

I ever contradicted your desire,
 Or made it not mine too? Or which of your friends
 Have I not strove to love, although I knew
 He were mine enemy? What friend of mine
 That had to him deriv'd your anger, did I
 Continue in my liking? nay, gave notice
 He was from thence discharg'd? Sir, call to mind
 That I have been your wife, in this obedience,
 Upward of twenty years, and have been blest
 With many children by you; if, in the course
 And process of this time, you can report,
 And prove it too, against mine honor aught,
 My bond to wedlock, or my love and duty,
 Against your sacred person—in God's name,
 Turn me away, and let the foul'st contempt
 Shut door upon me; and so give me up
 To the sharpest kind of justice.

In characteristic contrast to this is her conference with Cardinal Wolsey, wherein, in spite of the severe discipline of her daily life, her hot temper gets the better of her self-control, and relieves its virtuous indignation in rebukes as scathing as they are shrewd:

Lord cardinal,
 To you I speak.
 * * * * * I do believe,
 Induc'd by potent circumstances, that
 You are mine enemy; and make my challenge—
 You shall not be my judge; for it is you
 Have blown this coal betwixt my lord and me,—
 Which God's dew quench!—Therefore, I say again,
 I utterly abhor, yea, from my soul
 Refuse you for my judge, whom, yet once more,
 I hold my most malicious foe, and think not
 At all a friend to truth.

Wol. I do profess
 You speak not like yourself, who ever yet
 Have stood to charity, and display'd the effects

Of disposition gentle, and of wisdom
 O'ertopping woman's power. Madam, you do me wrong:
 I have no spleen against you. * * * *

Q. Kath. My lord, my lord,
 I am a simple woman, much too weak
 To oppose your cunning. You are meek, and humble-
 mouth'd;

You sign your place and calling in full seeming
 With meekness and humility; but your heart
 Is cramm'd with arrogancy, spleen, and pride.
 You have, by fortune, and his highness' favors,
 Gone slightly o'er low steps; and now are mounted
 Where powers are your retainers; and your words,
 Domestics to you, serve your will, as 't please
 Yourself pronounce their office. I must tell you,
 You tender more your person's honor than
 Your high profession spiritual; that again
 I do refuse you for my judge; and here,
 Before you all, appeal unto the Pope,
 To bring my whole cause 'fore his holiness,
 And to be judg'd by him.

In the scene where she gives audience to the Cardinals, Wolsey and Campeius (Campeggio), her individuality, with all its strong points of contrast, is admirably delineated—her simple, housewifely habits opposed to her jealous exaction of the honors which are her birthright:

Q. Kath. * * * * *
 * * * * * I was set at work
 Among my maids; full little, God knows, looking
 Either for such men, or such business.
 For her sake that I have been, (for I feel
 The last fit of my greatness,) good your graces,
 Let me have time and counsel for my cause;
 Alas! I am a woman, friendless, hopeless.

* * * * *
 * * * * *
 Cam. I would your grace
 Would leave your griefs, and take my counsel.

About his neck, yet never lost her lustre—
 Of her that loves him with that excellence
 That angels love good men with—even of her
 That, when the greatest stroke of fortune falls,
 Will bless the king.

The death of Queen Katharine—who lives to see her beautiful supplanter elevated to the throne she humbly waited on, and her own daughter, Mary, illegitimized to make way for new heirs—is full of majestic pathos. Her long probation of trial, which in a less heroic woman would have subdued every vestige of pride, had served but to intensify her ruling passion, fulfilling her own words: “nothing but death shall e’er divorce my dignities.”

Still constant in her duty and grave affection to Henry, she dictates a farewell letter to him, over which even he, monster as he is, sheds tears; and having carefully instructed her women as to their last sad offices, she gives up her troubled ghost:

I thank you, honest lord. Remember me
 In all humility unto his highness:
 Say his long trouble now is passing
 Out of this world; tell him in death I bless’d him,
 For so I will.—Mine eyes grow dim.—Farewell,
 My lord!—Griffith, farewell!—Nay, Patience,
 You must not leave me yet. I must to bed;
 Call in more women.—When I am dead, good wench,
 Let me be used with honor; strew me over
 With maiden flowers, that all the world may know
 I was a chaste wife to my grave; embalm me,
 Then lay me forth; although unqueen’d, yet like
 A queen, and daughter to a king, inter me.
 I can no more,— * * * *
 * * * * *

Pat. Do you note
 How much her grace is alter’d on a sudden—
 How long her face is drawn? How pale she looks,
 And of an earthly cold! Mark you her eyes?
Grif. She is going, wench; pray, pray!

Q. Kath. How, sir?

Cam. Put your main cause into the king's protection;
He's loving, and most gracious; 'twill be much
Both for your honor better, and your cause;
For if the trial of the law o'take you,
You'll part away disgrac'd.

Wol. He tells you rightly.

Q. Kath. Ye tell me what ye wish for both, my ruin.
Is this your Christian counsel? Out upon ye!
Heaven is above all yet; there sits a judge
That no king can corrupt.

Cam. Your rage mistakes us.

Q. Kath. The more shame for ye; holy men I thought ye—
Upon my soul, two reverend cardinal virtues;
But cardinal sins, and hollow hearts, I fear ye:
Mend them, for shame, my lords. Is this your comfort—
The cordial that ye bring a wretched lady,
A woman lost among ye, laugh'd at, scorn'd?

* * * * *

Woe upon ye,

And all such false professors! Would ye have me
(If you have any justice, any pity—
If ye be any thing but churchmen's habits)
Put my sick cause into his hands that hates me?

And this fearless denunciation of the hypocrisy of her saintly
visitors, who would persuade her to relinquish her pretensions as
queen-consort, is again contrasted with the most pitiful self-con-
templation:

Alas! he has banish'd me his bed already—
His love, too long ago: * * *

* * * Have I liv'd thus long—(let me speak myself,
Since virtue finds no friends,)—a wife, a true one—
A woman (I dare say, without vain-glory,)
Never yet branded with suspicion?
Have I with all my full affections
Still met the king, lov'd him next heaven, obey'd him,
Been, out of fondness, superstitious to him,
Almost forgot my prayers to content him?

And am I thus rewarded? 'Tis not well, lords.
Bring me a constant woman to her husband,
One that ne'er dream'd a joy beyond his pleasure,
And to that woman, when she has done most,
Yet will I add an honor,—a great patience.

'Would I had never trod this English earth,
Or felt the flatteries that grow upon it!
Ye have angels' faces, but Heaven knows your hearts.
What will become of me now, wretched lady?
I am the most unhappy woman living,—
Shipwreck'd upon a kingdom where no pity,
No friends, no hope; no kindred weep for me,
Almost no grave allow'd me:—Like the lily,
That once was mistress of the field, and flourish'd,
I'll hang my head, and perish.

Katharine's estimate of the popular feeling with regard to her-
self was not altogether just to English hearts; her cause elicited
much sympathy, much tender pity—especially among the women,
who in her wrongs saw their own rights threatened—but it was
timid and unavailing. Her virtues were universally acknowledged;
and of two beautiful tributes to her worth, the first, which Shak-
speare has ascribed to her husband, is historically attested:

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That man i' the world who shall report he has
A better wife, let him in nought be trusted
For speaking false in that. Thou art, alone,
(If thy rare qualities, sweet gentleness,
Thy meekness saint-like, wife-like government,
Obeying in commanding,—and thy parts,
Sovereign and pious else, could speak thee out,)
The queen of earthly queens:—She is noble born;
And like her true nobility she has
Carried herself towards me.

He counsels a divorce—a loss of her
That, like a jewel, has hung twenty years