

was a man formed by nature, and fashioned by long practice for all manner of court intrigue. His stature was low, so as to excite neither envy nor observation.—His countenance dismal—his public manners grave, and his address humble. But as in public he covered his prostitution by a solemnity of carriage, so in private he endeavoured to *captivate* by convivial humour; and to discountenance all public virtue, by the exercise of a perpetual, and sometimes not unsuccessful irony.

By these arts he recommended himself to the late Cardinal Lapidaro, and Don Thomaso del Cartero; the two most crafty statesmen—the De Retz and Machiavel of their age; under whom he studied, and against whom, *at times*, he exercised the mystery of politics.

To these qualifications Don Philip added an extraordinary magnificence of living.—His table was furnished with every thing that splendor could suggest, or luxury consume; and his profusion and policy united to solicit a multitude of guests. To his house then resorted all those who wished *through him* to obtain, or to learn *from him* to enjoy without remorse, those public emoluments which are the purchase of public infidelity.

Amongst the visitors of Don Philip was a youth, hitherto of fair fame and gentle endowments—Don Helena the Civilian—who lately accepted the office of menial Counsellor