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Phantastes Chapter 19: The Innocent III

Abraham Cowley

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The Innocent III.
By Abraham Cowley

I.

Though all thy Gestures and Discourses be
Coin'd and stamp'd by *Modesty*,
Though from thy *Tongue* Ne'er slip'd away
One Word which *Nuns* at th' *Altar* might not say
Yet such a Sweetness, such a Grace
In all thy speech appear,
That what to th' *Eye* a beauteous *Face*
That thy *Tongue* is to th' *Ear*.
So cunningly it wounds the heart,
It strikes such Heat through every Part,
That thou a *Tempter* worse than *Satan* art.

II.

Though in thy Thoughts scare any Tracks have been,
So much as of *Original Sin*,
Such Charms thy *Beauty* wears as might
Desires in dying confest *Saints* excite.
Thou with strange *Adultery*
Dost in each Breast a *Brothel* keep;
Awake all Men do *lust* for thee,
And some *enjoy* thee when thy *sleep*.
Ne'er before did *Woman* live,
Who to such *Multitudes* did give
The *Root* and *Cause* of *Sin*, but only *Eve*.

III.

Though in thy Breast so quick a *Pity* be,
That a *Flies* *Death's* a *Wound* to thee.
Though savage, and rock-hearted those
Appear, that weep not ev'n *Romances* Woes.
Yet ne'er before was *Tyrant* known,
Whose Rage was of so large Extent,
The Ills thou dost are *whole* thine own,
Thou'rt *Principal* and *Instrument*,
In all the Deaths that come from you,
You do the *treble Office* do
Of *Judge*, of *Tort'rer*, and of *Weapon* too.

IV.

Thou *lovely Instrument* of *angry Fate*
Which *God* did for our Faults create!

Thou *pleasant, universal Ill,*
Which *sweet as Health,* yet like a *Plague* dost *kill!*
Thou kind, well-natur'd *Tyranny!*
Thou *chaste* Committer of a *Rape!*
Thou *voluntary Destiny,*
Which no Man *can,* or *would* escape!
So gentle, and so glad to spare,
So wond'rous good, and wond'rous fair,
(We know) ev'n the *Destroying Angels* are.