

And beauty took its value from my breath,  
 To meet contempt, despair and death at Buda.  
 Ismena at this instant leaves the court:  
 No hope is left, no patience—I'm distracted.  
 The subtle tyrant love, who led me long  
 Through flow'ry paths, and spread elysium round me;  
 Whose fires, till now, serv'd but to heighten pleasure,  
 And quicken it to transport; has betray'd me  
 To plagues and torments not to be supported.  
 Ismena is essential to my being. O Matilda!  
 Assist me with your counsel or I'm lost.

QUEEN.

Alas! he knows not it too much imports me.

[Aside.

Do not abandon hope, but leave despair  
 To fools and cowards. Know, exalted souls  
 Have passions in proportion violent,  
 Resistless, and tormenting: they're a tax  
 Impos'd by nature on preheminance,  
 And fortitude and wisdom must support them.

CONRADE.

Who but Matilda e'er cou'd flatter misery,  
 And prove superior merit from our weakness?  
 At thy awak'ning voice my hope revives.  
 Cou'd'st thou but stop Ismena's purpos'd flight  
 (And nothing is too hard for wit like thine)  
 I yet may triumph o'er her pride and virtue.

QUEEN.

By stratagem to keep Ismena here  
 Can serve no end: when she perceives the fraud,  
 She'll fly more irritated than before.

CONRADE.

But I shall see her first.

QUEEN.