

ELMERICK.

A generous man must think it double grace,
When love and virtue condescend to chuse him:

QUEEN.

My lord, shou'd fate reduce some hapless woman,
Trembling and almost dying with confusion,
To make an offer of her love to you;
And such a love as instant death or madness
Were certain to ensue, shou'd you refuse it?
How wou'd you act? how treat a suppliant heart,
Whose weakness you had caus'd?

ELMERICK.

Your pardon, madam;

'Tis what I can't suppose; and asks no answer.

QUEEN.

Why not suppose? is it impossible?
Say—I—shou'd love; and trusting to your honour,
Have laid this fair occasion in your way
To break my fall, and spare me half my shame.

ELMERICK.

What vanity
Have I betray'd, what baseness, what presumption,
To need so strange a trial? if you doubt
My loyalty, and think I entertain
Designs injurious to my sovereign's honour,
And your fair virtue—

QUEEN.

'Tis too much, my lord,
This diffidence, this cold reserve—you urge me
To what I wou'd avoid, beyond the bounds
I had prescrib'd myself: yes, I cou'd die
Ere speak more plain; but must not have you think
I wou'd betray you. Heavens! what feign a passion