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*“There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.”*



MANFRED

A TRAGEDY

BY

LORD BYRON

DECORATED

BY

FREDERICK CARTER

*with an introduction
by the Artist*

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

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CONTENTS

*I can call the dead
And ask them what it is we dread to be.*

INTRODUCTION by Frederick Carter

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

ACT I.—*What would'st thou, Child of Clay! with me?*

SCENE I.—*The Tree of Knowledge is not that of Life.*

SCENE II.—*Ye crags upon whose extreme edge I stand.*

ACT II.—*I will call her.*

SCENE I.—*Away! there's blood upon the brim.*

SCENE II.—*Beautiful Spirit! with thy hair of light.*

SCENE III.—*The Three Destinies.*

SCENE IV.—*Farewell.*

ACT III.—*The only thing he seemed to love.*

SCENE I.—*It is too late.*

SCENE II.—*Which did draw down the erring spirits.*

SCENE III.—*He hath pursued long vigils.*

SCENE IV.—*Whither?*

VARIANT READINGS



☆ In that striking recovery of the older springs of poetry called somewhat deceptively the Romantic Revival, which grew so strangely from the Gothic phantasies of the eighteenth century, *Manfred* more than any other single work reveals the inner conflict of will from which a poetic reintegration of drama might well have sprung. It offered a singular promise. Out of it should have resulted a fecund outpouring like the Elizabethan had its nucleus of magical and dramatic intention come to fruition. Possessing the same subtle and urgent motive which revealed itself in Keats, Coleridge, and Shelley, equally with Byron, it prefigured Beddoes, Alexander Smith, and Darley. From the scattered definitions of these poets we may see what might have been done had it completely traversed the abyss between the older period and the new to find that coherence of dramatic will and sense of its own time which could resolve into gesture the teeming conflicts in the soul of the new age.

☆ Underlying the tawdry element of horror and mystery in *Manfred* the aged Goethe rightly divined the first statement of the modern conscience. This play postulated a new world of desires and conflicts that traditional morality could not apprehend, much less could it answer when they questioned. Byron revealed himself in it as the Marlowe of the new poetic drama. A baffled Marlowe because he ignored the stage and the mime. Hence the form of dramatic impulse he had discovered could not integrate itself. Nevertheless Byron was the clearest exponent of the tormented soul of his age striving to discover the liberating ecstasy and the new moral orientation which is its absolution.

☆ After this hint of a solution to its mysterious passion the whole of the nineteenth century fumbled in vain search for the tragic synthesis until Nietzsche appeared. The poets fell from their poetry at the breath of the stage as Romanticism degenerated into Melodrama. Poesy exhausted itself, signifying its intensity only in the passion of the lyric. And thus *Manfred* remains a drama in the void, a lyrical symbolisation of pain that escapes emptiness only by the personal acuity with which the despairing knowledge of a new responsibility is cast in the face of a blank objective world.

☆ None of Byron's dramas excepting perhaps *Cain* continue this challenge. *The Cenci* comes closer, but Shelley, warmly as he maintained Byron's principles, was somewhat bewildered amid the storm blasts of horror and evil. Gifted with his excessive lyrical delicacy of temper, he failed, immature as he yet was, properly to achieve a new moral polarisation. He remained too near the surface never finding those compelling depths of emotion which imaged themselves in physical movement. Keats, stronger and possessing the root of this moral renovation, died before he dared formulate it save æsthetically.

☆ Beddoes, who came closest, scattered it in grim metaphysical humours. But over all broods the figure of *Manfred* dignified and challenging in spite of the thin melodrama of his properties. And it is yet the problem of poetry to transform this Faustus into a Hamlet, a Macbeth, and an Antony, to create a love subtle and profound enough to include such scorn.

☆ This is not to depreciate the immense effect of *Manfred* in its own day. Upon Shelley it had an overwhelming influence and moulded his succeeding thought. That its challenge was taken seriously enough

by the highest contemporary European criticism is indicated by Goethe's appreciative comments. Byron had supremely the faculty of transmuting his objective experience into poetry. What induced a weakness in this faculty was his passionate admiration for action, glorifying it unduly as experience.

☆ He wrote *Manfred* in a frenzy of suspense whilst he awaited in Switzerland the decision of his half-sister Augusta Leigh. Their passionate love gave the vivid and burning objective that urged him to æsthetic expression. Whilst the discreet and ingenious manoeuvres of Lady Byron imposed sufficient restraint on the sister-in-law to stay her from infringement of the ordinances of custom, he was goaded by their separation to give form to this new challenge to society. Haunted by the ghost of his beloved, Byron fused all his inner conflicts into a poetic drama of evocation by spell and magical word. He felt that beside society there was the world of nature which needed to be conquered. The mountain and the stream were filled with powers that would not respond except in a qualified degree. Even they might be inimical—beyond he saw the Destinies and Nemesis.

☆ It is significant that Shelley's *Laon and Cythna* followed a year later, in 1818, hot foot upon the heels of *Manfred*. The effect of intimacy with Byron appears at all points and proclaimed itself by its approach to the problem of brother and sister intimacy as a justification for Byron's defiant appeal for comprehension. Shelley, who had enough social misdemeanours of his own to purge, drew on himself, deliberately, new fulminations in his desire to uphold his friend. But not only for such a reason could a poet of Shelley's artistic integrity have taken this stand. In order that

he should have used his poetry as a vehicle of protest, the matter must have touched him more nearly. Perpetually urged on by a passion for Justice, this it was that saved him from lapsing repeatedly into the habitual abstraction with which he was obsessed. He was awakened to the fact that the problem of conduct was neither bounded immutably by the laws of society nor those of the family, but reposed upon the integral personality in the end.

☆ And there was much which touched Shelley's own experience in the history of Manfred and Astarte. Not only was Byron's inner world shown forth but the protagonist was Shelley also. He himself had sought out the secrets of magic in his early youth with his sister Elizabeth and with her had tried wild experiments in its rites. Possessed by this passion for magic and the occult, he had written an early and ineffective story around the subject. About that period magic astrology and alchemy held for a while the interest of some of the first minds of literature. After the close-walled sense and sensibility of the eighteenth century the reader sought the thrill of horror and the shudder in the unknown. With a cold perfection everything rational that could be said had been said ; now they wanted the shiver in the unspeakable.

☆ All this of course is given with ample measure in *Manfred* ; strange Gothic terrors echo in its opening lines. But although these give the *mise en scène*, Byron shows small interest in the details of magical practice. Thereafter it is nature in mountain and stream and glacier that faces the hero, and it is social intercourse over the wine cup and the voice of religion that call. But he is already beyond these appeals passionately reaching across the barriers of life and of

death. In point of fact, moreover, the emotional climax comes when from a hint half spoken by a serving man the blood relationship of Manfred with Astarte is revealed. Now the haunting sought-for ghost takes on a more pathetic, a yet more potent terror.

☆ Behind the magical setting of the quest through all the natural forces of life made by Manfred lay the very real problem, which was not again presented to the world until at the end of the century it sprang up in the new theories about psychology and the dream. Once more were the profounder springs of love and passion subjected to scrutiny. What the poet had felt and proclaimed from the depth of his emotion the scientific experimenter drew into light, not as a singular experience but as a factor in all psychology. Even the laws of consanguinity could not avail against the quest for knowledge of the soul. This is what had cried out for resolution, and the soul could not find true expression save through answer to its question. The baffled generations between suffered through its repression.

☆ Byron asked what bounds belonged to nature or what to society, and his question makes the real problem of the play. With that comes its sense of tragedy. The pity and the terror of it began long ere the opening scene. Just as Faust had found new problems to solve at the Renaissance and by magical arts had called up Helen from the dark past, so Manfred felt the urge of a new era in its birth throes, and going beyond the genial Greeks, had sought in more obscure and far-off lands the true name of the goddess. She was Astarte. And there was no means of exorcising her by law or custom from the innermost places. Venus Astarte was not wife or mistress only, she was mother and sister too.

☆ Such was the perilous ground upon which he stood, for arrayed against him were not only social usages but religion and the family. Yet Byron's fatal lack of power fully to resolve experience into poetry, his excess of admiration for the deed cumbers his play with a hesitant shadowing that obscures the immensity of his challenge. It is necessary to know the events in his personal life to apprehend the full measure of his motive. And so it comes that we feel profoundly but yet must seek to be fully assured that here is all Venus clutching her prey.

FREDERICK CARTER



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MANFRED

CHAMOIS HUNTER

ABBOT OF ST. MAURICE

MANUEL

HERMAN

WITCH OF THE ALPS

ARIMANES

NEMESIS

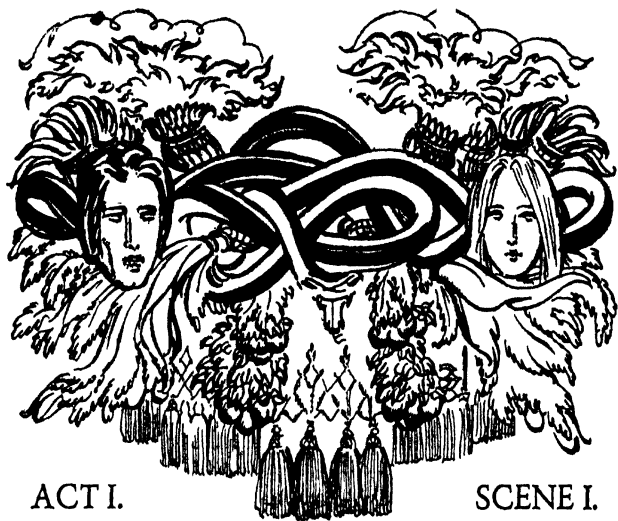
THE DESTINIES

SPIRITS, ETC

*The Scene of the Drama is amongst the Higher Alps—partly in the
Castle of Manfred, and partly in the Mountains.*







ACT I.

SCENE I.

MANFRED *alone.*—*Scene, a Gothic Gallery.*—*Time, Midnight.*

Man. The lamp must be replenish'd, but even then
It will not burn so long as I must watch :
My slumbers—if I slumber—are not sleep,
But a continuance of enduring thought,
Which then I can resist not : in my heart
There is a vigil, and these eyes but close
To look within ; and yet I live, and bear
The aspect and the form of breathing men.
But grief should be the instructor of the wise ;
Sorrow is knowledge : they who know the most
Must mourn the deepest o'er the fatal truth,
The Tree of Knowledge is not that of Life.
Philosophy and science, and the springs
Of wonder, and the wisdom of the world,
I have essay'd, and in my mind there is
A power to make these subject to itself—
But they avail not : I have done men good,
And I have met with good even among men—
But this avail'd not : I have had my foes,

And none have baffled, many fallen before me—
But this avail'd not :—Good, or evil, life,
Powers, passions, all I see in other beings,
Have been to me as rain unto the sands,
Since that all-nameless hour. I have no dread,
And feel the curse to have no natural fear,
Nor fluttering throb, that beats with hopes or wishes,
Or lurking love of something on the earth.
Now to my task.—Mysterious Agency !
Ye spirits of the unbounded Universe !
Whom I have sought in darkness and in light—
Ye, who do compass earth about, and dwell
In subtler essence—ye, to whom the tops
Of mountains inaccessible are haunts,
And earth's and ocean's caves familiar things—
I call upon ye by the written charm
Which gives me power upon you—Rise !

Appear !

[A pause.]

They come not yet.—Now by the voice of him
Who is the first among you—by this sign,
Which makes you tremble—by the claims of him
Who is undying,—Rise ! Appear !—Appear !

[A pause.]

If it be so.—Spirits of earth and air,
Ye shall not thus elude me : by a power,
Deeper than all yet urged, a tyrant-spell,
Which had its birthplace in a star condemn'd,
The burning wreck of a demolish'd world,
A wandering hell in the eternal space ;
By the strong curse which is upon my soul,
The thought which is within me and around me,
I do compel ye to my will—Appear !

[A star is seen at the darker end of the gallery ; it is stationary ;
and a voice is heard singing.]

FIRST SPIRIT.

Mortal ! to thy bidding bow'd,
From my mansion in the cloud,
Which the breath of twilight builds,
And the summer's sun-set gilds
With the azure and vermilion,
Which is mix'd for my pavilion ;
Though thy quest may be forbidden,
On a star-beam I have ridden ;
To thine adjuration bow'd,
Mortal—be thy wish avow'd !

Voice of the

SECOND SPIRIT.

Mont Blanc is the monarch of mountains ;
They crown'd him long ago
On a throne of rocks, in a robe of clouds,
With a diadem of snow.
Around his waist are forests braced,
The Avalanche in his hand ;
But ere it fall, that thundering ball
Must pause for my command.
The Glacier's cold and restless mass
Moves onward day by day ;
But I am he who bids it pass,
Or with its ice delay.
I am the spirit of the place,
Could make the mountain bow
And quiver to his cavern'd base—
And what with me wouldst *Thou* ?

Voice of the

THIRD SPIRIT.

In the blue depths of the waters,
Where the wave hath no strife,

Where the wind is a stranger,
And the sea-snake hath life,
Where the Mermaid is decking
Her green hair with shells,
Like the storm on the surface
Came the sound of thy spells ;
O'er my calm Hall of Coral
The deep echo roll'd—
To the Spirit of Ocean
Thy wishes unfold !

FOURTH SPIRIT.

Where the slumbering earthquake
Lies pillow'd on fire,
And the lakes of bitumen
Rise boilingly higher ;
Where the roots of the Andes
Strike deep in the earth,
As their summits to heaven
Shoot soaringly forth ;
I have quitted my birth-place,
Thy bidding to bide—
Thy spell hath subdued me,
Thy will be my guide !

FIFTH SPIRIT.

I am the Rider of the wind,
The Stirrer of the storm ;
The hurricane I left behind
Is yet with lightning warm ;
To speed to thee, o'er shore and sea
I swept upon the blast :
The fleet I met sail'd well, and yet
'Twill sink ere night be past.

SIXTH SPIRIT.

My dwelling is the shadow of the night,
Why doth thy magic torture me with light :

SEVENTH SPIRIT.

The star which rules thy destiny
Was ruled, ere earth began, by me :
It was a world as fresh and fair
As e'er revolved round sun in air ;
Its course was free and regular,
Space bosom'd not a lovelier star.
The hour arrived—and it became
A wandering mass of shapeless flame,
A pathless comet, and a curse,
The menace of the universe ;
Still rolling on with innate force,
Without a sphere, without a course,
A bright deformity on high,
The monster of the upper sky !
And thou ! beneath its influence born—
Thou worm ! whom I obey and scorn—
Forced by a power (which is not thine,
And lent thee but to make thee mine)
For this brief moment to descend,
Where these weak spirits round thee bend
And parley with a thing like thee—
What wouldst thou, Child of Clay ! with me ?

The SEVEN SPIRITS.

Earth, ocean, air, night, mountains, winds, thy star,
Are at thy beck and bidding, Child of Clay !
Before thee at thy quest their spirits are—
What wouldst thou with us, son of mortals—say ?

Man. Forgetfulness—

First Spirit. Of what—of whom—and why ?

Man. Of that which is within me ; read it there—
Ye know it, and I cannot utter it.

Spirit. We can but give thee that which we possess :
Ask of us subjects, sovereignty, the power
O'er earth—the whole, or portion—or a sign
Which shall control the elements, whereof
We are the dominators,—each and all,
These shall be thine.

Man. Oblivion, self-oblivion—
Can ye not wring from out the hidden realms
Ye offer so profusely what I ask ?

Spirit. It is not in our essence, in our skill ;
But—thou may'st die.

Man. Will death bestow it on me ?

Spirit. We are immortal, and do not forget ;
We are eternal ; and to us the past
Is, as the future, present. Art thou answer'd ?

Man. Ye mock me—but the power which brought
ye here
Hath made you mine. Slaves, scoff not at my will !
The mind, the spirit, the Promethean spark,
The lightning of my being, is as bright,
Pervading, and far darting as your own,
And shall not yield to yours, though coop'd in clay !
Answer, or I will teach you what I am.

Spirit. We answer as we answer'd ; our reply
Is even in thine own words.

Man. Why say ye so ?

Spirit. If, as thou say'st, thine essence be as ours,
We have replied in telling thee, the thing
Mortals call death hath nought to do with us.

Man. I then have call'd ye from your realms in vain ;

Ye cannot, or ye will not, aid me.

Spirit.

Say ;

What we possess we offer ; it is thine :

Bethink ere thou dismiss us ; ask again——

Kingdom, and sway, and strength, and length of days——

Man. Accursed ! what have I to do with days ?

They are too long already.—Hence—begone !

Spirit. Yet pause : being here, our will would do
thee service ;

Bethink thee, is there then no other gift

Which we can make not worthless in thine eyes ?

Man. No, none : yet stay—one moment, ere we
part——

I would behold ye face to face. I hear

Your voices, sweet and melancholy sounds,

As music on the waters ; and I see

The steady aspect of a clear large star ;

But nothing more. Approach me as ye are,

Or one, or all, in your accustom'd forms.

Spirit. We have no forms, beyond the elements
Of which we are the mind and principle :
But choose a form—in that we will appear.

Man. I have no choice ; there is no form on earth
Hideous or beautiful to me. Let him,
Who is most powerful of ye, take such aspect
As unto him may seem most fitting—Come !

*Seventh Spirit (appearing in the shape of a beautiful female
figure).* Behold !

Man. Oh God ! if it be thus, and *thou*
Art not a madness and a mockery,
I yet might be most happy, I will clasp thee,
And we again will be——

[*The figure vanishes.*

My heart is crush'd !

[*MANFRED falls senseless.*

(A voice is heard in the Incantation which follows.)

When the moon is on the wave,
And the glow-worm in the grass,
And the meteor on the grave,
And the wisp on the morass ;
When the falling stars are shooting,
And the answer'd owls are hooting,
And the silent leaves are still
In the shadow of the hill,
Shall my soul be upon thine,
With a power and with a sign.

Though thy slumber may be deep,
Yet thy spirit shall not sleep ;
There are shades which will not vanish,
There are thoughts thou canst not banish ;
By a power to thee unknown,
Thou canst never be alone ;
Thou art wrapt as with a shroud,
Thou art gather'd in a cloud ;
And for ever shalt thou dwell
In the spirit of this spell.

Though thou seest me not pass by,
Thou shalt feel me with thine eye
As a thing that, though unseen,
Must be near thee, and hath been ;
And when in that secret dread
Thou hast turn'd around thy head,
Thou shalt marvel I am not
As thy shadow on the spot,
And the power which thou dost feel
Shall be what thou must conceal.

And a magic voice and verse
Hath baptized thee with a curse ;
And a spirit of the air
Hath begirt thee with a snare ;
In the wind there is a voice
Shall forbid thee to rejoice ;
And to thee shall Night deny
All the quiet of her sky ;
And the day shall have a sun,
Which shall make thee wish it done.

From thy false tears I did distil
An essence which hath strength to kill ;
From thy own heart I then did ring
The black blood in its blackest spring ;
From thy own smile I snatch'd the snake,
For there it coil'd as in a brake ;
From thy own lip I drew the charm
Which gave all these their chiefest harm ;
In proving every poison known,
I found the strongest was thine own.

By thy cold breast and serpent smile,
By thy unfathom'd gulfs of guile,
By that most seeming virtuous eye,
By thy shut soul's hypocrisy ;
By the perfection of thine art
Which pass'd for human thine own heart
By thy delight in others' pain,
And by thy brotherhood of Cain,
I call upon thee ! and compel
Thyself to be thy proper Hell !

And on thy head I poured the vial
Which doth devote thee to this trial ;
Nor to slumber, nor to die,
Shall be in thy destiny ;
Though thy death shall still seem near
To thy wish, but as a fear ;
Lo ! the spell now works around thee,
And the clankless chain hath bound thee ;
O'er thy heart and brain together
Hath the word been pass'd—now wither !





ACT I.—SCENE II.

The Mountain of the Jungfrau.—Time, Morning.—

MANFRED *alone upon the Cliffs.*

Man. The spirits I have raised abandon me,
The spells which I have studied baffle me,
The remedy I reck'd of tortured me ;
I lean no more on superhuman aid ;
It hath no power upon the past, and for
The future, till the past be gulf'd in darkness,
It is not of my search.—My mother Earth !
And thou fresh breaking Day, and you, ye Mountains,
Why are ye beautiful ? I cannot love ye.
And thou, the bright eye of the universe,
That openest over all, and unto all
Art a delight—thou shin'st not on my heart.
And you, ye crags, upon whose extreme edge
I stand, and on the torrent's brink beneath
Behold the tall pines dwindled as to shrubs
In dizziness of distance ; when a leap,
A stir, a motion, even a breath, would bring
My breast upon its rocky bosom's bed
To rest for ever—wherefore do I pause ?

I feel the impulse—yet I do not plunge ;
I see the peril—yet do not recede ;
And my brain reels—and yet my foot is firm :
There is a power upon me which withholds,
And makes it my fatality to live,—
If it be life to wear within myself
This barrenness of spirit, and to be
My own soul's sepulchre, for I have ceased
To justify my deeds unto myself—
The last infirmity of evil. Ay,
Thou winged and cloud-cleaving minister,

[*An eagle passes.*

Whose happy flight is highest into heaven,
Well may'st thou swoop so near me—I should be
Thy prey, and gorge thine eaglets ; thou art gone
Where the eye cannot follow thee ; but thine
Yet pierces downward, onward, or above,
With a pervading vision.—Beautiful !
How beautiful is all this visible world !
How glorious in its action and itself !
But we, who name ourselves its sovereigns, we,
Half dust, half deity, alike unfit
To sink or soar, with our mix'd essence make
A conflict of its elements, and breathe
The breath of degradation and of pride,
Contending with low wants and lofty will,
Till our mortality predominates,
And men are—what they name not to themselves,
And trust not to each other. Hark ! the note,

[*The Shepherd's pipe in the distance is heard.*

The natural music of the mountain reed—
For here the patriarchal days are not
A pastoral fable—pipes in the liberal air,
Mix'd with the sweet bells of the sauntering herd ;

My soul would drink those echoes.—Oh, that I were
The viewless spirit of a lovely sound,
A living voice, a breathing harmony,
A bodiless enjoyment—born and dying
With the blest tone which made me !

Enter from below a CHAMOIS HUNTER.

Chamois Hunter.

Even so

This way the chamois leapt : her nimble feet
Have baffled me ; my gains to-day will scarce
Repay my break-neck travail.—What is here ?
Who seems not of my trade, and yet hath reach'd
A height which none even of our mountaineers,
Save our best hunters, may attain : his garb
Is goodly, his mien manly, and his air
Proud as a free-born peasant's, at this distance :
I will approach him nearer.

Man. (not perceiving the other). To be thus—
Grey-hair'd with anguish, like these blasted pines,
Wrecks of a single winter, barkless, branchless,
A blighted trunk upon a cursed root,
Which but supplies a feeling to decay—
And to be thus, eternally but thus,
Having been otherwise ! Now furrow'd o'er
With wrinkles, plough'd by moments,—not by years ;—
And hours—all tortured into ages—hours
Which I outlive !—Ye toppling crags of ice !
Ye avalanches, whom a breath draws down
In mountainous o'erwhelming, come and crush me !
I hear ye momentarily above, beneath,
Crash with a frequent conflict ; but ye pass,
And only fall on things that still would live ;
On the young flourishing forest, or the hut
And hamlet of the harmless villager.

C. Hun. The mists begin to rise from up the valley ;

I'll warn him to descend, or he may chance
To lose at once his way and life together.

Man. The mists boil up around the glaciers ; clouds
Rise curling fast beneath me, white and sulphury,
Like foam from the roused ocean of deep Hell,
Whose every wave breaks on a living shore,
Heap'd with the damn'd like pebbles.—I am giddy.

C. Hun. I must approach him cautiously ; if near,
A sudden step will startle him, and he
Seems tottering already.

Man. Mountains have fallen,
Leaving a gap in the clouds, and with the shock
Rocking their Alpine brethren ; filling up
The ripe green valleys with destruction's splinters ;
Damming the rivers with a sudden dash,
Which crush'd the waters into mist, and made
Their fountains find another channel—thus,
Thus, in its old age, did Mount Rosenberg—
Why stood I not beneath it ?

C. Hun. Friend ! have a care,
Your next step may be fatal !—for the love
Of him who made you, stand not on that brink !

Man. (not bearing him.) Such would have been for
me a fitting tomb ;
My bones had then been quiet in their depth ;
They had not then been strewn upon the rocks
For the wind's pastime—as thus—thus they shall be—
In this one plunge.—Farewell, ye opening heavens !
Look not upon me thus reproachfully—
You were not meant for me—Earth ! take these atoms !

[*As MANFRED is in act to spring from the cliff, the
CHAMOIS HUNTER seizes and retains him with
a sudden grasp.*]

C. Hun. Hold, madman !—though weary of thy life,

Stain not our pure vales with thy guilty blood :
Away with me—I will not quit my hold.

Man. I am most sick at heart—nay, grasp me not—
I am all feebleness—the mountains whirl
Spinning around me—I grow blind—What
art thou ?

C. Hun. I'll answer that anon.—Away with me—
The clouds grow thicker—there—now lean on me—
Place your foot here—here, take this staff, and cling
A moment to that shrub—now give me your hand,
And hold fast by my girdle—softly—well—
The Chalet will be gain'd within an hour :
Come on, we'll quickly find a surer footing,
And something like a pathway, which the torrent
Hath wash'd since winter.—Come, 'tis bravely done—
You should have been a hunter.—Follow me.

[As they descend the rocks with difficulty, the scene closes.]







ACT II.—SCENE I.

A Cottage amongst the Bernese Alps.

MANFRED *and* the CHAMOIS HUNTER.

C. Hun. No, no—yet pause—thou must not yet go forth :

Thy mind and body are alike unfit
To trust each other, for some hours, at least ;
When thou art better, I will be thy guide—
But whither ?

Man. It imports not : I do know
My route full well, and need no further guidance.

C. Hun. Thy garb and gait bespeak thee of high
lineage—

One of the many chiefs, whose castled crags
Look o'er the lower valleys—which of these
May call thee lord ? I only know their portals ;
My way of life leads me but rarely down
To bask by the huge hearths of those old halls,
Carousing with the vassals ; but the paths,
Which step from out our mountains to their doors,
I know from childhood—which of these is thine ?

Man. No matter.

C. Hun. Well, sir, pardon me the question,

And be of better cheer. Come, taste my wine ;
'Tis of an ancient vintage ; many a day
'T has thaw'd my veins among our glaciers, now
Let it do thus for thine—Come, pledge me fairly.

Man. Away, away ! there's blood upon the brim !
Will it then never—never sink in the earth ?

C. Hun. What dost thou mean ? thy senses wander
from thee.

Man. I say 'tis blood—my blood ! the pure warm
stream

Which ran in the veins of my fathers, and in ours
When we were in our youth, and had one heart,
And loved each other as we should not love,
And this was shed : but still it rises up,
Colouring the clouds, that shut me out from heaven,
Where thou art not—and I shall never be.

C. Hun. Man of strange words, and some half-
maddening sin,
Which makes thee people vacancy, whate'er
Thy dread and sufferance be, there's comfort yet—
The aid of holy men, and heavenly patience—

Man. Patience and patience ! Hence—that word
was made
For brutes of burthen, not for birds of prey ;
Preach it to mortals of a dust like thine,—
I am not of thine order.

C. Hun. Thanks to heaven !
I would not be of thine for the free fame
Of William Tell ; but whatsoe'er thine ill,
It must be borne, and these wild starts are useless.

Man. Do I not bear it ?—Look on me—I live.

C. Hun. This is convulsion, and no healthful life.

Man. I tell thee, man ! I have lived many years,
Many long years, but they are nothing now

To those which I must number : ages—ages—
Space and eternity—and consciousness,
With the fierce thirst of death—and still unslaked !

C. Hun. Why, on thy brow the seal of middle age
Hath scarce been set ; I am thine elder far.

Man. Think'st thou existence doth depend on time ?
It doth ; but actions are our epochs : mine
Have made my days and nights imperishable,
Endless, and all alike, as sands on the shore,
Innumerable atoms ; and one desert,
Barren and cold, on which the wild waves break,
But nothing rests, save carcasses and wrecks,
Rocks, and the salt-surf weeds of bitterness.

C. Hun. Alas ! he's mad—but yet I must not leave
him.

Man. I would I were—for then the things I see
Would be but a distemper'd dream.

C. Hun. What is it
That thou dost see, or think thou look'st upon ?

Man. Myself, and thee—a peasant of the Alps—
Thy humble virtues, hospitable home,
And spirit patient, pious, proud, and free ;
Thy self-respect, grafted on innocent thoughts ;
Thy days of health, and nights of sleep ; thy toils,
By danger dignified, yet guiltless ; hopes
Of cheerful old age and a quiet grave,
With cross and garland over its green turf,
And thy grandchildren's love for epitaph ;
This do I see—and then I look within—
It matters not—my soul was scorch'd already !

C. Hun. And wouldst thou then exchange thy lot
for mine ?

Man. No, friend ! I would not wrong thee, nor
exchange

My lot with living being : I can bear—
However wretchedly, 'tis still to bear—
In life what others could not brook to dream,
But perish in their slumber.

C. Hun. And with this—
This cautious feeling for another's pain,
Canst thou be black with evil?—say not so.
Can one of gentle thoughts have wreak'd revenge
Upon his enemies?

Man. Oh! no, no, no!
My injuries came down on those who loved me—
On those whom I best loved : I never quell'd
An enemy, save in my just defence—
But my embrace was fatal.

C. Hun. Heaven give thee rest!
And penitence restore thee to thyself;
My prayers shall be for thee.

Man. I need them not,
But can endure thy pity. I depart—
'Tis time—farewell!—Here's gold, and thanks for
thee—

No words—it is thy due.—Follow me not—
I know my path—the mountain peril's past :—
And once again I charge thee, follow not!

[Exit MANFRED.]



W. G. Smith del.



ACT II.—SCENE II.

A lower Valley in the Alps.—A Cataract. Enter MANFRED.

It is not noon—the sunbow's rays still arch
The torrent with the many hues of heaven,
And roll the sheeted silver's waving column
O'er the crag's headlong perpendicular,
And fling its lines of foaming light along,
And to and fro, like the pale courser's tail,
The Giant steed, to be bestrode by Death,
As told in the Apocalypse. No eyes
But mine now drink this sight of loveliness ;
I should be sole in this sweet solitude,
And with the Spirit of the place divide
The homage of these waters.—I will call her.

[*MANFRED takes some of the water into the palm of his hand and flings it into the air, muttering the adjuration. After a pause, the WITCH OF THE ALPS rises beneath the arch of the sunbow of the torrent.*

Beautiful Spirit ! with thy hair of light,
And dazzling eyes of glory, in whose form
The charms of earth's least mortal daughters grow

To an unearthly stature, in an essence
Of purer elements ; while the hues of youth,—
Carnation'd like a sleeping infant's cheek,
Rock'd by the beating of her mother's heart,
Or the rose tints, which summer's twilight leaves
Upon the lofty glacier's virgin snow,
The blush of earth embracing with her heaven,—
Tinge thy celestial aspect, and make tame
The beauties of the sunbow which bends o'er thee.
Beautiful Spirit ! in thy calm clear brow,
Wherein is glass'd serenity of soul,
Which of itself shows immortality,
I read that thou wilt pardon to a Son
Of Earth, whom the abstruser powers permit
At times to commune with them—if that he
Avail him of his spells—to call thee thus,
And gaze on thee a moment.

Witch.

Son of Earth !

I know thee, and the powers which give thee power ;
I know thee for a man of many thoughts,
And deeds of good and ill, extreme in both,
Fatal and fated in thy sufferings.

I have expected this—what wouldst thou with me ?

Man. To look upon thy beauty—nothing further.
The face of the earth hath madden'd me, and I
Take refuge in her mysteries, and pierce
To the abodes of those who govern her—
But they can nothing aid me. I have sought
From them what they could not bestow, and now
I search no further.

Witch. What could be the quest
Which is not in the power of the most powerful,
The rulers of the invisible ?

Man.

A boon ;

But why should I repeat it : 'twere in vain.

Witch. I know not that ; let thy lips utter it.

Man. Well, though it torture me, 'tis but the same ;
My pang shall find a voice. From my youth upwards
My spirit walk'd not with the souls of men,
Nor look'd upon the earth with human eyes ;
The thirst of their ambition was not mine,
The aim of their existence was not mine ;
My joys, my griefs, my passions, and my powers,
Made me a stranger ; though I wore the form,
I had no sympathy with breathing flesh,
Nor midst the creatures of clay that girded me
Was there but one who—but of her anon.
I said with men, and with the thoughts of men,
I held but slight communion ; but instead,
My joy was in the Wilderness,—to breathe
The difficult air of the iced mountain's top,
Where the birds dare not build, nor insect's wing
Flit o'er the herbless granite ; or to plunge
Into the torrent, and to roll along
On the swift whirl of the new breaking wave
Of river-stream, or ocean, in their flow.
In these my early strength exulted ; or
To follow through the night the moving moon,
The stars and their development ; or catch
The dazzling lightnings till my eyes grew dim ;
Or to look, list'ning, on the scattered leaves,
While Autumn winds were at their evening song.
These were my pastimes, and to be alone ;
For if the beings, of whom I was one,—
Hating to be so,—cross'd me in my path,
I felt myself degraded back to them,
And was all clay again. And then I dived,
In my lone wanderings, to the caves of death,

Searching its cause in its effect ; and drew
From wither'd bones, and skulls, and heap'd up dust,
Conclusions most forbidden. Then I pass'd
The nights of years in sciences untaught,
Save in the old-time ; and with time and toil,
And terrible ordeal, and such penance
As in itself hath power upon the air,
And spirits that do compass air and earth,
Space, and the peopled infinite, I made
Mine eyes familiar with Eternity,
Such as, before me, did the Magi, and
He who from out their fountain dwellings raised
Eros and Anteros, at Gadara,
As I do thee ;—and with my knowledge grew
The thirst of knowledge, and the power and joy
Of this most bright intelligence, until—

Witch. Proceed.

Man. Oh ! I but thus prolong'd my words,
Boasting these idle attributes, because
As I approach the core of my heart's grief—
But to my task. I have not named to thee
Father or mother, mistress, friend, or being,
With whom I wore the chain of human ties ;
If I had such, they seem'd not such to me—
Yet there was one—

Witch. Spare not thyself—proceed.

Man. She was like me in lineaments—her eyes,
Her hair, her features, all, to the very tone
Even of her voice, they said were like to mine ;
But soften'd all, and temper'd into beauty :
She had the same lone thoughts and wanderings,
The quest of hidden knowledge, and a mind
To comprehend the universe : nor these
Alone, but with them gentler powers than mine,

Pity, and smiles, and tears—which I had not ;
And tenderness—but that I had for her ;
Humility—and that I never had.
Her faults were mine—her virtues were her own—
I loved her, and destroy'd her !

Witch. With thy hand ?

Man. Not with my hand, but heart, which broke
her heart ;

It gazed on mine, and wither'd. I have shed
Blood, but not hers—and yet her blood was shed ;
I saw—and could not stanch it.

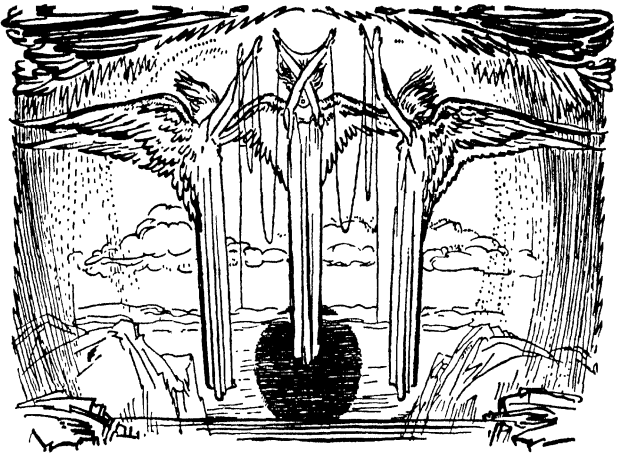
Witch. And for this—

A being of the race thou dost despise,
The order, which thine own would rise above,
Mingling with us and ours,—thou dost forego
The gifts of our great knowledge, and shrink'st back
To recreant mortality—Away !

Man. Daughter of Air ! I tell thee, since that hour—
But words are breath—look on me in my sleep,
Or watch my watchings—Come and sit by me !
My solitude is solitude no more,
But peopled with the Furies ;—I have gnash'd
My teeth in darkness till returning morn,
Then cursed myself till sunset ;—I have pray'd
For madness as a blessing—'tis denied me.
I have affronted death—but in the war
Of elements the waters shrunk from me,
And fatal things pass'd harmless ; the cold hand
Of an all-pitiless demon held me back,
Back by a single hair, which would not break.
In fantasy, imagination, all
The affluence of my soul—which one day was
A Cræsus in creation—I plunged deep,
But, like an ebbing wave, it dash'd me back

In all the days of past and future, for
In life there is no present, we can number
How few—how less than few—wherein the soul
Forbears to pant for death, and yet draws back
As from a stream in winter, though the chill
Be but a moment's. I have one resource
Still in my science—I can call the dead,
And ask them what it is we dread to be :
The sternest answer can but be the Grave,
And that is nothing—if they answer not—
The buried Prophet answered to the Hag
Of Endor ; and the Spartan Monarch drew
From the Byzantine maid's unsleeping spirit
An answer and his destiny—he slew
That which he loved, unknowing what he slew,
And died unpardon'd—though he call'd in aid
The Phyxian Jove, and in Phigalia roused
The Arcadian Evocators to compel
The indignant shadow to depose her wrath,
Or fix her term of vengeance—she replied
In words of dubious import, but fulfill'd.
If I had never lived, that which I love
Had still been living ; had I never loved,
That which I love would still be beautiful,
Happy and giving happiness. What is she ?
What is she now ?—a sufferer for my sins—
A thing I dare not think upon—or nothing.
Within few hours I shall not call in vain—
Yet in this hour I dread the thing I dare :
Until this hour I never shrunk to gaze
On spirit, good or evil—now I tremble,
And feel a strange cold thaw upon my heart.
But I can act even what I most abhor,
And champion human fears.—The night approaches.

[Exit.]



ACT II.—SCENE III.

The Summit of the Jungfrau Mountain.

Enter FIRST DESTINY.

The moon is rising broad, and round, and bright ;
And here on snows, where never human foot
Of common mortal trod, we nightly tread,
And leave no traces : o'er the savage sea,
The glassy ocean of the mountain ice,
We skim its rugged breakers, which put on
The aspect of a tumbling tempest's foam,
Frozen in a moment—a dead whirlpool's image :
And this most steep fantastic pinnacle,
The fretwork of some earthquake—where the clouds
Pause to repose themselves in passing by—
Is sacred to our revels, or our vigils ;
Here do I wait my sisters, on our way
To the Hall of Arimanes, for to-night
Is our great festival—'tis strange they come not.

A VOICE without, singing.

The Captive Usurper,
Hurl'd down from the throne,

Lay buried in torpor,
Forgotten and lone ;
I broke through his slumbers,
I shivered his chain,
I leagued him with numbers—
He's Tyrant again !
With the blood of a million he'll answer my care,
With a nation's destruction—his flight and despair.

Second VOICE without.

The ship sail'd on, the ship sail'd fast,
But I left not a sail, and I left not a mast ;
There is not a plank of the hull or the deck,
And there is not a wretch to lament o'er his wreck ;
Save one, whom I held, as he swam, by the hair,
And he was a subject well worthy my care ;
A traitor on land, and a pirate at sea—
But I saved him to wreak further havoc for me !

FIRST DESTINY answering.

The city lies sleeping ;
The morn, to deplore it,
May dawn on it weeping :
Sullenly, slowly,
The black plague flew o'er it—
Thousands lie lowly ;
Tens of thousands shall perish ;
The living shall fly from
The sick they should cherish ;
But nothing can vanquish
The touch that they die from.
Sorrow and anguish,
And evil and dread,
Envelope a nation—

The blest are the dead,
Who see not the sight
Of their own desolation—
This work of a night—
This wreck of a realm—this deed of my doing—
For ages I've done, and shall still be renewing !

Enter the SECOND and THIRD DESTINIES.

The Three.

Our hands contain the hearts of men,
Our footsteps are their graves ;
We only give to take again
The spirits of our slaves !

First Des. Welcome !—Where's Nemesis ?

Second Des. At some great work ;
But what I know not, for my hands were full.

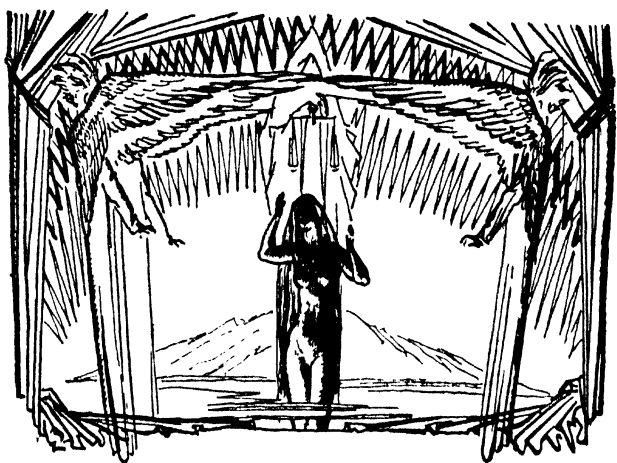
Third Des. Behold she cometh.

Enter NEMESIS.

First Des. Say, where hast thou been ?
My sisters and thyself are slow to-night.

Nem. I was detain'd repairing shatter'd thrones,
Marrying fools, restoring dynasties,
Avenging men upon their enemies,
And making them repent their own revenge ;
Goading the wise to madness ; from the dull
Shaping out oracles to rule the world
Afresh, for they were waxing out of date,
And mortals dared to ponder for themselves,
To weigh kings in the balance, and to speak
Of freedom, the forbidden fruit.—Away !
We have outstay'd the hour—mount we our clouds !

[Exeunt.]



ACT II.—SCENE IV.

The Hall of Arimanes—Arimanes on his Throne, a Globe of Fire, surrounded by the Spirits.

Hymn of the SPIRITS.

Hail to our Master!—Prince of Earth and Air!
Who walks the clouds and waters—in his hand
The sceptre of the elements, which tear
Themselves to chaos at his high command!
He breatheth—and a tempest shakes the sea;
He speaketh—and the clouds reply in thunder;
He gazeth—from his glance the sunbeams flee;
He moveth—earthquakes rend the world asunder.
Beneath his footsteps the volcanoes rise;
His shadow is the Pestilence; his path
The comets herald through the crackling skies;
And planets turn to ashes at his wrath.
To him War offers daily sacrifice;
To him Death pays his tribute; Life is his,
With all its infinite of agonies—
And his the spirit of whatever is!

Enter the DESTINIES and NEMESIS.

First Des. Glory to Arimanes ! on the earth
His power increaseth—both my sisters did
His bidding, nor did I neglect my duty !

Second Des. Glory to Arimanes ! we who bow
The necks of men, bow down before his throne !

Third Des. Glory to Arimanes ! we await
His nod !

Nem. Sovereign of Sovereigns ! we are thine,
And all that liveth, more or less, is ours,
And most things wholly so ; still to increase
Our power, increasing thine, demands our care,
And we are vigilant. Thy late commands
Have been fulfill'd to the utmost.

Enter MANFRED.

A Spirit. What is here ?
A mortal !—Thou most rash and fatal wretch,
Bow down and worship !

Second Spirit. I do know the man—
A Magian of great power, and fearful skill !

Third Spirit. Bow down and worship, slave !—
What, know'st thou not
Thine and our Sovereign ?—Tremble, and obey !

All the Spirits. Prostrate thyself, and thy condemned
clay,
Child of the Earth ! or dread the worst.

Man. I know it ;
And yet ye see I kneel not.

Fourth Spirit. 'Twill be taught thee.

Man. 'Tis taught already ;—many a night on the
earth,
On the bare ground, have I bow'd down my face,
And strew'd my head with ashes ; I have known

The fulness of humiliation, for
I sunk before my vain despair, and knelt
To my own desolation.

Fifth Spirit. Dost thou dare
Refuse to Arimanes on his throne
What the whole earth accords, beholding not
The terror of his Glory—Crouch ! I say.

Man. Bid *him* bow down to that which is above
him,
The overruling Infinite—the Maker
Who made him not for worship—let him kneel,
And we will kneel together.

The Spirits. Crush the worm !
Tear him in pieces !—

First Des. Hence ! Avaunt !—he's mine.
Prince of the Powers invisible ! This man
Is of no common order, as his port
And presence here denote ; his sufferings
Have been of an immortal nature, like
Our own ; his knowledge, and his powers and will,
As far as is compatible with clay,
Which clogs the ethereal essence, have been such
As clay hath seldom borne ; his aspirations
Have been beyond the dwellers of the earth,
And they have only taught him what we know—
That knowledge is not happiness, and science
But an exchange of ignorance for that
Which is another kind of ignorance.
This is not all—the passions, attributes
Of earth and heaven, from which no power, nor being,
Nor breath from the worm upwards is exempt,
Have pierced his heart, and in their consequence
Made him a thing, which I, who pity not,
Yet pardon those who pity. He is mine,

And thine, it may be—be it so, or not,
No other Spirit in this region hath
A soul like his—or power upon his soul.

Nem. What doth he here then ?

First Des. Let him answer that.

Man. Ye know what I have known ; and without
power

I could not be amongst ye : but there are
Powers deeper still beyond—I come in quest
Of such, to answer unto what I seek.

Nem. What wouldst thou ?

Man. Thou canst not reply to me.

Call up the dead—my question is for them.

Nem. Great Arimanes, doth thy will avouch
The wishes of this mortal ?

Ari. Yea.

Nem. Whom wouldst thou
Uncharnel ?

Man. One without a tomb—call up
Astarte.

NEMESIS.

Shadow ! or Spirit !

Whatever thou art,
Which still doth inherit

The whole or a part
Of the form of thy birth,

Of the mould of thy clay,
Which returned to the earth,

Re-appear to the day !

Bear what thou borest,

The heart and the form,
And the aspect thou worst

Redeem from the worm.

Appear !—Appear !—Appear !

Who sent thee there requires thee here !

[*The Phantom of ASTARTE rises and stands in the midst.*

Man. Can this be death ? there's bloom upon her cheek ;

But now I see it is no living hue,
But a strange hectic—like the unnatural red
Which Autumn plants upon the perish'd leaf.
It is the same ! Oh, God ! that I should dread
To look upon the same—Astarte !—No,
I cannot speak to her—but bid her speak—
Forgive me or condemn me.

NEMESIS.

By the power which hath broken
The grave which enthrall'd thee,
Speak to him who hath spoken,
Or those who have call'd thee !

Man. She is silent,
And in that silence I am more than answered.

Nem. My power extends no further. Prince of Air !
It rests with thee alone—command her voice.

Ari. Spirit—obey this sceptre !

Nem. Silent still !

She is not of our order, but belongs
To the other powers. Mortal ! thy quest is vain,
And we are baffled also.

Man. Hear me, hear me—
Astarte ! my beloved ! speak to me :
I have so much endured—so much endure—
Look on me ! the grave hath not changed thee more
Than I am changed for thee. Thou lovedst me
Too much, as I loved thee : we were not made
To torture thus each other, though it were

The deadliest sin to love as we have loved.
Say that thou loath'st me not—that I do bear
This punishment for both—that thou wilt be
One of the blessed—and that I shall die ;
For hitherto all hateful things conspire
To bind me in existence—in a life
Which makes me shrink from immortality—
A future like the past. I cannot rest.
I know not what I ask, nor what I seek :
I feel but what thou art, and what I am ;
And I would hear yet once before I perish
The voice which was my music—Speak to me !
For I have call'd on thee in the still night,
Startled the slumbering birds from the hush'd boughs,
And woke the mountain wolves, and made the caves
Acquainted with thy vainly echoed name,
Which answer'd me—many things answer'd me—
Spirits and men—but thou wert silent all.
Yet speak to me ! I have outwatch'd the stars,
And gazed o'er heaven in vain in search of thee.
Speak to me ! I have wander'd o'er the earth,
And never found thy likeness—Speak to me !
Look on the fiends around—they feel for me :
I fear them not, and feel for thee alone—
Speak to me ! though it be in wrath ;—but say—
I reckon not what—but let me hear thee once—
This once—once more !

Phantom of Astarte. Manfred !

Man. Say on, say on—

I live but in the sound—it is thy voice !

Pban. Manfred ! To-morrow ends thine earthly ills.
Farewell !

Man. Yet one word more—am I forgiven ?

Pban. Farewell !

Man. Say, shall we meet again ?

Pban. Farewell !

Man. One word for mercy ! Say, thou lovest me.

Pban. Manfred !

[*The Spirit of ASTARTE disappears.*]

Nem. She's gone, and will not be recall'd ;
Her words will be fulfill'd. Return to the earth.

A Spirit. He is convulsed.—This is to be a mortal
And seek the things beyond mortality.

Another Spirit. Yet, see, he mastereth himself, and
makes

His torture tributary to his will.

Had he been one of us, he would have made
An awful spirit.

Nem. Hast thou further question
Of our great sovereign, or his worshippers ?

Man. None.

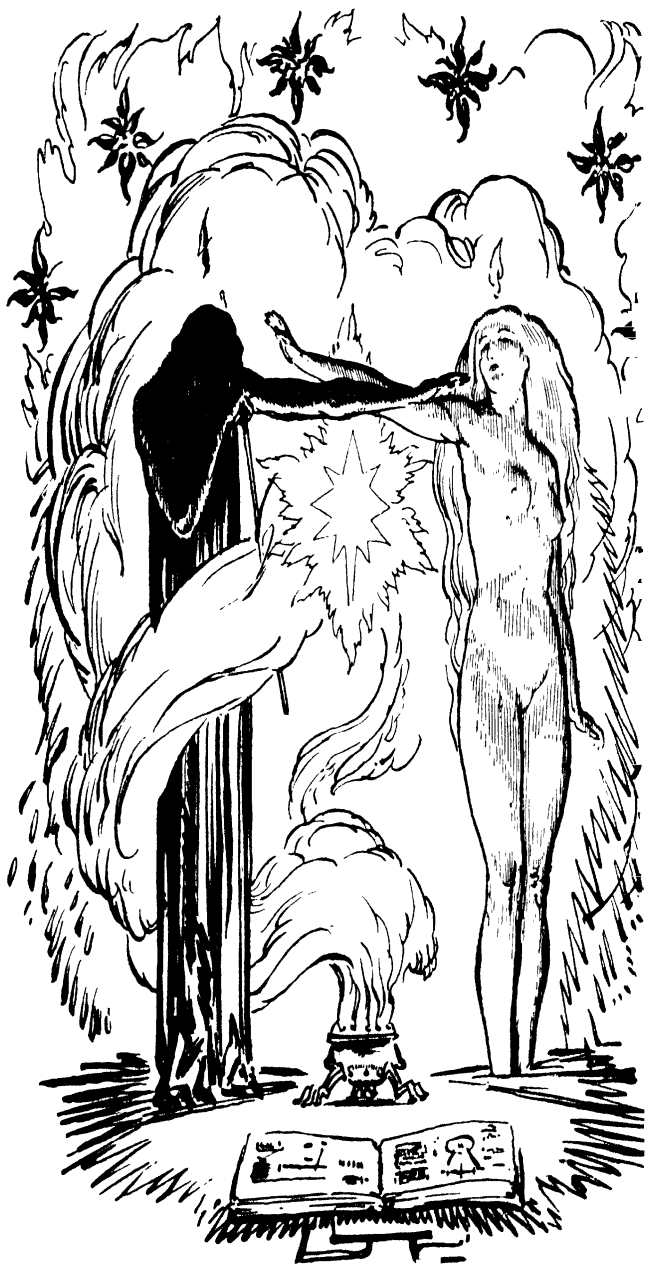
Nem. Then for a time farewell.

Man. We meet then ! Where ? On the earth :—
Even as thou wilt : and for the grace accorded
I now depart a debtor. Fare ye well !

[*Exit MANFRED.*]

(*Scene closes.*)







ACT III.—SCENE I.

A Hall in the Castle of Manfred.

MANFRED *and* HERMAN.

Man. What is the hour ?

Her. It wants but one till sunset,
And promises a lovely twilight.

Man. Say,
Are all things so disposed of in the tower
As I directed ?

Her. All, my lord, are ready ;
Here is the key and casket.

Man. It is well :
Thou mayst retire. [Exit HERMAN.]

Man. (alone). There is a calm upon me—
Inexplicable stillness ! which till now
Did not belong to what I knew of life.
If that I did not know philosophy
To be of all our vanities the motliest,
The merest word that ever fool'd the ear
From out the schoolman's jargon, I should deem
The golden secret, the sought "Kalon," found,

And seated in my soul. It will not last,
But it is well to have known it, though but once :
It hath enlarged my thoughts with a new sense,
And I within my tablets would note down
That there is such a feeling. Who is there ?

Re-enter HERMAN.

Her. My lord, the abbot of St. Maurice craves
To greet your presence.

Enter the ABBOT OF ST. MAURICE.

Abbot. Peace be with Count Manfred !

Man. Thanks, holy father ! welcome to these walls ;
Thy presence honours them, and blesseth those
Who dwell within them.

Abbot. Would it were so, Count !—
But I would fain confer with thee alone.

Man. Herman, retire. What would my reverend
guest ?

Abbot. Thus, without prelude :—Age and zeal, my
office,
And good intent, must plead my privilege ;
Our near, though not acquainted neighbourhood,
May also be my herald. Rumours strange,
And of unholy nature, are abroad,
And busy with thy name ; a noble name
For centuries ; may he who bears it now
Transmit it unimpair'd !

Man. Proceed,—I listen.

Abbot. 'Tis said thou holdest converse with the
things
Which are forbidden to the search of man ;
That with the dwellers of the dark abodes,
The many evil and unheavenly spirits

Which walk the valley of the shade of death,
Thou communest. I know that with mankind,
Thy fellows in creation, thou dost rarely
Exchange thy thoughts, and that thy solitude
Is as an anchorite's, were it but holy.

Man. And what are they who do avouch these things ?

Abbot. My pious brethren—the scared peasantry—
Even thy own vassals—who do look on thee
With most unquiet eyes. Thy life's in peril.

Man. Take it.

Abbot. I come to save, and not destroy—
I would not pry into thy secret soul ;
But if these things be sooth, there still is time
For penitence and pity : reconcile thee
With the true church, and through the church to
heaven.

Man. I hear thee. This is my reply : whate'er
I may have been, or am, doth rest between
Heaven and myself.—I shall not choose a mortal
To be my mediator. Have I sinn'd
Against your ordinances ? prove and punish !

Abbot. My son ! I did not speak of punishment,
But penitence and pardon ;—with thyself
The choice of such remains—and for the last,
Our institutions and our strong belief
Have given me power to smooth the path from sin
To higher hope, and better thoughts ; the first
I leave to heaven,—“ Vengeance is mine alone ! ”
So saith the Lord, and with all humbleness
His servant echoes back the awful word.

Man. Old man ! there is no power in holy men,
Nor charm in prayer—nor purifying form
Of penitence—nor outward look—nor fast—

Nor agony—nor, greater than all these,
The innate tortures of that deep despair,
Which is remorse without the fear of hell,
But all in all sufficient to itself
Would make a hell of heaven—can exorcise
From out the unbounded spirit the quick sense
Of its own sins, wrongs, sufferance, and revenge
Upon itself ; there is no future pang
Can deal that justice on the self-condemn'd
He deals on his own soul.

Abbot. All this is well ;
For this will pass away, and be succeeded
By an auspicious hope, which shall look up
With calm assurance to that blessed place,
Which all who seek may win, whatever be
Their earthly errors, so they be atoned :
And the commencement of atonement is
The sense of its necessity.—Say on—
And all our church can teach thee shall be taught ;
And all we can absolve thee shall be pardon'd.

Man. When Rome's sixth emperor was near his
last,
The victim of a self-inflicted wound,
To shun the torments of a public death
From senates once his slaves, a certain soldier,
With show of loyal pity, would have staunch'd
The gushing throat with his officious robe ;
The dying Roman thrust him back, and said—
Some empire still in his expiring glance,
“ It is too late—is this fidelity ? ”

Abbot. And what of this ?

Man. I answer with the Roman—
“ It is too late ! ”

Abbot. It never can be so,

To reconcile thyself with thy own soul,
And thy own soul with heaven. Hast thou no hope ?
'Tis strange—even those who do despair above,
Yet shape themselves some phantasy on earth,
To which frail twig they cling, like drowning men.

Man. Ay—father ! I have had those earthly visions,
And noble aspirations in my youth,
To make my own the mind of other men,
The enlightener of nations ; and to rise
I knew not whither—it might be to fall ;
But fall, even as the mountain-cataract,
Which having leapt from its more dazzling height,
Even in the foaming strength of its abyss,
(Which casts up misty columns that become
Clouds raining from the re-ascended skies,)
Lies low but mighty still.—But this is past,
My thoughts mistook themselves.

Abbot. And wherefore so ?

Man. I could not tame my nature down ; for he
Must serve who fain would sway—and soothe—and sue—
And watch all time—and pry into all place—
And be a living lie—who would become
A mighty thing amongst the mean, and such
The mass are ; I disdained to mingle with
A herd, though to be leader—and of wolves.
The lion is alone, and so am I.

Abbot. And why not live and act with other men ?

Man. Because my nature was averse from life ;
And yet not cruel ; for I would not make,
But find a desolation :—like the wind,
The red-hot breath of the most lone Simoon,
Which dwells but in the desert, and sweeps o'er
The barren sands which bear no shrubs to blast,
And revels o'er their wild and arid waves,

And seeketh not, so that it is not sought,
But being met is deadly ; such hath been
The course of my existence ; but there came
Things in my path which are no more.

Abbot. Alas !

I 'gin to fear that thou art past all aid
From me and from my calling ; yet so young,
I still would—

Man. Look on me ! there is an order
Of mortals on the earth, who do become
Old in their youth, and die ere middle age,
Without the violence of warlike death ;
Some perishing of pleasure—some of study—
Some worn with toil—some of mere weariness—
Some of disease—and some insanity—
And some of withered or of broken hearts ;
For this last is a malady which slays
More than are number'd in the lists of Fate,
Taking all shapes, and bearing many names.
Look upon me ! for even of all these things
Have I partaken ; and of all these things,
One were enough ; then wonder not that I
Am what I am, but that I ever was,
Or having been, that I am still on earth.

Abbot. Yet, hear me still—

Man. Old man ! I do respect
Thine order, and revere thine years ; I deem
Thy purpose pious, but it is in vain :
Think me not churlish ; I would spare myself,
Far more than me, in shunning at this time
All further colloquy—and so—farewell.

[Exit MANFRED.]

Abbot. This should have been a noble creature : he
Hath all the energy which would have made

A goodly frame of glorious elements,
Had they been wisely mingled ; as it is,
It is an awful chaos—light and darkness—
And mind and dust—and passions and pure thoughts
Mix'd, and contending without end or order,—
All dormant or destructive : he will perish,
And yet he must not ; I will try once more.
For such are worth redemption ; and my duty
Is to dare all things for a righteous end.
I'll follow him—but cautiously, though surely.

3BOT.





ACT III.—SCENE II.

Another Chamber.

MANFRED and HERMAN.

Her. My lord, you bade me wait on you at sunset :
He sinks behind the mountain.

Man. Doth he so ?
I will look on him.

[MANFRED advances to the Window of the Hall.

Glorious Orb ! the idol

Of early nature, and the vigorous race
Of undiseased mankind, the giant sons
Of the embrace of angels, with a sex
More beautiful than they, which did draw down
The erring spirits who can ne'er return.—
Most glorious orb ! that wert a worship, ere
The mystery of thy making was reveal'd !
Thou earliest minister of the Almighty,
Which gladden'd, on their mountain tops, the hearts
Of the Chaldean shepherds, till they pour'd
Themselves in orisons ! Thou material God !
And representative of the Unknown—

Who chose thee for his shadow ! Thou chief star !
Centre of many stars ! which mak'st our earth
Endurable, and temperest the hues
And hearts of all who walk within thy rays !
Sire of the seasons ! Monarch of the climes,
And those who dwell in them ! for near or far,
Our inborn spirits have a tint of thee
Even as our outward aspects ;—thou dost rise
And shine, and set in glory. Fare thee well !
I ne'er shall see thee more. As my first glance
Of love and wonder was for thee, then take
My latest look : thou wilt not beam on one
To whom the gifts of life and warmth have been
Of a more fatal nature. He is gone :
I follow. [Exit MANFRED.





ACT III.—SCENE III.

*The Mountains—The Castle of Manfred at some distance—
Terrace before a Tower—Time, Twilight.*

HERMAN, MANUEL, and other Dependants
MANFRED.

Her. 'Tis strange enough ; night after night, for
years,

He hath pursued long vigils in this tower,
Without a witness. I have been within it,—
So have we all been oft-times ; but from it,
Or its contents, it were impossible
To draw conclusions absolute, of aught
His studies tend to. To be sure, there is
One chamber where none enter ; I would give
The fee of what I have to come these three years,
To pore upon its mysteries.

Manuel. 'Twere dangerous ;
Content thyself with what thou knowest already.

Her. Ah ! Manuel ! thou art elderly and wise,
And could'st say much ; thou hast dwelt within the
castle—

How many years is't ?

Manuel. Ere Count Manfred's birth,

I served his father, whom he nought resembles.

Her. There be more sons in like predicament.
But wherein do they differ ?

Manuel. I speak not
Of features or of form, but mind and habits :
Count Sigismund was proud,—but gay and free,—
A warrior and a reveller ; he dwelt not
With books and solitude, nor made the night
A gloomy vigil, but a festal time,
Merrier than day ; he did not walk the rocks
And forests like a wolf, nor turn aside
From men and their delights.

Her. Beshrew the hour,
But those were jocund times ! I would that such
Would visit the old walls again ; they look
As if they had forgotten them.

Manuel. These walls
Must change their chieftain first. Oh ! I have seen
Some strange things in them, Herman.

Her. Come, be friendly ;
Relate me some to while away our watch :
I've heard thee darkly speak of an event
Which happened hereabouts, by this same tower.

Manuel. That was a night indeed ! I do remember
'Twas twilight, as it may be now, and such
Another evening ;—yon red cloud, which rests
On Eigher's pinnacle, so rested then,—
So like that it might be the same ; the wind
Was faint and gusty, and the mountain snows
Began to glitter with the climbing moon ;
Count Manfred was, as now, within his tower,—
How occupied, we knew not, but with him
The sole companion of his wanderings
And watchings—her, whom of all earthly things

That lived, the only thing he seem'd to love,—
As he, indeed, by blood was bound to do,
The lady Astarte, his—

Hush ! who comes here ?

Enter the ABBOT.

Abbot. Where is your master ?

Her. Yonder in the tower.

Abbot. I must speak with him.

Manuel. 'Tis impossible ;

He is most private, and must not be thus
Intruded on.

Abbot. Upon myself I take
The forfeit of my fault, if fault there be—
But I must see him.

Her. Thou hast seen him once
This eve already.

Abbot. Herman ! I command thee,
Knock, and apprise the Count of my approach.

Her. We dare not.

Abbot. Then it seems I must be herald
Of my own purpose.

Manuel. Reverend father, stop—
I pray you pause.

Abbot. Why so ?

Manuel. But step this way,
And I will tell you further.

[*Exeunt.*



ACT III.—SCENE IV.

Interior of the Tower

MANFRED *alone.*

The stars are forth, the moon above the tops
Of the snow-shining mountains.—Beautiful !
I linger yet with Nature, for the Night
Hath been to me a more familiar face
Than that of man ; and in her starry shade
Of dim and solitary loveliness,
I learn'd the language of another world.
I do remember me, that in my youth,
When I was wandering,—upon such a night
I stood within the Coliseum's wall,
'Midst the chief relics of almighty Rome ;
The trees which grew along the broken arches
Waved dark in the blue midnight, and the stars
Shone through the rents of ruin ; from afar
The watch-dog bay'd beyond the Tiber ; and
More near from out the Cæsars' palace came
The owl's long cry, and, interruptedly,
Of distant sentinels the fitful song

Begun and died upon the gentle wind.
Some cypresses beyond the time-worn breach
Appeared to skirt the horizon, yet they stood
Within a bowshot—where the Cæsars dwelt,
And dwell the tuneless birds of night, amidst
A grove which springs through levell'd battlements,
And twines its roots with the imperial hearths,
Ivy usurps the laurel's place of growth ;—
But the gladiators' bloody Circus stands,
A noble wreck in ruinous perfection !
While Cæsar's chambers, and the Augustan halls,
Grovel on earth in indistinct decay.—
And thou didst shine, thou rolling moon, upon
All this, and cast a wide and tender light,
Which soften'd down the hoar austerity
Of rugged desolation, and fill'd up,
As 'twere anew, the gaps of centuries ;
Leaving that beautiful which still was so,
And making that which was not, till the place
Became religion, and the heart ran o'er
With silent worship of the great of old !—
The dead, but sceptred sovereigns, who still rule
Our spirits from their urns.—

'Twas such a night !

'Tis strange that I recall it at this time ;
But I have found our thoughts take wildest flight
Even at the moment when they should array
Themselves in pensive order.

Enter the ABBOT.

Abbot. My good lord !
I crave a second grace for this approach ;
But yet let not my humble zeal offend
By its abruptness—all it hath of ill

Abbot. Alas ! lost mortal ! what with guests I
these

Hast thou to do ? I tremble for thy sake ;
Why doth he gaze on thee, and thou on him ?
Ah ! he unveils his aspect ; on his brow
The thunder-scars are graven ; from his eye
Glares forth the immortality of hell—
Avaunt !—

Man. Pronounce—what is thy mission ?

Spirit. Come !

Abbot. What art thou, unknown being ? answer—
—speak !

Spirit. The genius of this mortal.—Come ! 'tis time

Man. I am prepared for all things, but deny
The power which summons me. Who sent thee here ?

Spirit. Thou'lt know anon—Come ! come !

Man. I have commanded
Things of an essence greater far than thine,
And striven with thy masters. Get thee hence !

Spirit. Mortal ! thine hour is come—Away ! I

Man. I knew, and know my hour is come, but
To render up my soul to such as thee :
Away ! I'll die as I have lived—alone.

Spirit. Then I must summon up my brethren
Rise !

[*Other SPIRITS rise*

Abbot. Avaunt ! ye evil ones !—Avaunt ! I say
Ye have no power where piety hath power,
And I do charge ye in the name—

Spirit. Old man !
We know ourselves, our mission, and thine order ;
Waste not thy holy words on idle uses,
It were in vain : this man is forfeited.
Once more I summon him—Away ! Away !

Man. I do defy ye,—though I feel my soul
Is ebbing from me, yet I do defy ye ;
Nor will I hence, while I have earthly breath
To breathe my scorn upon ye—earthly strength
To wrestle, though with spirits ; what ye take
Shall be ta'en limb by limb.

Spirit. Reluctant mortal !
Is this the Magian who would so pervade
The world invisible, and make himself
Almost our equal ?—Can it be that thou
Art thus in love with life ? the very life
Which made thee wretched !

Man. Thou false fiend, thou liest !
My life is in its last hour,—*that* I know,
Nor would redeem a moment of that hour ;
I do not combat against death, but thee
And thy surrounding angels ; my past power,
Was purchased by no compact with thy crew,
But by superior science—penance—daring—
And length of watching—strength of mind—and skill
In knowledge of our fathers—when the earth
Saw men and spirits walking side by side,
And gave ye no supremacy : I stand
Upon my strength—I do defy—deny—
Spurn back, and scorn ye !—

Spirit. But thy many crimes
Have made thee——

Man. What are they to such as thee :
Must crimes be punish'd but by other crimes,
And greater criminals ?—Back to thy hell !
Thou hast no power upon me, *that* I feel ;
Thou never shalt possess me, *that* I know :
What I have done is done ; I bear within
A torture which could nothing gain from thine :

The mind which is immortal makes itself
Requital for its good or evil thoughts,—
Is its own origin of ill and end—
And its own place and time—its innate sense,
When stripp'd of this mortality, derives
No colour from the fleeting things without,
But is absorb'd in sufferance or in joy,
Born from the knowledge of its own desert.
Thou didst not tempt me, and thou couldst not tempt
me ;

I have not been thy dupe, nor am thy prey—
But was my own destroyer, and will be
My own hereafter.—Back, ye baffled fiends !
The hand of death is on me—but not yours !

[*The DEMONS disappear*]

Abbot. Alas ! how pale thou art—thy lips a
white—

And thy breast heaves—and in thy gasping throat
The accents rattle : Give thy prayers to heaven—
Pray—albeit but in thought,—but die not thus.

Man. 'Tis over—my dull eyes can fix thee not ;
But all things swim around me, and the earth
Heaves as it were beneath me. Fare thee well—
Give me thy hand.

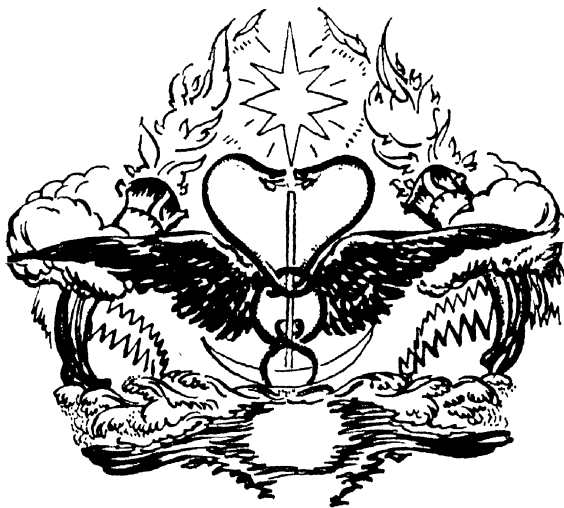
Abbot. Cold—cold—even to the heart—
But yet one prayer—alas ! how fares it with thee ?—

Man. Old man ! 'tis not so difficult to die.

[*MANFRED expires*]

Abbot. He's gone—his soul hath ta'en its earthl
flight—

Whither ? I dread to think—but he is gone.



VARIANT READINGS

☆☆☆☆☆☆ VARIANT READINGS ☆☆☆☆☆☆

The following variants come from the MSS. of *MANFRED* in Byron's handwriting in the possession of Mr. Murray. They are interesting in showing that Byron abandoned any effort to depict Manfred in opposition to existing moral values; that he preferred to define his antithesis to them by emphasising that at no point were their exhortations and consolations even intelligible to him.

ACT I. SCENE I. *line 29*: Eternal Agency!

Ye spirits of the immortal Universe!

line 33: Of inaccessible mountains are the haunts.

line 56: Which is fit for my pavilion.

line 71: Or makes its ice delay.

line 154: The Mind which is my Spirit—the high Soul.

line 158: Answer—or I will teach ye.

SCENE II. *line 78*: Like foam from the round ocean of old Hell.

ACT II. SCENE I. *line 31*: —and some insaner sin.

SCENE II. *line 26*: Wherein seems glassed—.

line 136: And live—and live for ever.

line 191: As from a bath —.

SCENE IV. Or still dost Qy?

ACT III. SCENE I. *from line 56 onwards*:

Abbot. Then hear and tremble! For the headstrong wretch
Who in the mail of innate hardihood
Would shield himself, and battle for his sins,
There is the stake on earth—and beyond earth
Eternal—

Man. Charity, most reverend father,
Becomes thy lips so much more than this menace,
That I would call thee back to it: but say,
What would'st thou with me?

Abbot. It may be there are
Things that would shake thee—but I keep them back,
And give thee till to-morrow to repent.
Then if thou dost not all devote thyself
To penance, and with gift of all thy lands
To the Monastery—

Man. I understand thee,—well!

Abbot. Expect no mercy ; I have warned thee.

Man. (*opening the casket*). Stop—

There is a gift for thee within this casket.

[*MANFRED opens the casket, strikes a light, and burns some incense*
Ho ! Ashtaroth !

The DEMON ASHTAROTH appears, singing as follows :—

The raven sits

On the Ravenstone*

And his black wing flits

O'er the milk-white bone ;

To and fro, as the night-winds blow,

The carcass of the assassin swings ;

And there alone, on the Ravenstone,

The Raven flaps his dusky wings.

The fetters creak—and his ebon beak

Croaks to the close of the hollow sound ;

And this is the tune, by the light of the Moon,

To which the Witches dance their round—

Merrily—merrily—cheerily—cheerily—

Merrily—merrily—speeds the ball :

The dead in their shrouds, and the Demons in clouds,

Flock to the Witches' Carnival.

Abbot. I fear thee not—hence—hence—
Avaunt thee, evil One !—help, ho ! without there !

Man. Convey this man to the Schreckhorn—to its peak—
To its extremest peak—watch with him there
From now till sunrise ; let him gaze, and know
He ne'er again will be so near to Heaven.

But harm him not ; and, when the morrow breaks,
Set him down safe in his cell—away with him !

Ash. Had I not better bring his brethren too,
Convent and all, to bear him company ?

Man. No, this will serve for the present. Take him up.

Ash. Come, Friar ! now an exorcism or two,

* Ravenstone (Rabenstein) a translation of the German word the gibbet, which in Germany and Switzerland is permanent, :
made of stone.

What, none of ye ?—ye recreants, shiver then
Without. I will not see old Manuel risk
His few remaining years unaided. [HERMAN goes in
Vassal. Hark !—

No—all is silent—not a breath—the flame
Which shot forth such a blaze is also gone :
What may this mean ? Let's enter !

Peasant. Faith, not I,—
Not but, if one, or two, or more, will join,
I then will stay behind ; but, for my part,
I do not see precisely to what end.

Vassal. Cease your vain prating—come.

Manuel (speaking within). 'Tis all in vain—
He's dead.

Her. (within). Not so—even now methought he moved ;
But it is dark—so bear him gently out—
Softly—how cold he is ! take care of his temples
In winding down the staircase.

[*Re-enter MANUEL and HERMAN, bearing MANFRED in th
arms.*

Manuel. Hie to the castle, some of ye, and bring
What aid you can. Saddle the barb, and speed
For the leech to the city—quick ! some water there !

Her. His cheek is black—but there is a faint beat
Still lingering about the heart. Some water.

[*They sprinkle MANFRED with water : after a pause he gi
some signs of life.*

Manuel. He seems to strive to speak—come—cheerly, Cour
He moves his lips—canst hear him ? I am old,
And cannot catch faint sounds.

[*HERMAN inclining his head and listeni*

Her. I hear a word
Or two—but indistinctly—what is next ?
What's to be done ? let's bear him to the castle.

[*MANFRED motions with his hand not to remove h*

Manuel. He disapproves—and 'twere of no avail—
He changes rapidly.

Her. 'Twill soon be over.

Manuel. Oh ! what a death is this ! that I should live

To shake my grey hairs over the last chief
Of the house of Sigismund.—And such a death !
Alone—we know not how—unshrived—untended—
With strange accompaniments and fearful signs—
I shudder at the sight—but must not leave him.

Manfred (speaking faintly and slowly). Old man ! 'tis not so
difficult to die. [MANFRED, having said this, expires.

Her. His eyes are fixed and lifeless.—He is gone.—

Manuel. Close them.—My old hand quivers.—He departs—
Whither ? I dread to think—but he is gone !

End of Act Third, and of the Poem.

line 54 : Sirrah ! I command thee.

SCENE IV. line 91 : Summons —.

In the first edition the third last line was omitted at Gifford's suggestion. Byron was angered at this and wrote to Murray, August 12th, 1817 : " You have destroyed the whole effect and moral of the poem by omitting the last line of Manfred's speaking."

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆ BYRON'S NOTES ☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

ACT II. SCENE II. line 1 : This iris is formed by the rays of the sun over the lower part of the Alpine torrents : it is exactly like a rainbow, come down to pay a visit, and so close that you may walk into it :—this effect lasts till noon.

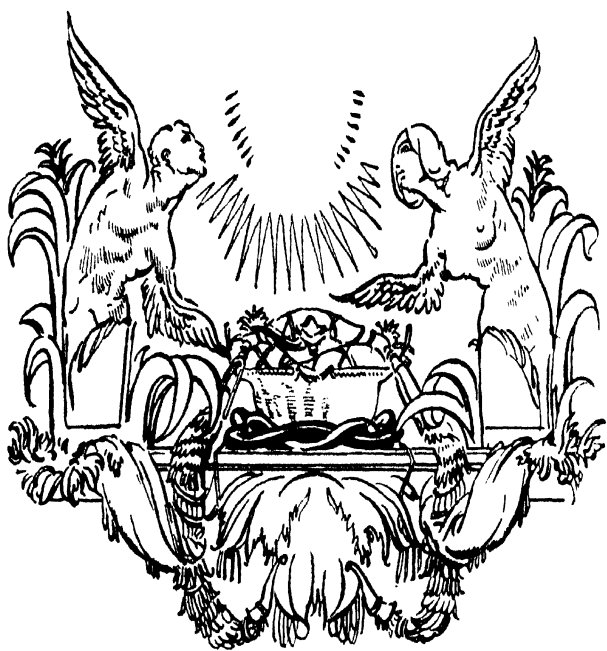
line 91 : The philosopher Iamblichus. The story of the raising of Eros and Anteros may be found in his life, by Eunapius. It is well told.

line 189 : The story of Pausanias, king of Sparta (who commanded the Greeks at the battle of Platea, and afterwards perished for an attempt to betray the Lacedemonians) and Cleonice, is told in Plutarch's life of Cimon ; and in the Laconics of Pausanias the Sophist, in his description of Greece.

ACT III. SCENE II. line 6 : ' That the *Sons of God* saw the daughters of men, that they were fair,' etc.

' There were giants on the earth in those days, and also after that, when the *Sons of God* came in unto the daughters of men : and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men, which were of old, men of renown.

Genesis, ch. vi, verses 2 and 4.



☆ HERE ENDS MANFRED ☆ BY LORD BYRON
☆ DECORATED BY FREDERICK CARTER ☆
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