

*Ner.* When the moon shone, we did not see the candle.

*Por.* So doth the greater glory dim the less:

A substitute shines brightly as a king

<sup>95</sup> Until a king be by, and then his state  
Empties itself, as doth an inland brook  
Into the main of waters. Music! hark!

*Ner.* It is your music, madam, of the house.

*Por.* Nothing is good, I see, without respect.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>100</sup> Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day.

*Ner.* Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.

*Por.* The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark  
When neither is attended,<sup>2</sup> and I think  
The nightingale, if she should sing by day,

<sup>105</sup> When every goose is cackling, would be thought  
No better a musician than the wren.

How many things by season season'd are

To their right praise and true perfection!

Peace, ho! the moon sleeps with Endymion<sup>3</sup>

<sup>110</sup> And would not be awaked. [Music ceases]

*Lor.* That is the voice,

Or I am much deceived, of Portia.

*Por.* He knows me as the blind man knows the cuckoo,  
By the bad voice.

*Lor.* Dear lady, welcome home.

*Por.* We have been praying for our husbands' healths,

<sup>115</sup> Which speed, we hope, the better for our words.  
Are they return'd?

*Lor.* Madam, they are not yet;

But there is come a messenger before,  
To signify their coming.

*Por.* Go in, Nerissa;

Give order to my servants that they take

<sup>1</sup> Nothing. . . . respect—Absolutely; that is, without regard to circumstances a thing is not good.

<sup>2</sup> Attended—Attended to, or listened to attentively.

<sup>3</sup> Endymion—A beautiful Greek youth beloved by Juno. Jealous Jupiter cast Endymion into an endless sleep on Mount Latmos. Diana fell in love with him. Another myth says Diana became enamoured of Endymion and cast him into an endless sleep that she might kiss him without his knowing it.