

**CRITO: OR, A  
DIALOGUE  
ON BEAUTY**

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Crito: or, A Dialogue on Beauty by Sir Harry Beaumont

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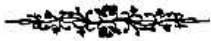
**SIR HARRY BEAUMONT**

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DIALOGUE ON BEAUTY.





### A Dialogue on Beauty.



**I**T was on one of the most pleasing Mornings in the last Summer, that Crito stole from the Noise and Bustle of the Town, to enjoy an agreeable Day or Two, with his Friend Timanthes in the Country. Timanthes received him with all that Joy and Pleasure, which is usual between Friends, who love one another entirely; and who have not met for a considerable Time. He shewed him his new Grove, and Gardens; and, as they were walking in the latter, "Since the Weather begins to be so warm (says he), if you like it, we will dine under that open Tent. The Air there will be refreshing to you; and will bring us the Smell of Orange and Lemon-Trees which surround it, without breaking that View of Country, of which you used to be so fond. When I placed them there, I had you in my Thoughts; and imagined it might be a favourite Seat of yours, whenever you came hither;

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which I wish your Affairs would suffer to be much oftener." Indeed the Spot was so well chosen, that it made not only their Dinner, but even their Conversation together after it, the more agreeable; and as they were still sitting and enjoying themselves there, for some Time into the Afternoon; a Servant came to let Timanthes know, that Milesius was just alighted; and was coming toward them. "Though in general I should not have been chosen to be interrupted to-day (says Timanthes), I am not sorry for Milesius's Visit at present; because his Gaiety may serve a little to divert you." "And I," says Crito, "love everything that you love; and shall therefore go with Pleasure with you to meet him." Milesius came up to them with his usual Vivacity in his Face and Behaviour; and, after a short Compliment or Two, they all sat down together again under the Tent.

They soon fell into a Conversation, which, though it might not be so solid, was at least more lively and joyous than their former. Timanthes could not help observing upon it. "You (says he) Milesius give Life to the Company wherever you come; but I am particularly glad of your coming here To-day, because my Friend Crito, on his Arrival this Morning, seemed to have the Remains of something of a Melancholy on his Face; but, since your joining us, the Cloud has been gradually clearing up, and seems now quite

driven away. I would not then take any Notice of it to him, for fear of oppressing the Mind of my Friend whilst too much afflicted; but as it now appears to have been only a passing Cloud, I could wish to ask the Cause of it; that I might endeavour to alleviate his Concern, if in my Power; and if not, that at least I might share it with him." "I am very much obliged to you (replied Crito, with a Cast of the same Concern returning on his Face), for your Tenderness for me, on this, and all other Occasions; but if you observed any thing of Sorrow about me on my First coming in, I can assure you, that it was not for any Misfortune that has happened to myself; nor any new Misfortune to any of our Friends; Whatever you saw in me of that kind, must have been occasioned by the Visit I made this Morning. You both know the Beauty and Merits of Mrs. B\*\*\*, as well as what a Brute of a Husband she has the Misfortune to be married to. I just called there, before I set out; and, on the Servant's telling me, that his Lady had been up some time, and was sitting in the Room next the Garden; as my near Relation to her gave me the Liberty of going on without sending in my Name, I walked toward the Room; and found the Door only just open enough to let me see her leaning on a Couch, with her head rested negligently on one Hand, whilst, with the other, she was wiping away a Tear, that



stole silently down her Cheek. The Distress in her Countenance, and the little Confusion that appeared about her Eyes, on her first discovering me (just as I was doubting whether I should retire or not), added so much to the other beauties of her Face, that I think I never saw her look so charming in my Life. "Stay, Sir, (says she); for you, I am sure, can excuse this little Overflow of Weakness in me.—My poor, dear, Jacky!—If Heaven had spared him to me, he would this very day have been Seven Years old. What a pretty little Companion should I have had in him, to have diverted me in some of the many Hours that I now pass alone!" I dissembled my being but too well acquainted with the real Occasion of her Sorrows; joined with her in lamenting the Loss she had mentioned; and, as soon as I could, led the Conversation into another Channel; and said every thing I could think of, to divert her Mind from the Object that I knew afflicted her. By Degrees, she recovered her usual Behaviour; but through all the Calmness and Pleasingness of it, there was still a Cloud hanging about her Eyes, which betrayed Part of the Uneasiness that she daily suffers under in her Heart. Good Heaven! how is it possible that any human Creature should treat so much Goodness, and so many Charms, with so much Barbarity of Behaviour!"—"We all know the Vileness of the

Man," cried Milesius, "as well as the Beauty and the Good Qualities of his Lady; but, pray, how come you to think, that her Sufferings should add to her Charms? or that a Distress, like her's, could ever be pleasing to the Eye? Some People have got such strange, unintelligible Notions of Beauty!"—"Was I to let you into all my Thoughts about Beauty," replied Crito, "what I happened to mention just now would, perhaps, appear far from being unintelligible to you. To own the Truth, I have thought on this Subject (which is usually rather viewed with too much Pleasure, than considered with any thing of Judgment) more gravely at least, I dare say, than ever you have: And if you was to provoke me a little farther, I do not know whether I could not lay down to you a sort of Scheme on it; which might go a good Way, not only toward clearing up this, but most of the Difficulties that so often occur in talking of it."—"I should as soon think of dissecting a Rainbow," says Milesius, "as of forming grave and punctual Notions of Beauty. Who, for Heaven's Sake, can reduce to Rules, what is so quick, and so variable, as to be shifting its Appearances every moment, on the most delightful Faces?"—"And why are those Faces the most delightful, in which that happens?" says Crito.—"Nay, that is one of the very things I could least pretend to account for," replied Milesius. "I am satisfied with seeing

that they are so; 'tis a subject that I never yet had a single Desire to reason upon; and I can very willingly leave it to you, to be a Philosopher in Love."—"But seriously," interposed Timanthes, turning toward Crito, "if you have ever found Leisure and Calmness enough to think steadily on so uncertain, and so engaging a Subject; why should not you oblige us with the Result of your Thoughts upon it? Let me beg it of you, as a Favour to both of us; for I am sure it will be agreeable to both: And if you refuse me, I am resolved to join with Milesius in believing, that it is incapable of having any thing said systematically, or even regularly about it."—"You know," says Crito, "how little I love to have all the Talk to myself; and what you propose may take me up an Hour, or Two: But if I must Launch out into so wide a Subject, it will be very necessary, that I should begin with telling you what I chiefly propose to consider, and what not.

"**E**VERY Object that is pleasing to the Eye, when looked upon, or delightful to the Mind, on Recollection, may be called beautiful; so that Beauty, in general, may stretch as wide as the visible Creation. Thus we speak not only of the Beauties of an engaging Prospect, of the rising or setting Sun, or of a fine starry Heaven; but of those of a Picture, Statue, or