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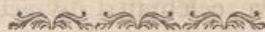
Lyttelton, George <Lord>

London, 1774

X. Christina, Queen of Sweden - Chancellor Oxenstiern.

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that Cato himself, had he remained upon earth, could have done us no good, unless he would have yielded to become *our prince*. But I see you consider me as a deserter from the republic, and an apologist for a tyrant. I therefore leave you to the company of those ancient Romans, for whose society you were always much fitter than for that of your contemporaries. Cato should have lived with Fabricius and Curius, not with Pompey and Cæsar.



DIALOGUE X.

CHRISTINA, Queen of Sweden.—Chancellor OXENSTIERN.

CHRISTINA.

YOU seem to avoid me, Oxenstiern; and, now we are met, you don't pay me the reverence that is due to your queen! Have you forgotten that I was your sovereign?

OXENSTIERN.

I am not your subject here, madam; but you have forgotten, that you yourself broke that bond, and freed me from my allegiance, many years before you died, by abdicating the crown, against my advice and the inclination of your people. Reverence here is paid only to virtue.

CHRISTINA.

I see you would mortify me, if it were in your power, for acting against your advice. But my fame does not depend upon your judgement. All Europe admired the greatness of my mind in resigning a crown, to dedicate myself entirely to the love of the sciences and the fine arts: things of which you had no taste in barbarous Sweden, the realm of Goths and Vandals.

O X E N-

OXENSTIERN.

There is hardly any mind *too great* for a crown; but there are many *too little*. Are you sure, madam, it was magnanimity, that caused you to fly from the government of a kingdom, which your ancestors, and particularly your heroic father, Gustavus, had ruled with so much glory?

CHRISTINA.

Am I sure of it? Yes:—and to confirm my own judgment, I have that of many learned men and *beaux esprits* of all countries, who have celebrated my action as the perfection of heroism.

OXENSTIERN.

Those *beaux esprits* judged according to their predominant passion. I have heard young ladies express their admiration of Mark Antony for heroically leaving his fleet at the battle of Actium, to follow his mistress. Your passion for literature had the same effect upon you. But why did not you indulge it in a manner more becoming your birth and rank? why did not you bring the Muses to Sweden, instead of deserting that kingdom to seek them in Rome? For a prince to encourage and protect arts and sciences, and more especially to instruct an illiterate people, and inspire them with knowledge, politeness, and fine taste, is indeed an act of true greatness.

CHRISTINA.

The Swedes were too gross to be refined by any culture, which I could have given to their dull, their half-frozen souls. Wit and genius require the influence of a more Southern climate.

OXENSTIERN.

The Swedes too gross! No, madam: not even the Russians are too gross to be refined, if they had a prince to instruct them.

CHRISTINA.

It was too tedious a work for the vivacity of my temper to polish bears into men: I should have died of the spleen before

I had

I had made any proficiency in it. My desire was to shine among those who were qualified to judge of my talents. At Paris, at Rome, I had the glory of shewing the French and Italian wits, that the North could produce *one* not inferior to them. They beheld me with wonder. The homage I had received in my palace at Stockholm was paid to my dignity: that which I drew from the French and Roman academies was paid to my talents. How much more glorious, how much more delightful to an elegant and rational mind, was the latter than the former! Could you once have felt the joy, the transport of my heart, when I saw the greatest authors, and all the celebrated artists, in the most learned and civilized countries of Europe, bringing their works to me, and submitting the merit of them to my decisions; when I saw the philosophers, the rhetoricians, the poets, making my judgement the standard of their reputation; you would not wonder that I preferred the empire of wit to any other empire.

O X E N S T I E R N.

O great Gustavus! my ever honoured, my adored master! O greatest of kings, greatest in valour, in virtue, in wisdom, with what indignation must thy soul, enthroned in heaven, have looked down on thy unworthy, thy degenerate daughter! With what shame must thou have seen her rambling about from court to court, deprived of her royal dignity, debased into a pedant, a witling, a smatterer in sculpture and painting, reduced to beg or buy flattery from each needy rhetorician, or hireling poet! I weep to think on this stain, this dishonourable stain, to thy illustrious blood! And yet——would to God! would to God! this was all the pollution it has suffered!

C H R I S T I N A.

Darest thou, Oxenstiern, impute any blemish to my honour?

O X E N S T I E R N.

Madam, the world will scarce respect the frailties of queens when they are on their thrones; much less when they have voluntarily

voluntarily degraded themselves to the level of the vulgar. And if scandalous tongues have unjustly aspersed their fame, the way to clear it is not by an *assassination*.

CHRISTINA.

Oh! that I were alive again, and restored to my throne, that I might punish the insolence of this hoary traitor!—But, see! he leaves me, he turns his back upon me with cool contempt!—Alas! do I not deserve this scorn? In spite of myself I must confess that I do.—O vanity, how short-lived are the pleasures thou bestowest! I was thy votary: thou wast the god for whom I changed my religion. For thee I forsook my country and my throne. What compensation have I gained for all these sacrifices, so lavishly, so imprudently made? Some puffs of incense from authors, who thought their flattery due to the rank I had held, or hoped to advance themselves by my recommendation, or, at best, over-rated my passion for literature, and praised me, to raise the value of those talents with which they were endowed. But in the esteem of *wise men* I stand very low; and *their esteem alone is the true measure of glory*. Nothing, I perceive, can give the mind a lasting joy, but the consciousness of having performed our duty in that station, which it has pleased the divine Providence to assign to us. The glory of virtue is solid and eternal: all other will fade away like a thin vapoury cloud, on which the casual glance of some faint beams of light has superficially imprinted their weak and transient colours.

D I A L O G U E X I.

TITUS VESPASIANUS.—PUBLIUS CORNELIUS SCIPIO AFRICANUS.

T I T U S.

N O—Scipio, I can't give place to you in this.—In other respects I acknowledge myself your inferior, though I was emperor of Rome, and you only her consul. I think your triumph