

Alexander Pope.

But when to mischief mortals bend their mind;
How soon fit instruments of ill they find!

Just then, CLARISSA drew, with tempting grace,
A two-edged weapon from her shining case.
So Ladies, in Romance, assist their Knight,
Present the spear, and arm him for the fight.

He takes the gift with reverence, and extends
The little engine on his fingers' ends.

This, just behind BELINDA'S neck he spread,
As o'er the fragrant steams she bends her head.

Swift to the Lock, a thousand Sprights repair!
A thousand wings, by turns, blow back the hair!
And thrice they twitched the diamond in her ear;
Thrice she looked back, and thrice the foe drew near!

Just, in that instant, anxious ARIEL sought
The close recesses of the Virgin's thought,
As, on a nosegay in her breast reclined,
He watched th' ideas rising in her mind.
Sudden, he viewed, in spite of all her art,
An earthly Lover lurking at her heart!
Amazed, confused, he found his power expired;
Resigned to Fate, and with a sigh retired.

The Peer now spreads the glitt'ring *forfex* wide
T' inclose the Lock; now joins it, to divide!

Ev'n then, before the fatal engine closed,
A wretched Sylph too fondly interposed!
Fate urged the shears, and cut the Sylph in twain;
But airy substance soon unites again!¹

¹ See MILTON, *Paradise Lost*, Lib. VI.