Kate and Marlow

MISS HARDCASTLE. (after a pause). But you have not been wholly an  
observer, I presume, sir: the ladies, I should hope, have employed some  
part of your addresses.  
  
MARLOW. (Relapsing into timidity.) Pardon me, madam, I--I--I--as yet  
have studied--only--to--deserve them.  
  
MISS HARDCASTLE. And that, some say, is the very worst way to obtain  
them.  
  
MARLOW. Perhaps so, madam. But I love to converse only with the more  
grave and sensible part of the sex. But I'm afraid I grow tiresome.  
  
MISS HARDCASTLE. Not at all, sir; there is nothing I like so much as  
grave conversation myself; I could hear it for ever. Indeed, I have  
often been surprised how a man of sentiment could ever admire those  
light airy pleasures, where nothing reaches the heart.  
  
MARLOW. It's----a disease----of the mind, madam. In the variety of  
tastes there must be some who, wanting a relish----for----um--a--um.  
  
MISS HARDCASTLE. I understand you, sir. There must be some, who,  
wanting a relish for refined pleasures, pretend to despise what they  
are incapable of tasting.  
  
MARLOW. My meaning, madam, but infinitely better expressed. And I  
can't help observing----a----  
  
MISS HARDCASTLE. (Aside.) Who could ever suppose this fellow  
impudent upon some occasions? (To him.) You were going to observe,  
sir----  
  
MARLOW. I was observing, madam--I protest, madam, I forget what I was  
going to observe.  
  
MISS HARDCASTLE. (Aside.) I vow and so do I. (To him.) You were  
observing, sir, that in this age of hypocrisy--something about  
hypocrisy, sir.  
  
MARLOW. Yes, madam. In this age of hypocrisy there are few who upon  
strict inquiry do not--a--a--a--  
  
MISS HARDCASTLE. I understand you perfectly, sir.  
  
MARLOW. (Aside.) Egad! and that's more than I do myself.  
  
MISS HARDCASTLE. You mean that in this hypocritical age there are few  
that do not condemn in public what they practise in private, and think  
they pay every debt to virtue when they praise it.  
  
MARLOW. True, madam; those who have most virtue in their mouths, have  
least of it in their bosoms. But I'm sure I tire you, madam.  
  
MISS HARDCASTLE. Not in the least, sir; there's something so  
agreeable and spirited in your manner, such life and force--pray, sir,  
go on.  
  
MARLOW. Yes, madam. I was saying----that there are some occasions,  
when a total want of courage, madam, destroys all the----and puts  
us----upon a--a--a--  
  
MISS HARDCASTLE. I agree with you entirely; a want of courage upon  
some occasions assumes the appearance of ignorance, and betrays us when  
we most want to excel. I beg you'll proceed.  
  
MARLOW. Yes, madam. Morally speaking, madam--But I see Miss Neville  
expecting us in the next room. I would not intrude for the world.  
  
MISS HARDCASTLE. I protest, sir, I never was more agreeably  
entertained in all my life. Pray go on.  
  
MARLOW. Yes, madam, I was----But she beckons us to join her. Madam,  
shall I do myself the honour to attend you?  
  
MISS HARDCASTLE. Well, then, I'll follow.  
  
MARLOW. (Aside.) This pretty smooth dialogue has done for me.   
[Exit.]  
  
MISS HARDCASTLE. (Alone.) Ha! ha! ha! Was there ever such a sober,  
sentimental interview? I'm certain he scarce looked in my face the  
whole time. Yet the fellow, but for his unaccountable bashfulness, is  
pretty well too. He has good sense, but then so buried in his fears,  
that it fatigues one more than ignorance. If I could teach him a  
little confidence, it would be doing somebody that I know of a piece of  
service. But who is that somebody?--That, faith, is a question I can  
scarce answer.