows not to disguise its griefs and weakness, 435
 But bears its workings outward to the world?
 I should have kept the mighty anguish in,
 And forced a smile at Cleopatra's falsehood:
 Octavia had believed it, and had stayed.
 But I am made a shallow-forded stream, 440
 Seen to the bottom: all my clearness scorned,
 And all my faults exposed.—See where he comes,

Enter DOLABELLA.

Who has profaned the sacred name of friend,
 And worn it into vileness!
 With how secure a brow, and specious form 445
 He gilds the secret villain! Sure that face
 Was meant for honesty; but Heaven mismatched it,
 And furnished treason out with nature's pomp,
 To make its work more easy.

Dola. O my friend!

Ant. Well, Dolabella, you performed my message? 450

Dola. I did, unwillingly.

Ant. Unwillingly?

Was it so hard for you to bear our parting?
 You should have wished it.

Dola.

Why?

Ant.

Because you love me.

And she received my message with as true,
With as unfeigned a sorrow as you brought it ? 455

Dola. She loves you, even to madness.

Ant. Oh, I know it.

You, Dolabella, do not better know
How much she loves me. And should I
Forsake this beauty ? This all-perfect creature ?

Dola. I could not, were she mine.

Ant. And yet you first
Persuaded me: How come you altered since ? 461

Dola. I said at first I was not fit to go:
I could not hear her sighs, and see her tears,
But pity must prevail: And so, perhaps,
It may again with you; for I have promised, 465
That she should take her last farewell: And, see,
She comes to claim my word.

Enter CLEOPATRA.

Ant. False Dolabella !

Dola. What's false, my lord ?

Ant. Why, Dolabella's false,
And Cleopatra's false; both false and faithless.
Draw near, you well-joined wickedness, you serpents, 470
Whom I have in my kindly bosom warmed,
Till I am stung to death.

Dola. My lord, have I
Deserved to be thus used ?

Cleo. Can Heaven prepare
A newer torment ? Can it find a curse
Beyond our separation ?

Ant. Yes, if fate 475
Be just, much greater: Heaven should be ingenious
In punishing such crimes. The rolling stone,
And gnawing vulture, were slight pains, invented
When Jove was young, and no examples known
Of mighty ills; but you have ripened sin, 480
To such a monstrous growth, 'twill pose the gods

To find an equal torture. Two, two such !—
Oh, there's no further name,—two such ! to me,
To me, who locked my soul within your breasts,
Had no desires, no joys, no life, but you; 485
When half the globe was mine, I gave it you
In dowry with my heart; I had no use,
No fruit of all, but you: A friend and mistress
Was what the world could give. O Cleopatra !
O Dolabella ! how could you betray 490
This tender heart, which with an infant fondness
Lay lulled betwixt your bosoms, and there slept,
Secure of injured faith ?

Dola. If she has wronged you,
Heaven, hell, and you revenge it.

Ant. If she has wronged me ! 495
Thou wouldst evade thy part of guilt; but swear
Thou lov'st not her.

Dola. Not so as I love you.

Ant. Not so ? Swear, swear, I say, thou dost not love
her.

Dola. No more than friendship will allow.

Ant. No more ?
Friendship allows thee nothing: Thou art perjured— 500
And yet thou didst not swear thou lov'st her not;
But not so much, no more. O trifling hypocrite,
Who dar'st not own to her, thou dost not love,
Nor own to me, thou dost ! Ventidius heard it;
Octavia saw it.

Cleo. They are enemies. 505

Ant. Alexas is not so: He, he confessed it;
He, who, next hell, best knew it, he vowed it.
Why do I seek a proof beyond yourself ? [*To Dolabella.*
You, whom I sent to bear my last farewell,
Returned, to plead her stay.

Dola. What shall I answer ? 510
If to have loved be guilt, then I have sinned;
But if to have repented of that love
Can wash away my crime, I have repented.

Yet, if I have offended past forgiveness,
 Let not her suffer: She is innocent. 515

Cleo. Ah, what will not a woman do, who loves?
 What means will she refuse, to keep that heart,
 Where all her joys are placed? 'Twas I encouraged,
 'Twas I blew up the fire that scorched his soul,
 To make you jealous, and by that regain you. 520
 But all in vain; I could not counterfeit:
 In spite of all the dams my love broke o'er,
 And drowned my heart again: fate took the occasion;
 And thus one minute's feigning has destroyed
 My whole life's truth.

Ant. Thin cobweb arts of falsehood; 525
 Seen, and broke through at first.

Dola. Forgive your mistress.

Cleo. Forgive your friend.

Ant. You have convinced yourselves.
 You plead each other's cause: What witness have you,
 That you meant to raise my jealousy?

Cleo. Ourselves, and Heaven. 530

Ant. Guilt witnesses for guilt. Hence, love and friend-
 ship!

You have no longer place in human breasts,
 These two have driven you out: Avoid my sight!
 I would not kill the man whom I have loved,
 And cannot hurt the woman; but avoid me: 535
 I do not know how long I can be tame;
 For, if I stay one minute more, to think
 How I am wronged, my justice and revenge
 Will cry so loud within me, that my pity
 Will not be heard for either.

Dola. Heaven has but 540
 Our sorrow for our sins; and then delights
 To pardon erring man: Sweet mercy seems
 Its darling attribute, which limits justice;
 As if there were degrees in infinite,
 And infinite would rather want perfection 545
 Than punish to extent.

Ant. I can forgive
A foe; but not a mistress and a friend.
Treason is there in its most horrid shape,
Where trust is greatest; and the soul resigned,
Is stabbed by its own guards: I'll hear no more; 550
Hence from my sight for ever !

Cleo. How ? for ever !
I cannot go one moment from your sight,
And must I go for ever ?
My joys, my only joys, are centred here:
What place have I to go to ? My own kingdom ? 555
That I have lost for you: Or to the Romans ?
They hate me for your sake: Or must I wander
The wide world o'er, a helpless, banished woman,
Banished for love of you; banished from you ?
Ay, there's the banishment ! Oh, hear me; hear me, 560
With strictest justice: For I beg no favour;
And if I have offended you, then kill me,
But do not banish me.

Ant. I must not hear you.
I have a fool within me takes your part;
But honour stops my ears.

Cleo. For pity hear me ! 565
Would you cast off a slave who followed you ?
Who crouched beneath your spurn ?—He has no pity !
See, if he gives one tear to my departure;
One look, one kind farewell: O iron heart !
Let all the gods look down, and judge betwixt us, 570
If he did ever love !

Ant. No more: Alexas !

Dola. A perjured villain !

Ant. [To *Cleo.*] Your Alexas; yours.

Cleo. Oh, 'twas his plot; his ruinous design,
To engage you in my love by jealousy.
Hear him; confront him with me; let him speak. 575

Ant. I have; I have.

Cleo. And if he clear me not—

Ant. Your creature ! one, who hangs upon your smiles !

Watches your eye, to say or to unsay,
Whate'er you please ! I am not to be moved.

Cleo. Then must we part ? Farewell, my cruel lord !
The appearance is against me ; and I go, 581
Unjustified, for ever from your sight.
How I have loved, you know ; how yet I love,
My only comfort is, I know myself :
I love you more, even now you are unkind, 585
Than when you loved me most ; so well, so truly
I'll never strive against it ; but die pleased,
To think you once were mine.

Ant. Good heavens, they weep at parting !
Must I weep too ? that calls them innocent. 590
I must not weep ; and yet I must, to think
That I must not forgive.—
Live, but live wretched ; 'tis but just you should,
Who made me so : Live from each other's sight :
Let me not hear you meet. Set all the earth, 595
And all the seas, betwixt your sundered loves :
View nothing common but the sun and skies.
Now, all take several ways ;

And each your own sad fate, with mine, deplore ;
That you were false, and I could trust no more. 600

[*Exeunt severally.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMION, and IRAS.

Char. Be juster, Heaven; such virtue punished thus,
Will make us think that chance rules all above,
And shuffles, with a random hand, the lots,
Which man is forced to draw.

Cleo. I could tear out these eyes, that gained his heart,
And had not power to keep it. O the curse 6
Of doting on, even when I find it dotage !
Bear witness, gods, you heard him bid me go;
You, whom he mocked with imprecating vows
Of promised faith !—I'll die; I will not bear it. 10
You may hold me—

[She pulls out her dagger, and they hold her.]
But I can keep my breath; I can die inward,
And choke this love.

Enter ALEXAS.

Iras. Help, O Alexas, help !
The queen grows desperate; her soul struggles in her
With all the agonies of love and rage, 15
And strives to force its passage.

Cleo. Let me go.
Art thou there, traitor !—O,
O for a little breath, to vent my rage,
Give, give me way, and let me loose upon him.

Alex. Yes, I deserve it, for my ill-timed truth. 20
Was it for me to prop
The ruins of a falling majesty ?
To place myself beneath the mighty flaw,

Thus to be crushed, and pounded into atoms,
 By its o'erwhelming weight? 'Tis too presuming 25
 For subjects to preserve that wilful power,
 Which courts its own destruction.

Cleo.

I would reason

More calmly with you. Did not you o'errule
 And force my plain, direct, and open love,
 Into these crooked paths of jealousy? 30
 Now, what's the event? Octavia is removed;
 But Cleopatra's banished. Thou, thou villain,
 Hast pushed my boat to open sea; to prove,
 At my sad cost, if thou canst steer it back.
 It cannot be; I'm lost too far; I'm ruined: 35
 Hence, thou impostor, traitor, monster, devil!—
 I can no more: Thou, and my griefs, have sunk
 Me down so low, that I want voice to curse thee.

Alex. Suppose some shipwrecked seaman near the shore,
 Dropping and faint with climbing up the cliff, 40
 If, from above, some charitable hand
 Pull him to safety, hazarding himself,
 To draw the other's weight; would he look back,
 And curse him for his pains? The case is yours;
 But one step more, and you have gained the height. 45

Cleo. Sunk, never more to rise.

Alex. Octavia's gone, and Dolabella banished.
 Believe me, madam, Antony is yours.
 His heart was never lost, but started off
 To jealousy, love's last retreat and covert; 50
 Where it lies hid in shades, watchful in silence,
 And listening for the sound that calls it back.
 Some other, any man ('tis so advanced),
 May perfect this unfinished work, which I
 (Unhappy only to myself) have left 55
 So easy to his hand.

Cleo.

Look well thou do't; else—

Alex. Else, what your silence threatens.—Antony
 Is mounted up the Pharos; from whose turret,
 He stands surveying our Egyptian galleys,

Engaged with Caesar's fleet. Now death or conquest ! 60
 If the first happen, fate acquits my promise;
 If we o'ercome, the conqueror is yours.

[*A distant shout within.*

Char. Have comfort, madam: Did you mark that
 shout ? [Second shout nearer.

Iras. Hark ! they redouble it.

Alex. 'Tis from the port.

The loudness shows it near: Good news, kind heavens ! 65

Cleo. Osiris make it so !

Enter SERAPION.

Serap. Where, where's the queen ?

Alex. How frightfully the holy coward stares
 As if not yet recovered of the assault,
 When all his gods, and, what's more dear to him,
 His offerings, were at stake.

Serap. O horror, horror ! 70
 Egypt has been; our latest hour has come:
 The queen of nations, from her ancient seat,
 Is sunk for ever in the dark abyss:
 Time has unrolled her glories to the last,
 And now closed up the volume.

Cleo. Be more plain: 75
 Say, whence thou comest; though fate is in thy face,
 Which from thy haggard eyes looks wildly out,
 And threatens ere thou speakest.

Serap. I came from Pharos;
 From viewing (spare me, and imagine it)
 Our land's last hope, your navy—

Cleo. Vanquished ?

Serap. No: 80
 They fought not.

Cleo. Then they fled.

Serap. Nor that. I saw,
 With Antony, your well-appointed fleet
 Row out; and thrice he waved his hand on high,

And thrice with cheerful cries they shouted back:
 'Twas then false Fortune, like a fawning strumpet, 85
 About to leave the bankrupt prodigal,
 With a dissembled smile would kiss at parting,
 And flatter to the last; the well-timed oars,
 Now dipt from every bank, now smoothly run
 To meet the foe; and soon indeed they met, 90
 But not as foes. In few, we saw their caps
 On either side thrown up; the Egyptian galleys,
 Received like friends, passed through, and fell behind
 The Roman rear: And now, they all come forward,
 And ride within the port.

Cleo. Enough, Serapion: 95
 I've heard my doom.—This needed not, you gods:
 When I lost Antony, your work was done;
 'Tis but superfluous malice.—Where's my lord?
 How bears he this last blow?

Serap. His fury cannot be expressed by words: 100
 Thrice he attempted headlong to have fallen
 Full on his foes, and aimed at Caesar's galley:
 Withheld, he raves on you; cries,—He's betrayed.
 Should he now find you—

Alex. Shun him; seek your safety,
 Till you can clear your innocence.

Cleo. I'll stay. 105

Alex. You must not; haste you to your monument,
 While I make speed to Caesar.

Cleo. Caesar! No,
 I have no business with him.

Alex. I can work him
 To spare your life, and let this madman perish.

Cleo. Base fawning wretch! wouldst thou betray him
 too? 110

Hence from my sight! I will not hear a traitor;
 'Twas thy design brought all this ruin on us.—
 Serapion, thou art honest; counsel me:
 But haste, each moment's precious.

Serap. Retire; you must not yet see Antony. 115

He who began this mischief,
'Tis just he tempt the danger; let him clear you:
And, since he offered you his servile tongue,
To gain a poor precarious life from Caesar,
Let him expose that fawning eloquence, 120
And speak to Antony.

Alex. O heavens ! I dare not;
I meet my certain death.

Cleo. Slave, thou deservest it.—
Not that I fear my lord, will I avoid him;
I know him noble: when he banished me,
And thought me false, he scorned to take my life; 125
But I'll be justified, and then die with him.

Alex. O pity me, and let me follow you.

Cleo. To death, if thou stir hence. Speak, if thou canst,
Now for thy life, which basely thou wouldst save;
While mine I prize at—this ! Come, good Serapion. 130
[*Exeunt Cleopatra, Serapion, Charmion, and Iras.*]

Alex. O that I less could fear to lose this being,
Which, like a snowball in my coward hand,
The more 'tis grasped, the faster melts away.
Poor reason ! what a wretched aid art thou !
For still, in spite of thee, 135
These two long lovers, soul and body, dread
Their final separation. Let me think:
What can I say, to save myself from death ?
No matter what becomes of Cleopatra.

Ant. Which way ? where ? [Within.]

Vent. This leads to the monument.

[Within.]

Alex. Ah me ! I hear him; yet I'm unprepared: 141
My gift of lying's gone;
And this court-devil, which I so oft have raised,
Forsakes me at my need. I dare not stay;
Yet cannot far go hence. [Exit.]

Enter ANTONY and VENTIDIUS.

Ant. O happy Caesar ! thou hast men to lead: 146
 Think not 'tis thou hast conquered Antony;
 But Rome has conquered Egypt. I'm betrayed.

Vent. Curse on this treacherous train !
 Their soil and heaven infect them all with baseness: 150
 And their young souls come tainted to the world
 With the first breath they draw.

Ant. The original villain sure no god created;
 He was a bastard of the sun, by Nile,
 Aped into man; with all his mother's mud 155
 Crusted about his soul.

Vent. The nation is
 One universal traitor; and their queen
 The very spirit and extract of them all.

Ant. Is there yet left
 A possibility of aid from valour ? 160
 Is there one god unsworn to my destruction ?
 The least unmortgaged hope ? for, if there be,
 Methinks I cannot fall beneath the fate
 Of such a boy as Caesar.

The world's one half as yet in Antony; 165
 And from each limb of it, that's hewed away,
 The soul comes back to me.

Vent. There yet remain
 Three legions in the town. The last assault
 Lopt off the rest; if death be your design,—
 As I must wish it now,—these are sufficient 170
 To make a heap about us of dead foes,
 An honest pile for burial.

Ant. They are enough.
 We'll not divide our stars; but, side by side,
 Fight emulous, and with malicious eyes
 Survey each other's acts: So every death 175
 Thou giv'st, I'll take on me, as a just debt,
 And pay thee back a soul.

Vent. Now you shall see I love you. Not a word

Of chiding more. By my few hours of life,
I am so pleased with this brave Roman fate, 180
That I would not be Caesar, to outlive you.
When we put off this flesh, and mount together,
I shall be shown to all the ethereal crowd,—
Lo, this is he who died with Antony !

Ant. Who knows, but we may pierce through all their
troops, 185
And reach my veterans yet ? 'tis worth the 'tempting,
To o'erleap this gulf of fate,
And leave our wandering destinies behind.

Enter ALEXAS, trembling.

Vent. See, see, that villain !
See Cleopatra stamped upon that face, 190
With all her cunning, all her arts of falsehood !
How she looks out through those dissembling eyes !
How he sets his countenance for deceit,
And promises a lie, before he speaks !
Let me despatch him first. [*Drawing.*

Alex. O spare me, spare me ! 195

Ant. Hold ; he's not worth your killing.—On thy life,
Which thou may'st keep, because I scorn to take it,
No syllable to justify thy queen ;
Save thy base tongue its office.

Alex. Sir, she is gone,
Where she shall never be molested more 200
By love, or you.

Ant. Fled to her Dolabella !
Die, traitor ! I revoke my promise ! die !

[*Going to kill him.*

Alex. O hold ! she is not fled.

Ant. She is: my eyes
Are open to her falsehood ; my whole life
Has been a golden dream of love and friendship ; 205
But, now I wake, I'm like a merchant, roused
From soft repose, to see his vessel sinking,

And all his wealth cast over. Ungrateful woman !
 Who followed me, but as the swallow summer,
 Hatching her young ones in my kindly beams, 210
 Singing her flatteries to my morning wake:
 But, now my winter comes, she spreads her wings,
 And seeks the spring of Caesar.

Alex. Think not so:
 Her fortunes have, in all things, mixed with yours.
 Had she betrayed her naval force to Rome, 215
 How easily might she have gone to Caesar,
 Secure by such a bribe !

Vent. She sent it first,
 To be more welcome after.

Ant. 'Tis too plain;
 Else would she have appeared, to clear herself.

Alex. Too fatally she has: she could not bear 220
 To be accused by you; but shut herself
 Within her monument; looked down and sighed;
 While, from her unchanged face, the silent tears
 Dropt, as they had not leave, but stole their parting.
 Some indistinguished words she inly murmured; 225
 At last, she raised her eyes; and, with such looks
 As dying Lucrece cast—

Ant. My heart forebodes—

Vent. All for the best:—Go on.

Alex. She snatched her poniard,
 And, ere we could prevent the fatal blow,
 Plunged it within her breast; then turned to me: 230
 Go, bear my lord, said she, my last farewell;
 And ask him, if he yet suspect my faith.
 More she was saying, but death rushed betwixt.
 She half pronounced your name with her last breath,
 And buried half within her.

Vent. Heaven be praised ! 235

Ant. Then art thou innocent, my poor dear love,
 And art thou dead ?
 O those two words ! their sound should be divided:
 Hadst thou been false, and died; or hadst thou lived,

And hadst been true—But innocence and death ! 240
This shows not well above. Then what am I,
The murderer of this truth, this innocence !
Thoughts cannot form themselves in words so horrid
As can express my guilt !

Vent. Is't come to this? The gods have been too
gracious; 245
And thus you thank them for it !

Ant. [*To Alex.*] Why stayest thou here ?
Is it for thee to spy upon my soul,
And see its inward mourning? Get thee hence;
Thou art not worthy to behold, what now
Becomes a Roman emperor to perform. 250

Alex. He loves her still:
His grief betrays it. Good ! the joy to find
She's yet alive, completes the reconciliation.
I've saved myself, and her. But, oh ! the Romans !
Fate comes too fast upon my wit, 255
Hunts me too hard, and meets me at each double.
[Aside. Exit.

Vent. Would she had died a little sooner, though !
Before Octavia went, you might have treated:
Now 'twill look tame, and would not be received.
Come, rouse yourself, and let's die warm together. 260

Ant. I will not fight: there's no more work for war.
The business of my angry hours is done.

Vent. Caesar is at your gates.

Ant. Why, let him enter;
He's welcome now.

Vent. What lethargy has crept into your soul ? 265

Ant. 'Tis but a scorn of life, and just desire
To free myself from bondage.

Vent. Do it bravely.

Ant. I will; but not by fighting. O Ventidius !
What should I fight for now ?—my queen is dead.
I was but great for her; my power, my empire, 270
Were but my merchandise to buy her love;
And conquered kings, my factors. Now she's dead,

Let Caesar take the world,—
 An empty circle, since the jewel's gone
 Which made it worth my strife: my being's nauseous; 275
 For all the bribes of life are gone away.

Vent. Would you be taken?

Ant. Yes, I would be taken;

But, as a Roman ought,—dead, my Ventidius:
 For I'll convey my soul from Caesar's reach, 280
 And lay down life myself. 'Tis time the world
 Should have a lord, and know whom to obey.
 We two have kept its homage in suspense,
 And bent the globe, on whose each side we trod,
 Till it was dented inwards. Let him walk
 Alone upon't: I'm weary of my part. 285
 My torch is out; and the world stands before me,
 Like a black desert at the approach of night:
 I'll lay me down, and stray no farther on.

Vent. I could be grieved,

But that I'll not outlive you: choose your death; 290
 For, I have seen him in such various shapes,
 I care not which I take: I'm only troubled,
 The life I bear is worn to such a rag,
 'Tis scarce worth giving. I could wish, indeed,
 We threw it from us with a better grace; 295
 That, like two lions taken in the toils,
 We might at last thrust out our paws, and wound
 The hunters that inclose us.

Ant. I have thought on it.

Ventidius, you must live.

Vent. I must not, sir.

Ant. Wilt thou not live, to speak some good of me? 300
 To stand by my fair fame, and guard the approaches
 From the ill tongues of men?

Vent. Who shall guard mine,
 For living after you?

Ant. Say, I command it.

Vent. If we die well, our deaths will speak themselves
 And need no living witness.

Ant. Thou hast loved me, 305
 And fain I would reward thee. I must die;
 Kill me, and take the merit of my death,
 To make thee friends with Caesar.

Vent. Thank your kindness.
 You said I loved you; and in recompense,
 You bid me turn a traitor: Did I think 310
 You would have used me thus?—that I should die
 With a hard thought of you?

Ant. Forgive me, Roman.
 Since I have heard of Cleopatra's death,
 My reason bears no rule upon my tongue,
 But lets my thoughts break all at random out. 315
 I've thought better; do not deny me twice.

Vent. By Heaven I will not.
 Let it not be to outlive you.

Ant. Kill me first,
 And then die thou; for 'tis but just thou serve
 Thy friend before thyself.

Vent. Give me your hand. 320
 We soon shall meet again. Now, farewell, emperor!—
 [*Embrace.*]

Methinks that word's too cold to be my last:
 Since death sweeps all distinctions, farewell, friend!
 That's all—
 I will not make a business of a trifle; 325
 And yet I cannot look on you, and kill you;
 Pray turn your face.

Ant. I do: strike home, be sure.

Vent. Home as my sword will reach. [*Kills himself.*]

Ant. Oh, thou mistak'st;
 That wound was not of thine; give it me back;
 Thou robb'st me of my death.

Vent. I do indeed; 330
 But think 'tis the first time I e'er deceived you,
 If that may plead my pardon.—And you, gods,
 Forgive me, if you will; for I die perjured,
 Rather than kill my friend. [*Dies.*]

Ant. Farewell ! Ever my leader, even in death ! 335
 My queen and thou have got the start of me,
 And I'm the lag of honour.—Gone so soon ?
 Is Death no more ? he used him carelessly,
 With a familiar kindness: ere he knocked,
 Ran to the door, and took him in his arms, 340
 As who should say—You're welcome at all hours,
 A friend need give no warning. Books had spoiled him
 For all the learned are cowards by profession.
 'Tis not worth
 My further thought; for death, for aught I know, 345
 Is but to think no more. Here's to be satisfied.
[Falls on his sword.
 I've missed my heart. O unperforming hand !
 Thou never couldst have erred in a worse time.
 My fortune jades me to the last; and death,
 Like a great man, takes state, and makes me wait 350
 For my admittance.— *[Trampling within.*
 Some, perhaps, from Caesar:
 If he should find me living, and suspect
 That I played booty with my life ! I'll mend 354
 My work, ere they can reach me. *[Rises upon his knees.*

Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMION, and IRAS.

Cleo. Where is my lord ? where is he ?

Char.

There he lies,

And dead Ventidius by him.

Cleo. My fears were prophets; I am come too late.

O that accursed Alexas ! *[Runs to him.*

Ant.

Art thou living ?

Or am I dead before I knew, and thou

360

The first kind ghost that meets me ?

Cleo.

Help me seat him.

Send quickly, send for help ! *[They place him in a chair.*

Ant.

I am answered.

We live both. Sit thee down, my Cleopatra:

I'll make the most I can of life, to stay

A moment more with thee.

Cleo. How is it with you ? 365

Ant. 'Tis as with a man
Removing in a hurry; all packed up,
But one dear jewel that his haste forgot;
And he, for that, returns upon the spur:
So I come back for thee. 370

Cleo. Too long, ye heavens, you have been cruel to
me:

Now show your mended faith, and give me back
His fleeting life !

Ant. It will not be, my love;
I keep my soul by force.
Say but, thou art not false.

Cleo. 'Tis now too late 375
To say I'm true: I'll prove it, and die with you.
Unknown to me, Alexas feigned my death:
Which, when I knew, I hasted to prevent
This fatal consequence. My fleet betrayed
Both you and me.

Ant. And Dolabella—

Cleo. Scarce 380
Esteemed before he loved; but hated now.

Ant. Enough: my life's not long enough for more.
Thou say'st, thou wilt come after: I believe thee;
For I can now believe whate'er thou sayest,
That we may part more kindly.

Cleo. I will come: 385
Doubt not, my life, I'll come, and quickly too:
Caesar shall triumph o'er no part of thee.

Ant. But grieve not, while thou stayest,
My last disastrous times: 390
Think we have had a clear and glorious day
And Heaven did kindly to delay the storm,
Just till our close of evening. Ten years' love,
And not a moment lost, but all improved
To the utmost joys,—what ages have we lived ?
And now to die each other's; and, so dying, 395
While hand in hand we walk in groves below,

Whole troops of lovers' ghosts shall flock about us,
And all the train be ours.

Cleo. Your words are like the notes of dying swans,
Too sweet to last. Were there so many hours 400
For your unkindness, and not one for love?

Ant. No, not a minute.—This one kiss—more worth
Than all I leave to Caesar. [Dies.

Cleo. O tell me so again,
And take ten thousand kisses for that word. 405
My lord, my lord ! speak, if you yet have being ;
Sign to me, if you cannot speak ; or cast
One look ! Do anything that shows you live.

Iras. He's gone too far to hear you ;
And this you see, a lump of senseless clay, 410
The leavings of a soul.

Char. Remember, madam,
He charged you not to grieve.

Cleo. And I'll obey him.
I have not loved a Roman, not to know
What should become his wife ; his wife, my Charmion !
For 'tis to that high title I aspire ; 415
And now I'll not die less. Let dull Octavia
Survive, to mourn him dead : My nobler fate
Shall knit our spousals with a tie, too strong
For Roman laws to break.

Iras. Will you then die ?

Cleo. Why shouldst thou make that question ? 420

Iras. Caesar is merciful.

Cleo. Let him be so
To those that want his mercy : My poor lord
Made no such covenant with him, to spare me
When he was dead. Yield me to Caesar's pride ?
What ! to be led in triumph through the streets, 425
A spectacle to base plebeian eyes ;
While some dejected friend of Antony's,
Close in a corner, shakes his head, and mutters
A secret curse on her who ruined him !
I'll none of that.

Char. Whatever you resolve,
I'll follow, even to death. 430

Iras. I only feared
For you; but more should fear to live without you.

Cleo. Why, now, 'tis as it should be. Quick, my friends,
Despatch; ere this, the town's in Caesar's hands:
My lord looks down concerned, and fears my stay, 435
Lest I should be surprised;
Keep him not waiting for his love too long.
You, Charmion, bring my crown and richest jewels;
With them, the wreath of victory I made
(Vain augury!) for him, who now lies dead: 440
You, Iras, bring the cure of all our ills.

Iras. The aspics, madam?

Cleo. Must I bid you twice?

[*Exit Charmion and Iras.*]

'Tis sweet to die, when they would force life on me,
To rush into the dark abode of death,
And seize him first; if he be like my love, 445
He is not frightful, sure.
We're now alone, in secrecy and silence;
And is not this like lovers? I may kiss
These pale, cold lips; Octavia does not see me:
And, oh! 'tis better far to have him thus, 450
Than see him in her arms.—Oh, welcome, welcome!

Enter CHARMION and IRAS.

Char. What must be done?

Cleo. Short ceremony, friends;
But yet it must be decent. First, this laurel
Shall crown my hero's head: he fell not basely,
Nor left his shield behind him.—Only thou 455
Couldst triumph o'er thyself; and thou alone
Wert worthy so to triumph.

Char. To what end
These ensigns of your pomp and royalty?

Cleo. Dull, that thou art! why 'tis to meet my love;

As when I saw him first, on Cydnus' bank, 460
 All sparkling, like a goddess: so adorned,
 I'll find him once again; my second spousals
 Shall match my first in glory. Haste, haste, both,
 And dress the bride of Antony.

Char. 'Tis done.

Cleo. Now seat me by my lord. I claim this place; 465
 For I must conquer Caesar too, like him,
 And win my share of the world.—Hail, you dear relics
 Of my immortal love !
 O let no impious hand remove you hence:
 But rest for ever here ! Let Egypt give 470
 His death that peace, which it denied his life.—
 Reach me the casket.

Iras. Underneath the fruit
 The aspic lies.

Cleo. Welcome, thou kind deceiver !
 [*Putting aside the leaves.*]

Thou best of thieves; who, with an easy key,
 Dost open life, and, unperceived by us, 475
 Even steal us from ourselves; discharging so
 Death's dreadful office, better than himself;
 Touching our limbs so gently into slumber,
 That Death stands by, deceived by his own image,
 And thinks himself but sleep.

Serap. The queen, where is she ?
 [*Within.*]

The town is yielded, Caesar's at the gates. 481

Cleo. He comes too late to invade the rights of death.
 Haste, bare my arm, and rouse the serpent's fury.
 [*Holds out her arm, and draws it back.*]

Coward flesh,
 Wouldst thou conspire with Caesar to betray me, 485
 As thou wert none of mine ? I'll force thee to it,
 And not be sent by him,
 But bring, myself, my soul to Antony.

[*Turns aside, and then shows her arm bloody.*]
 Take hence; the work is done.

Serap.

Break ope the door,

[*Within.*

And guard the traitor well.

Char.

The next is ours.

490

Iras. Now, Charmion, to be worthy
Of our great queen and mistress. [*They apply the aspics.*

Cleo. Already, death, I feel thee in my veins:

I go with such a will to find my lord,

That we shall quickly meet.

495

A heavy numbness creeps through every limb,

And now 'tis at my head: My eyelids fall

And my dear love is vanquished in a mist.

Where shall I find him, where? O turn me to him,

And lay me on his breast!—Caesar, thy worst;

500

Now part us, if thou canst.

[*Dies.*

[*Iras sinks down at her feet, and dies; Charmion stands behind her chair, as dressing her head.*

Enter SERAPION, two Priests, ALEXAS bound, Egyptians.

Priest. Behold, Serapion,
What havoc death has made!

Serap.

'Twas what I feared.—

Charmion, is this well done?

Char. Yes, 'tis well done, and like a queen, the last
Of her great race: I follow her. [*Sinks down: dies.*

Alex.

'Tis true,

She has done well: Much better thus to die,

Than live to make a holiday in Rome.

Serap. See how the lovers sit in state together,
As they were giving laws to half mankind!

510

The impression of a smile, left in her face,

Shows she died pleased with him for whom she lived,

And went to charm him in another world.

Caesar's just entering: grief has now no leisure.

Secure that villain, as our pledge of safety,

515

To grace the imperial triumph.—Sleep, blest pair,

Secure from human chance, long ages out,
 While all the storms of fate fly o'er your tomb;
 And fame to late posterity shall tell,
 No lovers lived so great, or died so well. [Exeunt. 520

EPILOGUE.

POETS, like disputants, when reasons fail,
 Have one sure refuge left—and that's to rail.
 Fop, coxcomb, fool, are thundered through the pit;
 And this is all their equipage of wit.
 We wonder how the devil this difference grows, 5
 Betwixt our fools in verse, and yours in prose:
 For, 'faith, the quarrel rightly understood,
 'Tis civil war with their own flesh and blood.
 The threadbare author hates the gaudy coat;
 And swears at the gilt coach, but swears afoot: 10
 For 'tis observed of every scribbling man,
 He grows a fop as fast as e'er he can;
 Prunes up, and asks his oracle, the glass,
 If pink or purple best become his face.
 For our poor wretch, he neither rails nor prays; 15
 Nor likes your wit just as you like his plays;
 He has not yet so much of Mr. Bayes.
 He does his best; and if he cannot please,
 Would quietly sue out his *writ of ease*.
 Yet, if he might his own grand jury call, 20
 By the fair sex he begs to stand or fall.
 Let Caesar's power the men's ambition move,
 But grace you him who lost the world for love !
 Yet if some antiquated lady say,
 The last age is not copied in his play; 25
 Heaven help the man who for that face must drudge,
 Which only has the wrinkles of a judge.
 Let not the young and beauteous join with those;
 For should you raise such numerous hosts of foes,
 Young wits and sparks he to his aid must call; 30
 'Tis more than one man's work to please you all.

NOTES

THE DEDICATION

References are made to the pages

Dryden's day, together with the first half of the eighteenth century, was the golden age of patronage, private and public. For a political pamphlet a man might receive a high public office. Even more remarkable, if a youth showed just a general literary talent, he might be subsidised by a Party, and promised golden rewards in exchange for services rendered, as Addison was, while still a young fellow at college; he responded so well and with such *finesse*, that at the first night of his play *Cato*, the *élite* of both Parties applauded loudly because he stated their case so well! There is something of the same *finesse* foreshadowed in this dedication of Dryden's: the poet who celebrated Oliver Cromwell has become the King's man, and, when it is quite safe to do so, finds that he abominates Republicanism and could kill all Republicans.

The dedication exploits adroitly both kinds of patronage: it is addressed to an individual, but the burden is a zealous *apologia* for the King's Party; the monarchy is extolled and the Opposition regarded as fit only to be exterminated, and all this is done with a thoroughness, an unction, and a celerity that reveals the professional adherent, *i.e.* one who stands to gain personally by his public devotion. This indicates a darker side to the picture of enlightened patronage, *viz.* the complete dependence on the benefactor, which grew more pronounced as public patronage fell off, till we have Johnson listing the enemies of the literary man thus:—

Toil, envy, want, *the patron*, and the jail.

Dryden, however, was still able to rely on Party patronage to a large extent, but this meant keeping well in with important members of the Party. Dryden was no fool at earning his bread and butter, and Sir Thomas Osborne, Earl of Danby (1631-1712), was a splendid choice because he more or less ruled England for some years. The real nature of the patronage is incidentally indicated by the length of the statement of the King's case, as compared with that of the eulogy of Osborne; but in any case Dryden loses no chances, and dexterously combines private with public patronage by identifying the Treasurer with the cause of the monarchy; and he clinches the matter by bringing in

Danby's wife's family, who, like Danby's own, had suffered for Charles' sake, probably when Dryden was eulogising Oliver Cromwell with the same zest.

From internal evidence, then, the dedication—and this is what is relevant to the student of literature—gives us some insight into the economic status of a man of letters at the Restoration. It is midway between the fussy fawning upon individual men seen, say, in Ben Jonson's prefaces, and the curt avowal of gratitude ("To —") of a modern book, whose author depends for his success entirely upon a public audience. What is unusual is that as Dryden was a most ingenious and plausible and thorough craftsman, he includes both kinds of patronage in his carefully blended appeal.

1. Carmen . . . gerit: "He loves a song (*i.e.* a poem), whosoever does actions worthy of song."

and though ours be much the inferior part: Dryden, usually so zealous in defence of his trade, had at the same time no illusions about its economic importance; a poet, however divinely inspired, must be paid to live. By whom? The man of action. Therefore the man of action is the senior partner.

which we copy and describe from you: there is an ingenious application of "classifying" to practical issues here. The poetic art, according to the "ancients," to whom, especially Aristotle and Horace, great lipservice was paid at this time, was essentially one of Imitation. A tragedy, *e.g.*, is an imitation of a great and noble action. A poet imitates action, then. Whose action? Obviously that of the great men who keep the poet alive—here, Sir Thomas Osborne.

2-3. Your lordship's administration . . . less able hand: private flattery. Osborne's peerless qualities as Treasurer are revealed.

3-4. It is certainly . . . prerogatives of the crown: a dexterous transition from private to public eulogy. A good minister is the sign of a good king; he is the sensitive mediator between the benevolent power at the top, and the people at the bottom: thus both Osborne and Charles II. are flattered.

4-6. These, my lord . . . disturbers of his country: a well-written plea for the monarchy, on the ingenious grounds that a democracy puts too much power into the hands of a few men, on whose actions there is no check. A monarchy, on the other hand, is curbed by an unalterable constitution. There is thus no case for agitators who pretend they have not enough freedom: they have, and it is only desire for personal elevation that makes them deny it.

5. Felices . . . Angligenae: "Oh men too happy, did they but know their blessings, the men of England!" An adaptation of Vergil's

*O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint,
Agricolae!*—

which may be rendered "Oh men too fortunate, did they but know their blessings, the farmers!"

6-7. And to whom . . . most obedient servant: Dryden returns to his original theme.—Osborne, who is a conspicuous example of loyalty if only because of what his father endured for the kingly cause, along with his wife's father, the Earl of Lindsey. Osborne himself, though fortunately not in the same way, has to suffer for his loyalty. The great responsibility of his office is such that he is always bothered by other people. Dryden fears he is one of these, but says it does not matter whether he reads the play or not, as long as he retains Dryden in his patronage. This is an engagingly frank statement of what a dedication is for, although he actually says he has forgotten the dedication until it is too late to start—a very artful remark, since it implies that what has gone before has not been the usual "puff" of his benefactor, but sober historic fact! After this document there is no wonder that it is said that Dryden was a master of "the prose of persuasion."

4-5. The nature of our government . . . which must protect it: Dryden advocates a policy of isolation, which still has its followers, although Dryden did not envisage isolating about a third of the globe; in fact he sees no future in territorial conquest.

5. their old forefather: the arch-rebel, Satan himself.

the late rebellion: apparently the Shaftesbury-Monmouth plot satirised later in *Absalom and Achitophel*.

6. Every remonstrance: a foreshadowing of the doctrine of the totalitarian state in which there can be no criticism at all.

fit to adorn an heroic poem: shows the extraordinary pre-occupation with epic theory at this time. Aristotle's definitions of epic and tragedy were combined and made to apply to either; others besides Dryden were not lacking in ingenuity. This hybrid resulted in the Heroic Play, which is what Dryden may be meaning here as he calls this play a *poem*, below. Such a play was, by implication, higher than either epic or tragedy, since it contained the best qualities of both. Dryden was the chief exponent of this kind, and the underlying grandiose conception of *All for Love* owes a good deal to the "heroics" of his earlier plays.

THE PREFACE

It is Dryden's prefaces to his various works that have earned for him his great rank as a prose writer. It is rather unusual to gain such a reputation from scattered, "occasional" (*i.e.* written for a particular occasion) documents which were only intended to *introduce*, not to be the major item. There is little attempt at the systematic exposition of a general body of personal beliefs or standards. In point of fact such standards as he had were based on that French criticism which set such value on "the ancients," and yet he often goes out of his way to poke fun at these, as in this preface. His most valuable remarks are his independent and occasional and often incidental appreciations of English writers. The body of his writing is an application of the above "classical" standards to whatever work is being discussed, but the application is *from without*; we do not gather that he feels very strongly personally about these tenets. And yet—and perhaps this is why we feel he is a great prose writer—we are not bored; the matter, in the main, is stale, or dead, or over-obvious, but he somehow makes it readable. Style and content cannot really be separated, except for examination of technical features, and yet to say that a great deal of Dryden's content is dead, but his style alive, seems a useful distinction. The queer thing is that in this preface, his "content" does become more alive exactly when he is *satirising* the critics who apply "the rules" too exactly!

As a rule, in his prefaces, Dryden "spreads himself" over a variety of topics, often with a merely casual connection. The one under review, however, has a distinct rise and fall in it which we can outline. The first part is a rather tame and technical application of "the rules" to his treatment of the story, all very much from the outside. Then, implying that a poet is his own best critic, he begins a vague attack on his punctilious critics. This is where the real feeling begins, with a corresponding rise in the tone. Beginning with a wide general sweep of his quarry, like a fox he narrows his circles, with increasing vehemence and particularising, till he has isolated and exposed his prey—Rochester—without ever mentioning him directly by name. Thus a personal feud causes a quickening and rise in the movement of the essay. Everything is done within the literary framework, and there is no reference to outside affairs: in short, Dryden gives this pretentious foe a grand literary drubbing, after which the most interesting part of the essay, for us, reads like a quiet, but effective, after-climax.

Here he discusses the relationship of *All for Love* with Shakespeare, not, notice, with *Antony and Cleopatra* alone. There are probably more echoes from the other plays, than from *Antony*.

He gives a cool, dignified, and plausible defence of his deliberate imitation of the master's style.

8. The death of Antony and Cleopatra: "death" reveals a good deal about the "classical" conception of tragedy. On the Greek stage nothing happened except talk. Action was reported only. This meant that what takes up three or four acts in a play by Shakespeare could be dismissed in an introductory narrative. It was not easy or impressive to extend the life-story of the hero over whole acts, when none of the actual incidents was allowed to happen on the stage. And what happened in practice, in the interests of economy and "unity" of structure, was that only the final part of the action—the catastrophe—came *directly* within the scope of the play; the earlier parts were dismissed in introductory narrative, and alluded to throughout. By this means they were *felt as if present*—a notable saving and tightening of dramatic effect. The great French tragedians, Corneille and Racine, took this conception over, and usually made the play an account of the *last day* of the hero's life, thus crystallising very definitely the so-called Unity of Time, which then became part of the "rules" of classical criticism. Hence the point of Dryden's reference. It will be noticed that *All for Love* deals directly only with the subject of the last act and a half of *Antony and Cleopatra*. As it is, Dryden has a very hard time trying to make the time-scheme shrink into a few hours.

treated by the greatest wits of our nation: "wit" was used by that age, as we shall note again in this preface, in the modern sense of "intellect"; its application did not imply either "quick-witted" or "witty" in our sense. We are perhaps not aware (and blush at our ignorance!) that our greatest intellects between Shakespeare and Dryden each bequeathed an *Antony and Cleopatra* to posterity. The following are some of our greatest intellects: the Countess of Pembroke, who translated the French Senecan Garnier's play on the subject in 1592; Daniel, whom, by the way, Dryden uses in Act V. (1594); May, 1639; Fletcher (1620?); Sedley (1677). Two of them are before Shakespeare.

bow of Ulysses: in the story of Homer's *Odyssey* Penelope was to marry the man who could use Ulysses' bow. None of her suitors could. Dryden may mean that Shakespeare's *Antony* was the "Ulysses," and the others are ineffective imitators. At all events he is going to have a try, and "take his own measures" which means (1) use his own methods, as they have done ("variously"), and (2) match his own talent against theirs.—But he is probably thinking "This comparison with Shakespeare will 'label' me and fix my rank as a poet."

the excellency of the moral: a strong "moral" nowhere emerges from Dryden's play. It was the fashion, from Renaissance times, to read a moral into all the great works of antiquity. What Dryden seems really to mean here is that it is an excellent subject *for tragedy*, as we see from what he says next.

All reasonable . . . be pitied: these are a few deductions from Aristotle's dictum that the tragic hero should be of a noble nature, but with one fatal flaw in it. Shakespeare's tragic heroes give us this impression, so there are some grounds for Dryden's boast, "all reasonable men . . ."

Plutarch: a Greek, writer of the famous *Lives*, which he usually arranged in pairs, one Roman, one Greek, for comparison. Shakespeare bases his play chiefly on the *Life of Antony* in North's translation, with characteristic divergences. Dryden's citing of these three as his authorities is amusing. The "classics," as cannot too often be said, worshipped the ancients, so to be authentic, they must always claim some Roman or Greek as their authority. Not that this was new: Chaucer claimed as his original for *Troilus and Criseyde*, one Lollius, whom, by mistranslation of a line of Horace, he took for a historian of the Trojan wars! His research into Lollius must have been as profound as Dryden's into Appian, whose surviving 11 books on Roman History (written in Greek) do not reach as far as Actium; Dryden's play begins *after* Actium. Of course Dryden may owe his *character* of Antony, as he says here, to some extent to Appian, and also to Dion Cassius, another historian of Rome, but all this is of interest only to pedants. Dryden in the main follows Shakespeare, divergences from Plutarch and all. Only in the death scene are there some differences, and here he follows the Greek.

necessity, or fatal ignorance: Aristotle's "tragic hamatria." This, and the general consideration of the play which follows, are applications of the "rules," i.e. the precepts of Aristotle and Horace as interpreted by post-Renaissance criticism, in particular French and Italian. A good statement and application of these in English is in Rymer's *The Tragedies of the Last Age Considered*. Dryden here seems to be adopting one of Rymer's modifications of Aristotle, viz. that the passion which proves fatal to the hero should be so powerful as to be unconquerable by reason. Applying this dictum to *All for Love*, Dryden finds an inherent weakness in the story which he cannot avoid. Why he should consider the lovers' crimes "wholly voluntary" is not very clear; probably he means they acted with open eyes, and deliberately, with full knowledge of what would ensue. But it is not fair to blame the story for this weakness; there is scope for plenty of "tragic infatuation," as Shakespeare showed. The weakness is

really Dryden's own faulty dramatisation; his treatment of passion is so "reasonable" as to be merely decorous, and not impassioned.

fabric: structure.

unities of time, place, and action: this unfortunate trinity haunted critics from the Renaissance on. Aristotle actually stipulated *one* unity—plot—but some ambiguous remarks of his about the length of time to be taken were dogmatically transformed into another unity, and a third one, space, gratuitously added. Dryden himself is rather apologetic about them and in fact he takes the same attitude, that the English stage is immune from the two added unities, in his *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*. Playwrights who tried to follow these rules had a terrible time trying to make the scene the same throughout their play. The absurdities they were forced into are amusingly analysed in John Dennis' strictures on Addison's "regular" tragedy *Cato*. Nevertheless it was considered in itself a great virtue to observe the Unities, which shows how seriously the laws were taken, and how much it was a matter of applying them from the outside, instead of the structure's being organic—*i.e.* organised from within—as in Shakespeare's tragedies

it is the only of the kind without episode: this is demonstrably untrue: A. W. Verrall (*Lectures on Dryden*) suggests a comma after only, in which case "the only" means "there is only *one* action in the play." Unity of plot was the unity stipulated by Aristotle. Shakespeare was blamed for having sub-plots in his tragedies. The limitations of the "rules" are revealed by this stricture. The condemned scenes in Shakespeare *do* conduce "to the main design"; "plot" was interpreted as meaning strictly the *story*, whereas in Shakespeare it means the *structure* of the play, which is a real unity, however many the subsidiary stories.

every act concluding with a turn of it: according to classical canons, every tragedy should have 5 movements, each of which must be confined in one act. Shakespeare has the movements, but not the act limit; they were (1) Exposition, (2) Complication, (3) Crisis or climax, (4) Dénouement or unravelling, where the tide begins to turn against the hero, (5) Catastrophe. Dryden surely does not mean that every act ends *with* one of these phases, but that every act *completes* one of them.

8-9. The greatest error... were both women: Dryden modestly apologises for introducing Octavia because she distracts pity from the two tragic protagonists. Here we have a revealing example of the limitations of this type of criticism: Dryden criticises even his own work *from outside*. This does not augur too well for his method of composition: a play is not a recipe

with a set number of ingredients. A critic may perhaps be pardoned for such a mistake, but a dramatist should know better. A play is an organism. The real test of this particular scene is whether it is successful. Scott thought it was coarse and degraded the general level of the play. Dryden anticipates the criticism, but defends his "vigour" against the coldness of the French method, where dignity must not be compromised. Our objection would probably be that there is too much of this same French politeness in Dryden's scene; more natural outbursts would make the quarrellers more like women; as it is their icy and deliberate "cattiness" makes them vulgar and unpleasant in the worst way of all—the "refined" way.

9-10. It is true, some actions . . . than of the poet: Dryden here, following Rymer, discusses the selection of material and language necessary for stage production; clearly, he says, some actions, though "natural," are either too trivial or too coarse to stage. Where "coarseness" (*i.e.* this scene between Octavia and Cleopatra) is to be staged, delicacy must be used, but only up to a point: to be particular beyond that point is only hypocrisy, and people who are shocked at coarseness which is not meant have something wrong with them. He is here defending this scene against the affected attacks of his "sucking critics," shows, as he usually does, good sense, and disdains to take note of petty objections which are only punctiliousness masquerading as criticism.

10. "Nous ne sommes . . . croit: Montaigne, the first and greatest essayist, was an exposé of the absurdities of human conduct. "We are made up entirely of ceremony, which carries us beyond ourselves so that we leave behind the concrete reality. We hang on to the branches, losing sight of the trunk and the body. We have taught our women to blush at the mere mention of what they think nothing of doing. We dare not name the parts of our body openly and yet we use them for all sorts of depravity. Ceremony will not have us mention by word of mouth things which are perfectly normal and natural, and we obey it. Commonsense tells us not to have anything to do with evil and depravity, and we promptly take no notice of it."

9-11. Yet in this nicety . . . Monsieur Hippolyte: Dryden hits out at the over-refinement of the French dramatists, who take the body out of story and characters and so make them colourless, all in the interests of good breeding. He gives an example from Racine's *Phèdre*, in which Hippolytus refuses to betray his stepmother when, having failed to gain his love, she accuses him to his father of having made love to her. Dryden shows that Hippolytus' quibbling over points of conduct when a great stain lies on his character is not "natural" but the act of

a madman with no sense of proportion: thus, instead of a strong man, Hippolytus is represented as a French man of fashion, occupied with frills and frippery, and not with essentials.

11. our Chedreux critics: here begins Dryden's general attack on his enemies, which he narrows down gradually to his arch-enemy, Rochester. Chedreux was the name of a fashionable wig-maker, and the name was transferred to the wigs. Dryden himself affected a *Chedreux* in his affluence; he uses the word here, of course, in the sense of "effeminate."

as universal as Aristotle: Aristotle was worshipped at the Renaissance, not so much for his philosophy, the popularity of which, indeed, suffered a reverse from its high esteem in the Middle Ages, as for his scientific classifications, both in the Sciences and in the Arts. Dryden is here making the doubtful claim that a poet is the best judge of poetry, except for such men of all-round judgment as Aristotle.

12. if I come closer: Dryden observes how "the wits" are never of one mind, in fact they are particularly severe on all the rest: the noose is tightening round Rochester's entourage.

Poetry . . . please: there are three words here which are inseparable and ubiquitous in Renaissance and eighteenth-century criticism: (1) picture, (2) nature, (3) please. The last one we can soon dispose of: poetry, according to Horace, must please, and not merely and baldly "instruct." But to make a coherent synthesis out of (1) and (2) we have first to decide what precise meanings were given to them, and this is impossible. Aristotle defined art as an imitation (*i.e.* a picture) of Nature. The phrase "caught on" and was heavily discussed in the Renaissance, each phase of which tended to give it a different shift of meaning. To Dryden's "classical" school it seemed to mean, to judge from its practice, a *generalising* of the particular: to the "Romantics" it meant a heavy emphasis on the *particular*.

An apposite illustration is before us. Compare the whole conception of *Antony and Cleopatra* with that of *All for Love*. One is crammed full of concrete particulars, both in language and in action, and the other eliminates any particularising of action or of expression of emotion: everything is carried on in general terms and we miss the sharp concreteness and physical evocations of Shakespeare.

Dryden is here, however, not so much concerned with the theory of poetry as with applying the dictum to deny his critics' validity of judgment. His arguments are not convincing.

12-16. Men of pleasant conversation . . . imperfections of his mistress: Rochester, once a friend but now an enemy, is aimed

at here. He accuses Rochester thus: (p. 12) Instead of being thankful for his high rank and estates, he must try to be a poet as well. Dryden takes the view that poets only write because they are poor, and so Rochester is a fool; his business is to patronise, not write. He gives examples (pp. 13, 14) of rulers who have tried their hand at poetry, setting themselves up against the "professionals," but even though they always won (if not, they killed the victor, as in Lucan's case) they only made themselves ridiculous. A great man should forget his own bad verses as Maecenas did (p. 14) and *patronise* poets (e.g. Horace and Vergil), not emulate them. Rochester is regarded, with heavy sarcasm, as even worse than an emulator; he is a persecutor, and not only of Dryden. He wrote a poem called *Allusion to the Tenth Satire of Horace*, in which he changed over from being Dryden's friend, to being his enemy. Dryden charges him with degrading his original, Horace, and with publishing the *Allusion* anonymously (p. 15).

12. Rarus . . . Fortunâ: "For common sense is as a rule rare in that rank of life." This seems, from the context, what Dryden understood the meaning to be. In Juvenal, however, from whose Eighth Satire the quotation is taken, *communis sensus* means "a consciousness of the common humanity of all members of society," not "common sense."

14. him who had thirty legions: periphrasis for a king, referring actually to Hadrian, used several times by the Roman poets, and by Bacon (Apophthegm 26).

that grinning honour: a prose-debt to Shakespeare, *Henry IV., Part I.* Falstaff: "I like not such grinning honour as Sir Walter hath" (Sir Walter being dead).

their little zanies: this is an apposite hit at Rochester, who once, being out of favour, attracted public attention by setting up as an astrologer. Everybody was deceived. A zany is a clown.

15. Crispinus: a poetaster satirised by Horace, and here identified by Dryden as the bore Horace met on the Holy Way (*Satires*, I., 9). Dryden says Horace would loathe Rochester even more than he did the bore. To show his own superior learning, Dryden adds a few quotations.

Demetri . . . cathedras: "You, Demetrius, and you, Tigellius, I bid go whine among your pupils' chairs."

Saxum . . . arvis: "A stone ancient and huge, . . . placed as a boundary-stone in a field, to keep away litigation from the ploughlands."

Genua . . . ictum: "His knees sink, his chill blood has congealed with cold. Next the very stone he has cast, tossed through the empty air, has not covered the whole of the intervening space, nor borne home its blow."

the twelve-penny gallery: this, as one can guess, was where the cheapest seats in the theatre were. Dryden apparently means that Rochester's judgment was as low as that of the frequenters of these seats.

Sternhold: the prototype of the bad poet. He versified the Psalms, with John Hopkins (sixteenth century). Dryden seems fond of the term—he uses it in the *Essay of Dramatic Poesie* and in *Regligio Laici*.

behind the lion's skin: the ass disguised himself as a lion, all except his bray.

the magistrates: apparently a reference to Rochester's *Allusion*, where he gives the names of those whose criticism he values, among them Shadwell and Buckingham, both Dryden's enemies.

16. Vellem . . . honestum: "I could wish that we blundered thus in friendship, and that good feeling had bestowed on such a blunder an honourable name."

a slow man hasty: a reference to the *Allusion*—"But hasty Shadwell and slow Wycherley"—referring to the time they took to compose. Dryden's point is, that it is forgivable, even praiseworthy, to gloss over faults in a friend by giving them a softer name; but quite unforgivable to praise them for virtues which they conspicuously lack, this being one of the methods of satire. For example, it is both absurd and unkind to call an old and decrepit dog by a name which implies qualities he no longer possesses.

Canibus . . . violentius: "Sluggish dogs, bare from long-standing mange, and licking the opening of a dry lamp (sc. for oil), will be called "Panther," "Tiger," "Lion," or the name of any fiercer beast that may rage on the face of the earth."

Nigra . . . est, etc.: "A woman of dark complexion is 'a nut-brown maid' (literally, 'honey-coloured'), one that is a slattern and smelly is 'careless.' If she stammers, and cannot speak distinctly, she 'lisps'; if she is dumb, she is 'modest' . . ."

Ad Aethiopem cygnum: "To calling the black man Snowball (literally, "to the Ethiop Swan")." Another example of "commending . . . by contraries."

Vos exemplaria . . . diurna: "Turn the pages of the Greek models by night and by day."

16-17. Dryden recovers from his digression and gives an account of the models of his play.

their models are regular: *i.e.* conformed to all the "rules." Dryden, as in the *Essay on Dramatic Poesie*, exempts our stage from a too strict application of the rules, because we build on a larger scale. Thus his play is based on "the practice of the ancients," as every good play should be, according to Horace and the neo-classicists, but liberties can be taken, if he likes.

I reserve it—hereafter: Dryden wrote a play on *Oedipus Tyrannus*, a poor one. He usually degraded his models, as in his travesty of *Paradise Lost*. *All for Love* is by way of being an exception.

17. disencumbered myself from rhyme: Dryden's Heroic plays before this were written in the Heroic couplet, and *All for Love* is almost his first venture in blank verse. The result shows what a good craftsman he was: there is no trace of 'prentice work in the verse, whatever its other limitations. He defends rhymed verse for plays in the *Dramatic Poesie* essay, which would repay study in connection with the matter in this preface and with his whole theory of play writing.

Ben Jonson: "though thou hadst small Latin and less Greek."

to handle the difference of styles: Dryden does this in his Preface to *Troilus and Cressida*. The subject of Dryden's debt to Shakespeare is dealt with in the Introduction, and in relevant places in the text. The modesty of his claims here, combined somehow with calm assurance, seems to have disarmed many critics. It is true that Dryden is easily first among the misguided imitators of Shakespeare's drama, and it is also true that the style of *All for Love* is "genuine"—*i.e.* Dryden writes naturally in it: but these are different things from saying that he is equal to, or even surpasses, his model, as is said surprisingly commonly. A typical judgment is that Shakespeare's play is more *pathetic*, but Dryden's more *tragic*. This heresy will be dealt with at appropriate places in the notes: here the obvious fact can be pointed out that the whole texture of Dryden's verse is thinner and of more common material; the verse is on a much lower level of intensity and vitality; in fact, in general the two illustrate the difference between *poetry* and *rhetoric*. But A. W. Verrall actually preferred parts of the "Cydnos" passage to the famous corresponding one in Shakespeare. A recent critic, Mr. F. R. Leavis, has subjected the two to a close examination and established in detail the obvious superiority of Shakespeare. And this is a favourable specimen of Dryden's blank verse; it is also a "set" imitation of the Shakespeare passage—a

departure from his usual method of *echoes*, and *coining* with the same dies. This is his nearest approach to "servile copying" and is clearly an attempt to "take his measure" by the greater poet. In general he avoids close parallels, and, by his reshuffling of characters and motives, is able to avoid repetition of situation. Where this is inevitable—*e.g.* in the death scene—his parallels are, significantly enough, not with Shakespeare, but with Daniel.

PROLOGUE

References are made to lines of the text: thus 1-18 means lines 1 to 18

Dr. Johnson, in his *Life of Dryden*, acutely points out the distinct achievement in their own kind of the prologue and epilogue. They are remarkably and sharply *alive*. The success of Dryden in this colloquial stab-and-thrust style contrasts significantly with the unreal grandiosity of the inflated "heroic" style he uses in his plays. This habit of style persists to some extent in *All for Love*, though it is purified greatly by the much higher stimulus he received and the resources he was drawing on there—*i.e.* Shakespeare. The chief interest in the Prologue, however, is its *tone*. In the essay called *A parallel between poetry and painting*, he said, "I never writ anything for myself but Antony and Cleopatra." And it is safe to say that it is an exception to his other plays which were definitely "commercial." But he makes no mistake about his Prologue, which is an open appeal to the popular taste, written in a corresponding key. Shakespeare's tragic heroes in the later plays are often subjected to indignity and mockery, cruel or kindly: *e.g.* *Lear*, and to some extent *Antony and Cleopatra*. But this is done *inside* the play, and for definite reasons. But Dryden deliberately lowers the tone of the heroics he takes so seriously *in* the play, before the play starts. The contrast between the Antony of the prologue (ll. 10-15) and that of the play is incredible. The jeering flippant tone of this remarkably clever pin's head survey of Antony's character really discounts the seriousness of the play that follows: it surely indicates that once more, though Dryden *was* writing for himself, the approach was from the outside.

1-18. He admits the faded and hackneyed material of the play.

19-30. But begs for an open mind: only small minds cavil at petty faults.

31-40. Surfeited with the harvest of plays that has now past, the critic may like the humble fare now offered. (One hopes he means the Elizabethan harvest, but suspects he means the Restoration products of the forcing-house.)

7. Dryden had favoured rhyme for plays (see *Dramatic Poesie*) but used both after *All for Love*.

10-11. Marlowe's blustering hero type was revived in the Heroic play: Dryden is here joking at the tameness of Antony as compared with his earlier heroes.

15. **Tonies**: a punning reference back to Antony. It was a current colloquialism for a half-wit (cf. Tony Lumpkin in *She Stoops to Conquer*).

18. **mistress true**: this prepares us for the new slant on Cleopatra. The adjective hardly fits Shakespeare's heroine.

22. **Hectors**: bullies. Something more definite would be called up in the audience's mind than in ours: the town was full of organised gangs of these Hectors.

28. A fine strong line, with perfect economy of thought and expression.

33-34. This is strangely like Crabbe, the last great figure of the school.

When one huge wooden bowl before them stood
 Fill'd with huge balls of farinaceous food;
 With bacon, mass saline, where never lean
 Beneath the brown and bristly rind was seen;
 When from a single horn the party drew
 Their copious draughts of heavy ale and new:—

34. the **homely rasher**: a curious hybrid of realism (rasher) and that habit of generalising and labelling which was typical of the "classical" school's interpretation of "imitating nature."

ACT I.

There is only one scene in each act. This is demanded by the Unity of Place and by the Unity of Time. There may be a break in time between the acts, but not during them. There was a controversy whether the dramatist was allowed twelve hours for the action of the play to work itself out in, or twenty-four. At all events the illusion of reality must not be broken by time gaps during the actual presentation of the action. This theory is another example of the entirely *external* application of the "rules." The dramatists thought the audience could be gulled into accepting as true and real what it saw, as long as it was not shocked into disbelief and scepticism by seeing the scene change before its eyes, or by seeing the hero a boy in one act and a man in the next. (Dr. Johnson exposes very forcefully

the fallacy of this naïve reasoning in the Preface to his edition of Shakespeare.) In fact the whole basis of the "classical" theory of drama was the audience; it was a dummy out of which were to be extracted the correct responses. Aristotle said that tragedy should awaken pity and horror. The dramatists therefore prescribed and dispensed a dose which they imagined would produce the right effect. This dose, if efficacious, was *therefore* a good play. It will thus be seen that playwriting by these theorists was in effect an early example of the use of Advertisement, in which the public is always the victim, out of whom is extracted whatever the advertisers desire. It would be interesting to see a revival of these Heroic Plays, so long forgotten; maybe the public, recognising the ingredients it had been told about beforehand, *would* obligingly simulate the correct response, as it does in many other cases.

All for Love, however, while remaining Heroic in conception, pulls away from that musical-comedy type by attempting to revive the Elizabethan type of play for new dramatic material; tidied up, of course, and toned down. This bastard type was a feature of the eighteenth century theatre.

This act forms the Exposition of the play: *i.e.* it explains the situation, both public and private; it also shows the springs of action out of which the "plot" is to develop: Antony's intentions are reversed by the end of the act, which naturally causes a *complication*, to be dealt with in Act two.

1-30. Shakespeare often paints in the "atmosphere" of his tragedy in the opening lines (e.g. *Macbeth*); moreover, he indicates of what nature the tragedy is to be.* Dryden tries his own hand at it here, but it appears as a deliberate device. The passage is quite well written—the descriptions are competent—but the method is *narrative* rather than *dramatic*, *static* instead of *dynamic*, at least by contrast with the first scene in *Macbeth*. We can see through the intention too easily; there is too much narrative detail, which concentrates attention on the "prodigy" *for its own sake*, so that we do not notice what it is meant to foreshadow.

2. lost their name: *i.e.* are so common that they cannot be called unnatural events. Compare *Macbeth*:

Malcolm. What's the newest grief?

Ross. That of an hour's age doth hiss the speaker;
Each minute teems a new one.

* Compare the storm in *Julius Caesar*, which stands for a conflict between two mighty forces; or the portents in *Macbeth* (horses eating each other, etc.), which bring out the *unnaturalness* of the murder.

6. **watched it:** presumably the awe-struck slaves *had* watched it and *then* run; they could not easily do both at the same time.

8. **water-mark:** the usual limit of the river's expansion.

9. **scaly herd:** "poetic diction," or, the habit of periphrasis; typical of "classical" poetry and originating in Milton.

10. **phocae:** seals.

13. **sea horses:** hippopotami.

Enter Alexas: he is brought on and kept mute for a while to draw our attention to him and give him an air of secrecy and mystery. As far as there is any "motivation" in the play, apart from changes in action produced by the conflict of character, seen in Antony's continual *volte faces*, it is done by Alexas, who seems to be a genuine patriot, rather harassed by the mad changes of policy of the hero and heroine, and attempting to restore the balances by even madder strategies. At all events, Dryden turns the limelight on him thus early in the play to try to give him the appropriate amount of significance.

24. **the boy king:** the youngest son of the last Ptolemy, made joint ruler with Cleopatra, by Caesar. Cleopatra, however, did not like him and had him killed. A lively account of this episode is to be found in Bernard Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra*.

25. **peal of groans:** a "stock" attempt to make our flesh creep (but "peal" suggests something harmonious, and not repulsive).

26. **then followed:** an even tamer conclusion.

lamentable: lamenting, but indicating that what the voice said was lamentable.

27. **ran back:** to his heart, and left him white.

30. A flat line, which rounds off a flat description, too imperfectly realised and generally described to produce any effect of horror on the reader; it is rhetorical, and there is no varied movement inside the verse to indicate tension, climax, or strong emotion. Compare with this view, Sir Walter Scott's: he calls it "the sublime and terrific description of an omen presaging the downfall of Egypt."

33. Alexas is jibing at priestly propaganda, which strikes fear by a show of magic.

36-7. He becomes more impolite than ever, saying that the dream was the result of indigestion, itself the result of gluttony. Shakespeare also stresses the decadent and voluptuous state of Alexandrian society, but Dryden makes no further use of the theme: which indeed would be out of place in the general high level of abstraction of the play. We hardly think of Cleopatra and Antony as real people who eat and get drunk and so on . . .

Chaucer was peculiarly interested in the causes of dreams; he advances as one cause that they are "engendered from repletion."

40-69. Tells the audience what they need to know about the state of affairs. The Romans, although they won at Actium, are strangely inactive, and Antony is "pondering in his tent." On all sides the outlook for Egypt's independence is gloomy. Antony had taken the East as his part of the world-division when he had become reconciled to Octavius and married the latter's sister, Octavia (Treaty of Brundisium, 40 B.C.). See lines 66-9. Alexandria was, then, a rival empire to Rome's.

48. **what Actium lost:** Dryden begins his play at the end of Antony's tether: Shakespeare stages the previous events of the Egyptian story. Actium was lost because Cleopatra's navy, led by Cleopatra herself, fled from the battle. Antony followed. See the later allusions.

51. **can:** used absolutely, in the sense of "can do." Maecenas and Agrippa do not come into Dryden's play, but are among the "supers" in Shakespeare's.

52. **his foes:** Antony's, of course.

60. **Isis' temple:** Isis was the moon-goddess, a symbol of fertility, worshipped in Egypt.

61. **we much fear:** if Antony breaks off from the "enchanting queen" Egypt will again become a Roman province. Alexas, a good nationalist, is naturally concerned at the prospect.

65. **scarceness of their soil:** (1) Italy is small; or, (2) the soil is poor; or, (3) there is little soil in Italy (all rock, compared with the Nile Delta?).

67. **dominion's other seat:** a Shakespearian coinage, which also sounds Miltonic.

68. **Colossus:** cf. *Julius Caesar*:

"Why, man, he doth bstride the narrow world
Like a colossus."

The Colossus was one of the wonders of the ancient world, a huge statue, supposed to straddle across the harbour at Rhodes.

70-4. Alexas makes a strong protest against histories being determined by a few power-drunk intriguers, but unfortunately the only way a nation can maintain itself is to tie itself to one of them. This summarises in a few words Alexas' political position and makes plausible his complex manoeuvrings with all parties later on. Alexas' outburst here is rather surprising, because it is a very sane view of the whole business of the heroics and supermen which Dryden himself is so fond of. If he had made more of the theme later on, through Alexas, the play, and Alexas, would have gained in richness and significance.

A somewhat similar attitude, which may have given Dryden the hint, is voiced by Ventidius in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act. III., Sc. I., though he is concerned with the relation of the ambitious *private* individual and the war-lord, and not of a *nation*. *E.g.*

Who does i' the wars more than his captain can
Becomes his captain's captain, and ambition,
The soldier's virtue, rather makes choice of loss
Than gain which darkens him.

Alexas' is still the attitude of the "plain man," and so is his solution—"let them take it out of each other."

72-3. "Our *desire* (to kill these tyrants off) is strong enough, in fact much stronger than our *power* to do so."

75. Oh, she dotes: cf. *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act. I., Sc. I.

and she, sweet lady, dotes,
Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry.

77. A good image: ivy both clings and destroys. Shakespeare in his maturity would have given the same image in a word or two and enriched it with other associations. The line illustrates revealingly Dryden's straightforward, overt, non-allusive, and complete-in-itself method of composition, as contrasted with Shakespeare's compressed lines, with different levels of meaning and richness of association.

81. The repetition of "this" is meant to indicate how deeply Alexas feels about the self-contradictory situation.

84. Far . . . centre: a forceful expression, but nothing more than forceful in Dryden (where it may be a *Paradise Lost* reminiscence). *Antony and Cleopatra* abounds with these "world images," and here the imagery gives the effect of the mighty world's being a toy for these supermen to play with, irresponsibly: they set the "scale" of the play; the men are as big as the world, and its opposite parts are mentioned casually as if they were only a step away. Dryden has, as we shall see, a number of (unconscious?) reflections of this imagery, especially in this act, and the fifth. But the difference is that they do not build up to anything like the same extent the vision of play-boy Titans tossing the globe about. Where they are striking—as they often are—they are so merely for the visions of size *in itself* which they conjure up; i.e. they are additions *to* the "situation," not an integral part of it.

89. erected look: Ventidius holds himself erect. A Shakespearean coinage.

90. Ventidius: he appears in only one scene in Shakespeare—Act III., Sc. I., where he is used to introduce a new attitude to the "overlords" and shrewdly to detract from their supposedly-world-shattering achievements. Dryden "lifts" him and turns

him into Fidelity who at the same time warns and comforts. In essence he is an adaptation of the "subsidiary" hero of French classical plays, the hero's "confidant." Scaeva in Fletcher's *The False One* (on the *Cleopatra* theme), Ahenobarbus in Shakespeare's *Antony*, and Dorax in Dryden's own *Don Sebastian* are parallels. The "quarrel" scene in which he now figures derives from the similar scene between Brutus and Cassius in *Julius Caesar*; there is a similar scene between Dorax and Sebastian in a later play by Dryden, *Don Sebastian*. He seems fond of "man-to-man" scenes, and remarks at the end of the preface that he prefers "the scene between Antony and Ventidius in the first act, to anything which I have written in this kind." It is not easy, however, to see in what way it is better than any other. Scott praises the characterisation of Ventidius, and says the blunt old Roman stamp emerges finely in him.

96-107. Dryden is trying to do two things in this speech (1) praise Ventidius, (2) show that he is coming to change things. Thus Alexas has to praise and hate him thoroughly in the same speech—hence its unplausibility.

96. Cilicia: Antony first met Cleopatra at Tarsus.

98. mortal: deadly.

99. "Let me show that I can be open-minded and appreciate merit even in one I hate." But the two views of Ventidius do not hang together, in spite of this attempt to reconcile them.

102. He . . . pleasures: he was never present at Antony's orgies. There are numerous allusions to these in *Antony and Cleopatra*, and a full staging of one in Act II., Sc. VII.

105. This was about the time when the older generation began to talk about "the good old days" of Rome. Horace, a little later, holds up the rugged forefathers of Rome as shining examples of manly virtue.

113. He . . . Cleopatra: "So he certainly will not see you."

118. bids it pass: dismiss it contemptuously: see l. 122.

115-22. Heroics.

123. Virtue's his path: this is a very partial view of Antony and is nowhere borne out by history; nor, for that matter, is his "virtue" noticeably *positive* in this play. The remark reveals Dryden's intention of making Antony respectable to fit in more with the "heroic" conception of the hero, torn between duty and love, in the manner of French tragedies.

131-2. Antony, as a super-man, is very severe on any relics of human weakness he may have.

202-8. This opening speech unexpectedly bears out Dryden's jeering remark in the Prologue—"weeps much." It is full of maudlin self-pity. Shakespeare's heroes sometimes so indulged when they knew all was over; e.g. *Othello's*, "*Soft you, a word or two before you go . . .*"; but we see them in all their manhood first. Dryden reverses the process: Antony is a broken man, and Ventidius restores him.

They tell me: suggests definite melancholia: cf. *Lear* (Act IV., Sc. VI.):

They told me I was everything; 'tis a lie.

No wonder Ventidius finds it "wondrous mournful" !

211-12. Antony has hoggishly wasted his powers in youth instead of living temperately and so retaining their force in his old age: wanting: needy.

213. **the tempest:** Ventidius' view is rather biased. Everything Antony has said yet has been feeble, and in a low key—nothing to suggest a *tempest*, or a *struggle*.

215. **Lie there:** Antony throws himself down on the ground as a terrific gesture of torment. This is a curious "lifting" of a stock incident of the Senecan-Marlovian type of drama from which the "heroic" drama borrowed some of its rant and violence. The device is more artistically used in *Othello*, where Othello's passion of jealousy is so powerful that it is unable to find utterance in speech and he falls to the ground in a fit. Here again we see, in Dryden, the attempt to be impressive at all costs,—here, against the evidence of Antony's previous behaviour.

216-17. Cf. Webster: *Duchess of Malfi*:

Much you had of land and rent;

Your length in clay's now competent.

Dryden, however, carries the image a stage further—into the urn.

220. **Octavia:** Antony's wife, sister of Octavian, whom he married to patch up a peace with Caesar. See *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act II., Sc. II.

221. This sentiment does not sound like Ventidius'. In fact the whole speech is untypical; we are to imagine him so affected by Antony's "weeping much" that he carries on in exactly the same strain as Antony's. The lines 215-26 are representative of the whole play; their tone is *elegiac*, not of *passionate tragedy*. There is a good deal of mournful recapitulation of the past, a *marmoreal* effect, a luxurious abandonment to pity and tears. There is more of this elegiac strain in *Antony and Cleopatra* than is usual in Shakespeare, but there it is an emotional contrast (both his hero and heroine are very emotional and subject to sudden reversals) to the fierce living of the play; there, the

240. *As You Like It*:—

... anon a careless herd,
Full of the pasture, jumps along by him . . .

242. fellow-citizen: probably suggested by the same part of *As You Like It*—" Being native *burghers* of this desert city."

243. Antony is deliberately cultivating the image. He talks of it as if someone else were the begetter of it. Indeed, the whole passage shows how he *dramatises himself*. Compare *Richard II*. It is significant that most of the parallels of characterisation come, not from *Antony and Cleopatra* or other late plays, but from Shakespeare's early plays, where characterisation is still (comparatively) rudimentary.

246-7. " I am now more like what I was then than you are."

245-9. This is meant to be lofty repartee, each brief word full of pent-up emotion. Ventidius " returns " Antony's remarks as squabbling children do (" You're a liar ! " " So are you ! " etc.). But the effect is hardly even laconic, just flat: e.g. " I'm angry." " So am I."

252. Ventidius regards Antony as almost divine. In *Antony and Cleopatra* the chief characters act like demi-gods. Antony himself was supposed to be familiar with Hercules, a demi-god. (" 'Tis the god Hercules, whom Antony lov'd, Now leaves him.")

253. All that's wretched: Antony is not feeling very " god-like."

255. I dare not: Ventidius thinks it is his sacred duty to " reclaim " Antony, and so he dare not disobey it.

257. so far: Ventidius had come from Parthia, where he had won victories as Antony's lieutenant (see above). Notice the faulty position of *so far* which makes its meaning ambiguous.

263. my mother: cf. *King Henry V.*, " And all my mother came into my eyes." Refers, of course, to the proverbial tenderness and pity of a mother. Dryden (" *her softness* ") makes it appear that Ventidius is thinking of his own mother, although the phrase was not usually used in this personal sense: " my mother " = my pity. " A fit of the mother " was hysteria.

266-7. *As You Like It*:—

... and the big round drops
Coursed one another down his innocent nose
In piteous chase.

Here it is the deer who is weeping, so it is rather disadvantageous to Ventidius' dignity to remember the parallel. Dryden has made full use of Jaques and his deer.

281. Refers to the popular belief about the cause of nightmares.

288. Cleopatra fled first at Actium. Antony probably means he fled before his soldiers did. Julius Caesar may have lost a battle, but he did at least "fight it out."

295-311. Ventidius tries hard to make Antony "confess" and so give his strong emotions release. Previously he would not speak to anyone but himself and Ventidius knows this will wear him down and ruin him utterly. The emotional exchanges between the two men release Antony's pent-up self-recrimination in a flood. It is a fine overflow, in the same elegiac vein as before, but much richer and more sensuous and more like *Antony and Cleopatra*.

298. purple greatness: a rich-seeming image; Dryden may be thinking only of the use of purple garments as a sign of high-place; but possibly also of the rich physical associations of the word, in which case it refers back to *vintage* in l. 295; compare Keats' "purple-stained mouth." In spite of the glow of the passage, one misses the "concrete" sensuousness of Shakespeare: the whole is general in effect; the images are not clear and "physical": the "glow" is diffuse and phosphorescent. Nevertheless it is a splendid piece of sustained oratory. The burden of it is in lines 211-12 (see notes, above).

314. by others: Ventidius means Cleopatra: he blames her for everything including this mood of self-accusation.

316. would: would like to.

317. distempered: out of order, ill.

319. officious: not used in the modern derogatory sense of "too official," but as "fondly trying to be of use." Antony says, "You are so fond of me you have lost your sense of reality; it is like trying to revive a dead man."

325-7. We have already had this in line 122. Antony is apt to repeat himself; he is not very prolific in ideas.

329. Antony killed Cicero (43 B.C.), who offered only a "passive resistance."

331. and so resolve: "I have decided to kill myself."

335. 'tis you (that) dream: "that" would make the line read as an alexandrine (six stresses). The omission gives the first half of the line added emphasis.

330. miscalled philosophy: Antony has made a good deal of capital out of his philosophic indifference to the world; he has "seen through" its delights. Ventidius is right in deciding that Antony is not convincing as a philosopher.

340. marches: boundaries (cf. the Welsh Marches): it is ultimately the same as "mark."

342. *chopt*: Shakespeare uses it as a variant of "chapped," but Dryden more probably means that they have actually had bits chopped off in battle. "Chapped" hands ensue from cold and damp, but they have had to suffer "heat and hunger."

virtue: power, strength, not necessarily *moral* goodness.

343-4. Although they are disfigured with long campaigns, they will be too good for Caesar's soldiers, well-clothed though they may be.

351. I'm besieged: cf. ll. 41-3.

359. They said: this repetition for emphasis is rather crudely juvenile. We have already had it in l. 345. The "sing-song" of the line is hardly in keeping with the lofty tone of the discussion.

363-5. Ventidius' hate gives the images more concreteness than usual. "Antony wins a kingdom, levies a tax, and buys Cleopatra a diamond with it, or a pendant worth the whole province." Ventidius imagines her gloating over both her new conquests and her new jewelry. The reality does not come up to our expectations. Cleopatra is a rather conventional "mistress true."

So far Ventidius has prevailed: he has come for two purposes: (1) to make Antony fight, (2) to get him away from Cleopatra, at all costs. By leading Antony on to "confess" his disgraceful conduct at Actium, he has relieved him of his intolerable burden of emotion and so left his mind free to receive other propositions, and he is now ready to lead Ventidius' legions. But Ventidius is not led astray in sentimental joy or self-congratulation to see his emperor a changed man. He insists dourly on No. 2 also. The disagreement this causes allows the scene to climb up to a *second* climax of reconciliation (l. 417).

368-9. *she deserves . . . lose*: a good epigram. *than I can lose*: Antony is continuing Ventidius' line of thought above, viz. that Antony loses all his conquests by giving them to Cleopatra to play with. Antony says: "If I win worlds and lose them to her, she still deserves more."

369-75. The "imagery" here, beginning with "more worlds" above, is in the *Antony and Cleopatra* manner. The "scale" image is a fine one. Ventidius is inspired by his hate and indignation here and rises to great heights, for him. He says (373-5) that the gods must be prodigals like Antony, or they would not deliver the world into such wasteful hands (as Antony's and Cleopatra's).

377. Antony is fired by Ventidius' bitterness, which he puts down to personal malice against his mistress, to an irrelevant accusation of "traitor." The quarrel blazes for a minute, but

goes out abruptly when Ventidius makes the obvious point that if he were a traitor he would have gone over to Caesar.

382. the first Caesar: Julius was Antony's great friend, and an equal, so that if *they* had quarrelled Antony could have challenged him to an "honourable satisfaction." But Ventidius is an inferior.

400-11. Ventidius, having calmed his emperor, persuades him, with sincere flattery, that the very fact that Ventidius has criticised him so severely, is a sign of Antony's greatness. A lesser prince would not have tolerated his criticism.

407-8. A lucky . . . design: when the gods made Antony, he turned out, by some happy chance, better than they intended.

408-11. "If they had not been envious of their own handiwork they would have made you immortal, and you would have served as a pattern for them to make others like you, to show how well they can make things" (= for *ostentation's* sake; *i.e.* "for show"). Cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, V, ii, 96 ff. ("But if there be").

411. But Cleopatra: Antony seems to accept the above version of his birth. He means "Having told me all about myself, tell me about Cleopatra"; *i.e.* he is willing to accept Ventidius' judgment on her also.

415. This is unworthy of Ventidius. It shows the effusive and whining gratitude of a beggar, without the beggar's excuse.

417. Speak . . . this: "Let these three hugs speak what my tongue cannot." This speech is more virile than we have grown to expect from Antony.

421. do not curse her: Ventidius was just about to call Cleopatra names ("this —").

423. all, but honour: Does this ring true? Where has Antony's honour reappeared from? Presumably Ventidius' exhortations have restored it. Nevertheless the phrase reads like a tag, evoked by the appearance of the "love" theme: the French prototypes of *All for Love* were built round a conflict between love and honour.

424. That's . . . master: an echo of a common "Shakespeareanism," e.g. *Tempest* (Act I., Sc. II.): *Ariel*: That's my noble master!

429-30. In that . . . fell: "Now you have said it, the thing is as good as done."

430. that day: the day of Octavius' defeat.

431. behind: to come. If he has ten years still to live, he will gladly sacrifice them to see Antony conquer.

433. In that . . . went: compare note on ll. 429-30, above. This repetition of a good effect seems to show that Dryden used

it *as a device* and not as something which emerged naturally from the stress of the moment.

434-5. Antony is not very logical; he is going to make *Caesar* smart for parting him from his love. This transference of resentment is, however, human.

436-7. The scene is meant to rise to its climax infectiously, with all opposition brushed aside; Ventidius' is a subsidiary part, now that Antony is fired (final attention must be focused on the hero), and his task is to help with this new impression of Antony; this he is made to do by some more use of the "god" and "hero" images.

437. Even more than line 232, this has the stamp and movement of the heroic couplet line. Cf. Pope:

She moves a goddess, and she looks a queen.

439. *mans*: (1) makes a man of—, (2) as in "man the boats"—i.e. "occupy."

442. *Cassius' camp*: at Philippi, where Brutus and Cassius were routed. Cf. *Julius Caesar*.

440-53. Typical self-glorification of the hero of "heroic" drama. It is rhetoric, not inspiration, and inclined to rant, but there is a good image in ll. 450-51.

451. *taste fate*: "give them a taste of what their end is to be." Thus the act ends on a top note of what is perilously near to bombast: it is intrinsically nearer to Dryden's own *Aurengzebe* than it is externally to *Antony and Cleopatra*.

ACT II.

The second phase of the action is the reverse side of the first. It is not exactly the crisis of the play, in which the hero takes the step that makes his doom inevitable, however unlikely it may seem at the time,—because there is no indication that his capitulation to Cleopatra will prove fatal. As the act ends he is about to fall on Caesar in a surprise sally, and there is no foreboding in the verse to point to a tragic issue; in fact we get the impression that Antony's fortunes are on the up-grade, at least temporarily. He has given in to Cleopatra but at least he is not back in the sorry position we first found him in; he has shed his moping and irresolution and is back in fighting trim. Nevertheless, the emphasis in this act is not on Antony the world-shatterer, but on Antony the lover. This is a convenient point for making this clear.

Shakespeare's Antony is above all a man; his passion for Cleopatra is, of course, the dominant motive of his actions in the play, but we do get other aspects of him; as a warrior, a statesman, a good master, etc. But Dryden's Antony is dominated almost solely by "the grand passion"; it is the mainspring of his constitution. Thus the title of the play is significant—*All for Love*.

Act II. is Cleopatra's act. In it we have Antony's "runaway" speeches about their past love and about the insignificance of the whole world compared with Cleopatra. Though she does not say much to him, her counter-tug, helped by one or two blunders on Ventidius' part, is carefully contrived; she picks on the right points to pierce Antony's armour, chiefly by playing a waiting and watching game. Against this careful appeal to sentiment, Ventidius' scolding arguments, though true, sound empty; they seem to be all shouting and warning, as if he was already aware of defeat; indeed, from the first he sounds in despair, and concedes points to his adversary too easily: he seems to say "When a woman enters, logic, honour, and even the method of communication, that men use easily when together,—all these suddenly sound ridiculous and mere rhetoric." He feels Cleopatra's potential power before she opens her mouth. There is some plausibility in the psychology of this triangular encounter.

Cleopatra cannot hope to compare with Shakespeare's conception. Dryden has wisely refrained from competition with her "infinite variety" and has confined his queen to the narrow limits of fidelity and meekness; she has none of the waywardness and "staggers to the circumference" of Shakespeare's vital creation; on the whole she is tame and colourless, but has enough resourceful femininity to defeat Ventidius.

1. What . . . turn: a forced and theatrical opening, rhetorical and conventional.

3. It is queer that Alexas should apparently subscribe to Antony's departure, though, as we see later, he is concerned to keep him tied to his mistress. He knows that if Antony goes, as things are, Egypt is lost even though Antony does fight Caesar, because his heart is hardened against the queen, and his waiting legions say they will "not fight for Cleopatra." His aim is therefore, while retaining Antony's warlike mood, to detach him from Ventidius and his twelve legions, and restore him, still belligerent, to the queen's bosom. The end of the act shows that Alexas has been successful. Antony is "reconciled," and about to launch a surprise attack with his few men. In this light, Alexas' utterances are surprising, though, before the play is over, one has ceased to be surprised at any of his

desperate fetches and turns. As a tame and well-motived Iago he is not convincing. This first remark of his is what he would *like* to happen rather than what *is* happening.

6-7. It is fitting that it is Alexas, the patriot, who tries to recall the queen to a sense of her high office. His high conception of what a queen should be to her nation must have suffered some severe rebuffs in his time, as here (7-10). She asks what there is in a queenship which exists only to be captured by someone else, which makes Alexas' appellation "mighty queen" seem as much a wish-fulfilment as his previous remark.

10-12. Cleopatra's first variation on the dominant theme, "the world well lost," is rather tame.

12-15. She has Antony's habit of naïve self-dramatising.

15. She is a slave to Antony (through love), and so to anybody (through habit). This is really a complaint against Antony.

16. A staid and *very* reasonable line! One is not surprised that Cleopatra objects to its respectable and sedate phraseology.

18. which . . . it: which = love; it = madness. "The cause" (Antony) is so mighty that it can produce nothing less than this divine frenzy. Cleopatra, however, only *states* her passion; the latter does not seize the lines and make them rock and soar. Compare *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act I., Sc. III.

Cleo.

When you sued staying,

Then was the time for words: no going then;

Eternity was in our lips and eyes,

Bliss in our brows' bent; none our parts so poor

But was a race of heaven:

Or Act I., Sc. V.—

—He's speaking now,

Or murmuring "Where's my serpent of old Nile?"

For so he calls me; now I feed myself

With most delicious poison.—Think on me

That am with Phoebus' amorous pinches black,

And wrinkled deep in time? Broad-fronted Caesar,

When thou wast here above the ground, I was

A morsel for a monarch; and great Pompey

Would stand and make his eyes grow in my brow:

There would he anchor his aspect and die

With looking on his life: etc.

This is very different from either Dryden's Cleopatra's self-dramatising or her *reasonable* expression of madness.

20. transcendent: "surprising," here helping the idea of rising above earthly things.

21. at first: straightaway. Does not imply a later reversal of the action, as nowadays ("at first I liked him, but then . . .").

23-6. Contrast: *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act I., Sc. V.:

Cleo. O well-divided disposition ! Note him,
 Note him, good Charmian, 't is the man, but note him:
 He was not sad, for he would shine on those
 That make their looks by his; he was not merry,
 Which seem'd to tell them his remembrance lay
 In Egypt with his joy; but between both.
 O heavenly mingle !—Be'st thou sad or merry,—
 The violence of either thee becomes,
 So does it no man else.—Met'st thou my posts ?

27-35. Contrast *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act I., Sc. III.—

Cleo. Where is he ?

Char. I did not see him since.

Cleo. See where he is, who 's with him, what he does;
 I did not send you.—If you find him sad,
 Say I am dancing; if in mirth, report
 That I am sudden sick: quick, and return. [*Exit Alexas.*]

Char. Madam, methinks, if you did love him dearly,
 You do not hold the method to enforce
 The like from him.

Cleo. What should I do, I do not ?

Char. In each thing give him way, cross him in nothing.

Cleo. Thou teachest like a fool,—the way to lose him.

35-110. Contrast (i) *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act II., Sc. V.—

Give me mine angle; we 'll to the river: there,
 My music playing far off, I will betray
 Tawny-finn'd fishes; my bended hook shall pierce
 Their slimy jaws, and, as I draw them up,
 I'll think them every one an Antony,
 And say " Ah, ha ! you're caught."

Char. 'T was merry when
 You wager'd on your angling; when your diver
 Did hang a salt-fish on his hook, which he
 With fervency drew up.

Cleo. That time,—O times !—
 I laugh'd him out of patience; and that night
 I laugh'd him into patience: and next morn,
 Ere the ninth hour, I drunk him to his bed;
 Then put my tires and mantles on him, whilst
 I wore his sword Philippan.—

Enter a Messenger.

O, from Italy !

Ram thou thy fruitful tidings in mine ears,
 That long time have been barren.

Mess.

Madam, madam,—

Cleo. Antony's dead !—If thou say so, villain,
Thou kill'st thy mistress; but well and free,
If thou so yield him, there is gold, and here
My bluest veins to kiss, a hand that kings
Have lipp'd, and trembled kissing.

Mess. First, madam, he is well.

Cleo.

Why, there's more gold.

But, sirrah, mark, we use
To say the dead are well; bring it to that,
The gold I give thee will I melt and pour
Down thy ill-uttering throat.

Mess. Good madam, hear me.

Cleo.

Well, go to, I will;

But there's no goodness in thy face. If Antony
Be free and healthful,—so tart a favour
To trumpet such good tidings ! if not well,
Thou shouldst come like a fury crown'd with snakes,
Not like a formal man.

Mess.

Will't please you hear me ?

Cleo. I have a mind to strike thee ere thou speak'st;
Yet, if thou say Antony lives, is well,
Or friends with Caesar, or not captive to him,
I'll set thee in a shower of gold, and hail
Rich pearls upon thee.

Mess.

Madam, he's well.

Cleo.

Well said.

Mess. And friends with Caesar.

Cleo.

Thou'rt an honest man.

Mess. Caesar and he are greater friends than ever.

Cleo. Make thee a fortune from me.

Mess.

But yet, madam,—

Cleo. I do not like " but yet," it does allay
The good precedence; fie upon " but yet ! "
" But yet " is as a gaoler to bring forth
Some monstrous malefactor. Prithee, friend,
Pour out the pack of matter to mine ear,
The good and bad together: he's friends with Caesar;
In state of health, thou say'st; and thou say'st, free.

Mess. Free, madam ! no; I made no such report:
He's bound unto Octavia.

Cleo.

For what good turn ?

Mess. For the best turn i' the bed.

Cleo.

I am pale, Charmian.

Mess. Madam, he's married to Octavia.

Cleo. The most infectious pestilence upon thee !

[Strikes him down.]

Mess. Good madam, patience.

Cleo.

What say you?—Hence,
[*Strikes him again.*]

Horrible villain! or I'll spurn thine eyes
Like balls before me; I'll unhair thy head.

[*She hales him up and down.*]

Thou shalt be whipp'd with wire, and stew'd in brine,
Smarting in lingering pickle.

Mess. Gracious madam,
I that do bring the news made not the match.

Cleo. Say't is not so, a province I will give thee,
And make thy fortunes proud; the blow thou hadst
Shall make thy peace for moving me to rage,
And I will boot thee with what gift beside
Thy modesty can beg.

Mess. He's married, madam.

Cleo. Rogue, thou hast liv'd too long. [*Draws a knife.*]

Mess. Nay, then I'll run.—

What mean you, madam? I have made no fault. [*Exit.*]

Char. Good madam, keep yourself within yourself
The man is innocent.

Cleo. Some innocents scape not the thunderbolt.—
Melt Egypt into Nile! and kindly creatures
Turn all to serpents!—Call the slave again;
Though I am mad, I will not bite him: call.

Char. He is afeared to come.

Cleo. I will not hurt him.

[*Exit Charmian.*]

These hands do lack nobility, that they strike
A meaner than myself, since I myself
Have given myself the cause.—

Re-enter CHARMIAN and Messenger.

Come hither, sir.

Though it be honest, it is never good
To bring bad news; give to a gracious message
An host of tongues, but let ill tidings tell
Themselves when they be felt.

Mess. I have done my duty.

Cleo. Is he married?

I cannot hate thee worse than I do,
If thou again say yes.

Mess. He's married, madam.

Cleo. The gods confound thee! dost thou hold there still?

Mess. Should I lie, madam?

Cleo. O, I would thou didst,
So half my Egypt were submerg'd and made
A cistern for scald'd snakes! Go, get thee hence;

Hadst thou Narcissus in thy face, to me
Thou wouldst appear most ugly. He is married ?

Mess. I crave your highness' pardon.

Cleo.

He is married ?

Mess. Take no offence that I would not offend you ;
To punish me for what you make me do
Seems much unequal. He 's married to Octavia.

Cleo. O, that his fault should make a knave of thee,
That art not what thou'rt sure of !—Get thee hence :
The merchandise which thou hast brought from Rome
Are all too dear for me ; lie they upon thy hand,
And be undone by 'em !

[*Exit Messenger.*]

(ii) Where think'st thou he is now ? Stands he, or sits he ?
Or does he walk ? or is he on his horse ?
O happy horse, to bear the weight of Antony !
Do bravely, horse ! for wot'st thou whom thou mov'st ?
The demi-Atlas of this earth, the arm
And burgoonet of men.—He's speaking now,
Or murmuring " Where's my serpent of old Nile ? "
For so he calls me ; now I feed myself
With most delicious poison.—Think on me,
That am with Phoebus' amorous pinches black,
And wrinkled deep in time ? Broad-fronted Caesar,
When thou wast here above the ground, I was
A morsel for a monarch ; and great Pompey
Would stand and make his eyes grow in my brow :
There would he anchor his aspect and die
With looking on his life.

Enter ALEXAS.

Alexas.

Sovereign of Egypt, hail !

Cleo. How much unlike art thou Mark Antony !
Yet, coming from him, that great medicine hath
With his tinct gilded thee.—

How goes it with my brave Mark Antony ?

Alexas. Last thing he did, dear queen,
He kiss'd—the last of many doubled kisses—
This orient pearl. His speech sticks in my heart.

Cleo. Mine ear must pluck it thence.

Alexas.

" Good friend," quoth he,

" Say, the firm Roman to great Egypt sends
This treasure of an oyster ; at whose foot,
To mend the petty present, I will piece
Her opulent throne with kingdoms : all the east,
Say thou, shall call her mistress." So he nodded,
And soberly did mount an arm-gaunt steed,
Who neigh'd so high, that what I would have spoke
Was beastly dumb'd by him.

29-35. Contrast this "mistress true," in an elegiac vein like Antony's on his first appearance, with Cleopatra's diversity of moods, as illustrated above. Dryden's Cleopatra is the soul of decorum and fidelity: the comparison is, if anything, with Shakespeare's Octavia. These lines are flat and lifeless and hollow; the conventional language of the betrayed lover in eighteenth century drama.

30-1. "The time when he loved me, though past, has left some trace of itself behind."

38-40. Antony's words are so all-powerful to Cleopatra that she pretends they had the appropriate effect on her as soon as they were spoken; if unfavourable, she is already dead. A hyperbole.

41. a long speech: of farewell.

49. iron statues: a good image, but not supported by the next reference to the soldiers, where there is the impression given of a struggling crowd.

55. Charmian shows how Antony, who is now in his "heroic" mood, still has a conscience guilty enough to spoil his heroics when he sees her.

make way: allow her to come up to him.

67. nod: a parallel with Jove is probably intended, whose nod had similar properties. This is to make the contrast between the two Antonies more effective.

69. a good line. Disguised: (1) hid it with his hand (masked it); (2) tried to make his action look as if arising from a different cause (see previous line).

72. Shakespeare's Cleopatra, according to Enobarbus, had a remarkable "celerity in dying"; her celerity was through high spirits, Dryden's queen's through low. The desired effect of profound love is not produced by this somewhat anaemic rhetoric.

79-85. Cleopatra fires up at the "faint word" respect, and we respect her more for it. The outburst, however, begins too politely; "disdain" is as "faint" a word as "respect." The last line too is limp. Contrast *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act III., Sc. III.—

Cleo. Is she as tall as me?

Mess.

She is not, madam.

Cleo. Didst hear her speak? is she shrill-tongued or low?

Mess. Madam, I heard her speak; she is low-voic'd.

Cleo. That's not so good. He cannot like her long.

Char. Like her! O Isis! 't is impossible.

Cleo. I think so, Charmian; dull of tongue, and dwarfish!—

What majesty is in her gait? Remember,

If e'er thou look'dst on majesty.

- Mess.* She creeps;
Her motion and her station are as one:
She shows a body rather than a life,
A statue than a breather.
- Cleo.* Is this certain?
Mess. Or I have no observance.
- Char.* Three in Egypt
Cannot make better note.
- Cleo.* He's very knowing,
I do perceive't. There's nothing in her yet.—
The fellow has good judgment.
- Char.* Excellent.
- Cleo.* Guess at her years, I prithee.
- Mess.* Madam,
She was a widow,—
- Cleo.* Widow!—Charmian, hark.
- Mess.* And I do think she's thirty.
- Cleo.* Bear'st thou her face in mind? is't long or round?
- Mess.* Round even to faultiness.
- Cleo.* For the most part, too, they are foolish that are so.—
Her hair, what colour?
- Mess.* Brown, madam; and her forehead
As low as she would wish it.
- Cleo.* There's gold for thee.
Thou must not take my former sharpness ill.
I will employ thee back again; I find thee
Most fit for business. Go make thee ready;
Our letters are prepar'd. [Exit Messenger.]
- Char.* A proper man.
- Cleo.* Indeed, he is so; I repent me much
That I so harried him. Why, methinks, by him,
This creature's no such thing.
- Char.* Nothing, madam.
- Cleo.* The man hath seen some majesty, and should know.
- Char.* Hath he seen majesty? Isis else defend,
And serving you so long!
87. The usual example is a stick, which appears to bend at the point between air and water. The light from the stick is, of course, refracted by the water.
88. **undisturbed:** not carried away by passion.
- 89-90. **dreaded man . . . run away:** this contrast is made repeatedly before Antony's appearance, too obviously as a sort of prophecy of what he will do; it is to prepare us for his *volte face*.
92. **My life on't:** "you can kill me if it is not true."
drags a chain: his attachment to Cleopatra.

95. interest: self-interest.

honour: Alexas is a "realist": he does not talk with due respect of "honour." He is also, of course, stating the fundamental conflict of heroic drama—between love and honour.

96. but: seems to mean "still" here; or perhaps "only." ("Though he is hard pressed, etc., he does nothing but doubt and compromise.")

102-4. This is Alexas' interpretation of what Antony's refusing to see her means.

106. work: handle him; in the sense of softening something stiff by working it with the hands.

108-10. Alexas is not hopeful of success. This is to re-arouse our interest in the coming struggle; Dryden is afraid lest the issue shall seem too much of a foregone conclusion.

111. minion: slave.

112. holds . . . nothing: "he is just lucky, and has done nothing to deserve it." Here again "virtue" means power, or force of character, not goodness. Compare *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act II., Sc. III.—

Ant. Say to me, whose fortunes shall rise higher, Caesar's or mine?

Sooth. Caesar's.

Therefore, O Antony, stay not by his side.
Thy demon, that thy spirit which keeps thee, is
Noble, courageous, high, unmatchable,
Where Caesar's is not; but near him thy angel
Becomes a fear, as being o'erpower'd: therefore
Make space enough between you.

Ant. Speak this no more.

Sooth. To none but thee; no more but when to thee.

If thou dost play with him at any game,
Thou art sure to lose; and, of that natural luck,
He beats thee 'gainst the odds: thy lustre thickens
When he shines by. I say again, thy spirit
Is all afraid to govern thee near him,
But, he away, 't is noble.

Ant. Get thee gone;

Say to Ventidius I would speak with him.— [Exit Soothsayer.
He shall to Parthia.—Be it art or hap,
He hath spoken true; the very dice obey him,
And in our sports my better cunning faints
Under his chance. If we draw lots, he speeds;
His cocks do win the battle still of mine,
When it is all to nought; and his quails ever
Beat mine, in hoop'd, at odds.

113. season: he is "tinted" by courage just enough to save him from being called a coward. Compare *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act III., Sc. XIII.—

Ant. To him again. Tell him he wears the rose
Of youth upon him, from which the world should note
Something particular: his coin, ships, legions,
May be a coward's, whose ministers would prevail
Under the service of a child as soon
As i' the command of Caesar. I dare him therefore
To lay his gay comparisons apart,
And answer me declin'd, sword against sword,
Ourselves alone. I'll write it; follow me.

114. (1) "You will not find him in the van, in an attack"; or, (2) "It takes him a long time to make up his mind to attack."

115. deliberate: he takes his time over it and does nothing on chance—like Mr. Snodgrass, in *Pickwick Papers*, who announced his intentions in a loud voice, took off his coat most deliberately, and then launched a furious attack on a small boy. There appears to be a cross-allusion here to Louis XIV., who had a similar reputation.

116. Illyria: better known as the setting for *Twelfth Night* than for any exploit (imaginary?) of Octavius.

119. lives on that: he believes in making a little go a long way. He lives on the reputation gained by his one conquest.

120. close: private, and also in the sense of *secret*. He will not fight, himself, but he has thugs who will.

121. See above extract from *Antony and Cleopatra*.

123-5. Compare *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act IV., Sc. I.

Caesar. . . . Let the old ruffian know

I have many other ways to die.

Act IV., Sc. II.—

Eno. He thinks, being twenty times of better fortune,*

He is twenty men to one.

The only point in this is the one Enobarbus makes. Shakespeare, followed by Dryden, must have misunderstood the corresponding line in North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives*:

"Caesar answered him that he had many other ways to die than so" (i.e. *Antony* had).

125. "Octavius would die any way but by the sword."

130-1. Two fine lines, vigorous with scorn, meaning that Octavius will be quite content to live on after all his faculties

* Again there is an emphasis on Caesar's good luck.

have gone with old age: **verge:** margin, edge. Antony is all for "one crowded hour of glorious life," etc.

133-4. "Why should a man who dare not take a risk for big stakes, be so favoured by the goddess of risks, *i.e.* Fortune?"

139-41. This is the fairy tale (to be found in *Grimm*) of the rivalry between all birds as to which could fly the highest. The eagle seemed to have won, but as he reached his highest sweep, the wren hopped off his back and went a little higher.

142. **braves:** challenges.

143. **age:** Octavius is a young upstart who pushes more experienced men aside.

144. **world's ridge:** the edge of the world, beyond which there is nothing (assuming that the world is flat). This is one of the "world" images which are dominant in the imagery of *Antony and Cleopatra*. This unexpectedly warm tirade (from 111-49) shows that Antony is in the highest spirits, and is chafing to get at his enemy, for the not very noble reason that it is not fair that a weakling like him should have all the luck. The nobility or otherwise of the utterance does not matter, however, as long as it *sounds* heroic. To analyse Antony's *motives* would not increase our respect for him. For Antony as a severe critic of character, Dryden had Shakespeare's precedent in *Julius Caesar*. Antony is still in the mood in which we left him at the end of Act I. Apparently he has got over the disintegrating effect of Charmian's intrusion: Alexas' task is thus made to appear more difficult.

162. Ventidius' asides are justified. The tame effusiveness and servility of Alexas' speech should have nauseated Antony. Instead he is affected by it: perhaps the numbers overwhelmed him.

166-7. There is some shrewdness in this reproach couched as retrospection.

169. **man it out:** put a bold face on it; be a man.

170-4. The audience, who know that Alexas is constructing all this himself, cannot understand why both Antony and Ventidius are taken in by the crawling hypocrisy. Cleopatra is supposed to have commissioned the captains (with a little flattery for them) to look after Antony. Ventidius instead of "exposing" this false sentiment for what it is, takes it seriously and tries to prove that Cleopatra does not think so very much about him, or she would not have run away from him at Actium. Antony, however, puts up no resistance at all, and tells Ventidius to suppress his. One gathers, from the reception of Alexas' speech, that Dryden meant it to be taken seriously as persuasive and heart-broken eloquence. Otherwise one would have to credit him with a satiric insight into the crude emotional make-up

of his heroes that he nowhere else shows in the play. But how can it be taken seriously when the audience knows Alexas is improvising it and when the whole tone is gushing and fawning?

180-1. Antony *can* be wounded; in fact he already is, because he carries with him Cleopatra's wounded heart. A hyperbole.

183-4. This not very effective distribution of jewels seems to be an attempt to catch the lavish atmosphere of *Antony and Cleopatra*. It is also, of course, Alexas' way of making the Romans think better of the queen they are about to desert; in particular it is aimed, though indirectly, at Antony.

186-8. Alexas' cunning here tries to make Ventidius appear in the wrong, by shaming him with a show of love and generosity. It can hardly be meant as an attempt to buy him over. Ventidius reacts as Alexas expects him to; he indignantly renounces the bribe, and actually plays into the schemer's hands by touching Antony on the raw by a surly, virtuous reference to Octavia. Ventidius is not only a Roman of the old stamp in his proclaimed belief in the virtue of poverty; he also believes in respectability, but the uncompromising snub for Antony ("The wronged Octavia") only sets the latter against all that he (Ventidius) stands for.

195. But . . . no remembrance? Alexas has cunningly kept the bait for Antony till the end, to see what effect the bestowal of favours on the lesser men will have; Antony, piqued by this, and by Ventidius' uncomfortable outspokenness, rises to it, and asks what *his* "token" is.

197. my mistress: Antony is playing up to Alexas increasingly; he will not have Cleopatra called his slave.

200. bleeding hearts: another appeal to Antony's easily-aroused sentimental vein. When Ventidius, in the next impassioned speech, warns him off the bracelet, he is roused to exasperation, if not to open anger.

206. bluest plagues: a common adjective for the plague, which probably refers to the lurid effect the disease had on its victim.

207. This line is a success: it suggests the sinister far more than Dryden's open attempts to make the flesh creep do (see 15-30, Act I.).

aconite: monkshood or wolfsbane. Dryden apparently means that no weak poison like aconite has been soaked into the silk gift, but a strong one; although actually aconitin, the poison obtained from the plant, is extremely powerful. The line would have more force if aconite were used in the dyeing of silk, in which case it would mean: "the silk has been dyed in worse than aconite."

208. Antony is turning.

211-17. He is growing sentimental: his tendency to elegy and to self-dramatising is roused here by Alexas' cunning stimulus.

213. to tell: count: cf. Milton, *L'Allegro*: *And every shepherd tells his tale Under the hawthorn in the dale*. Dryden seems further to have a rosary in mind.

217. And . . . this: by this time he has a warm feeling of being justified in his luxurious emotion. Alexas hastens to confirm this and thus make sharp the breach with Ventidius, who disdains to reply to his lord's appeal for sympathy.

218. "There is no harm in this except to Cleopatra, and to her the harm is that all this loving is now past for ever." This "for ever" is meant to make Antony still more maudlin by giving the coming separation an irrevocable air.

222. Even I . . . not one: Alexas was a eunuch.

225. pander: a go-between in secret loves. Pandar was the friend who arranged the coming together of Troilus and Cressida; it was Shakespeare who ascribed a more disreputable rôle to him.

226. Ventidius is already rather unsure of himself, and dare not risk a command; instead he has to *appeal* to Antony. He appreciates more than Antony this last opportunist master-stroke of Alexas.

227. Then I . . . Aethiop: "I have tried to make a black man white," i.e. Antony is incorrigible, and Ventidius gives him up.

228. in the toils: entangled in the mesh of the trap: cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*:—

but she looks like sleep
As she would catch another Antony
In her strong toil of grace.

229. Her eyes . . . work: a pregnant expression for "her attraction weakens you and so helps Caesar." This slow deliberate line is particularly effective after the short bursts of the two previous lines.

230. I'm constant to myself: this was the common boast of the superman hero of the heroic play: here, of course, it is intended as prophetic irony. Compare J. Caesar's: "But I am constant as the northern star" (Act III., Sc. I.).

234. This is rather a climb-down from "I am constant to myself; I know my strength." Antony, realising inside him that he is giving way, catches desperately and rather ludicrously at any straw:—"It is only polite for a gentleman to thank his hostess and say farewell." The demi-god is once more ruined before our eyes, before the cause of his ruin appears. He speaks like M. Hippolyte, at whom Dryden pokes fun in the Preface.

235-8. Ventidius speaks far less respectfully, in his bitter despair, than he dared to when "reclaiming" the Emperor, in Act I.

239-41. There is an early attempt here to show the "tragic infatuation" of the hero. After the crisis, the hero takes confident steps which he thinks demonstrate his own stability; actually they bring him nearer to his doom. Here the touch is just before the crisis in the ensuing struggle with Cleopatra. There are several crises in the play, none of which is the pivot on which the structure is balanced. In a Shakespeare tragedy, things prosper with the hero up to a point, and then, owing to the "fatal flaw" in his nature, he makes a false step, and the tide turns against him. In *Macbeth* this happens when Macbeth "sees things" (his weakness) at the banquet, and makes Scotland suspicious: in *Julius Caesar*, when Antony is allowed by Brutus to speak in the Forum (Brutus' weakness is that he cannot see "quite through the deeds of men"). But in *All for Love* there is a reversal of fortune in every act: it is change and change about, a series of rises and falls, weaker in effect than the slow rise, inevitable peak, and tremendous withdrawal of the wave of a Shakespeare tragedy.

Gods, I thank you: the force of this outburst of thankfulness seems extreme unless we realise that, probably without knowing it, Antony is so unsure of himself underneath, that he is tremendously relieved to find he does not rush straight into Cleopatra's arms when he first catches sight of her. Ventidius' warning ("Wait till you get to the end") puts Antony's speech in the right perspective.

242-6. The encounter begins with dignified repartee. Cleopatra is sparring for an opening.

244. *We make . . . ourselves*: Antony probably meant that Fate has intervened, and Fate cannot be gainsaid by man ("Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own"); but he has worded it ambiguously and Cleopatra seizes on this and says "Yes, but we make our own histories (= fates)." ("The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars But in ourselves, that we are underlings.")

245. Shakespeare will again serve as a parallel: "The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices make instruments to plague us" (*King Lear*, Act V., Sc. III., 170 ff.).

248. *I have . . . heaven*: Dryden may be thinking of Antony in *Antony and Cleopatra*, who had a friend in heaven—Hercules. There is a queer scene in Act IV. (Sc. III.) where soldiers hear the god leaving the hero.

2nd Sold. Hark !

1st Sold. Music i' the air.

3rd Sold. Under the earth.

4th Sold. It signs well, does it not ?

3rd Sold. No.

1st Sold. Peace, I say !

What should this mean ?

2nd Sold. 'Tis the god Hercules, whom Antony lov'd,
Now leaves him.

Cleopatra's flat utterance gains in borrowed richness by the parallel. The comparison further shows how even the shadowy gods can be made to yield an impressive dramatic effect, in the right hands.

233. To late posterity: (those who come later). There is here a touch of the self-pity which Shakespeare often allowed his heroes at the end. We have grown to expect it of Antony throughout (see notes on Act I., ll. 202-8). There may be a parallel to *Antony and Cleopatra* in Dryden's mind:—

Cleo. the quick comedians

Extemporally will stage us, and present

Our Alexandrian revels; Antony

Shall be brought drunken forth, and I shall see

Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness. (V. ii.)—

although the appeal to posterity, or at least to the world, is in Hamlet, Othello, and Julius Caesar:—

How many ages hence

Shall this our lofty scene be acted over,

In states unborn and accents yet unknown.

How many times shall Caesar bleed in sport, etc.

(*Julius Caesar*, Act III., Sc. i.)

These comparisons indicate the difference in method of the two dramatists; one uses cold statement, the other a concrete and lively instance. Dryden would not dare to sacrifice Cleopatra's dignity as Shakespeare does above. His characters depend almost entirely for their effect on the elevated decorum of their utterances; they have no "character" as Shakespeare's have. Compare the "argument" between Dryden's Antony and Cleopatra so far, with the following scene in Shakespeare (Act I., Sc. III.):—

Cleo. Where is he ?

Char. I did not see him since.

Cleo. See where he is, who's with him, what he does;
I did not send you.—If you find him sad,
Say I am dancing; if in mirth, report
That I am sudden sick: quick, and return.

[*Exit Alexas.*

Char. Madam, methinks, if you did love him dearly,
You do not hold the method to enforce
The like from him.

Cleo. What should I do, I do not ?

Char. In each thing give him way, cross him in nothing.

Cleo. Thou teachest like a fool,—the way to lose him.

Char. Tempt him not so too far; I wish, forbear:
In time we hate that which we often fear.
But here comes Antony.

Enter ANTONY.

Cleo. I am sick and sullen.

Ant. I am sorry to give breathing to my purpose,—

Cleo. Help me away, dear Charmian, I shall fall;
It cannot be thus long, the sides of nature
Will not sustain it.

Ant. Now, my dearest queen,—

Cleo. Pray you, stand farther from me.

Ant. What's the matter ?

Cleo. I know, by that same eye, there's some good news.
What says the married woman ?—You may go;
Would she had never given you leave to come !
Let her not say 't is I that keep you here;
I have no power upon you, hers you are.

Ant. The gods best know—

Cleo. O, never was there queen
So mightily betray'd ! yet at the first
I saw the treasons planted.

Ant. Cleopatra,—

Cleo. Why should I think you can be mine and true,
Though you in swearing shake the throned gods,
Who have been false to Fulvia ? Riotous madness,
To be entangled with those mouth-made vows,
Which break themselves in swearing !

Ant. Most sweet queen,—

Cleo. Nay, pray you, seek no colour for your going,
But bid farewell, and go. When you sued staying,
Then was the time for words; no going then;
Eternity was in our lips and eyes,
Bliss in our brows' bent; none our parts so poor
But was a race of heaven: they are so still,
Or thou, the greatest soldier of the world,
Art turn'd the greatest liar.

Ant. How now, lady !

Cleo. I would I had thy inches; thou shouldst know
There were a heart in Egypt.

Ant. Hear me, queen.
The strong necessity of time commands

Our services awhile, but my full heart
 Remains in use with you. Our Italy
 Shines o'er with civil swords; Sextus Pompeius
 Makes his approaches to the port of Rome:
 Equality of two domestic powers
 Breed scrupulous faction. The hated, grown to strength,
 Are newly grown to love: the condemn'd Pompey,
 Rich in his father's honour, creeps apace
 Into the hearts of such as have not thriv'd
 Upon the present state, whose numbers threaten;
 And quietness, grown sick of rest, would purge
 By any desperate change. My more particular,
 And that which most with you should safe my going,
 Is Fulvia's death.

Cleo. Though age from folly could not give me freedom,
 It does from childishness.—Can Fulvia die?

Ant. She's dead, my queen.

Look here, and at thy sovereign leisure read
 The garboils she awak'd; at the last, best,
 See when and where she died.

Cleo. O most false love!
 Where be the sacred vials thou shouldst fill
 With sorrowful water? Now I see, I see,
 In Fulvia's death, how mine receiv'd shall be.

Ant. Quarrel no more, but be prepar'd to know
 The purposes I bear, which are, or cease,
 As you shall give the advice. By the fire
 That quickens Nilus' slime, I go from hence
 Thy soldier, servant, making peace or war
 As thou affect'st.

Cleo. Cut my lace, Charmian, come.—
 But let it be.—I am quickly ill,—and well,
 So Antony loves.

Ant. My precious queen, forbear;
 And give true evidence to his love, which stands
 An honourable trial.

Cleo. So Fulvia told me.
 I prithee, turn aside and weep for her;
 Then bid adieu to me, and say the tears
 Belong to Egypt: good now, play one scene
 Of excellent dissembling, and let it look
 Like perfect honour.

Ant. You'll heat my blood; no more.

Cleo. You can do better yet; but this is meetly.

Ant. Now, by my sword,—

Cleo. And target.—Still he mends.
 But this is not the best. Look, prithee, Charmian,

How this Herculan Roman does become
The carriage of his chafe.

Ant. I'll leave you, lady.

Cleo. Courteous lord, one word.

Sir, you and I must part,—but that's not it;
Sir, you and I have lov'd,—but there's not it;
That you know well: something it is I would,—
O, my oblivion is a very Antony,
And I am all forgotten.

Ant. But that your royalty
Holds idleness your subject, I should take you
For idleness itself.

Cleo. 'T is sweating labour
To bear such idleness so near the heart
As Cleopatra this. But, sir, forgive me,
Since my becoming's kill me when they do not
Eye well to you. Your honour calls you hence;
Therefore be deaf to my unpitied folly,
And all the gods go with you! Upon your sword
Sit laurel victory! and smooth success
Be strew'd before your feet!

Ant. Let us go. Come;
Our separation so abides and flies,
That thou, residing here, go'st yet with me,
And I, hence fleeting, here remain with thee.
Away!

[*Exeunt.*]

263-6. In G. B. Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra*, in the same scene as the account of the boy Ptolemy (Act II.), there is a lively account of this episode, also in retrospect. When Caesar goes to Egypt and makes Cleopatra joint ruler, she tells him enthusiastically of how a strong young man had come, when she was only twelve, and restored the throne to her father, who had lost it for unluckily murdering his sister. She fell in love with him, and asks Caesar if he knows the young man. Caesar says he ought to, for he sent him. The whole play will repay study, if only to see how still another dramatist treats Cleopatra.

268-70. Compare *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act I., Sc. V.—

Cleo. My salad days,
When I was green in judgment, cold in blood.

282. Ventidius acts as a sort of chorus during Antony's long accusation; he is impressed (258), virtuously accusing (282), sadly confirmatory (293), exulting (299), contemptuous (314-16), sarcastic (325-7), etc., though by this time he is getting more personally involved in the struggle and loses his choric rôle.

279-80. Compare *Antony and Cleopatra*, (1) Act I. Sc. I.—

Philo. Nay, but this dotage of our general's
O'erflows the measure: those his goodly eyes,
That o'er the files and musters of the war
Have glow'd like plated Mars, now bend, now turn
The office and devotion of their view
Upon a tawny front; his captain's heart,
Which in the scuffles of great fights hath burst
The buckles on his breast, reneges all temper,
And is become the bellows and the fan
To cool a gypsy's lust.

Flourish. Enter ANTONY, CLEOPATRA, her Ladies, the Train,
with Eunuchs fanning her.

Look, where they come !
Take but good note, and you shall see in him
The triple pillar of the world transform'd
Into a strumpet's fool; behold and see.

(ii) Act I., Sc. I.—

Attendant. News, my good lord, from Rome.

Ant.

Grates me; the sum.

(iii) Act I., Sc. IV.—

Caesar. You may see, Lepidus, and henceforth know,
It is not Caesar's natural vice to hate
Our great competitor. From Alexandria
This is the news: he fishes, drinks, and wastes
The lamps of night in revel; is not more manlike
Than Cleopatra, nor the queen of Ptolemy
More womanly than he; hardly gave audience, or
Vouchsaf'd to think he had partners: you shall find there
A man who is the abstract of all faults
That all men follow.

Lepid. I must not think there are
Evils enow to darken all his goodness.
His faults in him seem as the spots of heaven,
More fiery by night's blackness, hereditary
Rather than purchas'd, what he cannot change
Than what he chooses.

Caesar. You are too indulgent. Let us grant it is not
Amis to tumble on the bed of Ptolemy,
To give a kingdom for a mirth, to sit
And keep the turn of tippling with a slave,
To reel the streets at noon and stand the buffet
With knaves that smell of sweat; say this becomes him,—
As his composure must be rare indeed
Whom these things cannot blemish,—yet must Antony

No way excuse his foils, when we do bear
 So great weight in his lightness. If he fill'd
 His vacancy with his voluptuousness,
 Full surfeits and the dryness of his bones
 Call on him for't; but to confound such time
 That drums him from his sport, and speaks as loud
 As his own state and ours,—'t is to be chid
 As we rate boys, who, being mature in knowledge,
 Pawn their experience in their present pleasure,
 And so rebel to judgment.

(iv) Act II., Sc. II.—

Ant. My being in Egypt, Caesar,
 What was't to you ?

Caesar. No more than my residing here at Rome
 Might be to you in Egypt; yet, if you there
 Did practise on my state, your being in Egypt
 Might be my question.

Ant. How intend you, practis'd ?
Caesar. You may be pleas'd to catch at mine intent
 By what did here befall me. Your wife and brother
 Made wars upon me; and their contestation
 Was theme for you; you were the word of war.

Ant. You do mistake your business; my brother never
 Did urge me in his act. I did inquire it,
 And have my learning from some true reports,
 That drew their swords with you. Did he not rather
 Discredit my authority with yours,
 And make the wars alike against my stomach,
 Having alike your cause ? Of this my letters
 Before did satisfy you. If you'll patch a quarrel,
 As matter whole you have to make it with,
 It must not be with this.

Caesar. You praise yourself
 By laying defects of judgment to me, but
 You patch'd up your excuses.

Ant. Not so, not so;
 I know you could not lack, I am certain on't,
 Very necessity of this thought, that I,
 Your partner in the cause 'gainst which he fought,
 Could not with graceful eyes attend those wars
 Which fronted mine own peace. As for my wife,
 I would you had her spirit in such another;
 The third o' the world is yours, which with a snaffle
 You may pace easy, but not such a wife.

Eno. Would we had all such wives, that the men might go
 to wars with the women !

Ant. So much uncurbable, her garboils, Caesar,
Made out of her impatience, which not wanted
Shrewdness of policy too, I grieving grant
Did you too much disquiet; for that, you must
But say I could not help it.

Caesar. I wrote to you;
When rioting in Alexandria you
Did pocket up my letters, and with taunts
Did gibe my missive out of audience.

Ant. Sir,
He fell upon me ere admitted: then
Three kings I had newly feasted, and did want
Of what I was i' the morning; but next day
I told him of myself, which was as much
As to have ask'd him pardon. Let this fellow
Be nothing of our strife; if we contend,
Out of our question wipe him.

These extracts also serve to indicate Dryden's method, already commented on, of dismissing whole tracts of his model in a brief generalisation, as here. This he does in the interests of economy of effect, and so that he can concentrate his attention entirely on the last phase of Antony's course. The danger is clearly illustrated here; the effect is so economical as to be almost non-existent. The passage is good rhetoric, but the full implications of Antony's "sacrifice" (as he now tries to make it appear) are not realised unless we refer to the more spacious canvases of Shakespeare: here we get vital impressions of how complicatedly seething "the business of the world" was, and how "the ne'er lust-weari'd Antony" "shut out enquiring nations" from his sight. This perfunctoriness, however, does not necessarily imply a criticism of Dryden's method: to be able to presuppose the audience's close familiarity with the details of the story *can* be an advantage to the dramatist: the Greek dramatists used their popular local myths, and so could gain the maximum of effect with the minimum of allusion. In Dryden's case, the theme had been before the public repeatedly, as he says at the beginning of his preface, so that he was in a similar position to that of the Greek tragedians, and indeed, in a superior position, since he had all the wealth of the Shakespearian treatment to evoke by a nearly-similar situation, or a brief allusion, as here. It is hoped, that by including the Shakespeare evocations at the relevant points in the text, Dryden's play can be seen to better advantage in its rich background.

282-92. This is perhaps the most famous "purple patch" of the play. It is splendid rhetoric, beginning with an irresistible movement, brought out consummately by the sense in 284. More than in any other speech in the play, the verse is sensitive

and responsive to the turns and emphasis of the emotion. It comes very near to being fine *dramatic* poetry, pulling away from the general competent level of the rhetoric, towards organic expression where sound and rhythm are fused with sense: it is almost *passion*. It is, however, significant that it is once more *retrospective* and *elegiac*—a “set piece.” Dryden’s verse rarely comes to this concentration of life when engaged in conveying the actual conduct of the action.

284. This is a fine-sounding and attractive metaphor, but on analysis it is vague, without having the rich ambiguity of a Shakespeare metaphor—*e.g.* “strong toil of grace” quoted above. “Down” suggests lightness, irresponsibility, delicacy, spontaneity, movement like a ball’s (*i.e.* in complete revolutions), and fragile, complete life. But attached to “feet” it cannot help also suggesting dust, and a clogging effect, not a liberating one. “Down *instead of* feet” would be bathos, but would convey more the meaning intended.

288. Compare Cory’s translation from the *Greek Anthology*. (“They told me Herakleitus”—):—

I wept as I remembered
How often you and I
Had tired the sun with talking
And sent him down the sky.

293-5. *Antony and Cleopatra*, I. ii.—

Mess. Fulvia thy wife first came into the field.

Ant. Against my brother Lucius?

Mess. Ay;

But soon that war had end, and the time’s state
Made friends of them, jointing their force ‘gainst Caesar,
Whose better issue in the war, from Italy
Upon the first encounter drave them.

Ant. Well, what worst?

Mess. The nature of bad news infects the teller.

Ant. When it concerns the fool or coward.—On!
Things that are past are done with me.—’T is thus:
Who tells me true, though in his tale lie death,
I hear him as he flatter’d.

Mess. Labienus—

This is stiff news—hath, with his Parthian force,
Extended Asia from Euphrates,
His conquering banner shook from Syria
To Lydia and to Ionia;
Whilst—

Ant. Antony, thou wouldst say,—

Mess. O, my lord!

Ant. Speak to me home, mince not the general tongue:
Name Cleopatra as she is call'd in Rome;
Rail thou in Fulvia's phrase, and taunt my faults
With such full license as both truth and malice
Have power to utter. O, then we bring forth weeds
When our quick minds lie still; and our ills told us
Is as our earring. Fare thee well awhile.

Mess. At your noble pleasure.

[*Exit.*

Ant. From Sicyon, ho, the news! Speak there!

1st Att. The man from Sicyon,—is there such an one?

2nd Att. He stays upon your will.

Ant. Let him appear.—

These strong Egyptian fetters I must break,
Or lose myself in dotage.

See also extract (iv) in notes to ll. 279-80, above.

295-6. **But yet . . . not:** in Plutarch and Shakespeare, and in l. 303 below, Antony did go to Italy. This seems a deliberate blackening of his character on Dryden's part; it might weaken Antony's "confession and accusation" in one, and so, by compensation, excuse Cleopatra somewhat, if it came out that Antony was aroused by the news, and set off for Rome *via* Parthia.

297. Another fine "world" image. Embracing Cleopatra, he loses his embrace on the world.

298. **scarce a grasp:** he has now only Alexandria, and that is besieged.

I . . . for't: bitter sarcasm.

301-2. Fulvia died in 41 B.C. at Sicyon. See *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act I., Sc. II.—

2nd Mess. Fulvia thy wife is dead.

Ant.

Where died she?

2nd Mess. In Sicyon;
Her length of sickness, with what else more serious
Importeth thee to know, this bears.

[*Gives a letter.*

Ant.

Forbear me.—

[*Exit 2nd Messenger.*

There's a great spirit gone! Thus did I desire it.
What our contempt doth often hurl from us,
We wish it ours again; the present pleasure,
By revolution lowering, does become
The opposite of itself. She's good, being gone;
The hand could pluck her back that shov'd her on.
I must from this enchanting queen break off;
Ten thousand harms, more than the ills I know,
My idleness doth hatch.—Ho! Enobarbus!

302-5. Compare *Antony and Cleopatra*, (i) Act II., Sc. II.—

Agrip. Give me leave, Caesar,—

Caesar. Speak, Agrippa.

Agrip. Thou hast a sister by the mother's side,
Admir'd Octavia; great Mark Antony
Is now a widower.

Caesar. Say not so, Agrippa;
If Cleopatra heard you, your reproof
Were well deserv'd of rashness.

Ant. I am not married, Caesar; let me hear Agrippa further
speak.

Agrip. To hold you in perpetual amity,
To make you brothers, and to knit your hearts
With an unslipping knot, take Antony
Octavia to his wife; whose beauty claims
No worse a husband than the best of men,
Whose virtue and whose general graces speak
That which none else can utter. By this marriage,
All little jealousies which now seem great,
And all great fears which now import their dangers,
Would then be nothing; truths would be tales,
Where now half tales be truths; her love to both
Would each to other and all loves to both
Draw after her. Pardon what I have spoke,
For 't is a studied, not a present thought,
By duty ruminated.

Ant. Will Caesar speak?

Caesar. Not till he hears how Antony is touch'd
With what is spoke already.

Ant. What power is in Agrippa,
If I would say, "Agrippa, be it so,"
To make this good?

Caesar. The power of Caesar, and
His power unto Octavia.

Ant. May I never
To this good purpose, that so fairly shows,
Dream of impediment!—Let me have thy hand;
Further this act of grace, and from this hour
The heart of brothers govern in our loves
And sway our great designs!

Caesar. There is my hand.
A sister I bequeath you, whom no brother
Did ever love so dearly; let her live
To join our kingdoms and our hearts, and never
Fly off our loves again!

(ii) Act III., Sc. II.—

Caesar. You take from me a great part of myself;
Use me well in't.—Sister, prove such a wife
As my thoughts make thee, and as my farthest band
Shall pass on thy approval.—Most noble Antony,
Let not the piece of virtue which is set
Betwixt us as the cement of our love,
To keep it builded, be the ram to batter
The fortress of it; for better might we
Have lov'd without this mean, if on both parts
This be not cherish'd.

Ant. Make me not offended

In your distrust.

Caesar. I have said.

Ant. You shall not find,
Though you be therein curious, the least cause
For what you seem to fear. So, the gods keep you,
And make the hearts of Romans serve your ends !
We will here part.

Caesar. Farewell, my dearest sister, fare thee well;
The elements be kind to thee, and make
Thy spirits all of comfort ! fare thee well.

Oct. My noble brother !

Ant. The April's in her eyes; it is love's spring,
And these the showers to bring it on.—Be cheerful.

Oct. Sir, look well to my husband's house, and—

Caesar. What Octavia ?

Oct. I'll tell you in your ear.

Ant. Her tongue will not obey her heart, nor can
Her heart inform her tongue,—the swan's down-feather,
That stands upon the swell at full of tide,
And neither way inclines.

306-7. Compare *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act III., Sc. VI.—

Oct. Hail, Caesar, and my lord ! hail, most dear Caesar !

Caesar. That ever I should call thee castaway !

Oct. You have not call'd me so, nor have you cause.

Caesar. Why have you stolen upon us thus ? You come not
Like Caesar's sister: the wife of Antony
Should have an army for an usher, and
The neighs of horse to tell of her approach
Long ere she did appear; the trees by the way
Should have borne men, and expectation faint'd,
Longing for what it had not; nay, the dust
Should have ascended to the roof of heaven,
Rais'd by your populous troops: but you are come
A market-maid to Rome, and have prevented
The ostentation of our love, which, left unshown,

Is often left unlov'd: we should have met you
By sea and land, supplying every stage
With an augmented greeting.

Oct. Good my lord.
To come thus was I not constrain'd, but did it
On my free will. My lord, Mark Antony,
Hearing that you prepar'd for war, acquainted
My grieved ear withal; whereon, I begg'd
His pardon for return.

Caesar. Which soon he granted,
Being an abstract 'tween his lust and him.

Oct. Do not say so, my lord.

Caesar. I have eyes upon him,
And his affairs come to me on the wind.
Where is he now?

Oct. My lord, in Athens.

Caesar. No, my most wronged sister; Cleopatra
Hath nodded him to her. He hath given his empire
Up to a whore; who now are levying
The kings o' the earth for war. He hath assembled
Bocchus, the king of Libya; Archelaus
Of Cappadocia; Philadelphos, king
Of Paphlagonia; the Thracian king, Adallas;
King Malchus of Arabia; King of Pont;
Herod of Jewry; Mithridates, king
Of Comagene; Polemon and Amyntas,
The kings of Mede and Lycaonia,
With a more larger list of sceptres.

Oct. Ay me, most wretched,
That have my heart parted betwixt two friends
That do afflict each other!

Caesar. * Welcome hither:
Your letters did withhold our breaking forth,
Till we perceiv'd both how you were wrong led
And we in negligent danger. Cheer your heart;
Be you not troubled with the time, which drives
O'er your content these strong necessities,
But let determin'd things to destiny
Hold unbewail'd their way. Welcome to Rome;
Nothing more dear to me. You are abus'd
Beyond the mark of thought; and the high gods,
To do you justice, make them ministers
Of us and those that love you. Best of comfort,
And ever welcome to us.

Agrip. Welcome, lady.

Maec. Welcome, dear madam.
Each heart in Rome does love and pity you;

Only the adulterous Antony, most large
In his abominations, turns you off,
And gives his potent regiment to a trull,
That noises it against us.

Oct. Is it so, sir ?

Caesar. Most certain. Sister, welcome; pray you,
Be ever known to patience. My dear'st sister ! [*Exeunt.*

309-16. Compare *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act III., Scs. VII., VIII., IX., X.

309. Another instance of Dryden's "writing down" of Cleopatra, to make her guilt more complete, and so her victory more astonishing.

In Shakespeare, it is Antony, now in the grip of tragic infatuation, who insists on fighting by sea at Actium.

315. Oxymoron. Ventidius, by a hyperbole, suggests that Cleopatra would not fly alone from the battle lest it should look mean. So she took half the fleet with her.

323-4. Alexas' aside is again a clever device to make Cleopatra's task seem the harder. She is apparently overwhelmed by Antony's "case," though she shows no signs of this when she *does* start the counter-attack.

325-7. Ventidius exults, with fine sarcasm. He now sees Cleopatra in a different light; she is all weakness after Antony's powerful presentation of his case, and her only weapons are sighs and tears. This forms material for two fine antitheses—*sigh . . . passage, tear . . . legions*, which emphasise her weakness and Antony's ruthless trampling strength. A further effect of puny weakness is produced in the clever implication that Cleopatra has only *one* tear and *one* sigh.

Prepare: implying neatly that Cleopatra's tears are "made to order."

bid: *i.e.* as at an auction.

'Tis like: it is likely. Irony.

331. **that destroys me:** "that" can refer either to "love" or to the fact that this love is now turned against her, in which case it would have a heavy stress. The latter seems more likely, from the movement of the line, and, indeed, is more effective in sense also.

334. "I will let myself be called guilty to please you."

335. **could I . . . ?:** rhetorical question, demanding the answer "no."

337. **Severe . . . destruction:** refers either to *you* or *eyes*, and means "mercilessly bent on my destruction."

339. **That:** refers to **advantages** (338): Antony noses out "advantages" which he can use against her.

341. A clever appeal to Antony's nobility and greatness. The whole speech is an excellent opening gambit; she tries to show, without condemning him and so raising his opposition, that he is behaving meanly and pryingly, and then turns round with an appeal he cannot deny—"Was this like you?" It is really flattery, especially the "For I end here" (340), which implies that she has no case to put forward, only this querying of his methods. Of course, she has no intention of ending here! The show of subservient, non-resisting love in this speech is psychologically sound, and shows us that Cleopatra has her own weapons against Antony's overwhelming array of facts. She cannot deny these, but she discounts them by querying Antony's interpretation of them, thus shifting attention from the condemnation of the facts themselves. Ventidius seems to realise her clever shifting of responsibility (346-7), but Antony is taken in by her wistful-reproachful appeal. His answer (341-4) does not show him in an attractive light. He first disclaims responsibility for this farewell scene (putting it on to Ventidius' broad shoulders, by implication), and then says he has blamed her only to clear himself and so justify his departure (again shifting the responsibility, this time, of his past disgraces). Antony's chief concern seems to be to back away from anyone who suggests he is responsible for his actions. These are poor "heroics," but, as has been said before, to analyse Antony's motives is not to increase our respect for him.

355. Cleopatra won the first round worthily, but her defence in the second is desperately thin. She let Caesar love her because at that time, although apparently she even then *loved* Antony (356), the latter was not her lover. If he had been, she would never have "endured" Caesar (351-3); in any case she let him love her only because he was the greatest man in the world (358) and because he would have forced her to had she not granted the favour (359-60). All this is pure casuistry and quite incapable of being proved; Antony is silent, but Ventidius at least is taken in, and actually grants her the point (361)!

362. **still:** this word reveals a weakness either on Dryden's part or on Ventidius'. It gives the impression that Ventidius has lost his head and thinks everything is lost; that he is desperate and stakes everything on a last throw. This panic is inexplicable, except by sheer stupidity.

363. **The consequence indeed:** Cleopatra pursues the demoralised foe; for the first time her voice is raised in exclamation and indignation, and the occasion is accurately timed. She must have had a shock of joy to find her wretched bait so surprisingly

snapped up, and of relief, to be so quickly off dangerous ice. In the next step of her "pleading" (in the legal sense), she is on surer ground. She can even afford to ignore Ventidius by continuing to aim directly at Antony, and referring to Ventidius only indirectly, as *him* (364) and *he* (368).

366. *uneasy wife*: perhaps refers to her intrigues and warrings.

368-70. This is good "pleading." If it was meritorious in Cleopatra to keep Antony from a *bad* wife, then the love which kept him from a *good* one must be even more astounding!

371-3. We cannot help but admire her astuteness. Here she goes back daringly to what had been a weak point—the Caesar episode—and makes it a strong one, relying on the powerful impression her preceding words must have. Her improved position in the "argument" is cunningly implied by her allusion. She was weak when Caesar came: now she is strong and could defy him. By implication; she was weak when first "defending" her affair with Caesar; now she is strong, and can defy him (= Ventidius).

372. and as . . . *young*: the second is Octavius, who is, comparatively, young.

374. *Words, words*: Ventidius should have said this before, after the first "Caesar" speech, instead of "Syren! Syren!" It might have made all the difference.

375 *his*: Cleopatra is still insulting Ventidius. His antagonism now seems beneath notice to her, as hers did at first to poor Ventidius (325-7).

dare: used absolutely = defy.

375-80. She admits she advised Antony to fight by sea and not by land, but that is all she has to be sorry for. She ran away from fear and not treachery, and wishes she could be a man, *i.e.* without fear. And if she were a man (a clever reversion to the "love" theme) those who now try to degrade her woman's love (a hit at Ventidius) could not grumble at her being friends with Antony. In this round, she uses, effectively, feminine wistfulness and attractive appealing weakness.

380. *We are . . . unhappy*: a typical Antony remark, though it sounds in place and dignified here.

381. Antony again tries to avoid personal responsibility: "Our bad luck causes this parting, if nothing else." One suspects the "if" is superfluous to the meaning.

382. Antony briefly puts the position in the form most likely to appeal to Cleopatra's sense of its reality; but we notice that here again he seems to be putting the responsibility of choice

on her; although, of course, it may be said that he is merely trying to make her admit, from her own commonsense, that he must go.

384-5. **If you . . . stay:** by this disconnected, emotional, utterance, Cleopatra cleverly avoids the responsibility; she begins to argue it out logically and then relies on the sudden gush of emotion to cover her abandonment of coherence. Thus Antony cannot say that she has given him reasons for staying. The thought that he must surely perish in battle if he leaves her is so dreadful that it causes this saving distraction.

390. Ventidius has spoilt the whole case. He wildly and rashly accuses her of keeping Antony only because her safety depends on his presence (this was Alexas' line of defence, but unfortunately for Ventidius, Alexas is not the accused); so far Cleopatra has varied her verbal attacks and defences to suit the occasion; but now Ventidius has clumsily played irrevocably into her hand, and all that is necessary is a quiet gesture, and a quiet restatement of her love; this quietness all the more effectively starts the blaze in which the scene ends.

394. Antony is startled, so much so that we suspect it is partly for joy, at finding something concrete to snatch at and so reverse the decision Cleopatra's varied tactics have shaken so severely.

395. **proscribing hand:** this recalls the scene in *Julius Caesar* (IV. i.), where, after Antony's oratorical victory in the Forum, he and Octavius coldbloodedly condemn ("proscribe") their enemies to death:—

Ant. These many shall die; their names are prick'd.

Oct. Your brother must die too; consent you, Lepidus?

Lep. I do consent—

Oct. Prick him down, Antony.

Lep. Upon condition Publius shall not live,
Who is your sister's son, Mark Antony.

Ant. He shall not live; look, with a spot I damn him.

proscribing and young (396) are epithets effectively transferred from Octavius to his hand.

396-7. **that . . . murder.**— this is not clear: *mine* is ambiguous. It more obviously stands for "my prescribing hand," in which case the whole meaning is "Octavius' zeal for passing the death sentence caused and encouraged a similar zeal in me, but his was far stronger than mine" (= "And . . . murder"). But "*mine*" could mean, by a loose construction, "my being proscribed" (by Octavia), so that Antony is now a victim of, instead of an accessory to, Octavia's "proscribing hand." The original is not expressed well enough to make either explanation entirely convincing.

398-9. In Plutarch, the offer is more vague—"he would deny her nothing reasonable"; this is vaguer still in Shakespeare:—

It much would please him
That of his fortunes you should make a staff
To lean upon.

—And we know that this was only a trap. Dolabella makes the offer attractive and does not hint it is not genuine, in order to bring out Cleopatra's fidelity. In Shakespeare, Cleopatra accepts; this was like her.

400. in requital: in return.

401-7. Cleopatra is quick to sense the exultation in Antony's tone, and breaks into a far more impressive *cri d'amour* than she has yet uttered.

408. **He melts; we conquer:** Alexas' first speech since Cleopatra's first venture. It is his turn to be choric; a quiet satisfaction expresses his feelings adequately. Ventidius is silent, lost.

409-20. Being now in possession of the field, Cleopatra consolidates her power, more in the lively chiding extravagant manner of Shakespeare's Cleopatra in Scenes I. and III. of Act I., by pretending to yield to his departure, and to admit to Ventidius' superior attraction, all in such a way, of course, that Antony is horrified and struck with remorse at the picture she conjures up. Compare: (a) *Antony and Cleopatra*, I. i.—

Att. News, my good lord, from Rome.

Ant.

Grates me; the sum.

Cleo. Nay, hear them, Antony.

Fulvia perchance is angry; or, who knows
If the scarce-bearded Caesar have not sent
His powerful mandate to you, "Do this, or this;
Take in that kingdom, and enfranchise that;
Perform't, or else we damn thee"?

Ant.

How, my love!

Cleo. Perchance,—nay, and most like,—

You must not stay here longer, your dismissal
Is come from Caesar; therefore hear it, Antony.
Where's Fulvia's process? Caesar's, I would say? both?—
Call in the messengers.—As I am Egypt's queen,
Thou blushest, Antony, and that blood of thine
Is Caesar's homager; else so thy cheek pays shame
When shrill-tongued Fulvia scolds.—The messengers!

(b) *Antony and Cleopatra*, I. iii.—

Cleo. Help me away, dear Charmian, I shall fall;
It cannot be thus long, the sides of nature
Will not sustain it.

Ant. Now, my dearest queen,—

Cleo. Pray you, stand farther from me.

Ant. What's the matter?

Cleo. I know, by that same eye, there's some good news.

What says the married woman?—You may go;

Would she had never given you leave to come!

Let her not say 't is I that keep you here;

I have no power upon you, hers you are.

Here, as in Dryden, she has an "alacrity in dying."

418. **Roman gravity:** cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, I. ii.—
—but on the sudden

A Roman thought hath struck him.

427-30. That Dryden had Sc. I. of *Antony and Cleopatra* in mind above is further indicated here by the parallel between this fine "world-image" passage and the continuation of (a) above:—

Ant. Let Rome in Tiber melt, and the wide arch
Of the rang'd empire fall! Here is my space.
Kingdoms are clay; our dungy earth alike
Feeds beast as man: the nobleness of life
Is to do thus; when such a mutual pair
And such a twain can do 't, in which I bind,
On pain of punishment, the world to weet
We stand up peerless.

428-30. Supply "let" to "leap," "sink," "fall."

432-40. Antony is in high spirits, and mocks Ventidius with his own words, and then remembers to be indignant (438-40).

441. Ventidius has recovered from his unfortunate loquacity and retreats into his old terse and surly (and disrespectful—"Will you go?" "self).

446. **your boy:** Antony is even laughing at the gods: he says "I know Octavius is your *good* boy: well, give the nice little boy a toy to play with—the world if you like." Also a jibe at Octavius' youth.

448. **gewgaw:** a toy.

cheaply off: "It is a poor bargain for Octavius if he gets only the world (and I get Cleopatra)." There are two good "world images" here and in 447.

449. A fine hyperbole. He speaks of Cleopatra as if she were infinitely larger than the world.

451-3. Compare *Antony and Cleopatra*, (a) I. iv.—

—to sit

And keep the turn of tippling with a slave,

To reel the streets at noon and stand the buffet
With knaves that smell of sweat.

(b) II. iii.—

I saw her once

Hop forty paces through the public street;
And having lost her breath she spoke and panted,
That she did make defect perfection,
And, breathless, power breathe forth.

(c) I. i.—

—and all alone

To-night we 'll wander through the streets—

454-6. Amid all this jubilation, Ventidius sounds the warning note—and goes out. Immediately the strain of his presence is removed, Antony, to relieve his high spirits, decides on a sudden attack on Caesar to revenge the treacherous offer he has discovered.

463-4. The closing couplet, especially the first line, has a very Restoration ring. Nevertheless, the last line, however unthinkingly and even derisively it may be uttered, may be meant by Dryden to be ominous:—"ere we die."

As in Act I., the scene ends with a rush of emotion, but it rings far more genuine and passionate. Although it is usually said that Act I. is the best act, for close and maintained interest, and for character conflict, Act II. is superior. The quotations from Shakespeare, however, show how easily this superiority can be "put down" by comparison. As Coleridge said:—"And if you would feel the judgment as well as the genius of Shakespeare in your heart's core, compare this astonishing drama (*Antony and Cleopatra*) with Dryden's *All for Love*."

ACT III.

In Act III. there is another of the many "reversals of fortune" whose frequency has been compared unfavourably with the wave-like movement of Shakespeare's tragedies. One is given the impression that the play could consist of an indefinite number of acts, in each of which the hero recants the decision he reached in the last, until the author's ingenuity and the audience's patience tire. In this particular act, Cleopatra loses her victory, at the expense of Octavia. It has been shown in the notes to Act II. that there was some psychological plausibility, and some interest, in the reactions of the characters in the duel with Cleopatra. But Act III. is not only tamer (though the general level of the verse is perhaps the most consistently

high of any, so far), but lacks this unity and plausibility. It does not hold together, particularly in the character of Antony. To begin with there is a rich dumb-show spectacle to "fix" an atmosphere of triumph; following this we have Antony in his best "heroic" vein; but almost immediately he is confessing "The wretched have no friends"! Then we hear of his consuming friendship for Dolabella, but in the very next speech he is utterly indifferent to the latter's whereabouts. But when Dolabella appears Antony dotes on him, and "If I had any joy when thou wert absent, I grudged it to myself" (we wonder why we have not heard of Dolabella before, when Antony has been joyous), but at the same time he is at his "lowest water mark" (in spite of the splendid victory celebrated at the beginning of the scene!). Then he has a taunting phase. He unpleasantly reminds Dolabella of Dolabella's secret passion for Cleopatra, sneers at Caesar (but is willing to be grateful that someone is making honourable terms for him with Caesar), and goes on to insult his wife, who has saved him. But he cannot bear that she should be more generous than he (the hero of a "heroic" play must have the monopoly of all good qualities), and so he finds "a secret yielding in his soul," which soon becomes complete submission to Octavia ("lead me where thou wilt; Even to thy brother's camp"). The latter then goes on to score a single-handed victory over Cleopatra, who appears quite a different woman in this scene. Then Cleopatra, after the exchange of sarcasms, becomes maudlin and decides to die of grief. The act is like March—it comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb; but in its uncertainty it is more like April. It is a good illustration of the weakness of Dryden's approach to drama; each separate part may sound convincing in itself, but is not convincing when related to the other parts. The sudden introduction of Dolabella is an example. By itself it seems a rather splendid example of the "blood-brotherhood" theme in which Dryden seems to shine; but taken in conjunction with previous events, it provokes unpleasant suspicions that Dolabella is just another "ingredient" in the play whose presence has to be made as interesting as possible, and so we are presented with the exchange of manly tendernesses, which have no other function than to be palatable. The contrast is with Hamlet's meeting with Horatio. Dryden's approach is external; Shakespeare's organic.

Stage directions: a laurel wreath was the emblem of victory presented to the conqueror. Roman generals were allowed to celebrate a public Triumph if their victory was considered notable enough. Antony, however, like the later Emperors, adjudicates himself a Triumph, but the ritual would seem to owe more to Alexandria than Rome.

1-23. Compare *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act IV., Sc. VIII.—

Ant. We have beat him to his camp; run one before,
And let the queen know of our gests.—To-morrow,
Before the sun shall see 's, we'll spill the blood
That has to-day escap'd. I thank you all,
For doughty-handed are you, and have fought
Not as you serv'd the cause, but as 't had been
Each man's like mine; you have shown all Hectors.
Enter the city, clip your wives, your friends,
Tell them your feats; whilst they with joyful tears
Wash the congealment from your wounds, and kiss
The honour'd gashes whole.—[*To Scarus*] Give me thy hand.

Enter CLEOPATRA, attended.

To this great fairy I'll commend thy acts,
Make her thanks bless thee.—[*To Cleopatra*] O thou day o' the
world,
Chain mine arm'd neck; leap thou, attire and all,
Through proof of harness to my heart, and there
Ride on the pants triumphing!

Cleo. Lord of lords!
O infinite virtue, com'st thou smiling from
The world's great snare uncaught?

Ant. My nightingale,
We have beat them to their beds. What, girl! though grey
Do something mingle with our younger brown, yet ha' we
A brain that nourishes our nerves, and can
Get goal for goal of youth. Behold this man;
Commend unto his lips thy favouring hand.—
Kiss it, my warrior.—He hath fought to-day
As if a god in hate of mankind had
Destroy'd in such a shape.

3-4. Antony is referring to his recent successful skirmish with Caesar, on which he was about to venture at the close of the last act.

10. This image in which Cleopatra identifies the opposites, love and punishment, is somehow unpleasant in spite of its "wit," perhaps because "mark you red" suggests vampire cruelty far more than love.

11. *brighter . . . greater . . .* means *brighter than . . . greater than . . .* The comparisons with the goddess of Love and the god of War are to introduce the "heroic" passages which follow. Antony is fond of self-dramatising.

12. *join'st: meetest.*

13. *Phlegræan plains:* were a district in Macedonia where gods and giants fought and the giants were killed by lightning. Antony, however, prefers to imagine them killed with his sword.

15. **blow:** seems to be the subject. "One blow killed a giant, the next cut off a mountain top to bury him, and so on." This is typical rant of the heroic drama, and goes back ultimately to Marlowe.

17-20. Dryden is here thinking of the myth described in the *Odyssey*; Venus has an affair with Mars, but Vulcan, her husband, the smith of Heaven, forged an unbreakable iron net and trapped the lovers in it and invited all the gods (the lady goddesses stayed at home through shame!) to come and laugh. But Apollo said to Hermes, "Hermes, would you not be willing—even held by hard bonds—to sleep in bed by golden Aphrodite?" Hermes replies, "Would that this might happen and that bonds three times as many as these might encompass me about and you gods be looking on, and all the goddesses,—were I but sleeping by golden Aphrodite!" Caesar is compared with Vulcan: the semicolon after "nets" is misleading.

20. "Make them envious of what they had intended to be a joke." The line has the cadence and antithetical structure of a line of the heroic couplet: cf. Goldsmith's "And fools who came to scoff remained to pray."

24-8. Compare *Antony and Cleopatra*, II. ii. (236-9)—

Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
Her infinite variety: other women cloy
The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry
Where most she satisfies:

28. Antony gets more than he gives.

37. **I'll avoid . . . presence:** this is one of Antony's typical lapses from heroic grace; one minute he imagines himself a god; the next he is trying to dodge Ventidius because he feels guilty!

41. **my father Hercules:** Plutarch mentions that Antony was descended from Hercules. Shakespeare uses it in a scene already mentioned: e.g. *Antony and Cleopatra*, IV. iii.—

'T is the god Hercules, whom Antony lov'd,

42. Antony swears by Hercules; Ventidius surpasses him and swears by Jove.

44. Antony is ashamed of being seen with Ventidius. His weakness of character is again apparent.

46-51. These lines are reminiscent of Ahenobarbus in *Antony and Cleopatra* about the time he is deciding to leave Antony. Ahenobarbus occupies a slightly similar position to Ventidius.

50. **confound their choice:** the gods could not decide what to punish in Antony and what to praise, his vices and virtues are so inextricably mixed in him.

58. **breathless**: this is redundant and spoils the fine image of death in this and the previous line.

59. Ventidius is sceptical of the value of Antony's victory, in which he himself would not join. Loss of men will not worry Caesar; he has plenty more.

61. **an easier peace**: Ventidius has changed his policy; he now thinks only of peace with honour. This is an indication of how low Antony's fortunes really are, although he himself, on the strength of one small victory, is confident of his chances. This is an attempt at the "tragic infatuation" which possesses Shakespeare's tragic heroes. See above.

63. **The boy**: cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act IV. i.: *Caesar*: He calls me boy.

64. "He is always considering how to gain a malicious advantage."

65. For the construction, see Act II., 114-15. It has been pointed out before how Antony likes to repeat a happy effort.

71. **Thank thy love**: = *I* thank.

77. **And of Egyptians**: "You have only one town to depend on, and that is populated only by Egyptians." Ventidius does not seem to think very highly of the Egyptians.

78. **nations . . . in**: a good effect of irresistible power. There is a strong emphasis on **nations**, to refer back, in contrast, to **Egyptians**.

80-97. This is how Dryden tries to make the introduction of Dolabella significant. To do this, Dryden has to make Antony turn in a second from a confident hero to a wretched man racking his brains to think of a single friend.

85. **beyond . . . women**: cf. David's lament over Jonathan. "His love for me was wonderful, passing the love of women."

86. **He** = Dolabella. **his** = Caesar's.

87. **rugged image**: one thinks of stone rather than of wax. An example of the limitations of Dryden's images.

93. They were so closely united that the rivets joining them (*i.e.* the reasons for their original friendship) could not be seen.

94. **That . . . yet**: "I have not found the right comparison for us yet."

96. **one mass**: made of the same material, and also mixed together in one lump, so that neither could distinguish his own identity (96-7). Dryden was probably drawing on Hermia and Helena, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and on Rosalind and Celia in *As You Like It*.

98. **He . . . him:** Ventidius voices Dryden's sentiments also. Antony is being *made* to introduce Dolabella, rather crudely, by Dryden-Ventidius, who says, "He is doing what I want him to." To make the tragic hero so worked up, so late in the day too, over a character who has not yet appeared, is a breach of dramatic decorum which Dryden makes more obvious by his attempts to "write up" the character.

100. Antony is, however, indifferent to Dolabella's whereabouts!

104. **a warmth:** the late seventeenth, and the eighteenth, century liked abstractions like this for love-words.

113. **would . . . here:** compare 100, above.

119. **my better half:** a phrase of which the dignity has since been lowered. Dryden seems to be improving upon Horace's calling Maecenas his *altera pars* ("the other half of his soul").

120-3. The varying length of the lines is meant, here and elsewhere, to indicate the strong emotions of the speaker.

123. **fond:** "doting" seems to be the meaning, though it does not go too well with the bridegroom image. The word had a much more intense meaning then than now.

124. This image is queerly in the manner of Webster, and helps to point a curious parallel between Dryden's dramatic method and Webster's. His plays also give the impression of a succession of images which are striking taken separately, but are not inter-connected, and indeed have no organic connection. The technique is related to that of the epigram.

124-5. Compare *Julius Caesar* (III. ii).—

Ant. Bear with me;

My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar,

And I must pause till it come back to me.

134. The swelling heart is typical of the hero of the Heroic Play. Antony says he has only a thin trickle of support, and that is all provided by himself, but his defiant heart swells that little so that it does at least reach either bank, and so *seems* like a big river. Here again Antony's habit of dramatising himself is to the fore. It seems his chief characteristic, indeed, for not much of his behaviour matches his own ideas about himself.

145. **menial kings:** Antony *had* had many Eastern kings helping him. A list is given in *Antony and Cleopatra*, III. ii.

156. Antony says, "Be careful how you criticise my love for Cleopatra. She is good looking and you are susceptible, and I seem to remember that you were so impressed when you first saw her that you were only too anxious to hide the fact that

you had come to accuse her of being an accomplice in your brother's death." What Antony means is "You are not in a position to blame me for loving her; you loved her yourself."

161-2. To . . . aid: to clear herself for not having helped Dola-bella's brother, and so indirectly causing his death, she came in person . . .

163. Cydnus: a Cilician river flowing through Tarsus where the meeting occurred.

161-83. Compare *Antony and Cleopatra*, II. ii.—

Eno. I will tell you.

The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,
Burn'd on the water; the poop was beaten gold;
Purple the sails, and so perfumed that
The winds were love-sick with them; the oars were silver,
Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and made
The water which they beat to follow faster,
As amorous of their strokes. For her own person,
It beggar'd all description: she did lie
In her pavilion—cloth-of-gold of tissue—
O'erpicturing that Venus where we see
The fancy outwork nature; on each side her
Stood pretty dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids,
With divers-colour'd fans, whose wind did seem
To glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool,
And what they undid did.

Agrip. O, rare for Antony !

Eno. Her gentlewomen, like the Nereides,
So many mermaids, tended her i' the eyes,
And made their bends adornings; at the helm
A seeming mermaid steers; the silken tackle
Swell with the touches of those flower-soft hands,
That yarely frame the office. From the barge
A strange invisible perfume hits the sense
Of the adjacent wharfs. The city cast
Her people out upon her, and Antony,
Enthron'd i' the market-place, did sit alone,
Whistling to the air; which, but for vacancy,
Had gone to gaze on Cleopatra too
And made a gap in nature.

Agrip. Rare Egyptian !

Saintsbury remarked that a comparison between *All for Love* and *Antony and Cleopatra* would be a most interesting literary exercise. Nowhere is this more true than with this passage where Dryden deliberately measures himself against Shakespeare, and it would be very tempting indeed to attempt a detailed comparison of these two "set" speeches; but it would take far

too long. Strangely enough, on the whole the critics have preferred Dryden: Scott says—"In judging betwixt these celebrated passages, we feel almost afraid to avow a preference of Dryden, founded partly on the easy flow of the verse, which seems to soften with the subject, but chiefly upon the beauty of the language and imagery, which is flowery without diffusiveness, and rapturous without hyperbole. I fear Shakespeare cannot be exculpated from the latter fault; yet I am sensible, it is by shifting his beauties from his conceits that his imitator has been enabled to excel him." It must be remembered, however, in judging these criticisms of Scott, that he was still close enough in time and temperament to the school of "polite" poetry which Dryden helped to found, to judge him sympathetically by the latter's own standards. His praise of the hair-raising omen in Act I. is similarly understandable, for the "Tale of Terror," in which such scenes were stock features, was popular in Scott's own day. A more recent critic, Verrall, objected to one or two of the "hyperboles" in Shakespeare's account, but it has been left to F. R. Leavis to establish in detail the obvious superiority of Shakespeare. As he deals with almost every line in detail, it is impossible here to summarise his "arguments"; but in brief his conclusion is that Dryden's is coarser and less *alive* than Shakespeare's. Dryden's is more decorous, of course. He would never dare risk lowering the dignity of his hero by making the deserted Antony *whistle*! Possible this is one of the incidents Scott had in mind when he praised Dryden for refining the often-coarseness of Shakespeare.

165. *lodged*: implies that the breezes seemed *fixed* in the sails; *i.e.* the sails kept permanently curved.

166. *Nereids*: water nymphs. The weakness of the phraseology of Dryden's school is here manifested: *nymph* was a stock word for *maiden*, but, being already a "classicism," makes "water nymphs" seem redundant.

167. *sea born*: Venus was supposed to have emerged from the sea: cf. "Love still has something of the sea, From which his mother Venus rose."

174-7. *But . . . object*: Dryden seems to have thought that Shakespeare should not have omitted the effect of her charm on the opposite sex, and so added this typical Restoration touch.

180. *or somewhat more*: the Heroic play, like modern advertisements, specialised in superlatives; this desperate effort to go one better than last time, results, as here, in bathos. Compare "for ever *and a day*."

193-9. Ventidius is fond of taking Dolabella's mild words out of his mouth and substituting his own merciless and hard hitting criticisms. See 151 above.

197. "You used what was left of your natural strength to love Cleopatra instead of to keep yourself fit."

199. 'T was . . . home: "Ventidius is right, but he need not have hurt your feelings so much."

200. "My loss affected only myself, not the whole world, as yours did."

203. This . . . friend: Antony has the reactions of the real sentimentalist; he is not so much concerned about the truth of the indictment as he is hurt by the fact that a friend makes it.

207. To . . . you: Dolabella says "Although I call you to your face, I make excuses for you to Caesar."

209. equal: this jealousy is also seen in Shakespeare's Antony:

Ant. Yes, my lord, yes; he at Philippi kept
His sword e'en like a dancer, while I struck
The lean and wrinkled Cassius; and 't was I
That the mad Brutus ended: he alone
Dealt on lieutenantry, and no practice had
In the brave squares of war; yet now—No matter.

210. While . . . this: apparently pointing to his head. Polonius makes a similar action-aided remark—"Take this from this if this be otherwise."

212. Methinks . . . else: not, "You ought not to bring them if they are not noble," but, "I know *you* would not bring them if, etc."

216. The punctuation is misleading; a comma after *conquer* is required to make the sense clear.

217-27. The entry of Octavia is prepared for in a similar way to that of Dolabella previously. Antony is made to "guess" at his benefactor.

231. I . . . not: Dolabella knows that Cleopatra will not be pleased to hear that Octavia has "rescued" her lover. Antony, however, not knowing who his rescuer is, thinks Dolabella is decrying the queen because he once loved her.

233. grudgings: symptoms; here = traces.

234-9. This is an effective piece of dramatic or prophetic irony. Antony makes this declaration of faith to Cleopatra just as her rival is about to appear and make him eat his words.

240. Octavia: Caesar's sister, whom Antony had married in order to keep peace with him. Scott says that Dryden makes far more use of her than Shakespeare does; this is true, perhaps, in that Dryden uses her to bring about another about-turn in Antony's decisions, a more emphatic one than in Shakespeare. Scott thinks her character compares unfavourably with that of

Shakespeare's gentle and loving wronged wife; he finds her cold and hard, doing her favours out of a sense of duty, and to save her reputation, and not because she loves.

245. For shame: *i.e.* at the way he has treated them.

246. confess a man: "if you profess to be a man"—.

250-1. your eyes . . . lips: an unattractive hyperbole.

252. Antony will never face up to opposition. See 37-8, above. He says, feebly, that he was silent because he could not think how his wife and children came there.

257. Caesar's sister: he is still sulky and will not admit she is his wife.

262. In . . . sister: "Although I am Caesar's sister, and so should now be your enemy."

267. duty first: see Scott's remark, above, on her character. It appears, however, from ll. 326-31, that she is really as self-sacrificing as Shakespeare's Octavia. She says duty prompts her because she knows that this attitude is more likely to be effective with Antony than the love-appeal she is really longing to make.

271-2. but . . . too: "just the right balance is struck (between submission and pride) as is right for a wife, who is also a Roman (*i.e.* naturally proud)." *mean* = the middle path (cf. Horace's "golden mean"): it is the subject of shows. Dolabella and Ventidius are very assiduous in making Antony feel ashamed of himself. Antony is not man enough to defy them—knowing he is in the wrong—as Shakespeare's Antony would.

273. begged: strong emphasis on this word = "you have begged it, not bargained for it, as between equals."

278-84. Antony's pride is to the fore here, but there is more to it than that; there is a strong spice of jealousy, which makes him imagine that his friends must think of his opponent as a god, who can forgive and pardon. This jealousy makes him more impassioned than he has been so far in this scene.

282. As . . . being: "as if he could give life to me." Antony means, "as if *he* had the power of life or death over *me*!"

291. She . . . brother: Antony does not receive these proposals like a great man: he uses any petty weapon he can to discredit his wife; she is only saving him in order to buy him, body and soul, and will use the threat of giving him up to her brother to keep him properly subdued. Again, this petulant abuse reveals Antony's great capacity for self-pity.

291-307. This is a restrained and dignified speech, and makes Antony, after what he has said, seem particularly crawling and base.

299. **cement:** *i.e.* "that which will bind you and my brother together."

309. Ventidius is deceived by Octavia's abnegation of feeling: Alexas comments on his stupidity *below* (382 ff.).

311-12. Antony's emotion is not exactly noble; he is stirred, not by her self-sacrifice, but by the fact that her generosity is greater than his. The hero of Dryden's type of drama must be outdone in nothing!

313. **winks** = blinks.

313-14. Ventidius, however, in spite of his blunt criticisms of Antony, is really rather sentimental about him, and pathetically anxious to see his best side. Hence his eagerness at this sign of grace in Antony.

324. Antony cannot bear not being loved: he is thus a true sentimentalist.

325. Ventidius is pleased to think Antony misses Octavia's love. He takes Antony's complaint to mean that he definitely *wants* her to love him; this would mean, of course, a victory over Cleopatra; Octavia is already potentially on a level with her; she has only to say she does love him. Cleopatra has made her sacrifice, acclaimed by Antony in 236-8, because she loved him. If Octavia can make the same claim for *her* sacrifice, Antony cannot say that Cleopatra's claim on him is greater.

333. **I . . . you:** this has two meanings: (1) "I am bound not to love you"; (2) "I *ought* not to love you (since I have been slighted by you), but I do!" Antony sees only the first meaning.

334. **if I could:** Octavia has to persist in her innuendos, but still Antony does not understand, until Dolabella explains the obvious to him.

338. Compare Act II., l. 1, and see note.

339. Antony is now in the throes. His chief weapon—Cleopatra's superiority, has been taken from him, and now they both seem equal, he cannot decide anything. Octavia's following appeal to his sentimental soul naturally swings him on her side.

359. **bad woman:** Cleopatra, of course, but Antony makes no remonstrance.

362-4. The rather repulsive pathos of this product of Octavia's imagination is likely to appeal to Antony. He likes the flattery of an appeal to his *power*. **I was born to suffer:** this self-dramatising is unlike Octavia's character so far: she has been restrained and uncomplaining: it is rather unworthy of her.

365. **Emperor:** reveals in what light Ventidius primarily regards Antony. He has used this term of address before.

369. **stock**: has here the sense of "family" (cf. "he comes of good stock"), but combined with a more original sense of the word—the original wood of a tree. A paraphrase would be—"I cut myself off from the circle of homelife of which I was before an integral part." The metaphor is not very happy, and does not fit in with in riot.

371. **O happy change**: one wonders how the many exclamations sprinkled about here would sound on a stage.

371-3. Ventidius cannot speak his happiness, so he cries it. A rather affecting image.

374-5. Antony sounds suspiciously like the abject captive he was afraid he would be (288-91). It is insensitive of Dryden to strike this note here. One could, of course, say that it was in character. Antony likes to abandon himself utterly to the sensation of the moment.

379. **officious**: here used in the modern sense of "busy-body."

380. **Be . . . first**: Ventidius shrewdly hits at Alexas' passion for being well-informed about everything.

382. **downright**: not in the modern complimentary sense, but, rather, "blunt" = "stupid."

381-4. Alexas feels it as a personal insult that Ventidius' open and honest arguing has defeated his own sly and subtle underhand intrigues.

395. We get a different view of Alexas in this confession, more in keeping with the effeminate Alexandrian that Shakespeare's Alexas is. Instead of the passionate nationalist, we get a childish delight (shown here as disappointment, because defeated) in excelling in intrigue ("wit"), self-pity because he is not a real man, a desire for personal glory as a recompense for his lack of maleness, and, at the moment, a very strong personal desire to avoid death! From the general tenour of the speech, however, one does feel a genuine pity for the poor fellow, particularly when he bewails not having felt the "joys" of ordinary folk.

397. The Romans thought a raven's cry was a very bad omen.

398-9. **now . . . death**: the comparison with Shakespeare's Cleopatra's "celerity in dying" has been made above. One suspects the comparison is so very unfavourable to Dryden because he makes his Cleopatra take to dying *seriously*, and so, unconvincingly.

400. **What . . . Egypt**: just as Alexas forgets his patriotism in the crisis and lapses into a concern for his *personal* defeat, so Cleopatra abandons Egypt in a word, and is concerned only with personal jealousy of her rival.

404-15. Compare *Antony and Cleopatra*, (1) II. v.—

Lead me from hence;
 I faint. O Iras ! Charmian !—'T is no matter.—
 Go to the fellow, good Alexas; bid him
 Report the feature of Octavia, her years,
 Her inclination, let him not leave out
 The colour of her hair: bring me word quickly.— [Exit Alexas.
 Let him for ever go;—let him not—Charmian,
 Though he be painted one way like a Gorgon,
 The other way's a Mars.—Bid you Alexas [To Mardian.
 Bring me word how tall she is.—Pity me, Charmian,
 But do not speak to me.—Lead me to my chamber. [Exeunt.

(2) III. iii.—

Cleo. Didst thou behold Octavia ?
Mess. Ay, dread queen.
Cleo. Where ?
Mess. Madam, in Rome
 I look'd her in the face, and saw her lead
 Between her brother and Mark Antony.
Cleo. Is she as tall as me ?
Mess. She is not, madam.
Cleo. Didst hear her speak ? is she shrill-tongued or low ?
Mess. Madam, I heard her speak; she is low-voic'd.
Cleo. That's not so good. He cannot like her long.
Char. Like her ! O Isis ! 't is impossible.
Cleo. I think so, Charmian; dull of tongue, and dwarfish !—
 What majesty is in her gait ? Remember,
 If e'er thou look'dst on majesty.
Mess. She creeps;
 Her motion and her station are as one:
 She shows a body rather than a life,
 A statue than a breather.
Cleo. Is this certain ?
Mess. Or I have no observance.
Char. Three in Egypt
 Cannot make better note.
Cleo. He's very knowing,
 I do perceive't. There's nothing in her yet.—
 The fellow has good judgment.
Char. Excellent.
Cleo. Guess at her years, I prithee.
Mess. Madam,
 She was a widow,—
Cleo. Widow !—Charmian, hark.
Mess. And I do think she's thirty.
Cleo. Bear'st thou her face in mind ? is't long or round ?

Mess. Round even to faultiness.

Cleo. For the most part, too, they are foolish that are so.—
Her hair, what colour?

Mess. Brown, madam; and her forehead
As low as she would wish it.

Cleo. There 's gold for thee.
Thou must not take my former sharpness ill.

I will employ thee back again; I find thee
Most fit for business. Go make thee ready;

Our letters are prepar'd. [Exit Messenger.

Char. A proper man.

Cleo. Indeed, he is so; I repent me much
That I so harried him. Why, methinks, by him,
This creature's no such thing.

Char. Nothing, madam.

Cleo. The man hath seen some majesty, and should know.

Char. Hath he seen majesty? Isis else defend,
And serving you so long!

Cleo. I have one thing more to ask him yet, good Charmian:
But 't is no matter; thou shalt bring him to me.
Where I will write. All may be well enough.

Char. I warrant you, madam. [Exeunt.

Cleopatra in both plays shows the same desire to be flattered, and in both she finds a diplomatic flatterer, but Dryden's tame bird is only too conscious of being flattered, and willing to give up the palm of beauty. This latter is expressed in an effective image (407-9, Poor . . . rubbish).

417-19. We are not prepared for this sudden change from low spirits to this rhetorical defiance. It is a good instance of Dryden's superficial insight into any situation; it was a similar defect that made Alexas first say portentously, above,

You are no more a queen
Egypt is lost

—and then proceed to some suave courtier-like flattery in quite a different key.

417. Juno was Jove's sister and wife.

418. her brother's = Jove's, not Caesar's.

420-88. Of this encounter, Scott says:—"I must not omit, that her scolding scene with Cleopatra, though anxiously justified by the author in the Preface, seems too coarse to be in character, and is a glaring exception to the general good taste evinced throughout the rest of the piece." It is a welcome sign that Scott, who in general is inclined to accept Dryden's own suggestions about his play and to praise him for having succeeded in carrying them out, should take exception to this forcible

dragging together of two women who kept well apart in real life. The sparring-match is obviously a situation for comedy rather than tragedy. Perhaps Shakespeare's Cleopatra, with her greater "coarseness" could have carried the scene off, and indeed there are many such comic situations in *Antony and Cleopatra*. But Shakespeare's scale allowed for comedy in "tragedy," Dryden's stricter and more decorous drawing did not, and Scott perceives the mistake. But Scott's own mistake is to say that the scene is "coarser," and different in tone to the rest of the play. That is what is wrong with it. It is not. Dryden tries to force this discordant material into exactly the same "lofty" style as he uses throughout. It was what may be called the "Restoration" side of Dryden which liked to imagine a woman-to-woman scene with no motive except feline jealousy on either side. One imagines the scene to have French prototypes, if not in the drama, then in the popular and dreary and high-toned prose romances which had a similar sententious but "unrealised" and external approach to emotional relationships. Dramatically the scene is purposeless. It helps in no "reversal of fortune."

421. **haughty carriage:** one would expect the remark to apply, if to anybody, to Octavia.

423. Perhaps a jibe at the fact that Julius Caesar made Cleopatra queen.

427. **my lover's Juno:** Jove was married to Juno, and found that his supreme authority did not apply to his wife.

434. **can:** used absolutely, in the sense "knows how to do."

431-6. **He's not . . . slave:** a pointless repetition of Antony's accusation in II., 268-81, and Cleopatra's reply in 347-60.

440. **inevitable charms:** charms which cannot be avoided by men (they are so powerful). Here Octavia must mean Cleopatra's *beauty*, but Cleopatra uses the word in a general sense—"attractions" (of behaviour, etc.). Then Octavia seizes on her chance to use still another meaning—"black endearments"—by which she seems to mean the additional spices the loose woman is supposed to season love with, to make it more attractive. Hence Octavia's virtuous indignation in 444-7.

445. **sex:** "the sex" = Woman, was a typical coinage of the "polite" age.

449. **charms:** Cleopatra refuses to accept the disreputable meaning Octavia has attached to the word, and thus, by implication, she denies, or feigns ignorance of, the allegation of prostitute.

453. **For . . . that:** *i.e.* like Octavia's. Dryden is not playing fair in this. Octavia was admitted to be better looking than

Cleopatra. Shakespeare's Cleopatra takes pleasure in calling herself "wrinkled deep in Time."

Thou . . . well: a tame rejoinder. Dryden's frequent poverties in repartee, causing a dead flatness, have been commented on before.

454. The line has the movement, closed sense, and epigrammatic structure of the heroic couplet.

456-61. This device of rhetoric of asking a number of questions with the same answer, or making statements which have application to one thing, is reminiscent of Shakespeare's early style, or of Marlowe or Greene. Cleopatra's answer in 461 caps all the others.

463. *specious*: "attractive-sounding," but probably Cleopatra also intends the jibe implied in its other meaning, "apparent": *i.e.* "you *seem* his wife, but you are so only in name."

464. *gild*: make it seem attractive. The tone of this speech is more like that of the Cleopatra we know—mournful, self-pitying, but faithful to death.

470. Octavia unkindly advises her to carry out her hint (*i.e.* to die).

471-4. Cleopatra is only too willing to oblige. The rest of the scene is couched in this funereal language. We are obviously meant to feel deep pity for the "mobled queen," and she herself tells us (475-7) that her display of (comparatively) high spirits was but a momentary response to her "rival's scorn," and not natural to her. This tomb-like atmosphere is meant as a contrast to the opening, when Cleopatra's fortunes were at their height (in the play).

477-9. This is to prophesy, in contrast to the prevailing gloom, that the game is not yet over for Cleopatra. It serves to prepare us for the changes of fortune in the next act.

482. This seems to be a very dignified and diluted version of Cleopatra's conceit in *Antony and Cleopatra*, where she is helping to haul the dying Antony up on to the monument, which is her refuge:—

Here's sport indeed !—How heavy weighs my lord !
Our strength is all gone into heaviness,
That makes the weight.

The difference in power and significance of the two is a fair measure of the difference in quality of the two plays.

483. *some*: the conventional picture of grief is perfectly epitomised in the vagueness of "some." The whole passage is "fake" writing. Why Dryden inserted this premature "vision"

of death here is hard to say. It is liable to make the real death scenes anticlimaxes.

484. Possibly a reminiscence of the lines in the powerful picture of death in Henry King's (1592-1669) *Exequy on his Wife*:—

So close the ground, and 'bout her shade
Black curtains draw;—my bride is laid.

487. The theme "All for Love" is integral to the play. Cleopatra is accordingly a consistent lover, beside whose love everything else is unimportant; the loss of love means death.

488. A singularly pointless, bathetic, and "make-weight" closing line. *Why* do infants moan themselves asleep? More of the attendant circumstances are required, to give the line any relevance. It is an epitome of the whole of the act after Antony's change of decision—it is "make weight" and irrelevant.

ACT IV.

By the end of this act we have reached an *impasse*; so far each act has ended in a *turn* towards one of the two groups manoeuvring for Antony's favour; each has succeeded in turn, only to lose in the next act. But now both parties are turned down! Thus there is a double "complication" in this, the longest, act.

In this act, too, the theme "All for Love" emerges more decisively, though negatively; the two loves of Antony's life—his mistress and his friend—on whom he has lavished all, both betray him, as he thinks. He has given all for love, and been cheated. But love wins, even in defeat: after a display of furious jealousy in typical heroic rant, he calms down to melancholy, incapable of pursuing revenge. Again, *tears* win against *action*, as Dryden promised us in the *Prologue*.

We notice a change in the conduct of the story; whereas previously the fight has been fair and above board, now there is a definite underhand forcing of the pace on both sides, an intriguing, of which the deceit recoils on the motivators, for the result is that Antony mistakes the motives of both sides. The way things seem for a time to play into Ventidius' hands reminds us of Iago's lucky scheming in *Othello*; the rousing of Antony's jealousy is, of course, a parallel to Iago's baiting of Othello, but there should be no need at this stage to stress Dryden's inferiority; indeed the intrigues of this act are almost disarmingly patent moves in the game, having none of the deeper significance by the side of which Iago's plotting is seen for what it is—a rough and ready framework to make the richness of the theme stand out. The act has many more Shakespeare parallels and echoes,

so many that only the most important may be noticed here. There is little to note in characterisation; Antony reacts as expected; and Cleopatra sees herself as "a silly harmless household dove."

1-42. We see in these lines how indecisive the victory of the Ventidius group has been. Antony is almost won back again even by the thought of having to say good-bye to Cleopatra. The device, repeated three times, of his returning to confess his love, so naïvely demands our pathos that it is hard-hearted to refuse it and to recognise it as one of Dryden's careful stimuli to produce the desired response from the audience.

3-4. **I could . . . weep:** a "heroic" image; Antony could stand the loss of an eye without a tear, but he cannot stand the thought of having to tell Cleopatra about his departure;—the word itself means death (a Shakespearian echo).

13. **feigned:** the word had not acquired the connotation of trickery; it meant just "inventing," "making up."

19. (but . . . long): "it" refers loosely to "when":—"let it be a long time before you do speak the fatal words" (*i.e.* "break it to her as gently and slowly as possible").

21-2. Normally, love begins slowly; in this case let it end slowly. "Other loves" is a good wistful touch, making a sad comparison with other more lucky lovers.

27. **her peace:** stress on *her*. "I am going to Caesar to make *our* peace with him." This "weakness" for looking after Cleopatra's future is what alienates Octavia.

32. "I did it only because sheer necessity made me": *but* = "only because of."

35. **Stage direction;** the tame melancholy with which Antony repeatedly returns is almost ludicrous; it betrays a tame conception on the author's part; the device in any case lends itself more to comic effects.

36. **fondness:** includes "foolishness" in its meaning.

38-9. Antony, at the moment, intends *not* to sacrifice "all for love," but here he unfairly expects Cleopatra to. He forgets *he* has already "another love."

42. **her:** = my soul. **both:** = Antony and Cleopatra.

43-50. This is a piece of fine rhetoric; it means "we are really like children; our passions (especially our follies) and their motives are perfectly obvious to others, and yet we cannot see them ourselves." Dolabella goes on to say that this applies to him; he can see Antony's folly, but now he has suddenly realised that he wishes he were in the same position (*i.e.* his own motives have been dark to him). His love for Cleopatra has asserted itself again, to his surprise.

46-7. The soul, in her dark "room," can see things outside in the light, but not inside. The first part of the striking image may be a reminiscence of Waller's—

The soul's dark cottage, battered and betrayed,
 Lets in new light through chinks that Time has made.—
 though other poets had used the idea.

52. *Stage direction*: there may be some attempt to represent Ventidius "above" as a sort of *deus ex machina*, whose sudden intervention settled matters in ancient plays. At least he has a god-like view of the scene, and everything beneath him goes to his satisfaction, until he does actually intervene; then he is baffled by the turn of events, instead of seeming to shape them aloofly, as now.

59-60. "It is a fine opportunity (to win Cleopatra). I am doing Antony no wrong by taking up what he has thrown down." Dolabella is trying to disprove what he has said above (56), that reason cannot justify his intention. He is now trying to justify it. He is "torn" between love for Cleopatra (which is, however, "hopeless") and duty to his friend (to whom he is "unfaithful"); it is a situation of French tragedy.

61. *None . . . at all*: Ventidius jubilantly replies, as if Dolabella were addressing him. Prosperity reveals a sense of humour in Ventidius.

68. *Stress on she*. If Cleopatra would only love Dolabella, everything would be fine for Ventidius. He could tell Antony all about it and so bring about Cleopatra's final ruin. Ventidius seems to realise that Cleopatra still has a strong hold on his "Emperor's" affections. From the event, we see that he would have done better to let well alone.

69. *That . . . weather*: this is good weathercraft. Porpoises are often seen, especially near the shore, before a storm. Dryden's form of the word is closer to the original (late) Latin: *porcus piscis* (pig fish).

70. *sweet devil*: (oxymoron) may be either Cleopatra or Alexas, more probably the former.

71-3. Shakespeare uses this "custom" several times; a looking-glass, held to the lips of someone dying, will show if there is still life in the body; for breath clouds the glass. Cf. Lear: "Lend me a looking glass. If that her breath will mist or stain the stone, Why then she lives." "In the same way, if Antony shows jealousy it will show he is still in love." Alexas still hopes to gain his ends by intriguing.

76-7. Cleopatra realises the weakness of Alexas' "theory." Jealousy may show Antony's love, but it will hardly restore him to her; in fact it will alienate him more.

83-4. See Antony's first mention of Dolabella in Act III.

86-8. Dryden is thinking of the fire-ships that were allowed to drift into the Spanish Armada, causing damage and confusion.

91-6. Cleopatra, as well as Antony, likes to dramatise herself elegiacally. She feels she was meant to be a simple trusting wife; but Fate has made her only a mistress, without giving her the hard-facedness that makes that position tolerable.

95-6. **unfurnished . . . happy**: she is not provided with the deceit necessary to make her position as mistress a happy one.

97. **event**: result.

101. Ventidius imagines the two as being now within his power—as if *he* had schemed to bring them together! He still “assumes the god.”

102-4. Cleopatra assumes a tone of coquettish raillery; Dolabella is made, cleverly, to keep silent at first, partly to reveal that he already has begun his wooing in the traditional style—through the lady's maid—and partly perhaps because he is flustered. His backwardness, however, makes it necessary for Cleopatra to make the first direct advances.

106. **Gallus . . . Tibullus**: two lyric poets, who chose the following names for their loves in their poetry. Gallus was an influential person; his poems are not extant. Tibullus is still famous.

111. *I.e.* Cleopatra's.

112-14. A neat way of introducing the real subject. “Friend” is cleverly chosen. Cleopatra apparently cannot bear to name Antony directly; but in Dolabella it should revive the conflict between friendship and love.

119. **your fellow**: your companion. This dismissal of her train is pathetically revealing; they are, of course, ignorant of her new rôle, and she is probably afraid their surprise will spoil her acting; also her loathing for her rôle makes her shrink from witnesses of it.

123. **of all your sex**: “the most of all your sex” (because he loves her).

124. **Of all your sex**: Cleopatra hints at *her* love. The phrase goes with “you,” of course.

126-7. **Women . . . sex!** This is most incongruous Restoration dandyism, from the mouth of the blunt cultivator of the “Old Roman” virtues!

130. Cleopatra is far more adroit than Dolabella in “professing” her love, perhaps because she is not sincere, and he is.

She dismisses *her* dismissal by Antony with a wave of the hand; it is not worth mentioning, especially as it embarrasses Dolabella.

131. An effective *double entendre*. (1) *If it were not Dolabella* who was announcing the news, she might have been really grieved. As it is, she does not mind (hinting that she prefers *him*). (2) *If she were not acting a rôle* she would be heartbroken. Only the audience senses the second meaning. The line is perhaps a reminiscence of Macbeth's reception of the news of his wife's death—"She should have died hereafter. There would have been a time for such a word."

134. A good actress could achieve the "double acting" implied here by Dolabella's remark. She is talking casually and flippantly about the greatest tragedy of her life, but a person under great strain might also use the same sparing words; *i.e.* they are consonant with both her real feelings and her rôle. Dolabella here seems to catch this note of strain, although it may be that he is just dumbstruck by her casualness.

135. *fortune*: = misfortune.

140. *the worst*: more than the worst, actually (See ll. 28-30 *above*). Dolabella is forgetting—for his own ends.

143. "My constancy does not *deserve* your love, but will you give it leave to *hope* for it?" Dolabella is modest, as well he might be, since his "constancy" is only of a few minutes' standing!

144. Ventidius, in the balcony, is still elated. *I have enough*: "I have heard enough to satisfy me." Dryden has to get him out of the way because soon afterwards the two "lovers" both reveal their "deceit." If Ventidius were a witness to this restoration of honesty, it would blacken his character too much to make him continue as he does with his "machinations." He, of course, thinks the attraction is genuine on both sides.

148. *pale*: seems to be used predicatively; the blood would leave her cheeks and make them pale. Otherwise there is a hyperbole.

150-2. *and my tongue . . . own*: a reversal of situation, but a reminiscence of Olivia's hint in *Twelfth Night* to Cesario, when "he" is sent by Orsino to solicit her love:—"But would you undertake another suit, I'd rather hear you to solicit that Than music from the spheres."

159-68. Dolabella here destroys all hope of success in his love, in a grotesque outburst of "heroic" rant. It impresses his hearer, not, as he intends, to greater love for him, by natural recoil from such a monster of deceit, but instead, with the

enormity of Antony's "offence." She forgets her rôle. Judging by the effect it has on Cleopatra, it seems that Dryden intended the passage to be taken seriously, though he had a good excuse for producing an artificial effect, since Dolabella is inventing the story, and probably has a guilty conscience. If one is kind, one will give Dryden the benefit of the doubt, and take it that he meant to introduce a violent and incongruous contrast with the tone of the previous passages, in order to "expose" Cleopatra impressively.

161. "He put on a most severe expression." The metaphor gives a good impression of rigidity and fixedness, though it is hard to explain, if examined closely. The "impression" on a coin is taken from the mould or "stamp." One would expect Antony's face to be *stamped with severity* (i.e. to be the "impression"), but apparently he makes his face into the *stamp* itself; thus he is a forger, for the legal "stamp" of severity belongs to severity itself. The author's intention is clearly to make the metaphor as intense as possible.

162. *fabric*: frame, but suggests something more vast, as intended.

163. *heaved for vent*: his fury had difficulty in finding expression.

bellowing Aetna: "bellowing" does not sound the right word for an eruption of the Sicilian volcano, but it fits in with the general effect of the passage remarkably well.

168. *From man's commerce* = from civilisation.

she'll . . . centre: a complex image; "she will poison the very heart of civilisation," mixed with "she will poison the heart of everyone she meets," and "she blasts everything right down to the centre of the earth." (Dryden has already used "centre" in this sense, before.) All three "ingredients" are hyperboles. Dryden seems to have incorporated some of the obscurity of Leontes' puzzling outburst of jealousy in the *Winter's Tale*—"Affection, thou stab'st the centre!"

172. The repetition of *bend*, to indicate urgency and zeal, is not happy. It is indeed hard to describe a simple action on the stage without exciting ludicrous thoughts; Dryden's attempt would have been better without the repetition, since this suggests, besides the above, a repeated bending of poor Cleopatra. Contrast Shakespeare's Cleopatra's "Cut my lace, Charmian," or Lear's "Pray you, undo this button."

173. *She . . . again*: "she is coming to again."

180. *hollowing*: this means what Mark Twain calls "hol-lerin'" (shouting), but it also evokes the hollowness, and so the

reverberations, of the tomb. Cleopatra is indulging in her favourite elegiac mood of welcoming death.

181. **Unkind:** refers to her attendants, who have brought her word.

183. **sure:** surely.

188. "How he departed, almost, etc."

189. **leaned to:** "was attracted towards."

204. **but never pierced:** because of its hardness.

my friend: apostrophising Antony. This is effective here.

205-7. A diffuse adaptation of Othello's self-pitying self-accusation after his murder of Desdemona:—

Of one whose hand,
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away
Richer than all his tribe.

211. **fore-knows:** "does not know beforehand that."

215. **I have far to go:** cf. Kent in *King Lear*: "I have a journey, sir, shortly to go." Cleopatra still wishes to die—her usual response to any disaster.

217. Ventidius is telling Octavia how she will be able to see for herself how things are, but he breaks off delightedly as he sees Dolabella take Cleopatra's hand as a reward for his promise to bring her to look at Antony (see below, 219-21). The incident seems rather "worked," for Dolabella has surely been shocked into seriousness before now. Ventidius makes an extravaganza out of this trifle when he is accusing her to Antony (see below, 281 on).

228. **his brother Caesar:** Caesar was actually his brother-in-law, but Ventidius is "rubbing in" the new solidarity he has achieved between them, to insult Cleopatra, and to compliment Octavia.

229-34. Octavia and Ventidius have misread the situation, as their remarks here (and above, 222) show. This lends force to Cleopatra's observation in l. 194.

231. **old man:** one has to forget that this is now a slang term for husband (or a masculine term of endearment). The stress is on *old*. Dolabella must be younger than Antony, who resents this fact later (282-3) when taunted with it.

235. **I pity Dolabella:** Ventidius begins to show himself in an unwelcome light, as an unscrupulous schemer; this is hardly in keeping with his character as accepted by those round him. Dolabella, whom he brought in with jubilation as Antony's saviour, is now to be made a scapegoat to ruin Cleopatra. Ventidius' thoughts are, doglike, always of one man only—his master. He is like David's stubborn lieutenant, Joab.

236. **Thessalian charms:** "charms" as used in magic here, not in the Restoration sense of "the sex's" attractions. Thessaly was the traditional home of Southern witchcraft, as Lapland was of the Northern. Some lurid tales of these witches are told in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*.

238. **sea-green:** Syrens were sea-green in the Roman poets, taking their colour from the waves they lived in.

their flattery: their songs enticed mariners to jump into the sea after them; cf. Odysseus' encounter with them in the *Odyssey*.

240-6. Ventidius' "tribute" is queerly out of character, especially the personal confession in 244-6. Who would have thought of him as a secret and "malignant" admirer of Cleopatra? His glowing account (though spoken in revulsion) of her is hardly in keeping with the picture of her as a drooping "mistress true" we have hitherto entertained. Dryden is here suddenly trying to incorporate some of Shakespeare's Cleopatra's wantonness. Ventidius' sudden preoccupation with "the sex" is alarming, particularly so when he himself suggests motives for his persecution of Cleopatra (unnecessary to his plan, of the success of which he is already assured) we should never have thought of him! He suddenly takes on some of the qualities of Iago, who has a secret sexual obsession, and, later on (288-94) of the frenzied jealousy of Leontes. This incongruous patchwork results from Dryden's attempt to work up an impressive scene in which Antony's very heart strings are racked. Antony has to be seen as a lonely Titanic victim, who excites really profound sympathy from the audience. So that Antony shall be seen as a *victim* and not as a *loser in an argument*, a cunning opposition is required, and for this rôle Ventidius has incongruously to be cast.

The above passage is based on *Antony and Cleopatra* :—

for vilest things
Become themselves in her, that the holy priests
Bless her when she is riggish.

250. Ventidius at last produces a more sensible reason for his actions, though it should be inessential to him what happens to Cleopatra, once Antony is removed from her influence.

251. **You have prevailed:** "over my suggestion of leaving well alone" (234).

253. **a strumpet's peace:** "make Cleopatra's peace with Octavius."

256. "looking for you."

262. **Speak softly:** he does not want Octavia to hear about his sentimental farewell to Cleopatra. His remark gives a good

opportunity for Ventidius to introduce his "strategy"; he begins with hints, like Iago, but soon comes out into open bullying: the following scene is drawn from the *Othello* "jealousy" scenes and from Leontes' fantasies of jealousy in the *Winter's Tale*.

264. Like your farewell: Ventidius turns Antony's words into a dark hint by a grimly witty play upon meanings. The obvious one is "Yes, it was the farewell you told him to make," but the sting is in the alternative meaning "It looked as if Dolabella gave you your *coup de grâce* as her lover"; i.e. it was farewell to Antony, and hail to Dolabella as the recipient of Cleopatra's favours. Ventidius will not talk softly because he wishes Octavia to hear (his wit?). Compare *Othello*, III. iii.—

Iago. Did Michael Cassio, when you woo'd my lady,
Know of your love?

Oth. He did, from first to last: why dost thou ask?

Iago. But for a satisfaction of my thought;
No further harm.

Oth. Why of thy thought, Iago?

Iago. I did not think he had been acquainted with her.

Oth. O, yes, and went between us very oft.

Iago. Indeed!

Oth. Indeed! ay, indeed: discern'st thou aught in that?
Is he not honest?

Iago. Honest, my lord!

Oth. Honest! ay, honest.

Iago. My lord, for aught I know.

Oth. What dost thou think?

Iago. Think, my lord!

Oth. Think, my lord! By heaven, he echoes me,
As if there were some monster in his thought
Too hideous to be shown. Thou dost mean something:
I heard thee say even now, thou likedst not that,
When Cassio left my wife: what didst not like?
And when I told thee he was of my counsel
In my whole course of wooing, thou criedst 'Indeed!'
And didst contract and purse thy brow together,
As if thou then hadst shut up in thy brain
Some horrible conceit: if thou dost love me,
Show me thy thought.

269. love: Antony seems to miss the ironic tone in which Ventidius says this, and so Ventidius has to come out as openly as he dare at the moment, in his next speech (271-3).

273. belie: "tell lies about." Antony is stung into indiscretion—he speaks out loudly. This gives Octavia her cue to join in.

275. There is a surly, hurt, honesty about this line, that should affect Antony strongly to believe him. Iago might have said it to impose in a like manner on Othello. He does say something in the same strain:—

Iago. . . . To be direct and honest is not safe.
I thank you for this profit, and from hence
I'll love no friend sith love breeds such offence.

Oth. Nay stay; thou shouldst be honest.

Iago. I should be wise; for honesty's a fool,
And loses that it works for.

275-9. Compare *Othello*, III. iii.—

Oth. I am bound to thee for ever.

Iago. I see this hath a little dash'd your spirits.

Oth. Not a jot, not a jot.

Iago. I' faith, I fear it has.

I hope you will consider what is spoke
Comes from my love; but I do see you're moved:
I am to pray you not to strain my speech
To grosser issues nor to larger reach
Than to suspicion.

Oth. I will not.

277. a trifle: Ventidius perists in punning, ironical, repetitions of Antony's words:—"trifle" in the sense of "trifling with Cleopatra's affections," referring to Dolabella. Antony is trying to avoid bringing Octavia into it, for obvious reasons, and Ventidius is determined to. Hence Antony's anger and threat of violence (279).

282. She saw it!: Antony now realises what he has to face. She is not very complimentary to Octavia. Antony is reduced to exclamations only, as in "*Young Dolabella!*" in the next line.

284. others: Cleopatra, of course. Ventidius' irony is becoming quite bland and suave, which makes his fantasy (285-95) on what actually happened all the more effective for its unexcited tone; the rhythms follow the inflections of the sneering imitations of Cleopatra's responses. In a parallel scene from *Othello*, the scene and its misrepresentation take place simultaneously: Iago is able to impose his version of what is happening on to Othello, as it happens under Othello's eyes. This is more convincing, since Antony can say Ventidius is lying, but Othello could not.

Cf. *Winter's Tale*, I. ii.—

Leontes. But to be paddling palms and pinching fingers,
As now they are, and making practised smiles
As in a looking-glass, and then to sigh, as 't were

The mort o' the deer; O that is entertainment
My bosom likes not, nor my brows . . .

. . . Still virginalling

Upon his palm !

290. There is a parallel, which rather "exposes" the line, in Dryden's ode, *Alexander's Feast*, but without the "turn":—

*And sighed and looked, sighed and looked,
Sighed and looked, and sighed again:*

299-300. Cf. *Much Ado About Nothing*, III. ii.:—

"Who, Hero?"

"Even she; Leonato's Hero, your Hero, everyman's Hero."

302-4. Ventidius makes an ironical "defence" of Cleopatra.
"After all she is only a mistress, and true to type."

305-10. Antony is trying to keep reasonable. His reason assures him that Cleopatra cannot be false, and so he deduces that it is a plot against her, which he is willing to forgive, to keep the peace.

308. just: seems to mean "consistent," "constant (to me)."

310-11. Are you . . . false? Octavia has been brooding over this since l. 253. She is testing Antony to see if he still loves Cleopatra. This line is a preparation for her later decision to "abdicate."

312-14. Antony's motives come at first as a shock, after his calm and sure defence of Cleopatra. From this it would appear that he is only concerned about her reputation because he would not like people to think that once he loved a prostitute ("of so light note"). The better way, for Antony's sake, is to take this as a "blind" to deceive the other two about his real feelings. He still maintains his air of appeal to them to be calm and sensible.

319-20. a witness from hell: a further example of Ventidius' apposite seizing upon Antony's words and turning them to his own advantage. Antony has just said that he would not believe a witness (of her falseness) from either heaven or earth. Ventidius drags the shrinking Alexas, who is just creeping out after an unintentional entry, forward, and says with grim humour, "Well, here is a witness from hell whom you will *have* to believe." Ventidius thinks of Alexas as the basest and most secret of intriguers, and so "from hell" is apposite.

322. The dash means "that is": "Alexas hates to speak the truth."

325. nightly change: of lovers, apparently.

326. Chaldeans: astrologers and magicians, famous in the ancient world.

327. The "signs" were sections of the astrological map of the sky, across which the sun and moon moved. "What day" should be a parallel to "what signs," but the sense is not clear. One would think Dryden meant "They can tell *from* the signs she passes through, what day it is." There are numerous examples in Chaucer of this method of reckoning dates.

328. My . . . pander: Ventidius is mocking at Alexas' ornate melliflence, which he details in the next line. A pander was a go-between in secret loves, originating in Chaucer's quite respectable Pandarus, who brought Troilus and Criseyde together.

329. Ventidius is mistrustful of statesmen and their oratory: cadence—harmony of sound, as distinct from harmony of sentence structure (turned periods).

334-5. Ventidius sneers unpleasantly at the low position he thinks Alexas has—viz. arranging "assignments" for Cleopatra and her supposed lovers. "How soon will it be your duty to arrange a meeting between Dolabella and Cleopatra?" Here we get further glimpses of the unattractive side of Ventidius; he is attracted in repulsion by unsavoury things, and creates fantasies about them. This sneering at poor Alexas is in bad taste.

340-1. and shuts . . . misled: the "he's" in 339-41 refer to Antony: "him" to Alexas. Octavia has already made one misjudgment like this (see above). What she says is true, but it is really *she* who "shuts . . . etc."

342-82. Alexas has to try to please both parties; he therefore uses the cadenced honeyed style Ventidius warned him not to use. He does not seem to notice personal slights, and calls Ventidius "brave"!

342-7. Cleopatra should be excused even by the injured Octavia for loving Antony. Who can help loving so great a man? Thus even Ventidius must excuse her, for what she has done in the past, at any rate (because he too loves Antony)." Alexas manages to compliment all three, as if incidentally. Antony is deified implicitly, and Octavia explicitly ("divine Octavia": the emperors allowed themselves to be worshipped while still alive), and Ventidius is praised for his bravery and his love for Antony! No wonder Antony is impressed (348). But Alexas surpasses himself in flattery in his next speech (349-60). "Her love for Antony is something too great merely to be apologised for ("excused"); it is grandly justified. Although her beauty, apart from the fact that she was a queen (351), attracted all the kings of the East, she thought only a Roman was worthy of her, and only *one* Roman (Antony), but he was so worthy of her that she preferred to be his mistress to marriage with one of her other suitors."

352. Meroë: an island on the Nile in Ethiopia, famous in the ancient world.

361-7. "But at length she realised how she had wronged Octavia; this was confirmed by their losing the war." As Alexas gets near dangerous ground, his style becomes more and more ornate. In this passage, nearly every noun has an adjective, to soften the meaning for Antony!

367. Oh . . . there: Ventidius is quick to notice where Alexas is politically and cautiously leading to, and now *he* praises him, and Antony is silent. There is perhaps a parallel here, in this duel of wits, with the *Merchant of Venice*, where Shylock is first jubilant at Portia's conduct of the case, and then Gratiano, whom he has just snubbed, takes up the strain, as the judgment becomes clearer. A good deal of Ventidius' part in this act is cast in a comedy vein: often the mantle of the cynical, high-spirited Enobarbus in *Antony and Cleopatra* seems to have fallen on him.

wheel: "that is the way the wind is blowing, is it?"

371-5. "Necessity has forced a change on her, but she has not entirely ceased to love Antony." Alexas is now sure that Ventidius is with him; he is trying to carry Antony a little of the way with him also.

372. the last necessity: perhaps Antony's decision to leave her. She now has to look after her own interests, naturally, since Antony's help is withdrawn.

377. this: *i.e.* Antony's tortured infatuation.

378. Ventidius is so jubilant that he does not notice that all is not well with his partner in success—Octavia.

381. should she: Alexas is still holding off from a commitment—"if she should love him—": but Antony can stand no more of this uncertainty; it has now, by being so prolonged, become a certainty—of her "guilt," and he breaks out in the tragic vein (383-7).

384. to hell, whence Ventidius had half-jokingly called him; see above (319-20).

384-7. let . . . her!: "Let those who have been longer damned than you have a rest while all their torturers confine their attention to you: but when Cleopatra comes to hell, you may join with them in torturing her." He bundles Alexas out. The latter should be at least convinced of the success of his plot; Antony *is* jealous! But no doubt he feels that things have got out of hand!

Ventidius also has over-reached himself, in a similar way, but unconsciously, whereas Alexas has done so consciously; *he* succeeded in making Antony jealous, and now Octavia is jealous!

Ventidius does not at first realise how deeply she is moved (394-5); he thinks she is emphasising their victory, but realises that Antony is in no mood for having salt rubbed in his wound. Octavia, however, has passed the reasonable stage, and is ready to quarrel over anything; Antony's desire to be left alone provides the spark. Antony, however, is, as usual, too bowed down with sorrows to face up to her (402-6); he is full of dignified self-pity; he wishes to retire to collect the fragments of his manhood (405-6); but Octavia says it is to mourn for Cleopatra, and not to recover, that makes him wish to withdraw. She accuses him of loving her (Octavia) only half heartedly, and then what she has been brooding over for so long is revealed—that Antony is trying to draw up a peace on Cleopatra's behalf with Octavius (409-12).

413. Antony, suddenly, in despair, falls back on Ventidius as his friend. He asks if he is a traitor like Dolabella, to submit him to such indignity at the hands of such a "fury." She takes him up over the word, but it appears to have shocked her anger out of existence, for she ends on a note of false calm. She will devote the rest of her life to her children and leave Antony with Cleopatra. This calm resignation may be the result of shock or exhaustion, or it may be the self-dramatising false self-control of a roused and injured woman. Her outburst is spirited and forceful, so much so that Ventidius realises there is little hope of a reconciliation this time (433). This scene ends in a doubtful win to Alexas, and an irreparable set back for Ventidius.

421. **cozened**: cheated. Octavia pretends to pity him, though she is surely being sarcastic, at least with Cleopatra. But she seems to have forgotten that she has seen her making love to Dolabella, and she tells Antony she (Cleopatra) is waiting to go back to him.

426. Her children.

431. Ventidius shifts the responsibility of this disaster on to Heaven. He forgets it is his own blundering intrusion that has set the avalanche in motion.

434-42. More self-pity; Antony seems now to regret having offended Octavia.

434. Self-pity is often a form of self-admiration, as here.

439. **had . . . had**: would have.

445-6. "His untroubled countenance and pleasant expression disguise the villainy within." **secure**: carefree, the original Latin meaning. **specious**: pleasant, but only in appearance. **gilds**: covers with gold; *i.e.* makes bad seem like good.

447. **mismatched**: Heaven gave him a fine appearance ("nature's pomp") but a treacherous heart.

449. **its: treason's, not Heaven's.**

454. **with as true:** connects up with next line " (and) with as . . ." Antony repeats " with as " to lend extra emphasis to each part of his statement: there is an ironic intention.

457. Antony says sarcastically that *even* Dolabella (who has usurped Antony's position) does not, etc. The whole speech is ironical. Antony, who has just had to suffer Ventidius' irony and Octavia's fury, now has a chance to use their methods to gain a vicarious revenge. He uses first irony, and now, on Cleopatra's entry, fury.

470. **well-joined wickedness:** their two separate wickednesses have joined together to make a perfect single wickedness. Antony thinks they are in a conspiracy to mock him.

475. **Beyond:** " greater than . . . "

476. **ingenious:** inventive.

477. Sisypheus' punishment in Hell was to roll a stone up a hill, down which it always rolled back. Tityrus had his liver perpetually gnawed by a vulture; it always grew again. Antony says these punishments were trivial inventions of Jove when he was young and when no powerful evil was known (479-80). But Cleopatra has developed sin to such a monstrous size that it will puzzle (" pose ") the gods to find a fit torture for its punishment.

487-8. **I had . . . you:** the syntax is slightly confused; Antony seems to mean: " I found no use for, or pleasurable results (" fruit ") from, any one but you. "

488-9. **A friend . . . give:** the two loves of his life are (all) that the world gave him (that he valued).

490-3. Antony forgets to be angry, and relapses into pathos, once more.

Secure of: safe from.

494. " Heroic " drama was fond of such bombastic invocations, often ending with a comical bathos, as here—" Heaven, hell, *and you* . . . ! There is an amusing parallel in one of Dryden's heroic dramas, where the hero says encouragingly to a king who has to fight a powerful army, with no men, " You have Heaven on your side, and me. "—Nothing more is needed !

497. **Not so . . . you:** Dolabella's reply is, perhaps intentionally, very ambiguous; (1) not *so much* as I love you, (2) not *in the same way* as—, (3) with a pause after " so, " " Certainly not, by the love I bear to you. " Antony's reply seems to point to (3), though he is obviously not satisfied, for in 502 he takes (1) as the meaning. In the following lines (502-4) he reveals that he thinks Dolabella's ambiguity is intentional; he is afraid to

tell Antony that he does love her, and of offending Cleopatra by saying he does *not* love her. Thus he is a "trifling hypocrite" (*i.e.* playing with both of them).

507. **next hell**: Alexas knew most about their designs, except hell (an allusion to their evil origin). Ventidius has already coupled poor Alexas with hell ("sweet devil," and witness "from hell").

510. **Returned . . . stay**: see above, ll. 452-61. We see why Antony was made suspicious by Dolabella's changed attitude to the separation.

515. **her . . . She**: both words are stressed.

523. **fate . . . occasion**: her bad luck took its chance to ruin her (by causing Octavia and Ventidius to discover them when Cleopatra was asking Dolabella for the favour of an interview with Antony, and to misinterpret the scene).

524. **feigning**: her deception was short, because she soon broke down, but long enough to ruin her life-long reputation for truth.

525-6. **Thin . . . first**: Antony says, "It is easy to see through your lies."

526-7. **You . . . cause**: "You believe your own lies, and each other's as well, for each pleads for the other instead of for himself."

529. This is inaccurate. Dolabella had no intention of raising Antony's jealousy. Perhaps Antony is addressing Cleopatra alone, though she replies for both.

531. **Guilt . . . guilt**: see above, 526-7.

535. **And . . . woman**: whom I have loved.

540-2. **Heaven . . . man**: "Heaven sees we are sorry and exacts no other punishment, but pardons us."

543. **Its . . . attribute**: Heaven's favourite quality.

limits: "limits the *full measure* of justice."

544-6. This is not easy to explain clearly. Dolabella's speech here is more compressed and Shakespearian than the general run of the verse. "Assume that there is infinite punishment and infinite crime, which together form a 'perfect' infinity. One should match the other in size, but because of mercy, this is not so. The 'perfect' infinity would rather not be perfect than allow the punishment to be as big as the crime." The far-fetched and involved image does not add much to Dolabella's first statement, which is clear enough ("limits the proportionate amount of justice").

547. Great stress is laid on these two themes. It is a defect that Dolabella has to repeat the words so often to keep the theme

to the fore; it should be *implicit* in the scene, and present without *explicit statements*.

560. **Ay . . . banishment!** Cleopatra seems to mean "What a dreadful banishment!" or, more strongly, "It is the banishment that worries me (not the loss of my kingdom and the hate of the Romans)." One really expects another word than "banishment"; something like Hamlet's "Aye, there's the rub!"

564. **a fool:** his tender heart. Here we have another reference to the theme beloved of "heroic" drama—conflict between inclination and honour.

568-71. She means, "He sheds no tear, gives me no kind look or farewell word. I call the gods to witness he never loved me." Cleopatra now addresses him in the third person, a pathetic admission that he is no longer taking notice of her.

571. **No . . . Alexas:** "It is no use. Alexas' testimony has damned you."

577-8. Cleopatra says Alexas will clear matters up, but Antony says he is only a fawning servant who will say whatever she wants him to at the moment.

581. "Appearances are against me."

582. **Unjustified:** "without being cleared."

584-5. "how yet I love" should follow "myself."

595-7. A fine piece of rhetoric, invoking "world images."

597. **common:** Antony demands that Dolabella and Cleopatra should not see each other again; they must live as far apart as possible, so that they may see the same sun and the same sky, but nothing else the same.

598. **several:** separate.

The act ends on a low-spirited, resigned note. Antony's jealousy soon peters out into mournful acceptance and even pity. These low spirits are characteristic of the play. Antony is never very good at taking the lead (he says something to this effect when Ventidius kills himself first in the next act), and the act tends to lapse in interest after Ventidius and Octavia have shot their bolts. Apart from Antony's failure to impose himself on the "culprits," the scene suffers from the fact that facts already twice-known to the audience (once when they occurred, and again as "presented" by Ventidius and Octavia to Antony) have once more to be gone over. Three times running is too much. Though Dryden does not borrow from the scene where Shakespeare's Antony is jealous, it is appended here to show once more the difference in handling and achievement of similar themes.

Ant. Favours, by Jove that thunders !—
What art thou, fellow ?

Thyr. One that but performs
The bidding of the fullest man, and worthiest
To have command obey'd.

Eno. [*Aside*] You will be whipp'd.

Ant. Approach, there !—Ah, you kite !—Now, gods and devils !
Authority melts from me ; of late, when I cried " Ho ! "
Like boys unto a muss, kings would start forth,
And cry " Your will ? " Have you no ears ? I am
Antony yet.

Enter Attendants.

Take hence this Jack, and whip him.

Eno. [*Aside*] 'T is better playing with a lion's whelp
Than with an old one dying.

Ant. Moon and stars !
Whip him.—Were't twenty of the greatest tributaries
That do acknowledge Caesar, should I find them
So saucy with the hand of she here,—what's her name,
Since she was Cleopatra ?—Whip him, fellows,
Till, like a boy, you see him cringe his face,
And whine aloud for mercy. Take him hence.

Thyr. Mark Antony !

Ant. Tug him away ; being whipp'd,
Bring him again : the Jack of Caesar's shall
Bear us an errand to him.—

[*Exeunt Attendants with Thyrens.*]

You were half blasted ere I knew you ; ha !
Have I my pillow left unpress'd in Rome,
Forborne the getting of a lawful race,
And by a gem of women, to be abus'd
By one that looks on feeders ?

Cleo. Good my lord,—

Ant. You have been a boggler ever ;
But when we in our viciousness grow hard—
O misery on't !—the wise gods seel our eyes,
In our own filth drop our clear judgments, make us
Adore our errors, laugh at's while we strut
To our confusion.

Cleo. O, is't come to this ?

Ant. I found you as a morsel cold upon
Dead Caesar's trencher ; nay, you were a fragment
Of Cneius Pompey's ; besides what hotter hours,
Unregister'd in vulgar fame, you have
Luxuriously pick'd out : for, I am sure,
Though you can guess what temperance should be,
You know not what it is.

Cleo. Wherefore is this ?

Ant. To let a fellow that will take rewards
And say " God quit you ! " be familiar with
My playfellow, your hand, this kingly seal
And plighter of high hearts !—O, that I were
Upon the hill of Basan, to outroar
The horned herd ! for I have savage cause;
And to proclaim it civilly, were like
A halter'd neck which does the hangman thank
For being yare about him.—

Re-enter Attendants with THYREUS.

Is he whipp'd ?

1st Att. Soundly, my lord.

Ant. Cried he ? and begg'd a' pardon ?

1st Att. He did ask favour.

Ant. If that thy father live, let him repent
Thou wast not made his daughter; and be thou sorry
To follow Caesar in his triumph, since
Thou hast been whipp'd for following him: henceforth
The white hand of a lady fever thee,
Shake thou to look on't.—Get thee back to Caesar,
Tell him thy entertainment: look, thou say
He makes me angry with him; for he seems
Proud and disdainful, harping on what I am,
Not what he knew I was. He makes me angry;
And at this time most easy 't is to do't,
When my good stars that were my former guides
Have empty left their orbs, and shot their fires
Into the abysm of hell. If he mislike
My speech and what is done, tell him he has
Hipparchus, my enfranchised bondman, whom
He may at pleasure whip, or hang, or torture,
As he shall like, to quit me. Urge it thou;
Hence with thy stripes, begone !

[*Exit Thyreus.*]

Cleo. Have you done yet ?

Ant. Alack, our terrene moon
Is now eclips'd; and it portends alone
The fall of Antony !

Cleo. I must stay his time.

Ant. To flatter Caesar, would you mingle eyes
With one that ties his points ?

Cleo. Not know me yet ?

Ant. Cold-hearted toward me ?

Cleo. Ah, dear, if I be so,
From my cold heart let heaven engender hail,
And poison it in the source, and the first stone
Drop in my neck; as it determines, so

Dissolve my life ! The next Caesarion smite !
 Till by degrees the memory of my womb,
 Together with my brave Egyptians all,
 By the discandying of this pelleted storm,
 Lie graveless, till the flies and gnats of Nile
 Have buried them for prey !

Ant.

I am satisfied.

ACT V.

Critics who find things to complain of in *Antony and Cleopatra* usually recant as far as the death scenes are concerned, and admire the noble language and wonderful pathos. Such a criticism would apply also to *All for Love*. In language, the act "lifts" above its predecessors. Much of it is rhetoric of a high order; it is this which distinguishes the act. There are no struggles for mastery as in the previous scenes; there is indeed an "intrigue," whereby a death-bed reconciliation is obtained, but it is of a higher order than those of Act IV.; at least there is no mean squabbling and strident scolding. The action is based on that of *Antony and Cleopatra*, with a few exceptions which rely on Plutarch; some of the speeches are modelled on parts of Daniel's dull Senecan *Tragedy of Cleopatra*. A writer in the *Review of English Studies* (No. 1), Mr. Thorn-Drury, seems to have been the first to discover the parallels, which are also incorporated into Mr. Montague Summers' edition of the play (Nonesuch). It is significant that Dryden should turn from Shakespeare to a writer of Daniel's calibre, in the most moving scene of the play. Perhaps he regarded it as an instance of his measuring himself against Shakespeare *by art* (see the reference to Alcinous' attempt to draw Ulysses' bow *by art*, in the *Preface*).

6. And (that): has the force of "because they."

7. doting on: *i.e.* "to keep on doting." Cleopatra says it is hard to find that you cannot stop being in love even though you know it is foolish.

9-10. Antony had (once) sworn to the gods promises of how faithful he would be to Cleopatra. Events have proved that he was mocking them.

imprecating: imploring.

12. But . . . breath: this sounds an easy way of dying. Unfortunately it is not practicable, like many "Romantic" notions.

20. ill-timed truth: this surely cannot mean his recent unlucky intrigue (in which "truth" was conspicuously absent).

He is probably referring back to the position at the beginning of the play, though even there it is hard to say what "truth" Alexas had uttered.

21-4. An effective "world image."

23. **flaw**: the *weak spot* in the "majesty" which caused its fall.

25-7. "It is absurd for an inferior to try to preserve intact the power which wilfully seeks to destroy itself." Here Alexas refers to his efforts to keep the Cleopatra-Antony union strong and powerful against its foes: the "fatal flaw" made these efforts useless. Perhaps Dryden is thinking of the "fatal flaw" of character which brings about the hero's fall, according to Aristotle's analysis.

33-4. **to prove . . . back**: "to see if . . . ; but I am likely to lose, either way."

36. **devil**: Cleopatra is the third to call him so.

37. **can**: used absolutely, not as an auxiliary, in the sense "can do."

39-45. In the last scene, Alexas was made to break into an effusive complimentary style (which he uses nowhere else in the play) to save himself. In this scene he uses metaphors (above) and similes (here) to excuse himself. It is an indirect way of accusing Cleopatra of ingratitude. "I give you a helping hand, at risk of my own life, and you blame me for my trouble, just when you are in sight of victory!"

46. Cleopatra cannot see herself on the heights Alexas has optimistically placed her on. The bottom of the sea seems a more truthful metaphor for her position.

51. **watchful** is an inverted foot, giving a variation unusual in Dryden's too-regular rhythms.

55. (**Unhappy . . . myself**): "unhappy" in the sense of "unlucky." "I bring luck to others (Cleopatra, *e.g.*) but get only bad luck for myself." Alexas says that, thanks to his efforts, Cleopatra has now only to beckon to Antony and he will come. This seems a very rosy view of the situation, and Cleopatra is not melted either by it, or by his appeal to her pity. She threatens his death (56) unless he makes good what he says. He accepts the threat (57).

58. **Pharos**: the lighthouse at Alexandria; there is a scene inside the lighthouse in Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra*.

59. It seems that Antony, disillusioned with Cleopatra, has gone straight off to fight Caesar. The "telescoping" of time is here rather too obvious.

66. **Where, where's**: Dryden seems fond of this device to denote consternation.

67. **holy coward:** Serapion was the priest who opened the play. We remember that Alexas did not like him.

68-70. "He looks as frightened as though still suffering from the shock of seeing his gods, and—what he thinks more about!—his collection-money, in danger! Dryden had not yet turned Roman Catholic when he wrote this often-heard anti-clerical joke about the greed of priests.

71. **Egypt has been:** *i.e.* "is dead"; a Latinism, from Vergil's *Ilium fuit* (Troy is done for).

72-5. **queen of nations . . . volume:** refers to the antiquity of Egyptian civilisation, which was thought in Dryden's day to be the oldest in the world.

74-5. **unrolled . . . closed up:** books of this period were long rolls of parchment, arranged something like a modern wall-map—*i.e.* with a roller each end.

76. **fate:** "our doom."

80-95. Cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, IV. xii.—

Ant. All is lost;
This foul Egyptian hath betrayed me.
My fleet hath yielded to the foe; and yonder
They cast their caps up and carouse together
Like friends long lost.

85-88. Fortune seemed to smile most at Antony just when it was about to leave him, like a prostitute flattering at parting the young waster from whom she has stolen everything.

91. **In few:** briefly.

94-5. This betrayal will naturally seem to Antony to be Cleopatra's doings. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, Antony's accusation is never denied, and Cleopatra's guilt must be tacitly accepted.

97. **your work:** the god's work of destruction.

98. **'Tis . . . malice:** "this last stroke is only an additional and unnecessary display of spite."

106. **your monument:** this, according to Plutarch, was "the tomb which he had caused to be made." It seems a queer and ominous place to hide in. In Plutarch and *Antony and Cleopatra* it was a tall building, for Antony has to be hoisted up to Cleopatra's level. Cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, IV. xiii.—

Cleo. Help me, my women! O, he is more mad
Than Telamon for his shield; the boar of Thessaly
Was never so emboss'd.

Char. To the monument!
There lock yourself, and send him word you are dead.

The soul and body rive not more in parting
Than greatness going off.

Cleo.

To the monument !—

Mardian, go tell him I have slain myself;
Say that the last I spoke was "Antony,"
And word it, prithee, piteously. Hence, Mardian,
And bring me how he takes my death.—To the monument !

108. **work him:** "work him round to sparing your life."

109. **madman:** Antony: see above, 100-4.

110. Shakespeare's Cleopatra has no scruples against bargaining with Caesar at Antony's expense.

119. Not necessarily his own life. Serapion means "If Caesar spared your life, Cleopatra, it would be on very humiliating terms; but it is not at all sure that he would" (precarious).

120. **expose:** "try out." Serapion does not like Alexas.

126. **justified:** proved innocent, cf. IV., 582.

128. **To death:** links up with previous line. "You will follow me—to your death, if you move an inch !"

130. **this:** presumably snaps her fingers.

131-9. "I wish I was not so afraid to die. Reason tells me that death is nothing, but still my body and soul dislike the idea of parting. How can I save myself, without bothering about Cleopatra's fate ?" One is grieved to see Alexas degraded thus; he seemed to be almost the only character with praiseworthy and disinterested motives, but now he is made an unnecessary sacrifice to the situations, and his only motive, his own safety. Poor Alexas is Dryden's scapegoat as well as that of his *dramatis personae*.

132-3. Scott praises this simile.

143. **court-devil:** Alexas imagines himself as a magician who conjures up devils to help him. *Court* devil because Cleopatra has used him exclusively for court affairs. He really means his oily tongue and slipperiness.

145. Because Cleopatra has threatened to kill him ? Or because Caesar is approaching ?

146. Stress on "thou" (implying "I have not").

147-8. We have noted before that Antony's personal honour must remain unvanquished so that he may remain the tragic hero. *He* has not been conquered, only his men.

148-58. Cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, IV. xii.—

Triple-turn'd whore ! 't is thou
Hast sold me to this novice, and my heart
Makes only wars on thee.—Bid them all fly;

For when I am reveng'd upon my charm,
 I have done all.—Bid them all fly; begone.— [Exit Scarus.
 O sun, thy uprise shall I see no more !
 Fortune and Antony part here; even here
 Do we shake hands.—All come to this ?—The hearts
 That spaniell'd me at heels, to whom I gave
 Their wishes, do discandy, melt their sweets
 On blossoming Caesar; and this pine is bark'd,
 That overtopp'd them all. Betray'd I am.
 O this false soul of Egypt ! this grave charm,—
 Whose eye beck'd forth my wars, and call'd them home,
 Whose bosom was my crownnet, my chief end,—
 Like a right gypsy, hath, at fast and loose,
 Beguil'd me to the very heart of loss.—

153-6. The first villain was not made by the gods, but begotten by the sun on the Nile, and made to look like, and imitate, a man ("aped"), but with the mud from which he was made for a soul." Cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*: "Your serpent of Egypt is bred now of your mud by the operation of your sun; so is your crocodile." The belief was that the animal life which was revealed when the Nile floods subsided was so propagated.

156-7. Every Egyptian is a traitor.

161. Perhaps Dryden is thinking of the scene in *Antony and Cleopatra* where Antony's god-friend Hercules leaves him.

162. **unmortgaged hope**: "Is there any little hope to which we have more than a borrowed right?"

165. **as**: is?

165-7. A "world-image." As Antony loses his possessions his spirits get higher, as if the soul of each lost "body" came back to him instead of flying away. This is an impressive image, though not too logical, for if he is losing his half of the world, he cannot still have it.

170. **As . . . now**: Ventidius, as a Roman of the old school, prefers death with honour to life with dishonour. Antony has again come under his strong influence, with beneficial results to the tone of his utterances. He has lost his passive low spiritedness, and is now the vigorous man of action.

172. **for burial**: "for us to be buried in."

173. **our stars**: our powers. Each person had a "lucky" star. Antony suggests that they combine theirs (though not much "luck" was to be expected").

174-7. They are to compete to see who shall kill the most.

emulous: in rivalry.

malicious: as if they hated each other.

179. *chiding*: Ventidius will not chide Antony any more.

By . . . life: "I swear by the few hours I have yet to live . . ." Ventidius is elated by death, but Antony still hopes for life (185-8).

186-8. 't is worth . . . behind: this image sounds striking, but its meaning does not reveal itself very easily; "gulf of fate" and "wandering destinies behind" seem to point to Death as Antony's desired objective, but from the sense of the previous lines it *ought* to mean—"it is worth risking death to reach the safety of our troops" (the veterans whom Ventidius had left behind on his way back from Parthia; the same who "would not come for Cleopatra" in Act I.). But their "destinies" are not "wandering" at the moment; but they would be if they broke through Caesar's lines! This is one of Dryden's Shakespearean coinages that will not stand analysis.

189-355. Cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, IV. xiv.—

I made these wars for Egypt, and the queen,—
Whose heart I thought I had, for she had mine,
Which whilst it was mine had annex'd unto't
A million moe, now lost,—she, Eros, has
Pack'd cards with Caesar, and false play'd my glory
Unto an enemy's triumph.—
Nay, weep not, gentle Eros; there is left us
Ourselves to end ourselves.—

Enter MARDIAN.

O, thy vile lady!

She has robb'd me of my sword.

Mard.

No, Antony;

My mistress lov'd thee, and her fortunes mingled
With thine entirely.

Ant.

Hence, saucy eunuch; peace!

She hath betray'd me and shall die the death.

Mard.

Death of one person can be paid but once,
And that she has discharg'd. What thou wouldst do
Is done unto thy hand; the last she spake
Was "Antony! most noble Antony!"
Then in the midst a tearing groan did break
The name of Antony; it was divided
Between her heart and lips: she render'd life.
Thy name so buried in her.

Ant.

Dead, then?

Mard.

Dead.

Ant. Unarm, Eros; the long day's task is done,
And we must sleep.—[*To Mardian*] That thou depart'st hence
safe,

Does pay thy labour richly; go.—[*Exit Mardian.*] Off, pluck off !—

The seven-fold shield of Ajax cannot keep
The battery from my heart. O, cleave, my sides !
Heart, once be stronger than thy continent,
Crack thy frail case !—Apace, Eros, apace.—
No more a soldier.—Bruised pieces, go;
You have been nobly borne.—From me awhile,— [*Exit Eros.*
I will o'ertake thee, Cleopatra, and
Weep for my pardon. So it must be, for now
All length is torture; since the torch is out,
Lie down, and stray no farther.—Now all labour
Mars what it does; yea, very force entangles
Itself with strength: seal then, and all is done.—
Eros !—I come, my queen !—Eros !—Stay for me !
Where souls do couch on flowers, we 'll hand in hand,
And with our sprightly port make the ghosts gaze;
Dido and her Aeneas shall want troops,
And all the haunt be ours.—Come, Eros, Eros !

Re-enter EROS.

Eros. What would my lord ?

Ant. Since Cleopatra died,
I have liv'd in such dishonour, that the gods
Detest my baseness. I, that with my sword
Quarter'd the world, and o'er green Neptune's back
With ships made cities, condemn myself to lack
The courage of a woman; less noble mind
Than she which by her death our Caesar tells
"I am conqueror of myself." Thou art sworn, Eros,
That, when the exigent should come—which now
Is come indeed—when I should see behind me
The inevitable prosecution of
Disgrace and horror, that, on my command,
Thou then wouldst kill me. Do't; the time is come.
Thou strik'st not me, 't is Caesar thou defeat'st.
Put colour in thy cheek.

Eros. The gods withhold me !
Shall I do that which all the Parthian darts,
Though enemy, lost aim and could not ?

Ant. Eros,
Wouldst thou be window'd in great Rome and see
Thy master thus with pleach'd arms, bending down
His corrigible neck, his face subdued
To penetrative shame, whilst the wheel'd seat
Of fortunate Caesar, drawn before him, branded
His baseness that ensued ?

Eros. I would not see't.

Ant. Come, then; for with a wound I must be cur'd.
Draw that thy honest sword, which thou hast worn
Most useful for thy country.

Eros. O, sir, pardon me !

Ant. When I did make thee free, swor'st thou not then
To do this when I bade thee ? Do it at once,
Or thy precedent services are all
But accidents unpurpos'd. Draw, and come.

Eros. Turn from me, then, that noble countenance,
Wherein the worship of the whole world lies.

Ant. Lo thee ! [Turning from him.]

Eros. My sword is drawn.

Ant. Then let it do at once
The thing why thou hast drawn it.

Eros. My dear master,
My captain, and my emperor, let me say,
Before I strike this bloody stroke, farewell.

Ant. 'T is said, man; and farewell.

Eros. Farewell, great chief. Shall I strike now ?

Ant. Now, Eros.

Eros. Why, there then !—Thus I do escape the sorrow
Of Antony's death. [Kills himself.]

Ant. Thrice-nobler than myself !
Thou teachest me, O valiant Eros, what
I should, and thou couldst not. My queen and Eros
Have by their brave instruction got upon me
A nobleness in record; but I will be
A bridegroom in my death, and run into't
As to a lover's bed. Come, then; and, Eros,
Thy master dies thy scholar: to do thus [Falling on his sword.]
I learn'd of thee. How ! not dead ? not dead ?—
The guard, ho !—O, dispatch me !

190. Alexas reflects Cleopatra's falseness.

209-13. Cleopatra is a swallow who breeds in the summer of Antony's prosperity, but when the winter of his misfortune comes, she flies to the spring of Caesar's rising fortunes.

211. **morning wake:** the sunrise. Antony is the summer sun.

214. **mixed with:** "been thrown in with."

220. **too . . . has:** "she *has* cleared herself—fatally !" (*i.e.* by death).

223. **unchanged:** Cleopatra's face does not look as if she is crying; in fact the tears have difficulty in finding vent (224)

225. **indistinguished:** indistinguishable.

227. **Lucrece**: this is an apposite allusion; Cleopatra *will* not disclose her grief, Lucrece *could* not, because her tongue had been cut out by Tarquin, her ravisher.

227. **Ventidius' remark**, cutting off Antony's shudder of foreboding, is jarringly heartless, even though we know that Alexas is improvising. Ventidius' remark refers not to Antony's "foreboding," but to Cleopatra's imminent death.

232. **yet suspect**: "still doubts my innocence": "suspect" is in the subjunctive mood.

235. **And . . . her**: half Antony's name remained unspoken. It is also "buried" because it never *will* be spoken, for the speaker is dead.

238. **two words**: see below, 240.

239-41. "It would have been *right* for her to die if she were false, and live if she were innocent; but to die and be innocent is horribly *wrong*."

245-6. Ventidius thinks Antony is out of his wits. He himself regards Cleopatra's death as a stroke of good fortune.

249-50. **what . . . perform**: *i.e.* suicide.

becomes: "it is fitting for." The Romans thought it the last sign of nobility to commit suicide when life is hopeless. Brutus and Cassius both did, in *Julius Caesar*.

254. **and her**: he is pleased to think that he still has the power to save others, although above he had declared his own safety was his sole aim. Alexas likes to feel he is swaying events!

the Romans: Caesar's forces.

255. **wit**: cleverness.

256. **double**: each "doubling back" he makes to escape it.

258. **treated**: "come to an understanding" (a "treaty"). Ventidius is quite callous about Cleopatra's supposed death, which affects him only from its "political" aspect.

259. **tame . . . received**: "it would show lack of courage to try to patch up a treaty now, just because Cleopatra is dead; besides, people would not believe this was our real reason. (They would think we were *using* her death to serve our own ends, *i.e.* to save us.)"

260. **warm**: heated by killing others.

262. "My fighting ('angry') days are over."

272. **factors**: manufacturers. Antony took their goods when he conquered them, and bought Cleopatra's love with them.

274. **circle**: the "setting" of the jewel.

275. **nauseous**: sick.

276. bribes: the attractions life offers us to make us want to live on. In these last speeches of Antony, the "All for Love" theme emerges triumphantly and clearly.

281-4. 'Tis time . . . inwards: this seems to be an attempt at the "recognition" which suddenly makes his error clear to the tragic hero just before his death. This is almost the only time Antony recognises that anything besides personal motives should rule the world. Between them, he and Caesar have made people doubtful whom to serve, and their wars, waged from opposite sides of the earth, have ground its face inwards. These "world-images" are very like those used in *Antony and Cleopatra*.

285-6. Cf. *Macbeth*: I gin to be aweary of the sun

And wish the estate of the world were now undone.

289-90. "I have no time to feel the sorrow I undoubtedly should, because I shall die now, with you."

292-4. Antony's elegiac mood has prevailed even over Ventidius' robust spirits. His life has worn down until it is like a rag that is hardly worth giving to a beggar.

296. in the toils: in nets, that entangle the beasts the more they struggle. Cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*:—

As she would catch another Antony
In her strong toil of grace.

297. Perhaps an echo of *Richard II.*:—

The lion, dying, thrusteth forth his paw
And wounds the earth, if nothing else.

300-2. The dying hero often made some such request for justification; cf. *Othello*'s:—

Soft you; a word or two before you go.
I have done the state some service, and they know't.
No more of that. I pray you, in your letters,
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
Speak of me as I am, etc.,

or Hamlet's request to Horatio:—

If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity (= death?) awhile
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my story.

302-3. who . . . you: "If I live, who will shield me from being called a coward for living after you were dead?"

Say . . . it: "Tell the world I ordered you to."

204. Speak for themselves.

305-8. Ventidius can go to Caesar and say that he killed Antony, and so save himself. Ventidius makes the right reply

to this obnoxious kindness, which hardly reveals Antony in a creditable light; he excuses himself (313-15). He has lost control of his thoughts since Cleopatra died.

316. "I have thought of a better idea; you must not refuse to carry it out, this time."

318. Let . . . you: "I hope your idea is not that I should outlive you, as it was before."

321. emperor: only in death does Ventidius relax from his formal terms of address to his superior. He now calls him "friend"—a pathetic touch.

327. Pray . . . face: "turn your face *away* from me"—so that Antony will not see what he is going to do.

328. Home . . . reach: "(I will strike) as deeply as my sword can reach."

329. "That wound was not to be given to yourself; it is mine; give it me back." Antony is concerned to find that Ventidius has stabbed himself instead of his master.

330-4. Ventidius dies well with this touching speech of friendship on his lips. We may perhaps regret, nevertheless, that his active, positive, character should be sacrificed, before its time, to make a pretty elegiac scene. He should have died with the roar of battle round him, like Brutus, or Cassius, or Macbeth.

333. perjured: guilty of deceit.

337. lag: behind in honour (in comparison with Ventidius and Cleopatra).

338. Is . . . more?: "Is this all that death is?"

he: Death; Death came to welcome Ventidius like a friend, before he had time to knock. Antony is consoled to think that death is so easy and quick.

342-3. "If he had been a learned man, he would not have had the courage to kill himself without any preliminary hesitation." Antony is contrasting Ventidius' active, extravert nature, untroubled by retrospection, with the subtle, motive-seeking reflective nature which the scholar's profession demands, but which destroys his power of "unconditioned" action. This is a queer place for such a "philosophic" meditation, as Antony realises in the next three lines. Possibly there is an underlying comparison between the scholar and himself, for he seems here (344-6) to imply that he is "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought" himself.

347. unperforming: the hand has not finished its work.

349. jades: "deceives my hopes."

349-51. Contrast Death's attitude to Antony and to Ventidius, 338-42, above.

352. He hears the trampling and thinks it is some advance guard of Caesar's.

353-4. Antony thinks what a dishonour it will be for him if Caesar thinks he has only half killed himself for the sake of good form, and that really he wants to live, and that having done what honour demanded, he will expect Caesar to share in his "conspiracy" and save him. "To play booty" is a device used by sharpers; one of them, the partner of the victim, plays badly and helps to make him lose. He himself loses, of course, but he gets that back when the booty is shared out afterwards.

354. *mend*: repair it; *i.e.* finish it.

356-412. Cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, IV. xv.—

Enter CLEOPATRA, and her maids aloft, with CHARMIAN and IRAS.

Cleo. O Charmian, I will never go from hence.

Char. Be comforted, dear madam.

Cleo. No, I will not.

All strange and terrible events are welcome,
But comforts we despise; our size of sorrow,
Proportion'd to our cause, must be as great
As that which makes it.—

Enter, below, DIOMEDES.

How, now ! is he dead ?

Diom. His death's upon him, but not dead.
Look out o' the other side your monument;
His guard have brought him thither.

Enter, below, ANTONY, borne by the Guard.

Cleo. O sun,
Burn the great sphere thou mov'st in ! darkling stand
The varying shore o' the world !—O Antony,
Antony, Antony !—Help, Charmian, help, Iras, help;
Help, friends below; let's draw him hither.

Ant. *Peace !*
Not Caesar's valour hath o'erthrown Antony,
But Antony's hath triumph'd on itself.

Cleo. So it should be, that none but Antony
Should conquer Antony; but woe 't is so !

Ant. I am dying, Egypt, dying; only
I here importune death awhile, until
Of many thousand kisses the poor last
I lay upon thy lips.

Cleo. I dare not, dear,—
Dear my lord, pardon,—I dare not,

Lest I be taken: not the imperious show
 Of the full-fortun'd Caesar ever shall
 Be brooch'd with me; if knife, drugs, serpents, have
 Edge, sting, or operation, I am safe.
 Your wife Octavia, with her modest eyes
 And still conclusion, shall acquire no honour
 Demuring upon me. But come, come, Antony,—
 Help me, my women,—we must draw thee up.—
 Assist, good friends.

Ant. O, quick, or I am gone.

Cleo. Here's sport indeed !—How heavy weighs my lord !
 Our strength is all gone into heaviness,
 That makes the weight. Had I great Juno's power,
 The strong-wing'd Mercury should fetch thee up,
 And set thee by Jove's side. Yet come a little,—
 Wishers were ever fools,—O, come, come, come;

[They heave Antony aloft to Cleopatra.]

And welcome, welcome ! die where thou hast liv'd;
 Quicken with kissing: had my lips that power,
 Thus would I wear them out.

All A heavy sight !

Ant. I am dying, Egypt, dying.—
 Give me some wine, and let me speak a little.

Cleo. No, let me speak; and let me rail so high,
 That the false huswife Fortune break her wheel,
 Provok'd by my offence.

Ant. One word, sweet queen;
 Of Caesar seek your honour with your safety.—O !

Cleo. They do not go together.

Ant. Gentle, hear me;
 None about Caesar trust but Proculeius.

Cleo. My resolution and my hands I'll trust,
 None about Caesar.

Ant. The miserable change now at my end
 Lament nor sorrow at, but please your thoughts
 In feeding them with those my former fortunes
 Wherein I liv'd the greatest prince o' the world,
 The noblest, and do now not basely die,
 Not cowardly put off my helmet to
 My countryman,—a Roman by a Roman
 Valiantly vanquish'd. Now my spirit is going;
 I can no more.

Cleo. Noblest of men, woo't die ?
 Hast thou no care of me ? shall I abide
 In this dull world, which in thy absence is
 No better than a sty ?—O, see, my women,
 The crown o' the earth doth melt.—My lord !—

[Antony dies.]

O, wither'd is the garland of the war,
The soldier's pole is fallen: young boys and girls
Are level now with men; the odds is gone,
And there is nothing left remarkable
Beneath the visiting moon.

Char. O, quietness, lady !

Irás. She is dead too, our sovereign.

Char. Lady !

Irás. Madam !

Char. O madam, madam, madam !

Irás. Royal Egypt,

Empress !

Char. Peace, peace, Irás !

Cleo. No more but e'en a woman, and commanded
By such poor passion as the maid that milks
And does the meanest chares.—It were for me
To throw my sceptre at the injurious gods;
To tell them that this world did equal theirs
Till they had stolen our jewel. All's but naught;
Patience is sottish, and impatience does
Become a dog that 's mad: then is it sin
To rush into the secret house of death,
Ere death dare come to us ?—How do you, women ?
What, what ! good cheer !—Why, how now, Charmian !—
My noble girls ! Ah, women, women, look,
Our lamp is spent, it's out !—Good sirs, take heart.
We'll bury him; and then, what's brave, what's noble,
Let's do it after the high Roman fashion,
And make death proud to take us.—Come, away:
This case of that huge spirit now is cold.—
Ah, women, women ! come; we have no friend
But resolution and the briefest end.

[*Exeunt: those above bearing off Antony's body.*]

358. my . . . prophets: " I half expected this."

362. Send . . . send: Dryden tries the device again !

I am answered: *i.e.* his question whether Cleopatra was alive, or a ghost (as she ought to be, for he believed her dead). Her sending for help convinces him she is not a ghost. Cf. Lear, when he wakes up and sees Cordelia—

You do me wrong to take me out o' the grave;

Thou art a soul in bliss; . . .

Cordelia. Sir, do you know me ?

Lear. You are a spirit, I know; when did you die ?

369. upon the spur: as fast as he can (by spurring): not in the modern sense of "on the spur of the moment," *i.e.* hastily, but also, without thinking, on an impulse.

372. **mended**: amended; *i.e.* "show that you are now for me instead of against me."

374. "I am only keeping myself alive by an effort."

374. "Only say —."

375. "It is too late merely to *say* I am true. I will *prove it by action* (*i.e.* I will die with you)."

380-1. **Scarce . . . now**: "I hardly thought anything of him before he told me he loved me; afterwards I hated him." This is unkind and ungrateful to poor Dolabella.

385. **That . . . kindly**: "As I can now believe you, we can part lovingly and trusting in each other."

391. **did**: acted.

394. **utmost**: last; their love got happier and happier right till the end. This is a pardonable exaggeration; their love in the play has been stormy.

395. **each other's**: belonging to each other.

396-8. Cf. Pope:

"By the ghosts who died for love
Wandering in the myrtle grove."

398. "And they will all follow in our train" (because they are illustrious examples of ghosts "who died for love").

399-400. A swan never sang till it died (according to the ancient belief, mentioned in the classics), and then it sang very sweetly.

401. "and *is* there not one left now for love?"

402-3. "Worth more than all the half of the world that I leave to Caesar."

407-8. **cast . . . look**: this sounds very stiff. This speech is forced and rhetorical. Compare Shakespeare's Cleopatra. Dryden has made it a conventional outburst, *i.e.* what one would expect a bereaved lady to say. He would probably have claimed merit for this, and called it "decorous" and "reasonable."

410. **senseless**: without feeling or sensation.

411. **leavings**: not "remnants of a soul" (*i.e.* bits of the soul itself), but, what the soul has left behind it.

415. She may *aspire* to it, but she cannot marry him while Octavia lives. What she means is that she will be his bride *in death* (417-19). She is not just claiming that she is a "respectable" woman.

418. **spousals**: marriage rites.

418. For . . . **break**: the law (even the great Roman law) cannot interfere with them when they are dead.

424-520. Cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, (i) V. ii.—

Cleo. Sir, I will eat no meat, I'll not drink, sir;
If idle talk will once be necessary,
I'll not sleep neither. This mortal house I'll ruin,
Do Caesar what he can. Know, sir, that I
Will not wait pinion'd at your master's court;
Nor once be chastis'd with the sober eye
Of dull Octavia. Shall they hoist me up
And show me to the shouting varletry
Of censuring Rome? Rather a ditch in Egypt
Be gentle grave unto me! rather on Nilus' mud
Lay me stark nak'd, and let the water-flies
Blow me into abhorring! rather make
My country's high pyramides my gibbet,
And hang me up in chains!

(ii) V. ii.—

Cleo. Farewell, and thanks.—[*Exit Dolabella.*] Now, Iras,
what think'st thou?

Thou, an Egyptian puppet, shalt be shown
In Rome, as well as I: mechanic slaves
With greasy aprons, rules, and hammers, shall
Uplift us to the view; in their thick breaths,
Rank of gross diet, shall we be enclouded,
And forc'd to drink their vapour.

Iras. The gods forbid!

Cleo. Nay, 't is most certain, Iras. Saucy lictors
Will catch at us, like strumpets, and scald rhymers
Ballad us out o' tune; the quick comedians,
Extemporally will stage us, and present
Our Alexandrian revels; Antony
Shall be brought drunken forth, and I shall see
Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness
I' the posture of a whore.

Iras. O the good gods

Cleo. Nay, that's certain.

Iras. I'll never see 't; for, I am sure, my nails
Are stronger than mine eyes.

Cleo. Why, that's the way
To fool their preparation, and to conquer
Their most absurd intents.—

Re-enter CHARMIAN.

Now, Charmian!—

Show me, my women, like a queen; go fetch
My best attires.—I am again for Cydnus,
To meet Mark Antony.—Sirrah Iras, go.—
Now, noble Charmian, we'll dispatch indeed;

And, when thou hast done this chare, I'll give thee leave
To play till doomsday.—Bring our crown and all.—
Wherefore's this noise? [Exit *Iras*. A noise within.]

Enter a Guardsman.

Guardsman. Here is a rural fellow
That will not be denied your highness' presence;
He brings you figs.

Cleo. Let him come in.—[Exit *Guardsman*.] What poor an
instrument
May do a noble deed! he brings me liberty.
My resolution's plac'd, and I have nothing
Of woman in me: now from head to foot
I am marble-constant; now the fleeting moon
No planet is of mine.

Re-enter Guardsman, with Clown bringing in a basket.

Guardsman. This is the man.

Cleo. Avoid, and leave him.— [Exit *Guardsman*.]
Hast thou the pretty worm of Nilus there,
That kills and pains not?

Clown. Truly, I have him; but I would not be the party
that should desire you to touch him, for his biting is immortal:
those that do die of it do seldom or never recover.

Cleo. Rememberest thou any that have died on't?

Clown. Very many, men and women too. I heard of one of
them no longer than yesterday; a very honest woman, but
something given to lie,—as a woman should not do, but in
the way of honesty,—how she died of the biting of it, what
pain she felt. Truly, she makes a very good report o' the
worm, but he that will believe all that they say shall never
be saved by half that they do; but this is most fallible, the
worm's an odd worm.

Cleo. Get thee hence; farewell.

Clown. I wish you all joy of the worm.
[Setting down his basket.]

Cleo. Farewell.

Clown. You must think this, look you, that the worm will
do his kind.

Cleo. Ay, ay; farewell.

Clown. Look you, the worm is not to be trusted but in the
keeping of wise people; for, indeed, there is no goodness in
the worm.

Cleo. Take thou no care; it shall be heeded.

Clown. Very good. Give it nothing, I pray you, for it is not
worth the feeding.

Cleo. Will it eat me?

Clown. You must not think I am so simple but I know the devil himself will not eat a woman. I know that a woman is a dish for the gods, if the devil dress her not. But, truly, these same whoreson devils do the gods great harm in their women; for in every ten that they make, the devils mar five.

Cleo. Well, get thee gone; farewell.

Clown. Yes, forsooth; I wish you joy o' the worm. [Exit.

Re-enter IRAS with a robe, crown, etc.

Cleo. Give me my robe, put on my crown; I have Immortal longings in me. Now no more The juice of Egypt's grape shall moist this lip.—Yare, yare, good Iras; quick.—Methinks I hear Antony call; I see him rouse himself To praise my noble act; I hear him mock The luck of Caesar, which the gods give men To excuse their after wrath.—Husband, I come ! Now to that name my courage prove my title ! I am fire and air; my other elements I give to baser life.—So; have you done ? Come then, and take the last warmth of my lips.—Farewell, kind Charmian, Iras, long farewell.

[Kisses them. Iras falls and dies.

Have I the aspic in my lips ? Dost fall ? If thou and nature can so gently part, The stroke of death is as a lover's pinch, Which hurts, and is desir'd. Dost thou lie still ? If thus thou vanishest, thou tell'st the world It is not worth leave-taking.

Char. Dissolve, thick cloud, and rain; that I may say, The gods themselves do weep !

Cleo. This proves me base;

If she first meet the curled Antony, He'll make demand of her, and spend that kiss Which is my heaven to have.—Come, thou mortal wretch,

[To an asp, which she applies to her breast.

With thy sharp teeth this knot intricate Of life at once untie; poor venomous fool, Be angry, and dispatch. O, couldst thou speak, That I might hear thee call great Caesar ass Unpoliced !

Char. O eastern star !

Cleo. Peace, peace !

Dost thou not see my baby at my breast, That sucks the nurse asleep ?

Char. O, break ! O, break !

Cleo. As sweet as balm, as soft as air, as gentle,—
O Antony !—Nay, I will take thee too.—

[*Applying another asp to her arm.*

What should I stay—

[*Dies.*

Char. In this wild world ?—So, fare thee well.—
Now boast thee, death, in thy possession lies
A lass unparallel'd.—Downy windows, close;
And golden Phoebus never be beheld
Of eyes again so royal !—Your crown's awry;
I'll mend it, and then play—

Enter the Guard, rushing in.

1st Guard. Where is the queen ?

Char. Speak softly, wake her not.

1st Guard. Caesar hath sent—

Char. Too slow a messenger.—

[*Applies an asp.*

O, come apace, dispatch ! I partly feel thee.

1st Guard. Approach, ho ! All's not well; Caesar's beguil'd.

2nd Guard. There's Dolabella sent from Caesar; call him.

1st Guard. What work is here !—Charmian, is this well done ?

Char. It is well done, and fitting for a princess
Descended of so many royal kings.

Ah, soldier !

[*Dies.*

Re-enter DOLABELLA.

Dolab. How goes it here ?

2nd Guard. All dead.

Dolab. Caesar, thy thoughts

Touch their effects in this; thyself art coming

To see perform'd the dreaded act which thou

So sought'st to hinder.

[*Within.* "A way there, a way for Caesar !"

Re-enter CAESAR, and all his train, marching.

Dolab. O sir, you are too sure an augurer;
That you did fear is done.

Caesar. Bravest at the last,
She levell'd at our purposes, and, being royal,
Took her own way.—The manner of their deaths ?
I do not see them bleed.

Dolab. Who was last with them ?

1st Guard. A simple countryman, that brought her figs;
This was his basket.

Caesar. Poison'd, then.

1st Guard. O Caesar,
This Charmian liv'd but now; she stood and spake.
I found her trimming up the diadem

On her dead mistress; tremblingly she stood
And on the sudden dropp'd.

Caesar. O noble weakness !—
If they had swallow'd poison, 't would appear
By external swelling; but she looks like sleep,
As she would catch another Antony
In her strong toil of grace.

Dolab. Here, on her breast,
There is a vent of blood and something blown;
The like is on her arm.

1st Guard. This is an aspic's trail; and these fig-leaves
Have slime upon them, such as the aspic leaves
Upon the caves of Nile.

Caesar. Most probable
That so she died; for her physician tells me
She hath pursued conclusions infinite
Of easy ways to die.—Take up her bed;
And bear her women from the monument.
She shall be buried by her Antony;
No grave upon the earth shall clip in it
A pair so famous. High events as these
Strike those that make them; and their story is
No less in pity than his glory which
Brought them to be lamented. Our army shall
In solemn show attend this funeral,
And then to Rome.—Come, Dolabella, see
High order in this great solemnity.

[*Exeunt.*]

The parallels are too many to be noted separately. It will be noted how closely Dryden relies for his atmosphere on Shakespeare. Much of this scene is, in fact, an abstract of Shakespeare's.

422-4. My poor . . . dead: one might have expected Antony to wish Cleopatra to live and make peace with Caesar. He did not, however, and here Cleopatra seems proud of it.

434. Despatch: "hurry."

436. surprised: taken by surprise (by Caesar).

440. (vain augury): the wreath of victory was to be an omen or prophecy of his success, but it was a bad guess.

442. aspics: "the pretty worm of Nilus . . . That kills and pains not." (*Antony and Cleopatra.*)

443. This is where Dryden begins his adaptations from Daniel's *Tragedie of Cleopatra*: "Tis sweet to die when we are forced to live."

445-6. him . . . he: Death. Cf. Shakespeare's Antony:—

. . . but I will be
A bridegroom in my death, and run into't
As to a lover's bed.

And Claudio, *Measure for Measure*:

I will encounter Darkness as a bride
And clasp it in my arms.

The reference to her love, Antony, makes the parallel more apposite.

446. **frightful**: frightening.

The verse in this passage (443-51) is broken up by the sense and by the varying rhythms.

453. **decent**: fitting.

455. **thou**: apostrophising the dead Antony. "No one but Antony himself was great enough to conquer him."

457. **To what end**: "for what purpose are —"

458. **ensigns**: paraphernalia.

459-64. Cf. Daniel:

Glittering in all her pompous rich array
Great Cleopatra sat, as if sh' had won
Caesar, and all the world beside, this day:
Even as she was when on thy crystal streams,
Clear Cydnos, she did shew what earth could shew.
When Asia all array'd in wonder, deems
Venus from heaven was come on earth below.
Even as she went at first to meet her love,
So goes she now again to find him.
But that first, did her greatness only prove,
This last her love that could not live behind him.

466. **conquer Caesar . . . him**: *i.e.* by dying.

467. **And . . . world**: *i.e.* Antony.

467-71. **Hail . . . life**: cf. Daniel's Cleopatra "*at the tombe of Antonius.*"

O sacred ever memorable stone
Thou hast without my tears, within my flame,
Receive th' oblation of my woefullest moan
That ever from sad affliction came.
And you dear relics of my lord and love
Most precious parcels of the worthiest liver,
O let no impious hand dare to remove
You out from hence, but rest you here for ever.
Let Egypt now give peace unto you dead
That living gave you trouble and turmoil.

467. *relics: i.e. Antony's body.*

473-506. Cf. Daniel: V. ii.—

Come rarest beast, that all our Egypt breeds,
 How dearly welcome art thou now to me ?
 The fairest creature that fair Nilus feeds,
 Methinks I see, in now beholding thee.
 Better than death, death's office thou dischargest, 1705
 That with one gentle touch canst free our breath,
 And in a pleasing sleep our soul enlargest,
 Making ourselves not privy to our death.
 O welcome now of wonders, wonder chief,
 That open canst with such an easy key, 1710
 The door of life, come gentle cunning thief,
 That from ourselves so steal'st ourselves away.
 And now I sacrifice these arms to death,
 That lust late dedicated to delights.
 Offering up for my last, this last of breath, 1715
 The complement of my love's dearest rites.
 What now false flesh, what ? and wilt thou conspire
 With Caesar too, as thou wert none of ours,
 To work my shame, and hinder my desire:
 And bend thy ribald parts against my powers ? 1720
 Wouldst thou retain in closure of thy veins
 That enemy, base life, to let my good ?
 No, know there is a greater power constrains
 Than can be countercheckt with fearful blood ;
 For to a mind that's great nothing seems great: 1725
 And seeing death to be the last of woes,
 And life lasting disgrace which I shall get,
 What do I lose that have but life to lose ?

Eras. See, not a yielding shrink, or touch of fear
 Consents now to bewray least sense of pain, 1730
 But still in one same sweet unaltered cheer,
 Her honour doth her dying spirits retain.

Cleo. Well, now this work of mine is done, here ends
 This act of life, that part the fates assigned
 What glory or disgrace the world could lend, 1735
 Both have and had, and both I leave behind,
 And Egypt, now the Theatre where I
 Have acted this, witness I die unforc'd,
 Witness my soul parts free to Antony,
 And now proud tyrant Caesar, do thy worst. 1740

Eras. Come Charmion, come, we must not only
 Spectators in this scene, but actors too.
 Now comes our part; you know we did agree
 The fellowship of death to undergo

And though our meaner fortunes cannot claim
A glory by this act, they shall have fame. 1745

Ch. Eras, I am prepar'd, and here is that
Will do the deed.

Eras. And here is of the same.

Ch. But Eras, I'll begin, it is my place. 1750

Eras. Nay, Charmion, here I drink a death to thee,
I must be first.

Ch. Indeed thou hast prevented me.

Yet I will have this honour to be last
Which shall adorn this head, which must be seen 1755
To wear that crown in death her life held fast,
That all the world may see she died a queen.

O see this face, the wonder of her life,
Retains in death a grace that graces death.
Colour so lively, cheer so lovely rife, 1760

As none would think this beauty could want breath.

And in that cheer, th' impression of a smile
Doth seem to show she scorns death and Caesar,

And glories that she would them so beguile,

And here tells death how well her death doth please her.

Caesar's messenger. See, we are come too late, this is
dispatcht, 1766

Caesar is disappointed of this grace.

Why, how now Charmion, what, is this well done ?

Ch. Yea, very well, and she that from the race
Of so great kings descends, doth best become. 1770

474-9. The aspix puts one quietly to sleep, never to wake again, like a lethal chamber. Cleopatra imagines Death himself being deceived by what is apparently only a sleep, but which is really death itself. Hence Death imagines that he himself must be only a sleep.

482. " He cannot conquer us; we have gone too far into death, and he dare not trespass on His territory.

486. *As . . . mine:* " as if you were not on my side, as you ought to be, for I own you."

487. *him:* Caesar.

490. *The next is ours:* (1) " the next step is for us to take."
(2) " the next snakes are for you and me to use."

498. She cannot see Antony's body any longer.

500. " (do) thy worst." Cleopatra ends on a triumphant note. She has at last got the marriage with Antony she has longed for—in death. She has no regrets.

504. Serapion rebukes Charmion.

507-8. Why is Alexas a prisoner? Because the priests will use him as a pledge of Egypt's safety (515-16); But why is he a traitor except for the fact that Serapion hates him? Moreover, he finds time from his private worries to approve of Cleopatra's action. Poor Alexas!

516. To . . . triumph: Alexas will be one of the "exhibits" paraded through the streets of Rome, for the people (who have a holiday when a general's "triumph" is celebrated) to gape at. Perhaps that is why he envies Cleopatra her escape from such ignominy (506-7). Alexas is the only figure left who can be made responsible for the whole affair.

519. late: later.

EPILOGUE

A précis of the meaning is: a poor author, when he has finished a legitimate and reasonable satire of the people he envies, just calls them abusive names (which he thinks are witty); but one notices that he imitates them if he gets a chance. But he, Dryden, neither flatters nor screams abuses. He does not praise the audience just because it praises his play (or *vice versa*). If he is not a success he will quietly retire; but if he can choose his own critics, he will choose ladies, who are more likely to be sympathetic to Antony than the men (who probably prefer Caesar). But even then some old-fashioned lady may say "This is not so good as the plays of my youth!" Against such a judgment he will appeal to the young (who never saw the old plays). In any case, one cannot please everybody.

1. disputants: men in an argument: from what follows, he seems to mean "men of fashion who like to be thought wits."

4. "This is all the sign of intelligence they show."

8. The foolish man of fashion and the foolish author have a common bond—their foolishness, and so it is like civil war for the author wit to attack the town wit.

10. but . . . afoot: *i.e.* he swears as long as he is on foot. If he gets a carriage, his satire ceases, and he grows into a fop as fast as he can.

13. prunes up: preens himself.

oracle: *i.e.* what he relies on for his information.

14. He consults the looking-glass to see if pink or purple clothes match his complexion best.

15. For: = as for.

17. **Mr. Bayes:** the comical man of letters, intended for Dryden, in Buckingham's *The Rehearsal*, which was an attack on the Heroic Tragedy. Dryden seems quite unperturbed here: "I am not so much like Bayes as to abuse and cringe as the case demands." He says elsewhere that Buckingham sat for his own portrait when he drew Bayes. We notice, however, that he keeps returning to the theme (see Preface).

19. **sue out:** ask for.

writ of ease: seems to be a certificate of discharge from employment, what we should call "his cards."

23. "But you ladies must favour Antony, who lost the world for love."

24. **antiquated:** old-fashioned.

25. **the last age:** *i.e.* the Elizabethan age. The lady says, "You should have copied an Elizabethan play, costumes and all."

26-7. Dryden's answer to this is, "Have I to waste my time and labour merely on making the play *look like* an old one?" (literally, "Say that a man has to create the figure of a judge. Will he succeed merely by giving his figure the *appearance* of wisdom, *i.e.* wrinkles,—and not wisdom itself? I pity him, if so").

29. **should you:** "if you should . . ."

30. **he:** "our poor wretch" (15), *i.e.* Dryden.

The Epilogue is in the same racy strain as the Prologue.

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