

My soul ne'er knew! No, rather let me bear  
Your utmost cruelty, your scorn and hatred,  
For what I am, a lost unhappy queen,  
Than once be thought so mean and so perfidious.

E L M E R I C K.

Confounded and amaz'd, my fault'ring tongue  
Scarce does its office.—Whither wou'd you urge me?  
'Tis too severe a proof!—as you are fair;  
As charms like yours may warm the coldest heart,  
And shake the most resolv'd; what if my senses  
Should mutiny against my weaker reason,  
And tempt me to betray you—horrid thought!—  
To sure and endless ruin!

Q U E E N.

What do you see  
That looks like ruin here?

E L M E R I C K.

Guilt:—that is ruin.

Q U E E N.

Why be it so, your love shall make it glorious.

E L M E R I C K.

No, shame and just remorse must still pursue  
Foul, trust-betraying love. And shou'd I say  
Ev'n that were in my power, I must deceive you.  
Shou'd wild desire, in an unguarded moment,  
Rifle your charms, and lay your virtue waste;  
The first return of thought wou'd bear me back  
To her, who claims me by the dearest ties  
Of virtuous, grateful love. Oh then return,  
With recollected powers o'ercome this weakness,  
And rise more glorious from this short decline.

Q U E E N.

This short decline!—no, let victorious love  
Here end a queen's confusion, or your scorn

Sink