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B E L L ' s

BRITISH THEATRE. 1

VOLUME THE SIXTEENTH.

J. Bell's D 156 C. 25
BRITISH THEATRE ;
TRAGEDIES.



LONDON
Printed for John Bell, at the British Library,
No. 1 in the Strand. May 16. 1780.

B E L L's
BRITISH THEATRE,

Consisting of the most esteemed

ENGLISH PLAYS.

VOLUME THE SIXTEENTH.

Being the Eighth VOLUME of TRAGEDIES.

CONTAINING

ELECTRA, by LEW. THEOBALD.

AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER, by N. ROWE, Esq.

OTHELLO, by SHAKESPEARE.

BUSIRIS, by Dr. YOUNG.

EURYDICE, by Mr. MALLET.

L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN BELL, at the British Library, Strand

M DCC LXXX.



J. Kneller del.

Engraved by John Smith, Theatre Street 1777.

*M^{rs} YATES in the Character of ELECTRA.
 O dear memorial of my dearest friend,
 Ye scanty Reliques of Orestes, Oh!*

BELL'S EDITION.

AS SUPPLIED C T R A.
FOR THE RAGEDY,
As translated from the PHOCLES; with Notes,
By Mr. THEOBALD.

DISTINGUISHING ALSO THE
VARIATIONS OF THE THEATRE,
AS PERFORMED AT THE
Theatre-Royal in Dury-Lane.

Regulated from the Prompt-Book,
By PERMISSION of the MANAGERS,
By Mr. HOPKINS, Prompter.

Ως ας ελεος...
Δελα τι...
Ευαγγελ...
Ανα...
Εκτυλ. in Corph.



LONDON:

Printed for JOHN BELL, near *East-Exchange*, in the *Strand*.

MDCCLXXII.



SUPPLIES
FOR THE
SERVICE OF
JOSEPH ADDISON, Esq.

S I R,

THIS poem presumes to throw itself at your feet, as a piece more wanting your protection, than worthy of your patronage. But it is as necessary for young authors, who should be conscious of their imperfections, to screen themselves under great names; as it has been always natural to criminals, to fly to a sanctuary.

Permit me then, Sir, more than to hope a shelter; to promise myself some reputation from this honour. Or, even should the world determine of my performance to my disadvantage; the satisfaction I take in being allowed the privilege of this address, yields me more pleasure than their censure could give me pain.

But I am so far from entertaining any fears of its miscarriage; that if my own partiality and the judgment of those chosen friends,

—Quibus hæc, sint quæcumque, arridere velim,

have not conspired to procure me in its favour: I may presume, that little or nothing is refused to allow it, will be my best excuse for publishing it in this public manner, to declare it to the world.

Your obedient

Humble servant,

LEW. THEOBALD.

43
D R A M A T I S P E R S O I

M E N.

Drury-Lane.

Egyftus, an ufurper of the govern-
ment of *Argos*, ——— Mr. Palmer.
Oreftes, fon of the late rightful king
Agamemnon, by *Clytemneftira*, ——— Mr. Smith.
Pylades, his friend, prince of Phocis, ——— Mr. Packer.
The Governor of *Oreftes*, ——— Mr. Aickin.

W O M E N.

Clytemneftira, queen of *Argos*, late
wife of Agamemnon, now of
Egyftus, ———
Electra, Agamemnon's daughter, ———
Chryfothemis, ditto, ———
Attendants of *Clytemneftira*.
Chorus of young ladies of *Argos*.

SCENE, before the Palace

[5]

E L E C T R A.

ACT I.

SCENE, *before the Royal Palace in Mycenæ.*

Governour of Orestes, Orestes, and Pylades.

ERNOB.

OH, for a man, (he who once,
 Supreme, led our victorious Greeks
 To Troy's distant thence may you survey
 The object of your, your ardent wishes:
 Behold your ! here, the grove
 Of Inachus, your frantic daughter:
 And here, the famous Lycæan Forum stands,
 Erected to the glorious god of day:
 To his, on the left, is Juno's awful temple;
 Around the glittering tow'rs of rich Mycenæ,
 With the dire house of bloody Pelops rise.
 Thence I receiv'd you from your sister's arms,
 Snatch'd from the fate in which your father fell;
 I took, preserv'd, and nourish'd you till now,
 To grow the keen avenger of his blood:
 But now, Orestes, and you, Pylades,
 The nearest partner of his cares, betimes
 Must determine what our cause requires.
 For see, the cheerful light begins to dawn;
 The warbling birds salute the early sun;
 Every star wants in his paler glory.
 When the busy search of jealous eyes
 Shall let us fix our points; only time
 Off all slow debate, and calls for action.
 Thou truest friend that ever serv'd his prince,
 Does thy love to me shine out conspicuous!
 As the gen'rous steed when weak with age,
 In his rage, and scents the distant battle;
 Thou, though press'd with years, work up our souls
 To me, and follow in the glorious chase.

To thee my purpos'd vengeance I'll disclose,
 Do thou with deep attention mark my words;
 And where my youth shall err, with wisdom guide
 Know, when I went to ask the Pythian
 What method I should take in my revenge;
 He thus in express terms spoke his high counsel
 Close be thy vengeance; no loud force prepare
 But steal upon th' unguarded murderer.
 Therefore do thou, my venerable friend,
 As soon as kind occasion will permit,
 Enter the palace; dive into their counsels;
 And find out means for this our great attempt:
 For rev'rend age has plow'd thy features up,
 And bent thee to the earth, that thou shalt pass
 Successfully unknown, and unsuspected. 45
 Then form a tale like this;—that thou art
 From Phocis, from Phanoteus, to relate
 (For he's their potent friend, their dear ally)
 Nor spare an oath to back the licens'd fraud 50
 And win belief, how poor Orestes perish'd;
 Whirl'd from his chariot in the Pythian games.
 This be the sum and subject of thy errand;
 Mean while, as the great Lycian god enjoin'd,
 We, with oblations and devoted hair, 55
 Will please my father's shade, and crown his tomb.
 That done, here let us meet; and in our hands
 Bear to th' incestuous court the brazen urn,
 Which lies conceal'd in yonder verdant thickets;
 Thus by an artful fraud resembling truth,
 We may convince them of the needless
 That I am dead; that
 Of my burnt bones, why
 Why should I grieve to
 While I rise fairer from
 To nobler life, to happy
 Nor can the tale which
 Oft have I heard of me
 Revive and flourish
 To fresh renown, and
 So on my foes from dead
 Glare like a meteor, at
 But, Oh, my country,
 Receive me prosp'rous,

ELECTRA

7

paternal dome, to see I come,
the gods to rid the of pollution.
me not dishonour'd from this land!

75

in my father's throne,
me from the scourge of usurpation,

—But now, my good old friend,

80

task which thou hast undertook;

des, will hence, time presses hard;

whose friendly call the issues hang

mortal actions.

Elect. Oh! my fortune——

(Groaning from within.)

Gov. Hark! sure I heard the voice of female sorrow. 85

Orest. Think you, 'twas not the poor Electra groan'd?

Say, shall we stay and listen to her anguish?

Gov. Not far the world!——Begin we from the god;

And his commands fulfil: with due oblations

Appease, invoke the manes of your sire:

90

From hence we shall the hop'd event derive,

And draw a blessing on the pious work.

[Exeunt Orestes and Pylades at one door, Governor and Attendants at another.]

SCENE II.

Elect. *[Alone.]* Oh, sacred light, and, Oh, thou ambient air,

How have ye witness'd my constant sorrows!

in rage of grief,

95

and bleeding bosom!

lask'd with my woe:

heard my despair!

And bed been curst,

and anguish!

100

unhappy sire,

cried battle spar'd;

from my mother flew!

trous joys,

with ring and

105

he hero down:

does an oak.

or complains;

and thee, Oh, father,

With

Without regard to shame or pity murder'd ?
 And I, while life remains, will cherish grief ;
 Each rising morn, and each descending night
 Shall hear my moan : for with incessant wail,
 Like the sad nightingale robb'd of her young,
 Before my father's doors I'll plaintive stand ;
 And my loud wrongs proclaim to ev'ry ear.
 Ye realms of Pluto, and his gloomy consort !
 Infernal Hermes ! You, my potent curses !
 And awful furies, daughters of the gods,
 Behold the great are fallen, unjustly slain !
 And vile adultery stains the royal couch !
 Oh, rise, assist, revenge a murder'd king.
 Send me my brother, my Orestes hither,
 To ease my sorrows, and to bear his part :
 For, Oh ! I sink beneath the dire oppression.

SCENE III.

Electra and Chorus.

Cho. Thou offspring of a most unworthy mother,
 Uncomforted Electra ! wherefore still
 Dost thou with streaming eyes and piercing groans
 For ever mourn the fate of Agamemnon ?
 Indulge affliction, nor permit the space
 Of intervening years to wipe away
 The memory of those snares and female arts
 That caught his noble life ? — Oh, may the man,
 If justice warrant my devoting prayer,
 That wrought his end, fail !

Electra. Oh, gen'rous ma
 Kindly you come to soften
 I know you do, to charm me
 But, Oh ! I must be deaf to
 Nor ever cease to mourn my
 Wherefore I must conjure you
 By all your tender offices of love
 Let me indulge my tears, and be a wretch ;
 Nor urge me to remit my task of sorrow.

Cho. But yet, nor pray'rs nor tears, can soften
 Or bribe th' unpitied Hades to unlock
 Earth's common prison, and send back your father.
 Yet, fond of woe and unavailing passion,

That

E L E C T R A.

Hurly wastes and preys upon your health,
 Turn the ills which mourning will not cure. 150
 You court immod'rate sorrow thus?
 They must be, sure, insensible and stupid,
 Forg'd in murder'd parent's death.
 e rather like the wailing bird,
 n'ring herald of approaching spring, 155
 ever, murder'd Ilys, mourns.
 obe, my heart esteems a goddess;
 Thou monument of unexampled sorrow!
 Lost to thy sex, and hardened to a stone,
 Thou still art Niobe, and weep'st for ever! 160
Cho. Have you, *Electra*, only cause to mourn?
 Are there not those have equal right to grieve?
 Though you surpass them in immod'rate transports.
 How does *Chrysothemis* suppress her anguish?
 And how *Iphigeneia* bear her pain? 165
 Or how *Orestes* droop in secret exile?
Elek. Happy *Orestes*, when the glad *Mycenæ*
 Views him returning to his rightful throne;
 Sent by the sweet direction of the gods!
 Whilst I expect him with unwearied hopes, 170
 Childless, and desolate, debarr'd of wedlock,
 Dissolv'd in tears, and worn away with anguish.
 But cruel he, regardless of my pain,
 Forsakes my love and ardent invitations:
 Gooth'd me still with flatt'ring tidings; 175
 hopes, in vain, of his arrival;
 is hopes; for, Oh! he will not come!—
 air not, lady, for there reigns above
 d, that overlooks mankind;
 ng hand omit your anger; 180
 ports ye all to wild distraction;
 just repentments die forgotten:
 time knows his redressing hour.
 stays on *Erifa's* verdant shore,
Agamemnon's son, back'd with the pow'r 185
 enging *Erebus*, will come;
 ith fury, and redress your wrongs.
 ch of my life has been already spent,
 ought but unavailing hopes;
 ger bear the uneasy state, 190
 An orphan, unsupported, weak, and friendless;

Us'd like a menial in my father's house :
 Robb'd of all rights of birth and princely state ;
 Clad in these homely weeds of wretched wretches,
 And fed with offals from th' imperial table.

Cho. Oh, dismal was the welcome of his triumphs !

Mournful return ! And, Oh ! that bridal room,

To which the unsuspecting husband went,

And met the sudden axe ! Accursed stroke !

By fraud concerted, and by lust perform'd ;

Adult'rous lust with treachery combin'd

In horrid mixture for the horrid act ;

Whether some god or man inspir'd the passion !

Eliz. Oh, day most hated of the rolling year !

Oh, blackest night ! And, Oh, prodigious griefs

Which flow'd from that unutterable deed !

When both their hands upon my father struck,

To speak their union, and make mischief sure.

I too was struck, undone by that dire blow,

And agonizing death lies heavy on me !

But may the great Olympian god, may Jove

Repay their treason with still growing anguish !

Let no short interval of gladness cheer them,

But guilt and black remorse haunt them for ever !

Cho. No more such words : outrage ; call to mind

From what a state of ease your rage has thrown you,

And pull'd down woe by wilful provocation :

Enough of sorrow has thy soul endur'd,

By bearing up and halting the tempest.

Believe it vain t' assail violence

And tempt the rugged

Eliz. Such treasons

My heart is conscious of

Yet danger shall not cease

But while I live, I will

From whom, ye dear

In such extremes of woe

The voice of consolation

Cease, cease your strains of unprevailing comfort :

For never must my labours find an end ;

Never must I have truce with my afflictions :

But be a faithful wretch, and weep for ever.

Cho. Alas !—My love, like a fond mother, pleads

calm your breath; lest your distemper'd wrath
 should be the parent of still greater troubles. 235
Me. Oh! Can my ills admit of an increase?
 piety forget a father's murder?
 at men, what barb'rous nations, say it can?
 let me not be honour'd in their thoughts!
 : were I to be match'd to some such tame 240
 forgiving soul, I would not let the soft
 Unjust infection, clog my tow'ring rage;
 Nor for a moment stop my shrill-tongu'd grief,
 Which flies to gratify my father's shade:
 For if my noble father unreveng'd, 245
 Must moulder into dust, and be forgot;
 Whilst they, triumphant in their happy guilt,
 Laugh at the same revenge that cannot reach them,
 Farewel to virtue, let religious awe
 No more restrain mankind, but outrage flourish! 250
Cho. In yours and in our own behalf we came,
 T' express our duty, and assuage your woes:
 But if our words displeas'd your princely mind,
 You must o'ercome, and we submit in silence.
Me. I had best think that my uneasy load 255
 moderate or strain'd:
 y of sorrow.
 ded, could behold
 not like me resent?
 g ills I see, 260
 od blossom on each other:
 ner who gave me life,
 that wounds my soul.
 ter injur'd house,
 with his assassins; 265
 dig's to take
 the fi, or yield to famine.
 believe drag;
 acted, when I see
 ether's throne; 270
 id robes of state;
 ons on that spot,
 Agamemnon stow'd?
 must divide my soul,
 great injury; 275
 ather's bed,

And

And guilty mother's arms? If virtue suffer
 To call her mother, who with rank offence
 Has injur'd nature in her sacred laws.
 But she enjoys the wretch deform'd with blood,
 Nor fears the furies round th' adult'rous bed;
 But with a wicked triumph at the fact,
 Searches impatient for the welcome day
 Whereon my father fell: Oh, horrid thought!
 And when it comes, in wanton revels, plays,
 Feasts, dances, and with impious sacrifice,
 Thanks all the gods for the successful murder.
 While I, a forc'd spectator of their riot,
 (In mock'ry call'd the feast of Agamemnon)
 In secret mourn; nor am allow'd to vent
 The anguish of my lab'ring heart in freedom:
 For she, with watchful and ungen'rous
 Eyes my distress, and thus upbraids my pain.
 Thou scorn of Heav'n! Have none but thou been griev'd?
 Art thou the only one whose father dy'd?
 Be trebly curs'd, and may th' infernal pow'rs
 Never release thee from the woe thou'rt fond of.
 Such is her language;—but whene'er she's told
 Orestes soon will come, then, then she raves,
 And bellows loud,—Thou source of all my cares,
 This is thy work, who stol'st Orestes from me,
 And nurs'd him up to be thy mother's ruin:
 But thou shalt pay the price of all my fears.
 Thus does she taunt; while her illustrious spouse
 Stands by her side, pleas'd and pleas'd with her
 That trifling coward, who only wars in c
 Who only wars in c
 But while I wait to
 To end my griefs an
 His vengeance sleeps
 Nor leaves me pleas'd
 To flatter woe, and ke
 In such a state 'tis hard to be discreet;
 And not accuse the unassisting gods:
 For in such ills our passions will transgress,
 Rise with our suff'rings, and like them grow boundless!
Chor. Tell me, Electra, is Ægysthus nigh?
 Who might, if he o'er-heard, resent my words.

282

285

290

295

300

315

Ela.

E L E C T R A.

Elect. Oh, think nor I should taste these gentle freedoms
If he were nigh; but, guiltless of my joy,
He traverses the verdant fields of Argos. 320

Cho. With greater confidence I then shall speak;
Nor fear to ask the things I long to know.

Elect. Secure from danger, ask me what you please.

Cho. Then tell me of Orestes, will he come? 325
Or is there still a cause to keep him back?

Elect. He says he comes, but does not what he says.

Cho. Important actions move but slowly on.

Elect. I mov'd not slowly when I sav'd his life.

Cho. Fear not; his virtue will not fail his friends. 330

Elect. In that belief I have protracted woe.

Cho. No more—I see Chrysothemis approach;
Your sister, Madam, this way bends her steps,
And in her hands she bears sepulchral off'rings.

S C E N E IV.

Chrysothemis, Electra, and Chorus.

Chryf. Why will you, sister, at this public gate,
Repeat your grievance in such clam'rous accents? 335
Nor let experience teach you to discard
An impotent and unavailing passion?

Believe that I am conscious of our wrongs;
And would, if I had pow'r, attempt revenge, 340
And let my strong resentment stand confess'd:

But when our weakness dictates to our wrath,
'Tis wiser to submit with lower'd sails,
Than to collect the storm and tempt destruction.

Thus would I counsel you to stifle rage;
Though I confess your indignation just; 345

But if for life, or liberty, or death,
We must obey and stoop to rugged pow'r.

Elect. 'Tis base that you, from such a father sprung,
Should be neglect of his forgotten worth, 350

Side with the faction of an impious mother:
For all your counsels are by her prescrib'd,
And speak her pleasure but at second hand.

Unheeding, confess, and chuse thy crime,
That thou, or know'it not, or forgett'it thy duty. 355

You said but now, if you had pow'r to hate,

3

To hate to purpose, you'd avow your anger;
 Yet when I struggle to revenge my father,
 Far from assisting, you obstruct my work.
 Is not this cowardice, or something worse?
 Tell me what great advantage would arise,
 Should I suspend my grief, and put on gladness?
 Do I not live, though ill the life I lead?
 Ill as it is, it is enough for me:
 Whilst ev'ry day I interrupt their joys,
 Contending still to please my father's shade,
 If the deceas'd are capable of pleasure.
 While you, whose words profess such specious hate,
 Act in concurrence with the murderers.
 But would they give me all my sister's gifts,
 And all the ornaments in which you shine;
 I would not yield a moment to them.—
 Let costly banquets load your wanton table,
 And your soft life in delicacies flow;
 Give me the meanest necessary food,
 The virtue which has earn'd, shall think it rich,
 And add a sweetne's to the homely diet.
 I scorn the guilty honours you have purchas'd,
 And so should you in wisdom: but, O, shame!
 You court disgrace, and when you might be still'd
 The glorious daughter of the best of fathers,
 You are the mother's, her distinguish'd darling!
 Thus at the price of censure, you be
 Your friends, and sell the blood of A

Cho. For Heav'n's sake, let not a
 you:

You both speak well, and both may be
 If you will join, and by each other's pi

Chry. This language I am us'd to hear
 Nor had I now provok'd this repetition
 But that I heard an evil threaten her,
 Which would at once end these incens

Elec. Name it; and if you can pro
 Greater than these I feel, I will obey

Chry. Take then the sum of what I
 Unless you calm these passions, they r
 To force you hence, where you shall n
 The cheerful light of day, but lie ton

In some damp gloomy subterranean prison,
 For from this country; there to groan unheard,
 And breath your sorrows 'midst unwholesome vapours. 400
 But, Oh, be wise; prevent the threaten'd woe;
 Nor blame your sister, who with early care
 Would labour to divert th' unripe destruction.

Elect. And have they then determined thus against me?

Chry. As soon as e'er Agylthus shall return. 405

Elect. Oh, may the threaten'd mischief wing him thither!

Chry. What horrid wish is this, unwary maid?

Elect. That he would come and execute his malice.

Chry. Ha! Are you lost to sense? What would you aim at?

Elect. That I might fly from all of you, as far 410
 As earth has bounds. ———

Chry. ——— Respect you not your life?

Elect. 'This life is wond'rous beautiful indeed,
 Fit to be car'd for!

Chry. ——— Were you wise it might.

Elect. Teach me not, sister, to betray my friends.

Chry. I teach you not, but to obey superiors. 415

Elect. 'Tis yours to flatter, I have no such soul.

Chry. 'Tis prudent not to throw our lives away.

Elect. But glorious to resign them for a father.

Chry. Our father would not wish us to pursue
 Revenge at that rash hazard ———

Elect. ——— Cowards only, 420

And fearful souls, applaud such tim'rous maxims.

Chry. And will you not be caution'd 'gainst affliction?

Elect. No: for I would not quite forego my reason.

Chry. Then I have done, and will pursue my orders.

Elect. What orders! ——— And to whom these fun'ral
 rites? 425

Chry. The queen enjoins me, at my father's tomb,
 From her to make libations.

Elect. ——— How! from her?

To make libations to that hated man?

Chry. To him she kill'd, for so you would infer.

Elect. By whom persuaded, whose advice was this? 430

Chry. 'Tis the result of a nocturnal fright.

Elect. Oh, all ye gods of Argos, aid me now! —

Chry. What grounds for hope derive you from her fears?

Elect. Tell me the vision, and I'll then resolve you.

Chry. Alas! I know but little—

Elect. ——— Tell me then 435

That little! — Little sentences and words
Have often rais'd, and ruin'd men as oft.

Chry. 'Tis whisper'd, that she saw our father come
Again to light, and seem'd once more his wife:
That he took in his hand the regal scepter, 440

(Which once he bore, but now Ægyptus bears)
And fix'd it in the earth; when straight there sprang
From it a thriving branch, which flourish'd wide,
And over-shadow'd all Mycenæ's land.

This did I learn from one who was at hand, 445
When to the rising sun she told her vision,
To deprecate it's omen. More I know not,
But that these rites are owing to its horrors.

Elect. Now I conjure you, by our genial gods,
Obey me; fall not into rash offence; 450
But, e'er it be too late, avoid pollution.

And, dearest sister, let no part of those
Design'd oblations touch my father's tomb;
For 'tis not just, to bring his injur'd shade
Unhallow'd off'rings from an impious hand:
But give them to the winds; or hide them deep 455
In earth, at distance from his awful tomb.

Let the earth keep them for her fun'ral
The fittest off'rings to adorn her grave.

Had she not been the vilest of her sex,
She would not sacrifice to him she slew.

How do you think his injur'd ghost will be
To taste the off'rings which are sent by her?

Who, not content to rob him of his life,
Mangled and hack'd him to disarm resentment

And strove to wipe th' abomination off.
Will impious off'rings satisfy for murder?

And weak libations purge the guilt of blood?
No; sling th' offensive sacrifice away;

And from our heads let each present a lock
Of supplicating hair: too mean the gift!

But all I have to give, except this girdle;
Which take, however plain and unadorn'd.

E L E C T R A.

17

Prostrate, invoke him to arise from earth ;
 To come propitious and destroy our foes ;
 And send Orestes, with avenging force, 475
 To strike the hostile tyrants to the earth :
 Then shall we richer sacrifices pay,
 And crown his ashes with more grateful off'ings.
 My heart suggests, the care of our revenge
 Employs his ghost, and sent the hideous dream : 480
 Therefore, my sister, aid the gen'rous work ;
 The cause of you, and me, and that dear man,
 Our common parent, who is now no more.
Cho. The virgin speaks with piety, and you
 In wisdom should perform the dutious office. 485
Chry. I will : for 'tis a vain and senseless strife,
 For two to die in a work that's just,
 And asks dispatch : But now that I consent,
 By Heav'n ! you must be silent, friends ; for if
 M^r enraged mother should discover ought, 490
 I might have cause to mourn the bold attempt.

[Exit Chrysothemis.]

S C E N E V.

C H O R U S.

Electra remains on the stage while the Chorus sing.

I.

Cho. Or my prophetic soul mistakes,
 Or I in hope from reason err ;
 Or vengeance swift advances makes,
 Upon the conscience-haunted murderer. 495
 Daughter, she comes ; she comes away
 With pow'r and justice in array ;
 I'm strong in hope, the bodsng dream,
 The herald of her awful terrors came.
 The king's resentments shall not cease, 500
 Nor shall the bury wrongs but in redress.
 The vengeful axe that gave the impious blow,
 Mindful of th' imperial woe,
 To hell and heav'n calls out aloud
 For retribution, and for blood. 505

B 3

The

II.

The brazen-footed fury shall appear
 With hundred feet, and hundred hands;
 To execute her fell commands,
 Who yet conceals her wrathful spear.
 Unseen she does her future work survey, 510
 And hovers o'er her unsuspecting prey.
 For impious acts have stain'd the royal bed;
 Acts at which Hymen stood dismay'd,
 While by concerted guile betray'd
 To give adult'ry scope, the husband bled. 515
 But I in hope, to foresee some dire event,
 The threat'ning visions of the night
 Shall have their force, nor be content
 To punish guilt with base afflict.
 Let birds, dreams, divinations lose their force, 520
 And solemn oracles no more discourse;
 If this appearance passes hence
 Without an happy consequence.

III.

Oh, inauspicious chariot-race,
 Which love-instructed Pelops won; 525
 What mighty mischiefs hast thou done,
 To this ill-fated place?
 For e'er since Myrtulus was thro'
 Headlong from the chariot, down
 The promontory's horrid brow
 Into the suffocating surge below;
 Unnumber'd evils have befall'n the state
 And Argos felt successive forms of fate

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ELECTRA.

19

ACT II. SCENE I.

Clytemnestra, Electra and Chorus.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

YOU'RE free, you think, and now may walk at large,
 Because you know Ægysthus is not here ;
 Who would confine your walks, not let you range,
 To vent your spleen, and execrate our friends.
 But in his absence you regard not me ;
 I am the theme of your unmanner'd railings ;
 You brand me with injustice ; say, I'm fierce,
 And play the tyrant over you and yours.
 But I abuse you not : I only pay
 Your handsome compliments to me in kind ;
 And, first insulted, by return reproach.
 And still your father is the stale pretence,
 As if I murder'd him : I did, I own it ;
 I own I did it ; and 'twas bravely done.
 Justice commanded, and I gave the blow ;
 And you, if wise, had help'd the glorious work :
 For he whom you so obstinately mourn,
 Murder'd your sister ; he, of all the Greeks
 Could find a daughter for a sacrifice,
 And bore to see her butcher'd. Cruel man !
 A stranger to the pangs of bleeding nature,
 The pains a mother feels.
 Whom was his fair victim slain ?
 He ? You will not surely say it ?
 Liberty to kill my daughter ?
 His brother Menelaus ?
 He die, who kill'd my child !
 Her children of his own ?
 They both had dy'd than she ;
 They and their mother dy'd,
 Not alone the war began.
 O God of Hell preter-
 Natural to any second victim ?
 A wretched father lost
 But Menelaus not ?
 Proclaim him rash and impious ?
 Think, my censure has condemn'd him ;
 And

5

10

15

20

25

30

35

And

And so would injur'd Iphigenia too,
 Could the departed speak, accuse her father.
 I do not then repent of what I did ;
 But if you think I ought, take heed you speak
 In terms of calm respect, and urge your reasons.

Elect. You cannot plead that you were now provok'd,
 And therefore did retort opprobrious language.
 But might I be permitted, I would try
 To plead my father's cause, and sister's too.

Cly. You may : and did you always thus address me,
 'T would spare you that reproach you murmur at.

Elect. First, you confess that you my father slew ;
 And can there be a blacker crime than this ;
 The cause be just or no ? But that it was not,
 I'll shew you ; drawn by your adult'rous love,
 Not for your daughter, but your present spouse,
 You did the action. Ask Diana why,
 Why she delay'd so long the courted winds ?
 Or what the goddesses will not, I will tell you.

'Tis said, my father, sporting in her grove,
 Put up a noble-spotted branching stag ;
 And as he chas'd and slew the glorious prey,
 In triumph utter'd some unhappy word.
 The goddesses, to revenge th' insult, detain'd
 The fleet in Aulis, till my wretched fire
 Should make atonement with his daughter's blood.

Thus fell she ; nor could any meaner bribe
 Purchase a wind to swell their flagging sails ;
 For which, and not for Menelaus's sake,
 With struggling sorrows and reluctant pang,
 At last he yielded to the sacrifice.

But had he done it for his brother's sake,
 Should you have kill'd him therefore ? By what law ?

Take heed, lest you repent the rules you make ;
 By your own laws yourself will stand condemn'd :

If murder must with murder be repaid,
 Justice will tell you, you are next to bleed ;

Thus ev'n your own defence was turn'd against you.

But tell me, if you can, on what account
 You now persist in execrable guilt ?

Why have you commerce with the bloody wretch,
 Who was th' abettor of your horrid crime ?

Why propagate by him a lawless brood,

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And banish far into another land
 The virtuous offspring of your husband's bed?
 Can this be reconcil'd? Or will you say
 These are the farther proofs of your revenge?
 'Tis base to say it; it can ne'er be good 85
 To wed a traitor for a daughter's sake.
 Yet, deaf to just reproof, you spurn at counsel;
 Cry, that 'tis insolence t' upbraid a parent;
 And shoot with all the arrows of your tongue.
 I have a mistress, not a mother in you, 90
 Oppress'd with hardships, and condemn'd to all
 That you and your curs'd consort will impose.
 Nay, scarce my brother did escape your rage;
 Who wears out wretched life in anxious exile.
 The villain whom you oft upbraid me with; 95
 And say, I nourish a revenger for you!
 And be assur'd, I wanted not the will;
 Therefore proclaim me to the world at large;
 Brand me with impudence; call me soul railer;
 The signal characters shall make me known, 100
 And mark me out for Clytemnestra's daughter!
Cho. I see, her fierce resentment blazes high,
 Regardless whether reason rules her anger.
Cly. And what regards can she receive from me,
 Who thus upbraids and vilifies her mother? 105
 Wretched wretch!—Believe you not, my friends,
 I blush at any action?
 You mistake!—I blush at what I do;
 I blame the words I speak
 My station, age or tortures; 110
 My actions and malignant soul
 I do not blame to be rude against my will;
 I do not flourish by example.
 You railer! do my actions teach,
 Your tongue to grow offensive? 115
 My offence that speaks; you do the things,
 Whose proper language must be told.
 I do not blame Diana, when Ægisthus comes,
 To insult me unreveng'd.
 I do not blame you of the liberty you gave; 120
 I do not blame you, but will not hear with temper.
 Do not suffer me to make oblations,

But

But interrupt with inauspicious words,
Because I bade you speak?

Electra. Go on, perform

Th' intended rites; I will no longer stop
The meritorious office, but be silent.

125

Clytemnestra. Then lift thou up the suppliant fruits on high;

[*To her Attendant.*]

Which, offer'd to the sacred God of Day,
Shall free me from the fears which now I bear.

Oh, Phœbus! thou, whose hallow'd image stands

130

Before this palace, hear my hidden sense;

I speak not among friends, nor is it fate

Here to unfold the secrets of my heart

Before thy radiant light, when she is by;

Lest with her envy, and her babbling tongue,

135

She spread the story over all the city.

But hear me thus—The vision of last night,

The doubtful dream, which sleeping I beheld,

If it be prosperous, Oh, Lycian King,

Fulfil and ratify its kind intents;

140

If ill, turn all its horrors on my foes;

Nor prosper those who would disturb my state,

And plot in private to undo my pow'r

Thus let me always live, from danger free,

And rule this kingdom and this house as now;

145

Join'd to those friends to whom I now am join'd;

Still crown'd with bliss, and with such children who

Nor hate, nor enviously disturb my joys.

Grant this, Apollo, and look down propitious;

Grant this, and in the manner which I ask

150

The rest thou know'st, altho' I speak it not;

For gods have pow'r to read our inmost thoughts,

And nought is hid'd from the sons of Jove.

SCENE II.

Governor, Clytemnestra, Electra, and Chorus.

Gov. Ye virgins, may a stranger hope to learn,
If this tall fabric be the royal palace?

Cho. It is.

Gov. — And this the Queen whom I behold!
Her dress and person speak th' imperial rank.

Cho. You're right; 'tis she.

Gov. ——— Then hail, Oh, Queen! I come
To bring you and Ægysthus grateful news
From one who is your friend.

Cly. ——— I embrace the news ——— 160
But next inform me from what friend you come.

Gov. From Phocis, from Phanoteus, to relate
A business of concern ———

Cly. ——— Pronounce it, stranger;
The man you come from speaks the errand good.

Gov. To sum up all, Orestes is no more. 165

Elect. Ah, wretched maid! It brings me to the grave.

Cly. What said you, stranger? Listen not to her.

Gov. I say again, Orestes is no more.

Elect. I part with him, and am too no more!

Cly. At distance howl! ——— But, stranger, you pro-
ceed. 170

Instruct us in the manner of his fate.

Gov. To this was I employ'd — Know, mighty Queen,
When young Orestes at the plains arriv'd,
Where Grecia celebrates her Pythian games;
Soon as the herald's shrill-proclaiming voice
Summon'd each champion to the noble sports,
He enter'd the broad lists, bright as a god,
The admiration of the throng'd spectators!

He first to recount the things he did;
He stated course of games he ran,
And triumph ev'ry prize away. 180

His youth was hymn'd by ev'ry tongue;
His loud by th' herald's voice an Argive,
His name, Agamemnon's son,
The chief of Greece! — And thus he flourish'd. 185

He saw the gods oppose the mightiest man,
He sink beneath th' unequal match!

At next succeeding morn arose,
The nature of the lusty contests;
He saw the rival troop advanc'd, 190

He saw conquest in the chariot-race.
He saw them speed so; for when his steeds,

His hopes, successful wing'd their way;
He saw them crown'd him with the promis'd prize:

He saw him fall with a mistaken breadth,
He 195
He

He struck unwary on the outmost column,
 And broke his axle short—He, with the shock,
 Fell from his seat, and in the twisted harness
 Intangled hung—Him, thus precipitate,
 The frighted horses, with confusion wild, . . . 200
 Dragg'd to the middle courie. With yells and shrieks
 The pitying crowd beheld, and mourn'd the youth,
 Fall'n from renown, and lost to future conquests!
 Now dash'd against the ground, and now aloft
 Rebounding furious; till the charioteers 205
 (But, Oh, too late!) stopp'd his unruly steeds,
 And loos'd him, with unseemly wounds deform'd,
 Torn, bruis'd, disfigur'd, and no longer known
 To be Orestes, by his dearest friends!
 Some Phocian men, appointed to the task, 210
 Strait burnt his body, and have brought, inbra'd,
 His dust, the poor remains of all his greatness,
 To find a tomb in his paternal soil.

Such was his death; how terrible to hear!
 But, Oh, how more afflicting to the sight! 215
 The worst of spectacles these eyes have seen.

Cho. Alas! alas! then all my master's race
 Are perish'd, rooted up, and quite extinguish'd.

Cly. Oh, Jove! what news is this? Of joy, or horror?
 That crowns with safety, yet with sorrow wounds;
 Whilst to assure my life, I lose my son. 220

Gov. Why does the present story make you sad?

Cly. I feel the mother struggling in my soul.

Gov. Vain and unwelcome then is this my labour.

Cly. How vain, or how unwelcome? Since you come 225.

To bring me certain tokens of his death,
 Who, tho' my son, and suckl'd from my breast,
 Yet who forsook me, like a vagrant fled,
 And chose a stranger's for his mother's house;
 Who never saw me since he left the land;
 But, branding me with parricide, he still
 With rebel menaces has stabb'd my peace.

I scarce have slept by night, or wak'd by day,
 Secure or pleasant; but each anxious minute
 Seem'd but a short reprieve from instant death. 230
 But this kind morn disturthens me of fear,
 From him, and her; from her, the greater plague!

Beasts

Because domestic, in my bosom warm'd,
Th' ungrateful serpent sucks my vital blood.

But hurt no longer by her taunting malice,
My easy life shall flow with pleasure on. 210

Electra. Wretched Electra!—Now it's time to mourne
Thy fate, Orestes, when thy mother triumphs
In thy destruction thus—Gods! is it well?

Cly. With him 'tis wond'rous well, tho' not with
thee. 215

Electra. Avenging goddess, hear her contumelious!

Cly. She has already heard, and well determin'd.

Electra. Ay, now intult; your joys indeed are full.

Why should Orestes help to make them less?

Cly. He performs his duty, performing anger. 220

He will not, therefore, deferre our love,

But will attend our clamours.

Electra. Orestes, stay, till I may now depart.

Cly. Not so, my daughter; he would dishonour us,

And him that sent you, thus to let you go. 225

Enter the palace, and let's leave this railer

To howl abroad, and spread her stubborn grief.

[*Exeunt Clytemnestra, Attendants and Governor.*]

SCENE III.

Electra and Chorus.

Electra. Had she the marks of sorrow? Did the wretch

Confess despair, or like a mother mourn?

But with malignant pleasure stalk'd away! 230

Dearest Orestes, how hast thou undone me!

Thy love has kill'd me, ravish'd all the hopes

Which my soul had fix'd her last support,

Which thou would'st one day come, and with thy hand

Uprooge my father and unhappy me! 235

Where shall I retreat, forlorn, depriv'd

Of thee, and of my father? Now again,

Must I be dragg'd to serve the cur'd men

Which kill'd my father. Can sweet Heav'n permit?

By the gods, I will no longer dwell 240

With the hated roof which covers them:

Here on earth will make my humble bed,

And mourn, till life is worn away to nothing.

If I'm a torment, let them kill me strait;
 For I am sick of life, and fain would die:
 When life is irksome, death is a relief.

S C E N E IV.

Electra joins in the Chorus.

I.

Cho. Does not Apollo see? Will Jove not hear?
 When will it thunder, if it now be clear?

Elect. Alas! my fate——

Cho. Why weep'st thou so?

Elect. Oh!——

Cho. Soften thy tumultuous woe.

Elect. You kill me if you stop my grief.

Cho. How?

Elect. ——By teaching vain relief.

By offering comfort to restore,

When he in whom I hop'd is now no more.

By such unavailing care

Y' insult my griefs, and aggravate despair.

II.

Cho. The fate of Amphiarus know,
 By female avarice betray'd:

A victim to his wife's persuasions made:

But now the monarch in the shades below——

Elect. Oh, killing thought!

Cho. ——Immortal reigns;

A prophet in th' Elysian

Elect. Woe on the cause!

Cho. Ay, woe, indeed,

On th' accursed matron's head!

Elect. But she too late her treason rued.

Cho. I grant, revenge her crime pursued

Elect. That injur'd monarch found a foe

His discontented shade t' appease

But my unhappy sire has none

To give the plaintive phantom

III.

Oh, virgin, great is thy distress!

Too well I know

The weight of my oppressing woe;

Of griefs successive, long, and numberless I

With justice you of misery complain.

305

Therefore no longer wound my ear

With Comfort's voice; nor hope to cheer

My soul, that ne'er shall taste again —

What say'st thou, maid?

———— The sweets of peace,

Ne'er be charm'd to joy or ease:

310

Now the gen'rous youth is gone,

Hope and vengeance are undone.

IV.

Cho. Death is the portion of mankind.

Not like him, by furious coursers borne,

Quais'd, disfigur'd, mangled, torn,

315

all all a death of horror find?

Dark, unforeseen is fate's surprise.

is fate was unforeseen indeed,

In a foreign land to bleed;

Without these hands to close his eyes.

310

Happy Prince!

———— No obsequies to have;

nor weeping friends to mourn thee to the grave.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III. SCENE I.

Chrysothemis, Electra, and Chorus.

CHRYSOTHEMIS.

NOR, my dearest, I forgot my sex,

Neglected decency, and ran impatient

bring you grateful news; whose glad surprise

will end those ills which you so long have mourn'd.

C 1

Elek.

Elect. Where canst thou find a cure for my
tunes,

On which no beam of comfort e'er can dawn?

Chry. Enlarge thy hopes: Orestes is arriv'd;
Arriv'd as surely as I live to speak it.

Elect. Or rather dost thou rave, unhappy girl!
And sport with my afflictions and thy own.

Chry. By all the gods, I do not trifle with you,
Or dally with your woes, but know he's come.

Elect. By what unerring arguments convinc'd,
That you so strongly bend to their report.

Chry. I owe not to report th' uncertain tale, 15
But to these eyes, that saw th' unerring signs.

Elect. What signs? What could'st thou see, too cre-
To kindle this fantastic fever up? [Orestes enters]

Chry. Hear, I conjure you, ere you quite condemn,
And judge, if reason warrant my assertion. 20

Elect. If the relation gives you pleasure, speak.

Chry. Thus, then: As I approach'd the hallow'd tomb
Wherein my father's peaceful ashes lie,
I saw the ground with streams of milk distain'd,
Fresh pour'd, and flowing from the tufted hillocks; 25
And all the flowers the genial season yields,
Strew'd in a circle round the sepulchre.

I saw, and wond'ring; and look'd all around,
I lest any one unseen should steal upon me,
And interrupt my search. But when I saw 30
All things in solitude and perfect rest,

I nearer to the tomb advanc'd, and th'
Upon the utmost pile, a lock of hair,
Fresh cut, in waves was spread; when
Presented young Orestes to my thought
And whisp'ring me, 'twas his which I
The tokens of that dear-lov'd man's
I took it up, and spoke suspicious words,
And my glad eyes o'erflow'd with tears
And then my conscious soul believ'd as
Those fun'ral honours came from none
To whom but me, or you, belong'd this
I did it not, I'm sure; nor you, I think
How could you, who from hence are
A moment's absence, tho' to worship f

ther——she delights not in such acts ;

could she do it, but we must have known.

But Orestes then could pay these honours.

Comfort, sister ; not the same harsh god

remitting fury still pursues ;

50

From o'erblown, a pleasing calm succeeds ;

perhaps, the low'ring scene will change,

our souls, and brighten them with gladness.

Oh, senseless raptures ! how I pity thee !

What ! is the news ungrateful then at last ?

Elect. You know not where you are, nor what you speak.

Chry. Do I not know what these my eyes beheld ?

Elect. Lose not an hope in search of poor Orestes,
Nor build thy safety there ; for he—is dead.

Chry. Oh, heav'n ! where did you learn the fatal news ?

60

Elect. From one who stood and saw the youth expire.

Chry. I stand amaz'd ! Where is this fatal herald ?

Elect. Careless'd within, and welcome to my mother.

Chry. Oh, fatal ! Whose were all those oil'rings then,
Which grac'd my father's tomb ?

Elect. ————— We must suppose
Some friend has plac'd them there, the monuments
Of dead Orestes' love.

65

Chry. ————— Deceitful joy !
I halted, ravish'd with the strong delight,
Nor dreamt of this disastrous turn of fate.
But now too well I find our former ills

70

Gain their ground, and call up fresh afflictions !

Elect. Too true th' increase ; but if you'll learn of me,
I'll teach you how we may redeem ourselves.

Chry. Oh, can we raise the dead to life again ?

Elect. Believe not my conceits tow'r up to madness. 75

What would'st thou then prescribe, that I can't

Elect. Resolve but to perform what I advise. [and int

Chry. 160 our honour, fear not a repulse.

Elect. Think nothing can without some pains succeed.

Chry. I do, and will contribute to my pow'r. 80

Elect. Hear then the resolution I have form'd ;

How vain to urge our want of friends to you,
Who know that we have none ; that cruel death

Has torn them hence, and we are left alon
 While yet Orestes liv'd, my flatter'd grief
 Encourag'd hopes that he would one day ce
 And satisfy my father's crying blood :
 But, now he is no more, I look on you,
 'To aid your sister in the pious work ;
 And help to kill th' assassin, curs'd Agysthu
 I'll spread the counsels of my soul before yo
 And we with open bosoms will converse.
 Why should you still be passive in your wro
 Is there redress in hope, but from ourselves ?
 Does not oppression grind us every way ?
 Are we not spoil'd of our paternal rights ?
 Debar'd of Hymen's joys, and wasting all
 Our bloom of life in virgin solitude ?
 And, Oh, believe it must be ever thus !
 Nor will the tyrant's caution give us room
 'To propagate a race to his destruction.
 But if you'll follow the advice I give,
 Your sire and brother shall conspire to praise,
 And, from the grave, applaud the gen'rous action.
 Then shall you be saluted, noble, free,
 As nature and your princely birth design'd ;
 And worthy youths shall sigh for your embrace
 For virtue is a charm fires every breast.
 Do you not see what glory, what applause,
 You purchase to yourself and me by this ?
 What citizen, what stranger, seeing us,
 Will not with these encomiums mark us out ?—
 Behold the sisters !—friends, the rival pair,
 Who from destruction rais'd their father's hou
 Who brav'd the fury of triumphant foes,
 Attack'd their pomp, and struck the righteous l
 Of life regardless !—These should always be
 'The subjects of our wonder and our l
 These should be honour'd, courted, and
 And in our feasts, assemblies and our street
 Hymn'd and distinguish'd for heroic souls .
 Such language shall we hear from every tong
 And live eternal in the voice of fame.
 Follow me, then ; revenge your father's bloo
 Make dead Orestes smile, and rescue me ;

Rise seue yourself; shake off the guilty chain:
For gen'rous souls disdain a vile dependance.

Cho. Prudence is useful in affairs like these,
To counsel, or embrace th' important task.

Chry. Had she but weigh'd her words before she
spoke, 130

she would have kept what now she has not done,
A modest prudence, and an useful caution.

What prospect of success, that thus you arm,
And ask me to assist the daring work?

Regard your feeble sex and tender form, 135

In strength inferior to the foes you brave:

Behold how Fortune woos them with her smiles,
Who are crush'd by fate, and waste to nothing.

Who then, invading one defended thus,

But must expect the death he thought to give? 140

Take heed we do not aggravate our ills,
And purchase new distress, if overheard:

Tis not th' advantage of that vain renown,
Which, panting to obtain, we earn by death!

Tho' death, perhaps, will be esteem'd a mercy; 145

And when 'tis courted, life shall be our doom;

To suffer on, and taste protracted anguish.

But, I conjure you, ere we tur'ous run
Into the gripe of Fate, and cast away

The last remains of Agamemnon's blood, 150

Restrain your rage, and what your rashness utter'd

Shall perish, and be lost to my remembrance.

Be wise at length, taught by prevailing woe;

Once unable to contend, submit.

Be rul'd; for wisdom and a prudent mind, 155

Are the greatest goods that men enjoy.

Your answer does not disappoint my thoughts;

I would reject the work:

The task remains for me.

And shall not want a hand. 160

Have you been of this heroic soul

When he fell, you'd done it then!

He was the soul, but wanted years for action.

Do not tempt them still for desp'rate acts like these.

Barren of counsel! barren of assistance! 165

Your attempts oft crush their wretched author.

Exit.

Elect. Your wisdom I admire, your tears I hate.

Chry. The time will come when I shall have your praise.

Elect. The time will never come, when you'll deserve it.

Chry. Th' event of things will best determine this. 170

Elect. Begone; for I expect no aid from thee.

Chry. You might. The fault is in your own resolves.

Elect. Go, and betray my counsels to the Queen!

Chry. I nourish not an hate that thirsts your ruin.

Elect. Yet you could brook to draw me to dishonour. 175

Chry. Not to dishonour, but to prudent care.

Elect. Must I then follow where your fancy leads?

Chry. When you think better, you shall lead.

Elect. ————— 'Tis true

That she who speaks so well should act so ill.

Chry. The condemnation on yourself returns.

Elect. But does not justice warrant my designs?

Chry. 'Tis dangerous to be always strictly just.

Elect. Such maxims ne'er shall regulate my;

Chry. You would have cause to thank me if I

Elect. By Heav'n, I'll not be fear'd from
solves.

Chry. And will you not be wrought to safer

Elect. No; evil counsel is the worst of thin

Chry. You set a wrong construction on my w

Elect. My purpose is not new, a start of pass
But weigh'd with reason, and confirm'd by t

Chry. I'm gone, since you my reasons dis
As I your actions.

Elect. ————— Wherefore go you
I would not load you with my secrets more,
Tho' you should kneel in tears, and beg to sha
It argues folly to pursue a trifle.

Chry. Enjoy your fancied wisdom by you
When ruin'd, you'll too late approve my c

{ E . . C

SCENE II.

C H O R U S.

Electra remains on the Stage while the Chorus sings.

I.

Why, when th' inhabitants of air,
 With tender duty, grateful care,
 Grant their aged parents food 200
 To whom their little souls they ow'd ;
 Why do not reas'ning men the same,
 And their whole lives by those dumb patterns frame ?
 Slain by Jove's shafts with terror bright,
 By heav'nly Themis, and eternal right, 205
 The wretch that dares their pow'r, shall soon
 Be from his guilty triumphs thrown.
 Thou, Fame, that dost all mortal actions know,
 Thy melancholy trumpeter blow ;
 Pierce the centre with the sound, 210
 The ears of the Atridæ wound ;
 While thou dost a tale relate,
 Full of sorrow, full of fate !

II.

How all their house in wild disorder stands ;
 The children disfigure their friendly hands ; 215
 Electra, wretched maid !
 A thousand ills betray'd,
 Her father melts in tears,
 Her constant sorrow wears ;
 Her sorrow-singing strains 220
 Her mournful nightingale complains.
 Her fears of danger and of death,
 Could a victory obtain,
 Her two domestic furies slain,
 Her glorious cause resign her breath. 225
 Who, of noble parents born,
 Slave to guilt and impious scorn ?

III.

E L E C T R A.

III.

The well-descended and the great,
 Throw off the vile incumb'ring weight
 Of things that would obscure their fame, 230
 Assert their glory, and redeem their name.
 Thou, Oh, noble, wretched air!
 Who hast a life of irksome woes
 Before dishonour'd honours chose;
 Thou shalt double praises wear; 235
 Stand eternally renown'd,
 With justice and with wisdom crown'd.

IV.

Oh, may'st thou live, succeed, and glory
 In strength above the tyrants' seat;
 As much as now thou art below, 240
 And crush'd by their injurious pow'r.
 I've seen thee struggling with thy fate,
 Inimitably thine;
 Amidst thy sorrows resolutely great,
 Religious, constant, and divine. 245

END of the THIRD ACT.

ACT IV, SCENE I.

Orestes, Pylades, Electra, Chorus, and Attendants on Orestes.

ORESTES.

YF virgins, will your goodacts set me

If, misinform'd by guides, I tread

Cho. Whom do you seek, or whither w

Orest. My search determines in Egypt

Cho. This is the dome: accuse not y

Orest. Which of you will inform the r

Some Phocian men have business with A

Elect. Oh, heav'ns! are these the mess

Who bring the proofs of the report we he

Strophius. I know not what you heard; but aged Stro-
phius 10

catch'd me here with news about Orestes.

Electra. What is it, stranger? Oh, I shake for fear!

Strophius. In that small urn we bring the small remains
his dead body.

Electra. ——— Oh, my wretched state!

It is the measure of my sorrows full.

Strophius. If these your tears are for Orestes shed, 15

know, that this urn contains the man you mourn.

Electra. Oh, then, if ever pity touch'd your breast,

Permit me to receive it in these arms;

To mourn my own and his disastrous fate, 20

And wash his ashes with unfeigned tears.

Orestes. Whichever she be, surrender her the urn;

She asks not like a foe; but all her words

Bespeak a friend's concern, or kindred love.

Electra. Oh, dear memorial of my dearest friend! 25

Ye scanty relics of Orestes!—Oh,

How different from him my hopes had form'd!

From him I sent, do I receive you now?

Dissolv'd to dust, and crumbling into nothing.

I sent you forth a glorious blooming child;

But, Oh, that I had dy'd an hundred times,

Ere thus condemn'd you to a luckless exile!

Stain'd from thy mother's rage, and sav'd from slaughter;

For on that day thou might'st have fall'n secure, 30

As if Agamemnon's tomb!

Stretch'd on a foreign shore

There no sister was at hand,

and stiffen'd limbs, or bear

up thy fun'ral flame.

When thy fingers' hands at length you come, 40

to kiss this little urn.

Wife! I had a table nursing cares,

and I had paid your youth,

and I had nurs'd o'er your infant years,

Oh! *Electra* rear'd thee up, 45

and I had snatch'd thee from thy mother's task;

and I had found joy above thy mother's raptures,

and I had been in distinguish'd passion.

But now thy father has mow'd down all my labours,

And,

And, like a whirlwind, swept their mem'rs
 And thee with them. My father went before
 Now I am dead to thee, and thou to me.
 Our foes insult; our mother, in contempt
 Of nature, triumphs, and grows mad with
 On whom I long have sed delusive hopes
 That thou would'st come, and reap the venge
 But fate has frustrated the just event,
 And mock'd my expectations with thy dust.
 Oh, weight of sorrow! most untimely change
 Unhappy progress, and destructive games!
 How hast thou kill'd thy sister, poor Orestes!
 Receive me, therefore to thy little house,
 Like thee, a shadow: so may we converse,
 And meet below, to mourn our mutual suff'rings
 For whilst thou wert on earth, my soul partok
 Of all thy pleasures, griev'd in all thy pains;
 And therefore would I die and share thy tomb:
 For all is peace, all quiet in the grave.

Cho. Oh, think, Electra, on your mortal state!
 Think too, Orestes, like yourself, was mortal,
 And let that calm your sorrows. Death's a debt
 All owe to nature, all at times must pay.

Orest. What shall I say? My bosom swells for vent,
 And I'm no longer master of my tongue.

Elect. Whence is th' oppression of your heaving
 breast?

Orest. Is that Electra's celebrated face?

Elect. This is her face; but all its charms are dead.

Orest. Curse on the suff'rings that have spoil'd
 beauty!

Elect. How can my griefs from thee deserve this?

Orest. Oh, beautiful form, consum'd and
 sorrows!

Elect. All your complaints will centre in this.

Orest. To waste her youth in virgin solitude.

Elect. Why dost thou look upon me thus, and

Orest. I was a stranger to my griefs till now.

Elect. And can you see them by reflection?

Orest. I see thee vex'd with unexampled wrong.

Elect. You see but little of the ills I bear.

Orest. Can sorrow furnish out a scene more

Elet. Yes; to be forc'd to dwell with murderers.

Orest. Of whom?

Elet. — My father: forc'd to be their slave. 90

Orest. Who is the author of this cruel force?

Elet. One whole fell actions give the lie to nature;

And say, she's not my mother. —

Orest. — But the means?

Does she by strong compulsion bow you down,

Or savagely withdraw your life's support? 95

Elet. By all th' extremes her impious heart can think,
She gives me woe —

Orest. — Is no protector near?

Elet. None; he that would have been, is here—in dust.

Orest. My heart is wounded with your helpless state.

Elet. 'Thou only hast with kind compassion view'd
me. 100

Orest. I only feel the sympathetic pain.

Elet. Dost thou to ties of blood owe thy compassion?

Orest. Might I confide my fortunes with these maids,
You then should learn —

Elet. — Their faith is bound to me.

Orest. Set down the urn, and you shall hear my
story. • 105

Elet. Now, by the gods, let me possess this treasure.

Orest. Be counsell'd, maid; you will not err in this.

Elet. By all the honours of your birth, I beg,
Force not these dear remains from my embrace.

Orest. You must not keep them —

Elet. — Oh, increase of woe!
'twere deny'd to bury thee, Orestes. 110

Orest. Auspicious speak; your sorrow is not just.

Elet. Do I not justly mourn my brother's death?

Orest. The word is out of time; forbear these sounds.

Elet. Am I not worthy then to mourn his fate? 115

Orest. Of nought unworthy; but your sorrow err.

Elet. What, when I bear his ashes in my hands?

Orest. You only carry his imagin'd dust.

Elet. Ah! where is then the wretched youth interr'd?

Orest. No where—the living covet not a grave. 120

Elet. Is he alive? —

Orest. — He is, if I am so.

Elet. And art thou he?

My father

Orest. ——— Behold my father's signet,
And know your brother from the happy proof.

Elect. Oh, blessed day!

Orest. ——— I join to bless it with you.

Elect. And do I hear thee speak?

Orest. ——— Distrust not, maid.

125

Elect. Do my arms hold thee?

Orest. ——— May they ever do so.

Elect. My dear companions, do you see *Orestes*,
Reviving by those arts that spoke him dead?

Cho. I see, Oh, virgin! and the sudden joy
Trickles in tears of pleasure from my eyes.

130

Elect. Oh, thou lov'd offspring of my much-lov'd sire,
You're come, you've found a long-expecting friend!
You're come, you've seen whom long you wish'd to see!

Orest. I'm come; but speak not with so loud a joy.

Elect. Wherefore?

Orest. ——— Lest they within o'er-hear your trans-
ports.

Elect. But, by Diana, the unconquer'd
Electra will not condescend to fear
What women's impotence can do against us.

Orest. Remember, women have their manly

Elect. Oh, you have set before my eyes a
The glaring image of my father's wrongs;
An ever-living scene of villainy,
Ne'er to be expiated, ne'er forgot!

Orest. I know our wrongs, and at a proper
You shall relate the mournful tale entire.

Elect. It is a theme will suit with ev'ry time
But most with this; for at this present hour
I have regain'd the liberty of speech.

Orest. Be studious to preserve what you've

Elect. How?

Orest. By restraining these extatic joys.

Elect. Who could be silent in a joy like mine
Who smother the big rapture, thus transported
When I behold thee in a glad surprisè,
As ris'n from death, and by a wonder rescu'd?

Orest. You saw me, when the gods first
came.

Elect. My joys encrease with every word thou speak'st
 And thy last accents yield superior pleasure.
 For if the gods instructed thy return,
 Kind Heav'n concerns itself in our distress,
 And sure will prosper what itself began. 160

Orest. I would indulge the transports of your joy,
 But fear they're too excessive to be safe.

Elect. Since after such a painful age of absence,
 At length you come to bless my longing eyes, 165
 That have been quench'd with sorrow, do not now—

Orest. What must I not?

Elect. ——— Deprive me of the joy,
 Th' unmeasur'd joy I feel in gazing on thee.

Orest. I will not, sister; 'twould displease me much,
 Should any one attempt in that to wrong thee.

Elect. And does my fondness please thee?

Orest. ——— Should it not? ——— 170

Elect. Oh, friends, I heard the dreadful tale of death!

Then my strong passion was without a voice,

Compell'd to hear, nor suffer'd to lament:

But now I hold thee, and thy lovely form,

Whose image sorrow could not'er erase, 175

With cordial smiles revives my fainting soul.

Orest. Oh, stop this wild career of swelling pleasure!

Nor tell me now my mother's impious deeds;

Nor how *Aegisthus* drains my father's house,

Squanders his wealth, and riots in his substance. 180

Th' untimely speech would hinder our design.

Rather instruct the course of my revenge:

Let all we with open force rush boldly on them,

Or baffle licens'd fraud deceive our foes,

And suddenly surprize them into ruin? 185

But, Oh, take heed, suppress your struggling joy,

Nor let your mother trace its infant pleasures!

Still wear the sorrow which you did before,

And for my death suppos'd, dissembling sigh.

When fate has crown'd us with th' events we wish, 190

Then may we smile, and give a loose to joy.

Elect. Oh, brother, still your pleasure shall be mine!

For all my pleasure takes its rise from you:

No comforts has *Electra* from herself;

Nor would I rob you of a moment's ease, 195

To purchase to myself the greatest joy :
 For should my transports stop your glorious aim
 They would affront the now assisting pow'rs.
 You know th' affairs within, and have been told
 Agesthus is not there ; my mother is.
 But harbour not a thought, that she shall e'er
 Behold a transport kindle on this cheek ;
 Hate shall controul and dash each rising pleasure
 And ev'n beholding thee, my tears atreth
 Shall stream for joy : for how should I forbear,
 Who in the space of one short morn have seen thee
 Dead and alive, miraculous surprize !
 Should my dead father now return from earth,
 I should not wonder, but believe my sense.
 Since then so unexpected thou art come,
 Perform the work which else was doom'd for me :
 For ere you came, my soul had entertain'd
 Resolves of vengeance, with a glorious view
 Of noble freedom, or of noble death.

210

Orest. But soft : for some approach us from within.
Elect. Strangers, go in ; — ye messengers of
 None can refuse, yet none with joy receive..

S C E N E II.

*Governor, Orestes, Pylades, Attendants, Electors,
 Chorus.*

Gov. Oh, lost to wisdom, and all prudent tho'
 Have you abandon'd all concern for life ?
 Shook hands with reason, and bid Fate defiance
 Who stand not near, but in the midst of danger
 And those the greatest too, yet know it not ?
 For had not I secur'd these outward gates,
 Employ'd their ears, and guarded ev'ry passage,
 Your measures had by this, been all betray'd ;
 But I have cover'd you as yet with care ;
 Wherefore give o'er these talkative delays ;
 And this insatiate burst of noisy joy ;
 And enter straight : for in attempts like these,
 Delays are ill, when deeds require dispatch.

Orest. Are all things ready to receive me the

Gov. All, all ; nor can they know you.

- Orest.* ————— Then you told
The necessary tale of my decease.
- Gov.* Before, you're dead to all the world but us.
- Orest.* Did they with raptures hear the news, or how?
- Gov.* Suspend the long recital till anon; 250
For all looks well within, yet all's not well.
- Elek.* For Heav'n's sweet sake, Orestes, who is this?
- Orest.* Know you not him?
- Elek.* ————— I cannot call to mind.
- Orest.* Have you forgot to whom you once bequeath'd
me? 250
- Elek.* Whom do you mean?
- Orest.* ————— By whose officious hands
Your love convey'd me to the Phocian land?
- Elek.* Is this that only faithful man I found,
Durst aid th' afflicted when my father fell?
- Orest.* He is; at present seek no farther proof. 255
- Elek.* Oh, blessings on thy head, thou great support
Of Agamemnon's house! And art thou he
Redeem'd us from such ills? Oh, let me kiss
Those hands, and kneel t' embrace those aiding feet.
How could you keep yourself so long conceal'd? 260
Or how my eyes mistake you, though disguis'd?
Your words were cruel, but your works were kind;
all was your news, but friendly its design.
Hail, father! (for I see my father in you.)
Hail! Never was a man in one short day 265
So much detested, and so much ador'd! —
- Gov.* Enough of praise; until the circling hours
Inform you farther how we have deserv'd;
And teach you all the series of our fortunes.
But now I turn myself to you, my prince; 270
'Tis time for action; Clytemnestra's now
Alone without her guard; if you omit
This happy moment, think you will be drove
T' encounter numbers arming in her rescue.
- Orest.* The present business wants no more debate; 275
But, Oh! my Pylades, let's haste to action;
'Tis bending to these genial pow'rs for aid,
Who grace the portal, and protect the dome.

[Exeunt Orestes, Pylades, and Governor.]

E L E C T R A.

S C E N E III.

Electra and Chorus.

Electra. O king Apollo, hear them when th
And me with them; who with a bounteous
Have ever, to my pow'r, adorn'd thy shrine.
And now, O Lycian god, prostrate, with aw
I bless thy godhead, and implore thy favour
Assist the righteous vengeance now in hand,
And shew mankind with what detesting eyes
The gods behold and punish guilty mortals!

275

S C E N E IV.

C H O R U S.

I.

Chorus. See where the god of battle stalks,
Breathing discord, foaming blood;
Through all the guilty haunts he
Th' avenging suries at his heels prov
The destin'd stroke,
No more to be avoided, or withstood
For horror now the scene does dra
Which my prophetic soul foresaw

II.

Agamemnon's shade t' appeare,
With silent steps behold the son,
Beneath the guilty roof is gone
And see! the vengeful sword he b
Mata's son attendance pays,
And wrapt in clouds the youth conve
While he the task of fate obeys,
Unknowing of delays.

END of the FOURTH ACT.

ACT V. SCENE I.

Electra and Chorus.

ELECTRA.

WAIT with attentive silence, dearest maids;
For straight they will achieve the work of horror.

Cho. Oh! how do they proceed?

EleA. ———— While she prepares
The customary banquet, to allay

The sorrow of her son's imagin'd death;

They press around her, watchful; ————

Cho. ———— Wherefore then

Did you come forth?

EleA. ———— To guard against surprize,
And give them notice, should Ægythus come.

Cly. [*Within.*] Oh, fatal hour! some help—I am
befet;

Naked of friends, and cover'd with destroyers! 10

EleA. What shrieks are those? Did you not hear
them, friends?

Cho. I heard the frightful cry, and shake with horror.

Cly. [*Within.*] Confusion! Oh, Ægythus, Oh! where
are you?

EleA. The noise grows louder.

Cly. [*Within.*] ———— Oh, my son, my son,
Have pity on thy mother!

EleA. ———— Thou had'st none 15
On him, or on his bleeding father. ————

Cho. ———— ———— ———— Oh!

Oh, wretched city! Oh, disastrous race!
Death and destruction lay the princes waste!

Cly. [*Within.*] Oh! I am hurt.

EleA. ———— Repeat, repeat the blow.

Cly. [*Within.*] Alas! for mercy ————

EleA. ———— Oh, that curst Ægythus, 20
Caught in the toil, did groan like thee, defenceless!

Cho. The potent execrations are fulfill'd!

The long deceas'd revive; and drain the blood
Of those, whose hands were once embru'd in slaughter!

SCENE

SCENE II.

Electra, Orestes, Pylades, Attendants, *an*

Elect. Behold they come! And their disc
Drop with the crimson sacrifice of Mars!
Speak, my Orestes, how succeeds our cause!

Orest. All's well within; unless the god de
The wretch is dead; nor need you longer fe
Your mother's pride shall e'er insult you mon

Cho. No more;—for, lo! Ægisthus is in sight.

Elect. Oh, yet retire; he comes as you could wish
He comes in triumph from his rural sports;
And unsuspecting joy glows on his cheek.

Cho. Therefore with speed retire, ere he behold: 35
And since suspicious fate has led the way,
Complete the work you have so well begun.

Orest. Fear not; success shall crown us—

Elect. ————— But, retire.

Orest. I go—

[Orestes, Pylades, and Attendants retire.

Elect. ————— And leave the business here to me.

Cho. 'Twere fit a while we entertain the tyrant 40
With courteous accents, and dissembled meekness,
To win him on, and sooth him into ruin.

SCENE III.

Ægisthus, Electra, and Chorus.

Ægyst. Who can inform us where those Phocians are,
Who bring the tidings how Orestes perish'd,
Thrown from his chariot in the Pythian games?
You, I suppose—whose daring insolence
Till now has lived in him: you, I suppose,
As most concern'd, can give the best account.

Elect. Too well, I can; for how should I
The dearest accident which could befall me?

Ægyst. Instruct us quickly where the strange

Elect. Within; they meet a kind reception

Ægyst. Do they bring certain news that he is

Elect. They do not tell it, but they they in

Ægyst. May we then witness to it with our

Elect. You may behold the spectacle of horri

ever joy'd to hear thee speak till now!—
 dead, if things like these can give you
 lure.

silent, and set open all the gates ;

no, nay, all Argos see :

60

courag'd empty hopes,

all the carcass of this man ;

to my pow'r ; nor hence presume

to pride to wake my wrath.

obey your orders — for at length

65

I've learnt submission ; and must stoop to pow'r.

S C E N E I V.

SCENE opening discovers the body of Clytemnestra covered ;
 Orestes, Pylades, and Attendants round it, Ægysthus,
 Electra, and Chorus.

Ægys. By Heav'n, he's fallen ; nor undeserv'd his
 But, if my words transgress, I say no more. (fate!

Take from his face the veil, that I may pay

My debt of sorrow o'er my kinsman's body !

70

Orest. Yourself unveil it ; it belongs to you,

First to behold and mourn the friend's disaster.

Ægys. You well advise, and I'll obey your counsel ;
 Let some go call my Clytemnestra forth. —

Orest. She's near you ; look not any where, but here—

[Uncovers the body.

Ægys. Death to my eyes !

Orest. — Of what are you afraid ?

76

Are you a stranger to your consort's face ?

Ægys. In whose damn'd snares am I unhappy fall'n ?

Orest. Do you but now begin to apprehend

You've partly'd with the man, imagin'd dead ?

80

Ægys. Alas ! I understand the vaunting speech,
 And fear Orestes spoke it. —

Orest. — Boast thyself

No more a prophet, who so long hast err'd !

Ægys. I feel, I am undone ; but give me leave
 To argue for a while. —

Elect. — Now, by the gods,

85

Permit him not to waste the time in words.

What can a short reprieve from death import,

Per-

Perplex'd with fears, and lengthen'd out with pain?
 Dispatch the villain strait; and let them throw
 His body forth, a prey to dogs and vultures?— 90
 Far from our fight! for this alone remains
 To cure my sorrows, and conclude our vengeance.

Orest. No more delay of words; but enter there;—
 You are not now to argue, but to die.

Ægyl. But wherefore enter there?—If honour
 strikes, 95
 Why should you shame to give the blow in public?

Orest. Contend not with thy doom; but strait obey:
 For where you kill'd my father, thou shalt die.

Ægyl. This house shall be the future scene of death,
 And drink the blood of all the race of Pelops.— 100

Orest. Thine it shall drink; I dare foretel thee, tyrant.

Ægyl. Your sire had no such talent of prediction!

Orest. Your speech offends; and I delay too long.
 Go on—

Ægyl. But lead the way.

Orest. ————No; thou shalt lead. 104

Ægyl. Do you suspect I should escape your wrath?

Orest. Heav'n guard my vengeance from a fear like
 that!

But I would rob thee of content in death,

And make it bitter in each circumstance.

Did justice thus pursue the sinner close,

Nor lag with lazy steps behind the crime; 110

The world would then be frighted into virtue.

[*Goes in, driving Ægylthus before him.*]

Cho. Oh, seed of Atreus, how hast thou been cross'd!

Through what varieties of anguish tost!

Till late, with stern attempts, the vengeful sword

Has peace and banish'd liberty restor'd. 115

END of the FIFTH ACT.

NOTES

N O T E S

UPON

E L E C T R A.

THE subject of this tragedy is the return of Orestes from Phocis to Argos, and his revenge of his father's murder, in the death of Ægisthus and Clytemnestra. But the poet did not think fit to give this poem a title from that important incident, which makes its catastrophe; but rather chose to call it *Electra*. This lady was the elder sister of Orestes, and who (when their father Agamemnon, on his return from Troy, was inhumanly murdered by his own wife Clytemnestra, and her paramour Ægisthus) was the instrument of securing her tender brother from the rage of the murderers, by conveying him to Strophius, king of Phocis, through the care of a faithful and secret servant. Clytemnestra and Ægisthus, after Agamemnon's death, possessing themselves of the government of Argos, slipped no opportunities of expressing their resentment towards *Electra* for this action.

The poet in her character has laboured to express her miseries with vast variety: and given her the true features of an heroic daughter through the whole poem. All her sentiments give a fresh subject for admiration; and she is equally wonderful in her strong and implacable resentments against her father's murderers; in her impatience for Orestes to come and revenge him; in her excessive sorrows for her brother's supposed disaster; in
her

her transports, when she comes to know he is living; and in her zeal, for the performance of his revenge when once on foot.

I shall take notice of the artful constitution of this tragedy, in my following notes on the several acts; and what a natural foundation there is for the respective incidents, which are prepared without being foreseen.

The subject of *Ægisthus* and *Clytemnestra's* death employed the pens of the three great Greek tragedians; but they are all so different in the disposition of the same stories, that I believe (with Monsieur Hedeelin, in his whole art of the stage;) they were the cause of that grand disorder and confusion, there is in story and chronology in those old times: because that they, having changed both the times and events for their own ends, have influenced some historians, who thought to pick out of them the truth of story, and so made all things uncertain. Any body that will read the *Electra* of Euripides, this of Sophocles, and the *Cæphoræ* of *Æschylus*, will easily see that they made no difficulty of contradicting one another, nor even themselves.

NOTES upon the FIRST ACT.

Ver. 1. *Governor.*] He supports the part of a very
 k; and by him the poet has artfully ex-
 audience the place of the scene, Mycenæ
 time when the act on commences, the
 the manner he received Orestes from his
 to be conveyed to Phocis; and Pylades's
 of Orestes, from Phocis, in his return to

Isachus's—*Daughter.*] whose name was
 ory having no manner of relation to the
 I shall refer the reader for it to my Pro-
 Æschylus, which will shortly be published,
 ample occasion for touching her history in
 onces.

solis Deus—*solis Deus of day.*] The original has it τῷ
 of the *Wolf-destroying God*; but I was of
 opinion, this epithet would make no very beautiful ap-
 pearance in English; and therefore was not obliged (ac-
 cording to Horace) *verbum verbo reddere*. Besides, that
 I do not remember the story of Apollo's destroying the
 wolves; any farther than as Mr. Lloyd, in his *Lexicon*
Historico-Poeticum, says, (on the word, Lycius) that
 there was an oracle of the Lycian Apollo, *quia in Lycia*
maximè claus fuit ob Luporum interfecionem: or, perhaps,
 he obtained the epithet from the wolf's being sacrificed to
 him, as a beast obnoxious to his displeasure, who was
 the god of the shepherds. Or again, if we will learn
 the truth from Triclinius (one of the scholiasts,) on this
 passage, it will come very near my translation of it: for,
 he says, Apollo is to be considered allegorically as the
 sun; who by his presence and resplendence extinguishes the
 dawn, which resembles the colour of a wolf, (τῷ λύκῳ,)
 and therefore is called in Greek, τὸ λυκόφω.

Ver. 9. *Juno's awful temple.*] The Greek says, her
famous temple; and Sophocles very skillfully takes notice
 of a temple to her there, because Argos (as likewise
 Mycenæ, Sparta, Samos, &c.) was peculiarly sacred to
 Juno.

— *In funonis honorem*
Aptum dicit equis Argos, diesque Mycenae.

says Horace; those who are curious of knowing her claim to this region, may consult Nat. Com. l. 8. cap. 22.

Ver. 16. *And you, Pylades.*] A staking prince would make but a very odd figure on our theatre, however the mute character was resented by the Athenians. Sophocles has not given this prince leave to open his mouth; Æschylus indeed, in his *Cæphoræ*, has so far complimented his quality, as to make him speak three verses: And Euripides, who, in his *Electra*, has tied the tongue of Pylades, even when he had that lady given him & her brother, to wife; has in some measure made his amends in his *Orestes* and *Iphig. Taurica*, in both which he speaks, as well as acts, like a prince and a friend.

Ver. 54. *Man while, as the great.*] The learned Dr. Potter, in his *Antiquities of Greece*, has inadvertently run into more than one error on this passage: for quoting it, he takes notice, "That *Electra* in Sophocles says, "that *Agamemnon* had commanded her and *Chrysothemis* to dedicate their hair to his tomb;" and therefore thus he translates it,

"With drink-off'rings and locks of hair, we must,
 "According to his will, his tomb adore."

Now, in the first place, this is not spoken by *Electra* her sister, but by *Orestes* to *Pylades*. And this error betrayed him into a worse mistake in the version of it (*de ipso*) which he renders (*according to his will*) meaning *Agamemnon's*, has not the least regard to *Agamemnon*, but directly to *Apollo*; as any learned examiner may satisfy himself. *Ad opere in tanto sancto obrepit somnum.*

Ver. 68. *Ofi have I beard.*] The scholiast thinks Sophocles had an eye to the story concerning *Pythagoras* (told by *Hermippus* in *Diog. Laertius*) "That when he came to Italy, he made a private room upon ground; and having caused a report to be spread

his death, he hid himself in that room, ordering his mother to let him down meat privately from time to time, with an account in writing of all affairs that happened in Crotona, and the places about. After a time he comes abroad, pretending to be risen from the dead, and tells all the things that had happened since his supposed death, as if he had learned them in the other world." Which project procured him a mighty authority. Tertullian, in his book of the Soul, gives the same account of this story; only adds this particular, that he stayed under ground seven years. 'Tis not improbable, that Sophocles might have an eye to this story, as a thing not very distant from his own age: but that Orestes, who speaks, should do so too, would be to make him guilty of an Anachronism with a vengeance. Therefore I am inclined to suppose, it may have a reference to Ulysses more properly; but to this the scholiast will object, *ὡς γὰρ εἰσέταται τὸ τῶν Ὀδυσσεύ, there no such thing happened to Ulysses: No, he did not hide under ground for a season; but he was long supposed dead at Ithaca, and rose upon them suddenly from obscurity to splendor.*

Ver. 90. *Appease, invoke.*] This is one mark of the poet's art in his scenery, that he will not permit Orestes to stay on the stage to be satisfied in Electra's cause of sorrow; for then the discovery of his return would be too early: but he clears the scene, not only to make room for Electra's complaints to herself; but likewise by sending Orestes to make oblations at his father's tomb, prepares a remembrance which cannot be forgotten, and which he has reserved for the opening of his third act.

Ver. 105. *And how, Iphianassa.*] Triclinius upon this place says, that Euripides and the other poets, mean one person by Iphigenia and Iphianassa. That the Latin poets, as well as the Greek, confound these two names, is plain from these lines of Lucretius,

*Aulide quo pacto Triviae Virginis aram
Iphianassae turpiteruni sanguine sedit
Dulces, Danaum delecti, prima virorum.*

NOTES UPON ELECTRA.

But then the commentators are staggered to know, why the poet should make the Chorus mention Iphianassa, or Iphigenia, who was now at Diana's shrine in Tauris: But Trichinius says, the Chorus mention her though absent from Mycenæ, with the same reason they do Orestes: who, as they thought, was at Phocis. I must confess, I do not pretend to be certain whom the poet here intends by Iphianassa; but I think, with submission to Trichinius, Sophocles did not here mean Iphigenia: for it would be very absurd to suppose Iphigenia in a living capacity mourning for her father, when in the first scene of the second act, Clytemnestra excuses her murder of Agamemnon, as a just reprisal upon him, for sacrificing his daughter Iphigenia on Diana's altar at Aulis.

Ver. 171. *Debar'd of wedlock.*] The poet throughout this tragedy, in many places, insinuates the hatred upon Electra, of being denied the privilege of marriage, and makes her complain to Chrysothemis, that *Ægeus* would never suffer them to propagate a race to her destruction. Euripides makes *Ægylthus* marry her a person who boasts of his family, but is decayed in fortunes. Some, who favour Sophocles's opinion, will have her derive her name from her single state, *quasi ἀλιερα, i. e. sine Thalamo.* *Ælian* in his Various History informs us, that *Xanthus*, the Lyrick poet, says her first name was *Laodice*; but, that after *Agamemnon's* murder, ἀλιερα ὄνομα ἐπαλαγομένης παρθένου Ἀγυθῆ ἠελίας ἰκαλιερα, ἵα το ἀμοιβῆν ἄνδρα, κ' ἢ παλαιῶν ἀλιερα, growing old in virginity, the Argives called her *Electra*, because of her living without an husband.

Ver. 184. *On Crissa's verdant shore.*] *Crissa*, or *Criseus* was a town of Phocis near the Corinthian bay from its neighbourhood to that town, was called *Criseus*.

Ver. 195. *And fed with ofal.*] The Greek ἰφισαμοι τραπίλαιε. *I am sit at empty tables.*

Ver. 332. *Chrysothemis approach.*] Sophocles introduced the character of *Chrysothemis* with a mild and condescending temper, to heighten the manly and stubborn sentiments of *Electra* again the part of *Ismene* in his *Antigone*. The name of *Chrysothemis* is likewise very artful

cessary to the carrying on the plot of the play: for as Clytemnestra's ugly dream naturally required expiations to avert its horrors, so her sending Chrysothemis to make oblations at Agamemnon's tomb, easily prepares the first remembrance and suggestion of Orestes's return, by her finding a lock of his hair on the monument, and signs of other customary honours paid to the sepulchre.

Ver. 398. *Subterranean prison.*] It was a custom with the ancients, when they would make away with any one, and not be polluted (as they thought) with his blood; to shut him up in a dark cavern, and there leave him to die. I will give a confirmation of this by one example out of our own author: Creon having actually condemned Antigone to the same punishment with which Electra is here threatened, washes his hands of her blood; say-

Ἡμῶς γὰρ ἀλοι τῶν ἐπιταφῶν τῆς ἀδελφῆς,

Upon which the scholiast comments thus, (τῶν ἐπιταφῶν) τὸ φέω τῶν, φέω, διὰ τὸ μὴ χερεῖσιν αὐτῶν ἀποκαθαίρειν.

Ver. 464. *To disarm resentment.*] These words I have added in explanation of a very odd custom, alluded to by the poet. If any one killed another treacherously, he first cut off all the extreme parts of the outmost members of the party slain, and sewing or tying them together, wore them under his arm-pits; as an amulet or spell to prevent the furies from haunting the murderer. And they believed, that having part of the murdered body in their power, as an hostage, to do what they would with, the ghost of the party would not offer to meddle with them; or else would spare the bearer, for love of the carriage. The pieces thus cut off, they called ἀποκαθαίρειν, and ἀποκαθαίρειν, or ἀποκαθαίρειν, as in Apollonius: and the action of so mutilating the person, was called ἀποκαθαίρειν: so sometimes the pieces cut off, they called ἀποκαθαίρειν, from the action (ἀποκαθαίρειν) of fixing them under their arm-pits; which last term is used here by Sophocles.

Ver. 465. *To wipe the abomination off.*] The first scholiast on this passage says, he that had killed another, wiped off the stains of blood from his sword, either on the hair

of his own head, or of the party slain. Triclinius says particularly on the hair of the party slain, which is undoubtedly the truest. I will go a step farther than either of the scholiasts on this place, by informing the reader, that they only thus wiped away the abomination of the fact, when they spilt the blood unjustly. But if they thought they did it in a good cause, they used to take the sword, and hold it up towards the sun with the blood on it; *Ὁμήρου τῷ δικαίῳ περιουκίνας*, says the scholiast on Euripides in Orestes; to shew that they feared not if Heaven were witness.

Ver. 528. *For ever since Myrtilus.*] He was the son of Mercury by Phaethusa; when he drove Oenomaus in a chariot-race, being corrupted by the promises of Pelops, he so ordered it, that his malle's chariot broke by the way, and his master with the fall, broke his neck. Oenomaus expiring, conjured Pelops to revenge his death; who afterwards, when Myrtilus demanded the reward of his treachery, threw him from a rock into the sea, which from his name was called the Myrtoan sea.

NOTES upon the SECOND ACT.

Ver. 2. *Ægylthus is not here.*] The poet's contrivance is wonderful in making Ægylthus absent; for thereby he takes occasion to heighten Electra's distress, by saying, she could not have had the liberty of stirring out of the palace, if he were at home; and likewise by leaving Clytemnestra alone, he facilitates the catastrophe of the poem. Euripides has likewise, in his *Electra*, sent her into the fields to do sacrifice, and make a rural banquet.

Ver. 18. *Murdered your sister.*] This confirms what we have observed on the first act, that Iphianassa could be intended for Iphigenia by Sophocles, whom he often in Clytemnestra's speech expressly intimates to be dead; and therefore Triclinius, on one passage, notes thus, ἦτοι ἢ Ἰφιγένεια, ὅχι ἢ ἢ Ἀχιλλεύου ἀρπάζουσα, ἀλλὰ βασίλειος ἡμετέρας. But I designed this note of a different nature; all discourses brought on the stage, ought to have no particular reference to the diversion of the

audience, unless drawn from the very ground and nature of the subject, and absolutely necessary to the same. I fear Clytemnestra's vindication of her husband's death, and Electra's condemnation of her for it, will fall under the displeasure of this rule; for however fine and affecting the discourses may be in themselves, I doubt they are introduced with regard to the spectators alone; for as Agamemnon had been killed twenty years ago, it necessarily argues, that the justice, or guilt of his death, must have been a subject already sufficiently canvassed betwixt Clytemnestra and her daughter.

Ver. 29. *They forb. beauty's d.*] The old authors vary mightily in regard to Helen's Children. Eustathius on Homer says, she only bore Hermione, and that she was not permitted to have any more children, because child-birth is accounted to spoil women's beauty. But some say, she bore two children to Paris. Sophocles here gives her two by Menelaus; which agrees, as the scholiast observes, with Hesiod's account,

Ἡ τίσις Ἡραίων δαριδὸς Μενελάου,
Ὀπλοτάτος δ' Ἰφάνης Νικηγάτου, ἔστιν ἄγχι.

But Pausanias in Corinthiac, says, Menelaus had Nicostratus and Megapenthes by a she-slave; but others say, her proper name was Δία, i. e. *Serva*.

Ver. 123. *Inauspicious words.*] 'Tis almost too well known to require a note, how superstitious the old Greeks were in point of all ominous words, and particularly in matters of religion. Before their holy ceremonies began, the cryer gave this charge to the people, *Ἐἰσφρασίτε*, which answers to the terms afterwards used by the *mans, favete lingua*; which do not so strictly enjoin silence, as an abstaining from all prophane and *ous words*,

————— *Male ominatis*
Parcite verbis. Hor.

For they reckoned that such terms prophaned the sacrifice; (and therefore Plautus calls it, *abscanare*) and if these expressions were uttered by any one nearly related

56 NOTES UPON ELECTRA.

to the person, whose business was in hand, they took the greater notice of them, and accounted them so much the worse. Or if the omen were immediately caught by the bearer, or struck upon his imagination, it was of the more force.

Ver. 129. *Shall free me from the fears.*] We have heard already in the first act, that Clytemnestra had disclosed her dream to the *Rising Sun*, to deprecate its omen: this she did conformable to the customs of the ancients; and Triclinius helps us out with their reason for it, ἰσχυρὰ ἰσχυρῶς (nempe ἰσχυρῶς) δὲος ἰσὶ τῇ νυκτὶ, ἀπολεσῶν ἰσχυρῶς, &c. because the sun being contrary to the night, might have power to avert, or expel all evils brought by the same. And therefore they gave the sun or Apollo the epithets of ἀπολέσων, ἰσχυρῶς, &c. But this telling of dreams was not always appropriated to one particular deity, but sometimes to Hercules, Jupiter, or the Household Gods. Nor was the disclosing of their fears reckoned sufficient, but they were to offer incense, or other oblations, and pray (as Clytemnestra here does) that if good was portended, it might be brought to pass; if the contrary, that the gods would avert whatever ill was boded by them. *Aeschylus*, in his *Perthians*, lets us into another custom in these cases; Queen Atossa being terrified by a nocturnal vision, as soon as she rose went to a river, and washed away the pollutions of the night, before she approached the altars of the gods;

Ἐπι δ' αἰθέρα, κ' χερσὶν ἀκτιφύσσει
Ἐλευσα πύθον, ἔτι θυγάτηρ χερσὶ
Ἰσχυρῶς προσέειπε, ἀπολεσῶν ἰσχυρῶς
Θύσσει δῖον· αἰδῶμαι, ὅτι τίθει τάδε.

The scholiast on this place of *Aeschylus* gives a different reason, why the sun was looked upon as the giver of dreams, τὸν γὰρ ἰσχυρῶς ἰσχυρῶς, οἱ ἄλλοι διακινηζόμενοι, ἵνα ἴσχυρῶς ἰσχυρῶς, dreams vanish and are dissipated.

Ver. 157. *Her dress, and person.*] The original is ἰσχυρῶς γὰρ ὡς τυραννίδος ἰσχυρῶς, which Mr. Johnson's late edition renders, *Decore enim, ut regina, videtur habitu*. But I cannot think this expresses the whole meaning of the Greek.

Greek, as if the governor knew Clytemnestra to be a queen only by her face; but (as the scholiast says better) φορᾶσαι ἐκ τῆς γαλῆς αὐτῆς βασιλείου, he concluded her such, from her robes and regalia.

Ver. 172. *Know, mighty queen*] I have taken a liberty in this narration, for which, however I may be accused by the adorers of Sophocles, I shall be easily pardoned by every English reader: I have ventured rather to make an agreeable innovation on, than be a faithful translator of, a passage which contains too tedious and graphical a description of the Pythian games to be relished at this time of day; and cools the passion which it should excite, and keep warm by its conciliations and distress.

Ver. 174. *Celebrates her Pythian games.*] Aristotle finds fault with this narration, in the *Electra*; upon which it may not be improper to add part of Mr. Dacier's remarks. Sophocles was not so prudent and judicious in the management of some other of his pieces, as he was in *Oedipus*; for in his *Electra*, he was guilty of the very fault that Aristotle here mentions, by putting in something that was absurd, and which is the more vicious, because he was the author of it. In the second scene of the second act, he who brings the false news of Orestes's death, says, That that prince being at the celebrated meeting of the Grecians, to assist at the Pythian games, won all the prizes, but was killed in the race of the chariots. Aristotle thought this was absurd, and out of all reason, not because it was not probable, that Ægisthus and Clytemnestra should not hear the news before the arrival of those who brought Orestes's news, for there were a thousand things which might hinder that; but because the Pythian games were not begun till above five years after Orestes was dead, and a falsehood ruined all the probability of the piece, of which it was the foundation.—Without doubt, Sophocles thought his audience did not know the rise of those news, or else he would have taken care not to have made such an alteration in the epocha; otherwise the incoherence is admirably well hid, under the wonderful circumstances which are in the relation, but that don't justify

58 NOTES UPON ELECTRA.

Ver. 287. *The fate of Amphiaraus.*] He was a great soothsayer, who foreseeing that all who went with Adrastus to the Theban war should perish, Adrastus only excepted, refused to go along with him, and prevented several others from entering into the same league. Adrastus was told, he need only give the necklace to Eriphyla, (Amphiaraus's wife) which Polynices had brought from Thebes, and which had been dedicated to harmony, to prevail on Amphiaraus to make one in the expedition. Adrastus obeyed the advice, and Eriphyla, charmed with the beauty of the necklace, promised to engage her husband; for that depended only on her, Amphiaraus having sworn to obey his wife in every thing.

Ver. 298. *Found a son.*] Alcmeon was the son of Amphiaraus; the father, on his departure for Thebes, strictly charged his son, who was then very young, that when he came to age, he should revenge his death by killing his mother. Alcmeon obeyed these orders very punctually: several of the poets represented this story in tragedy; and this murder of Eriphyla by Alcmeon, the ancients saw with great pleasure acted on their stages.

NOTES upon the THIRD ACT.

Ver. 1. *For joy, my dearest.*] Chrysothemis having been at her father's tomb to offer her own and sister's hair thereon, meets with the libations there, which had been poured by Orestes, and by them suggests he was returned to Argos: for that Clytemnestra had not offered them, nor yet Electra, nor Chrysothemis, and therefore it must be Orestes.

Ver. 24. *With streams of milk.*] The libations which they made at a sepulchre, consisted for the most part of honey, and milk, and wine: upon which they sometimes sprinkled barley-flower. The manner of using these liquors, was to go round the monument; and pour out some, as they went, out of a bottle (*κλυστήριον*, as Euripides says in his *Electra*) and as they offered, they used certain speeches and prayers to the ghosts of the dead to be propitious to them: and therefore those *κλυστήρια*, or libations, were usually termed *κλυστήρια*, and *κλυστήρια*.

Ver.

Ver. 26. *And all the flowers*] The custom of strewing flowers about the grave seems rather in honour of the manes, than any ways propitiatory. They sometimes wove them into garlands before they presented them, and this was *σφαιρὴ τῶν τιμῶν*, a *crowning of the tomb*. These garlands were called *ἱστῆς*, either from their expressing love; or from *ἱστῶ*, because composed of a collection of flowers; or lastly, because they were thrown *ἐν τῷ ἔρειπῳ*, upon the earth. The reason of it, says the scholiast upon Euripides, was *ἐπεὶ τὸ τιμῶν ἀπὸ μίμνησκαι τοῦ νεκρῶν*, to honour the dead as they used to do the living when they won the games.

NOTES upon the FOURTH ACT.

Ver. 10. *But aged Strophius.*] He was king of Phocis, and father of Pylades. But after all, why must Orestes and his governor vary in their story? Orestes himself comes from Strophius, but he charges his governor to say he is a Phocian, and sent from Phanoteus, *οὐκ ἀνδρὸς Φωκίης ἦναι*, if I do not misunderstand this passage; for the scholiast says, *ὡς αὖτε δὲ ἔρημα φασὶ τὸ Φωκίης*; that Phanoteus was said to be the name of a city; if this be so, I indeed have erred; but there is a second place, which, I believe, will justify my construction, ver. 672. *Φωκίης δὲ Φωκίης*, says the governor, Phanoteus the Phocian: for Sophocles could never mean the governor should say, the Phanotean, the Phocian, which he must do, if Phanoteus were a city.

Ver. 39. *A torch to kindle up.*] For it was customary for the pile to be lighted by some of the dead person's nearest relations or friends; who did it with their faces turned from the pile, to shew themselves averse to so mournful an office. So at Miscnus's funeral in Virg.

— *Subj: Etiam more parentum
Aversæ tenuere facem.*

Ver. 108. *By all the honours.*] The original has it, *καὶ τῆς γυναικὸς, &c.* Do not I conjure you by your chin or beard: but the conjuration would seem very trivial and needless to us, however venerable amongst the ancients.

That

60 NOTES UPON ELECTRA.

That it was the custom of old, for suppliants to take hold of the beard of the person to whom they made their entreaty, is evident from Homer,

— Διὸς ἱερὸν ἴσ' ἄρ' ἐπ' ἀλοφύων ἰλυσσά
 Λισσομένῃ

And this was one manner of salutation among the Hebrews, as appears by 2 Sam. 20, 9; *And Jacob took Amasa by the beard with the right hand to kiss him.*

Ver. 122. *Behold my father's signet.*] Gr. Μου (Ἐρασίδου) σφραγίδα upon which the scholiasts have commented very variously, Triclinius thus, τῆ ἐξ ὠϊφάνθ' ἄμω, ὅτι δι' ἡνδραπέδου κληρονομήσει ἕξω, ἵτιον δὲ φησι τὸ Ἐρασίδα αἰὲς τῷ δουλόωσι. *The ivory shoulder, which the descendants of Polop bore; but others say, it is not far a feat.* The third scholiast purs a still different gloss upon it, Ἐρασίδα τῆ τῆς καρτερίας τῷ προσώπῳ ἢ τῷ λοιπῷ σώματι, τῆς κατὰ πλάτη καὶ τῆς ἰμῶ κατὰ Ἄλαμμων; that is, *the make and turn of his face and body altogether resembling his father Agamemnon.* I have translated it signet; but am not absolutely determined, whether that was the intention of Sophocles. Aristotle takes notice of a remembrance made use of by the poet Carcinus in his Thyestes, by the means of a star; but perhaps that remembrance may be much the same as ours, and borrowed from Sophocles: for Robortellus conjectures, and not without great probability, (in Mr. Dacier's opinion,) that instead of the word σφραγίδα, which signifies a *star*, Aristotle writ ὀστία, which signifies *bones*, and that he means *the bone of ivory with which the god repaired Pelops's shoulder, and which appeared in his descendants.*

NOTES upon the FIFTH ACT.

Ver. 4. *The customary banquet.*] Gr. ἡ δὲ σπονδή, which Mr. Johnson renders, *in festis adorna*; however I have relied on the words of the scholiasts; the latter of which, as usual, I shall here transcribe, τὰς δὲ σπονδὰς δὲ τῶν τῶν μὲν τῶν μὲν

σοφρος καλῶσθαι, κ' ὁ δεινὸς ὁ ἴσι κερῶ διαπαιχόμενος γυμνῶ. ἐλάθη δὲ τὸ ἴστρον ὄνομα ἔχει κοσμα ἀπόβια εἰς ταῖς οὐκ αἰετὶ κοσμα δὲ ἔστρον εἰς παρρησιας. For after the funeral was over, (says Dr. Potter) the company met together at the house of the deceased person's nearest relations, to divert them from sorrow. Here there was an entertainment provided, which was termed *παρρησιας*, *παρρησιας* ταῖς, &c.

Ver. 26. *Crimson sacrifice of Mars.*) i. e. with the blood they had shed. γὰρ γὰρ δὲ γὰρ ἄρα. says Sophocles; and I believe he certainly expresses himself thus, in allusion to the human victims which were on some occasions sacrificed to Mars. Triclinius remarks on this passage thus, ἔστι δὲ ἄρα, ἔστι δὲ ἄρα, ἔστι δὲ ἄρα ἄρα. γὰρ γὰρ γὰρ καλεῖται; that is, with the sacrifice, or blood which Mars receives in sacrifice, for he is termed a lover of blood.

Ver. 68 *But if my words transgress.*] The Greek has it, εἰ δ' ἔπειρῃ Νέμοισι; which, I confess, gave me no small trouble to understand; and unless another passage in this play have helped me to a right conception of them, I shall as freely own myself still in the dark. Clytemnestra in the second act, triumphing on account of Orestes's disaster, Electra cries out,

Ἄνε Νέμοισι τὴν Δανάην ἀγρίαν
 Avenging goddess, hear her contumelies!

Upon which Triclinius remarks, Νέμοισι, δὲ ἀμφοτέρω τῶν τοῦ Δανάης ἐφεξήσθαι καὶ τῶν τοῦ Οὐρανίου, i. e. Nemesis is a goddess who rescues and punishes all insults upon the dead. So Ægyptus, triumphing on the like occasion, stops short; — *but if I err, or shall be punished for it, I say no more.*



Richard St.

Engraved by John Baskett, Esq. 1757.

Thames Street.

MISS YOUNG in the Character of ARTEMISA.

Let them come on,
I cannot fear.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

The EARL of JERSEY,

LORD CHAMBERLAIN OF HIS MAJESTY'S
HOUSEHOLD, &c.

MY LORD,

IF any thing may atone for the liberty I take in offering this trifling to your Lordship, it is, that I will engage not to be guilty of the common vice of dedications, nor pretend to give the world an account of the many good qualities they ought to admire in your Lordship. I hope, I may reckon on it as some little piece of merit, in an age where there are so many people write panegyrics, and so few deserve them. I am sure you ought not to sit for your picture, to so ill a hand as mine. Men of your Lordship's figure and station, though useful and ornamental to the age they live in, are yet reserved for the labours of the historian, and the entertainment of posterity; nor ought to be aspersed with such pieces of flattery while living, as may render the true history suspected to those that come after. That which should take up all my care at present, is most humbly to beg your Lordship's pardon for importuning you on this account; for imagining that your Lordship (whose hours are all dedicated to the best and most important uses) can have any leisure for this piece of poetry. I beg, my Lord, that you will receive it, as it was meant, a mark of my entire respect and veneration.

I hope it may be some advantage to me, that the town has not received this play ill. To have depended merely upon your Lordship's good-nature, and have offered something without any degree of merit, would have been an unpardonable fault, especially to so good a judge.

The play itself, as I present it to your Lordship, is a much more perfect poem than it is in the representation on the stage. I was led into an error in the writing of it, by thinking that it would be easier to retrench than to add: but when I was at last necessitated, by reason of the extreme length, to cut off near six hundred lines, I found that it was mained by it to a great disadvantage. The fable (which has no manner of relation to any part of true history) was left dark and intricate, for want of a great part of the narration, which was left out in the first scene; and the chain and connexion, which ought to be in the dialogue, was interrupted in many of the other places. But since what was omitted in acting is now kept in, I hope it may indifferently entertain your Lordship, at an unbending hour. The faults which are most generally found (and which I could be very proud of submitting to your Lordship's judgment, if you can have leisure for so trivial a cause) are, that the catastrophe in the fifth act is barbarous, and shocks the audience. Some people, whose judgment I ought to have a deference for, have told me, that they wished I had given the latter part of the story quite another turn; that Artaxerxes and Amestris ought to have been preserved, and made happy in the conclusion of the play; that besides the satisfaction which the spectators would have had, to have seen two virtuous (or at least innocent) characters rewarded and successful, there might have been also a more noble and instructive moral drawn that way. I must confess, if this be an error (as perhaps it may) it is a voluntary one, and an error of my judgment: since in the writing, I actually made such a sort of an objection to myself, and chose to wind up the story this way. Tragedies have been allowed, I know, to be written both ways very beautifully: but since terror and pity are laid down for the ends of tragedy, by the great master and father of criticism, I was always inclined to fancy that the last and remaining impressions, which ought to be left on the minds of an audience, should proceed from one of these two. They should be struck with terror in several parts of the play, but always conclude and go away with pity; a sort of regret proceeding from goodness, which, though an uneasiness, is not altogether
dūa-

disagreeable to the person who feels it. It was this passion that the famous Mr. Otway succeeded so well in touching, and must and will at all times affect people, who have any tenderness or humanity. If therefore I had saved Artaxerxes and Amestris, I believe (with submission to my judges) I had destroyed the greatest occasion for compassion in the whole play. Any body may perceive, that she is raised to some degrees of happiness, by hearing that her father and husband are living (whom she had supposed dead) and by seeing the enemy and persecutor of her family dying at her feet, purposely, that the turn of her death may be more surprising and pitiful. As for that part of the objection, which says, that innocent persons ought not to be shewn unfortunate; the success and general approbation which many of the best tragedies that have been writ, and which were built on that foundation, have met with, will be a sufficient answer for me.

That which they call the poetical justice, is, I think, strictly observed; the two principal contrivers of evil, the Statesman and Priest, are punished with death; and the Queen is deposed from her authority by her own son; which, I suppose, will be allowed as the severest mortification that could happen to a woman of her imperious temper.

If there can be any excuse for my entertaining your Lordship with this detail of criticisms, it is, that I would have this first mark of the honour I have for your Lordship, appear with as few faults as possible. Did not the prevailing character of your Lordship's excellent humanity and good-nature encourage me, what ought I not to fear from the niceness of your taste and judgment? The delicacy of your reflexions may be very fatal to so rough a draught as this is; but if I will believe (as I am sure I ought to do) all men that I have heard speak of your Lordship, they bid me hope every thing from your goodness. This is that, I must sincerely own, which made me extremely ambitious of your Lordship's patronage for this piece. I am but too sensible that there are a multitude of faults in it; but since the good-nature of the town has covered, or not taken notice of them, I must have so much discretion, as not to look with an as-

fected nicety into them myself. With all the faults and imperfections which it may have, I must own, I shall be yet very well satisfied with it, if it gives me an opportunity of reckoning myself from this time,

Your Lordship's most obedient

and devoted humble servant,

N. R O W E.



P R O L O G U E.

*I*F dying lovers yet deserve a tear,
 If a jaded story of a maid's despair,
 Yet move compassion in the pining fair;
 This day the poet does his arts employ,
 The soft access of your souls to try.
 Nor let the Stoic boast his mind unmov'd;
 The brute philosopher, who ne'er has prov'd
 The joy of loving and of being lov'd;
 Who scorns his human nature to confess,
 And striving to be more than man, is lost.
 Nor let the men the weeping fair accuse,
 Those kind protectors of the tragic muse,
 Whose tears did moving Otway's labours crown,
 And made the poor Monimia's grief their own:
 Those tears their art, not weakness, has confess'd,
 Their grief approv'd the merits of their taste,
 And they wept most, because they judg'd the best.
 O could this age's writers hope to find
 An audience to compassion thus inclin'd,
 The stage would need no fiddle, nor song, nor dance,
 Nor capering Monsieur brought from active France:
 Clinch, and his organ-pipe, his dogs and bear,
 To native Barret might again repair,
 Or breathe, with Captain Otter, blank air.
 Majestic Tragedy should once again
 In purple pomp adorn the swelling scene:
 Her search should ransack all the ancients store,
 The fortunes of their loves and arms explore,
 Such as might grieve you, but should please you more.
 What Shakspeare durst not, this bold age should do,
 And famous Greek and Latin beauties shew:
 Shakspeare, whose genius to itself a law,
 Could men in every height of nature draw,
 And copy'd all but women that be frow.
 Those ancient heroines your concern should move,
 Their grief and anger much, but most their love;
 For in the account of every age we find
 The best and fairest of that sex were kind,
 To pity actions and to love inclin'd.
 Avert, ye fair ones, who in judgment sit,
 Your ancient empire over love and wit;

Reform our sense, and teach the men to obey :
 They'll leave their umbling, if you lead the way. .
 Be but what these before to Otway were :
 O were you but as kind ! we know you are as fair.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M E N.

<i>Artaxerxes</i> , prince of Persia, elder son to King <i>Artaxerxes</i> , by a former queen,	<i>Druy-Law.</i>
<i>Artaban</i> , son to <i>Artaxerxes</i> , by <i>Artemisa</i> ,	Mr. Fleetwood.
<i>Memnon</i> , formerly general to <i>Artaxerxes</i> , now disgraced, a friend to <i>Artaxerxes</i> ,	Mr. Holland.
— — — — —	Mr. Moskop.
<i>Mirza</i> , first minister of state, in the interest of <i>Artemisa</i> and <i>Artaban</i> ,	Mr. Brasby.
<i>Mogas</i> , priest of the Sun, friend to <i>Mirza</i> and the <i>Queen</i> ,	Mr. Burton.
<i>Cleantes</i> , friend to <i>Artaban</i> ,	Mr. Scarse.
<i>Orchaues</i> , captain of the guards to the <i>Queen</i> ,	Mr. Aulin.

W O M E N.

<i>Artemisa</i> , formerly the wife of <i>Trechus</i> , a Persian Lord, now married to the King, and Queen of Persia,	Miss Young.
<i>Amestris</i> , daughter to <i>Memnon</i> , in love with, and beloved by, <i>Artaxerxes</i> .	Mrs. Gibber.
<i>Cleone</i> , daughter to <i>Mirza</i> , in love with <i>Artaxerxes</i> , and beloved by <i>Artaban</i> ,	Miss Macklin.
<i>Beliza</i> , confidante to <i>Cleone</i> ,	Mrs. Simpson.

THE
AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

* * * The lines marked with several commas, 'thus,' are omitted in the representation.

A C T I.

SCENE, A Royal Palace.

Enter, at several doors, Mirza and Magas.

MIRZA.

WHAT bring'st thou, Magas? Say, how fares the King?

Mag. As one, whom when we number with the living,
We say the most we can; tho' sure it must
Be happier far to quit a wretched being,
Than keep it on such terms: 'for as I enter'd
' The royal lodging, in universal horror
' Struck thro' my eyes, and chill'd my very heart;
' The cheerful day was every where shut out
' With care, and left a more than midnight darkness,
' Such as might even be felt: a few dim lamps,
' That feebly lifted up their sickly heads,
' Look'd faintly thro' the shade, and made it seem
' More dismal by such light; while those that waited
' In solemn sorrow, mix'd with wild amazement,
' Obscure'd a dreadful silence.

Mir. Didst thou see him?

Mag. My Lord, I did: treading with gentle steps,
' I reach'd the bed, which held the poor remains
' Of great Arfaces: just as I approach'd,

• His

70 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

• His drooping lids, that seem'd for ever clos'd,
 • Were faintly rear'd, to tell me that he liv'd :
 • The balls of sight, dim and depriv'd of motion,
 • Sparkled no more with that majestic fire,
 • At which ev'n kings have trembled : but had lost
 • Their common useful office, and were shaded
 • With an eternal night. Struck with the sight,
 • That shew'd me human nature fall'n so low,
 • I hastily retir'd.

• *Mir.* He dies too soon ;
 • And fate, if possible, must be delay'd.
 • The thought that labours in my forming brain,
 • Yet crude and immature, demands more time.
 • Have the physicians given up all their hopes ?
 • Cannot they add a few days to a monarch,
 • In recompence of thousand vulgar fates,
 • Which their drugs daily hasten ?

• *Mag.* As I pass
 • The outward rooms, I found them in consult ;
 • I ask'd them if their art was in a stand,
 • And could not help the king. They shook their heads,
 • And in most grave and solemn wise unfolded
 • Matter, which little purposed, but words
 • Rank'd in right learned phrase ; all I could learn, was,
 • That nature's kindly warmth was quite extinct,
 • Nor could the breath of art kindle again
 • Th' ethereal fire.'

Mir. My royal mistress Artemisa's fate,
 And all her son young Artaban's high hopes,
 Hang on this lucky crisis ; since this day
 The haughty Artaxerxes and old Memnon
 Enter Persepolis : the yearly feast
 Devoted to our glorious god the Sun
 Hides their designs under a holy veil ;
 And thus religion is a mask for faction.
 But let their guardian Geni still be watchful,
 For if they chance to nod, my waking vengeance
 Shall surely catch that moment to destroy them.

Mag. 'Tis said the fair Anclitris, Memnon's daughter,
 Comes in their company.

Mir. That fatal beauty,
 With most malignant influence, hast cross

THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER. 15

My first and great ambition. When my brother,
 The great Cleander, fell by Memnon's hand,
 (You know the story of our houses' quarrel)
 I fought the king for justice on the murderer ;
 And to confirm my interest in the court,
 ' In confidence of mighty wealth and power,
 ' A long descent from noble ancestors,
 ' And somewhat of the beauty of the maid,'
 I offer'd my Cleone to the prince,
 Fierce Artaxerxes ; he, with rude disdain,
 Refus'd the proffer ; and to grate me more,
 Publickly own'd his passion for Amestris :
 And, in despite ev'n of his father's justice,
 Espous'd the cause of Memnon.

Mag. Ev'n from that notehers, I remember,
 You dated all your service to the Queen,
 Our common mistress.

Mir. 'Tis true, I did so : nor was it in vain ;
 She did me right, and satisfy'd my vengeance :
 Memnon was banish'd, and the prince, disgrac'd,
 Went into exile with him. Since that time,
 Since I have been admitted to her council,
 And seen her, with unerring judgment, guide
 The reins of empire ; I have been amaz'd,
 To see her more than manly strength of soul,
 ' Cautious in good success, in bad unshaken ;
 ' Still arm'd against th' uncertain turns of chance,
 ' Untouch'd by any weakness of her sex,
 ' Their superstition, pity, or their fear ;
 ' And is a woman only in her cunning,'
 What story tells of great Semiramis,
 Or rolling time, that gathers as it goes,
 Has added more, such Artemisa is.

Mag. Sure 'twas a mark of an uncommon genius,
 To bend a soul like that of great Artaxerxes,
 And charm him to her sway.

Mir. Certainly fate,
 Or somewhat like the force of fate, was in it ;
 And still whenever remembrance sets that scene
 Before my eyes, I view it with amazement.

Mag. I then was young, a stranger to the court,

12 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

And only took the story as reported
By different fame; you must have known it better.

Mir. Indeed I did; then favour'd by the King,
And by that means a sharer in the secret.

'Twas on a day of public festival,
When beauteous Artemisa stood to view
(Behind the covert of a golden lattice)
The King and court returning from the temple:

When just as by her stand Artaxerxes pass'd,
The window by design or chance fell down,
And to his view expos'd her blushing beauties.

She seem'd surpris'd, and presently withdrew;
She seem'd surpris'd, and presently withdrew;
But ev'n that moment was an age in love:
So was the monarch's heart for passion moulded,
So apt to take at first the soft impression.

Soon as we were alone, I found the evil
Already past a remedy, and vainly
Urg'd the resentment of her injur'd lord:
His love was deaf to all.

Mag. Was Tiribafus absent? •

Mir. He was then general of the horse,
Under old Memnon in the Median war.

But if that distant view so much had charm'd him,
Imagine how he burnt, when, by my means,
He view'd her beauties nearer; when each action,
And every graceful sound conspir'd to charm him:

• Joy of her conquest, and the hopes of greatness,
• Gave lustre to her charms, and made her seem
• Of more than mortal excellence.' In short,

After some faint resistance, like a bride
That strives a while, tho' eager for the bliss,
The furious King enjoy'd her:

And to secure their joys, a snare was laid
For her unthinking lord, in which he fell,
Before the fame of this could reach his ears.

Since that, she still has by successful arts
Maintain'd that pow'r, which first her beauty gain'd.

Mag. With deepest foresight, wisely has she laid
A sure foundation for the future greatness
Of Artaban, her only darling son.

Each busy thought, that rolls within her breast,

Labour for him : the King, when first he sicken'd,
 Dectar'd he should succeed him in the throne.

Mir. That was a point well gain'd ; nor were the elder-
 Of Artaxerxes worth our least of fears, [Ship
 If Memnon's interest did not prop his cause.
 • Since then they stand secur'd, by being join'd,
 From reach of open force, it were a master-piece,
 Worthy a thinking head, to sow division
 And seeds of jealousy, to loose those bonds
 Which knit and hold them up ; that so divided,
 With ease they might be ruin'd.

Mag. That's a difficulty next to impossible.

Mir. Cease to think so.

• The wise and active conquer difficulties,
 • By daring to attempt them : Sloth and Folly,
 • Shiver and shrink at sight of Toil and Hazard,
 • And make th' impossibility they fear.
 Ev'n Memnon's temper seems to give th' occasion ;
 Of wrong impatient, headlong to revenge ;
 Tho' bold, yet wants that faculty of thinking,
 That should direct his anger. Valiant fools
 Were made by Nature for the wise to work with ;
 They are their tools, and 'tis the sport of statesmen,
 When heroes knock their knotty heads together,
 And fall by one another.

Mag. What you've said,

Has wak'd a thought in me which may be lucky :
 Ere he was banish'd for your brother's murder,
 There was a friendship 'twixt us ; and tho' then
 I left his barren soil, to root myself
 More safely under your auspicious shade,
 Yet still pretending ties of ancient love,
 At his arrival here I'll visit him :
 Whence this advantage may at least be made,
 To ford his shallow soul.

Mir. Oh ! much, much more ;

'Twas happily remember'd : • nothing gulls
 • These open unsuspecting fools, like friendship :
 • Dull heavy things ! whom Nature has left honest
 • In mere frugality, to save the charge
 • She's at in setting out a thinking soul :
 • Who, since their own short understandings reach

24 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

‘ No further than the present, think even the wise,
 ‘ Like them, disclose the secrets of their breasts,
 ‘ Speak what they think, and tell tales of themselves.’
 Thy function too will vanish o’er our arts,
 And sanctity dissembling.

Mag. Yet still I doubt,
 His caution may draw back, and fear a snare.

Mir. Tell him, the better to assit the fraud,
 That even I wish his friendship, and would gladly
 Forget that cause of hate, which long has held us
 At mortal distance, give up my revenge,
 A grateful off’ring to the public peace.

Mag. Could you afford him such a bribe as that,
 A brother’s blood yet unatou’d?

Mir. No, *Magas*,
 It is not in the power of Fate to raze
 That thought from out my memory :

‘ Eternal night, ’tis true, may cast a shade
 ‘ On all my faculties, extinguish knowledge,
 ‘ And great revenge may with my being cease ;
 ‘ But whilst I am, that ever will remain,
 ‘ And in my latest spirits still survive.’

Yet I would have thee promise that, and more ;
 The friendship of the Queen, the restitution
 Of his command, and honours, that his daughter
 Shall be the bride of Artaban ; say any thing :
 Thou know’st the faith of courtiers, and their oaths,
 Like those of lovers, the Gods laugh at ’em.

Mag. Doubt not my zeal to serve our royal mistress,
 And in her interest yours, my friend and patron.

Mir. My worthy Friend ! will be my friend, and
 share
 The utmost of my pow’r : by greatness rais’d,

{ Embracing. }

Thou, like the God thou serv’st, shalt shine aloft,
 And with thy influence rule the under world,
 But see ! the Queen appears ; ‘ She seems to muse ;
 ‘ Her thoughtful soul labours with some event
 ‘ Of high import, which builtes like an embryo
 ‘ In its dark room, and longs to be disclos’d.’
 Retire, lest we disturb her.

{ They retire to the side of the Stage. }

THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER. 15

Enter the Queen attended.

Queen. Be fix'd, my soul, fix'd on thy own firm basis
Be constant to thyself; nor know the weakness,
The poor irresolution of my sex:

• Disdain those shews of danger, that would bar
• My way to glory. Ye divin' Pow'rs!
• By whom tis said we are: from whose bright beings
• Those active parts were struck which move our clay;
• I feel and I confess to' ethereal energy,
• That busy restless principle, whose appetite
• Is only pleas'd with greatness like your own:
• Why have you clogg'd it then with this dull mass,
• And shut it up in woman? Why detrain'd it
• To so inferior part of the creation?
• Since your own heavenly hands mistook my lot,
• 'Tis you have err'd not I. Could fate e'er mean
Me for a wife, a slave, to Timbafum!
• To such a thing as he! A wretch! A husband!
Therefore in just assertion of myself,
I shook him off, and pass'd those narrow limits,
Which laws contrive in vain for souls born great.
There is not, must not be, a bond for greatness!
Pow'r gives a sanction, and makes all things just.
Ha! Mirza! Worthy Lord, I saw thee not.

[Seeing Mirza.]

So busy were my faculties in thought.

Mirza. The thoughts of princes dwell in sacred
privacy, *[Singing.]*

Unknown and venerable to the vulgar;
And like a temple's innermost recesses,
None enter to behold the hallow'd mysteries,
Unbidden of the God that dwells within.

Queen. Wise Mirza! Were my soul a temple, fit
For Gods and godlike councils to inhabit,
Thee only would I chuse of all mankind,
To be the priest, still favour'd with access;
Whose piercing wit, sway'd by unerring judgment,
Might mingle even with assembled Gods,
When they devise unchangeable decrees,
And call 'em fate.

Mirza. Whate'er I am, each faculty,
Thy utmost power of my exerted soul,

Preserves a being for your service ;
And when I am not yours, I am no more.

Queen. Time shall not know an end of my acknow-
But every day of our continu'd lives [ledgements :
Be witness of my gratitude, to draw
The knot, which holds our common interest, closer :
Within six days, my son, my Artaban,
Equally dear to me as life and glory,
In public shall espouse the fair Cleone,
And be my pledge of everlasting amity.

Mirza. O, royal Lady ! you outbid my service :
And all returns are vile, but words the poorest.

Queen. Enough ! be, as thou hast been, still my
I ask no more. But I observe of late, [friend,
Your daughter grows a stranger to the court ;
Know you the cause ?

Mirza. A melancholy girl ;
Such in her infancy her temper was,
Soft, even beyond her sex's tenderness ;
' By nature pitiful, and apt to grieve
' For the mishaps of others, and so make
' 'The sorrows of the wretched world her own ;'
Her closet and the Gods share all her time,
Except when only (by some maid attended)
She seeks some shady solitary grove,
Or by the gentle murmur of some brook
Sits sadly list'ning to a tale of sorrow,
'Till with her tears she swell the narrow stream.

Queen. It is not well, these thoughts must be remov'd ;
That eating canker, grief, with wasteful spite,
Preys on the rosy bloom of youth and beauty ;
But love shall chase away these clouds of sadness ;
My son shall breathe so warm a gale of sighs,
As shall dissolve those icicles that hang
Like death about her heart.

Attend us, holy Magas, to the King,
Nor cease to importune the mighty Gods
To grant him health, tho' much I fear in vain.

[*Exeunt Queen, Magas, and Attendants.*

Mirza. This meddling Priest, longs to be found a fool ;
' Thinks he that Memnon, soldier as he is,
' Thought-

THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

17

' Thoughtless and dull, will listen to his soothing? '
 Howe'er I gave his wife proposal way,
 Nay, urg'd him to go on; the shallow fraud
 Will ruin him for ever with my enities,
 And make him firmly mine, spite of his tears,
 And natural inconstancy.
 While choice remains, he will be still unsteady,
 And nothing but necessity can fix him.

[Exit.

Enter Artaxerxes, Memnon, and Attendants.

Artax. Methinks, my noble father and my friend,
 We enter here like strangers, and onlook'd for:
 Each busy face we meet, with wonder starts,
 And seems amaz'd to see us.

Mem. Well may th' ignoble herd
 Start, if with heedless steps they unawares
 Tread on the lion's walk: a prince's genius
 Awe with superior greatness all beneath him;
 With wonder they behold the great Arfaces
 Revis'd again in godlike Artaxerxes.
 In you they see him, such as oft they did
 Returning from his wars, and crown'd with conquest,
 When all our virgins met him on the way,
 And with their songs and dances blest his triumph:
 Now basely sw'd by factious priests and women,
 They start at majesty, and seem surpriz'd,
 As if a God had met 'em. In honour's name,
 Why have we let this be? Why have we languish'd,
 And suffer'd such a government as this
 To waste our strength, and wear our empire low?

Artax. Curs'd be the means by which these ills arose,
 Fatal alike to me as to my country;
 Which my great soul, unable to revenge,
 Has yet with indignation only seen.
 Cut off, by arts of coward priests and statesmen,
 (Whom I disdain'd with servile smiles to court,)
 From the great right which God and Nature gave,
 My birthright to a throne.

Mem. Nor priests, nor statesmen,
 Could have compleated such an ill as this,
 If women had not mingl'd in the mischief;

If Artemisa had not by her charms,
 And all her sex's cunning, wrought the King,
 Old, obvious to her arts, decay'd in greatness,
 Dead to the memory of what once he was,
 ' Just crawling on the verge of wretched life,
 ' A burden to himself, and his friends pity,'
 Among his other failings, to forget
 All that a father and a king could owe
 To such a son as you; — to cut you off
 From your succession, from your hopes of empire,
 And graft her upstart offspring on to royalty.

Artax. But if I bear it,
 Oh, may I live to be my brother's slave,
 The scorn of those brave friends that own my cause;
 May you, my father, spurn me for a coward,
 Give me to vile despair. By heav'n, my heart
 Sits lighter in my bosom, when I think
 That I this day shall meet the boy my brother,
 Whose young ambition with aspiring wings
 Dares ev'n to mate my greatness,

Mem. Fame, that speaks
 Minutely every circumstance of princes,
 Describes him bold, and fiercely fond of power,
 ' Which ev'n in spite of Nature he affects,'
 Impatient of command, and hardly deigning
 To be controul'd by his imperious mother.
 'Tis said too ' as no means were left untry'd,
 ' Which might prepare and fit him to contend
 ' With a superior right and merit,'
 That books and the politer arts ' (which those
 ' Who know admire) ' have been his care; already
 He mingles in their councils, and they trust
 His youth with secrets of important villainy.
 The crowd, taught by his creatures to admire him,
 Stile him a God in wisdom.

Artax. Be that his glory:
 Let him with pedants hunt for praise in books,
 Pour out his life amongst the lazy gown-men,
 Grow old and vainly proud in fancy'd knowledge,
 Unequal to the task of vast ambition;
 Ambition! the desire of active souls,
 That pushes 'em beyond the bounds of Nature,

•And

And elevates the hero to the God.
But see! My love, your beautiful daughter, comes,
And ev'n ambition sickens at her sight.

Enter Amestris attended.

Revenge and fierce desires of glory cease
To urge my passions, master'd by her eyes;
And only gentle fices now warm my breast.

Am. I come, my father, to attend your order.

[To Memnon.

Mem. 'Tis well; and I would have thee still be near me.
The malice of the faction which I hate,
Would vent itself ev'n on thy innocence,
Wert thou not safe under a father's care.

Artax. Oh! say a lover's too; nor can you have
An interest in her safety more than mine.
Love gives a right superior ev'n to Nature;
Or love is Nature in the noblest meaning,
The cause and the preserver of the world.
These arms, that long to press thee to my bosom,
For ever shall defend thee.

Mem. Therefore, my son,
Unto your care I leave our common charge;
Tigranes with our friends expect my orders;
Those when I have dispatch'd, upon the instant
I will return, and meet at your apartment.

[Exit Memnon.

Artax. Come to my arms, and let me hide you there
From all those fears that vex thy beating heart;
Be safe and free from all those fancy'd dangers,
That haunt thy apprehension.

Am. Can you blame me,
If from retirement drawn, and pleasing solitude,
I fear to tempt this stormy sea, the world,
Whose ev'ry beach is strew'd with wrecks of wretches
That daily perish in it? Curst ambition!
Why dost thou come to trouble my repose,
'Who have ev'n from my infancy disclaim'd thee?'

Artax. Cease to complain, my love, and let no
thought,
But what brings peace and joy, approach thy breast.
Let me impart my manly fires to thee,
To warm thy fancy to a taste of glory;
Imperial power, and purple greatness wait thee,

And

And sue for th' acceptance; by the Sun,
And by Arsaces' head, I will not mount
The throne of Cyrus, but to share it with thee.

Am. Van shows of happiness! Deceitful pageantry!
Ah, Prince! hadst thou but known the joys that dwell
With humbler fortunes, thou wouldst cur'd thy royalty.
Had fate allotted us some obscure village,
Where only blest with life's necessities,
We might have pass'd in peace our happy days,
Free from the cares which crowns and empires bring;
There no step-mother, no ambitious brother,
No wicked statesman, would with impious arts
Have strove to wrest from us our small inheritance,
Or stir the simple hinds to noisy faction:
Our nights had all been blest with balmy slumber,
And all our waking hours been crown'd with love.

Ariax. Exquisite charmer! Now by Oroftrader,
I swear, thy each soft accent melts my soul:
The joy of conquest, and immortal triumph,
Honor and greatness, all that fires the hero
To high exploits and everlasting fame,
Grows vile in sight of thee. My haughty soul,
By Nature fierce, and panting after glory,
Could be content to live obscure with thee,
Forgotten and unknown of all but my Amestris.

Am. No, son of great Arsaces, tho' my soul
Shakes in my sex's weakness, and would fly
From noise and faction, and from fatal greatness;
Yet for thy sake, thou idol of my heart,
' (Nor will I blush to own the sacred flame
' Thy sighs and vows have kindled in my breast)'
For thy lov'd sake, spite of my boding fears,
I'll meet the danger which ambition brings,
And tread one path with thee: ' Nor shalt thou lose
' The glorious portion which thy fate designs thee,
' For thy Amestris' fears.

' *Ariax.* Give me those fears;
' For all things will be well.

' *Am.* Grant it, ye Powers!'

This day before your altars will I kneel,
Where all my vows shall for my prince be offer'd;
Still let success attend him, let mankind

Adore

Adore in him your visible divinity ;
Nor will I importune you for myself,
But sum up all I ask in Artaxerxes.

Artax. And doubt not but the Gods will kindly hear
Their virgin vot'ry, and grant her pray'r ; -
Our glorious Sun) the source of light and heat,
Whose influence cheers the world he did create,
Shall smile on thee from his meridian skies,
And own the kindred beauties of thy eyes ;
Thy eyes which, should his own fair beams decay,
Might shine for him, and bless the world with day.

[*Exeunt.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

A C T II.

SCENE, an Apartment of the Palace.

Enter MEMNON and MAGAS.

MEMNON.

THOSE who are wise in courts, my holy Sir,
Make friendships with the ministers of state,
Nor seek the ruins of a wretched exile,
Lest there should be contagion in misfortunes,
And make th' alliance fatal.

Magas. Friends like Memnon
Are worth being sought in danger ; ' since this age,
' Of most flagitious note, degenerates
' From the tam'd virtue of our ancestors,
' And leaves but few examples of their excellence,'
Whom should we seek for friendship but those few,
Those happy few, within whose breasts alone
The footsteps of lost virtue yet remain.

Mem. I pry'thee peace : for nothing misbecomes
The man that would be thought a friend, like flattery ;
Flattery, the meanest kind of base dissembling !
And only us'd to catch the grossest souls :
Besides, it stains the honour of thy function,
Which, like the Gods thou serv'st, should be sincere.

Mag. By that sincerity, by all the service
My friendship can express, I would approve it :

And

And tho' I went not from Persepolis
 Companion of your exile, yet my heart
 Was with you still; and what I could I did,
 Beseeching *our* God for your return.

' Not were those vows in vain, since only again,
 ' 'Tis giv'n me to behold my friend; stay more,
 ' Would you nurse, to keep you here for ever.

Mem. The Gods, 'tis true, are just, and here, I hope,
 At length decreed an end to my misfortunes;
 At least they give me this, to die with honour,
 When life growe vile or burdensome.

Mag. By me they offer all that you can ask,
 And point an easy way to happiness.
 Spare them the wounds our wretched country seais,
 The thousand ills which civil discord brings.
 Oh! still that noise of war, whose dread alarms
 Frighten repose from country village,
 And stir rude tumult up, and wild distraction
 In all our peaceful cities.

Mem. Witness for me,
 Ye awful Gods, who view our inmost thoughts;
 I took not arms, till urg'd by self-defence,
 The eldest law of nature.
 Impute not then those ills that may ensue
 To me; but those who with incessant hate
 Pursue my life, whose malice spreads the flame
 To every part, that my devoted fabric
 May in the universal ruin burn.

Mag. And yet ev'n there perhaps you judge too rashly,
 Impetuous passion hurries you to fast,
 You cannot mark th' advantage of your fortune.

Mem. Has not the law been urg'd to set a brand
 Of foul dishonour on my hoary head?
 Ha! Am I not proserib'd?

Mag. Forget that thought,
 That jarring grates your soul, and turns the harmony
 Of blessed peace to curst infernal discord.
 Hate and its fatal causes all shall cease,
 And Memnon's name be honour'd as of old;
 The bravest and the most successful warrior,
 The fortunate defender of his country.

Mem. 'Tis true (nor will it seem a boast to own)
 I have

I have fought well for Persia, ' and repy'd
 ' The benefit of birth with honest service.'
 Full fifty years harnes'd in rugged steel,
 I have endur'd the biting winter's blait,
 And the feverer heats of parching summer:
 While they who toll'd at home on lazy couches
 Amidst a crew of harlots and soft eunuchs,
 Were at my cost secure in luxury:
 This is a justice Mirza's self must do me.

Mag. Even he, tho' fatal accidents have set
 A moit unhappy bar between your ir rudship,
 Lamenting that there had been cause of enmity,
 And owning all the merit of your virtues,
 Will otten with fate had ordain'd you friends.

Mem. Our God, the Sun, shall sooner change his
 And all th' impossibiliti's, which poets [counte,
 Count to extravagance of loose description,
 Shall sooner be.

Mag. Yet hear me, noble Memnon:
 When by the duty of my priesthood mov'd,
 ' And in just detestation of the mischiefs
 ' Inteline jars produce,' I urg'd wise Mirza,
 By his concurrence, help, and healing counsil,
 To stop those wounds at which his country bleeds:
 Griev'd at the thought, he vow'd his whole endeavour
 Should be to close these breaches:
 That ev'n Cleander's death, and all those quarrels
 That long have nourish'd hatred in your houses,
 Should be in joy of public peace forgotten.

Mem. Oh, couldst thou charm the malice of a states-
 And make him quit his purpose of revenge, [man,
 Thy preaching might reform the guilty world,
 And vice would be no more.

Mag. Nay, ev'n the Queen
 Will bind the confirmation by her son,
 And asks the fair Amelias for prince Artaban.

Mem. Were that the only terms, it were impossible.

Mag. You wou'd not shun th' alliance of a Prince?

Mem. No, for it is the glory of my fate,
 That Artaxerxes is design'd my son,
 With every grace and royal virtue crown'd;
 ' Great, just, and merciful, such as mankind

' (When

• (When in the infant world first governments
 • Began by choice) would have delign'd a king.
Mag. • Unbounded pow'r, and height of greatness give
 • To kings that lustre, which we think divine;
 • The wise who know 'em, know they are but men,
 • Nay sometimes weak ones too: the frow-^{ded}
 • Who kneel before the image, not the God,
 • Worship the deity their hands have made.

The name of Artaban will be as great
 As that of Cyrus, when he shall possess
 (As sure he shall) his throne.

Mem. Ha! What means he?

This villain priest! But hold my rage a little,
 And learn dissimulation; I'll try him further. • [*Aside.*
 You talk in riddles, when you name a throne,
 And Artaban; the Gods, who portion out
 • The lots of princes as of private men,
 Have put a bar between his hopes and empire.

Mag. What bar?

Mem. The best, an elder brother's claim.

Mag. That's easily remov'd; the King their father,
 On just and weighty reasons, has decreed
 His scepter to the younger: add to this,
 The joint concurrence of our Persian lords,
 Who only want your voice to make it firm.

Mem. Can I, can they, can any honest hand,
 Join in an act like this? Is not the elder
 By nature pointed out for preference?

• Is not his right inroll'd among those laws [*order?* •
 • Which keeps the world's vast frame in beauteous
 Aik those thou nam'd'st but now, what made them lords?
 What titles had they had, if merit only
 Cou'd have conferr'd a right, if Nature had not
 Strove hard to thrust the worst deserving first,
 And stamp'd the noble mark of eldership
 Upon their baser metal.

Mag. Sure there may be
 Reasons of so much pow'r and cogent force,
 As may ev'n set aside this right of birth;
 If sons have rights, yet fathers have 'em too,
 'Twere an invidious task to enter into •

The insolence and other faults which mov'd
Royal Arfaces to a just displeasure
Against his eldest son, prince Artaxerxes.

Mem. Ha! Dare not for thy life, I charge thee, dare
To brand the prince's virtue of my prince [out
With the name of most base and damn'd contrivance.
I tell thee, ambitious priest, should the just gods
Require severe account of thy past life,
And charge remembrance to expose thy crimes
In rank and hideous order to thy view,
Horror and guilt of soul would make thee mad.

Mag. You take the matter further than I meant it:
My friendship only aims at your advantage;
• Would point you out a way to peace and honour;
• And, in return of this, your rage unkindly
• Loads me with injuries.

Mem. Away! I cannot bear thy base dissembling,
My honest soul disdains thee and thy friendship.
How hast thou dar'd to think so vilely of me,
That I would condescend to thy mean arts,
And traffic with thee for a prince's ruin?

• A prince the joy and honour of mankind,
• As much superior to the rest of kings,
• As they themselves are above common men;
• And is the very image of the gods.
Wert thou not privileg'd like age and women,
My sword should reach thee, and revenge the wrong
Thy tongue has done his fame.

Mag. Ungrateful lord!
Would'st thou invade my life, as a return
For prefer'd love? But let th' event declare
How great a good, by me sincerely offer'd,
Thy dull romantic honour has refus'd.
And since I have discharg'd the debt I ow'd
To former friendship, or the gods hereafter
Send ruin down, and plague thee with confusion,
Remember me in vain, and curse thy folly.

[Exit Magus.

Mem. No, my remembrance treasures honest thoughts,
And holds not things like thee; I scorn thy friendship,
And would not owe my life to such a villain:
But thou art hardly faint enough to prophecy.

Were all thy tribe like thee, it might well startle
Our lay unlearned faith, when through such hands
The knowledge of the gods is reach'd to man.

But thus those gods instruct us, that *noy* all
(Who like intruders thrust into their *trades*)

And turn the holy office to a trade)

Participate their sacred influence.

This then is your own cause; ye awful powers,
Revenge yourselves, your violated altars,
That those who with unhallow'd hands approach,
May tremble at your justice.

[Exit.

SCENE, *the Palace.*

Enter the Queen, Artaban, Mirza, Magas, and Attendants.

Art. My brother then is come?

Mirza. My lord, I saw him;

With him old haughty Memnon: as they pass'd,
With fierce disdain they view'd the gazing crowd,
And with dumb pride seem'd to neglect that worship
Which yet they wish'd to find: this way they move,
'Tis said, to ask an audience of the King.

Queen. Mirza, 'tis well, I thank thy timely care;
Here will we face this storm of insolence,
Nor fear the noisy thunder: let it roll,
Then burst, and spend at once its idle rage.

Art. Why meet we thus like wrangling advocates,
To urge the justice of our cause with words?
I hate this parle, 'tis tame: if we must meet,
Give me my arms, and let us stake at once
Our rights of merit and of eldership,
And prove like men our title.

Mirza. 'Twere unsafe,

They come surrounded by a crowd of friends;
To strike thro' these were dangerous and rash.
Fate waits for them elsewhere with certain ruin:
From Mirza's hand expect it.

Queen. Be it so:

Auspicious sage, I trust thee with my fortune,
My hopes of greatness, do thou guide 'em all,
For me and for thyself. My son, give way,

Nor

Nor let thy hasty youth disturb with outrage
The present necessary face of peace ;
Occasions great and glorious will remain
Worthy thy arms and courage.

And ~~will~~ ^{may} thy reign th' unmanly task.

• ~~Worthy~~ ^{indeed} your province.'

Mir. My royal mistrels,
Prepare to meet with more than brutal fury
From the fierce Prince and Memnon.

Queen. Well I know
The insolence and native pride of each,
With scurrile taunts and blackest infamy
They load my name : but let them rail,
A woman's vengeance waits them.

Mir. They are here. •

Enter Artaxerxes, Memnon, and Attendants.

Art. Ye tutelar gods, who guard this royal fabric,
And thou, O, Orosmeda, the protector
Of the great Persian race, e'er yet my father,
Royal Arfaces, mingle with your godheads,
Grant me once more to lay before his feet
His eldest born, his once-lov'd Artaxerxes,
'To offer my obedience to his age ;
All that a son can owe to such a father.
You, who with haggard eyes stare wildly on me,
If (as by your attendage here you seem)
You serve the King my father, lead me to him.

Queen. And dost thou wonder that mankind should stare,
When parricides and rebels, in despite
Of nature, majesty, and reverend age,
With impious force and ruffian violence,
Would rob a king and father of his life ?
Cut off his short remains—

Art. Ha ! say'st thou, woman ?
I pr'ythee peace, and urge not a reply ;
I would not hold acquaintance with thy infamy.

Queen. Ye righteous pow'rs, whose justice awes the
world,
Let not your thunders sleep, when crimes like these
Stalk in the open air.

Sur. Thy priest instructs thee,
 Else sure thou hadst not dar'd to tempt the gods,
 And trifle with their justice. Canst thou name it,
 And look on me? On me, whom thy curst arts
 Have strove to bar from native right to ~~inherit~~;
 Made me a stranger to a father's love,
 And broke the bands of nature, which ~~bind~~ ~~me~~
 The nearest to his heart.

Queen. Had he not reason,
 When thou, with rebel insolence, didst dare
 To own and to protect that hoary ruffian:

(*Pointing to Mennot.*)

And in despite ev'n of thy father's justice,
 To stir the factious rabble up to arms
 For him; and make a murderer's cause thy own?

Men. I had another name; nor shouldst thou move me,
 Insulting Queen, to words, did not remembrance
 With horror sting my soul for Tiribafus,
 Thy murder'd lord, when by my fatal orders,
 And by his own high courage urg'd, he fell,
 To make thy way to guilty greatness easy.
 I thought him then a traitor (for thy arts
 Had taught the royal mandate so to call him)
 Too big for public justice; and on that pretence
 Consented to the snare that catch'd his life;
 So my obedient honesty was made
 The pander to thy lust and black ambition.
 Except the guilt of that accursed day,
 In all my iron years of wars and danger,
 From blooming youth down to decaying age,
 My fame ne'er knew a stain of soul dishonour;
 And it that made me guilty, think what thou art,
 The cause and the contriver of that mischief.

Queen. What, nam'dst thou Tiribafus! Be his guilt
 Forgotten with his memory. Think on Cleander,
 And let the furies that enquire for blood,
 Set horror up, and bitter'd remorse,
 To gnaw thy anxious soul. Oh, great Cleander!
 Unworthy was thy fate, thou first of warriors,
 To fall beneath a base assassin's stab,
 Whom all the thirsty instruments of death
 Had in the field of battle fought in vain.

Mem. In fight of heaven and of the equal gods,
I will avow that my revenge was just,
My injur'd honour could not ask for less;
Since he refus'd to do a soldier's justice,
I us'd his own strength.

And dar'st thou call that act a soldier's justice?
Didst thou not meet him with dissembled friendship,
Hiding the rancour of thy heart in smiles?
When he (whose open unsuspecting nature
Thought thee a soldier honest as himself)
Came to the banquet as secure of peace,
' By mutual vows renew'd; and in the revel
' Of that luxurious day, forgetting hate,
' And every cause of ancient animosity,
' Devoted all his thoughts to mirth and friendship:"
Then, Memnon, (at an hour when few are villains,
The sprightly juice infusing gentler thoughts,
' And kindling love ev'n in the coldest breasts)"
Unequal to him in the face of war,
Stole on Cleander with a coward's malice,
And struck him to the heart.

M. m. By the stern god,
By Mars, the patron of my honour'd wars,
'Tis basely false. In his own drunken brawl
The boaster fell. I bore his lavish tongue,
Nor thought him worth my sword, 'till (his cold temper
Warm'd with the wine) he dar'd me to the combat;
Then pleas'd to meet him in that fit of valour,
I took him at his word, and ' (with my sword
' Drawn against his in equal opposition)"
I kill'd him while it lasted.

Art. Cease we, my friend,
This women's war of railing; when they talk,
Men should be still, and let noise tire itself.
I came to find a father, tho' my fears
Suggest the worst of evils to my thoughts,
And make me dread to hear Arfaces' fate.
Lead, Memnon, to the presence.

Paris. Prince, you pass not.
Guard, keep the door. The King your father lives—

Art. Ha! if he lives, why lives he not to me?
 Why am I thus shut out and banish'd from him?
 Why are my veins rich with his royal blood?
 Why did he give me life, if not to serve him?
 Forbid me not to wait upon his bed,
 And watch his sickly slumbers, that my youth
 May with its service glad his drooping age,
 And his cold hand may bless me ere he die.
 Nay, be a queen, and rob me of his crown,
 But let me keep my right to filial piety.

Queen. Well hast thou urg'd the specious name of duty
 To lude deform'd rebellion: hast thou not
 With thy false arts poison'd his people's loyalty?
 What meant thy pompous progress thro' the empire?
 Thy vast profusion to the factious nobles,
 Whose interest sways the crowd, and stirs up mutiny?
 Why did thy haughty, fierce, disdainful soul
 Stoop to the meanest arts which catch the vulgar;
 Herd with them, tawn upon them, and carest them?
 Appeal to them, to them relate thy wrongs,
 And make them judges of thy father's justice?
 Thy cruel and unnatural lust of power
 Has sunk thy father more than all his years,
 And made him wither in a green old age.

Art. False all as hell: nor had I arm'd my friends
 But to defend that right——

Queen. Dost thou not come,
 Impatient of delay, to halloo fate?
 To bring that death, the lingering disease
 Would only for a day or two deter?

Art. I bear thee, and disdain thy little malice,
 That dares to stain my virtue with a crime
 It views with most abhorrence; but reproach
 Is lost on thee, since modesty, with all
 The virtues that adorn thy sex, is fled.

Queen. Audacious rebel!

Art. Infamous adulteress!
 Stain of my father's bed, and of his throne!

Acta. Villain, thou'st. O, Madam, give me way,
 [To the Queen, who holds him, drawing his sword.]
 Whatever hars my fury, calls me base,
 Unworthy of the honour of your son.

Queen. Hold, Arraban : my honour suffers not
From his lewd breath, ' nor shall thy sword profane
' With brawls of blood the reverence of this place,
' To peace and sacred majesty devoted.'

Art. How art thou ?

Queen. My son of great Arsaces. [contrivance.

Art. No, 'tis false ; thy forging mother's damn'd
Seek for thy father in that plotting fellow.

[Pointing to Mirza.

The hero's race disclaims thee. Why dost thou frown,
And knit thy boyish brow ? Dost thou dare ought
Worthy the rank of the divine Arsaces ?

If so, come forth ; break from that woman's arms,
And meet me with thy good sword like a man.

Art. Yes, Artaxerxes, yes ; thou shalt be met :

The mighty gods have held us in the balance,
And one of us is doom'd to sink for ever ;

Nor can I bear a long delay of fate,
But wish the great decision were even now :

Prodd and ambitious prince, I dare like thee
All that is great and glorious. Like thine,
Immortal thirst of empire fires my soul :

My soul, which of superior power impatient,
Disdains thy eldership ; therefore in arms

(Which give the noblest right to kings) I will
To death dispute with thee the throne of Cyrus.

Art. Do this, and thou art worthy of my anger.

Oh, energy divine of great ambition,
That can inform the souls of beardless boys,
And ripen them to men, in spite of nature !

I tell thee, boy, that empire is a cause,
For which the gods might wage immortal war.

Then let my soul exert her utmost virtue,
And think at least thou art Arsaces' son,

That the idea of thy fancy'd father
May raise and animate thy lesser genius,

And make thee fit to meet my arm in battle.

Art. Oh ! doubt not but my soul is charm'd with
greatness,

' So much it rivals ev'n the joy of knowledge
' And sacred wisdom. What makes gods divide,
' But power and science infinite ?'

Heat

Hear only this; our father, press'd by age,
 And a long train of evils which that brings,
 Languishes in the last extremes of life;
 Since thou wouldst blot my birth with base dishonour,
 Be this my proof of filial piety;
 While yet he lives, cease we our enmity,
 Nor let the hideous noise of war disturb
 His parting soul.

Art. I take thee at thy word:

Let his remains of life be peace betwixt us,
 And after that let all our time be war.
 Remember when we meet, since one must fall,
 Who conquers and survives, survives to empire.

[Exit severally Queen and Artaban, Artaxerxes and Memnon, cum suis.]

Mir. Most fortunate event! which gives us more
 Than ev'n our wishes could have ask'd. This truce
 Gives lucky opportunity for thinking;
 'Twill lull these thoughtless heroes to security.

Mag. Th' approaching festival will more confirm it:
 • Of all those sacred times which heretofore
 • Religion has distinguish'd from the rest,
 • And to the service of the gods devoted,
 • This has been still most venerably held.
 • Amongst the vulgar toil and labour ceases,
 • With chaplets crown'd they dance to the shrill pipe,
 • And in their songs invoke those milder deities,
 • That soften anxious life with peace and pleasure;
 • Slaves are enfranchis'd, and inveterate foes
 • Forget, or at the least suspend their hate,
 • And meet like friends. Pernicious discord seems
 • Outrooted from our more than iron-age:
 • 'The gods are worship'd with unusual reverence,'
 Since none, not ev'n our kings, approach their temples,
 With any mark of war's destructive rage,
 But sacrifice unarm'd.

Mir. A lucky thought
 Is in my mind at once compleatly form'd,
 Like Grecian Pallas in the head of Jove.
 When Memnon, Artaxerxes, and their friends,
 Shall, in obedience to the holy rites,
 To-morrow at the altars bow unarm'd,

Orchanes with a party of the guards,
 Who in my palace shall this night be plac'd,
 May at that private door which opens into
 The temple, rush at once, and seize them all.
 The heads once off, the mean and heartless crowd
 With ease may be dispers'd.

Mag. That you propose
 Wears a successful face, were it as innocent :
 An act of such outrageous profanation,
 May shock the thoughts ev'n of our closest friends,
 And make them start from an abhorr'd alliance,
 That draws the vengeance of the gods upon them.

• *Mir.* Art thou the first to start a doubt like that ?
 • Art thou (who dost inspire their oracles,
 • And teach them to deceive the easy crowd
 • In doubtful phrase) afraid of thy own gods ?
 • In every change they were on thy side still,
 • And sure they will not leave thee now for trifles.
 • The gods shall certainly befriend our cause,
 • At least not to be our foes ; nor will they leave
 • Their happy seats (where free from care and pain,
 • Bless'd in themselves alone, of man regardless,
 • They loll serene in everlasting ease)
 • To mind the trivial business of our world.

• *Mag.* But more I fear the superstitious vulgar,
 Who, tho' unknowing what religion means,
 Yet nothing moves them more than zealous rage
 For its defence, when they believe it violated.

Mir. • I was to blame to tax the priest with scruples,
 • Or think his care of interest was his conscience.

My caution shall obviate all thy fears ;
 We will give out that they themselves design'd
 To fire the temple, and then kill the King.
 No matter, tho' it seems not very probable ;
 More monstrous tales have oft abus'd the vulgar.

Mag. I yield to your direction ; and to strengthen
 The enterprize, will secretly dispose
 A party of my own within the temple,
 To join with yours.

Mir. It joys my heart to think
 That I shall glut my vengeance on this Memnon ;

That

THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

That I shall see him strive in vain, and curse
 The happy fraud that caught him. ' Like a lion,
 ' Who long has reign'd the terror of the woods,
 ' And dar'd the boldest huntsmen to the combat ;
 ' 'Till catch'd at length within some narrow pass,
 ' With foaming jaws he bites the dust, and
 ' And roars, and rolls his fiery eyes in vain,
 ' While the surrounding swains at pleasure wound him,
 ' And make his death their sport :
 ' Thus wit still gets the mastery over courage.
 ' Long time unmatched in war the hero shone,
 ' And mighty fame in fields of battle won,
 ' 'Till one fine project of the statesman's brain,
 ' Bereaves him of the spoils his arms did gain,
 ' And renders all his boasted prowess vain.'

[Exit]

END of the SECOND ACT.

A C T III.

SCENE, *A Garden belonging to Mirza's Palace.*

*Cleone is discovered lying on a bank of flowers,
 Beliza attending.*

SONG, by B. STORKE, Esq.

UPON a shady bank repos'd,
 Philanthic, amorous, young, and fair,
 Sighing, to the groves disclose'd
 The story of her care.

The vocal groves give some relief,
 While they her notes return ;
 The waters murmur o'er her grief,
 And Echo seems to mourn.

A swain, that heard the nymph complain,
 In pity of the fair,
 Thus kindly strove to cure her pain,
 And ease her mind of care.

To

THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

35

'Tis just that love should give you rest,
From love your torments came ;
Take that warm cordial to your breast,
And meet a kinder flame.

How wilt thou must the woman prove,
(O, fair nymph, beware)
Whole folly scorns another's love,
And courts her own despair ?

Cl. Oh love ! thou bane of an unhappy maid !
Still art thou busy at my panting heart !
Still dost thou melt my soul with thy soft images,
And make my ruin pleasing ! Fondly I try,
By gales of sighs and floods of streaming tears,
To vent my sorrows and assuage my passions :
Still fresh supplies renew th' exhausted stores.
Love reigns my tyrant, to himself alone
He vindicates the empire of my breast,
And banishes all thoughts of joy forever.

Bel. Why are you still thus cruel to yourself ?
Why do you feed and cherish the disease,
That preys on your dear life ? How can you hope
To find a cure for love in solitude ?
Why rather chuse you not to shine at court ;
And in a thousand gay diversions there,
To lose the memory of this wretched passion ?

Cl. Alas ! Bel za, thou hast never known
The fatal power of a resistless love :
Like that avenging guilt that haunts the impious,
In vain we hope by flying to avoid it ;
In courts and temples it pursues us still,
And in the loudest clamours will be heard :
It grows a part of us, lives in our blood,
And every beating pulse proclaims its force.
Oh ! think not then that I can slay myself ;
The grave can only hide me from my sorrows.

Bel. Allow me then at least to share your griefs ;
Companions in misfortunes make them less ;
And I could suffer much to make you easy.

Cl. Sit by me, gentle maid, and while I tell
A wretched tale of unregarded love,

If thou, in kind compassion of my woes,
 Shalt sigh, or shed a tear for my mishap,
 My grateful eyes shall pay it back with interest
 Help me to fail at my too easy heart,
 That rashly entertain'd this fatal guest:
 And you, my eyes, why were you still in pain
 Of any other light but Antaxerxes?

Why did you make my woman's heart acquainted
 With all the thousand graces and perfections,
 That dress the lovely hero up for conquest?

Bel. Had you oppos'd this passion in its infancy,
 Ere time had given it strength, it might have dy'd.

Cle. That was the fatal error that undid me:
 My virgin thoughts, and unexperienc'd innocence,
 Found not the danger till it was too late.

And tho' when first I saw the charming prince,
 I felt a pleasing motion at my heart,
 Short-breathing sighs heav'd in my panting breast,
 ' The mounting blood flush'd in my glowing face,
 ' And dy'd my cheeks with more than usual blushes.'
 I thought him, sure, the wonder of his kind,
 And wish'd my fate had giv'n me such a brother:
 Yet knew not that I lov'd, but thought that all,
 Like me, beheld and bless'd him for his excellence.

Bel. Sure never hopeless maid was curst before,
 With such a wretched passion; all the gods
 Join to oppose your happiness; 'tis said,
 This day the Prince shall wed the fair Amestris.

Cle. No, my Beliza, I have never known
 The pleasing thoughts of hope: certain despair
 Was born at once, and with my love increas'd.

Bel. Think you the Prince has e'er perceiv'd your thoughts?

Cle. Forbid it, all ye chaster powers, that favour
 ' The modesty and innocence of maids:
 ' No, till my death, no other breast but thine,
 ' Shall e'er participate the fatal secret.
 ' Oh! could I think that he had ever known
 ' My hidden flame, shame and confusion
 ' Wou'd force my virgin soul to leave her me:
 ' And certain death ensue.'

Thou nam'd'st the fair Amestris, didst thou not

Madam, I did.
 I envy not her happiness.
 The few of our sex are blessed like her
 In a godlik' lord.
 My lord has been a man!

What should I then? I might have sought his friendship;
 Perhaps from long experience of my faith,
 He might have lov'd me better than the rest.
 Amidst the dangers of the horrid war,
 Still had I been the nearest to his side;
 In courts and triumphs still had shar'd his joys,
 Or when the sportful chase had call'd us forth,
 Together had we cheer'd our foaming steeds,
 Together press'd the savage o'er the plain:
 And when o'er-labour'd with the pleasing toil,
 Stretch'd on the verdant hill had slept together,
 But whither does my roving fancy wander?
 These are the sick dreams of fantastic love.

' So in the calenture the seaman fancies
 ' Green fields and flow'ry meadows on the ocean,
 ' Till leaping in, the wretch is lost for ever.
 ' *Bel.* Try but the common remedies of love,
 ' And let a second flame expel the first.
 ' *Cle.* Impossible: as well thou may'st imagine,
 ' When thou complain'st of heat at scorching noon,
 ' Another sun shall rise to shine more kindly.
 ' Believe me, my Beliza, I am grown
 ' So fond of the delusion that has charm'd me,
 ' I hate the officious hand that offers cure.'

Bel. Madam, prince Artaban.

Cle. My cruel stars!

Do you then envy me my very solitude?
 But death, the wretch's only remedy,
 Shall hide me from your hated light for ever.

Enter Artaban.

Thou lovely mourner! still, still wilt thou blast
 Me with insuspicious tears?
 When at thy feet I kneel, and sue for pity,
 Or when thy cold regards complain,
 Canst thou not only answer me with sighs?
 Canst thou not say, my lord, what answer can I give?
 Canst thou not win you with my grief,

Pity the temper of a wretched maid,
By nature sad, and born the child of sorrow
In vain you ask for happiness from me,
Who want it for my self.

Arta. Can blooming youth,
And virgin innocence, that knows no guile,
Know any cause for grief?

* *Cle.* Do but survey
* The miserable state of human kind,
* Where wretches are the general increase,
* And tell me if there be not cause for grief.
* *Arta.* Such thoughts as these, my fair philosopher,
* Inhabit wrinkled cheeks and hollow eyes;
* The marks which years set on the wither'd face;
* The gentle goddess, Nature, wisely has
* Allotted other cares for youth and beauty.
The god of love stands ready with his torch
To light it at thy eyes, but still in vain;
For ere the flame can catch, 'tis drown'd in tears.

* *Cle.* Oh! Name not love, the worst of all;
* The common ruin of my easy sex,
* Which I have sworn for ever to avoid,
* In memory of all those hapless maids,
* That love has plung'd in unexampled woes?

Arta. Forbear to argue with that angel face,
Against the passion thou wert form'd to raise.

* Alas! Thy frozen heart has only known
* Love in reverse, not tasted of his joys;
* The wishes, soft desires, and pleasing pains,
* That center all in most extatic bliss.
* Oh, lovely maid, mispend no more that treasure
* Of youth and charms, which lavish nature gives;
The Paphian goddess frowns at thy delay;
By her fair self, and by her son she swears,
Thy beauties are devoted to her service.

Lo! Now she shoots her fires into my breast,
She urges my desires, and bids me seize thee,

[Taking her hand and i

And bear thee as a victim to her altar:
Then offer up ten thousand thousand joys,
As an amends for all thy former coldness.

Forbear, my lord; or I must swear to thy
Toe ever from your fight.

• *Arta.* Why dost thou frown,
• And damp the rising joy within my breast.
• Art thou resolv'd to force thy gentle nature,
• Compassionate to all the world beside,
• And only to me cruel? Shall my vows,
• Thy father's intercession, all be vain.

• *Cle.* Why do you urge my father's fatal power,
• To curse you with a sad unlucky bride?
Call round your eyes on our gay Eastern courts,
On smiling beauties, born to better fate,
To gaze on to the beholders;

• To see some happy princess with your vows,
• To see the poor Cleone to her sorrows.
• To see those queens are those of most celestial form,
• Whom no man can drive thy image from my heart?
• To see they cast in nature's fairest mould,
• More than Cynthis's shining train of stars,
• And as the forest the thickest ever clasp'd
• Her lover, when the bridal night was past;
I swear I would prefer thee, O Cleone,
• With all thy scorn and cold indifference,
• Would choose to languish and to die for thee,
• Much rather than be blest'd, and live for them.

Cle. Oh, prince! It is too much, nor am I worthy
The honour of your passion, since 'tis fix'd
By certain and unalterable fate,
That I can never yield to a return:
My thoughts are all to chaste Diana vow'd,
And I have sworn to die a virgin votary.

Arta. Impossible! thou canst not give away
Mine and thy father's right, ev'n to the gods:
Diana will disown th' unjust donation,
Nor favour such an injury to love.
To every power divine I will appeal,

• To see if they will be so partial,
• To see if they will expect us; come, fair saint,
• To see if they will abide their righteous doom,
• To see if they will decree my happiness,
• To see if they will bring, and my name approve,
• To see if they will have felt the power of love. [*Ex.*

40 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

SCENE, *the Temple of the Sun.*

Enter Artaxerxes, Amestris, and Attendants.

Art. 'Tis done! 'Tis done! Oh, let me find some way
To tell the mighty joy that fills my breast,
Lest I grow mad with height of furious bliss.
The holy priest has ty'd the sacred knot,
And my Amestris now is all my own.

Oh, thou soft charmer! thou excelling sweetness!
Why art thou not transported all like me?
I swear thou dost not love thy Artaxerxes,
If thou art calm in this excess of happiness.

Am. Alas! My lord, my panting heart yet trembles,
' In vast suspense between unruly joys
' And chilling fears.' Somewhat methinks there is
That checks my soul, and says, 'I was too bold
To quit the pleasures of my virgin state,
To barter 'em for cares and anxious love.

Art. These are the fears which wait on every bride,
And only serve for preludes to her joys;
Short sighs, and all those motions of thy heart,
Are nature's call, and kindle warm desires.

Soon as the friendly goddess of the night
Shall draw her veil of darkness o'er thy blushes,
These little cold unnecessary doubts
Shall fly the circle of my folding arms:

' And when I press thee trembling to my bosom,
' Thou shalt confess (if there be room for words,
' Or ev'n for thoughts) that all those thoughts are bliss.

Am. Yet surely mine are more than common fears,
' For, Oh, my prince! when my foreboding heart
' Surveys th' uncertain state of human joys,
' How secretly the malice of our fate
' Unseen pursues, and often blasts our happiness
' In full security; I justly dread,
' Lest death or parting, or some unseen accident,
' Much worse, if possible, than each of these,
' Should curse us more than ever we were bless'd.

Art. Doubt not the gods, my fair, whose righteous
' Shall favour and protect our virtuous lover. [power
' It still thou apprehend'st approaching danger,
' Let us make haile and snatch th' uncertain joy,

While

THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

48

- While fate is in our power.
 • Now let us start, and give a loose to love,
 • Feast ev'ry sense, with each luxurious pleasure,
 • Improve our minutes, make 'em more than years,
 • Than Ages. 'and ev'n live the life of gods.
 • If after this death or ill-fortune comes,
 • It cannot injure us, since we already
 • Have liv'd and been before-hand with our fate.
 • *Am.* Oh! let me ease at once my tender heart,
 • And tell my dearest lord my worst of fears.
 • There is an ill which more than death I dread;
 • Should you by time and long fruition sated,
 • Grow faithless, and forget the lost Amestris;
 • Forget that everlasting truth you vow'd,
 • Tho' sure I should not publicly complain,
 • Nor to the gods accuse my perjur'd prince,
 • Yet my soft soul would sink beneath the weight;
 • I should grow mad, and curse my very being,
 • And wish I ne'er had been, or not been lov'd.
 • *Art.* Dost thou—when every happier star shines for
 • And with propitious influence gilds our fortune, [us,
 • Dost thou invent fantastick forms of danger,
 • And fright thy soul with things that are impossible?
 • Now by the potent god of love I swear,
 • I will have ample vengeance for thy doubts.
 • My soft complaining fair, shalt thou not pay me
 • In joys too fierce for thought, for these suspicious?
 • The bands which hold our love are knit by fate,
 • Nor shall decaying Time or Nature loose 'em.
 • Beyond the limits of the silent grave,
 • Love shall survive, immortal as our beings:
 • And when at once we climb yon azure skies,
 • We will be shown to all the bless'd above
 • For the most constant pair that e'er deserv'd.
 • To mingle with their stars.
 • *Am.* 'Tis true! 'Tis true!
 • Norought I to suspect thee. Oh, my hero!
 • The gods have form'd thee for the nearest pattern
 • Of their own excellence and perfect truth.
 • Oh, let me sink upon thy gentle bosom,
 • And, blushing, tell how greatly I am blest'd.
 • Forgive me, modestly, if here I row

48 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

- That all the pleasures of my virgin state
- Were poor and trifling to the present rapture :
- A gentle warmth invades my glowing breast,
- And while I fondly gaze upon thy face,
- Ev'n thought is lost in exquisite delight.
- *Art.* Oh, thou delicious, perfect, angel woman !
- Thou art too much for mortal sense to bear :
- The vernal bloom and fragrancy of spices,
- Wasted by gentle winds, are not like thee.
- From thee, as from the Cyprian queen of love,
- Ambrosial odours flow ; my every faculty
- Is charm'd by thee, and drinks immortal pleasure.
- Oh, glorious god of day, fly swiftly forward,
- And to thy sister's rule resign the world :
- Nor haste to rise again, but let the night
- Long bless me with her stay, that thy return
- At morn may find me happiest of my kind.

Exit Memnon.

My father ! Is there an increase of joy ?
 What can ye give, ye gods, to make it more ?

Mom. Ye blessings of my age ! Whom when I view,
 The memory of former woes is lost.

Oh, prince ! Well has this glorious day repay'd

My youth and blood spent in Arfaces' service.

Nor, had the gods indulg'd my vainest wishes,

Durst I have ask'd for such a son as you are.

But I am roughly bred, in words unknowing,

Nor can I phrase my speech in apt expression,

To tell how much I love and honour you :

Might I but live to fight one battle for you,

'Tho' with my life I bought the victory,

'Tho' my old batter'd trunk were how'd to pieces,

And scatter'd o'er the field, yet should I bless

My fate, and think my years wound up with

Art. Doubt not, my noble father, but ere

A large remain of glory is behind,

When civil discord shall be reconcil'd,

And all the noise of faction hush'd to peace :

Rough Greece alike in arts and arms severe,

No more shall brand the Persian name with

Athens and Sparta wond'ring, shall behold us

Strict in our discipline, undaunted, patient

War's stern toil, and dread our hostile virtue.
 The stubborn commonwealths, that proudly dare
 Oppose the glorious monarch of the East,
 Shall pay their homage to the throne of Cyrus.

When with laurels cover'd we return,
 My love shall cheer, and smiling bless our triumph,
 While at her feet I lay the scepters of the world.

Queen. Oh, glorious theme! By heav'n, it fires my age,
 And kindles youth again in my cold veins.

Queen. Ha! Mirza and the Queen! retire, my fair;
 A gentle hate and bawling rage shall not
 Disturb the peace, to which this happy day
 Is consecrated. Forward to the altar.

[*Exeunt Artaxerxes, Amestris, Memnon,
 and Attendants.*]

[*Enter the Chamber door, Queen, Mirza, and Attendants.*]

Queen. We are dispos'd, and fate but waits our orders
 To give the blow.

Queen. Your caution was

Both wise and faithful, not to trust my son
 Too rashly with a secret of this nature:
 The youth, tho' great of soul, and fond of glory,
 Yet leans to the fantastic rules of honour,
 Would hesitate at such an act as this,
 Tho' future empire should depend upon it.

Mirza. When time shall add experience to that know-
 With which his early youth is richly fraught, [I judge,
 He'll be convinc'd that only fools would lose
 A crown for notional principles.

Honour is the unthinking soldier's boast,
 Whose dull head cannot reach those finer arts,
 By which mankind is govern'd.

Queen. And yet it gives a lustre to the great,
 And makes the crowd adore 'em.

Mirza. Your son shall reap
 The whole advantage, while we bear the guilt:
 You, Madam, when the sacred hymns are finish'd,
 Must with the prince retire; our foes when seiz'd,
 Within the temple may be best secur'd
 Till you dispose their fate.

[*Exit.*]

Queen. The rites attend us; [*Solemn Music is heard.*
This day my son is monarch of the East.

Mirza. Lend us, ye gods, your temples but this day,
You shall be paid with ages of devotion,
And after this, forever undisturb'd,
Brood o'er your smoking altars.

[*Exeunt Queen, Mirza, and Attendants.*]

The Scene opening, shews the Altar of the Sun, Memnon, and several other Priests attending. Solemn Music is heard. Then enter on one Side Memnon, Artaxerxes, and Attendants; on the other Side the Queen, Mirza, Artaban, Cleone, Cleanthes, and Attendants. All bow towards the Altar, and then range themselves on each Side of the Stage, while the following Hymn is perform'd in Parts, and Chorus by the Priests.

H Y M N to the Sun, by W. SHIFFER.

Hail, Light, that doubly glads our sphere,
Glory and triumph of the year!
Hail, festival, forever blest,
By the adoring ravish'd East!

• Hail, Mithras, mighty deity!
• For fire and air, and earth and sea,
• From thee their origin derive,
• Motion and Form from thee receive.

• When matter yet unsex'd lay,
• No sooner thou intus'd'st thy ray,
• But the dull mass its power obey'd,
• But an harmonious world was made.

• Which still, when thou withdraw'st thy beams,
• An undistinguish'd Chaos seems,
• For what are objects without sight?
• Or vision, when involv'd in night?

• Night is an universal grave,
• Where things but doubtful being have;
• Till them thy beams illuminate,
• And, as it were, again create,

Chorus, &c.

- Hail, source of immaterial fire,
- That ne'er began, can ne'er expire ;
- Whose orb, with streaming glories fraught,
- Dazzles the ken of human thought.

All the dependent spheres above,
By thy direction shine and move :
All power being here below,
From thy immediate essence flow.

What is the soul of man, but light,
Drawn down from thy transcendent height ?
What but an intellectual beam ;
A spark of thy immortal flame ?

- For as thou rul'st with gladsome rays
- The greater world, so this the less ;
- And like thy own diffusive soul,
- Shoots life and vigour thro' the whole.
- Since then from thee at first it came,
- To thee, tho' clogg'd, it points its flame ;
- And conscious of superior birth,
- Despises this unkindred earth.

Chorus, &c.

Hail, Orosmaes, power divine !
Permit us to approach thy thrise ;
Permit thy votaries to raise
Their grateful voices to thy praise.

Thou art the father of our kings,
The stem whence their high lineage springs ;
• The sovereign lord, that does maintain
• Their uncontrol'd and boundless reign.

Oh, then assist thy drooping son,
Who long has grac'd our Persian throne !
Oh, may he yet extend his sway !
We yet Anaces' rule obey !

- Let thy vitality impart
- New spirits to his fainting heart :
- Let him, like thee (from whom he sprung)
- Be ever active, ever young.

Chorus, &c.

[When the Music is ended, Memnon, Artaxerxes, Queen, Artaban, &c. go off as they entered, severally; only Mirza comes forward, and the Scene shuts; he waits after Amestris going out, and then speaks.]

Mir. What means this foreign warmth within my breast?

Is this a time for any thought but vengeance?

That fatal beauty dazzles my weak sense,

And blasts the resolution of my soul:

' My eyes in contradiction to my purpose,

' Still bent to her, and drunk the poison in;

' While I stood stupid in suspense of thought,

' And now like oil my flaming spirits blaze;

' My arteries, my heart, my brain is scorched,

' And I am all one fury.' Feel the Mirza!

Canst thou give way to dotage, and become

The jest of fools? No! 'tis impossible:

Revenge shall rouse, 'and with her iron whips

' Lash forth this lazy ague from my blood,

' This malady of girls. Remember, statesman,

' Thy fate and future fortunes now are forming,

' And summon all thy counsels to their aid,'

Ev'n thy whole soul—It wo't not be: Amestris

Still rises uppermost in all my thoughts,

The master-piece of nature. The boy god

Laughs at my rage, and triumphs o'er my folly.

[A tumultuous noise is heard.]

Ha! by the gods, 'tis doing! Now, my stars,

Be kind, and make me master of my will at once.

Enter Magus.

But see, the priest—Why dost thou stare and tremble?

Have we succeeded? say; and ease my fears.

Mag. My soul is pierc'd with horror! Every god

Seems from his shrine to threaten us with vengeance:

The temple reels, and all its pond'rous roof

Nods at the prostration.

Mir. Base and tearful!

' How can thy wretched soul conceive such monsters?

Canst thou, who wouldst be great, be superstitious?

But 'tis the coward's vice. Say, are our enemies secur'd?

Alc.

THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER. 49

Mag. They are; the Prince, old Memnon, and his
An Orchanes' hands; only Tigranes [daughter,
With some of lesser note are fled.

Mir. No matter:

These are the foul, the rest a lifeless mass,
Not worth our apprehension.

Mag. Will you stay,

To meet the furious thunder of their rage?

Mir. I will: thou may'st retire, and summon back
Thy scatter'd spirits: let not the crowd see
Thy fears; 'twill make thee vile and cheap among 'em.

[Exit Mag.

Enter Artaxerxes, Memnon, and Amestris, prisoners,
Orchanes and Guards.

Art. Stop! Villain! Answer—say—how hast thou
To do this insolence? • [dar'd

Orch. I know my orders,
Which from the Queen my mistress I receiv'd,
Who will avow her own authority. [possible!

Art. Ha! from the Queen! She durst not, 'tis im-

'Tis sacrilege! 'tis treason! 'tis damnation!

Am I not Artaxerxes? Born to empire,

The next degree to gods! O thou bright Sun,

That roll'st above, the object of our worship,

Canst thou behold, and not avenge thy race?

Thy injur'd race? If I could ought admit

Unworthy of thy great original,

Let me be doom'd to all this villain's slave.

If not, why am I made the scorn of wretches

' So much below me, that they hardly share

' The common privilege of kind: but are

' As beasts to men——'

Mem. See where the master-villain stands! Unmov'd

And harden'd in impiety; he laughs

At the fictitious justice of the gods,

And thinks their thunder has not wings to reach him.

But know, the joy thy triumph brings is short:

My fate (if the gods govern) or at least

My mind, 's beyond thy reach, and scorns thy malice.

Mir. Dull, valiant fool, thy ruin is the least,

The most ignoble triumph of my wit.

Cleander's blood asks for substantial vengeance,

• And

48 THE AMBITIOUS-STEP-MOTHER.

• And when the thought that labours in my breast
 • Appears in action, thou shalt know the cause
 • Why I remain to view thy hated face,
 • That blasts me with its presence. Thou shalt know
 And curse thyself; curse the ill-omen'd day
 That gave thee birth; renouncing all the gods,
 Thyself of them renounc'd, shalt sink to hell
 In bitterest pangs, and mingle with the furies.

Mem. Unballow'd dog, thou ly'st! The utmost
 Of all thy study'd malice cannot move me

• To any act that misbecomes my courage;
 And if the gods in trial of my virtue,
 Can yield my life up to the hangman's mercy,
 I'll shew thee with what ease the brave and honest
 Can put off life, till thou shalt damn thy arts,
 Thy wretched arts, and impotence of malice.

Mir. Reit well assur'd, thou shalt have cause to try
 The philosophic force of passiveness.

Art. Oh, death to greatness! Can we fall so low,
 To be the slavish object of his mirth?
 • Shall my just rage and violated honour
 • Play the buffoon, and minister to laughter?
 • Down, down, my swelling heart, hide thy resentments,
 • Nor prostitute the ruffled majesty
 • Of injur'd princes to the gazing crowd;
 • My face shall learn to cover the emotion
 • My wounded soul endures. Ha! my Amestris!
 My love! my royal bride! The spoiler, Grief,
 Defaces every feature: like the deluge
 That raz'd the beauties of the first creation—
 I cannot bear it—Villains, give me way—

*[He breaks from the Guards that hold him, and catches
 hold of Amestris.]*

Oh! let me hold thee in my throbbing bosom,
 And strive to hide thy sorrows from my sight:
 I cannot see thy griefs: and yet I want
 The power to bring relief.

Am. Ah! no, my Prince:
 There are no remedies for ills like ours;
 My helpless sex by nature stands expos'd
 To all the wrongs and injuries of fortune:
 Defenceless in myself, you were my refuge,

THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER. 19

' You are my Lord; to whom should I complain,
' 'Tis you cannot redress me? Were you not
The honour, joy, and safety of Amestris?

' For you alone I liv'd, with you alone
' I could be happy.' Oh, my Artaxerxes!

One influence guides our consenting stars,
And still together we are bless'd or curs'd.

' *Mir.* With a malignant joy my ears drink in

' Her each harmonious accent; every glance

' Goes to my heart, and stirs alternate motions

' Of heat and cold; a lazy pleasure now,

' Thrills all my veins, anon desire grows hot,

' And my old sinews shrink before the flame. [*Mir.*]

' *Art.* Go on, and charm me with thy angel's voice,

' Soothe ~~on~~ ~~to~~ ~~soothe~~ the fury in my breast,

' That urges me to unbecoming passion:

' My rage grows cool amidst thy soft complainings;

' And tho' thou talk'st of woes, of death, and ruin,

' 'Tis heaven to hear thee.

' *Am.* Since this is all our wretched consolation,

' Let us indulge our grief, till by long use

' It grows habitual, and we lose the pain.

' Here on the marble pavement will we sit,

' Thy head upon my breast; and if remembrance

' Of cruel wrongs shall vex thy noble heart,

' The murmur of my sighs shall charm the tumult;

' And Fate shall find us calm: nor will the gods,

' Who here inhabit and behold our sufferings,

' Delay to end our woes in immortality.

' *Art.* Ha! say'st thou? Gods! Yes, certain there
are gods,

' To whom my youth with reverence still has bow'd

' Whose care and providence are virtue's guard:

' Think then, my fair, they have not made us great,

' And like themselves for miserable ends.'

Mir. Gods might behold her, and forget their wisdom.

But I delay too long. Orphans, lend thy ear. [*Aside.*]

[*Mirza whispers Orphans, and Exit.*]

Mom. My children, you are still my joy and happiness;

50 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

Why am I made your curse? This hated head
To death devoted, has invol'd your innocence
In my destruction.

[*Guards lay hold on Artaxerxes and Amestris.*]

Am. Ahs! my father!

Art. Barbarous dogs! What mean you?

Orch. Convey the lady to Lord Mirza's palace,

* 'Tis the queen's will she shall be there confin'd.

Art. Thou canst not mean so damn'd a villainy.

Thou dar'st not, shalt not part us: Fate can't do it.

Mem. Cursed old age! Why have I liv'd to see this?

Oh, my children!

Orch. Force them asunder.

Art. Hew off my limbs, ye dogs, I will not loose 'em.

* Oh, devil! Death and injuries! My wife—my dog.

Am. My Lord, my husband! — [Amestris]

[*Orchanes and one party of the Guards force Artaxerxes and Memnon off one way, and the other party be Amestris another.*]

Re-enter Mirza.

Mir. This was most noble mischief! it stung home
* 'Twas luxury of vengeance—' 'Twas not ill

* To keep aloof: these boisterous beasts have paws,

* And might have scratch'd: the wife should not allow

* A possibility to Fortune's malice.

Now to the rest; this Prince, this husband, dies;

To-morrow's dawn brings his and Memnon's fate.

This night let them despair, and ban, and rage,

And to the wooden deities within

Tell frantic tales: my hours shall pass more pleasing

If love (which yet I know not) can give pleasure.

* Love! What is love? The passion of a boy,

* That spends his time in laziness and sonnets:

* Lust is the appetite of man; and shall

* Be sated, till it loat's the cloying banquet.

* The wise are privileg'd by human frailty

* To taste these pleasures, but not dwell upon them:

* They mar and dull the faculty of thinking.

One night I safely may indulge in riot,

* 'Tis politic lewdness, and assails my vengeance.

THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER. 51

grow young and surfeit on her charms,
 delicious sweets; then rising from her arms,
 nauseous, momentary joy forget,
 myself again; again be wife and great. [Exit-

END of the THIRD ACT.

A C T IV.

SCENE, *The Palace.*

Enter Artaban and Cleanthes.

ARTABAN.

THIS base and impious! Where are the ties
 Shall keep mankind in order, if religion
 The public faith be violated? 'Tis an injury
 That beards both gods and men, and dares their justice.

Clean. The fearful croud already take th' alarm,
 Break off their solemn sports, their songs and dances,
 And wildly in tumultuous concert join:

And while they dread the anger of the gods,
 The wife, who know th' effects of popular fury,
 From them expect that vengeance which they fear.

Mirza. The sacred power of majesty, which should
 Eternally own and protect the violence.

It must not, shall not be: who steals a crown
 By men like these, wears it unworthily.

Mirza. The Queen, your mother, Sir, she will expect
 You should approve that act her power has done.

Artaban. I'll meet her as I ought, and shew myself
 Worthy the noble rivalship of empire.

Enter the Queen, Mirza and Attendants.

Queen. My son, I come to joy you of a crown
 glory, certain now. Your fate at length
 has master'd that malignant influence

Which it struggled long: you are a king,
 The greatest that our eastern world beholds;
 And tho' my widow'd bed be cause for grief,
 For thy sake, my son, I joy to say
 My days are no more.

E 2

Act.

52 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

Arta. 'Twere vain and foolish
 To mourn his death with ceremonious sorrow -
 For tho' he died the greatest of our race,
 Yet since decaying age had sunk him low,
 And all the native majesty was lost,
 'Twas time the soul should seek for immortality,
 And leave the weary body to enjoy
 An honourable rest from care and sickness;
 Peace to his ashes, and eternal fame
 Dwell with his memory; while we who live
 Look back with emulation on his greatness,
 And with laborious steps strive to ascend
 That height where once he sat.

Queen. Thou hast already
 Attain'd the lofty summit of his glory;
 His throne expects thee but to sit and fill it.

Arta. No, Madam; when the gods choose worthy
 On whom to place such greatness, they surround
 The glorious prize with toil and thorny dangers,
 And bid the man who would be great, dare greatly,
 Be it for dull elder brothers to possess
 Without deserving; mine's a nobler claim,
 Nor will I taste the god-like joys of power,
 'Till men and gods with justice shall confess
 'Tis barely the reward of what I merit.

Queen. What means my son?

Arta. To wrestle for a crown.

Queen. With what fantastic shadow wouldst
 The haughty rival of thy hopes is fall'n;
 He lives indeed, but 'tis to grace thy triumph
 And bow before thee; then be swept away
 Like the remembrance of an idle dream,
 Which tho' of yesternight, is now forgotten.

Arta. It grieves me much to say, my royal
 I cannot take a crown upon these terms,
 Tho' even from your hands: the conscious
 That witnesses within my breast for glory,
 Points me to greatness by the paths of honour,
 And urges me to do as a king ought,
 That would not wear his purple as the gift
 Of impious treachery and base deceit.

Queen. Amazement turns my senses! Or, I dream!
For sure thou canst not mean so poor a folly.

- Hast thou been bred in the wise arts of empire?
- Been early taught to know the worth of power?
- And wouldst thou lose the golden opportunity,
- With which thy fortune courts thee, for a notion?
- An empty sound of virtue? A dry maxim,
- Which pedants have devis'd for boys to canvass?

Can my son think so meanly? Go, set free
(Since honour bids) this lordly elder brother,
Bow like a slave before him, wait his pleasures,
And live dependent on his scanty pension;
He may reward thy servile loyalty,
And make thee ruler of some petty province,
In recompence of royalty giv'n up.

Art. No; (tho' I must confess I would not hold him
Caught in a villain's snare, 'nor do a murder
'Unworthy of a hangman') yet to death
I will defy him as my mortal foe.

And since my father's fate'd solves that truce
To which I stood engag'd, 'tis war again.
Amidst the steely squadrons will I seek
This haughty brother, by his friends surrounded,
And back'd with all th' advantage of his birth;
Then bravely prove upon him with my sword,
He falsely brands me for a bookish coward,
That Nature's error only gave him preference,
Since Fate meant me the king.

Queen. A mother's care is watchful for thy safety,
Else wert thou lost, thou honourable fool:
Long might'st thou vainly hunt in bloody fields
For that advantage which thy willing fortune
Now reaches to thy hands: 'in battles with
'Uncertain wings the wavering goddess flies,
'And oft with partial hand bestows her favour
'On fools and thick-scall'd heroes;' seize her now,
While she is thine, or she is lost for ever.

Art. No matter, let her fly; the eagle Virtue
Shall soar beyond her, and command her flight:
Fortune is not my mistress, but my slave.
Posterity, that reads the name of Artaban
In the records of empire, shall not blush

To think I plotted with a knavish priest,
 The scandal of his venerable function,
 ' And mark of the gods vengeance,' to betray
 A prince my enemy; ' as if being conscious
 ' Of lesser worth, and of unequal courage,
 ' I durst not fairly strive with him for greatness.
 Let the abhorr'd and impious treachery
 Obscurely die unknown to future ages;
 Or if our shame must be deliver'd down,
 By all the kingly hopes that fire my soul,
 It shall not pass without a brand of punishment.

Queen. 'Tis wond'rous well! Young men
 it rarely!

' You mean to be renown'd for early justice,
 ' And mark your ostentatious love of virtue,
 ' Ev'n in their bloods who list you up to power;
 ' Perhaps we too ourselves must be arraign'd
 ' Before your puny bar, and seal your axe;
 ' 'Twill be a noble subject for your praise,
 ' And yield much matter to declaiming flatterers.
Att. You, Madam, are my mother: No

And bids me see no faults in her that bore me
 Those other slaves that dare.—

Queen. May be immortal,

For ought that thou canst do to cause their fall.

' Is not thy power the creature of my favour,
 ' Which in precarious wife on me depending
 ' Exits by my concurrence to its being?'
 Mistaken youth! ' whose giddy brain ambitious

' Has, like the fume of drunken vapours, risen
 Think'it thou that I, whose soul was form'd for

Would lay the golden reins of empire down
 Or trust them to the guidance of a boy,

Who shall dispose of me, or those that serve me
 According to the dictates of old morals,

His bearded tutor glean from musty authors?
Att. Nay then, 'tis time I should exert my

And tho' you gave me birth, yet from the gods
 (Who made my father be as he was, royal,

And stampt the mark of greatness on my soul
 I claim my right to empire: may I fall

Vile and forgotten, if I ever own
Any superior being but those gods.

Queen. Thou rav'st, and halt forgot me.

Art. No, you are

My mother, and a woman, form'd to obey ;
On that condition all the sex's privileges
Are founded : the creating hand has mix'd
Softness and beauty in your composition,
To charm and bend the mind of man, impatient
Of the ignoble pleasure ; you were made for
The weakness and necessities of Nature ;

I am your feeble souls for greatness suited :

Your government is monstrous in you.

Art thou mighty goddess, Nature ! dost thou hear

My bold defiance ? This insolent upbraider,

Whom I nurs'd in my indulgent bosom ?

Whom I promis'd future greatness to the skies,

Whom I thought my labour'd more than when

My mother's sorrow for his birth :

Why should I die by ! —

Art thou man, that vaunt'st thyself upon thy manhood,

Whom I thought thy rougher kind e'er had,

Whom I confess'd woman's superior wit,

Whom I thought our sex's just prerogative.

Why should my mother's fondness plead hard for thee,

Why should I should pay the forfeit of thy insolence ;

Or know, young king, that I am fate in Persia,

Whom life and death depend upon my pleasure.

Art. The world would be well govern'd, should the

World dispute their providence to women's care, [gods

And trust them with the fate of kings and empires.

Queen. ' Yet thou art saic'—Away, nor tempt me fur-
ther.

But the patience ev'n of gods themselves has limits,

Who' they with long forbearance view man's folly ;

But if thou wilt persist to dare my power,

I will strike them, I may be urg'd to loose my vengeance,

Who' thou wert my creature, strike thee dead.

Mir. Beseech you, sir, retire ; the Queen your mo-

thers labours with wisest foresight for your good, [ther,

And is incens'd to see you thwart that purpose.

Art.

Artis. What is the good of greatness, but the power ?
 Madam, I leave you ; my own innate virtue
 Arms me against your rage, unjust and impotent :
 Wait but the great success my soul divines,
 And you will own your little juggling arts
 Have only serv'd to obstruct a while my glory,
 And screen this elder brother from my conquest.

[*Exeunt Artaban and Cleanthes.*]

* *Queen.* Some envious pow'r above, some hostile de-
 mon,

* Works underhand against my stronger ge
 * And countermines me with domestic jars.
 * Malicious chance ! When all abroad was I
 * To start an unseen danger from my self !
 * Mirza, didst not thou mark the haughty b
 * With what assuming pride he own'd his da
 * And claim'd superiority of power ?
 * Oh, can I live and bear to be controul'd ?
 * To share the pleasure of supreme comman
 * With him or any one ? Oh, Artemisa !
 * Didst thou disdain subjection to a husband
 * The proudest title of that tyrant man,
 * And canst thou yield t' a boy, a son, by n
 * And grateful duty to obedience bound ?

Mir. Madam, let me intreat you, by the
 To calm your just resentments. * Meddlin

* (Whose malice labours to perplex the wife
 * If not prevented will unravel all
 * Those sinister arts, which we with care have
 The Prince led on by this pernicious honour
 May set the pris'ners free ; think, if that ha
 To what a shock of fate we stand expos'd.

Queen. 'Tis true ; this foolish honour run
 * Ridiculous notion ! as if self-inter
 * Were not the first and noblest law of nature.
 Say then, wise Lord, and let thy ready wit,
 Still present to itself, avert this blow.

Mir. One method, tho' ungentle, yet remain
 To remedy the fears this ill produces ;
 'This instant let a guard confine the Prince ;
 Ere he can gain the means t' effect that mischief.

He meditates against himself and us :
 To-morrow, early as the morning dawns,
 The prisoners all shall die ; that once dispatch'd,
 The raging fit of honour will relax,
 And give him leisure to consider coolly
 The advantage of his fortune.

Enter. You have reason ?

And no' I fear his haughty temper will
 Scarcely brook confinement, he must learn
 To bear it as he can ; perhaps 'twill bend him,
 And make his youth more pliant to my will.

Mir. Your orders cannot be dispatch'd too soon,
 For the flying hours is precious.

Enter the eunuch Bagoas, let him attend us,
 And give the instructions on the instant.

Exit the Queen and Mirza, severally.

SCENE, Mirza's Palace.

Enter Cleon in a Man's Habit, with a Dark-Lansbern,
 Beliza following.

Cle. Ye gentle powers, who view our cares with pity,
 And pour compassion to the poor Amestris.

My father ! was not thy soul wounded,
 When she and I now we pass by her apartment)
 By the accents of her loud complainings ?

My aching heart bleeds for her sufferings.

Bel. 'Tis true she feels the bitterest pangs of woe ;
 And were not all my thoughts to you devoted,
 My grief would deeply sink into my soul.

Why will you tempt alone ten thousand dangers ?
 Our father's and the furious Queen's resentment ;
 The cruel guards, and all those fatal accidents,
 Which in the horror of this dreadful night,
 Might shake the resolution of a man.

Cle. Pr'ythee no more, thou know'st I am resolv'd,
 And all thy kind advice is urg'd in vain ;

And fond mistaking fears present the danger
 More dreadful than it is : this master-key
 Will open to me thro' that passage to the temple,
 Which the guards, who seized the unhappy prince
 This morning, enter'd ; that of all the rest

Is only left unguarded, and from thence,
 Assisted by the friendly veil of night,
 We may conduct him thro' my father's palace
 In safety to the street: There undistinguish'd
 Amongst the busy discontented croud,
 That swarm in murmuring heaps, he may retire:
 Nor shall my father or the Queen e'er know
 The pious fraud my love was guilty of.

Bel. Yet still I fear——

Cle. No more, retire and leave me;
 My drooping heart sits lighter than it's wont
 And cheerfully presages good success.

Bel. Where shall I wait you?

Cle. At my own apartment.

Bel. The mighty gods protect you.

Cle. Softly: retire.

What noise was that?—The creature of my dream
 In vain, fond maid, wouldst thou belie thy name
 Thy coward soul confesses thee a woman.

A foolish, rash, fond woman where am I
 To save my godlike hero. 'Oh my heart

' It pants and trembles, sure 'tis joy not fear

' The thought has giv'n me courage: I shall

' That darling of my eyes.' What if I find

Then death is in my reach, and ends my sin

[Sings

Why dost thou shake, my hand, and fear to

This instrument of fate? If I succeed,

Yet Artaxerxes will not live for me;

And my despair will want thy friendly aid.

Death ev'ry way shuts up my gloomy prosp'r

' It then there be that Lethe and Elysum,

' Which priests and poets tell, to that dark

' My soul, of life impatient, shall make haste

' One healing draught my quiet slum'rs resto'

' And love forgotten, ne'er disturb me more

A Night-Scene of the Temple of the Sun.

Enter Memnon and Artaxerxes.

Art. Still 'tis in vain! this idle rage is vain
 And yet my swelling passions will have way

• And rend my labouring breast 'till they find vent.
 • Was it for this, ye cruel gods, you made me
 • Great like yourselves, and as a king, to be
 • Your sacred image? Was it but for this?
 • To be cut down, and mangled by vile hands,
 • Like the false object of mistaken worship?
 Why rather was I not a peasant slave,
 Bred from my birth a drudge to your creation,
 And to my destin'd load inur'd betimes?

Mem. The malice of our fate were not compleat,
 Had we not been by just degrees to happiness
 rais'd, only to be plung'd the deeper down
 In an abyss of woes. Early success
 Met and attended all my youthful wars;
 • And when I rush'd amidst the dreadful battle,
 • The weaker Genii of our Asian monarchs
 • Shrank from the force of our superior fate;
 • O'er-match'd they fell, and by my sword were swept
 • Like common beings from the glorious field.
 Then was the day of joyous triumph, then,
 My soul was lifted high, ev'n to the stars.
 But now—what am I now? O, damn'd reverse of fortune!
 Now, when my age would be indulg'd in ease,
 And joy in pleasure of my former fame,
 Now I am curs'd; held at a villain's mercy,
 My foes derision, and the scorn of cowards.

Act. Oh, torture of my soul! damn'd racking thought!
 Am not I too reserv'd for servile vassalage?
 To be the subject of a boy's command?
 • A boy by nature set beneath my sway,
 • And born to be my slave! Shall he triumph,
 • And bid me live or die? Shall he dispose
 • His beardless visage to a scornful smile,
 • And tell me that his pleasure is my fate?
 No; my disdaintful soul shall struggle out,
 And start at once from its dishonour'd mansion.

Mem. Oh, royal thought! nor shall they keep back
 who's common means be not in reach. [death,
 shall my old soldier's outside, rough and hardy,
 Scarr'd o'er with many an honourable mark,
 Be cag'd for public scorn! Shall Mirza tell me,
 Thus didst thou once, and now thou art my slave;

My

My foot shall spurn thee, tread upon thy neck,
 And trample in the dust thy silver hairs?
 Shall I not rather choak, hold in my breath,
 Or smear some wall or pillar with my brains?

Art. Rage, or some god, shall save us from dishonour.
 But Oh, my father! Can we take our flight,
 Tho' to the stars, and leave my love behind;
 Where is she now? Where is my queen, my bride,
 My charmer, my Amestris?

Mem. Speak not of her.

Art. Not speak?

Mem. Nor think of her, if possible.

Art. Was she not snatch'd, ' torn from my embraces,
 ' Whilst every god look'd on, and saw the wrong,
 ' Heard her loud cries, which vainly stir
 ' Their slow unready vengeance!' Was she
 Torn from my panting bosom (yet I live)
 Ev'n on our bridal-day? ' Then when
 ' Were kindly join'd, and made but one,
 ' Then, when she sigh'd and gaz'd, and bled,
 ' When every touch, when every joy
 ' And those that were behind were mortals,
 To lose her then! Oh! —

And yet you bid me think of her no more.

Mem. I do; for the bare mention turns my brain,
 And even now I border upon madness;
 So dreadful is the very apprehension
 Of what may be.

' *Art.* Can we make thought go back?
 ' Will it not turn again, cleave to our breasts,
 ' And urge remembrance 'till it sting us home?
 ' Ha! now the ghastly scene is set before me;
 ' And as thou said'st it, it runs me to distraction;
 ' Behold her beauties, form'd for kings to serve,
 ' Held vile, and treated like an abject slave!
 ' Helpless amidst her cruel foes she stands,
 ' Intulcing Artemisa mocks her tears,
 ' And bids her call the gods and me in vain.

' *Mem.* Would that were all.'

Art. Ha! Whither wouldst thou drive me?

Mem. Did you like me consider that dog Mirza,
 Early to hell devoted, and the turks,

Born, nurs'd, and bred a villain, you would fear
The worst effects his malice could express
On virtue which he hates, when in his power.

Art. What is the worst ?

Mem. What my old fault'ring tongue
Trembles to utter ; goatish lust and rape.

Art. Ha ! rape ! if there are gods, it is impossible.

Mem. Oh ! dreadful image for a father's thought !

To have his only child, her sex's boast,
The joy of sight, and comfort of his age,
Dragg'd by a villain, slave, ' his ruthless hand
' Wound in her hair,' to some remote dark cell,
A scene for horror fit, there to be blotted
By his foul lust, ' till appetite be gorg'd.'
Let ~~me~~ ~~the~~ ~~savage~~ first, let this old hand
That oft has blest'd her, in her blood be drench'd ;
Let me behold her dead, dead at my foot,
To spare a father's greater shame and sorrow.

Art. A father ! What's a father's plague to mine ?

My husband and a lover ! if it can be,
There is such a hoarded curse in store,
Transfix me now, ye gods, now let your thunder
Fall on my head, and strike me to the center,
Lest, if I should survive my ruin'd honour
And injur'd love, I should ev'n curse your godheads,
Run banning and blaspheming thro' the world,
And with my execrations fright your worshippers
From kneeling at your altars.'

Enter Cleone with a Dark-Lantern and Key.

Cl. This way, he echoing accents seem to come ;
'tis the wretched prince ! ' Oh, can you hear him,
& yet refuse to lend your aid, ye gods ?

Art. This gloom of horrid night suits well my soul,
Grief, sorrow, conscious worth, and indignation,
Mad confusion in my lab'ring breast,
I am all'o'er chaos,

' this, alas !

'Tis of Artaxerxes, Persia's heir ?
A poor lamp to cheer the dismal shade
Of this huge holy dungeon ! ' Slaves, murderers,

F

' Villains

62 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

“ Villains that crosses wait for, are not us’d thus.
I’ll shew my self.

*[She turns the Light, and comes towards
Artaxerxes and Memnon.*

Mem. Ha! whence this gleam of light?

Art. Fate is at hand, let’s haste to bid it welcome,
It brings an end of wretchedness.

Cle. Speak lower;

I am a friend: long live prince Artaxerxes.

Art. What wretch art thou, that hail’st me with a curse?
Come from that cloud that muffles up thy face;
And if thou hast a dagger, shew it boldly:
We wish to die.

Cle. Think better on my errand;
I bring you blessings, liberty and life,
And come the minister of happier fate.

[Turns the Light on herself.

Now down, my blood, down to my trembling heart,
Nor sparkle in my visage to betray me. *[Aside.*

Art. Ha! as I live, a boy! a blushing boy!
Thou wert not form’d fure for a murderer’s office;
Speak then, and tell me what and whence thou art.

Cle. Oh, seek not to unveil a trivial secret,
Which known imports you not. I am a youth
Abandon’d to misfortunes from my birth,
And never knew one cause to joy in life,
But this that puts it in my power to save
A prince like Artaxerxes. Ask no more,
But follow thro’ the mazes that I tread,
Until you find your safety.

Art. Thus forbidding,
Thou giv’st me cause t’ enquire: are then the guards
That when the day went down, with strictest watch
Observ’d the temple gates, remov’d or fled?

Cle. They are not, but with numbers reinforc’d
Keep every passage; only one remains
Thro’ Mirza’s palace, open to our flight.

Mem. Ha! Mirza! there’s damnation in his name,
Ruin, deceit, and treachery attend it;
Can life, can liberty or safety, come
From him, or ought that has an interest in him?
Rather, suspect this feigning boy his instrument,

To plunge us deeper yet, if possible,
 In misery ; ' perhaps some happy accident,
 • As yet to us unknown, preserves us from
 • The utmost malice of his hate while here,
 • This sets his wicked wit at work to draw us
 • Forth from this holy place ; much better be
 • The pris'ners of the gods, than wear his-setters.'

Cle. Unfortunate suspicion ! what shall I say
 To urge 'em to be safe, and yet preserve
 My wretched self unknown ?

[*Aside*]

• *Art.* Surely that face
 • Was not design'd to hide dissembled malice.
 • Say, youth, art thou of Mirza's house (as sure thou must,
 • If thou pretend'st to lead us that way forth)
 • And canst thou be a friend to Artaxerxes,
 • Whom that fell dog, that minister of devils,
 • With most opprobrious injuries has loaded ?

• *Cle.* Tho' I am his, yet sure I never shar'd
 • His hate——Shall I confess and own my shame ?

• Oh, heavens !——

[*Aside*]

• *Mem.* Mark, th' unready traitor stammers ;
 • Half-bred, and of the mungrel strain of mischief,
 • He has not art enough to hide the cheat,
 • His deep-designing lord had better plotted.

• Away ! 'Thinks he so poorly of our wit,
 • To gull us with a novice ?—— If our fate
 • Has giv'n us up, and mark'd us for destruction,
 • Tell him, we are resolv'd to meet it here.

• *Cle.* Yet hear me, prince, since you suspect me sent
 By Mirza, to ensnare you, know I serve

(Oh, gods ! to what am I reduc'd !) [*Aside.*]——his daugh-

ter's god compassionate of your woes has stirred [ter !

A woman's pity in her softer breast ;

And 'tis from her I come to give you liberty.

I beg you to believe me.

[*She weeps.*]

Art. See, he weeps !

• *Mem.* The waiting tears stood ready for command,

And now they flow to varnish the false tale.'

Art. His daughter, say'st thou ? I have seen the maid.

Do'st thou serve her ; and could she send thee to me ?

'Tis an unlikely riddle.

Mem. Perhaps 'tis meant,

That she who shares his poisonous blood, shall share
 The pleasure of his vengeance, ' and inure
 ' The woman's hands and eyes to death and mischief.'
 But thou, her instrument, begone, and say,
 The fate of princes is not sport for girls.

Cle. ' Some envious power blasts my pious purpose,
 ' And nought but death remains: O that by that
 ' I might persuade him to believe and trust me;
 ' And fly that fate which with the morning waits him!
 ' [Aside.]

I grieve, my lord, to find your hard suspicion
 Debars me from preserving your dear life,
 (Which not your own Amestris wishes more.)
 To-morrow's dawn (Oh! let me yet prevail)
 The cruel Queen resolves shall be your last.
 Oh, fly! let me conjure you, save yourself.
 May that most awful god that here is worshipp'd
 Deprive me of his chearful beams for ever,
 Make me the wretched'st thing he sees while living,
 ' And after death the lowest of the damn'd,'
 If I have any thought but for your safety.

Art. No, I have found the malice of thy mistress;
 Since I refus'd her love when she was proffer'd
 By her ambitious father for my bride,
 And on a worthier choice bestow'd my heart,
 She vows revenge on me for slighted beauty.

Cle. My lord, you do her most unmanly wrong;
 She owns the merit of the fair Amestris,
 Nor ever durst imagine she deserv'd you.
 Oh! spare that thought, nor blot her virgin fame.
 In silence still she wonder'd at your virtues,
 Bless'd you, nor at her own ill fate repin'd;
 'This wounds her most, that you set an unkindly
 Th' officious piety that would have sav'd you.
 Careless of an offended father's rage,
 For you alone concern'd, she charg'd me guide you,
 When midnight sleep had clos'd observing eyes,
 Safe thro' her father's palace with this key——
 And if I met with any that durst bar
 Your passage forth, she bid me greet him thus——

[Stabs herself]
 [Artaxerxes catches her as she falls]

Art. What hast thou done, rash boy ?

Cle. Giv'n you the last,
And only proof remain'd, that could convince you
I held your life much dearer than my own.

Mem. Horrid amazement chills my freezing veins ?

Cle. Let me conjure you with my latest breath,
Make haste to seize the means that may preserve you ;
This key, amidst the tumult of this night,

[Giving the Key.]

Will open you a way thro' Mirza's palace.
May every god assist and guard your flight :
And Oh ! when all your hopes of love and glory
Are crown'd with just success, will you be good,
And think with pity on the lost Cleone ?

Art. Ten thousand dismal fancies crowd my thoughts

Oh ! is it possible thou canst be she,
Thou most unhappy fair-one ?

Cle. Spare my shame,
Nor call the blood that flows to give me peace,
Back to my dying cheeks. Can you forget
Who was my father ; and remember only
How much I wish'd I had deserv'd your friendship ?
Nay, let my tongue grow bold, and say, your love ?
But 'twas not in my fate.

Art. What shall I say,
To witness how my grateful heart is touch'd ?
But, Oh ! why would'st thou give this fatal instance ?
Why hast thou stain'd me with thy virgin blood ?
I swear, sweet saint, for thee I could forgive
The malice of thy father, ' tho' he seeks
' My life and crown ; thy goodness might atone
' Ev'n for a nation's sins.' Look up, and live,
And thou shalt still be near me as my heart.

Cle. Oh, charming sounds, that gently lull my soul
To everlasting rest ! I swear 'tis more,
More joy to die thus bless'd, than to have liv'd
A monarch's bride : may every blessing wait you ;
In war and peace, still may you be the greatest,
The favourite of the gods, and joy of men —
I faint—Oh, let me lean upon your arm — *[She dies.]*

Art. ' Hold up the light, my father.' Ha ! she swoons !
' The iron hand of death is on her beauties.

66 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

And see, like lilies nipp'd with frost, they languish.

Mem. My tough old soldier's heart melts at the fight,
 And an unwonted pity moves my breast ;
 Ill-fated maid ! too good for that damn'd race,
 From which thou drew'st thy being ! fure the gods,
 Angry, ere while will be at length appeas'd
 With this egregious victim : let us tempt 'em
 Now while they seem to smile.

Art. A beam of hope
 Strikes thro' my soul, like the first infant light
 That glanc'd upon the chaos ; if we reach
 The open city, fate may be ours again :
 But Oh ! whate'er success or happiness
 Attend my life, still fair unhappy maid,
 Still shall thy memory be my grief and honor,
 On one fix'd day in each returning year,
 Cypress and myrtle for thy sake I'll wear ;
 Ev'n my Ameltris thy hard fate shall mourn,
 And with fresh roses crown thy virgin urn,
 'Till in Elysium blest'd, thy gentle shade
 Shall own my vows of sorrow justly paid.

[*Exeunt*]

END of the FOURTH ACT.

A C T V.

SCENE, Mirza's Palace.

Enter Mirza, Magas, and Attendants, with Lights.

MIRZA.

PHOO ! You o'er-rate the danger.

Magas. If I do,

- We err in the extreme, since you esteem it
- As much too lightly. Think you then 'tis nothing,
- This horrid jar of tumult and confusion ?
- Heads white with years, and vers'd in long experience,
- Who yet remember all the different changes
- A rolling age produces, cannot call
- To mind one instance dreadful as this night.
- Infernal discord, hideous to behold,
- Hangs, like its evil genius, o'er the city,

And

- 1 And sends a snake to every vulgar breast.
 2 From several quarters the mad rabble swarm,
 3 Arm'd with the instruments of hasty rage,
 4 And in confus'd disorderly array
 5 Most formidable march : their differing clamors,
 6 Together join'd, compose one deafening sound ;
 7 Arm ! Arm ! they cry, religion is no more,
 8 Our gods are slighted, whom if we revenge not,
 9 War, pestilence, and famine, will ensue,
 10 And universal ruin swallow all.
 11 *Mir.* A crew of mean, unthinking, heartless slaves,
 12 With ease stirr'd up to mutiny, and quell'd
 13 With the same ease, with like expressions shew,
 14 Their joy or anger : both are noise and tumult,
 15 And still, when holidays make labour cease,
 16 They meet and shout : do these deserve our fears ?
 17 *Mag.* Most certainly they may ; if we consider
 18 Each circumstance of peril that concurs ;
 19 Tigranes, with the rest that 'scap'd the temple,
 20 Are mix'd amongst this herd, and urge the wrongs
 21 Which with the gods their prince and Memnon suffer.
 22 *Mir.* Nor need we fear ev'n that, safe in the aid
 23 And number of our friends, who treble theirs ;
 24 For this mad rout, that hum and swarm together,
 25 For want of somewhat to employ their folly,
 26 Indulge 'em in their fancy for religion.
 27 Thou and thy holy brotherhood of priests
 28 Shall in procession bear the sacred fire,
 29 And all our golden gods ; let their friends judge
 30 Will they look not kindly as of old ;
 31 a most apt amusement for a crowd,
 32 'll gaze and gather round the gaudy shew,
 33 quite forget the thoughts of mutiny.
 34 And shall wait you.
 35 *Mag.* Why go not you too with us ;
 36 hold your wisdom in most high regard,
 37 will be greatly sway'd by your persuasion ;
 38 occasion is well worth your care and presence.
 39 Oh ! you'll not need my aid : besides, my friend,
 40 ours this night are destin'd to a task
 41 more import than are the fates of millions
 42 traveling souls as theirs. As yet the secret

63 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

- Is immature, not worth your present knowledge :
- To-morrow that and all my breast is yours.
- I must not, dare not trust him with my weakness,
- 'Twill mark me for his scorn ; 'tis yet some wisdom,
- If we must needs be fools, to hide our folly. [*Afide:*
- *Mag.* He means the prisoners' death ; let him engross
- The people's hate, monopolize damnation,
- I will be safely ignorant of mischief. [*Afide-*
- Hereafter when your wisdom shall think fit
- To share those thoughts, and trust 'em with your friend,
- I shall be pleas'd to know ; this instant hour
- My cares are all employ'd on my own province,
- Which hastes me hence.
- *Mir.* May all your gods assist you. [*Exeunt*

SCENE, an Apartment in Mirza's Palace.

Enter Amestris.

Am. Will ye not hear, ye ever gracious Gods ?
 (Since sure you do not joy in our misfortunes,
 But only try the strength of our frail virtue)
 Are not my sorrows full ? can ought be added ?
 My royal lord, and father ! yet dear names
 In which my all of happiness was sumn'd,
 What have the ministers of fate done with you
 Are you not dead ? Too sure ! that's past a doubt : [*band*
 Oh, Memnon ! Oh, my prince ! my father ! Oh, my hus-

Enter Mirza.

Mir. Such Juno was (except alone those tears)
 When, upon Idu's top she charm'd the god,
 That long had been a stranger to her bed ;
 Made him forget the business of the world,
 And lay aside his providence, t'employ
 The whole divinity upon her beauty.
 And sure 'twas worth the while ; had I been pleas'd
 So had I too been pleas'd to be deceiv'd
 Into immortal joys. O cease thy tears !—

Am. Give 'em me back, or if the grave
 Restore to none, Oh, join my fate to theirs
 Shut us together in some silent vault,
 • Where I may sit and weep till death's kin
 • Shall lay me gently by my lord's dear side,
 And hush my sorrows in eternal slumber.

Mir. In pity to your form assuage those tears,

Sorrow

Sorrow is beauty's bane : nor let your breast
 Harbour a fear: I wage not war with fair ones;
 ' But with you would efface those ugly thoughts,
 ' That live in your remembrance to perplex you ;
 Let joy, the native of your soul, return,
 And love's gay god sit smiling in your eyes,
 As erst he did ; I bring you joy and glory,
 And would so fully recompense the loss
 You fondly mourn, that when you count the gains,
 Yourself should own your fortunes are well chang'd.

Am. Oh, impious comforter ! talk'st thou of joy,
 When nature dictates only death and horror ?
 Is there a god can break the laws of fate,
 And give me back the precious lives I've lost ?
 What nam'st thou recompence ? Can ought atone
 ' For blood ? A father's and a husband's blood !
 Such comfort brings the hungry midnight wolf,
 When having slain the shepherd, smear'd with gore,
 He leaps amidst the helpless bleating flock.

Mir. Away with this perverseness of thy sex,
 ' These foolish tears, these peevish sighs and sobbings ;
 ' Look up, be gay, and cheer me with thy beauties,
 ' And to thy wish I will indulge thy fancy.
 Not all th' imagin'd splendor of the gods
 ' Shall match thy pomp, sublimely shalt thou shine,
 ' The boast and glory of our Asian world ;
 ' Or shall she of all thy tow'ring sex
 ' 'Till thy face (thou lovely fair) in power.

power, on power, and place supreme.
 There is but one, one only thing to think on,
 'Till lord, and his dark gaping grave,
 Unclos'd impatient of my coming.
 Listen, gentle maid, while I impart
 Such softness to thy ear,
 'Till the halcyon brooding o'er the waves)
 'Till its influence hush thy stormy grieves.
 'Till I come ! and if thou bear'st one thought of pity
 'Till my breast, Oh, leave me to myself,
 'Till my presence, hideous to my soul,
 'Till my consolations, strive to add
 'Till my ill woes, that swell'd without thy help,
 'Till my life and bubble o'er the margin.

Mir.

Mir. What if I talk'd of love ?

Am. Of love ! Oh, monster !

Mir. If love be monstrous, so is this fair frame,
This beauteous world, this canopy, the sky,
• That sparkling shines with gems of light innumerable ;
• And so art thou and I, since love made all ;
• Who kindly reconcil'd the jarring atoms
• In friendly league, and bid 'em be a world.
• Frame not thy lovely mouth then to blaspheme
• Thy great Creator ; thou art his, and made for
• His more peculiar service ; thy bright eyes,
• Thy moist red lip, thy rising snowy bosom,
• Thy every part was made to furnish joy,
• Ev'n to a riotous excess of happiness.
Oh, give me but to taste thy blissful charms,
And take my wealth, my honour, pow'r, take all,
All, all for recompence.

Am. Execrable wretch !

Thus, is it thus thou wouldst assuage my sorrows !
When thy inhuman bloody cruelty,
Now with redoubling pangs cleave my poor heart,
Com'st thou bespotted with the recent slaughter
To profess impious love ; accursed fiend !
Horror and grief shall turn me to a fury ;
Still with my echoing cries I will pursue thee,
And halloo vengeance in thy guilty ears ;
• Vengeance for murder ! for my prince's murder !
• And for my poor old father ! Think not, villain
Who art the plague and scourge of human-kind,
That there is peace for thee, whilst I run mad
With raging sorrow. Vengeance, vengeance waits thee,
Great as my woes ! ' my dear, dear Artaxerxes !'

Mir. I am not lucky at the glosing art
Of catching girls with words ; but 'tis no matter ;
Force is a sure resort : and when at last
Fierce as a tow'ring falcon from her height,
I swoop to strike the prey, it is my own. [A]
Obstinate fool, how dar'st thou cross my wishes ?
• Since the same hand that has avenged me well
• Upon my other foes, commands thy fate ?
Tho' mercy, in compassion of thy beauty
Reach out her hand to save thee, yet, if I urg'd,

Here

THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

Revenge may still take place—think well on that.

Am. That, that is all the mercy which I ask ;
Indulge thy thirsty malice in my blood,
And hasten me to peace, ' my woman's heart
' Shall gather all its little stock of courage
' To arm me for the blow. Tho' death be terrible,
' Ghastly and pale, yet I will joy to meet him.
' My better life already is destroy'd,
' Imperfect now and wanting half myself,
' I wander here in vain, and want thy hand
' To guide and re-unite me to my lord.

Mir. Alas ! thou hast not read aright thy destiny,
Matter of much import requires thy life,
And still detains thee here. Come, I'll instruct thee,
And put thee in the way of fate's design.

[Laying bold on her.

Am. Unhand me, villain !

Mir. Nay, you must not struggle,
Nor frown, and look askew : fantastic sex !
That put men on the drudgery to force you
To your own confusion.

Shall he brave you,
Shall not your lightning blast him ?
Your gods have pleasures of their own ;
While he revels, nor has leisure
To mind his misery.

Oh save me ! save me ! save me !
Come along ! you see you strive in vain.

[Striving with her.

What hope of aid from gods or men ?
With my prayer and tears implore thy pity.
Speak, for enchantment dwells upon thy tongue,
All the fluttering spirits in my blood
Cease nimbly on to the celestial sound.

What shall I say to move him to compassion ?
Groveling, prostrate thus upon the earth,
I conjure you, spare my virgin honour ;
Do not commit a wrong to you unprofitable,

* Yet

THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

‘ Yet worse to me than torments, racks, and death ;
Kill me, the last of my unhappy race,
And let old Memnon’s name with me be lost.
‘ If death be not enough, let me live wretched ;
‘ Pull off these robes, and clothe me like a slave,
‘ Then send me out to labour at some village,
‘ Where I may groan beneath a cruel master,
‘ Be hardly us’d, and want e’en food and raiment,
‘ Till cold, and dirt, and poverty shall change
‘ And make me loathsome as my fellow-wretches.
‘ Oh ! let my rags claim only this one privilege,
‘ To wrap me in the grave a spotless maid.’

Mir. That tongue which pleads, makes all entreating
vain,

‘ Thy every motion, each complaining accent,
‘ Warms me afresh, and urges new desire ;
‘ Thou art, thou must be mine, nor heaven nor earth,
‘ Nor the conspiring power of hell shall save thee ;’
I long to lose my age in thy embraces,
To bask and wanton in thy warmer sun
Till a new youth shoot thro’ me.

Am. Chase Diana,

And thou, the guardian of the marriage bed,

[Getting loose from him.]

Thou, royal Juno, Oh, protect thy votary !

Mir. ‘ My jaded age and weak enervate limbs
‘ Falter and shrink unequal to their office.’

I prythee yield ; come, yield and be a queen ;

[Laying hold on her again.]

Yield, and be any thing. I cannot bear
Their fierce convulsive starts, this raging fla
That drinks my blood.

Am. Oh, never, never, never.

‘ A cause like this will turn me to a fighter,’
To my last gasp, to death I will resisto

Mir. My coward strength, ‘ dost thou give
beauty ?’

Rouse, and deserve the pleasure thou would

Am. Unmanly traitor !—seize him, all ye

[In the struggle she draws his own poniard.]

Mir. *[falling.]* Damnation ! Oh, my life
Has struck me to the earth.

Am. There sink for ever ;
Nor rise again to plague the wretched world.

Mir. My heated blood ebbs out, and now too late
My cooler reason bids me curse my folly.
Oh, idiot, idiot ! to be caught so poorly !

• Where are thy fine arts now ? Unravel'd all,
• Mangled and cut to pieces by a girl !
• Oh, shame of wisdom ! when revenge was sure,
• And fate was in my grasp, to lose it all,
• Neglect the noble game, run out my years
• On the pursuit of joys I could not taste : ———
My memory must be the jest of boys.

Am. My boasted courage sinks at sight of blood.

[*Letting fall the poniard.*]

• Tho' justly shed, and I grow stiff with horror.

[*Mirza attempting to rise, falls again.*]

Mir. It wo'not be ! Life gushes out again,
And I shall die without revenge or aid.

[*Trampling without.*]

What noise is that without there ? Help !

Am. Oh, heavens !

What will become of me ?

Enter Orcanes hastily.

Orc. My Lord ! Where are you ?

On the ground ! What wretched accident ?
to make this night compleat,

horrors ne'er shall match.

My Lord ! I am tallen vilely,

not life with fully all

renown of what is past.

alk'ft of horrors, speak 'em boldly,

an add to this confusion.

my Lord, and summon all your wisdom,

tancy of soul, to heart——

! I cannot wait my preparation,

take me as it finds me.

ear it thus ; your daughter's dead——

ghter ?

words have met with an unguarded side,

i pierce es'n thro' my soul. Say, how ? Where ?

Tell me !——

Orc. As with a guard I kept the temple-gates,

G

I heard

I heard old Memnon and the pris'ner prince
 Loud as the roaring ocean in a storm,
 ' Echoing their rage thro' the vast sounding dome ;
 When on a sudden, ere the night had gain'd
 Four hours at most, the noise was hush'd in silence.
 Wond'ring, and curious of the cause, I enter'd,
 And found (Oh, grief to sight !) your lovely daughter
 Dress'd like a boy, then warm, and newly dead.
 One wound was on her breast. Why she was there,
 Or how, we know not ; to compleat the ill,
 The pris'ners both are fled.

Mir. Fled ! 'tis impossible.

Ha' Which way ? Whither ? How ? They could not fly.

Am. Oh, wond'rous turn of joy ! Are they not dead
 then ?

[*Aside.*

Orch. They could not 'scape the guards ; no other pass
 Remain'd but yours, and even that was fast. [*Exit*
 Upon the instant I beset each avenue
 Which to your palace leads ; happily as yet
 They are not pass'd from thence.

Am. Guard 'em, ye gods !

Mir. Find 'em again, Orphanes, ere I die,
 Or I am more than doubly damn'd ; this loss
 Is worse than mine, worse than my daughter's death,
 'Tis death of my revenge. ' Malicious fortune !
 ' She took the moment when my wisdom added,
 ' And ruin'd me at once. O doating fool !
 ' Thou fool of love, and of pernicious women !
 I sicken ; nature fails me ; Oh, revenge !
 Will not thy cordial keep back flying life ;
 It shall ; Orphanes, drag that traitress to me.

Am. Oh, if thou art a man, I charge thee 'not
 ' And scorn his bidding, scorn to be his slave,
 ' A devil's drudge in mischief.' Save me from d
 Have pity on my youth : Oh, spare my youth !

[*Orphanes pulls Ametriss down to*

Mir. Hearken not to her, drag her, pull her do
 Shut Memnon's boast of thee, while I die childless
 No, to Cleone's ghost thou art a victim.
 ' O could I but have seen thee with those eyes
 ' I view thee now, I had been wife and safe ;
 ' That face shall make no more fools in this world,

THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER. 75

' Down, bear thy fatal beauties down to hell,
' And try if thou canst charm among the dead.'
Die, witch; enchantress, die. *[He flings her.]*

Am. Ah! mercy, heavens!

Mir. I thank thee, hand, at least for this last service.
Now fly, *Orchard's*, haste and tell the Queen,
My latest breath stays for her—Something I would
[Exit Orchard's.]

Important to her service—I breathe short,
Life stays in pain, and struggles to be gone,
I strive in vain to hold it—Ha! what mean
These fleeting shades that dance before my sight?
'Tis death, I sell it plain; the dreadful change
That nature starts at, death!—Death!—What is
'Tis a vast disquisition: priests and scholars *[death!]*
Enquire whole ages, and age yet in doubt.
My head turns round—I cannot form one thought
'That pleases me about it.—Dying—must resolve me:

[Mirza dies.]

Am. Oh, my hard fortune! must I die? die now,
When Artaxerxes calls and bids me live?

My dear lov'd image stays my parting soul,
And makes it linger in its ruin'd house.

' Ha! sure he's dead—'tis so, and now he stands
[Looking on Mirza.]

' Arraign'd before the dread impartial judges,

' To answer to a long account of crimes.'

Had I but strength, perhaps my fate may yet
[Rising.]

Find some way to save me.

Mirza. My father make life worth my care,
My blood flows fast: this way, I think.

[Goes off faintly.]

*at the other Side Artaxerxes and Memnon, with a
Sword and Dark-Lantern.*

M. Ha! here are lights, ' hold up thy weapon, son.'

' And see, blood and a body on the floor!

' means this scene of death! what wretch art thou?

' Il ye utter powers! 'tis Mirza, see,

' is now dead.

M. ' Damnation' thy punishment then is new to him.

' there be one deeper pit of sulphur,

One plague above the rest in those dark regions,
 He, as the most shandon'd dog, may claim it,
 And vie for preference with devils themselves.
This way, my prince, let us attempt. [Exit and return.

Re-enter Amestris.

Mem. We must return, we cannot pass that way.

Am. The doors are guarded, fate has clos'd me round.

Art. Ha! art thou my Amestris?

Mem. Oh, my daughter! [They run to her.

Am. Are ye then come at last to bless my eyes,
 Which could not close without one parting view?

Oh, hold me, or I sink——

Mem. Alas! my child——

Art. My cruel tears! why art thou pale and faint?
 Ha! whence this blood? Oh! killing spectacle!

Am. Forth from my heart the crimson river flows,
 My lavish heart, that hastily consumes
 Its small remain of life. Oh, lay me gently
 On my last bed the earth, whose cold hard bosom
 Must shortly be the place of my long rest.

Mem. What have we done? or, Oh! if we have sinn'd,
 What has thy innocence done to merit this!

Am. That villain Mirza——

Mem. Ha! say, what of him?

Am. Offer'd most brutal outrage to me——

Art. Oh, ye eternal rulers of the world
 Could you look on unmov'd? But say, is
 That I may bow before the god that sav'd

Am. Sure 'twas some choller pow'r that
 And taught my trembling hand to find
 With his own poniard to the villain's heart

Mem. Thou art my daughter still! O
 That gives in death an interval of joy.

Am. Just in that hour of fate a villain
 By whose assistance the revengeful Mirza
 Forc'd me to share death with him.

Art. 'Tis past, 'tis past,

• And all those fires that lighted up my soul
 • Glory and bright ambition languish now
 • And leave me dark and gloomy as the night
 Oh, thou soft dying sweetness!—shall I rage
 And curse myself? curse ev'n the gods?
 I am the slave of fate, and bow beneath

The load that presses me ; am sunk to earth,
And ne'er shall rise again : here will I sit
And gaze till I am nothing.

Am. Alas ! my lord,
' Fain would I strive to bid you not be sad,
' Fain would I hear your grief, but 'tis in vain :
I know by my own heart it is impossible ;
For we have lov'd too well. ' Oh, mournful nuptials !
' Are these the joys of brides ;' indeed 'tis hard,
' 'Tis very hard to part ; I cannot leave you ;
The agonizing thought distracts me : hold me,
Oh, hold me fast, death shall not tear me from you.

Art. O could my arms fence thee from destiny,
The gods might launch their thunder on my head,
Plague me with woes treble to what I feel :
With joy I would endure it all to save thee.
What shall I say ? What shall I do to save thee ?
Grief shakes my frame, it melts my very temper,
My manly constancy and royal courage
Run gushing thro' my eyes : Oh, my Amestris !

Am. And see my father ! his white beard is wet
With the sad dew.

Mem. I try'd to man my heart,
But could not stand the buffet of this tempest.
It tears me up—my child ! ha ! art thou dying ?

Am. Indeed I'm very sick. Oh, hold me up !
My pain increases, and a cold damp dew
Lings o' my face. Is there no help ? no ease ?
Lave ? your arm, my love ?

ist ; my heart,
old ?

ill you not forget me,
to moulder in my tomb ?
ill not, still there will be room
brance in your noble heart ;
w'd me truly.' Now I faint.
Shield me from that ugly phantom,
th' how dark and deep it is ?
ight——'tis hideous horror ?
ws o'er me—let me not lie there.

[Amestris dies.]

life gave way, and the last rufy breath

Went in that sigh. ' Death like a brutal victor,
 • Already enter'd, with rude haste defaces
 • The lovely frame he'us master'd; see how soon
 • These starry eyes have lost their light and lustre!
 • Stay, let me close their lids.' Now for rest;
 O'd Memnon! ha! grief has transfix'd his brain,
 And he perceives me not.—Now what of thee?
 Think'st thou to live, thou wretch? Think not of any
 Thought is damnation, 'tis the plague of devils [thing;
 To think on what they are. And see, this weapon
 Shall shield me from it, plunge me in forgetfulness,
 Ere the dire scorpion, thought, can rouze to sting me.
 Lend me thy bosom, my cold bride: ill-fortune

[Lying by her.

Has done its worst, and we shall part no more;
 Wait for me, gentle spirit, since the stars
 Together must receive us. *[Stabs himself.]* Oh, well aim'd!
 How foolish is the coward's fear of death!
 Of death, the greatest ——— sweet way fo

*[Memnon stands looking on the
 and then speaks.*

Mem. Yet will I gaze! yet, tho' my
 And turn to steel or marble. Here's a light
 To bless a father! these, these were you
 Ye bounteous gods! ' You'll spare my t
 You gave me being too, and spun me ou
 To hoary wretchedness. Away, 'twas cr
 Oh, cursed, cursed, cursed fourscore yea
 Ye heap of ills, ye monstrous pile of pla
 Sure they lov'd well, the very streams of
 That flow from their pale bosoms, meet an
 Stay, let me view 'em better—' nay, 'tis
 If thou art like thy mother—Shealy'd te
 Where is she?—Ha! that dog, that villai
 He bears her from me: shall we not pursu
 The whirl of battle comes across me, fly;
 Begone; they shall not, dare not brave m
 ' H-y, 'tis a glorious sound!' rush on, m
 We'll start and reach the goal of fate at once

Enter on the other side Queen and Attendant

Queen. Why am I summon'd with this c

THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER. 79

This is no common ruin; Artaxerxes!
 And Memnon's daughter! 'Mirza, thou art fallen
 ' In pompous slaughter: could not all thy arts,
 ' That d'ld about destruction to our enemies,
 ' Guard thy own life from fate? Vain boast of wisdom,
 ' That with fantastic pride, like basty children,
 ' Builds paper towns and houses, which at once
 ' The hand of chance o'erturns, and loosely scatters!'

1st At. Oh, dismal sight! [Looking.

Queen. What is it frights thy eyes?

1st At. Old Memnon's body

Queen. 'Tis a grateful horror.'

1st At. Upon the floor the batter'd carcase lies
 Well'ring in gore, ' whilst on the marble-wall
 ' A dreadful mass of brains, grey-hair, and blood,
 ' Is snear'd in hideous mixture.'

Queen. Fierce despair

Has forc'd a way for the impetuous soul.

'Tis well, he is in peace—What means this tumult?

[Shouts, clashing of swords.

fverdK.

Enter an Officer, his sword drawn.

Off. Fly, Madam, lest your person be not safe;
 The traitor Bagages, to whose charge you trusted
 The prince your son, has drawn the guards to join him,
 And now, assisted by the furious rabble,
 On every side they charge those few who keep
 This palace and the temple, with loud outcries,
 Proclaiming that they mean to free the prisoners.
 I charge you, ere I fled to give you notice,
 Fell by the prince's hand; the raging torrent
 O're down our weak resistance, and pursuing
 In furious haste, ev'n trod upon my flight:
 This instant brings them here.

Queen. Let them come on,
 I cannot fear; this storm is rais'd too late,
 I stand secure of all I wish already.

[Shouts and clashing of swords again.

Enter Artaban, Cleantes, and Attendants, with their
 swords drawn.

Art. Then virtue is in vain, since base deceit
 And treachery have triumph'd o'er the mighty.

Oh,

Oh, nature! let me turn my eyes away,
Lest I am blasted by a mother's sight.

Queen. Ungrateful rebel! do thy impious arms
Pursue me for my too indulgent fondness
And care for thee?

Art. Well has that care been shewn;
Have you not foully stain'd my sacred fame?
Look on that scene of blood; the dire effects
Of cruel female arts. But, Oh, what recompense?
What can you give me for my murder'd love?
Has not the labyrinth of your fatal counsels
Involv'd my fair, my lovely, lost Cleone?
By our bright gods I swear, I will assert
The majesty of manly government,

Nor wear again your chains. ' Still as our mother
' Be honour'd; rule amongst your maids and eunuchs,
' Nor mingle in our state, where mad confusion
' Shakes the whole frame, to boast a woman's cunning.'

Queen. Thou talk'st as if thy infant hand could grasp,
Guide, and command the fortune of the
But thou art young in pow'r. Remember
Thy father, once the hero of his age,
Was proud to be the subject of my sway;
The warrior to the woman's wit gave way
And found it was his interest to obey.
And dost thou hope to shake off my command?
Dost thou, the creature of my forming hand
When I assert the pow'r thou dar'st invade
Like Heaven I will resolve to be obey'd,
And rule or ruin that which once I made.

[*Exit Queen.*]

Art. Let a guard wait the Queen: tho'
For reverence to her person, jealous pow'r
Must watch her subtle and ambitious wit.
Hast thou seen'd the impious priest? Clean
Maas, that wretch that prostitutes our gods

Cleone. Already he has met the fate he
' This night the hypocrite in grand procession
' March'd through the city to appease the
' And bore the gods along to aid his puny
' When on a sudden, like a hurricane,
' That starts at once, and ruffles all the

Some fury more than mortal seiz'd the crowd :
 At once they rush'd, at once they cry'd, Revenge ;
 Then snatch'd and tore the trembling priest to pieces.
 What was most strange, no injury was offer'd
 To any of the brotherhood beside,
 But all their rage was ended in his death :
 Like formal justice that severely strikes,
 And in an instant is serene and calm.

Art. Oh, my Cleantes ! do but cast thy thoughts
 Back on the recent story of this night ;
 And thou with me wilt wonder, and confess
 The gods are great and just. Well have you mark'd,
 ' Celestial powers, your righteous detestation
 ' Of sacrilege, of base and bloody treachery.'
 May this example guide my future sway :
 • Let honour, truth, and justice, crown my reign,
 Ne'er let my kingly word be given in vain,
 But ever sacred with my foes remain. }
 On these foundations shall my empire stand, }
 The gods shall vindicate my just command, }
 And guard that power they trusted to my hand.

[*Exeunt.*]

END of the FIFTH ACT.





EPILOGUE.

THE spleen and vapours, and this doleful play,
I have mortify'd me to that bright to-day,
That I am almost in the mortal mind,
To die indeed, and leave you all behind.
Know then, since I resolve in peace to part,
I mean to leave to one alone my heart:
(Last favours evill admit of no partage,
I bar all sharing, but upon the stage)
To one who can with one alone be blest,
The peaceful monarch of a single breast:
To one—— But, Oh! how barren will be to you
That phoenix in your fickle changing kind!
New loves, new interests, and religions new,
Still your fantastic appetites pursue.
Your sickly fancies latch what you possess,
And every restless fool would change his place.
Some weary of their peace and quiet grown,
Want to be boisted up aloft, and shewn;
Whilst from the ruz'd height, the wise get safely down,
We find your wavering temper to our cost,
Since all our pain and care to please is lost.
Music in vain supports with friendly aid
Her sister poetry's declining head:
Shew but a mimic ape, or French buffoon,
You to the other house in flocks are gone,
And leave us here to tune our crowds alone.
Must Shakespeare, Fletcher, and ludicrous Be
Be left for Saramouch and Harlequin?
Alas you are inconstant, yet 'tis strange,
For taste is still the same, and ne'er can change

EPILOGUE.

*Let ev'n in that you vary as the rest,
And every day new notions are profess'd.
Nay, there's a wit has found, as am told,
New ways to braven, despairing of the old:
He swears he'll spoil the clerk and sexton's trade,
Bells shall no more be rung, nor graves be made:
The barse and fix no longer be in fashion,
Since all the the faithful may expect translation.
What think you of the project? I'm for trying,
I'll lay aside these foolish thoughts of dying;
Preserve my youth and vigour for th' stage,
And be translated in a good old age.*

• Argill.





J. Baskett del.

J. Baskett sculp.

MR BASKETT in the Character of IAGO
O beware my Lord of jealousy!

T H E L L O.

TRAGEDY, by SHAKESPEARE,

AS PERFORMED AT THE
THEATRE-ROYAL, DRURY-LANE.

Regulated from the PROMPT-BOOK,
With PERMISSION of the MANAGERS,
By Mr. HOPKINS, Prompter.

An INTRODUCTION, and NOTES
CRITICAL and ILLUSTRATIVE,

ARE ADDED BY THE
AUTHORS of the DRAMATIC CENSOR.



L O N D O N :

and for JOHN BELL, near Exeter-Exchange, in the Strand.

M.DCC.LXXVIJ.

) T H E L L O.

INTRODUCTION.

THE exposition of those passions which most prejudice human nature, which, when in full possession of the heart, precipitate us into the most violent and irreparable acts, is noble employment for a dramatic Author's pen. Where then could Shakspeare find a fitter theme, than jealousy? which Dr. Young, in his bold imitation of this play, emphatically calls, the "Hydra of calamities, the seven-fold death." A most striking picture of caution is here held up to view: that, in matters of such deep concern, we should not give way to appearances, however plausible and corroborative; nor trust friendly professions, when they have a fatal tendency. Every intelligent person will easily perceive with what a vast power of idea he has treated his subject; with what unspurred speed his Pegasus maintains a daring flight; with what irresistible force his muse takes possession of our hearts, and to what sublime pleasure he leads us, through the paths of pain. In this edition, though the unities are still intruded upon, the play may be esteemed regular, we had almost said perfect.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

	<i>Drury-Lane.</i>	<i>Covent-Garden</i>
OTHELLO,	Mr. BARRY.	Mr. ROSS.
JAGO,	Mr. REDDISH.	Mr. BENSLEY.
RODRIGO,	Mr. DODD.	Mr. DYER.
CASSIO,	Mr. PALMER.	Mr. CLARKE.
BRABANTIO,	Mr. HURST.	Mr. GARDNER.
DUKE,	Mr. BRANSBY.	Mr. MORRIS.
LODOVICO,	Mr. PACKER.	Mr. OWENSON.
MONTANO,	Mr. J. AICKIN.	Mr. PERRY.
GRATIANO,	Mr. WRIGHTON.	Mr. REDMAN.
MESSENGER,	Mr. WHEELER.	Mr. HOLTOM.
DEI DEMONA,	Mrs. BARRY.	Miss MILLER.
EMILIA,	Mrs. HOPKINS.	Mrs. GREEN.

Officers, Gentlemen, Messengers, Musicians, Sailors, and Attendants.

SCENE, for the First Act, in Venice; during rest of the Play, in Cyprus.

T H E L L O.

ACT I.

SCENE, *a Street in Venice.**Enter Rodorigo and Iago.**

RODORICO.

NEVER tell me, I take it much unkindly,
That thou, *Iago*, who hast had my purse,
As if the strings were thine, shouldst know of this.

Iago. But you'll not hear me.

If ever I did dream of such a matter, abhor me.

Rod. Thou told'st me thou did'st hold him in thy hate.

Iago. Despite me;

If I do not. The great ones of the city,

* The characters of *Iago* and *Roderigo*, are not only well contrasted, but drawn in a masterly manner. In performance, *Roderigo* requires nothing but smartness of figure, airiness of deportment, and pertness of expression. The addition of a vacant talk of features must be of advantage. *Iago*, though great extent of expression may be dispensed with, if well supported, must have solid and variable powers; depth of voice for his soliloquies, and the weightier ones; familiar freedom for the lighter ones. His countenance should be plausible, but pregnant with design; and capable, not only of marking the villain strongly, but occasionally assuming the semblance of an honest man. This part, though not curtailed in the acting, is still so long, and has so many digresses, that, without capital abilities and strict attention, it is possible to do it justice, in representation.

In personal suit, to make me his lieutenant,
 Off-capp'd to him: and by the faith of a man,
 I know my price, I'm worth no worse a place.
 But he, as loving his own pride and purpose,
 Nonsuits my mediators. "For certes," says he,
 "I have already chose my officer."

And what was he?

Forsooth, a great arithmetician,
 One *Michael Cuffio*; a fellow
 That never set a squadron in the field,
 Nor the division of a battle knows,
 More than a spinster.

He, in good time, must his lieutenant be,
 And I, sir, (bless the mark!) his moorship's ancient.

Rod. By heav'n, I rather would have been his hangman.

Jago. Now, sir, be judge yourself,
 If I in any just term am assign'd
 'To love the Moor.

Rod. I would not follow him, then.

Jago. O, sir, content you; •

I follow him, to serve my turn upon him.
 Heaven is my judge, not I
 For love and duty; but, seeming so,
 For my peculiar end.

For, when my outward action doth demonstrate
 The native act and figure of my heart,
 In compliment extern, 'tis not long after
 But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve,
 For daws to peck at. I'm not what I seem.

Rod. What a full fortune does the thick-lips owe,
 If he can carry her thus!

Jago. Call up her father,

Rout him, make after him, poison his delight,
 Tho' his joy be joy,
 Yet throw such changes of vexation 'on't,
 As it may lose some colour.

Rod. Here is her father's house. I'll call aloud.

Jago. Do, with like timorous accent, and dire yell,
 As when, by night and negligence, a fire
 Is spied in populous cities.

Rod. What, ho! *Brabantio!* signior *Brabantio!* ho!

O T H E L L O.

egs. Awake! What, ho! *Brabantio!* ho, thieves!
thieves!

k to your house, your daughter, and your bags.
eves, thieves.*

Brabantio appears above, at a window.

ew. What is the matter, there?

d. Signior, is all your family within?

ra. Are all your doors lock'd?

a. Why? Wherefore ask you this?

ra. Sir, you're robb'd:

have lost half your soul;

Even now, ev'n very now, an old black ram &

Is tapping your white eard? Arise, arise,

Awake the snorting citizens with the bell,

Or else the devil will make a grandfire of you.

Arise, I say.

Bra. What, have you lost your wits!

Red. Most reverend signior, do you know my voice?

Bra. Not I. What art you?

Red. My name is *Roderigo*.

Bra. The worse welcome.

In honest plainness, thou hast heard me say,

My daughter's not for thee. And now in madness

Dost thou come to start my quiet.

Red. Sir, sir, sir!—

Bra. But thou must needs be sure,

spirit and my place have in their power

make this bitter to thee.

Red. Patience, good sir.

Bra. What, tell'st thou me of robbing? This is

Venice;

house is not a grange.

The following Brabantio, at such a time, and in such a manner, is imagined, proving a good introduction to opening the plot.

The lines distinguished by italics, for sake of decency, should be read, though usually spoken.

Red.

Rod. Most brave *Brabantio*,

In simple and pure soul, I come to you.

Iago. Sir, you'll have your daughter covered with a
Barbary horse; you'll have your nephews neigh to you:
you'll have coursers for cousins, and genets for ger-
mans.*

Bra. What profane wretch art thou?

Iago. I am one, sir, that comes to tell you,
daughter and the Moor are now making the beast with
two backs.

Bra. Thou art—a villain.

Iago. You are—a senator.

Bra. This thou shalt answer. I know thee, *Roderigo*.

Rod. Sir, I will answer any thing. But I beseech you,
Straight satisfy yourself.
If she be in your chamber, or your house,
Let loose on me the justice of the state,
For thus deluding you.

Bra. † Give me a taper——Call up my people——
This accident is not unlike my dream;
Belief of it oppresses me, already.
Light; I say, light!

Iago. Farewel; for I must leave you.
It seems not meet nor wholesome, to my place,
'To be produc'd (as, if I say, I shall)
Against the Moor.
In which regard,

* This, and *Iago's* next speech, merit the same fate, for the
same reason. Would not a transition from

In simple and pure soul I come to you,
to *Brabantio's* answer,

This thou shalt answer, &c.

be an eligible means of avoiding an offence to decency.

† In representation, *Brabantio* should be sustained by a venerable
appearance, and a medium degree of the pathetic. He is drawn
tender father; his charge, of charms, spells, &c. however strong
is strongly characteristic. It is not to be inferred that *Brabantio*
was weak enough to give into an implicit belief of their power
but that nothing beneath supernatural means could influence
daughter (to use his own words.)

To see in love with what she fear'd to look on.

O T H E L L O

Tho' I do hate him, as I do hell's pains,
 Yet, for necessity of present life,
 I must shew out a flag and sign of love,
 (Which is, indeed, but sign.) That you may surely
 Lead to the *Sagittary* the raised search; [find him,
 And there will I be with him. So farewell. [Exit,

Enter Brabantio, and Servants with Torches.

Bra. It is too true an evil. Gone she is!
 Now, *Roderigo*,
 Where didst thou see her? Oh! unhappy girl,
 With the Moor, saidst thou?
 How didst thou know 'twas he?
 Get more tapers.

Raise all my kindred—Are they married, think you?

Red. Truly, they are.

Bra. Oh heaven! How gat she out?
 Oh treason of my blood!
 Fathers, from hence, trust not your daughter's minds,
 By what you see them act. Are there not charms,
 By which the property of youth and maid-hood
 May be abus'd? Have you not read, *Roderigo*,
 Of some such thing?

Red. Yes, sir, I have indeed.

Bra. Call up my brother:

Some one way, some another——Do you know
 Where we may apprehend her and the Moor?

Red. I think I can discover him, if you please
 To get good guard, and go along with me.

Bra. Pray you, lead on. At ev'ry house I'll call,
 My command at most. Get weapons, ho!
 And raise some special officers of might.
 O good *Roderigo*, I'll deserve your pains.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE *Shifts to another Street, before the Sagittary.*

Enter Othello, and Iago.

Iago. Tho' in the trade of war I have slain men,
 I do not hold it base and infamous,

To

To do a contriv'd murder.—Nine or ten times,
I thought to've jerk'd him here under the ribs.

Os. It's better as it is.

Iago. Nay, but he prated,
And spoke such scurvey and provoking terms,
Against your honour,
That with the little godliness I have,
I did full hard forbear him. But I pray, sir,
Are you fast married? for be sure of this,
That the magnifico * is much belov'd,
And hath in his effect a voice potential,
As double as the duke's. He will divorce you
Or put upon you what restraint or grievance,
The law (with all it's might t'enforce it on)
Will give him cable.

Os. Let him do his spite?

My services, which I have done the signory,
Shall out-tongue his complaints. 'Tis yet to know
(Which when I know that boasting is an honour,
I shall promulgate) I fetch my life and being
From men of royal siege: and my demerits
May speak, and bonnetted, to as proud a fortune,
As this that I have reach'd. For know, *Iago*,
But that I love the gentle *Desdemona*.
I would not my unhoused free condition
Put into circumscription and confine,
For the sea's worth. But look! What lights come
yonder? †

Enter Cassio, with Torches and Attendants.

Iago. These are the raised father, and his friend
You were best go in.

Os. Not I: I must be found.

* *Magnifico*, a nobleman of Venice.

† There is not in the whole scope of the drama, a character which demands greater requisites, than *Othello*: he, as there which gives more support to, or calls for more from, the actor. His appearance should be amiably elegant, and above the middle stature; his expression full and sententious, for the declamatory part; flowing and harmonious, for the love-scenes; rapid, powerful, for each violent climax of jealous rage.

parts, my title, and my perfect soul,
 all manifest me rightly. Is it they?

Iago. By *Janus*, I think no.

Oth. The servants of the duke, and my lieutenant,
 the goodness of the night upon you, friends!
 What is the news?

Caf. The duke does greet you, general;
 and he requires your haste, post-haste appearance,
 on the instant.

Oth. What is the matter think you?

Caf. Something from *Cyprus*, as I may divine.
 You have been hotly call'd for;

'men, being not at your lodgings to be found,
 the senate sent above three several quests,
 To search you out.

Oth. 'Tis well I am found by you:
 I will but spend a word here in the house,
 And go with you. [Exit Othello.

Caf. Ancient, what makes he here?

Iago. Faith, he to-night hath boarded a land carrack;*
 If she prove lawful prize, he's made, for ever.

Caf. I do not understand.

Iago. He's married.

Caf. To whom?

Iago. Marry, to—Come, captain, will you go?

Enter Othello.

Oth. Have with you.

Caf. Here comes another troop, to seek for you.

Enter Brabantio, Rodorigo, with Officers and Torches.

Br. It is *Brabantio*. General, be advis'd,
 comes to bad intent.

Rod. Holla! Stand there.

Off. Signior is the Moor.

Off. Down with him, thief.

[They draw, on both sides.

* A carrack, is a rich ship.

Iago. You, *Roderigo!* Come, sir, I am for you—

Ors. Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them.

Good signior, you shall more command with years,
Than with your weapons.

Bra. O, thou foul thief! Where hast thou stabb'd
my daughter?

Damn'd as thou art, thou hast enchanted her;
For I'll refer me to all things of sense,
If she in chains of magic were not bound,
Whether a maid, so tender, fair, and happy,
So opposite to marriage, that she shunn'd
The wealthy curled darlings of our nation,
Would ever have, t' incur a general mock,
Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom,
Of such a thing as thou, to fear, not to delight? †
I therefore apprehend, and do attach thee,
For an abuser of the world, a praiser
Of arts inhibited, and out of warrant.
Lay hold upon him; if he do resist,
Subdue him at his peril.

[*They fight.*]

Ors. Hold your hands.

Both you of my inclining, and the rest.
Were it my cue to fight, I should have known it,
Without a prompter. * Where will you I go,
To answer this your charge?

Bra. To prison, 'till fit time
Of law, and course of direct session,
Call thee to answer.

Ors. What if I do obey?

How may the duke be therewith satisfied
Whose messengers are here about my side
Upon some present business of the state,
To bring me to him?

† There is somewhat very plausible in this here; and we apprehend the justice of our remark
with respect, &c. is sufficiently enforced here, as
in the scene, where the parties are before the law.

* This is a spirited resolve. A brave man
will never, when he can do it with honour.

Caf. True, most worthy signior,
The duke's in council, and your noble self,
I'm sure, is sent for.

Bra. How! The duke in council,
In this time of the night? Bring him away;
Mine's not an idle cause. The duke himself,
Or any of my brothers of the state,

Can not but feel this wrong, as 'twere their own.
For if such actions may have passage free,
Bond-slaves and pageants † shall our state-men be.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE changes to the Senate-house.

— Duke and Senators sit at a Table, with Lights and Attendants.

Duke. There is no composition in these news,
That gives them credit.

1 Sen. Indeed, they're disproportion'd.
My letters say, a hundred and seven galleys.

Duke. And mine a hundred and forty.

2 Sen. And mine, two hundred.

But though they jump not on a just account,
Yet do they all confirm

A Turkish fleet, and bearing up to Cyprus.

Duke. Nay, it is possible enough to judgment.

Enter Officer, and Messenger.

Off. A messenger from the galleys.

Duke. Now!—What's the business?

† A difference of opinion has arisen between pagants and pageants: we incline to the former, because we cannot suppose that the Venetian state would have made a pageant their general sides, pagants, taken as cyphars, bears an intelligible meaning. The first instance, in the very next page, uses the word exactly to its proper sense.

Mess. The *Turkish* preparation makes for *Rhodes*,
So I was bid report here to the state.

Duke. How say you, by this change?

1 Sen. 'Tis a pageant,
To keep us in false gaze.

Duke. Nay, in all confidence, he's not for *Rhodes*.

Off. Here's more news.

Ent. r another Messenger.

2 Mess. The *Ottomites*, (reverend and gracious)
Steering with due course towards the isle of *Rhodes*,
Have there injoin'd them with an after fleet—

1 Sen. Ay, so I thought. How many, as you guess?

Mess. Of thirty sail; and now they do re-stem
Their backward course, bearing with frank appearance,
Their purposes towards *Cyprus*. Signior *Montano*,
Your trusty and most valiant servitor,
With his free duty, recommends you thus,

[*Gives a Packet.*

And prays you to believe him.

Duke. 'Tis certain then for *Cyprus*. *Marcus Lucius*,
Is he not here in town?

Sen. He's now in *Florence*.

Duke. Write from us to him, post, post-haste,
dispatch.

1 Sen. Here comes *Brabantio*, and the valiant Moor.

*To them enter Brabantio, Othello, Cassio, Iago, Rod-
rigo, and Officers.*

Duke. Valiant *Othello*, we must strait em
Against the general enemy *Ottoman*.
I did not see you. Welcome, gentle signi

We lack'd your counsel and your help,

Bra. So did I yours. Good your grace,
Neither my place, nor ought I heard of but
Hath rais'd me from my bed; nor doth the
'Take hold on me; for my particular gri-
ls of so flood-gate and o'er bearing nature,

That it engults and swallows other sorrows,
And yet is still itself.

Duke. Why? what's the matter?

Bra. My daughter! oh, my daughter!—

Sen. Dead?

Bra. 'To me.

She is abus'd, stolen from me, and corrupted
By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks;
For nature to preposterous to err,
Sans witchcraft, could not—

Duke. Whoe'er he be, that in this foul proceeding
Hath thus beguil'd your daughter of herself,
And you of her, the bloody book of law
You shall yourself read in the bitter letter,
And your own sense; yea, tho' our proper son
Stood in your action. •

Bra. Humbly I thank your grace.
There is the man, this Moor, whom now, it seems,
Your special mandate, for the state-affairs,
Hath hither brought. •

Duke. We're very sorry for't.
What in your own part can you say to this?

[To Othello.]

Bra. Nothing, but it is so.

Oth. Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors,
My very noble and approv'd good masters;
That I have ta'en away this old man's daughter,
It is most true; true, I have married her;
The very head and front of my offending,
As extent; no more. Rude am I in speech,
As blais'd with the soft phrase of peace;
These arms of mine had seven years pith,
Some nine moons wasted, they have us'd
In action in the tented field;

moderately charges himself with what his oratory,
to be some, contradicts; and there is his beauty in
as a nice talk to relate his course of love, and his
hidden with too much delicacy and delicacy, in

And little of this great world can I speak,
 More than pertains to feats of broils and battle;
 And therefore little shall I grace my cause,
 In speaking for myself. Yet, by your patience,
 I will a round unvarnish'd tale deliver,
 Of my whole courſe of love; what drugs, what charms,
 What conjuration, and what mighty magick,
 (For ſuch proceeding I am charg'd withal)
 I will bring his daughter with.

Era. A maiden, never bold;
 Of ſpirit ſo ſtill and quiet, that her motion
 Bluſh'd at itſelf: and ſhe, in ſpite of nature,
 Of years, of country, credit, every thing,
 To fall in love with what ſhe fear'd to look on—
 I therefore vouch again,
 That with ſome mixtures pow'rful o'er the blood,
 Or with ſome dram, conjur'd to this effect,
 He wrought upon her.

Duko. To vouch this, is no proof.

Othello, ſpeak;
 Did you by indirect and forced courſes
 Subdue and poiſon this young maid's affections;
 Or came it by requeſt, and ſuch fair queſtion,
 As ſoul to ſoul affordeth?

Oib. I beſeech you,
 Send for the lady to the *Sagittary*,
 And let her ſpeak of me before her father;
 If you do find me foul in her report,
 The truſt, the office, I do hold of you,
 Not only take away, but let your ſentence
 Even fall upon my life.

Duko. Fetch *Deſdemona* hither.

Oib. Ancient, conſult them, you beſt
 place. [Exit laſt

And, till ſhe come, as truly as to heav'n
 I do confeſs the vices of my blood,
 So juſtly to your grave ears I'll preſent
 How I did thrive in the fair lady's love,
 And ſhe in mine.

Duke. Say it, *Othello*.

Oth. Her father lov'd me, oft invited me ;
 Still question'd me the story of my life,
 From year to year ; the battles, sieges, fortunes,
 That I have past.
 I ran it through, e'en from my boyish days,
 To the very moment that he bade me tell it :
 Wherein I spoke of most disastrous chances ;
 Of moving accidents by flood and field ;
 Of hair-breadth 'scapes in the imminent deadly breach ;
 Of being taken by the insolent foe,
 And sold to slavery ; of my redemption thence ;
 Of battles bravely, hardly fought ; of victorie,
 For which the conqueror mourn'd, so many fell ;
 Sometimes I told the story of a siege,
 Wherein I had to combat plagues and famine ;
 Sold ers unpaid ; fearful to fight,
 Yet bold in dangerous mutiny.
 All these to hear
 Would *Desdemona* seriously incline :
 But still the house-affairs would draw her thence,
 Which ever as she could with haste dispatch,
 She'd come again, and with a greedy ear,
 Devour up my discourse ; which I observing,
 Took once a pliant hour, and found good means
 To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart,
 That I would all my pilgrimage dilate,
 Whereof by parcels she had something heard,
 But not distinctively : I did consent,
 And often did beguile her of her tears,
 Of some distressful stroke,
 I suffer'd. My story being done,
 My pains a world of sighs. (strange,
 In faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing
 'twas wond'rous pitiful. —

She speaks the pen of a great orator; and though long, never fails to please much in the recital.

She wish'd she had not heard it;—yet she wish'd,
That heaven had made her such a man:—she than
And bade me, if I had a friend that lov'd her, [me,
I should but teach him how to tell my story,
And that would woo her. On this hint I spake;
She lov'd me for the dangers I had pass'd;
And I lov'd her, that she did pity them.
This only is the witchcraft I have us'd.
Here comes the lady. Let her witness it.

Duke. I think, this tale would win my daughter,
Good *Brabantio*, [too—
Take up this mangled matter at the best;
Men do their broken weapons rather use,
Than their bare hands.

Bra. I pray you hear her speak.
If she confess that she was half the wooer,
Destruction on my head, if my bad blame
Light on the man!

Enter Desdemona, &c.

Come hither, gentle mistress,
Do you perceive in all this noble company,
Where you most owe obedience?

Des. My noble father,
I do perceive here a divided duty:
To you I'm bound, for life and education;
My life and education both do teach me
How to respect you. You're the lord of duty:
I'm hitherto your daughter. But there's
And so much duty as my mother shew'd
To you, preferring you before her father;
So much I challenge that I may profess
Due to the Moor, my lord.*

Bra. I have done.
I had rather adopt a child, than get it;

* There is a beautiful degree of modest confidence
speech.

Come hither, Moor:

I here do give thee that, with all my heart.
Which, but thou hast already, with all my heart
I would keep from thee.

Beseech you now to the affairs o' th' state.

Duke. The *Turk*, with a most mighty preparat'on,
moves for *Cyprus*: *Othello*, the fortitude of the place is
well known to you. You must therefore be content to
slubber the gloss of your new fortunes, with this more
stubborn and boist'rous expedition.

Oth. Thy tyrant custom, most grave senators,
Hath made the flinty and steel couch of war
My thrice driven bed of down.† I do ag'nize
A natural and prompt alacrity
I find in hardiness; and do undertake
This present war against the *Ottomites*.
Most humbly therefore bending to your state,
I crave fit disposition for my wife,
Due reverence of place and exhibition;
With such accommodation and besort,
As levels with her breeding.

Duke. Why, at her father's.

Bra. I will not have it so.

Oth. Nor I.

Des. Nor I. I would not there reside,
To put my father in impatient thoughts,
By being in his eye. Most noble duke,
To my unfolding lend your gracious ear,
And let me find a charter in your voice,
To keep my maidenhood in simpleness.

What would you, *Desdemona*?

I did love the Moor to live with him,
His violence and storm of fortunes,
To the world. My heart's subdu'd,
Every quality of my lord;
His willage in his mind,

† I have been told in these lines.
knowledge.

And to his honour and his valiant parts,
 Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate;
 So that, dear lords, if I be left behind,
 A moth of peace, and he go to the war,
 The rites, for which I love him, are bereft me;
 And I a heavy interim shall support,
 By his dear absence. Let me go with him.

Oth. Your voices, lords; beseech you, let her will
 Have a free way. I therefore beg it not,
 To please the palate of my appetite;
 But to be free and bounteous to her mind.
 And heav'n defend your good souls, that you think,
 I will your serious and great business scant,
 For she is with me.—No, when light-wing'd toys^{*}
 Of feather'd Cupid foil with wanton dulness
 My speculative and active instruments,
 That my disports corrupt and taint my business,
 Let all indign and base adversities
 Make head against my estimation.

Duke. Be it as you shall privately determine,
 Or for her stay or going; th' affair cries haste;
 And speed must answer. You must hence, to-night.

Des. To night, my lord?

Duke. This night.

Oth. With all my heart.

Duke. At nine i'th' morning here we'll meet again.
Othel's, leave some officer behind,
 And he shall our commission bring to you;
 And such things else of quality and respect,
 As doth import you.

Oth. Pleas'd your grace, *Iago*;
 (A man he is of honesty and trust)
 To his conveyance I assign my wife,
 With what else needful your good grace shall think
 To be sent after me.

* This is a delightful sight of fancy, and natural
 sense, who, though he bows to the shrine of love, holds
 the important concerns of life.

Duke. Let it be so.

Good-night to every one. And, noble signior,
If virtue no delighted beauty lack,
Your son-in-law is far more fair than black.

Bra. Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see;
She has deceiv'd her father, and may thee.

[*Exit Duke, with Senators.*]

Oth. My life upon her faith!—Hence, *Iago*,
My *Desdemona* must I leave to thee;
I pr'ythee let thy wife attend on her;
And bring her after in the best advantage.
Come, *Desdemona*, I have but an hour
Of love, of worldly matter and direction,
To speak with thee. We must obey the time.

[*Exeunt.*]

Manent Rodorigo and *Iago*.

Rod. Iago.—

Iago. What say'st thou, noble heart?

Rod. What will I do, think'st thou?

Iago. Why, go to bed, and sleep.

Rod. I will incontinently drown myself.

Iago. Well, if thou dost, I shall never love thee after.
Why, thou silly gentleman!

Rod. It is silliness to live, when to live is a torment;
and then we have a prescription to die, when death is
our physician.

Iago. O villainous! I have look'd upon the world
for four times seven years, and since I could dis-
tinguish betwixt a benefit and an injury, I never
found man that knew how to love himself. Ere I
would say I would drown myself, for the love of a
Guinea hen, I would change my humanity with a

What should I do? I confess, it is my shame

scene is very much, and very properly, reduced, from its
text.

to be so fond; but it is not in my virtue to amend it.

Iago. Virtue! a fig. Come, be a man: thyself! drown cats and blind puppies. I have found thee my friend, and I could never see thee, than now. Put money in thy pocket; thou these wars; I say, put money in thy pocket; I cannot be, that *Desdemona* should long love to the Moor—put money in thy pocket.

Rod. Wilt thou be fast to my hopes, in the issue?

Iago. Thou art sure of me.—Go, make money.—I have told thee, often, and I tell thee, again and again, I hate the Moor. My cause is hearted; thine hath no less reason. Let us be conjunctive in our revenge against him. If thou canst cuckold him, thou dost thyself a pleasure, me a sport. Traverse, go, provide thy money. We will have more of this to-morrow. Adieu.

Rod. Where shall we meet i'th' morning?

Iago. At my lodging.

Rod. I'll be with thee, sometimes.

Iago. Go to. Farewel. Do you hear, *Roderigo*?

Rod. What say you?

Iago. No more of drowning; do you hear?

Rod. I am chang'd; I'll go sell all my land.

[Exit.

Enter Iago.

Iago. Thus do I ever make my fool my purse; For I my own gain'd knowledge should prophane, If I should time expend with such a snipe, But for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor, And it is thought abroad, that 'twixt my sheets He has done my office. I know not how, But I for mere suspicion in that kind,

* *Shakespeare*, who had the possession of the *Shakespeare* in view, has shown a contrast

I do, as if for surety. He holds me well—
 better shall my purpose work on him.
 'Tis a proper man: let me see, now?—
 at his place, and to plume up my will;
 ble knavery—How? how?—let's see—
 some time, t'abuse *Othello's* ear,
 is too familiar with his wife.—
 a person, and a smooth dispose,
 be suspected; fram'd to make women false.
 The Moor is of a free and open nature,
 That thinks men honest that but seem to be so;
 And will as tenderly be led by th' nose,
 As asses are.
 I hav't—it is ingendered—hell and night
 Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light. †

[Exit.

minds; the subtle, gloomy temper of *Iago*, touched with it, deter-
 mines upon a revenge, but, as deliberate, under the smiling, treacher-
 ous mask of friendship; *Othello's* generous, unsuspecting heart, hav-
 ing sucked in the poison, enters upon an open, violent declaration of
 his resentment. Herein the poet, as in most of his pieces, shows a
 correct knowledge of human nature.

† This Act is sufficiently supplied with business. The plot and
 characters are well opened, and the writing, all through, equals any
 thing we could wish.

END of the FIRST ACT.

ACT

A C T II.

SCENE, *the capital City of Cyprus.**Enter Caffio, Montano, and Gentlemen.*

CAFFIO.

THANKS to the valiant of this warlike isle, †
That so approve the Moor: oh, let the heav'n
Give him defence against the elements,
For I have lost him on a dangerous sea.

Mont.

† The Second Act commonly begins here; yet we think that the scene which precedes, as originally written, should be retained, as it contains some fine passages, and raises a pleasing proper anxiety, for Osbello's safety; wherefore we give it to perusal.

MONTANO and GENTLEMEN.

MON. *What, from the cap, can you discern at sea?*GEN. *Nothing at all: it is a high-wrought flood;
I cannot, 'twixt the heav'n and main,
Descry a sail.*MON. *Metinks the wind hath spoke aloud at land;
A fuller blast ne'er shook our battlements:
If it hath ruffian'd so upon the sea,
What ribs of oak, when mountains melt on them,
Can hold the mortice? What shall we hear of this?*2d GEN. *A congregation of the Turkish fleet;
For do but stand upon the foaming shore,
The chiding billows seem to check the clouds;
The wind-mal'd surge, with high and mounting main,
Seems to call water on the burning Bear,
And quench the guards of th' ever-fixed pole.
I never did see molestation view
On the enchafed flood.*MON. *If that the Turkish fleet
Be not embelster'd and embay'd, they're drown'd.
It is impossible to bear it out.**Enter a third Gentleman.*3d GEN. *News, lords: Our wars are done;
The desperate tempest hath so bang'd the Turks*

O T H E L L O.

23

Is he well shipp'd?
His bark is stoutly timber'd, and his pilot
expert and approv'd allowance.

] A fail, a fail, a fail!

Enter a Gentleman.

What noise?

Gent. The town is empty; on the brow o'th' sea
Stand ranks of people, and they cry, a fail.

Cas. My hopes do shape him for the governor.
I pray you, sir, go forth,

And give us truth who 'tis that is arrived.

Gent. I shall.

[Exit.]

Ment. But, good lieutenant, is your general wiv'd?

Cas. Most fortunately, he hath achiev'd a maid,
That paragons description and wild fame.

*That their departing halts. Another ship of Venice
Hath seen a grievous wreck and saff'rance,
On most part of the fleet.*

Mon. How! is this true?

Gent. The ship is here put in,
A Venetian; Michael Cassio,
Lieutenant of the warlike Moor, Othello,
Is come on shore; the Moor's himself at sea,
And is in full commission here for Cyprus.

Mon. I'm glad on't; 'tis a worthy governor.

Gent. But this same Cassio, though he speaks of comfort,
Touching the Turkish loss, yet he looks sadly,
And prays the Moor be safe; for they were parted,
By foul and violent tempest.

Mon. Pray heav'n's be he!

For I have serv'd him, and the man commands
Like a full soldier. Let's to the sea-side,
As well to see the vessel that comes in,
As to throw out our eyes for brave Othello,
Ev'n till we make the main and th' actual flag
An indistinct regard.

Let us do so.

For every minute is expectancy
Of more arrivance.

C

Exit

Enter a Gentleman.

How now? Who has put in?

Gent. It is one *Iago*, ancient to the general.

Cas. He's had most favourable and happy
Tempests themselves, high seas, and howling
As having sense of beauty, do omit
Their mortal natures, letting safe go by
The divine *Desdemona*.

Mont. What is she?

Cas. She that I spoke of, our great captain's captain,
Left in the conduct of the bold *Iago*.

Enter Desdemona, Iago, Rodorigo, and Æmilia.

O behold!

The riches of the ship is come on shore:
Hail to thee, lady! and the grace of heav'n,
Before, behind thee, and on every hand,
Enwheel thee round.

Des. I thank you, valiant *Cassio*.

What tidings can you tell me of my Lord?

Cas. He is not yet arriv'd, nor know I ought
But that he's well, and will be shortly here.

Des. O, but I fear—how lost you company?

Cas. The great contention of the sea and skies
Parted our fellowship.

Good antient, you are welcome. Welcome, mistress.

Let it not gall your patience, good *Iago*. [*To Æmilia*.]

That I extend my manners. 'Tis my breeding,
That gives me this bold shew of courtesy.

Iago. Sir, would she give you so much of her lips,
As of her tongue she oft bestows on me,
You'd have enough.

Des. Alas! she has no speech.

Iago. In faith too much.

Mary, before your ladyship, I grant,
She puts her tongue a little in her heart,
And chides with thinking.

O T H E L L O.

I. You have little cause to say so. [doors,
 Come on, come on; you're pictures out o'
 your parlours, wild cats in your kitchens,
 your injurings, devils being offended,
 in your housewifery, and housewives in your
 O, fie upon thee, slanderer! [beds!
Iago. Nay, it is true; or else I am a *Turk*;
 You rise to play, and go to bed to work.*
Emil. You shall not write my praise.
Iago. No, let me not.
Des. What would'st thou write of me, if thou should'st
 praise me? †
Iago. Oh gentle lady, do not put me to't,
 For I am nothing, if not critical.
Des. Come, one essay. There's one gone to the
Cas. Ay, madam. [harbour?
Des. I am not merry; but I do beguile
 The thing I am, by seeming otherwise. [indeed?
 What praise could thou bestow on a deserving woman.
Iago. *She that was ever fair, and never frank,
 Had tongue at will, and yet was never dumb;
 Never lach'd gold, and yet was never poor;
 Fled from her wish, and yet said, now I may;
 She that was never angry'd, her revenge being mine,
 Bate her wrong day, and her displeasure fit;
 She that could think, and never disclose her mind,
 Have suitors following, and not look behind;
 She was a wight, (if ever such wight were) —*
Des. To do what?
Iago. To suckle fools, and chronicle small-beer.

* Through the whole of this scene, *Iago* expresses himself somewhat too freely, both to his wife and *Desdemona*; but is there not a strong trait of character in it? He thought, we presume, an exaggerated frankness the best mask for his private purposes.

† In representation, we expect nothing from the two characters of *Desdemona* and *Emilia*, but delicacy of appearance and expression, in the former; with a larger degree of spirit in the latter.

Des. Oh most lame and impotent conclusion,
 not learn of him, *Emilia*, tho' he be thy
 How say you, *Cassio*, is he not a most pro-
 liberal censurer?

Cas. He speaks home, madam; you mark
 more in the soldier, than in the scholar.

Iago. [*Aside.*] He takes her by the palm; ay, *Veil*
 said—whisper.—With as little a web as this, will I
 ensnare as great a fly as *Cassio*. Ay, smile upon her;
 do—You say true, 'tis so, indeed.—If such tricks as
 these strip you out of your lieutenancy, it had been
 better you had not kiss'd your three fingers so oft.
 [*Trumpet sounds*]. 'The Moor—I know his trumpet.

[*Trumpet.*

Des. Let's meet him, and receive him.

Enter Othello, and Attendants.

Oth. Oh, my fair warrior!

Des. My dear *Othello*.

Oth. It gives me wonder great as my content,
 To see you here before me. O my soul's joy!
 If after every tempest come such calms,
 May the winds blow till they have waken'd death;
 And let the labouring bark climb hills of seas
Olympus high; and duck again as low,
 As hell's from heav'n! If I were now to die,
 'Twere now to be most happy; for, I fear,
 My soul hath her content so absolute,
 That not another comfort like to this,
 Succeeds in unknown fate.

Des. The heav'n's forbid,
 But that our loves and comforts should increase,
 Ev'n as our days do grow!

Oth. Amen to that, sweet powers!
 I cannot speak enough of this content,
 It stops me here: it is too much of joy.
 And this, and this, the great'st discords be,
 That e'er our hearts shall make.

[*Exit*

Oh, you are well tun'd, now; but I'll let
 that make this muick, as honest as I

[*Aside.*

Now, friends, our wars are done; the *Turks*
 are down'd.

our old acquaintance of this isle?

Money. you shall be well desir'd in *Cyprus*;

I've found great love amongst them. Oh, my sweet,

I prattle out of fashion, and I dote,

In mine own comfort. Pr'ythee, good *Iago*,

Go to the bay, and disembark my coffers.

Bring thou the master to the citadel;

He is a good one, and his worthiness

Does challenge much respect. Come, *Desdemona*,

Once more well met at *Cyprus*.

[*Exeunt Othello, Desdemona, &c.*

Remain Iago and Rodorigo. *

Iago. Come hither, *Rodorigo*, if thou be't valiant:
 list me; the lieutenant, to-night, watches on the court
 of guard. First, I must tell thee this; *Desdemona* is
 directly in love with him.

Rod. With him! why, 'tis not possible!

Iag. Lay thy fingers thus; and let thy soul be in-
 stracted. Mark me with what violence she first lov'd
 the Moor, but for bragging, and telling her fan-
 tistical lies. And will she love him still for brag-
 ing? Let not thy discreet heart think it. Her eye
 must be fed. And what delight shall she have to look
 on the devil!

Rod. I cannot believe that of her, she's full of most
 blest'd condition.

Iag. Blest'd his end! the wine she drinks is made
 of grapes. Blest'd pudding! didst thou not see her

* *Iago's* method of working, through the whole piece, on this
 famous tool of his dark design, is full of cunning,
 of art.

paddle with the palm of his hand? Did' that?

Rod. Yes, that I did; but that was but ce

Iago. Letchery, by this hand; an index; prologue to the history of lust, and foul Sir, be you rul'd by me. I have brought *Venice*. Watch you, to-night; for the com lay't upon you. *Cassio* knows you not: I'll not be far from you. Do you find some occasion to anger *Cassio*, either by speaking too loud, or taunting his discipline, or from what other course you please, which the time shall more favourably minister.

Rod. Well.

Iago. Sir, he's rash, and very sudden in choler: and, haply, may strike at you. Provoke him, that he may; for even of that will I cause those of *Cyprus* to mutiny; whose qualification shall come into no true taste again, but by the displanting of *Cassio*.

Rod. I will do this, if you can bring it to any opportunity.

Iago. I warrant thee. Meet me, by and by, at the citadel. I must fetch his necessaries ashore. *Exe.*

Rod. Adieu.

[*Exe.*

Manet Iago.

Iago. That *Cassio* loves her, I do well believe; That she loves him, 'tis apt, and of great credit. 'The Moor, howbeit that I endure him not, Is of a constant, loving, noble nature; And, I dare think, he'll prove to *Desdemona*, A most dear husband. Now I love her too, Not out of absolute lust, (tho', peradventure, I stand accountant for as great a sin;) But partly led to diet my revenge, For that I do suspect the lustful Moor Hath leapt into my seat:® The thought whereof

Doth,

® The author has again made *Iago* very properly jealous suspicions of the Moor, as a leading

like a poisonous mineral, gnaw my inwards;
 eating can, or shall, content my soul,
 and even'd with him, wife for wife;
 clinging so, yet that I put the Moor
 into a jealousy so strong,
 judgment cannot cure. Which thing to do,
 is poor brach † of *Truce*, whom I trace
 for his quick hunting, stand the putting on,
 I'll have our *Michael Cassio* on the hip,
 Abuse him to the Moor in the rank garb;
 (For I fear *Cassio* with my night-cap, too)
 Make the Moor thank me, love me, and reward me.
 For making him egregiously an ass;
 And practising upon his peace and quiet,
 Even to madness. 'Tis here—but yet confes'd:
 Knavery's plain face is never seen, till us'd.

[Exit.

SCENE, the Castle Gate.

Enter Othello, Desdemona, Cassio, and Attendants.

Oth. Good *Michael*, look you to the guard to-night.
 Let's teach ourselves that honourable sleep,
 Not to out sport discretion.

Cas. *Iago* hath direction what to do.
 But, notwithstanding, with my personal eye,
 Will I look to't.

Oth. *Iago* is most honest.

Michael, good-night. To-morrow, with your earliest,
 Let me have speech with you. Come, my dear love,
 The purchase made, the fruits are to ensue;
 That profit's yet to come, 'tween me and you.
 Good-night.

[Exit. *Othello and Desdemona, into the Castle.*

villainous revenge. The whole procedure of this treacherous
 shows great caution, much policy, and deep malignance
 and
 tract, a kind of babbling hound.

Enter

Enter Iago.

Cassio. Welcome, *Iago*; we must to the v
Iago. Not this hour, lieutenant. 'Tis i
o'th' clock. Our general cast us thus ear
love of his *Desdemona*; whom let us not there
He hath not yet made wanton the night with
she is sport for *Jove*.

Cas. She's a most exquisite lady.

Iago. And I'll warrant her, full of game.

Cas. Indeed she's a most fresh and delicate creature.

Iago. What an eye she has! methinks it sounds a
parley to provocation.

Cas. An inviting eye; and yet, methinks, right
modest.

Iago. And when she speaks, is it not an alarm to
love?

Cas. She is, indeed, perfection.

Iago. Well, happiness to their sheets. Come, lieu-
tenant, I have a sloop of wine, and here without are a
brace of *Cyprus* gallants, that would fain have a mea-
sure to the health of black *Orbello*.

Cas. Not to-night, good *Iago*. I have very poor
and unhappy brains for drinking. I could well with
courtesy would invent some other custom of entertain-
ment.

Iago. Oh, they are our friends; but, one cup; I'll
drink for you.

Cas. I have drank but one cup, to-night, and that
was carefully qualified too: and behold what innova-
tion it makes here. I am unfortunate in the infirmity,
and dare not task my weakness with any more.

Iago. What, man! 'tis a night of revels, the gal-
lants desire it.

Cas. Where are they?

Iago. Within. I pray you, call them hither.

Cas. I'll do't, but it dislikes me.

Iago. If I can fasten but one cup upon him

With that which he hath drank to-night al

He'll be as full of quarrel and offence,
 As my young mistress's dog.—
 Now my sick fool, *Rodrigo*,
 Whom love hath turn'd almost the wrong side out,
 To *De demona* hath to-night carous'd
 Potatoes pottle deep; and he's to watch.
 Three lads of *Cyprus*, noble swelling spirits,
 (That hold their honours at a wary distance,
 'The very elements of this warlike isle,)
 Have I, to-night, fluster'd with flowing cups,
 And they watch too. Now, 'mongst this flock of drunk-
 Am I to put our *Cassio* in some action, [ards,
 That may offend the isle. But here they come.
 If consequence do but approve my dream,
 My boat sails freely, both with wind and stream.

Enter Cassio, Montano, and Gentlemen.

Cas. 'Fore heaven they have given me a rouse,
already.

Mont. Good faith, a little one. Not past a pint,
as I'm a soldier.

Iago. Some wine, ho: [Iago sings.

And let me the canakin clink, clink, clink,

And let me the canakin clink.

A soldier's a man; oh, man's life's but a span:

Why then let a soldier drink.

Some wine, boys.

Cas. 'Fore heav'n, an excellent song.

Iago. I learn't it in *England*; where, indeed, they
are most potent in potting. Your *Dane*, your *German*,
and 'your swag-belly'd *Hollanders*—Drink, ho! are
nothing to your *English*.

Cas. Is your *Englishman* so exquisite in his drinking?

Iago. Why, he drinks you with facility, your *Dane*
dead drunk. He sweats not to overthrow your *Almain*.
He gives your *Hollanders* a vomit, ere the next pottle
be filled.

Cas. To the health of our general.

Mont.

Mont. I am for it, lieutenant, and justice.

Iago. Oh, sweet England.

*King Stephen was, and a worthy peer,
His breeches cost him but a crown;
He sold them six-pence all too dear,
With that he call'd the taylor loun.**

Some wine, ho.

Cas. Why, this is a more exquisite song than the other.

Iago. Will you hear't again?

Cas. No, for I hold him to be unworthy of his place, that does those things. Well—Heaven's above all; and there be souls that must be saved, and there be souls that must not be saved.

Iago. It's true, good lieutenant.

Cas. For mine own part, (no offence to the general, nor any man of quality) I hope to be saved.

Iago. And so do I too, lieutenant.

Cas. Ay, but, by your leave, not before me. The lieutenant is to be saved before the ancient. Let's have no more of this: let's to our affairs. Forgive us our sins—Gentlemen, let's look to our business. Do not think, gentlemen, I am drunk. This is my ancient; this is my right hand, and this is my left. I am not drunk, now; I can stand well enough, and I speak well enough.

Genl. Excellent well.

Cas. Why, very well then. You must not think then that I am drunk. [Exit.]

Moment Iago and Montano.

Iago. You see this fellow that is gone before;
He is a soldier fit to stand by *Cassio's*
And give direction. And do but see his vice;

* *Iago's* method of working on *Cassio's* weakness, is exceedingly artful, as the veil of social jollity covers design.

I trust, the trust *Orsello* puts him in,
On some odd time of his infirmity,
Will forsake this island.

Mont. But is he often thus?

Iago. 'Tis evermore the prologue to his sleep.

Mont. It were well

The general were put in mind of it.
Perhaps, he sees it not; or his good nature
Prizes the virtue that appears in *Cassio*,
And looks not on his evils. Is not this true?

Enter Rodorigo.

Iago. How now, *Rodorigo*!

I pray you after the lieutenant, go. [Exit Rod.]

Mont. And 'tis great pity, that the noble Moor
Should hazard such a place as his own second,
With one of an ingraft infirmity;
It were an honest action to say so
Unto the Moor.

Iago. Not I, for this fair island.
I do love *Cassio* well, and would do much
To cure him of this evil. [Within. Help, help!]

Re-enter Cassio pursuing Rodorigo.

Cas. You rogue, you rascal!

Mont. What's the matter lieutenant?

Cas. A knave, teach me my duty! I'll beat the
knave into a twiggen battle.

Rod. Beat me!—

Cas. Dost thou prate, rogue?

Mont. Nay, good lieutenant; [Staying him.]

I pray you, sir, hold your hand.

Cas. Let me go, sir, or I'll knock you over the
mezzard.

Mont. Come, come, you're drunk.

Cas. Drunk! [They fight.]

Iago. Away, I say, go out and cry mutiny.

[Exit Rod.]

Nay,

Nay, good lieutenant——sir——*Montano*
 Help, masters! Here's a goodly watch, i
 Who's that? Who rings the bell——
 rise,

Fy! fy! lieutenant! hold:
 You will be shamed for ever.

Enter Othello and Attendants.

Oth. Hold, for your lives.
 Why, how now? Ho! From whence ariseth this?
 Are we turn'd *Turks*? and to ourselves do that,
 Which heaven hath forbid the *Ottomites*?
 For christian shame, put by this barbarous brawl.
 He that stirs next, to carve for his own rage,
 Holds his soul light: he dies upon his motion.

[Bell rings.]

Silence that dreadful bell; it frights the isle
 From her propriety. What is the matter?
 Honest *Iago*, that looks dead with grieving,
 Speak, who began this? on thy love, I charge thee.

Iago. I do not know. Friends all, but now, even now
 In quarter, and in terms, like bride and groom
 Divesting them for bed; and then, but now——
 (As if some planet had unwitting men),
 Swords out, and tilting one another's breasts,
 In opposition bloody. I can't speak
 Any beginning to this peevish odds,
 And would in action glorious had lost
 Those legs, that brought me to a part of it.

Oth. How comes it *Michael*, you are thus forgot?

Cas. I pray you, pardon me, I cannot speak.

Oth. Worthy *Montano*, you were wont be civil;
 The gravity and stillness of your youth
 The world hath noted; and your name is great,
 In mouths of wisest censure. Where the master,
 That you unlace your reputation thus,
 And spend your rich opinion, for the name
 Of a night-brawler? Give me answer to it.

Mont. Worthy *Othello*, I am hurt to danger:
 Your officer *Iago* can inform you,

While I spare speech, which something now offends me,
Of all that I do know? nor know I ought
By me that's said, or done, amiss, this night?
Unless self-charity be sometimes a vice,
And to defend ourselves, it be a sin,
When violence assails us.

Ors. Now, by heav'n,*
If I once stir,
Or do but lift this arm, the best of you
Shall sink in my rebuke. Give me, to know
How this foul rout began. Who set it on;
And he that is approv'd in this offence,
'Tho' he had twinn'd with me, both at a birth,
Shall lose me.——What, and in a town of war,
Yet wild, the people's hearts brimful of fear,
To manage private and domestic quarrel?
In night, and in the court of guard and safety?
'Tis monstrous. Say, *Iago*, who began't.

Mont. If partially assinn'd, or leagu'd in office,
Thou dost deliver more or less than truth,
Thou art no soldier.

Iago. Touch me not so near: †
I'd rather have this tongue cut from my mouth,
Than it should do offence to *Michael Cassio*.
Yet, I persuade myself, to speak the truth,
Shall nothing wrong him. Thus 'tis general,
Montano and myself being in speech,
There comes a fellow, crying out for help
And *Cassio* following, with determin'd sword,
To execute upon him. Sir, this gentleman
Steps in to *Cassio*, and intreats his pause;
Myself the crying fellow did pursue,
Left, by his clamour (as it so fell out)

* We think, the following lines of the original should be retained, as beautiful and significant:

*My blood begins my safer guides to rule,
And passion, having my best judgment choler'd,
Assays to lead the way——If I once, &c.*

† This account of the brawl exhibits an uncommon share of the old dissimulative policy.

The town might fall in fright. He, swift of foot,
 Out-ran my purpose: I return'd, the rather,
 For that I heard the clink and fall of swords,
 And *Cassio* high in oath; which, till to-night,
 I ne'er might say before. When I came back,
 (For this was brief) I found them close together,
 At blow and thrust; even as again they were,
 When you, yourself, did part them.
 More of this matter cannot I report.
 But men are men; the best sometimes forget.
 Tho' *Cassio* did some little wrong to him,
 As men in rage strike those that with them best;
 Yet surely, *Cassio*, I believe, receiv'd
 From him that fled, some strange indignity,
 Which patience could not pass.

Oth. I know, *Iago*,
 Thy honesty and love doth mince this matter,
 Making it light to *Cassio*. *Cassio*, I love thee,
 But never more be officer of mine.——†

Enter Desdemona.

Look, if my gentle love be not rais'd up:
 I'll make thee an example.

Des. What's the matter?

Oth. All is well, sweeting, come to bed.
 Sir, for your hurts, myself will be your surgeon.
 Lead him off. * [*Montano is led off.*]
 Look with care about the town,
 And silence those whom this vile brawl distracted.

* There is great dignity of censure, of reproach, and punishment, in this short address to *Cassio*.

† Though we may doubt *Iago's* rebuke and discharge of *Cassio* to be very piercing, yet, reason and nature deny its sufficiency to restore a person so stupid to such sober sense. And the author himself seems conscious of this, by making an apology. "I am a very laze one, in answer to *Iago's* question, 'How came you thus recovered?' However, what *Cassio* says of himself and his interpretation, is so sensible, we may be glad of his recovery.

Come,

Come, *Desdemona*, 'tis the soldier's life,
To have his balmy numbers wak'd with strife.

[*Exit*]

Moment Iago and Cassio.

Iago. What, are you hurt, lieutenant?

Cas. Past all surgery.

Iago. Marry, heav'n forbid!

Cas. Reputation, reputation, reputation! Oh, I have lost my reputation! I have lost the immortal part of myself, and what remains is bestial. My reputation! *Iago*, my reputation!

Iago. As I am an honest man, I thought you had received some bodily wound: there is more sense in that, than in a reputation. Reputation is an idle and most false imposition; oft got without merit, and lost without deserving. You have lost no reputation, at all, unless you repute yourself such a loser. What, man—there are ways to recover the general again. Sue to him again, and he's yours.

Cas. I will rather sue to be despised, than to deceive so good a commander, with so light, so drunken, and so indiscreet an officer. Oh, thou invincible spirit of wine! if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee devil.

Iago. What was he that you followed with the sword? What had he done to you?

Cas. I know not.

Iago. Is't possible?

Cas. I remember a mass of things, but nothing distinctly: a quarrel, but nothing wherefore. Oh, that men should put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains!

Iago. Why, but you are now well enough: how came you thus recovered?

Cas. It has pleased the devil, drunkenness, to give place to the devil, wrath; one unperfectness shews me another, to make me frankly despise myself.

Iago. I could heartily wish this had not befallen: but since it is as it is, mend it, for our own good.

As I do now. For while this honest fool
 Plies *Desdemona* to repair his fortune,
 And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor,
 I'll pour this pestilence into his ear,
 That she reveals him for her body's lust:
 And by how much she strives to do him good,
 She shall undo her credit with the Moor.
 So will I turn her virtue into pitch;
 And out of her own goodness make the net,
 That shall enmesh them all. How now, *Roderigo*!

Enter Roderigo.

Rod. I follow here in the chase, not like a hound
 that hunts, but one that fills up the cry. My money
 is almost spent; I have been to night exceedingly
 well cudgelled; and I think the issue will be, I shall
 have so much experience for my pains; and so with
 no money at all, and a little more wit, return again
 to *Venice*.

Iago. How poor are they, that have not patience!
 What wound did ever heal but by degrees?
 Thou knowest we work by wit, and not by witchcraft;
 And wit depends on dilatory time.
 Does't not go well? *Cassio* hath beaten thee,
 And thou, by that small hurt, hast cashier'd *Cassio*.
 Retire thee; go where thou art billeted.
 Away, I say; thou shalt know more, hereafter;
 Nay, get thee gone. [*Exit Roderigo.*]
 Two things are to be done;
 My wife must move for *Cassio* to her mistress:
 I'll set her on:
 Myself, the while, to draw the Moor apart,
 And bring him jump, when he may *Cassio*. And
 soliciting his wife—Ay, that's the way;
 Dull not device, by coldness and delay. [*Exit.*]

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

* This Second Act carries on the plot well—there's much
 matter and spirit in it.

ACT III.

SCENE. *changes to an Apartment in the Palace.*

*Enter Desdemona, Cassio, and Emilia.**

DESDEMONA.

BE thou assur'd, good *Cassio*, I will do
All my abilities in thy behalf.

Emil. Good madam, do: I know it grieves my
As if the cause were his. [husband,

Des. Oh, that's an honest fellow; doubt not, *Cassio*,
But I will have my lord and you again
As friendly as you were.

Cas. Most bounteous madam,
What ver shall become of *Michael Cassio*,
He's never any thing but your true servant.

Des. I know't, I thank you; you do love my lord,
You've known him long; and, be you well assured,
He shall in strangeness stand no farther off,
Than in a politic distance.

Cas. Ay, but, lady,
That policy may either last so long,
Or feed upon such nice and waterish diet,
That I being absent, and my place supply'd,
My general will forget my love and service.

Des. Do not doubt that; before *Emilia* here,
I give thee warrant of thy place.
Therefore be merry, *Cassio*;
For thy solicitor shall rather die,
Than give thy cause away.

* *Shak.peare* has furnished, at the beginning of the third act, a very trifling, non-essential scene, of two pages, to gratify the peculiar taste of his audiances, but which is now most justly reject-
ed, the act beginning much better here.

Enter

Enter Othello and Iago, at a Distance.

- Emil.* Madam, here comes my lord.
Cas. Madam, I'll take my leave.
Dsf. Why, stay and hear me speak.
Cas. Madam, not now: I'm very ill at ease,
 Unfit for mine own purposes.
Dsf. Well, do your discretion. [*Exit Cassio.*]
Iago. Hah! I like not that—
Oib. What dost thou say?
Iago. Nothing, my lord: or if—I know not what.
Oib. Was not that *Cassio* parted from my wife?
Iago. *Cassio*, my lord?—no, sure, I cannot think it,
 That he would steal away so guilty-like,
 Seeing you coming.
Oib. I believe 'twas he.
Dsf. How now, my lord!
 I have been talking with a suitor here,
 A man that languishes in your displeasure.
Oib. Who is't you mean?
Dsf. Why, your lieutenant *Cassio*. Good, my lord,
 If I have any grace or power to move you,
 His present reconciliation take;
 For if he be not one that truly loves you,
 That errs in ignorance, and not in cunning,
 I have no judgment in an honest face.
 I pr'ythee, call him back.
Oib. Went he hence, now?
Dsf. In sooth, so humbled,
 That he hath left part of his grief with me,
 To suffer with him. Good love, call him back.
Oib. Not now, sweet *Desdemona*: some other time;
Dsf. But shall't be shortly?
Oib. The sooner, sweet, for you.
Dsf. Shall't be to-night at supper?
Oib. Not to-night.
Dsf. To-morrow dinner, then?
Oib. I shall not dine at home:
 I meet the captain at the citadel.
Dsf. Why then to-morrow night, or *Tuesday* morn,

Or *Tuesday* noon, or night, or *Wednesday* morn,
I pr'ythee, name the time; but let it not
Exceed three days; in faith, he's penitent:
When shall he come?

Tell me, *Othello*. I wonder in my soul
What you would ask me, that I would deny.
What! *Michael Cassio*!

That came a wooing with you, and many a time,
When I have spoke of you displeasingly,
Hath ta'en your part; to have so much to do
To bring him in! trust me, I could do much—

Orb. Pr'ythee, no more; let him come when he will,
I will deny thee nothing.

Whereon I do beseech you grant me this,
To leave me but a little to myself.

Des. Shall I deny you? no: farewel, my lord.

Orb. Farewel, my *Desdemona*, I'll come strait.

Des. *Emilia*, go; be as your fancies teach you:
Whate'er you be, I am obedient. [Exit.

Meet Othello and Iago.

Orb. Excellent wretch!—P'rdition catch my soul,
But I do love thee; and when I love thee not,
Chaos is come again.

Iago. My noble lord,—

Orb. What dost thou say, *Iago*?

Iago. Did *Michael Cassio*, when you woo'd my lady,
know of your love?

Orb. He did, from first to last. Why dost thou ask?

Iago. But for a satisfaction of my thought;
No further harm.

Orb. Why of thy thought, *Iago*?

Iago. I did not think he'd been acquainted with it.

Orb. Oh, yes, and went between us, very oft.

Iago. Indeed!

Orb. Indeed! say, indeed. Discern'st thou ought of
Is he not honest? [that?

* We think *were* much more eligible than *were*th.

Iago. Honest, my lord!

Oth. Honest! ay, honest.

Iago. My lord, for ought I know.

Oth. What dost thou think?

Iago. Think, my lord!—

Oth. Think, my lord! why, by h av'n thou echo'st
As if there were some monster in thy thought, ^{(me,}
Too hideous to be shewn. Thou dost mean something:
I heard thee say but now, ~~that he's not that—~~
When *Cassio* left my wife. What did'st not like?
And when I told thee, he was of my counsel,
In my whole course of wooing; thou cry'dst, ^{indeed!}
And didst contract and purse thy brow together,
As if thou then had'st shut up in thy brain
Some horrible conceit: if thou dost love me,
Shew me thy thought.

Iago. My lord, you know I love you.

Oth. I think thou dost,

And, for I know thou'rt full of love and honesty,
And weigh'st thy words before thou giv'st them breath,
Therefore those stops of thine fright me the more:
For such things in a false disloyal knave,
Are tricks of custom: but, in a man's that's just,
They're cold dilations working from the heart,
That passion cannot rule.

Iago. For *Michael Cassio*,

I dare be sworn, I think, that he is honest.

Oth. I think so too.

Iago. Men should be what they seem,

Or, those that be not, would they might seem none!

Oth. Certain; men should be what they seem.

Iago. Why then, I think *Cassio's* an honest man.

Oth. Nay, yet there's more in this;

I pray thee, speak to me as to thy thinkings,
As thou dost ruminat; and give thy worst
Of thoughts the worst of words.

Iago. Good, my lord, pardon me.

Tho' I am bound to every act of duty,

I am not bound to that all slaves are free to;

Utter my thoughts!—Why, say they're vile and false;

As where's that palace where into foul things

Sometimes

Sometimes intrude not?*

Orb. Thou dost conspire against thy friend, *Iago*.
If thou but think'st him wrong'd, and mak'st his ear
A stranger to thy thoughts.

Iago. I do beseech you,
Though I perchance am vicious in my guess—†
(As, I confess, it is my nature's plague
To spy into abuse; and oft my jealousy
Shapes faults that are not;) I intreat you then,
From one that so improbably conceits,
Your wisdom would not build yourself a trouble,
Out of my scattering and unsure observance:
It were not for your quiet, nor your good,
Nor for my manhood, honesty, and wisdom,
To let you know my thoughts.

Orb. What dost thou mean?

Iago. Good name in man, and woman, dear my lord,
Is the immediate jewel of their souls.
Who steals my purse, steals trash: 'tis something, no-
thing;

'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands;
But he that filches from me my good name,
Robs me of that, which not enriches him,
And makes me poor, indeed. †

Orb. I'll know thy thoughts—

Iago. You cannot, if my heart were in your hand;
Nor shall not whilst 'tis in my custody.

Orb. Ha!

Iago. Oh, beware, my lord, of jealousy;
It is a green-ey'd monster, which doth make
The meat it feeds on. That cuckold lives in bliss,
Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger;

* There is great subtlety, and shew of honesty, in this speech; claiming independence of thought, gives an air of truth, consequently credit, to what comes after.

† The hesitative, dubious mode of working up the Moor, is finely conceived, and his unsuspecting manner of swallowing jealousy's insidious poison, happily display'd.

‡ This speech is held in such general, just esteem, and has been so often quoted, that any comment upon it is unnecessary.

But

O T H E L L O.

But oh, what damned minutes tells he o'er,
Who doats, yet doubts; suspects, yet strongly loves!

Oth. O misery!

Iago. Poor and content, is rich, and rich enough;
But riches endless, is as poor as winter,
To him that ever fears he shall be poor.
Good heav'n, the souls of all my tribe defend
From jealousy!

Oth. Why? why is this?
Think'st thou I'd make a life of jealousy?
To follow still the changes of the moon,
With fresh suspicions? No; to be once in doubt,
Is once to be resolv'd.

'Tis not to make me jealous,
To say, my wife is fair, feeds well, loves company,
Is free of speech, sings, plays, and dances well;
Where virtue is, these are most virtuous.
Nor from my own weak merits will I draw
The smallest fear, or doubt of her revolt;
For she had eyes, and chose me. No, *Iago*,
I'll see before I doubt; when I doubt, prove;
And on the proof, there is no more but this,
Away at once with love, or jealousy.*

Iago. I'm glad of this: for now I shall have reason
To shew the love and duty that I bear you,
With franker spirit. Therefore, as I'm bound,
Receive it from me. I speak not yet of proof.
Look to your wife, observe her well with *Cassio*;
Wear your eye, thus: not jealous, nor secure;
I would not have your free and noble nature
Out of self-bounty be abus'd; look to't.
I know our country's disposition well;
In *Venice* they do let heav'n see the pranks
They dare not shew their husbands: their best con-
science

Is not to leave't undone, but keep't unknown.

* There is a great share of good sense, very well expressed, in this speech; for certain it is, that polite accomplishments and vivacity are rather an ornament, than a bias, to virtue.

Oth.

Oth. Dost thou say so?

Iago. She did deceive her father, marrying you;
And when she seem'd to shake, and fear your looks,
She lov'd them most.

Oth. And so she did.

Iago. Go to, then:

She that so young could give out such a seeming,
'To seal her father's eyes up, close as oak—
He thought 'twas witchcraft—but I'm much to blame:
I humbly do beseech you of your pardon,
For too much loving you.

Oth. I'm bound to you for even

Iago. I see this has a little dash'd your spirits,

Oth. Not a jot, not a jot.

Iago. Trust me, I fear it has:

I hope you will consider what is spoke
Comes from my love. But, I do see you're mov'd—
I am to pray you not to strain my speech
To grosser issue, nor to larger reach,
Than to suspicion.

Oth. I will not.

Iago. Should you do so, my lord,
My speech would fall into such vile success,
Which my thoughts aim not at. *Cassio's* my worthy
My lord, I see, you're mov'd— [friend.

Oth. No, not much mov'd—

I do not think but *Desdemona's* honest.

Iago. Long live she so! and long live you, to think so!

Oth. And yet, how nature erring from itself—

Iago. Ay, there's the point;—as (to be bold with you)
Not to affect many proposed matches,
Of her own clime, complexion, and degree,
Whereto we see, in all things nature tends.
Foh! one may smell, in such, a will most rank,
Foul disproportions, thoughts unnatural.
But, pardon me, I do not in position
Distinctly speak of her; tho' I may fear
Her will, recoiling to her better judgment,
May fall to match you with her country forms,
And, haply, so repent.

Oth. Farewel, farewell;
If more thou dost perceive, let me know more;
Set on thy wife t'observe. Leave me, *Iago*.

Iago. My lord, I take my leave.

[*Going*.

Oth. Why did I marry?

This honest creature, doubtless,
Sees and knows more, much more, than he unfolds.

Iago. My lord, I would I might intreat your honour
To scan this thing no farther; leave it to time:
Altho' 'tis fit that *Cassio* have his place,
For sure he fills it up with great ability;
Yet, if you please to hold him off, a while,
You shall by that perceive him, and his means;
Note, if your lady strain his entertainment,
With any strong or vehement importunity,
Much will be seen in that. In the mean time,
Let me be thought too busy in my fears,
(As worthy cause I have to fear I am)
And hold her free, I do beseech your honour.*

Oth. Fear not my government.

Iago. I once more take my leave.

[*Exit Iago*.

Manit Othello.

Oth. This fellow's of exceeding honesty,
And knows all qualities, with a learned spirit
Of human dealings. If I prove her haggard, I
'Tho' that her jesses were my dear heart-strings,
I'd whistle her off, and let her down the wind,
'To prey at fortune. Haply, for I'm black,
And have not those lost parts of conversation,
That chamberers have; or, for I am declin'd
Into the vale of years—yet that's not much—
She's gone, I am abus'd, and my relief

* *Iago's* pretended regard for *Desdemona* by throwing doubts on his own observations, is an admirable device to cover his artifice.

† *Haggard*, wild, irreclaimable.

‡ *Jesses*, small straps put round the legs of a hawk, to keep it on the hand.

Must be to loath her. Oh, the curse of marriage!
That we can call these delicate creatures ours,
And not their appetites. I had rather be a toad,
And live upon the vapour of a dungeon,
Than keep a corner in the thing I love,
For other's use. *Desdemona* comes!

Enter Desdemona and Emilia.

If she be false, oh, then heav'n mocks itself.
I'll not believe't. †

Des. How, now, my dear *Othello*!

Your dinner, and your generous islanders,
By you invited, do attend your presence.

Oth. I am to blame.

Des. Why do you speak so faintly?

Are you not well?

Oth. I have a pain upon my forehead, here.

Des. Why, that's with watching, 'twill away again;
Let me but bind it hard, within this hour
It will be well.

Oth. Your handkerchief is too little;

[She drops her handkerchief.]

Let it alone. Come, I'll go in with you.

Des. I am very sorry that you are not well.

[Exit.]

Music. Emilia.

Emil. I am glad I have found this handkerch:
here:

This was her first remembrance from the Moor:
My wayward husband hath a hundred times
Woo'd me to steal it. I'll have the work ta'en ou
And give't *Iago*. What he'll do with it,
Heav'n knows, not I;
I nothing, but to please his fantasy.

† The sudden effect of *Desd*
pleasing and natural; for the l
grossly imposed on, always judge

Enter Iago.

Iago. How now, what do you do here, alone?

Emil. Do not you chide; I have a thing for you.

Iago. You have a thing for me!

It is a common thing—

Emil. What?

Iago. To have a foolish wife.

Emil. Oh, is that all! What will you give me now,
For that same handkerchief?

Iago. What handkerchief?

Emil. What handkerchief!

Why that the Moor first gave to *Desdemona*;

That, which so often you did bid me steal.

Iago. Hast stolen it from her?

Emil. No, but she let it drop, by negligence;
And, to th' advantage, I being here, took't up.

Iago. Here it is.

Emil. A good wench, give it to me.

Iago. What will you do with't, you have been se-
vere me such it? [earnest

Why, what is that to you! [Snatching it.

L If't be not for some purpose of import,

Give it me again. Poor lady! she'll run mad,

And she shall miss it.

Be not you known on't;

Give it me for it. Leave me—Go— [Exit *Emil.*

Iago's lodging lose this handkerchief,

And I will find it. Trifles light as air,

But jealous confirmations strong,

Upon his holy writ. This may do something,

Which already changes with my poisons.

Enter Othello.

O he comes! Not poppy, nor mandragora,

And drowsy syrups of the world,

Which here I have poured down, as a corroborative circumstance, is hap-
pily true; for nothing can be more true than *Iago's* as-
sertion, "Trifles light as air, &c."

Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep,
Which thou ow'dst yesterday.

Oth. Ha! false to me!

Iago. Why, how now, general? No more of that.

Oth. Avaunt! be gone! thou'st set me on the rack:
I swear 'tis better to be much abus'd,
'Than but to know a little.

Iago. How, my lord?

Oth. What sense had I, in her stol'n hours of lust?
I saw't not, thought it not, it harm'd not me;
I slept the next night well; was free and merry;
I found not *Cassio's* kisses on her lips.
He that is robb'd, not wanting what is stol'n,
Let him not know't, and he's not robb'd at all.

Iago. I am not sorry to hear this.

Oth. I had been happy, if the general camp,
(Pioneers and all) had tasted her sweet body,
So I had nothing known. Oh now, for ever
Farewel the tranquil mind! Farewel content!
Farewel the plumed troops, and the big war,
'That make ambition virtue! Oh, farewel!
Farewel the neighing steed, and the shrill trump,
The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,
The royal banner, and all quality,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!
And, oh, you mortal engines, whose rude throats
'Th' immortal *Jove's* dread clamours counterfeit,
Farewel! **Othello's* occupation's gone!

Iago. Is't possible, my lord?

Oth. Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore?
Be sure of it: give me the ocular proof,

[*Catching hold of*]

Or, by the worth of mine eternal soul,
Thou hadst better have been born a dog, *Iago*,
Than answer my wak'd wrath.

Iago. Is't come to this?

* This impassioned rhapsody is extremely striking and beautiful. *Shakespeare*, herein, as well as through the whole act, has put forth a flood of genius.

Oib. Make me to see't; or, at least, so prove it,
That the probation bear no hinge, nor loop,
To hang a doubt on; or, woe upon thy life!

Iago. My noble lord—

Oib. If thou dost slander her, and torture me,
Never pray more; abandon all remorse;
On horror's head, horrors accumulate;
Do deeds to make heav'n weep, all earth amaz'd;
For nothing can'st thou to damnation add,
Greater than that.

Iago. Oh, grace! oh heav'n, defend me!
Art thou a man? Have you a soul? or sense?
Heav'n be w'you; take mine offence. O wretched fool,
That liv'st to make thine honesty a vice!
Oh, monstrous world! Take note, take note, oh world,
'To be direct and honest, is not safe!
I thank you for this profit, and, from hence,
I'll love no friend, sith love breeds such offence.

Oib. Nay, stay—Thou should'st be honest—

Iago. I should be wise, for honesty's a fool,
And loses what it works for.

Oib. By the world,

I think, my wife is honest; and think, she is not;
that thou art just; and think, thou art not;
some proof. Her name, that was as fresh
as the daisy's, is now begrim'd and black,
with face. If there be cords or knives,
poison or fire, or suffocating streams,
I'll endure't—Would I were satisfied!
Nay, you are catch'd up with passion;
I'll not be satisfied!
I'll be satisfied!
I would I nay, and will.

through all the scenes of this Act, requires most
vers of expression; they cannot rise too far, unless
he claims great judgment and sensibility, without
he shows the secret workings of a villainous heart:
Othello's, are the effusions of a wounded, generous, credulous one.

Iago. And may; but how? How satisfied, my lord!
Would you be supervisor, grossly gape on?
Behold her——?

Oth. Death and damnation! Oh!

Iago. It were a tedious difficulty, I think,
To bring 'em to that prospect. Damn them, then,
If ever mortal eyes do see them bolster,
More than their own. What then? how then?
What shall I say? where's satisfaction?
It is impossible you should see this,
Were they as prime as goats, as hot as monkies, †
As salt as wolves in pride, and fools as gross,
As ignorance made drunk. But yet, I say,
If imputation, and strong circumstances,
Which lead directly to the door of truth,
Will give you satisfaction, you might have't.

Oth. Give me a living reason she's disloyal.

Iago. I do not like the office;
But since I'm enter'd into this cause so far,
Prick't to't by foolish honesty and love,
I will go on. I lay with *Cassio*, lately,
And, being troubled with a raging tooth,
I could not sleep.——
There are a kind of men so loose of soul,
That in their sleeps will mutter their affairs;
One of this kind is *Cassio*.
In sleep, I heard him say, "Sweet *Desdemona*,
"Let us be wary, let us hide our loves;"
And then, sir, would he gripe and wring my hand—
Cry,— "Oh sweet creature!" and then kiss me ha-
As if he pluck'd up kisses by the roots,
That grew upon my lips; and then
Cry, "Curst fate! that gave thee to the Moor."

† We wish the greater part of this
thing material would be lost, and do
not mind it, after *Othello* says, *Death* was
to reply,
My lord,

If imputation and strong

Oth. Oh, monstrous! monstrous!

Iago. Nay, this was but his dream.

Oth. But this denoted a foregone conclusion:
'Tis a shrewd doubt, tho' it be but a dream.

Iago. And this may help to thicken other proofs,
That do demonstrate thinny.

Oth. I'll tear her all to pieces.

Iago. Nay, but be wise; yet we see nothing done;
She may be honest, yet—Tell me but this,
Have you not sometimes seen a handkerchief,
Spotted with strawberries in your wife's hand?

Oth. I gave her such a one; 'twas my first gift.

Iago. I know not that; but such a handkerchief,
(I'm sure, it was your wife's) did I to-day,
See *Cassio* wipe his beard with.

Oth. If it be that—

Iago. If it be that, or any, that was hers,
It speaks against her, with the other proofs.

Oth. Oh, that the slave had forty thousand lives!
One is too poor, too weak, for my revenge.
Now do I see 'tis true—Look here, *Iago*,
All my fond love thus do I blow to heav'n:
'Tis gone.—

Black vengeance, from th' unhallowed cell!
Whore love, thy crown and hearted throne,
Thy hate! swell, bosom, with thy fraught,
As th' aspicks tongues.

Let me be content.

In blood, blood, blood— [change.

Patience, I say; your mind, perhaps, may
Over, *Iago*. Like to the *Pontick* sea,

Whose current and compulsive course
Retiring ebb, but keeps due on,

Strait, and the *Hellaspont*;

Whose bloody thoughts, with violent pace,

Never ebb back, ne'er ebb to humble love,

Whose wide revenge

Whisper—Now, by yon marble heav'n,

In presence of a sacred vow, [He kneels.

My words—

Iago

Iago. Do not rise yet.* [Iago kneels.
 Witness, ye ever burning lights above!
 Ye elements that clepe us round about!
 Witness, that here *Iago* doth give up
 'The execution of his wit, hands, heart,
 'To wrong'd *Othello's* service. Let him command,
 And not to obey, shall be in me remorse,
 What bloody business ever.

Oth. I greet thy love,
 Not with vain thanks, but, with acceptance bounteous,
 And will upon the instant put thee to't.
 Within these three days let me hear thee say,
 That *Cassio's* not alive.

Iago. My friend is dead;
 'Tis done, at your request. But let her live.

Oth. Damn her, lewd minx! oh damn her, damn
 Come, go with me apart; I will withdraw. [her!
 To furnish me with some swift means of death,
 For the fair devil. Now art thou my lieutenant—

Iago. I am your own, for ever. † [Exit:

SCENE an Apartment in the same Castle.

Enter Desdemona and Emilia.

Des. Where should I lose that handkerchief, *Emilia*?

Emil. I know not, madam.

Des. Believe me, but my noble Moor
 Is true of mind, and made of no such baseness,
 As jealous creatures are, it were enough
 To put him to ill thinking.

Emil. Is he not jealous?

* *Iago's* kneeling here, is such a master-stroke of hypocrisis that it seldom fails to cause laughter in one, and to draw exclamations from another part of the audience.

† *Shakespeare*, in a strange flight of fancy, crammed a clown into this tragedy, who has been, with strict justice, banished as also another excrement, *Cassio's* mistress, *Bianca*. We think the Third Act would end well here.

Des. Who, he! I think the sun where he was born,
Drew all such humours from him.

Æmil. Look, where he comes.

Des. I will not leave him now, till *Cassio* be
Call'd to him. How is it with you, my lord?

[*Æmil*ia retires.]

Enter Othello.

Oth. Well, my good lady. Oh hardness to dissemble!
How do you, *Desdemona*?

Des. Well, my lord.

Oth. Give me your hand; this hand is moist, my lady.

Des. It yet hath felt no age, nor known no sorrow.

Oth. This argues fruitfulness, and liberal heart:
Hot, hot, and moist—this hand of yours requires
A sequester from liberty; fasting and prayer,
Much castigation, exercise devout;
For here's a young and sweating devil here,
That commonly rebels. 'Tis a good hand,
A very frank one.

Des. You may, indeed, say so:

For 'twas that hand that gave away my heart.

Oth. A liberal hand. The hands of old gave hearts;
New heraldry is hands, not hearts.

cannot speak of this. Come, now your promise.

What promise, chuck?

I've sent to bid *Cassio* come speak with you.

Have a salt and sorry rheum offends me:

thy handkerchief.

Here, my lord.

That which I gave you.

Have it not about me.

It is—

Indeed, my lord.

That's a fault. That handkerchief

is precious to my mother give;

her manner, and could almost read

the thoughts of people. She told her, while she knit

could make her amiable, subdue my father

[it,

easy to her love; but if she lost it,

Or

Or made a gift of it, my father's eye
Should hold her loathed, and his spirits hunt
After new fancies. She dying, gave it me;
And bid me, when my fate would have me wiv'd,
To give it her. I did so: and take heed on't;
Make it a darling, like your precious eye;
To lose't, or give't away, were such perdition,
As nothing else could match.

Des. Is't possible?

Orb. 'Tis true; there's magick in the web of it;
A *Sibyl* that had numbered in the world
Of the sun's course two hundred compasses,
In her prophetic fury sew'd the work:
The worms were hallow'd that did breed the silk;
And it was dy'd in mummy, which the skilful
Conserv'd of maidens hearts.*

Des. Indeed! is't true?

Orb. Most veritable; therefore look to't well.

Des. Then would to heav'n that I had never seen't!

Orb. Hal wherefore?

Des. Why do you speak so startlingly and rash?

Orb. Is't lost? is't gone? speak, is't out o' th' way?

Des. Bless us!

Orb. Say you!

Des. It is not lost; but what, and if it were?

Orb. Ha!

Des. I say, it is not lost.

Orb. Fetch it, let me see't.

Des. Why, so I can, sir, but I will not now:
This is a trick to put me from my suit.

Pray you, let *Cassio* be receiv'd again.

Orb. Fetch me the handkerchief—my mind

Des. Come, you'll ne'er meet a more sufficient

Orb. The handkerchief—

* There is something charmingly awful in the Motif of giving the handkerchief consequence; and *Desdemona's* supplication for *Cassio* is finely imagined, and it most tends to strengthen her husband's jealousy.

Des. A man, that all his time
Hath founded his good fortunes on your love;
Shar'd dangers with you.

Oth. The handkerchief—

Des. In sooth you are to blame.

Oth. Away!—

[*Exit* Othello.]

Maxim Desdemona and Emilia.

Emil. Is not this man jealous?

Des. I ne'er saw this before.

Sure, there's some wonder in this handkerchief:
I'm most unhappy in the loss of it.

Emil. 'Tis not a year or too thews us a man;
Look you! *Cassio*, and my husband.

Enter Iago and Cassio.

Iago. There is no other way, 'tis she must do't;
And so, the happiness! go and importune her.

Des. How now, good *Cassio*, what's the news with

Cass. Madam, my former suit. [you?]

Des. Alas! good *Cassio*?

...ation is not now in tune;

... is not my lord; nor should I know him,

... n favour as in humour alter'd.

... my lord angry?

... he went hence but now;

... ainly, in strange unquietness.

... m he be angry!

... of moment then; I'll go meet him:

... y'thee do so.

... ore's matter in't, indeed, if he be angry.

[*Exit.*]

Enter Desdemona, Emilia, and Cassio.

... something, sure, of state,
... in Venice.

Emil. Pray heav'n, it be

State

State matter as you think ; and no conception,
Nor jealous toy, concerning you.

Des. Alas, the day, I never gave him cause.

Æmil. But jealous souls will not be answer'd so ;
They are not ever jealous for a cause ;
But jealous, for they're jealous. It's a monster
Begot upon itself, born on itself.

Des. Hear'a keep that monster from *Othello's* mind !

Æmil. Lady, amen.

D.s. I will go seek him. *Cassio*, walk hereabout ;
If I do find him fit, I'll move your suit,
And seek t'effect it to my uttermost.

Cas. I humbly thank your ladyship. •

[*Ex. Des. and Æmil. at one door, Cas. at the other.*]

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

A C T^O IV.

SCENE, a Court, before the P

Enter Othello and Iago.

I A G O.

W H I L E you think so? †

Orb. Think so, *Iago* ! •

Iago. What, to kiss in private? †

Orb. Ay, unauthoriz'd kiss? †

• The Third Act ends better here, without including his female cypher. As a main engine of his being the author did not make the lieutenant a better he should be represented by a handsome figure, whose slender third rate requisites will do.

† We are of opinion, that this Act is the best that for spirit, extent of conception, boldness of point design, and probability of events.

‡ It does ~~not~~ great service to begin the here, as the six original pages which precede, are

Iago. If they do nothing, 'tis a venial slip:
But if I give my wife a handkerchief—

Oth. What then?

Iago. Why then, 'tis hers, my lord; and being hers,
She may, I think, bestow't on any man.

Oth. She is protectress of her honour, too:
May she give that?

Iago. Her honour is an essence that's not seen,
They have it very oft, that have it not:
But for the handkerchief—

Oth. By heav'n, I would most gladly have forgot it:
Thou said'st—oh, it comes o'er my memory,
As doth the raven o'er th' infected house,
Boding to ill,—he had my handkerchief.

Iago. What if I said, I'd seen him do you wrong!
Or heard him say, (as knaves must blab)

Oth. Hath he said any thing?

Iago. He hath, my lord, but be you well assur'd,
No more than he'll unswear.

Oth. What hath he said?

Iago. Why, that he did—I know not what he did.

Oth. What? What?

Iago. Lie—

Oth. With her?

Iago. With her; on her—what you will—

Oth. Lie with her!

will chop her into messes; cuckold me!

Iago. Oh, 'tis foul in her.

What, with mine officer!

hat's fouler.

Let me some poison, *Iago*, this night; I'll
ulate with her, lest her body and her beauty
my mind again—this night, *Iago*.

Do it not with poison; strangle her in bed;
The bed which she hath contaminated.

and often indecent; the Moor has already been suf-
ficiently punished; besides, the character of *Othello*, as it now
stands, such as very great spirit and acting powers can go
to, must sink the ablest performer.

beginning the Act at this line would save delicacy and
be, in that sense, an improvement.

Oth. With her?

Iago. With her; on her—what you will—

Oth. Lie with her!

Will chop her into messes; cuckold me!

Oth. Good, good;
The justice of it pleases; very good.

Iago. And for *Cassio*, let me be his undertaker:
You shall bear more, by midnight.

Oth. Excellent, good:— [A trumpet within.]
What trumpet is that same?

Iago. Something from *Venice*, sure. 'Tis *Lodovico*
Come from the duke: and see, your wife is with him.

Enter Lodovico and Desdemona.

Lod. Save you, worthy general.

Oth. With all my heart, sir.

Lod. The duke and senators of *Venice* greet you.
[Gives him a letter.]

Oth. I kiss the instruments of their pleasures.

Des. And what's the news, good cousin *Lodovico*?

Iago. I am very glad to see you, signior.
Welcome to *Cyprus*.

Lod. I thank you. How does lieutenant *Cassio*?

Iago. Lives, sir.

Des. There's fallen between him and my lord
An unkind breach: but you shall make all well.

Oth. Are you sure of that?

Des. My lord!—

Oth. This fast you not to do, as you will!— [D.]

Lod. He did not call; he's busy in it.
Is there division 'twixt my lord and *Cassio*?

Des. A most unhappy one; I would
T'atone them, for the love I bear to *Cassio*.

Oth. Fire and brimstone!

Des. My lord!

Oth. Are you wise?

Des. What, is he angry?

Lod. May be the letter mov'd him.
For, as I think, they do command him
Deputing *Cassio* in his government.

Des. Trust me, I'm glad on't.

Oth. Indeed!

Des. My lord!

Oth. I'm glad to see you mad.

Des. Why, sweet *Otbello*?

Orb. Devil!—

[*Striking her.*]

Des. I have not deserved this.

Lod. My lord, this would not be believ'd in *Venice*,
Tho' I should swear I saw't. 'Tis very much ;
Make her amends—she weeps.

Orb. Oh devil, devil!

If that the earth could teem with woman's tears,
Each drop she falls would prove a crocodile.

Out of my sight—

Des. I will not stay to offend you.

[*Going.*]

Lod. Truly, an obedient lady.

I do beseech your lordship, call her back.

Orb. Mistress—

Des. My lord.

Orb. What would you^d with her, sir.

Lod. Who, I, my lord?

Orb. Ay, you did wish, that I would make her turn :

Sir, she can turn and turn, and yet go on ;
And turn again. And she can weep, sir, weep ;
And she's obedient, as you say, obedient ;
Very obedient—proceed you in your tears—
Concerning this, sir,—oh, well painted passion!

nanded home—get you away,

you, anon.—Sir, I obey the mandate,

turn to *Venice*—Hence, avaunt!—

leave my place. And, sir, to-night,

that we may sup together.

come, sir, to *Cyprus*—

honkies!

[*Exeunt Othello and Desdemona, stormily.*]

March Lodovico and Iago.

Is the noble Moor, whom our full senate

held so sufficient? What, strike his wife!

That was not so well ; yet would I knew

what stroke would prove the work.

Lod. Is it his use?

Or did the letters work upon his blood,

And now create this fault?

Iago. Alas, alas!
It is not honesty in me to speak
What I have seen and known,
Do but go after,
And mark how he continues.

Lord. I'm sorry that I was deceiv'd in him. [Exit.

SCENE changes to an Apartment in the Palace.

Enter Othello and Emilia.

Oth. You have seen nothing, then!

Emil. Nor ever heard, nor ever did suspect.

Oth. Yes, you have seen *Cassio* and her together.

Emil. But then I saw no harm; and then I heard
Each syllable that breath made up between them.

Oth. What, did they never whisper?

Emil. Never, my lord.

Oth. Nor send you out o'th' way?

Emil. Never.

Oth. To fetch her fan, her gloves, her

Emil. Never, my lord.

Oth. That's strange!

Emil. I durst, my lord, to wager she is honest,
Lay down my soul at stake: if you think otherwise,
Remove your thought, it doth abuse your bosom;
If any wretch hath put this in your head,
Let heaven requite it with the serpent's curse!
For if she be not honest, chaste, and true,
There's no man happy; the purest of their wives
Is foul as slander.

Oth. Bid her come hither—go. [Exit
She says enough; yet she's a simple bawd
That cannot say as much. This is a subtle
A closet-lock and key of villainous secrets;
And yet she'll kneel and pray: I've seen her

Enter Desdemona and Emilia.

Des. My lord, what is your will?

Oth. Pray you, chuck, come hither.

Des. What is your pleasure?

Oth. Let me see your eyes; look in my face.

Des. What horrible fancy's this?

Oth. Some of your function, mistress,
Leave procreants alone, and shut the door;
Cough, or cry hem, if any body come.
Your mystery, your mystery—nay, dispatch.

[*Exit Emilia.*]

Des. Upon my knee, what doth your speech import?
I understand a fury in your words,
But not your words.

Oth. Why, what art thou?

Des. Your wife, my lord! your true and loyal wife.

Oth. Come, swear it; damn thyself; lest, being like
one
Of heav'n, the devils themselves should fear to seize
thee.

Therefore be doubly damn'd: swear, thou art honest.

Des. Heav'n doth truly know it.

Oth. Heav'n truly knows,
That thou art false as hell.

Des. To whom, my lord?

With whom? How am I false?

Oth. Ah, *Desdemona!* away, away—

Des. Alas, the heavy day! why do you weep?
Am I the motive of these tears, my lord?
If, haply, you my father do suspect
An instrument of this your calling back,
Lay not your blame on me; if you have lost him,
Why, I have lost him too.

Oth. Had it pleased heav'n *
To try me with affliction, had it rain'd
All kind of sores and shames on my bare head,
Steep'd me in poverty to the very lips,
Giv'n to captivity me and my utmost hopes;
I should have found in some place of my soul,
A drop of patience. But, alas, to make me

* This speech is a very beautiful cause of pain for tenderness to
be in; most pathetic & picturesque.

A fixed figure for the hand of scorn
 To point his slow and moving finger at—
 Yet could I bear that too, well, very well.
 But there, where I had garner'd up my heart,
 Where either I must live, or bear no life,
 'The fountain from the which my current runs,
 Or else dries up; to be discarded thence;
 Or keep it, as a cistern for foul toads
 To knot and gender in. Turn thy complexion there.
 Patience, thou young and rose-lip'd cherubim;
 Ay, there, look grim as hell.*

Des. I hope, my noble lord esteems me honest.

Os. Oh, ay, as summer flies are in the shambles,
 That quicken even with blowing. O thou weed!
 Who art so lovely, fair, and smell'st so sweet,
 That the sense akes at thee—
 'Would thou had'st ne'er been born!

Des. Alas, what ignorant sin have I committed?

Os. Was this fair paper, this most goodly book,
 Made to write whore upon? What committed?
 —Oh, thou public commoner!

I should make very forges of my cheeks,
 That would to cinders burn up modesty,
 Did I but speak thy deeds.—What commit
 Heav'n stops the nose at it, and the moon
 The bawdy wind, that kisses all it meets,
 Is hush'd within the hollow mine of earth,
 And will not hear't. What committed!

Des. By heav'n, you do me wrong.

Os. Are not you a strumpet!

Des. No, as I am a christian.

Os. What, not a whore!

Des. No, as I shall be sav'd.

Os. I cry you mercy, then.

I took you for that cunning whore of Venice,
 That married with *Osello*.

* The meaning of this passage is obviously this—Patience, an eye upon that lov'd, faithless object, and even your smiling countenance must change to bend-like grimaces of resentment.

Exit

Enter Æmilia.

You, mistress,
That have the office opposite to St. Peter,
And keep the gate of hell. You! you! ay, you!
We have done our course, there's money for your pains;
I pray you, turn the key, and keep our counsel. [*Exit.*

Æmil. Alas, what does this gentleman conceive?
How do you, madam? how do you, my good lady?
Good madam, what's the matter with my lord?

Des. With whom, *Æmilia*?

Æmil. Why, with my lord, madam.

Des. Who's thy lord?

Æmil. He that is your's, sweet lady.

Des. I have done. Do not talk to me, *Æmilia*.

Go, call thy husband hither.

Æmil. Here's a change, indeed! [*Exit.*

Des. 'Tis meet I should be us'd so, very meet.

Enter Iago and Æmilia.

Iago. What is your pleasure, madam? how is't with you?

Des. I cannot tell. Those that do teach your babes,
Do it with gentle means, and easy task;
He might have chid me so; for in good faith,
I am a child to chiding.

Iago. What's the matter, lady?

Æmil. Alas, *Iago*, my lord has so bewhor'd her,
Thrown such despight and heavy terms upon her,
That true hearts cannot bear it.

Des. Am I that name, *Iago*?

Iago. What name, fair lady?

Des. Such as, she said, my lord did say I was.

Æmil. He call'd her whore; a beggar in his drink
Could not have laid such terms upon his callet.*

* *Callet* here, means true, ~~and~~ *scold*: *to scold*, is us'd at present, for to scold.

Iago. Why did he so?

Des. I know not; I'm sure I am none such.

Iago. Do not weep, do not weep. Alas, the day!

Æmil. Hath she forsook so many noble matches?
Her father, and her country, and her friends,
To be call'd whore? Would it not make one weep?

Des. It is my wretched fortune.

Iago. Beshrew him for't! How comes this trick upon

Des. Nay, heav'n doth know. [him?]

Æmil. I will be hang'd, if some eternal villain,
Some busy and insinuating rogue,
Some cogging, cozening slave, to get some office,
Has not devis'd this slander: I'll be hang'd, else.

Iago. Pic, there's no such man; it is impossible.

Des. If any such there be, heav'n pardon him!

Æmil. A halter pardon him, and he'll gnaw his
bones!

Why should he call her whore? Who keeps her com-
pany?

What place? what time? what form? what likelihood?

The Moor's abus'd by some most villainous knave,

Some base notorious knave, some scurvy fellow.

Oh heav'n, that such companions thou'dst unfold,

And put in every honest hand a whip,

To lash the rascal naked thro' the world.*

Iago. Speak within door.

Æmil. Oh, fie upon him! Some such 'squire he
That turn'd your wit the seamy side without,
And made you to suspect me with the Moor.

Iago. You are a fool. Go to.

Des. Alas, *Iago,*

What shall I do to win my lord again?

Good friend, go to him: by this light of heav'n,

I know not how I lost him. Here I kneel; [Kneels]

If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love,

Or in discourse, or thought, or actual deed;

Or that mine eyes, mine ears, or any sense,

Delighted then on any other form;

Or that I do not yet, and ever did,

And

And ever will, though he do shake me off
To beggarly divorcement, love him dearly,
Comfort forswear me! Unkindness may do much;
And his unkindness may defeat my life,
But never taint my love.

Iago. I pray you, be content; 'tis but his humour;
The business of the state does him offence,
And he does chide with you.

Des. If 'twere no other—

Iago. It is but so, I warrant.

Go in, and weep not; all things shall be well.

[*Exeunt Desdemona and Emilia.*]

Enter Rodorigo to Iago.

How now, *Rodorigo*?

Rod. I do not find that thou deal'st justly with me.

Iago. What in the contrary?

Rod. Every day thou dost it^a me with some device,
Iago; and rather, as it seems to me now, keep'st from
me all conveniency, than suppliest me with the least
advantage of hope. I will, indeed, no longer endure
it. Nor am I yet persuaded to put up in peace, what
already I have so foolishly suffer'd.

Iago. Will you hear me, *Rodorigo*?

Rod. Faith, I have heard too much; and your words
and performances are no kin together.

Iago. You charge me most unjustly.

Rod. With nought but truth. I have wasted myself
out of means. The jewels you have had from me, to
deliver to *Desdemona*, would have half corrupted a vo-
urist. You have told me she hath receiv'd them, and
return'd me expectations and comforts of sudden respect
and acquaintance; but I find none.

Iago. Well, go to. Very well.

Rod. Very well; go to. I cannot go to, man, nor
'tis not very well; nay, I think, it is scurvy, and begin
to find myself sobb'd in it.

Iago. Very well.

^a *Desi'st*—*gives* me off.

Red. I tell you, 'tis not very well. I will make myself known to *Desdemona*: if she will return me my jewels, I will give over my suit, and repent my unlawful solicitation: if not, assure yourself, I will seek satisfaction of you.

Iago. You have said, now---

Red. Ay, and said nothing but what I protest intendment of doing.

Iago. Why now, I see there's nestle in thee; and even from this instant, do I build on thee a better opinion, than ever before. Give me thy hand, *Roderigo*; thou hast taken against me a most just exception; but, I protest, I have dealt most directly in thy affair.

Red. It hath not appear'd.

Iago. I grant, indeed, it hath not appear'd; and your suspicion is not without wit and judgment. But *Roderigo*, if thou hast that in thee, indeed, which I have greater reason to believe now than ever, (I mean, purpose, courage, and valour) this night shew it. If thou the next night following, enjoy not, *Desdemona*, take me from this world with treachery, and devise engines for my life.

Red. Well, What is it? Is it within reason and compass?

Iago. Sir, there is a special commission come from *Venice*, to depute *Cassio* in *Othello's* place.

Red. Is that true? Why, then *Othello* and *Desdemona* return again to *Venice*.

Iago. Oh, no; he goes into *Mauritania*, and taketh away with him the fair *Desdemona*, unless his abode be lingered here by some accident; wherein, none can be so determinate, as the removing of *Cassio*.

Red. How do you mean removing him?

Iago. Why, by making him incapable of *Othello's* place; knocking out his brains.

Red. And that you would have me to do?

Iago. Ay, if you dare do yourself a profit, and a right. He sups to-night with a harlot; if you will watch his going thence, you may take him at your pleasure:

pleasure: I will be near to second your attempt. Come, stand not amaz'd at it, but go along with me! I will shew you such a necessity in his death, that you shall think yourself bound to put it on him. It is now high supper-time; and the night grows to waste. About it.

Red. I will hear further reason for this.

Jago. And you shall be satisfied. [Exit.]

Enter Othello, Lodovico, Desdemona, and Emilia.

Lod. I do beseech you, sir, trouble yourself no further.

Oth. Oh, pardon me; 'twill do me good to walk.

Lod. Madam, good night! I humbly thank your ladyship.

Des. Your honour is most welcome.

Oth. Oh, Desdemona!

Des. My lord.

Oth. Get you to bed, on th' instant, I will be returned, forthwith; dismiss your attendant there; look it be done.

Des. I will, my lord.

Oth. Will you walk, sir? [Exit.]

Emil. How goes it now? He looks gentler than he

Des. He says, he will return immediately, [did.] And hath commanded me to go to bed, And bid me to dismiss you.

Emil. Dismiss me!

Des. It was his bidding; therefore, good Emilia, Give me my nightly wearing, and adieu. We must not now displease him.

Emil. * I would you had never seen him! †

END of the FOURTH ACT.

* There are two pages judiciously curtailed from the latter part of his scene.

† The Fourth Act, though not quite equal to that which precedes it, yet maintains its place with great dignity, and does its author credit. The plot goes on with fine gradation.

ACT

A C T V.

S C E N E, a Street before the Palace.

Enter Iago and Rodorigo.

I A G O.

H E R E, stand behind this bulk. Straight will he come:*Wear thy good rapier bare, and put it home; It makes us, or it mars us; think on that, And fix most firm thy resolution.**Rod.* Be near at hand, I may miscarry in't.*Iago* Here at thy hand; be bold, and take thy sword.*Rod.* I have no great devotion to the deed, Yet, he hath given me satisfying reasons: 'Tis but a man gone. Forth my sword; he dies.*[Stands apart.]**Iago.* Now, whether he kill *Cassio*, Or *Cassio* him, or each do kill the other, Every way makes my gain. Live *Rodorigo*, He calls me to a restitution large, Of gold and jewels, that I bobb'd from him, As gifts to *Desdemona*. It must not be.—If *Cassio* do remain, He hath daily beauty in his life, That makes me ugly; and, besides, the Moor May unfold me to him! there stand I in peril: No, he must die. Be it so. I hear him coming.*Enter Cassio.**Rod.* I know his gait; 'tis he. Villain, thou diest.*[He runs at Cassio, and wounds him.]**Cas.* That thrust had been mine enemy, indeed, — But that my coat is better than thou know'st: I will make proof of thine.*[Fights. Iago cuts Cassio behind in the leg, and exit.]**[Then Rodorigo and Cassio fall.]*

* * This scene is sometimes made, and we think properly, the last of the Fourth Act, by such disposition, the Fifth Act opens with more solemnity, and is more uniform.

Rod.

Rod. Oh, I am slain.

Caf. I'm main'd for ever; help, ho; murder,

Rod. Villain that I am, [murder!]

Oh, help! ho, a surgeon.

Caf. What, ho? no watch? no passage? Murder, murder!

Rod. Nobody come. Then shall I bleed to death.

Enter Iago, in his shirt, with a Light and Sword.

Iago. Who's there? What noise is this, that cries out murder?

Caf. *Iago*, oh I am spoil'd, undone by villains!

Give me some help.

Iago. Oh me, lieutenant! What villains have done

Caf. I think, that one of them is hereabout! [this?]

And cannot make away.

Rod. Oh, help me there.

Caf. That's one of them.

Iago. Oh, murth'rous slave! oh, villain!

[*Iago* *stabs him.*]

Rod. Oh, damn'd *Iago*! oh, inhuman dog!

Iago. Kill men i'th' dark! Where be these bloody thieves?

How silent is this town! Ho, murder! murder!

Enter Lodovico and Gratiano.

What may you be? Are you of good or evil?

Lod. As you shall prove us, praise us.

Iago. Signior *Lodovico*?

Lod. He, sir.

Iago. I cry you mercy! Here's *Cassio* hurt by villains.

Gra. *Cassio*!

Iago. How is't, brother?

Caf. My leg is cut in two.

Iago. Marry, heav'n forbid!

Know we this face?

Alas, my friend, my dear countryman,

Roderigo! No: yes, sure. Yea, 'tis *Roderigo*.

G

Enter

Enter Emilia.

Emil. Alas, what is the matter?
What is the matter, husband?

Iago. *Cassio* hath here been set on in the dark,
By *Rodorigo*, and fellows that are 'scap'd:
He's almost slain, and *Rodorigo* dead.

Emilia, run you to the citadel,
And tell my lord and lady what hath hap'd.
Will you go on afore?—This is the night,
That either makes me, or fordoes me quite.

[Exeunt Iago following.]

SCENE, a Bed-chamber: *Desdemona* is discovered
asleep, in her bed.

Enter Othello, with a Light and a Sword.

Oth. It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul:
Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars!
It is the cause—Yet I'll not shed her blood,
Nor fear that whiter skin of hers than snow,
And smooth as monumental slabbatter:

[Lays down the Sword.]

Yet she must die; * else she betray more men.
Put out the light, and then—put out the light?
If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
I can again thy former light restore,
Should I repent; but once put out thy light,
Thou cunning'st pattern of excellent nature,
I know not where is that *Promethean* heat,
That can thy light relumine.— *[Sets down the Taper.]*
When I have pluck'd thy rose,
I cannot give it vital growth again;
It needs must wither.—I'll smell thee on the tree;

[Kissing her.]

* The Aile and sentiment, in which *Othello* ruminates, is awfully solemn and natural. The situation of *Desdemona*, her innocence, the conversation, and her death, co-operate strongly to touch the strings of pity.

Oh, balmy breath, that do'st almost persuade
Justice to break her sword! One more; one more;
Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee,
And love thee after—One more, that's the last;
So sweet, was ne'er so fatal! I must weep,
But they are cruel tears; this sorrow's heavenly
It strikes where it doth love.—She wakes—

Des. Who's there? *Othello?*

Oth. Ay, *Desdemona*.

Des. Will you come to-bed, my lord?

Oth. Have you pray'd, to-night, *Desdemona?*

Des. Ay, my lord.

Oth. If you bethink yourself of any crime,
Unreconcil'd, as yet, to heav'n and grace,
Solicit for it straight.

Des. Alack, my lord,

What may you mean by that?

Oth. Well, do it, and be brief; I will walk by.
I would not kill thy unprepared spirit;

No, (heav'n's forbend!) I would not kill thy soul.

Des. Talk you of killing!

Oth. Ay, I do.

Des. Then heav'n have mercy on me!

Oth. Amen, with all my heart.

Des. If you say so, I hope you will not kill me.

Oth. Hum.

Des. And yet I fear you: for you're fatal then,
When your eyes roll so. Why I should fear, I know not,
Since guilt I know not: yet, I feel I fear.

Oth. Think on thy sins.

Des. They're loves I bear to you.

Oth. Ay, and for that thou dy'st.

Des. That death's unnatural, that kills for loving.

Alas! why gnaw you so your nether lip?
Some bloody passion shakes your very frame;
These are portents: but yet I hope, I hope,
They do not point on me.

* This dialogue has more nature, and a happier effect, by being mostly composed of lines and half lines, than if the speeches had been longer.

Orb. Peace, and be still.

Des. I will so. What's the matter?

Orb. That handkerchief,
Which I so lov'd, and gave thee, thou gav'st *Cassio*.

Des. No, by my life and soul; send for the man,
And ask him.

Orb. Sweet soul, take heed, take heed of perjury:
'Thou art on thy death-bed.

Des. Aye, but not yet to die.

Orb. Presently;

Therefore confess thee freely for thy sin;
For to deny each article with an oath,
Cannot remove, nor choak, the strong conception,
'That I do groan withal. Thou art to die.

Des. Oh, heav'n have mercy on me!

Orb. I say, amen.

Des. And have you mercy, too!—I never did
Offend you, in my life; never lov'd *Cassio*,
But with such general warranty of heav'n,
As I might love. I never gav'g him token.

Orb. By heav'n, I saw my handkerchief in's hand.
Oh, perjurd woman! thou dost stone my heart;
And mak'st me call, what I intend to do,
A murder, which I thought a sacrifice.
I saw the handkerchief.

Des. He found it, then:

I never gave it him. Send for him hither,
Let him confess a truth.

Orb. He hath confest.

Des. What, my lord?

Orb. That he hath—us'd thee—

Des. How? unlawfully?

Orb. Ay.

Des. He will not say so.

Orb. No, his mouth is stopp'd:
Honest *Iago* hath ta'en order for't.

Des. My fear interprets, then—What is he dead?

Orb. Had all his hairs been lives, my revenge
Had stomach for them all.

Des. Alas, he is betray'd, and I undone.

Orb.

Orb. Out, strumpet I weep'st thou for him to my face?

Des. O banish me, my lord, but kill me not.

Orb. Down, strumpet.

Des. Kill me, to-morrow, but let me live to-night.

Orb. Nay, if you strive—

Des. But half an hour.

Orb. Being done, there is no pause.

Des. But while I say one prayer.

Orb. It is too late. [*He smothers her.*]

Æmilia at the Door.

Æmil. My lord, my lord! what, ho! my lord,
my lord!

Orb. What noise is this! Not dead! not yet quite
I, that am cruel, am yet merciful; [*dead!*]
I would not have thee linger in thy pain.
So, so.*

Æmil. within.) What, ho, my lord, my lord!

Orb. Who's there?

Æmil. Oh, my good lord, I would speak a word
with you.

Orb. Yes, 'tis *Æmilia*—By and by—She's dead.
'Tis like she comes to speak of *Cassio's* death;
The noise was high—Ha, no more moving!
Still as the grave. Shall she come in? Were't good?
I think she stirs again—No—What's the best?
If she come in, she'll sure speak to my wife.
My wife! my wife! What wife? I have no wife.
Oh, unsupportable! Oh, heavy hour!
Methinks, it should be now a huge eclipse
Of sun and moon, and that the affrighted globe
Should yawn at alteration—†

Æmil. I beseech you,
That I may speak with you. O good, my lord!

Orb. I had forgot thee. [*Unlocks the Door.*]

* It has been justly remarked, that, *striking Desdemona*, here, reconciles her recovering speech, yes, dying afterwards; which is otherwise, highly unnatural.

† There is a most natural, well-drawn confusion in this speech which concludes with great magnitude of idea.

What's the matter with thee, now? Come in, *Emilia*.

Emil. Oh, my good lord, yonder's foul murder!

Ob. Who! now! [*donec*

Emil. But now, my lord.

Ob. It is the very error of the moon;
She comes more near the earth than she was wont,
And makes men mad.

Emil. *Cassio*, my lord, hath kill'd

A young Venetian, called *Rodorigo*.

Ob. *Rodorigo* kill'd! and *Cassio* kill'd!

Emil. No, *Cassio* is not kill'd.

Ob. Not *Cassio* kill'd! Then murder's out of tune,
And sweet revenge grows harsh.

Des. Oh falsely, falsely murder'd!—

Emil. Alas! what cry is that?

Ob. That! what?

Emil. Out, and alas! that was my lady's voice.
Help! help, ho! help! oh lady, speak again;
Sweet *Desdemona*! oh sweet mistress, speak.

Des. A guiltless death I die.

Emil. Oh, who has done this deed?

Des. Nobody, I myself, farewell.

Commend me to my kind lord; oh, farewell. [*Exit.*

Ob. Why, how should she be murder'd?

Emil. Alas! who knows?

Ob. You heard her say herself, it was not I.

Emil. She said so, I must needs repeat the truth.

Ob. She's like a liar gone to burning hell;

'Twas I that kill'd her. [*devil.*

Emil. Oh, the more angel she, and you the blacker!

Ob. She turn'd to folly, and she was a whore.

Emil. Thou dost belie her, and thou art a devil.

Ob. She was false as water.

Emil. Thou art rash as fire, to say

That she was false. Oh, she was heav'nly true.

Ob. *Cassio* did use her; ask thy husband else.

Oh, I were dama'd beneath all depth in hell,

But that I did proceed upon just grounds,

To this extremity. Thy husband knew it all.

Emil. My husband!

Ob. Thy husband.

Emil. That she was false to wedlock!

Orb. Ay, with *Cassio*: had she been true,
If heav'n would make me such another world,
Of one entire and perfect chrysolite,
I'd not have sold her for it.

Emil. My husband!

Orb. What mean's this iteration, woman?
I say thy husband.

Do'st understand the word?

My friend, thy husband, honest, honest *Iago*.

Emil. If he says so, may his pernicious soul
Rot half a grain a-day! he lies to th' heart;
She was too fond of her most sthly bargain.

Orb. Ha!—

Emil. Do thy worst:
This deed of thine is no more worthy heav'n,
Than thou wast worthy her.

Orb. Peace, you were best.

Emil. Thou hast not half that power to do me harm,
As I have to be hurt: oh gull! oh dolt!
As ignorant as dirt! thou'st done a deed——
I care not for thy sword. I'll make thee known,
Tho' I lost twenty lives—Help! help! ho! help!
The Moor hath kill'd my mistress. Murder, murder!

Enter Montano, Gratiano, Iago, and others.

Mont. How now, general?

Emil. Oh! are you come, *Iago*! you have done well,
That men must lay their murders on your neck.

Gra. What is the matter?

Emil. Disprove the villain, if thou be'st a man.
He says, thou told'st him that his wife was false;
I know thou didst not: thou'rt not such a villain.
Speak, for my heart is full.

Iago. I told him what I thought; and told no more,
Than what he found himself was apt and true.

Emil. But did you ever tell him she was false?

Iago. I did.

Emil. You told a lie; an odious, damned lie!
Upon my soul, a lie, a wicked lie.

She

She false with *Cassio*! Did you say with *Cassio*?

Iago. With *Cassio*, mistress;

What, are you mad? I charge you get you home.

Emil. Good gentlemen, let me have leave to speak;
'Tis proper I obey him, but not now:

Perchance, *Iago*, I will ne'er go home.

Oth. Oh! oh! oh! [*Othello falls on the bed.*]

Emil. Nay, lay thee down, and roar;

For thou hast kill'd the sweetest innocent,

That e'er did lift up eye.

Oth. Oh, she was foul! [*Rising.*]

I scarce did know you, uncle: there lies your niece,
Whose breath, indeed, these hands have newly stopp'd;
I know this act shews horrible and grim.

Gra. Poor *Desdemona*! I'm glad thy father's dead:
Did he live, now,

This sight would make him do a desp'rate turn;
And fall to reprobation.

Oth. 'Tis pitiful; but yet *Iago* knows,
That she with *Cassio* had the act of shame,
A thousand times committed. *Cassio* confess't it;
And she did gratify his amorous works,
With that recognizance and pledge of love,
Which I first gave her; I saw it in his hand;
It was a handkerchief, an antique token,
My father gave my mother.

Emil. Oh heav'n! oh heavenly powers!
That handkerchief thou speak'st of,
I found, by fortune, and did give my husband;
For often, with a solemn earnestness,
(More than, indeed, belong'd to such a trifle,)
He begg'd of me to steal it.

Iago. Filth, thou liest.

Emil. By heav'n, I do not; I do not, gentlemen:
Oh, murd'rous coxcomb! What should such a fool
Do with so good a wife?

[*Iago breaks through, and wounds his wife, then runs out.*]

* The opening of *Iago's* villainy is judicious, and the gradual, yet full expulsi^on of it, very satisfactory.

Orb. Are there no stones in heav'n,
But what serve for the thunder? Precious villain!

Gra. The woman falls; sure, he has kill'd his wife.

Mont. Take this weapon,
Which I have here recover'd from the Moor:
Come, guard the door without, let him not pass,
But kill him rather; I'll after that same villain.

[*Exeunt Mont. and Gra.*]

Orb. I am not valiant, neither;
But every puny whipster gets my sword.
But why should honour out-live honesty?
Let it go all.

Emil. Moor, she was chaste; she lov'd thee, cruel
So come my soul to bliss, as I speak true; [Moor,
So speaking as I think, I die, I die. [*Emilia dies.*]

Orb. I have another weapon in this chamber,
It was a sword of Spain, the *Ebro's* temper;
Oh, here it is. Uncle, I must come forth.

Gra. within.] If thou attempt it, it will cost thee dear;
Thou hast no weapon, and perforce must suffer.

Orb. Look upon me then, and speak with me,
Or, naked as I am, I will assault thee.

Re-enter Gratiano.

Gra. What is the matter?

Orb. Lo! I have a weapon:
A better never did itself sustain,
Upon a soldier's thigh. I've seen the day,
That with this single arm, and this good sword,
I've made my way through most impediments,
Than twenty times your stop. But, oh vain boast!
Who can controul his fate? 'Tis not so, now.
Man but a rush against *Othello's* breast,
And he retires. Where should *Othello* go?
Now—how dost thou look, now? Oh ill-farr'd wench!
Pale as thy smock! When we shall meet at compt,

* The situation of *Othello* is here exceedingly pitiable, and the actor has, in this speech, as in many others of the fifth Act, a glorious opportunity for impressive expression.

This look of thine will hurl my soul from heav'n,
And fiends will snatch at it. Cold, cold, my girl,
Ev'n like thy chastity.

“ Whip me, ye devils,

“ From the possession of this heav'nly sight:

“ Blow me about in winds, roast me in sulphur,

“ Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire— †

Oh *Desdemona!* *Desdemona!* dead, dead! oh, oh!

Enter Lodovico, Cassio led in wounded, Montano, and Iago Prisoners, with Officers.

Lod. Where is this rash and most unfortunate man

Oth. That's he that was *Othello*.

Lod. Where is that viper? Bring the villain forth.

Oth. I look down towards his feet; but that's a fable.

If that thou best a devil, I cannot kill thee.

[*Othello wounds Iago.*

Lod. Wrench his sword from him.*

Iago. I bleed, sir, but am not kill'd.

Oth. I am not sorry, neither: I'd have thee live;

For, in my sense, 'tis happiness to die.

Lod. Oh thou *Othello*, that wast once so good,

Fall'n in the practice of a cursed slave,—

What shall be said of thee?

Oth. Why, any thing;

An honourable murth'rer, if you will:

For nought I did in hate, but all in honour.

Lod. This wretch hath part confess'd his villainy:

Did you and he consent in *Cassio's* death?

Oth. Ay.

Cas. Dear general, I never gave you cause.

Oth. I do believe it, and I ask your pardon.

Will you, I pray, demand that demi-devil,

Why he hath thus ensnar'd my soul and body?

† Though the marked lines afford a fine transition of expression, yet, as they convey very hateful ideas, we could wish them omitted.

* Saving *Iago* for legal punishment, we much approve; and see no reason why *Desdemona* should have been killed, unless to fix on him a positive charge of murder.

Iago. Demand me nothing; what you know, you
From this time forth I ne'er will speak a word. [knows]

Oth. Well, thou dost best.

Lod. Sir, you shall understand what hath befall'n,
Which, as I think, you know not, here's a letter,
Found in the pocket of the slain *Roderigo*,
And, here, another; one of them imports
The death of *Cassio* to be undertook
By *Roderigo*.

Oth. Oh, villain!

Lod. Now, here's another discontented paper,
Found in his pocket too; and this, it seems,
Roderigo meant t'have sent this damned villain;
But that, belike, *Iago* in the interim
Came in, and satisfied him.

Oth. Oh, thou pernicious caitiff!
How came you, *Cassio*, by that handkerchief,
That was my wife's?

Cas. I found it in my chamber:
And he himself confess't but even now,
That there he dropt it for a special purpose,
Which wrought to his desire.

Oth. Oh, fool, fool, fool!

Cas. There is, besides, in *Roderigo's* letter,
How he upbraids *Iago*, that he made him
Brave me upon the watch; whereon it came
That I was cast; and even now he spake,
After long seeming dead, *Iago* hurt him,
Iago set him on.

Lod. You must forsake this room, and go with us;
Your pow'r and your command is taken off,
And *Cassio* rules in *Cyprus*. For this slave,
If there be any cunning cruelty,
That can torment him much, and hold him long,
It shall be his. Away with him. [*Exit Iago guarded.*]
You shall close prisoner rest,

Till that the nature of your fault be known,
To the *Venetian* state. Come, bring him away.

Oth. Soft you; a word or two before you go.
I've done the state some service, and they know't;
No more of that. I pray you, in your letters,

When

When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
 Speak of me as I am: nothing extenuate,
 Nor set down ought in malice. Then must you speak
 Of one that lov'd not wisely, but too well;
 Of one, not easily jealous; but being wrought,
 Perplex'd in the extreme; of one, whose hand,
 Like the base *Indian*, threw a pearl away,
 Richer than all his tribe; of one whose eyes
 Albeit unused to the melting mood,
 Drop tears as fast as the *Arabian* trees
 Their medicinal gum. Set you down this:
 And say, besides, that in *Aleppo* once,
 Where a malignant and a turban'd *Turk*
 Beat a *Venetian*, and traduc'd the state,
 I took by the throat the circumcised dog,
 And smote him thus.—†

[Stabs himself and dies.

Lod. Oh *Spartan* dog!

[To *Iago*.

More fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea!

Gratiano, keep the house,

And seize upon the fortunes of the Moor,

For they succeed to you. To you, lord governor,

Remains the censure of that hellish villain:

The time, the place, the torture, oh! enforce it.

Myself will strait abroad; and to the state

This heavy act, with heavy heart relate. † [Exit.

* The catastrophe of *Othello* is nobly supported; and his voluntary death a natural sight of mind, torn with remorse for having sacrificed the idol of his heart, to a false charge and an unhappy resentment.

† At the end of the Third Act a reader or spectator is induced to think his feelings cannot be touched more sensibly, but there is such a well conceived succession of events, such variation of circumstances, such preservation of character, such a noble mellifluousness of writing, and such a melting climax of catastrophe, that sensation is played upon, with increasing force, to the very last speech.

THE END OF OTHELLO.



Engraved by J. G. Kneller del. Sculpsit J. G. Kneller fecit. J. G. Kneller sculp.

*M. BENSLEY in the Character of BUSIRIS.
Throw all my Glories open to his View.*

BELL'S EDITION.

BUSSIRIS,
KING OF EGYPT.

A TRAGEDY.

As written by E. YOUNG, LL.B.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

Theatre-Royal in Dury-Lane.

Regulated from the Prompt-Book,

By PERMISSION of the MANAGERS,

By Mr. HOPKINS, Prompter.

*Et triste planè acerbumque funus! O morte ipsa mortis tempus indigeas!
Jam destinata agas egregia juveni, jam electus nuptiarum dies, quod
gaudium, quo marec mutatum est? Plin. Epist.*



LONDON,

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MDCCLXVII.

TO HIS GRACE THE

DUKE OF NEWCASTLE,

Lord Chamberlain of his Majesty's Household, &c.

MY LORD,

IF a dedication carries in its nature a mark of our acknowledgment and esteem, and is there most due, where we are most obliged, the late instances I received of your Grace's undeserved and uncommon favour in an affair of some consequence (foreign to the theatre) has taken from me the privilege of choosing a patron; especially for a performance which, not only by its kind, falls immediately under your Grace's authority, but which likewise by its good fortune in a season of some danger to it, received from your Grace's free indulgence, its life and success on the stage. Thus my ambition concurs with my duty, and it is my happiness not to be able to gratify the impulse of the one, without obeying at the same time the dictates of the other.

Addresses of this nature, through a gross abuse of praise, have justly fallen under ridicule. How pleasant is it, to hear one of yesterday complimented on his illustrious ancestors? A sordid person, on his magnificence? An illiterate pretender, on his skill in arts and sciences? Or a wretch contracted with self-love on his diffusive benevolence to mankind? Yet from the frequency of such a shameful prostitution of the pen as this, one advantage results; it gives the grace of novelty and peculiarity to a dedication, that shall reclaim panegyric from its guilt, and rescue the late mentioned sublime distinctions of character from absurdity and injustice, by applying them to a Duke of Newcastle. It is a kind of compliment paid to panegyric itself, to use it on so just an occasion.

It is letters, my Lord, which distinguish one age from another; each period of time shines or is obscured in its degrees, they flourish or decline; and who knows not that the value of letters is determined by the kind or colour of the age? How great? How happy then is the present time, how great an assurance has it of being exempted from the death of common ages, when we see the politer arts triumphing in the care and encouragement of one who has made an early and regular acquaintance with them at their own home, joining to the amplest fortune the qualifications requisite (had it been wanting) to acquire and deserve it. One, who in the flower of youth, when the imagination is warmest, and fit for such a province, presides over the labours of genius and fine taste, and has it in his power to rival those he is pleased to patronise. One, in a word, who, covetous of learning, reaches beyond his own nation for new supplies of it; who, zealous for merit, pays honours to its very ashes; and whose being an excellent master in polite letters himself, is one of the smallest proofs he has given of his ardent love towards them.

But I cannot turn my thought that way, without being put in mind of the imperfection of the following scenes. I own they have many faults, as far as I can allow, without reflecting on the town, for the countenance they have received: but I hope they have merit enough to entitle them to some share of your Grace's approbation, as well as errors enough to make them stand in need of all your protection. The continuance of which is humbly hoped by,

My Lord,

Your Grace's much obliged,

Most obedient, and

Most humble servant,

EDWARD YOUNG.

PROLOGUE.

By a FRIEND.

LONG have you seen the Greek and Roman name,
 Assisted by the muse, renew their fame:
 While yet unsung those heroes sleep, from whom
 Greece form'd her Plato's, and her Caesar's Rome.
 Such, Ægypt, were thy sons! Divinely great
 In arts, and arms, in wisdom, and in fate.
 Her early monarchs gave such glories birth,
 Their ruins are the wonders of the earth.
 Structures so vast by these great kings design'd,
 Are but faint sketches of their boundless mind:
 Yet ne'er has Albion's scene, though long renown'd,
 With the stern tyrants of the Nile been crown'd.
 The tragic muse in grandeur should excel,
 Her figure blazes, and her numbers swell.
 The proudest monarch of the proudest age,
 From Ægypt comes to tread the British stage:
 Old Homer's heroes moderns are to those
 Whom this night's venerable scenes disclose.
 Here pomp and splendor serve but to prepare;
 To touch thee, 'tis our peculiar care;
 By just distresses first pity to impart,
 And mend your nature, while we move your heart;
 Nor would these scenes in empty words abound,
 Or overlay the sentiment with sound.
 Words (when the poet would your souls engage)
 Are the mere garnish of an idle stage.
 When passion rages, eloquence is mean:
 Gestures and looks best speak the moving scene.
 The shining fair, and tender woes invite
 To pleasing anguish, and severe delight,
 By your affliction you compute your gain,
 And rise in pleasure, as you rise in pain.
 If then just objects of concern are shown,
 And your hearts heave with sorrows not your own,
 Let not the generous impulse be withstood,
 Strive not with nature, but not to be good:
 Sighs only from a noble temper rise,
 And 'tis your virtue swells into your eyes.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M E N.

Busiris, king of Egypt, Mr. Bensley,
Myron, the prince.
Nicanor, father of *Mandane*.
Memnon,
Rameses,
Syphoces,
Pheron,
Auletes, a courtier.

} Conspirators.

W O M E N.

Myris, queen of Egypt.
Mandane.

SCENE, *MEMPHIS* in *Old Egypt*.

BUSIRIS.

B U S I R I S.

A C T I.

SCENE, *a Temple in Memphis.**Enter Pheron and Syphoces.*

SYPHOCES.

IF glorious structures and immortal deeds,
 Enlarge the thought, and set our souls on fire,
 My tongue has been too cold in Egypt's praise,
 The queen of nations, and the boast of times,
 Mother of science, and the house of gods!
 Scarce can I open wide my lab'ring mind
 To comprehend the vast idea, big
 With arts and arms, so boundless in their fame.

Pher. Thrice happy land! did not her dreadful king,
 Facsimil Busiris, whom the world reveres,
 Lay all his shining wonders in disgrace,
 By cruelty and pride.

Syph. By pride indeed,
 He calls himself the proud, and glories in it,
 Nor would exchange for Jupiter's Almighty.
 Have we not seen him shake his silver reins
 O'er haughty monarchs, to his chariot yok'd?
 Unconscious of indignation and despair,
 While he aloft displays his impious state,
 With all their rick'd kingdoms o'er his brow,
 His crown is heav'n in diamond and gold.

Pher. Nor less the tyrant's cruelty than pride;
 His horrid altars stream with human blood,
 And piety is murder in his hand.

*[A great storm.
 Syph.]*

Syb. There rose the voice of twice two hundred thousand,
 And broke the clouds, and clear'd the face of day;
 The king, who from this temple's airy height,
 With heart dilated, that great work surveys,
 Which shall proclaim what can be done by man,
 Has struck his purple streamer, and descends.

Pbr. Twice ten long years have seen that haughty
 Which nations with united toil advance, [pile,
 Gain on the skies, and labour up to heaven.

Syb. The king—or prostrate fall, or disappear.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter Busris attended.

Buf. This ancient city, Memphis the renown'd,
 Almost coeval with the sun himself,
 And boasting strength scarce sooner to decay,
 How wanton sits she amid nature's smiles,
 Nor from her highest turret has to view,
 But golden landscapes, and luxuriant scenes,
 A waste of wealth, the storehouse of the world!
 Here, fruitful vales far stretching by the sight,
 There, sails unnumber'd whiten along the stream;
 While from the banks full twenty thousand cities
 Survey their pride, and see their gilded towers
 Float on the waves, and break against the shore:
 To crown the whole, this rising pyramid

[*Shows the plan.*

Lengthens in air, and ends among the stars,
 While every other object shrinks beneath
 Its mighty shade, and lessens in the view,
 As kings compar'd with me.

Enter Auletes, he falls prostrate.

Aul. Oh, live for ever,

Busris, first of men!

Buf. Auletes, rise.

Aul. Ambassadors from various climes arrive,
 To view your wonders, and to greet your fame;
 Each laden with the gifts his country yields,
 Of which the meanest rise to gold and pearl:
 The rich Arabian fills his ample vase
 With sacred incense; Ethiopia sends
 A thousand couriers swifter than the wind;

And

B U S I R I S .

And their black riders darken all the plain :
Camels and elephants from other realms,
Bending beneath a weight of luxury,
Bring the best seasons of their various years,
And leave their monarchs poor.

Buf. What from the Persian ?

Aut. He bends before your throne, and far outweighs
The rest in tribute, and out-shines in state.

Buf. Away ! He sees me not ; I know his purpose,
A spy upon my greatness, and no friend :
Take his ambassador, and shew him Egypt,
In Memphis shew him various nations met,
As in a sea, yet not confin'd in space,
But streaming freely through the spacious streets,
Which send forth millions at each brazen gate,
When e'er the trumpet calls ; high over head
On the broad walls the chariots bound along,
And leave in air a thunder of my own :
Jove too has pour'd the Nile into my hand,
The prince of rivers, ocean's eldest son :
Rich of myself, I make the fruitful year,
Nor ask precarious plenty from the sky——
Throw all my glories open to his view,
Then tell him, in return for trifles offer'd,
I give him this ; and when a Persian arm

[Gives him a bow.

Can thus with vigour its reluctance bend,
And to the nerve its stubborn force subdue,
Then let his master think of arms—but bring
More men than yet e'er pour'd into the field ;
Mean time, thank Heaven, our tide of conquest drives
A different way, and leaves him still a king.
This to the Persian——I receive the rest,
And give the world an answer. *[Exit Busris.*

Mandane, attended by Priests and her Virgins, is seen sacrificing at a distance.

A Hymn to Isis is sung, the Priests go out.

Mandane, attended by her maids, advances.

Mand. My morning duty to the gods is o'er,
Yet still this terror hangs upon my soul,

And

And saddens every thought—I still behold
 The dreadful image, still the threatening sword
 Points at my breast, and glitters in mine eye
 But 'twas a dream, no more. My virgin
 And thou, great Ruler of the world, be present
 Oh, kindly shine on this important hour!
 'This hour determines all my future life,
 And gives it up to misery or joy.
 These lonely walks, this deep and solemn night,
 Where noon-day suns but glimmer to the sight
 This house of tears, and mansion of the dead
 For ever hides him from the hated light,
 And gives him leave to groan.

Back Scend draws, and shews Memnon leaning on his father's Tomb.

Was ever scene

So mournful! If, my Lord, the dead alone
 Be all your care, life is no more a blessing.
 How could you shun me for this dismal shade,
 And seek from love a refuge in despair?

Mem. Why hast thou brought those eyes to this sad place,

Where darkness dwells, and grief would sigh secure,
 In welcome horrors, and beloved night?
 Thy beauties drive the friendly shades before them,
 And light up day e'en here. Retire, my love;
 Each joyful moment I would share with thee,
 My virtuous maid, but I would mourn alone.

Mand. What have you found in me so mean, to hope
 That while you sigh, my soul can be at peace?
 Your sorrows flow from your Mandane's eyes.

Mem. Oh, my Mandane! ———

Mand. Wherefore turn you from me?
 Have I offended, or are you unkind?
 Ah, me! A sight as strange, as pitiful!
 From this big heart, o'ercharg'd with gen'rous sorrow,
 See the tide working upward to his eye,
 And stealing from him in large silent drops,
 Without his leave! ——— Can those tears flow in vain?

Mem. Why will you double my distress, and make
 My grief my crime, by discomposing you?

And

And yet I can't forbear! Alas! my father!

at name excuses all; what is not due
that great name, which life or death can pay?

Mand. Speak on, and ease your lab'ring breath, it swells
And sinks again, and then it swells so high,
It looks as it would break. I know 'tis big
With something you would utter. Oft in vain
I have presum'd to ask your mournful story;
But ever have been answer'd with a frown.

Mem. Oh, my Mandane! did my tale concern
Myself alone, it would not lie conceal'd;
But 'tis wrapt up in guilt, in royal guilt;
Therefore 'tis unsafe to touch upon't.

All my tale, is to blow off the ashes
From sleeping embers which will rise in flames
At the least breath, and spread destruction round.

You art faithful, and my other self;

Oh! my heart this moment is so full,
It bursts with its complaints, and I must speak.

She, the present queen, was only sister

Of great Artaxes, our late royal lord:

She, who now reigns, was first of males
Of royal blood, to which this crown descends.

With long circumstance to load my story

Artaxerxes' virtuous Myrta fir'd his daring soul,

And turn'd his sword against her brother's life:

She mounting to the tyrant's bed and throne,

Triumph'd in her shame, and triumph'd in her guilt.

So black a story well might shun the day.

Artaxes' friends (a virtuous multitude)

Were swept away by banishment, or death,

And left the tyrant's throne, and faced the devouring grave.

Think, Mandane, on your own,
Pardon me! ———

[Weeps]

My father took me, then of tender years,

And rear'd me with his son (a son since dead).

He vainly hop'd, by shews of guilty kindness

To wipe away the blackness of his crime,

And reconcile me to my father's fate;

But how have I long been forc'd to stay my vengeance,

To smother my brow with smiles, and curb my tongue,

While the big woe lies throbbing at my heart.

Enter

Enter Pheron at a distance.

Pber. So close! so loving! Here I stand un-
And watch my rival's fate.

Mem. But thou, my fair,
Thou art my peace in tumult, life in death,
Thou yet canst make me blest.

Mand. As how, my Lord?

Mem. Ah! why wilt thou insult me?

Mand. Memnon——

Mem. Speak.

Mand. Nature forbids, and when I would begin,
She stifles all my spirits, and I faint:
My heart is breaking, but I cannot speak.
Oh, let me fly.—

Mem. You pierce me to the soul. *[Holding her.]*

Mand. Oh! spare me for a moment, till my heart
Regains its wonted force, and I will speak.
Pheron, you know, is daily urgent with me,
Breaks through restraints, and will not be refus'd.

[Pheron shows a great concern.]

Yet more, the prince, the young impetuous prince,
Before his father sent him forth to war,
And gave the Mede to his destructive sword,
Has often taught his tongue a silken tale,
Descended from himself, and talk'd of love.
Since last I saw thee, his licentious passion
Has haunted all my dreams——

This day the court shines forth in all its lustre
To welcome her returning warrior home;
Alas, the malice of our stars!

Mem. To place it

Beyond the power of fate to part our lovers,
Be this our bridal night, my life!——my

Pber. Perdition seize them both! and
So long, to catch her in another's arms!
Another's arms for ever! Oh, the pang!
Heart-piercing sight!——but rage shall take
It shall be so——and let the crime be his
Who drives me to the black extremity;
I fear no farther hell than that I feel.

Alas! I grasp thee, and my anxious heart
 In all its doubts I may call thee mine.

Yes, this too give me! Oh, painful ecstasy!

What words can I utter.

My Lord!

What means this damp that comes athwart my joy,
 Chastising thus the lightness of my heart?

I have a father, and a father too,

Tender as nature ever fram'd.—His will

Should be consulted.—Should I touch his peace,

I should be wretched in my Memnon's arms.

Mem. Talk not of wretchedness.

Alas! this day

First gave me birth, and (which is strange to tell)

The fates e'er since, as watching its return,

Have caught it as it flew, and mark'd it deep

With something great, extremes of good or ill.

Mem. Why should we bode misfortune to our loves?

No, I receive thee from the gods, in lieu

Of all that happiness they ravish'd from me;

Fame, freedom, father, all return in thee.

Had not the gods Mars'ane to bestow,

They never would have pour'd such vengeance on me;

They meant me free, and could not be severe.

Soon as night's favourable shades descend,

The holy priest shall join our hands for ever,

And life shall prove but one long bridal-day.

Till then, in scenes of pleasure lose thy grief,

Or strike the lute, or smile among the flowers,

Or breathe the sweet, and fairer bloom for thee.

From this dear tender side,

From these dear friends, and important calls,

Love itself—I quit thee now,

See me no more.

[They embrace.

My friends are here,

[Exit Mand.

My dear friend! how my soul pants for

Thy dear friends now begin their claim,

[thee?]

Thy dear friends, and their claim, and torrow, and revenge,

Thy dear friends, and their tumult tear up all my breast:

Thy dear friends, and their the softnesses of love!

Exit Syphocles.

Thy dear friend, worthy Memnon.

B

Mem.

Mem. Welcome, my Syphoces.
 And much I hope thou bring'st a bleeding heart,
 A heart that bleeds for others miseries,
 Bravely regardless of its own, though great
 That first of characters.

Syph. And there's a second,
 Not far behind, to rescue the distress'd
 Or die.

Mem. Yes, die; and visit those brave men,
 Who, from the first of time, have bath'd their hands
 In tyrants' blood, and grasp'd their honest swords
 As part of their own being, when the cause,
 The public cause, demanded. Oh, my friend!
 How long shall Egypt groan in chains? How long
 Shall her sons fall in heaps without a foe?
 No war, plague, famine, nothing but Bufiris,
 His people's father! and the state's defence!
 Yet but a remnant of the land survives.

Syph. What havock have I seen? Have we not known
 A multitude become a morning's prey,
 When troubled rest, or a debauch has sour'd
 The monster's temper? then 'tis instant death
 Then fall the brave and good, like ripen'd corn
 Before the sweeping scythe, not the poor man
 To starve and pine at leisure in their chains.
 But what fresh hope, that we receive your face
 To meet you here this morning?

Mem. Know, Syphoces,
 'Twas on this day my warlike father's blood,
 So often lavish'd in his country's cause,
 And greatly sold for conquest and renown;
 'Twas on this execrable day it flow'd
 On his own pavement, in a peaceful hour,
 Smok'd in the dust, and wash'd a ruffian's feet
 This guilty day returning, t'ouzes all
 My smother'd rage, and blows it to a flame.
 Where are our friends?

Syph. At hand. Rameses,
 Last night, when gentle rest o'er nature spread
 Her still command, and care alone was waking,
 Like a dumb, lonely, discontented ghost,
 Enter'd my chamber, and approach'd my bed

With bursts of passion, and a peal of groans,
 He recollects his godlike brother's fate,
 The drunken banquet, and the midnight murder,
 And urges vengeance on the guilty prince.
 Such was the fellness of his boiling rage,
 Methought the night grew darker as he frown'd.

Mem. I know he bears the prince most deadly hate;
 But this will enter deeper in his soul, [Shows a letter.]
 And rouse up passions, which till now have slept:
 Murder shall look like innocence to this.

Syph. How, Memnon!

Mem. This reminds me of thy fate;
 The queen has courted thee with proffer'd realms,
 And fought by threats to bend thee to her will;
 She languishes, she burns, she wastes away
 In fruitless hopes, and dies upon thy name.

Syph. Oh, fatal love! which stung by jealousy,
 Expell'd a life far dearer than my own,
 By curst poison—Ah, divine Apame!
 And could the murd'ress hope she should inherit
 This heart, and fill thy place within these arms?—
 But grief shall yield—Revenge, I'm wholly thine.

Mem. The tyrant too is wanton in his age,
 He shews that all his thoughts are not in blood;
 Love claims its share; he envies poor Ramefes
 The softness of his bed; and thinks Amelia
 A mistress worthy of a monarch's arms.

Chorus. Justice, Ramefes comes, a fullen gloom
 Spreads o'er his brow, and marks him through the dusk.

Enter Ramefes, Phéron, and other Conspirators.

Phéron. What, my friends, shall Memnon bid you
 Welcome?

Chorus. And melancholy scenes of death?
 Or costly banquets, such as spread
 Upon Myron's table, when you brother fell.

[To Ramefes.]

These gilded roof, no gay apartment,
 Such as the queen prepar'd for thee, Syphoces.
 Yet discontent, my valiant friends,
 Disturb us, and 'tis not out of season
 That Memnon ought may mind us of our fate:
 His sword is ever drawn, and furious Myris
 Thinks the day lost that is not mark'd with blood.

Ram. And have we felt a tyrant twenty
Felt him, as the raw wound the burning fire
And are we murmuring out our midnight cry
Drying our tears in corners, and complain
Our hands are forfeited. Gods! strike the
No hands we need to fasten our own chains
Our masters will do that; and we want souls
To raise them to an use more worthy men.

Mem. Ruffles your temper at offences past?
Here then, to sting thee into madness.

[Gives the Letter. *Rameses reads.*

Ram. Oh!

Syph. See how the struggling passions shake his frame.

Ram. My bosom joy, that crowns my happy bed
With tender pledges of our mutual love,
Far dearer than my soul! and shall my wife,
The mother of my little innocents,
Be taken from us! Torn from me! from mine!
Who live but on her sight! and shall I hear
Her cries for succour, and not rush upon him?
My infant hanging at the neck upbraids me,
And struggles with his little arms to save her.
These veins have still some generous blood
The dregs of those rich streams his wars
I'll give in dowry with her.

Phor. Well resolv'd:

A tardy vengeance shares the tyrant's guilt

Ram. Let me embrace thee, Phoron, till
And dost disdain the coldness of delay.
Curse on the man that calls Rameses friend
And keeps his temper at a tale like this;
When rage and rancour are the proper virtue
And loss of reason is the mark of men.

Mem. Thus I've determin'd; when the
Lulls this proud city, and her monarch drows
Of humbled toes, or his new mistress' love
Then we will rush at once, let loose the ten
Of rage pent in, and struggling twenty years
To find a vent, and at one dreadful blow
Begin and end the war.

A more suspicious juncture could not happen
The Persian, who for years has join'd our

Stirr'd up the love of freedom, and in private
 Long nurs'd the glorious appetite with gold,
 This morn with transport snatch'd the with'd occasion
 Of throwing his resentment wide, and now
 He is wns in arms, and giveth' event to fate.

Ram. This hand shall drag the tyrant from the throne,
 And stab the royal victim on this altar.

[*Pointing to the tomb.*

Mem. Oh, justly thought! Friends cast your eyes around,
 All that most awful is, or great in nature,
 This scene presents; the gods are here,
 And here our fam'd forefathers' sacred tombs;
 Who never brook'd a tyrant in this land.
 Let us not act beneath the grand assembly!
 The slighted altars tremble, and these tombs
 Send forth a peal of groans to urge us on.
 Come then, surround my father's monument,
 And call his shade to witness to your vows.

Ram. Nor his alone. Oh, all ye mighty dead!
 Illustrious shades! who nightly stalk around
 The tyrant's couch, and shake his guilty soul:
 Whether already you converse with gods
 Or stray below in melancholy glooms,
 From earth, from air, from heaven, and from hell,
 Come, I conjure you, by the prisoner's chain,
 The widow's sighing, and the orphan's tears,
 The virgin's shrieks, the hero's spouting veins,
 By whom blasphem'd, and free-born men enslav'd,
 Dear, Jove, and you most injur'd heroes, hear,
 Whoe'er this thrice hallow'd monument
 Shall see our hands, and kneeling to the gods,
 Commit our souls to great revenge!

Mem. We swear——

In this night the tyrant and his minions bleed,
 Shall lay those palaces in dust,
 And the gilded domes now glitter in the sun,
 So now my toe is taken in the soil;
 And I'll see a second call for this proud maid——

Mem. Both well spent, a perjury

Of such account in vengeance, and in love.

[*Aside.*

Mem. We wrong the mighty dead, if we permit
 Our eyes alone to count this grand assembly:

A thousand unseen heroes walk among us
 My father rises from his tomb, his wound
 Bleed all atreth, and consecrate the day ;
 He waves his arm, and chides our tardy
 More than this world shall thank us. O
 Such our condition, we have nought to lo
 And great may be our gain, if this be gre
 To crush a tyrant, and preserve a stare ;
 To still the clamours of our father's blood
 To fix the basis of the public good,
 To leave a fame eternal, then to soar,
 Mix with the gods, and bid the world adore

END of the FIRST ACT

ACT II.

SCENE, *the Palace.*

A magnificent Throne discovered, and several courtiers walking to and fro.

Enter Syphoces and Rameles. Shouts at a distance.

RAMESES.

WHAT means this dust and tumul
 These streamers fooling in the v
 The tyrant blazing in full insolence,
 And all his gaudy courtiers basking rou
 Like pois'nous vermin in a dog-day sur
Syph. Your father and prince Myron
 And with one peal of joy the nation ris
Ram. Long has my father serv'd this
 With zeal well worthy of a better caus
 Though with his helm he hides a hoar
 Long vers'd in death, the father of the
 At the shrill trumpet he throws off the
 Of fourscore years, and springs upon
 The transport danger gives him, conqu
 And a short youth boils up within his v
Syph. Behold, this way they pass to

B U S I R I S.

Nicanor *pass the Stage with Attendants.*

pity 'tis that one so lost in guilt,
 gage the sight with manly charms,
 lovely? [*Looking on Myron*

me. Rameses:

foc, I must be ever just.

grateful, affable, and brave:

shows no limit to his passion;

And the tempest-beaten bark is not so toss'd

As is his reason, when those winds arise:

And though he draws a fatal sword in battle,

And kindles in the warm pursuit of fame,

Reason subdues him quite, the sparkling eye,

And gen'rous frowl bear down his graver mind,

While fiery spirits dance along his veins,

And keep a constant revel in his heart.

Ram. But here the tyrant comes!—With what excess
 Of idle pride will he receive his son?

How with big words will he swell out this conquest,

And into grandeur puff his little tales.

*Enter B... , and ascends the Throne; on the other side,
 enter Myron and Nicanor.*

one, my son, greater partner of my fame,

As th' increase of my dominions,

More mountains rise, more rivers flow,

More stars shine in my still growing empire.

Myself surveys it not at once,

For the view, whilst far disjoin'd,

Is e'er unheerd of by each other;

And in shades, while those enjoy the light;

Various, but their king the same.

... Sir, your thanks are due; to this old arm,

Which has not threescore winter camps unbend,

For victory, and I my life.

... ce courter, with a javelin slung,

... air, then tearing with a bound

... g earth, plung'd deep amidst the foe;

... ousand deaths from ev'ry side,

... mark, and on my buckler rung;

... brog'd legions like a tempest rush'd

This

This friend, o'er gasping heroes, rolling steeds,
And snatch'd me from my fate.

Buf. I thank thee, general,
Thou hast a heart that swells with loyalty,
And throws off the infection of these times;
But thy degenerate boy——

Nic. No more my son,
I cut him off, my guilt, my punishment.
Look not, dread Sir, on me through his offence;
Oh, let not that discolour all my service,
And ruin those who blame him for his crime.

Buf. Old man, I will not wear the crown in vain,
Subjects shall work my will, or feel my pow'r,
Their disobedience shall not be my guilt;
Who is their welfare, glory, and defence?
The land that yields them food, and ev'ry stream
That slakes their thirst, the air they breathe is mine.
And is concurrence to their own enjoyment,
By due submission, a too great return?
Death and destruction are within my call——
But thou shalt flourish in thy master's smile.
A faithful minister adorns my crown,
And throws a brighter glory round my brow.

Nic. Take but one more, one small one to your favour,
And then my soul's at peace—I have a daughter,
An only daughter, now an only child,
Since her lost brother's folly; she deserves
The most a father can for so much goodness:
Her mother's dead, and we are left alone,
We two are the whole house, nor are we two,
In her I live, the comfort of my age;
And if the King extend his grace so far,
And take that tender blossom into shelter,
Then I have all my monarch can bestow,
Or heav'n itself, but this, that I may wear
My life's poor remnant out in your command;
Stretch forth my being to the last in duty,
And, when the Fates shall summon, die for you.

Buf. Nicanor, know, thy daughter is our care.

Myr. Oh, Sir, be greatly kind, exert your power,
And with the monarch furnish out the friend!
Art thou not he, that gallant-minded chief

B U S I R I S.

21

sloop to give me less than life?
 ve ungrateful? Shocking thought!
 ateful has no guilt but one,
 s may pass for virtues in him.
 y my daughter's promis'd welfare gives me,
 not open to discover——
 t me thank you.

s me,

Myr. Dry thy tears,
 And follow us; thy daughter's near our Queen,
 And long, no doubt, to see thee; Bless the maid,
 And then attend us on affairs of state,
 I hear there's treason near us; though the slaves
 Tail off from their obedience, and deny
 That I'm their monarch, I'm Buziris still.
 Collected in myself, I'll stand alone,
 And hurl my thunder, though I shake my throne:
 Like death, a solitary king I'll reign
 O'er silent subjects, and a desert plain;
 Ere brook their pride, I'll spread a gen'ral doom,
 And ev'ry step shall be from tomb to tomb.

[Exit.

[Myr. and Aul. who talked aside, advance.

tent beauties glow'd upon my mind,
 each thought. She never left me——
 lieve it? In the field of battle,
 A, and the flame of fight,
 hast stol'n away my soul,
 ne in danger—My rais'd arm
 , forgetful to descend,
 ent spar'd the prostrate foe——
 rth rose equal to my own!
 ved with honour, and enjoy
 —and why not now? Methinks
 c'd her in a fairer light,
 id, and heighten'd ev'ry charm.

odest grace subdu'd my soul.
 look, which seems to hang
 light o'er all her beauties,
 ng most inflames desire.

Enter Mandane.

ce! What dignity divine!
 Secrating ev'ry feature!

Around

Around that neck, what dross are gold and pearl?
Mandane! Powerful being, whose first fight
Gives me a transport not to be express'd;
And with one moment over-pays a year
Of danger, toil, and death, and absence from thee.

Mand. My Lord, I fought my father.

Myr. Leave me not,
I've much to say, much more than you conceive;
Yes, by the gods, much more than I can utter.
My breath is snatch'd, I tremble, I expire; [*Aside.*
Nay, here I'll offer tender violence—

[*Takes her hand.*

May I not breathe my soul upon this hand,
When your eyes triumph, and insult my pain?
Permit me here to take a small revenge.

Mand. My Lord, I am not conscious of my fault.

Myr. 'Tis false—I know the language of those eyes,
They use me ill—see my heart beat, Mandane;
Believe not me, but tell yourself my passion—
Is it in art to counterfeit witsen?

To drive the spirits, and inflame the blood?
Each nerve is pierc'd with light'ning from your eye,
And every pulse is in the throbs of love.

Mand. My Lord, my duty calls, I must not stay.

Myr. Give me a moment: I have that to speak
Will burst me if suppress'd—Oh, heav'nly maid!
Thy charms are doubled, so is thy disdain—
Who is it? Tell me who enjoys thy smile;
There is a happy man, I swear there is;
I know it by your coldness to your friend—
That thought has fix'd a scorpion on my heart,
That stings to death—and is it possible
You ever spoke of Myron in his absence,
Or cast, at leisure, a light thought that way?

Mand. I thought of you, my Lord, and of
And pray'd for your success; nor must I now
Neglect to give him joy.

Myr. Yet stay, you shall not go—Ungrateful
I would not wrong your father; but by heav'n
His love is hatred if compar'd with mine.
I understand whence this unkindness flows;
Your heart relents some licence of my youth

ve had touch'd my brain. You may forgive me,
 never shall forgive myself;
 live, I'd rush upon my sword,
 ve me, I shall now approach,
 er only, but a wretch
 om baleness to the ways of honour,
 passion join my gratitude.

neel before you, I shall rise
 As well a better as a happier man,
 Indebted to your virtue and your love.

Mand. I must not hear you.

Myr. Oh, torment me not!

Hear me you must, and more—Your father's valour,
 In the late battle, rescu'd me from death:
 And how shall I be grateful? Thou'rt a princess—
 Think not, Mandane, this a sudden start,
 A flash of love, that kindles and expires:
 Long have I weigh'd it; since I parted hence,
 No night has pass'd but this has broke my rest,
 And with ev'ry dream. My fair, I wed thee
 Best counsel of my soul.

gods, I tremble at the rising storm!

er?

then despise me?

want the courage to accept
 my merit, and for ever
 my little worth.

k myself, foregone my temper,
 y delights of youth,
 y virtue most severe?

make thee my friend?

ed thro' the pow'riul reasons
 d my fond resolves?

, and glory of no weight,
 got, and my own conquests,
 to sooth your pride,
 rt?

e hear me;

ron prove my ruin.

art thou marry'd?

[*Mand.*]

[*Kaels.*]

Myr.

Myr. My heart foretold it—Ah, my soul!

Aul. Madam, 'tis prude in you to withhold

[*Ex.*]

Myr. I do not live—I cannot bear the light
Where is Mandane? But I would not know.
She is not mine. Yet tho' not mine in love,
Revenge, my just revenge, may overtake her.
Oh, how I hate her! Let me know her faults.
Did the proud maid insult me in distress,
And smile to see me gasping? Speak, Auletes.
Did she not sigh? Sure she might pity me.
Though all her love is now another's right.

Aul. She sigh'd and wept; but I remov'd her from you.

Myr. It was well done. Yet I could gaze for ever,
And did she sigh, and did she drop a tear?
The tears she shed for me are surely mine;
And shall another dry them on those cheeks,
And make them an excuse for greater fondness?
Shall I assist the villain in his joys?
No, I will tear her from him.

I'd grudge her beauties to the gods that gave them.

Aul. My Lord, have temper.

Myr. And another's passion

Warm on that lip! another's burning arms
Strain'd round the lovely waist for which I die,
And she consenting, wooing, growing to him!
What golden scenes, when absent, did I feign!
What lovely pictures did I draw in air!
What luxury of thought! and see my fate!
Shall then my slave enjoy her, and I languish
In my triumphal car, my foot on purple,
And o'er my head a canopy of gold;
Fate in my nod, and monarchs in my train?
What if I stab him? No; she will not wed
His murderer. I never form'd a wish,
But full fruition taught me to forget it.
And am I lessen'd by my late success?
And have I lost my conquest? Fly, Auletes,
And tell her——

Aul. What, my Lord?

Myr. No, bid her——

Aul. Speak.

Myr. I know not what. My heart is torn asunder.

Aul. Retire, my Lord, and recompose yourself;
The Queen approaches. Ha! her bosom swells.

[*Exit Myron.*]

Her pale lip trembles, a disorder'd haste
Is in her steps; her eyes shot gloomy fires!
When Myris is in anger, happy they
She calls her friends.

Enter Queen.

Queen. Auletes, where's the King?

Aul. At cotagil, Madam.

Queen. Let him know I want him.

[*Exit Aul.*]

Bale! to forget to whom he owes a crown!
Fool! to provoke her rage whose hand is red
In her own brother's blood!

Enter King and Pheron.

King. Horrid conspiracy!

Pher. This night was destin'd for the bloody deed.

King. Mistaken villains! if they wish my death,
They should, in prudence, lay their weapons by.
So jealous are the gods of Egypt's glory,
I cannot die while lives are arm'd against me.
Haste, Pheron, to the dungeon, plunge them down
Far from the beams of day; there let them lie
Banish'd this world, while yet alive, and groan
In darkness and in horror; let double chains
Consume the flesh of Memnon's loaded limbs,
Till death shall knock them off. A king's thy friend:
Nay, more, Busiris. Go, let that suffice. [*Exit Pher.*]

Queen. My Lord, your thought's engag'd.

King. Affairs of state
Demind me from my Queen.

Queen. The world may wait:

at request, my Lord.

King. Oblige me with it.

Queen. Will you comply?

King. My Queen, my pow'r is yours.

Queen. Your Queen?

King. My Queen.

Queen. Indeed, it should be so.

then sign these orders for Amelia's death.

He starts, turns pale, he's sinking into earth
Enough; begone, and fling thee at her feet
Doat on my slave, and sue to her for mercy.
Go, pour forth all the folly of thy soul;
But bear in mind, thou giv'st not of thy own:
Thou giv'st that kindness which I bought with gold,
Nor shall I lose unmov'd.

King. I wish, my Queen,
This still had slept a secret for thy sake;
But since thy restless jealousy of soul
Has been so studious of its own disquiet,
Support it as you may. I own I've felt
Amelia's charms, and think them worth my

Queen. And dar'st thou bravely own it to
Forgetful man! 'tis I then owe a crown!
Thou hadst still grovell'd in the lower world
And view'd a throne at distance, had not I
Told thee thou wert a man, and (dreadful to
Thro' my own brother cut thy way to empire
But thou might'st well forget a crown bestow'd
That gift was small; I listen'd to thy sigh
And rais'd thee to my bed.

King. I thank you for it.
The gifts you made me were not cast away;
I understand their worth. Husband and King
Are names of no mean import; they rise to
Into dominion, and are big with pow'r. —
Whate'er I was, I now am King of Egypt
And Myris' Lord.

Queen. I dream! Art thou Busiris?
Busiris, that has trembled at my feet,
And art thou now my Jove with clouded brow,
Dispensing fate, and looking down on Me?
Dost thou derive thy spirit from thy crimes?
'Cause thou hast wrong'd me, therefore dost
And roll thine eye in anger? Rather bend,
And sue for pardon. Oh, detestable!
Burn for a stranger's bed! —

King. And what was mine,
When Myris first vouchsaf'd to smile on me?

Queen. Distraction! death! upbraided
Thou art not only criminal, but base.

Mine was a godlike guilt: ambition in it;
 Its foot in hell, its head above the clouds;
 For know, I hated when I most carefs'd:
 'Twas no Busiris, but the crown, that charm'd me,
 And sent its sparkling glories to my heart.
 But thou canst foil thy diadem with slaves.

King. Syphoces is a king then.

Queen. Ha!

King. Let fair Amelia know the King attends her.

[*Exit.*]

Queen. Go, tyrant, go, and wipe it, by thy shame,
 Prepare thy way to ruin: I'll o'ertrake thee,
 Living or dead; if dead, my ghost shall rise,
 To tick in thy ears, and stalk before thy eyes;
 To dash thy triumph o'er my rival's charms,
 And dash thy blood, when clasp'd within her arms.
 Alone to sleep is beneath the great;
 Tyrant, thy torments shall support my state.

[*Exit.*]

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

A C T III.

SCENE, *the General's House.*

Enter the King.

King.

HERE swells my stubborn fair; I'll sooth her pride,
 And lay an humbled monarch at her feet.
 But let her well consider, if she'll show
 To welcome bliss, and dead to glory's charms,
 Then my resentment rises in proportion
 To this high grace extended to my slave,
 And turn the force of her own charms against her.
 Monarchs may court, but cannot be deny'd.

Enter the Queen veiled.

Amelia, dry thy tears, and lay aside
 That melancholy veil—Ha, Myris!

Queen. Myris—

A name that should like thunder strike thine ear,
 And make thee tremble in this guilty place.
 But wherefore dost thou think I meet thee here?

Not with mean sighs and deprecating tears
 To humble me before thee, and increase
 The number of thy slaves, in hope to break
 Thy resolution, and avert thy crime ;
 But to denounce, if thou shalt dare persist,
 The vengeance due to injur'd Heav'n and me
 And by this warning double thy offence.
 Think, think of vengeance, 'tis the only joy
 Which thou hast left me ; I'm no more thy
 Nor Queen ; but know, I am a woman still.

Enter Auletes.

Aul. May all the gods watch o'er your life and empire,
 And render omens vain ! So fierce the storm,
 Old Memphis from her deep foundations shak
 And such unheard of prodigies hang o'er us,
 As make the boldest tremble. See, the moon
 Robb'd of her light, discolour'd, without form
 Appears a bloody sign, hung out by Jove,
 To speak peace broken with the sons of men
 The Nile, as frighted, shrinks within its bank
 And as this hour I pass'd great Isis' temple,
 A sudden flood of lightning rush'd upon it,
 And laid the shrine in ashes.

King. Oh, mighty Isis !

Why all these signs in nature ? Why this tem
 To tell me I am guilty ? If my crown
 The Fates demand, why let them take it back
 My crown, indeed, I may resign ; but, Oh !
 Who can awake the dead ? —————

'Tis hence these spectres shock my midnight
 And nature's laws are broke to discompose me
 'Tis I that whirl these hurricanes in air,
 And shake the earth's foundations with my gu
 Oh, Myris, give me back my innocence !

Queen. I bought it with an empire.

King. Cheaply sold !

Why didst thou urge my lifted arm to strike
 The pious King, when my own heart recoil'd ?

Queen. Why did you yield when urg'd, as
 You that are vain of your superior reason,
 And swell with the prerogative of man.
 If you succeed, our counsel is of nought,

You own it, not accepted, tho' enjoy'd ;
 It steal the glory, and deny the favour ;
 Yet if a fatal consequence attend,
 Then were the authors ; then your treach'rous praise
 Allows us sense enough to be condemn'd.

King. 'Tis prudent to dissemble with her fury,
 And wait a softer season for my love. [Aside.

Bid Isis' priests attend their King's devotions :
 I'll soon with sacrifice the angry pow'rs.
 Swift to my dungeons ; bid the r darksome wombs
 Give up the numerous captives of my wars ;
 Ten thousand lives to Heav'n devoutly pour,
 Not let the sacred knife grow cool from blood,
 As in old Nile, infected with the stain,
 In a death-streets flows purple to the main. [Exit.

Queen. In vain artifice ! I know the sacrifice
 You most intend. But I will dash your joys :
 Thou, victim, and thy goddess, both shall feel me.

Aul. Madam, the Prince.

Queen. And is he still afflicted ?

Aul. It grieves your faithful servant to relate it :
 He struggles manfully, but all in vain ;
 Sometimes he calls his muse to his aid,
 He strives with martial strains to fire his blood,
 And rouse his soul to battle :
 Then he relapses into love again,
 Feeds the disease, and doats upon his ruin.

Queen. Why seeks he here the cause of all his sorrows ?

Aul. He seeks not here Mandane, but her father ;
 For friendship is the balm of all our cares,
 Melts in the wound, and softens ev'ry fate.

[Martial Music.

Enter Myron at a distance.

Queen. Heav'ns, what a glory blazes from his eye !
 His force, what majesty in ev'ry motion !
 In each step he trod upon a foe !

Myr. Oh, that this ardor would for ever last !
 I shall, nor will I curse my being more :
 And kings, and conquer'd kingdoms are before me ;
 I bend the bow, and launch the whistling spear,
 And o'er the mountains, plunge into the stream,
 Where thickest saulchions gleam, and helmets blaze,

Rush in, and find amusement from my pain.
I'll number my own heart among my foes
And conquer it, or die.

Queen. The thoughts of war
Will soon dislodge the fair-one from his breast.
But this has broken in on my intent—
I would remind thee of my late commands.

Aul. Madam, 'tis needless to remind you
At dead of night I set the pris'ners free.

Queen. Yes, set the pris'ners free: 'tis
Such as my soul pants after—It becomes
Oh, it will gall the tyrant! stab him home!
And if one spark of gratitude survives,
Soften Syphoes to my fond desire,
The tyrant's torment is my only joy;
Ye gods! or let me perish or destroy,
Or rather both; for what has life to boast,
When vice is stalleless grown, and virtue lost?
Glory and wealth I call upon in vain,
Nor wealth nor glory can appease my pain;
My every joy upbraids me with my guilt,
And triumphs tell me sacred blood is spilt. [*Exit C*

Enter Myron.

Myr. The shining images of war are fled,
The sounding trumpets languish in mine ear,
The banners furl'd, and all the sprightly blaze
Of burnish'd armor, like the setting sun,
Insensibly is vanish'd from my thought:
No battle, siege, or storm sustain my soul
In wonted grandeur, and fill out my breast;
But softness steals upon me, melting down
My rugged heart in languishment and sighs,
And pours it out at my Mandane's feet.
I see her e'en this moment stand before me
Too fair for fight, and fatal to behold.

I have her here, I clasp her in my arms,
And in the magnets of excessive love,
Sigh out my heart, and bleed with tenderness

Aul. My Lord, too much you cherish this
She is another's

Myr. Do not tell me so;
Say rather she is dead; each heav'nly char

Turn into horror! Oh, the pain of pains
 When the fair-one whom our soul is fond of
 Gives transport, and receives it from another!
 How does my soul burn up with strong desire,
 Now shrink into itself, now blaze again!
 I'll tear and rend the strings that tie me to her:
 If I stay longer here, I am undone.

As he is going, enter Nicanor.

Nic. My Prince, (and since such honours you vouchsafe)
 My friend, I have presum'd upon your favour:
 This is my daughter's birth-day, and this night
 I dedicate to joys which ever languish,
 If you refuse to crown them with your presence.

Nicanor, I was warm on other thoughts—
 In arms I'll still near you in the day of danger,
 In marches, and the bloody field,
 Against nations clash in arms,
 As a people in one groan expire:
 I, with your helmet, thrown aside,
 and useless in the hour of peace?
 Since then you press it, I must be your guest—
 as I labour, as I onward move,
 In neck of some controuling pow'r. [*Aside.*
 In this mean? Wise may relieve my thoughts,
 and converse lift my soul again. [*Exeunt.*

The back Scene draws, and discovers a Banquet.

Enter Mandane richly dressed.

It was this day that gave me life; this day
 give much more, should give me Memnon too:
 A rival'd by his chains, they clasp
 so round, (a cold, unkind embrace!)
 that an earnest of far worse to come.
 O, my soul, in dungeon darkness clos'd,
 as damp unwholesome steams, and lives on poison,
 compell'd to suffer ornaments,
 as the rainbow, and to blaze in gems,
 on all the shining guilt of dress,
 'tis almost a crime that I still live.
 My eyes, which can't dissemble, pouring forth
 sad truth, are honest to my heart.

These

These robes, Oh, Memnon! are Mandane
And load, and gall, and wring her bleeding

*Enter Myron, Nicanor, Auletes, &
their Places.*

Nic. Sound louder, found, and waft my
Hear me, ye righteous gods, and grant my
For ever shine propitious on my daughter.
Protect her, prosper her, and when I'm
Still bless me in Mandane's happiness.

[The bowl goes round. Music.]

Haste, call my daughter; none can taste of joy,
Till she, the mistress of the feast, is with us.

[A Servant brings Nicanor a letter, & reads it.]

The King's commands at any hour are welcome.

Myr. Not leave us, General!

Nic. Ha! the King here writes me,
The discontented populace, that held
O'er midnight bowls their desperate cabals,
Are now in bold defiance to his power.
Amid the terrors of this stormy night,
Ev'n now, they deluge all yon western vale,
And form a war, impatient for the day.
The spreading poison too has caught his troops,
And the revolting soldiers stand in arms
Mix'd with seditious citizens.

Myr. Your call is great.

Enter Mandane. Myron starts from his Seat in disorder.

Mand. Oh, Memnon! how shall I become a banquet,
Suppress my sorrow, and comply with joy?
Severest fate! am I deny'd to grieve?

Nic. Be comforted, my child, I'll soon return.
Why dost thou make me blush? I feel my tears
Run trickling down my cheek.

Myr. I must away!

Her smiles were dreadful, but her tears are death.
I can no more. I sink beneath her charms,
And feel a deadly sickness at my heart. *[Aside to Aul.]*

Nic. Your cheek is pale, I dare not let you part.
You are not well.

Myr. A small indisposition ;
 I soon shall throw it from me. Farewel, General ;
 Conquest attend your arms.

Nic. You shall not leave
 Your servant's roof ; 'tis an unwholesome air
 And my apartment wants a guest.

Myr. Nicanor,
 If health returns, I shall not press my couch,
 And hear of distant conquests ; but o'ertake thee,
 And add new terror to the front of war.

Nic. Mean time, you are a guardian to my child ;
 Let her not miss a father in my abience ;

olds dear.

Farewel.

[*Embrace.*

Nic. *Exit on Myron off the Stage, and returns.*

I feel a tenderness at heart

Come near, Mandane,
 And indulge the father.

with her clay-cold' hand
 turning on thee her faint eye,
 oneness and expir'd.

well enough ; her grace
 and lives within thine eye.

you both—My heart o'erflows—

thy mother's monument—

tenderness—No more—

I shall return again,

best child fit down in peace,

my grief.

olds

iter's fervent vows, you will.

my only care ; my soul is with thee ;

and you remember me.

[*Exit.*

Enter Myron and Auleres.

can give me ease ; my restless thought,
 as in a troubled sea.

no, nor know I whither,

where ? Ha ! where indeed !

and ask myself again

—Impetuous bliss !

my mounting spirits blaze !

apest of delight !

Aul.

Aul. My Lord, you tremble, and your
Strange tumults in your breast.

Myr. What hour of night ?

Aul. My Lord, the night's far spent.

Myr. The gates are barr'd,
And all the household is compos'd to rest ?

Aul. All ; and the great Nicanor's men
Proud to receive a royal guest, expect

Myr. Perdition on thy soul for naming
Nicanor ! Oh, I never shall sleep more !
Defend me ! Whither wander'd my bold
Broke loose from reason, how did they run mad !
And now they are come home, all arm'd with stings,
And pierce my bleeding heart —

I beg the gods to disappoint my crime,
Yet almost wish them deaf to my desire :
I long, repent ; repent, and long again ;
And every moment differs from the last.
I must no longer parley with destruction.

Auletes, seize me, force me to my chamber,
There chain me down, and guard me from myself :
Hell rises in each thought ; 'tis time to fly. [Exit.

Enter Mandane and Rameses.

Ram. I hope your fears have giv'n a false alarm.

Mand. You've heard my frequent visions of the night,
You know my father's absence, Myron's passion ;
Just now I met him ; at my sight he started,
Then with such ardent eyes he wander'd o'er me.
And gaz'd with such malignity of love,
Sending his soul out to me in a look
So fiercely kind, I trembled, and retir'd.

Ram. No more ; my friends (which, as I have told you,
The Queen, to gill the tyrant, has set free)
Are lodg'd within your call ; th' appointed hour,
If danger threatens, brings them to your rescue.

Mand. Where are they ?

Ram. In the hall beneath your chamber.
Memnon alone is wanting ; he's providing
For your escape before the morning dawn.
The rest in vizors, tearing to be known,
Have ventur'd thro' the streets for your protection.

Mand. Auspicious turn ! when I gain

Ros. 'Tis suspicious turn indeed ! and what completes
The happiness, the base man that betray'd us
This arm laid low : I watch'd him from the King ;
I took him warm, while he with lifted brow,
Confess'd high thought, and triumph'd in his mien ;
I thank'd him with my dagger in his heart.
'Tis late ; refresh yourself with sleep, Mandane.

[*Exit Mandane.*]

So, 'tis resolv'd Myron dares attempt
So black a crime, it justifies the blow :
He dies, and my poor brother's ghost shall smile.
This way he bends his steps ; I hate his sight,
But death has made it lovely to me.

[*Exit.*]

Enter Myron and Auletes.

Now this passion, like a whirlpool, drives me,
In rapid motion, round and round,
Here, and draws in all my soul !

I can't but reason about her ;

But all reason dies before her ;

And she but tells me I am conquer'd. —

As if no star e'er shone

On the wide expanse, the lightning's flash
Larkens, and the burling clouds
Thunder seem to rock the land.

They dare now from shelter roam,
And make the forests groan.

I ? A monster yet more fell

Than the wilds ? — I am, and threaten more —

Darker than this dreadful night,
And fiercer tempest rage within —

— This leads me to her chamber —

Even croak ?

[*Starting.*]

Why should I
Fear her not.

My sov'n, methinks earth trembles under me !

Why should you cry, you are wanting to me ;

Why should you say, in ill ! Ob, take me whole !

Why should you firm me good without allay,

Why should you thus at variance with myself !

Why should you say, as he dash'd from side to side —

Why should you say, kept at parting, kneel'd before me,

Why should you say, she gave her to my care,

Why should you say, she sav'd my life — and doubt I still ?

[*Exit.*]

I'm guilty of the fact; here let me lie,
 And rather groan for ever in the dust,
 And float the marble pavement with my tears
 Than rise into a monster. [*Flings*]

Mandane passing at a distance, speaks to e

Man. Well, observe me.

Before the rising sun my Lord arrives,
 To seal our vows; the holy priest is with
 Watch to receive them at the western gate
 And privately conduct them to my chamber.

[*Exeunt Mandane and Servant.*]

Myr. [*Starting up.*] Oh, torments, racks and flames!
 then she expects him

With open arms! Am I cast out for ever,
 For ever must despair, unless I snatch
 The present moment? She is all prepar'd,
 Her wishes waking, and her heart on fire!
 That pow'rful thought sweeps heav'n and hell before it,
 And lays all open to the Prince of Egypt,
 Born to enjoy whatever he desires,
 And sing tear, anguish, and remorse behind him.
 I see her midnight dress, her flowing hair,
 Her slacken'd bosom, her relenting mien;
 All the forbidding forms of day flung off
 For yielding softness—Oh, I'm all confus'd!
 I shiver in each joint!—Ah, she was made
 To justify the blackest crimes, and gild
 Ruin and death with her destructive charms!

Aul. You'll force her then?

Myr. Thou villain, but to think it—

No, I'll solicit her with all my pow'r;
 Conquest and crowns shall sparkle in her sight.
 If she consent, thy Prince is bless'd indeed,
 Takes wing, and tow'rs above mortality!
 If she resist, I put an end to pain,
 And lay my breathless body at her feet.

*Mandane passing at a distance to her Chamber; Myr
 meets her.*

Mand. Is this well done, my Lord?

Myr. Condemn me not

Before

Before you hear me: let this posture tell you,
 I'm not so guilty as perhaps your fears,
 Your commendable, modest fears suspect.
 Nay do not go you know not what to do:
 I would receive a favour, not constrain it.
 Return, or good Nicanor, best of fathers,
 Shall charge you with the murder of his friend.

Mand. And dare you then pronounce that sacred name,
 And yet persist? Were you his mortal foe,
 What could your malice more?

Alyr. Oh, fair Mandane!
 I know my fault, I know your virtue too;
 But such the violence of my disorder,
 That I dare tempt e'en you. Methinks that guilt
 Has something lovely which proclaims your pow'r—
 But touch me with your hand, I die with bliss.
 Why swells your eye? By Heav'n, I'd rather see
 All nature mourn, than you let fall a tear!
 I own I'm mad, but mad of love.
 You can't be kinder to me than I myself;
 In that respect I'm mad in all.

Do not resist, but yield;
 I'll love you with love!

Mand. Oh, how you weep so; it will kill me;
 The more I speak, my eyes are darken'd;
 My limbs are numb; and my trembling limbs
 Cannot bear their weight; all left of life
 Is what I love: if love was in our pow'r,
 The fault were mine; since not, you must comply.
 How godlike to bestow more heav'nly joys
 Than you can think, and I support, and live?

Mand. Oh, how can you abuse your sacred reason,
 At particle of Heav'n, that soul of Jove,
 To varnish o'er, and paint so black a crime!
 Prince! —

Syr. What says Mandane?

Mand. Sir, observe me,
 burning sighs, and ever-streaming tears,
 if noble nature has with pity seen;
 would they not work deeper in your soul,
 if you convinc'd my sorrows flow for you?

For you, my Lord, they flow; for I am safe;
 (I know you are surpris'd) they flow for you
 Myron, my father's friend, my prince, my god
 Myron, my guardian god, attempts my peace
 And need I further reason for these tears?
 Nature affords no object of concern
 So great, as to behold a gen'rous mind
 Driv'n by a sudden gust, and dash'd on guilt.
 'Tis base, you ought not; 'tis impracticable.
 You cannot—Make necessity your choice
 Nor let one moment of defeated guilt,
 Of fruitless baseness, overthrow the glory
 Your whole illustrious life has dearly bought
 In toilsome marches, and in fields of blood.

Enter Auletes and Servants.

Aul. My Lord, your life's beset; the room bene
 Is throng'd with ruffians, which but wait the signal
 To rush and sheath their daggers in your heart.

Myr. Betray'd! Curs'd forcecest! It was a plot
 Concerted by them all to take my life,
 And this the bait to tempt me to the toil:
 She dies——

Aul. No, first enjoy, then murder her——
 Trust to my conduct, and you still are safe.
 They all are mask'd; I have my vizor too.
 But time is short; for once confide in me.
 You, Sir, for safety, fly to your apartment;

[To the You, hear Mandane to her closet——You, *To the*
 Speed to the southern gate, and burst it open.

[As the Servants seize Mandane, she gives the
off.

Enter Kamiesco and Conspirators mask'd.

Ram. The villain fled? Perdition intercept him
 Disperse, fly several ways, let each man bear
 A steady point well levell'd at his heart.
 If he escapes us now, success attend him;
 May he for ever triumph.

[As they pass the stage in confusion, Auletes enters
among them.

Aul. Ha! why halt you?
 Pursue, pursue! e'en now I saw the monster,

in, Myron, with these eyes I saw him
is prize swift to the western gate:
ere it burst.

[A noise without.

[Exit.

without.) 'Tis done :

the mally bar, and all is safe :

and with your lives defend the pass.

Enter Myron.

At least have time for vengeance on her,

and die not if I die. Barbarians!

Why are you pointed at my life! 'Tis well!

But I will give them an excuse for murder;

Such, such a cause— Off, love, and soft compassion;

Harden, each sinew of my heart, to steel.

I'll do, what, done, will shock myself, and those

Whom time sets farthest from this dreadful hour.

Enter Mandane, forc'd in by Auletes.

Mand. By what name 'tis that can revenge a falsehood,

I'm innocent of the thoughts of blood. [falls.

Myr. Why are you champions here in arms? 'Tis

Mand. I charge you for the wrong

done to my royal master!

Why do you stand my great defender!

Why do you stand to insult my tears,

Why do you stand to care to suffer wrong?

Why do you stand your friend, but not my father:

Why do you stand both, and my severe distress

Why do you stand more deeply wound him than your guilt.

[*Myron walks passionately at a distance.*

Myr. Slaves, are you sworn against me? Stop her voice,

And bear her to my chamber.

Mand. Oh, Sir! Oh, Myron!

Behold my tears—here I will fix for ever—

I'll clasp your feet, and grow into the earth—

cut me, hew me, give to ev'ry limb

separate death!—but spare my spotless virtue;

spare my fame—You wound to distant ages,

thro' all time my memory will bleed.

Myr. Distraction! all the pains of hell are on me!

[*As the Servants force in Mandane,*

Mand. Oh, Memnon!—Oh, my Lord!—my life!

where art thou?

[*She is borne off.*

D 2

[*Myron*

[Myron expresses sudden passion and surprise, stands awhile fixed in astonishment, then speaks.

Myr. As many accidents concur to work
My passions up to this unheard-of crime,
As if the gods design'd it — Be it then
Their fault, not mine — Memnon ! said she not Memnon ?
My heart began to stagger, but 'tis over —
Heav'n blast me, if I thought it possible
I could be still more curs'd — That hated dog
Her lord, her life ! — I thank her for my cure
Of all remorse and pity : this has left me
Without a check, and thrown the loosen'd reins
On my wild passion to run headlong on,
And in her ruin quench a double fire,
The blended rage of vengeance and of love.
Destruction full of transport ! Lo, I come
Swift on the wing, to meet my certain doom :
I know the danger, and I know the shame ;
But, like our phoenix, in so rich a flame
I plunge triumphant my devoted head.
And doat on death in that luxurious bed.

END of the THIRD ACT.

A C T IV.

Enter Myron in the utmost disorder, bareheaded
light, &c. Walks disturbedly before he speaks.

MYRON.

HENCEFORTH let no man trust the first
Of guilt ; it hangs upon a precipice,
Whose steep descent , last perdition ends !
How far am I plung'd down beyond all thought
Which I this evening fram'd ! — But be it so —
Consummate horror ! guilt beyond a name !
Dare not, my soul, repent : in thee repentance
Were second guilt ; and thou blasphem'it just
By hoping mercy. Ah ! my pain will cease
When gods want pow'r to punish. Ha ! the day
Rise never more, O Sun ! let night prevail,

Eternal darkness close the world's wide scene,
and hide me from Nicanor and myself.

Enter Auletes.

Who's there?

Aul. My Lord!

Myr. Auletes!

Aul. Guard your life.

The house is rous'd, the servants all alarm'd,
The gliding tapers dart from room to room;
Solemn confusion, and a trembling haste,
Mix'd with pale horror, glares on ev'ry face:
The strengthen'd foe has rush'd upon your guard,
And cut their passage thro' them to the gate.
Implacable Ramefes leads them on,
Breathing revenge, and panting for your blood.

Myr. Why, let them come, let in the raging torrent;
I wish the world would rise in arms against me,
For I must die, and I would die in state.

*The doors are burst open, the servants pass the stage in tumult,
Ramefes, &c. enter. Myron and his Guards over the
stage. Then Ramefes and Syphoces enter meeting.*

Where's the Prince?

The monster stands at bay;

no more than shut him from escape,

Force arrive.

Oh, my Syphoces!

This is a grief, but not for words.

I will live!

She lives——But, Oh, how bless'd
the day which are no more! By health I saw her;

on the ground in mourning weeds she lies,

Her torn and loosen'd tresses shade her round,

thro' which her face, all pale, as she were dead,

beams like a sickly moon. Too great her grief

is words or tears; but ever and anon,

after a dreadful, still, insidious calm,

collecting all her breath, long, long suppress'd,

she sobs her soul out in a lengthen'd groan,

and sad, it breaks the hearts of all that hear,

and sends her maids in agonies away.

Syph. Oh, tale, too mournful to be thought on!

Ram. Hold——

No, let her virgins weep ; forbear, Syphoc
Tear out an eye, but damp not our revenge.
Dispatch your letters ; I'll go comfort her.

[*A Servant enters and speaks aside to Ram*
And has she then commanded none approach
I'm sorry for it ; but I cannot blame her :

Such is the dreadful ill, that it converts
All offer'd cure into a new disease ;
It thuns our love, and comfort gives her pain

Re-enter Syphoces.

Syph. Your father is return'd : redundant Nile
Broke from its channel, overflows the pass,
And sends him back to wait the waters fall.

Ram. And is he then return'd ? I tremble for I
I see his white head rolling in the dust.
But haste, it is our duty to receive him.

Enter Myron.

Myr. I feel a pain of which I am not worthy,
A pain, an anguish, which the honest man
Alone deserves. Is it not wond'rous strange
That I, who stab'd the very heart of nature,
Should have surviving ought of man about me ?
And yet, I know not how, of gratitude
And friendship still the stubborn sparks survive,
And poor Nicanor's torments pierce my soul.
Confusion ! he's return'd.

Enter Nicanor.

Nic. My prince—— [*Advancing to*

Myr. My friend—— [*Turning aside and bidding*

Nic. I interrupt you.

Myr. I had thee there. [*Smiting &*

Before thou cam'st, my thoughts were bent upon

Nic. Oh, Sir, you are too kind !

Myr. Death, tortures, hell !

Nic. What says my Prince ?

Myr. A sudden pain,

To which I'm subject, struck across my heart.

'Tis past ; I'm well again.

Nic. Heav'n guard your health !

Myr. Dost thou then wish it ?

Nic. Am I then distrust'd ?

Then when I sav'd your life, I did the least
I e'er would do to serve you.

Myr. Barbarous man!

Nic. What have I done, my Prince? Which way offended?
Has not my life, my soul been yours?

Myr. Oh!—Oh!

Nic. By Heav'n, I'm wrong'd! Speak, and I'll clear
myself. *[Takes him by the hand.]*

Myr. I'm poison and destruction; curse thy gods;
I'll kill thee in compassion—Oh, my brain!
Away, away, away! *[Shows him from him; going.]*

Do, kill me, Prince.——

You will not go: I do demand the cause
You has put forth thy hand against thy father?
As provok'd, I'll do myself the justice
To thee, youth, that I deserve that name;
I love thy parents lov'd thee more than I.

I hear them; they are on me—Loose thy hold,
I'll plant my dagger in thy breast.

Your dagger is needless. Oh; ungrateful boy!

Forgive me, father; Oh, my soul bleeds for thee!

[Embrace.]

As he is going out Auletes meets him, and speaks to him

How to escape? On ev'ry side inclos'd?
I'm resolv'd to perish by his hand;
If I should, and meaner death I scorn.
How to work him to my fate, to sting
His passion up so high, will be a task
As severe, as difficult as strange.

But to me, cruel heart; it must be done.

[Aside.]

Now, from my very soul, I cannot tell,
How to enchantment all; for things so strange
As happen'd, I might well distrust my sense.
If mine eyes are true, I plainly read
Your grief in anguish, and I must confess
Your grief is just—It was inhuman in you——
To reveal the cause, unravel from the bottom
The mystery that has embroil'd our loves;
I'm ill, my Prince, I love, since you repent.)
An accident depriv'd me of my friend,
But sit you to yourself?

Myr.

Myr. A traitor's fight!

Nic. Beneath my roof?

Myr. Beneath thy very helmer.

Thou art a traitor. Guard thyself.

Nic. Distraction!

Traitor! — For standing by your father's

And stemming the wild stream that roars agst

Of rebel subjects, and of foreign toes?

For training thee to glory and to war?

For taking thee from out thy mother's arms,

A mortal child, and kindling in thy soul

The noble ardors of a future god?

Farewel, I dare not trust my temper more.

Myr. Grey-headed, venerable traitor!

Enter Ramcles.

Ram. Ha!

Turn, turn, blasphemer, and

All provocation's needless.

*[He assaults the Prince
ders him.*

Nic. Forbear, my!

Ram. Forbear!

Nic. If I am calm,

Your rage should cease.

Ram. No, 'tis my own reveng

Unless, Sir, you disown me for you

Nic. Thy sword against thy prince.

Ram. A villain.

Nic. Hold.

Ram. The worst of villains.

Nic. 'Tis too much.

Ram. Oh, father! —

Nic. What would'st thou?

Ram. Sir, your daughter —

Nic. Rightly thought;

She best can comfort me in all my sorrow.

Call, call Maudane: to behold my child

Would cheer me in the agonies of death:

Call her, Ramcles — Am I disoboy'd?

Ram. Oh, Sir! —

Nic. What mean those transports of conc

Ram. Though I'm an outcast from your love, I weep,
To open your black scene of misery.

Nic. Where will this end?—Oh, my fore-boding
heart!

Ram. Should he, to whom, as to a god, at parting,
You gave, with streaming eyes, your soul's delight,
While yet your last embrace was warm about him,
Gloomy and dreadful as this stormy night,
Rush on your child, your comfort, your Mandane,
All sweet and lovely as the blushing morn,
Seize her by force, now trembling, breathless, pale,
Prostrate in anguish, tearing up the earth,
Crying, shrieking to the gods and you.—
Hold my brain!—Look there, and think the rest.

*Act Scene opens. A darkened chamber, a bed, and the
stairs. Women pass out, weeping, &c. Ni-*

Nic. I am your father's daughter!—My only daughter!
That sweeten'd age
Pangs within me!
Ram. No, cease you useless tears,
Despair.
Nic. I would ease.

Ram. O!
Support my father.
I am less.
I'd the very tend' rest nerve;
Pities me:
Tough all the raging tortures of her soul
Relieve my pain! But hold, my heart, to thank her,
Burst at once, and let the pangs of death
Fly from my thought. [Goes to her.]

Nic. Severest fate
None its worst—I've drawn my father's tears.—
Forbear to call me by that tender name;
I can't help thee, I would fain forget
I am part of me—it only sharpens
The pangs, which, if a stranger, I should feel,—
I am here, my Mandane: to behold thee

In such excess of sorrow, quite destroys me,
And I shall die, and leave thee unreveng'd.

Mand. Oh, Sir! there are misfortunes most severe,
Which yet can bear the light, and we'll sustain'd
Adorn the sufferer. — But this affliction
Has made despair a virtue, and demands
Utter extinction, and eternal night,
As height of happiness. *[Scene shuts on them.]*

Enter Syphoces.

Ram. Oh, my Syphoces!

Syph. And does this move you? Does this melt you down,
And pour you out in sorrow? Then fly far,
Ere Memnon comes; he comes with flushing cheek,
And beating heart, to bear a bride away,
And bless his fate; how dreadfully deceiv'd!

Ram. The melancholy scene at length begins.

Enter Memnon.

Mem. Oh, give me leave
To yield to nature, and indulge my joy.
My friend! My brother! Oh, the ecstasy
That fires my veins and dances at my heart!
You love me not, if you refuse to join
In all the just extravagance, and flight
Of boundless transport on this happy hour
Where is my soul, my bliss, my lovely bride
Call, call her forth; Oh, haste! the priest
And ev'ry moment is a crime to love.

Ram. Speak to him. — Pr'ythee speak.

Syph. Be heav'n, I cannot.

Mem. What can this mean?

Ram. Syphoces.

Syph. Nay, Rameses.

Mem. By all the gods, they struggle with
And swallow down their tears to hide them
By friendship's sacred name, I charge you,

*[They look on him with the utmost concern
on different sides of the stage.]*

Was ever man thus left to dreadful thought,
And all the horrors of a black turnwise!

What woe is this too big to be express'd?
Oh, my sad heart! Why bod'st thou so severe
Mandane's life in danger! There indeed;

Fortune, I fear thee still; her beauties arm thee,
Her virtues made thee dreadful to my thought;
But for my love how I could laugh at fate!

Enter a Servant, and gives him a paper. He reads.

Enter Ramefes, Memnon furious and falls on Ramefes.

Ram. 'Twere happy if his soul would ne'er return;
The gods may still be merciful in this.—
His lids begin to rise.—How fares my friends?

Mem. Did Myron feel my pangs, you'd pity him.

Enter Syphoces.

Fainting beneath th' oppression of her grief,
Mandane seeks the fresher air:
Withdraw; 'twill pain her to be seen,
Of all by you.

By my own heart,
and am convinc'd.—I dare not see her,
'twould strike me dead.

*Memnon is going, Mandane meets him; both start,
she shrieks, Memnon recovers himself and falls
her knees; embracing them; she tries to disengage,
but persisting, she presses him; he takes her passionately
in his arms. They continue speechless and motionless
some time.*

Was ever mournful interview like this?
they writhe with anguish! Hear them groan!
Large silent dew run trickling down,
The weeping marble; passion chokes
words, and they're the statues of despair!
Oh, my Mandane!

*[At this she violently breaks from him, and exits.
a moment more.]*

[As Memnon is following, Ramefes holds him.]

Brother——

Forgive me——

You're to blame.——

Look there.

art is bursting.

1. With revenge.

2. And love.

3. Revenge.

4. Oug dear embrace, 'twill edge my sword.

Syph.

Syph. No, Memnon, if our swords now want an edge,
 They'll want for ever; to this spot I charm thee;
 By the dread words revenge and liberty!
 This is the crisis of our fates; this moment
 The guardian gods of Egypt hover o'er us,
 They watch to see us act like prudent men,
 And out of ills extract our happiness.
 My friends, these dire calamities, like poison,
 May have their wholesome use! This sad occasion,
 If manag'd artfully, revives our hopes;
 It gives Nicanor to our sinking faction,
 And still the tyrant shakes.

Ram. My father comes;
 Or snatch this moment, or despair for ever.
 While passions glow, the heart, like heated steel,
 Takes each impression, and is work'd at pleasure.

Enter Nicanor.

Nic. Why have the gods chose out my weakest hours,
 To set their terrors in array against me?
 This would beat down the vigour of my youth,
 Much more grey hairs, and life worn down so to
 Vain man! to be so fond of breathing long,
 And spinning out a thread of misery.
 The longer life the greater choice of evil;
 The happiest man is but a wretched thing,
 That steals poor comfort from comparison;
 What then am I? Here will I sit me down,
 Brood o'er my cares, and think myself to death.
 Draw near, Rameses; I was rash ere while,
 And chid thee without cause.—How many years
 Have I been cas'd in steel?

Ram. Full threescore years
 Have chang'd the seasons o'er your crested brow
 And seen your falchion dy'd in hostile blood.

Nic. How many triumphs since the king has

Ram. They number just your battles, one to

Nic. True, I have follow'd the rough trade of
 With some success, and can without a blush
 Review the shaken fort, and sanguine plain.
 I have thought pain a pleasure, thirst and toil
 Blest objects of ambition; I remember,
 (Nor do my foes forget that bloody day;)

When the barb'd arrow from my gaping thigh
Was wrench'd with labour, I disdain'd to groan,
Because I suffer'd for Butiris' sake.

Ram. The King is not to blame.

Nic. Is not the prince his son ?

Ram. But in himself—

Nic. And has he lost his guilt, *[Rising in passion.*
Cause he has injur'd me ? Ere while thy blood
Was kindled at his name.—Didst thou not tell me
A shameful black design on poor Amelia ?
Oh, Memnon ! what a glorious race is this,
To make the gods a party in our cause,
And draw down blessings on us !

Mem. He that supports them

In such black crimes, is sharer of their guilt.

Nic. Point out the man, and with these wither'd hands
I'd fly upon his throat, though he were lodg'd
Within the circle of Butiris' arms.

Ram. He that prevents ~~it~~ not when in his power,
Supports them in their course of flaming guilt,
And you are he !

Nic. Thou rav'st.

Syb. The army's yours.

I've founded every chief ; but wave your finger,
Thousands fall off the tyrant's side, and leave him
Naked of help, and open to destruction.

But sweep his minions, cut a pander's throat,
Or lop a sycophant, the work is done.

Nic. What would you have me do ? *[Starting.*

Mem. Let not your heart

Fly off from your own thought : be truly great,
Resent your country's sufferings as your own.
A generous soul is not confin'd at home,
But spreads itself abroad o'er all the public,
And feels for every member of the land.
What have we seen for twenty rolling years,
But one long tract of blood ! Or, what is worse,
Throng'd dungeons pouring forth perpetual groans,
And free-born men oppress'd ! Shall half mankind
Be doom'd to curse the moment of their birth ?
Shall all the mother's fondness be employ'd

To rear them up to bondage, give them strength
To bear afflictions, and support their chains?

Soph. To you the valiant youth most humbly bend,
[*Kneeling.*]

And beg that nature's gifts, the vigorous nerve
And graceful port, design'd to bless the world,
And take your great example in the field,
May not be forc'd by lewdness in high place,
To other toils, to labour for disease,
To wither in a loath'd embrace, and die
At an inglorious distance from the foe.

Ram. To you Amelia lifts her hands for safety.

Mem. To you—to you— [Kneeling.
[*Bursting in tears.*]

Nic. By heav'n he cannot speak.—I understand thee,
Rise—rise—my son. Rise all; your work is done;
They perish all, these creatures of my sword.
Have I not seen whole armies vaulted o'er
With flying javelins, which thus out the day,
And fell in rattling storms at my command,
To slay, and bury proud Busiri's foe?
He lives and reigns, for I have been his friend;
But I'll unmake him, and plough up the ground,
Where his proud palace stands. [Exit.

Mem. Oh, my Mandane!
The gods by dreadful means bestow success,
And in their vengeance, most severely bless:
From thy bright streaming eyes our triumphs flow,
The tyrant falls, Mandane strikes the blow.
So the fair moon, when seas swell high, and pour
A wasteful deluge on the trembling shore,
Inspires the tumult from her clouded throne,
Where silent, pensive, pale, she sits alone,
And all the distant ruin is her own.

END of the FOURTH ACT.

A C T V.

SCENE, *the Field.*

Enter Busris and Auletes. *An Alarm at a distance.*

BUSRIS.

WElcome the voice of war! though loud the sound,
It faintly speaks the language of my heart,
It whispers what I mean. But say, Auletes,
What urge these forlorn rebels in excuse
For chooling ruin?

Aul. Various their complaints;

But some are loud, that while your heavy hand
Presses whole millions with incessant toil,
(Toils fitter far for beasts than human creatures)
In building wonders for the world to gaze at,
Weeds are their food, their cup the muddy Nile.

Bus. Do they not build for me? Let that reward them—
Yes, I will build ~~more~~ wonders to be gaz'd at,
And temper all my cement with their blood.

Whose pains and art reform'd the puzzled year,
Thus drawing down the sun to human use,
And making him their servant? Who push'd off
With mountain dams the broad redundant Nile
Descended from the moon, and bid it wander
A stranger stream in unaccustom'd shores?

Who from the Ganges to the Danube reigns?—

But virtues are forgoo!—Away—to arms!

I'll call to mind my glorious ancestry,
Which for ten thousand rolling years renown'd,
Shines up into eternity itself,

And ends among the gods.

[*An alarm*]

Enter Memnon.

Aul. The rebel braves us.

Bus. Hold, let our weapons thirst one moment longer;
And death stand still, till he receives my nod.—
Whom meet I in the midst of my own realm,
With bold defiance on his brow?

Mem. The slave

Whom bread Busris lately laid in chains,
An emblem of his country.

Buf. Is it thus
You thank my royal bounty?

Mem. Thus you thank'd
The good Artaxes; thus you thank'd my father.

Buf. What I have done, conclude most right and just,
For I have done it, and the gods alone
Shall ask me why. Thou liv'st, although they fell;
And if they fell unjustly, greater thanks
Are due from thee, whom ev'n injustice spar'd.

Mem. Thy kindnesses are wrongs, they mean to sooth
My injur'd soul, and steal it from revenge.

Buf. Turn back thine eye, behold thy troops are thin,
Thy men are rarely sprinkled o'er the field,
And yet thou carriest millions on thy tongue.

Mem. All thy bloody-thirsty sword has laid in dust
Are on my side, they come in bloody swarms,
And throng my banners; thy unequal'd crimes
Have made thee weak, and rob my victory.—

Buf. Ha!

Mem. Nay, stamp not, tyrant; I can stamp as loud,
And raise as many dæmons at the sound.

Buf. I wear a diadem.

Mem. And I a sword.

Buf. Yet, yet submit, I give thee life.

Mem. Secure your own:

No more, Busris— bid the sun farewell.

Buf. Busris, and the sun should set together;
If this day's angry gods ordain my fate,
Know thou, I tall like some vast pyramid,
I bury thousands in my great destruction,
And thou the first.— Slave! in the front of battle
There thou shalt find me.

Mem. Thou shalt find me there,
And have well paid that gratitude I owe.

A continued Alarm.

Enter Myron and Nicanor meeting.

Nic. Does not mine eye strike horror through thee
And shake the weapon from thy trembling arm?
Buf. Boy! The foulness of thy guilt secures thee
From my reproach, I dare not name thy crime.

Myr. Old man, didst thou stand up in thy own

I then should be afraid of fourscore years,
And tremble at grey hairs; but since thy frenzy
Has lent those venerable locks to cast
A gloss of virtue on the blackest crime,
Accurst rebellion, this gives back my heart,
With all its rage, and I'm a man again.

Nic. Come on, and use that force in arms, I taught
I'll now resume the life I gave so late. [thee;

Myr. I grieve thou hast but half a life to lose,
And dost defraud my vengeance——At my touch
Thou moulder'st into dust, and art forgotten.

[*Preparing to fight, Myron Stops Short.*

Ah, no! I cannot fight with thee: begone
And stake elsewhere: thou canst not want a death
In such a field, though I refuse it to thee.
Rameses, Memnon, give them to my sword,
Sustain'd by thousands; but to fly from thee,
From thee, most injur'd man, shall be my praise,
And rise above the conquest of my foes.

Nic. 'Tis not old age, th' avenging gods pursue thee!

[*He retires before Nicanor off the Stage. A loud Alarm.*

Enter Busris and Auletes in pursuit.

Bus. 'Tis well, I like this madness of the field;
Let heighten'd horrors, and a waste of death
Inform the world Busris is in arms.
But then I grudge the glory of my sword
To slaves, and rebels; while they die by me,
They cheat my vengeance, and survive in fame.

Aul. I panted after in the paths of death,
And could not but from far behold your plume
O'er-shadow slaughter'd heaps, while your bright helm
Struck a distinguish'd terror through the field,
The distant legions trembling as it blaz'd.

Bus. Think not a crown alone lights up my name,
My hand is deep in fight. Forbid it, Isis,
That whilst Busris treads the sanguine field,
The foremost spirit of his host should conquer
But by example, and beneath the shade
Of this high-brandish'd arm. Didst thou e'er fear?
See 'tis an art. I know not how to fear.

'Tis one of the few things beyond my power;
And if death must be fear'd before 'tis felt,

Thy master is immortal, Oh, Auletes——
 But while I speak, they live!
 Where fall the sounding cataracts of Nile,
 The mountains tremble, and the waters boil;
 Like them I'll rush, like them my fury pour,
 And give the future world one wonder more. [Exeunt.

*Enter Myron engaged with a party; his plume is smitten off.
 He drives the foe, and returns.*

Myr. When death's so near, but dares not venture on
 'Tis Heaven's regard, a kind of salutation, [us,
 Which to ourselves our own importance shews.—
 Faint as I am, and almost sick of blood,
 There is one cordial would revive me still;
 The sight of Memnon; place that fiend before me. [Exit

Enter Memnon.

Mem. Where, where's the Prince? Oh, give him to
 my sword!

His tall white plume, which like a high wrought form
 Floated on the tempestuous stream of fight,
 Shew'd where he swept the field; I follow'd swift,
 But my approach has turn'd him into air——

Enter Myron.

The fight but now begins!

Myr. Why, who art thou?

Mem. Prince, I am——

Myr. Memnon.

[Dis]

Mem. No——I'm Mandane.

Myr. Ha!

Mem. She's here, she's here, she's all: her
 and virtues! [Striking his head.

Virtues and wrongs! Thou worse than murder——

Myr. I charge thee name her not, forbear
 With that ill-omen'd note.

Mem. Mandane!

Myr. Be it so.

When I reflect on her mean love for thee,
 And plot against my life, my pain is less.

Mem. 'Tis false; she meant she knew it not; Rameses,
 He, only he, was conscious of the thought.

Myr. Then I'm a wretch indeed!

Mem. As such I'll use thee;

I'll dash thee like some poison on the earth,
Then haste and cleanse me in the blood of men.

• *Myr.* I thank thee for this spirit which exalts thee
Into a foe, I need not blush to meet.

Now from my soul, it joys me thou art found,
And found alive; by heav'n, so much I hate thee,
I fear'd that thou wast dead, and hadst escap'd me:
I'll drench my sword in thy detested blood,
Or soon make thee immortal by my own.

Villain!

Mem. Myron!

Myr. Rebel!

Mem. Myron!

Myr. Hell!

Mem. Mandane!

[*Myron falls.*]

Myr. Just the blow, and juster still,
Cause imbitter'd to me by that hand
most detest; which gives my soul an earnest
of vast unfathomable woes to come,
That dreadful dowry for my dreadful love.
I leave the world my misery's example,
I wish'd aright, no trivial legacy.

[*Dies.*]

Enter Syphoces.

Syb. My Lord, I bring you most unwelcome news.
A poor Mandane wander'd near the field,
I hope to see her injuries reveng'd;
Thoughtless of any suit'rings but the past,
Party of the foe, saw, seiz'd, and bore her off.

Mem. Veng'ance and conquest now are trivial things,
We made their prize! 'Tis impious in my soul
To entertain a thought but of her rescue.
Now, now, I plunge into the thickest war,
As some bold diver from a precipice
Into mid ocean, to regain a gem,
Whose loss impoverish'd kings, to bring it back,
I see the day no more.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter Mandane Prisoner.

Mand. A gen'rous foe will hear his captive speak;
Benefit thus kneeling I implore:

Let one of all those swords that glitter round me,
Ouchsafe to hide its point within my breast.

Enter

B U S I R I S.

Enter Memnon.

Mem. Ah, villains! Cursed atheists! Can you bear
That posture from that form? What, what are numbers,
When I behold those eyes? Not mine the glory,
That singly thus I quell a host of foes.
Inhuman robbers! Oh, bring back my soul.

[They force her off, he rushes in upon them and is taken.]
Poor comfort to mankind, that they can lose
Their lives but once—But, Oh! a thousand times
Be torn from what they love.

Enter Rameses.

Ram. Far have I waded in the bloody field,
Laborious through the stubborn ranks of war,
And trac'd thee in a labyrinth of death;
But thus to find thee!—Better find thee dead!
These slaves will use thee ill.

Mem. Of that no more;
Myron is dead, and by this arm.

Ram. I thank thee.
All my few spirits left exult with joy,
I'll chase and scourge him through the lower world.

Mem. Alas, thou bleed'st.

Ram. Curse on the tyrant's sword,
I bleed to death; but could not leave the world,
Without a last embrace. Just now I met
The poor Mandane.

Mem. Quickly speak. What said she?

Ram. Nothing of comfort. Cease to ask me farther.
If you meet more, your meeting will be sad.—
Your arm, I faint—Ah, what is human life?
How like the dial's tardy-moving shade!
Day after day slides from us unperceiv'd!
The cunning fugitive is swift by stealth,
Too subtle is the movement to be seen,
Yet soon the hour is up—and we are gone.
Farewel, I pity thee.

Mem. Farewel, brave friend!
Would I could bear thee company to rest,
But life in all its terrors stands before me,
And shuts the gate of peace against my wishes.—
Do I not hear a peal of distant thunder?
And see, a sudden darkness shuts the day,

And

And quite blots out the sun—But what to me,
The colour of the sky? A death-cold dew,
Hangs on my brow, and all my slacken'd joints
Are shok without a cause—A groan! from whence?
Again! And no one near me? Vain delusion!
Yet not I fear in vain! some ill is tow'rd me,
More dreadful sure, than all that's past. Mandane!
Nephew'd she was at peace, and past the reach
Of this ill news, but such my wayward fate
I cannot ask a curse, but 'tis deny'd me:
And could I wish I ne'er should see her more?

Enter Mandane guarded.

and. This is my brother; a short privacy
I shall favour you may grant a toe.

ard. Let it be short, we may not wait your leisure.

m. 'Tis wond'rous strange, there's something holds
me from her,

keeps this foot fast rooted to the ground.

is the last time I shall ever pray.

O, ye gods, confine your threat'ned vengeance,

I will bless your mercies while I suffer.

[*Memnon and Mandane advance slowly to the front
of the stage.*]

and. What didst thou pray for?

m. For thy peace.

and. 'Twas kind;

Oh! those hands in bonds deny the blessing,
which they earnestly were rais'd to heav'n.

m. I fear so too; what we have yet to do

is soon done; this meeting is our last.

Shall we use it?

and. How? Consult thy chains,
my calamities.

m. Sad counsellors,
cruel their advice—Are there no other?

and. I look around—and find no glimpse of hope,
direct night of horror and despair!

m. Of horror and despair, indeed, Mandane!

Shall thou believe me? Nay, can I believe

myself? The last thing that I wish'd for was—'tis false.

The weight of my misfortune hurts my mind.

and. Was what?

Mem.

Mem. I dare not think; to think is to look down
A precipice ten thousand fathom deep,
That turns my brain—Oh! Oh!

Mand. Memnon, no more:
That silence and those tears need no explaining;
And it is kind, with such severe reluctance
To think upon my death—though necessary.

Mem. Ah, hold! You plant a thousand daggers
Talk not of dying—I disown the thought;
Right is not right, and reason is not reason,
All is distraction when I look on thee.
Oh, all ye pitying gods! dash out from nature
Your stars, your sun, but let Mandane live.

Mand. No: death long since was my confirm'd resolve.

Mem. Myron is dead.

Mand. What joy a heart like mine
Can feel, it feels—had he been never born,
I might have liv'd—his now—impossible.

Mem. This even to my miseries I owe,
That it discovers greater virtues still,
In her my soul adores—Oh, my Mandane!
Oh, glorious maid! then thou wilt be at peace—

[Memnon walks thoughtfully, and returns.]

Must I survive, and change thy tenderne's
For a stern master, and perpetual chains?
Long I may groan on earth to fate their malice,
Then through slow torments linger into death,
No steel to stab, no wall to dash my brain!

Mand. Ha!

Mem. Why thus fix'd in thought? What might
Is lab'ring in your soul? Your eyes speak woe.

Mand. Will not the blood hounds be content
With life?

Mem. Alas, Mandane! No; they study nature
To find out all her secret seats of pain,
And carry killing to a dreadful art:
A simple death in Egypt is for friends.

Mand. Oh, then it must be so!—and yet it c

Mem. What means this sudden paleness?

Mand. Heav'n assist me!

[Feeling in her bosom the swoons.]

Mem. My love! Mandane! hear me, my espous'd!

My

My dearest heart! the infant of my bosom!
Whom I would foster with my vital blood.

• *Mand.* 'Tis well, and in return I give thee—this.

[Shows a dagger.]

Mm. Millions of thanks, thou refuge in despair.

Mand. Terrible kindness! Horrid mercy! Oh!

I cannot give it thee.

Mm. Full well I know

Thy tender soul, and I must force it from thee.

[As he is struggling with her for the dagger, she speaks.]

Mand. My Lord! my soul! myself! You tear my heart.

Am I not dearer to my eyes than light?
Do I not circulate through all my veins?
With life, and form my very soul!

Now, monsters, I defy you: fate forbids
I will not allow my guard may interpose,
Or your favour vain—Thus, only thus. *[Embrace.]*

• Ah, no! Since last I saw thee, thrice I rais'd
[Holds his arm.]

My bleeding arm, and thrice I let it fall.—
I refuse compassion to my sex,
Who betrays me, and is Myron's friend.—
My son-in-law, you supply an arm,
Which still will be happy in your love.

• *[After a pause of astonishment, he sinks gently on the earth.]*

• From dreadful to more dreadful I am plung'd,
And in deepest anguish deeper still.

I complain in common with mankind—

A wretched species all alone.

I do not daily lose thee, but be curs'd

Who in my own hands with thy life-blood?

It cannot be avoided.

• Nor perform'd.

• My hand against thee as a foe!

• Who should save thee from thy very father,

And such thy dearest friends to use thee well,

Whose kindness kind, and soften all their smiles?

My Mandane! Think how I have lov'd!

My Mandane! Think upon thy pow'r!

How often hast thou seen me pale with joy,
And trembling at a smile? and shall I—

Mand. Myron—

[At that Memnon starts up suddenly.]

Mem. Ah, hold! I charge thee hold! One glance that
way

Awakes my hell, and blows up all its flames.—
The world turns round, my heart is sick to death!
Oh, my distraction! perfect loss of thought!

Mand. Why stand you like a statue? Are you dead?
What do you fold so fast within your arms?
Why with fix'd eye-balls do you pierce the ground?
Why shift your place, as if you trod on fire?
Why gnaw your lip, and groan so dreadfully?
My Lord, if I have spent whole live-long nights
In tears, and sigh'd away the day in private,
Only oppress'd with an excess of love,
Oh, turn, and speak to me!

Mem. And these, no doubt,
Are arguments that I should draw thy blood.—
No child was ever lull'd upon the breast
With half that tenderness has melted from thee,
And fell like balm upon my wounded soul.
And shall I murder thee? Yes, thus—thus—thus.

|| Embracing some time.

Mand. Alas! My Lord forgets we are to die.

[Memnon gazes with wonder on the dagger.]

Mem. By heav'n I had! my soul had took her flight
In bliss—Why, is not this our bridal-day?

Mand. That way distraction lies.

Mem. Indeed it does.

Roth. Oh! Oh!

Mand. Thy sighs and groans are sharper than thy sword.
The guard is on us.

Mem. Then it must be done.

Sun, hide thy face, and put the world in mourning,
Though blood start out for tears, 'tis done—but one.
One last embrace.

[As he embraces her, she bursts into tears.]

Let me not see a tear.—I could as soon
Stab at the face of heaven, as kill thee weeping.

Mand. 'Tis past, I am compos'd.

Mem.

Mem. And now, and now.

Maud. Be not so fearful, 'tis the second blow
Will pain my heart—indeed this will not hurt me.

Mem. Oh, thou hast stung my soul quite through and
through,

With those kind words; I had just steel'd my breast;

[Dashing down the dagger.]

And thou undo'st it all—I could not bear

To razor thy skin, to save the world from ruin.

Maud. If you're a woman, I'll be something more.

I shall not taste of heav'n till you arrive.

[Stabs herself.]

Maud. Struck home—and in her heart.—She's
dead already,

And now with me all nature is expir'd.—

My lonely bride; now we again are happy,

[Stabs himself.]

And better worlds prepare our nuptial bow'r.—

Now ev'ry splendid object of ambition,

Which lately with their various losses play'd

Upon my brain, and fool'd my idle heart,

Are taken from me by a little mist,

And all the world is vanish'd.

[Dies.]

A march sounded. Enter Nicanor and Syphocles victorious.

The Guard which were advancing to the bodies fly.

Nic. The day's our own, the Persian's angry pow'r's

Have well repaid this morning's insolence,

And turn'd the desp'rate fortune of the field

Py sure, though late relief.

Syph. Nicanor, friend,

from the city bring you welcome news:

A guilty letter from the minorous queen

—, read amongst the multitude; while yet

Their blood was warm with reading the black scroll,

Myris to view the fortune of the fight,

Leaving her palace for the western tow'r,

Was seiz'd, torn, scatter'd on the guilty spot

Where her great brother fell.

Nic. The gods are just.

Syph. See where Busiris comes, your royal captive,

In his misfortune great; an awful ruin!
And dreadful to the conqueror!

[Nicanor advancing sees the bodies.

Nic. Sad fight! —————

A fight, that teaches triumph how to mourn,
And more than justifies these streaming tears,
Even on the moment that my country's fav'd
From sore oppression, and inglorious chains.

[He falls on his attendants.

A great Shout. Enter Busiris wounded.

Bus. Conquer'd! 'Tis false; I am your
Your master, though in bonds; you stand ag
At your good fate, and trembling can't enjoy
Now from my soul I hug these welcome eha
Which shew you all Busiris, and declare
Crowns and success superfluous to my fame.
You think this streaming blood will low'r my
No, ye mistaken men, I smile at death;
For living here, is living all alone,
To me a real solitude, amid

A throng of little beings, groveling round
Which yet usurp one common shape and na
I thank these wounds, these raging pains,
An interview with equals soon elsewhere.

[He

Ha! Dead? 'Tis well; he rose not to my
I only wish'd his fate, and there, he lies.
Some when they die, die all: their mould'
Is but an emblem of their memories:
The space quite closes up through which
That I have liv'd, I leave a mark behind,
Shall pluck the shining age from vulgar ti
And give it whole to late posterity.

My name is writ in mighty characters,
Triumphant columns, and eternal domes,
Whose splendor heightens our Egyptian
Whose strength shall laugh at time, till th
Old earth itself, shall fail. In after-ages
Who war or build, shall build or war fro
Grow great in each, as my example fires
'Tis I of art the future wonders raise;
I fight the future battles of the world.—

Great Jove, I come! Egypt, thou art forsaken: [*Sinks.*

Asia's impoverish'd by my sinking glories,

And the world lessens, when Buziris falls. . [*Dies.*

Symb. Bear the dead monarch to his pyramid;

And for what use soe'er it was design'd,

By that high-minded, but mistaken man,

There let him lie magnificent in death:

Great was his life, great be his monument:

And Buziris' nephew, young Arfaces,

Of gentler spirit, let the crown devolve.

From this day's vengeance let the nations know,

Jove lays the pride of haughtiest monarchs low;

And they who kindled with ambitious fire,

Arms and arms with most success aspire,

Void of virtue, but provoke their doom,

Wasp at their fate, and build themselves a tomb.

END of the FIFTH ACT.





EPILOGUE.

By a FRIEND.

Spoken by MANDANE.

THE race of critics, dull judicious rogues,
To mournful plays deny brisk epilogues.
Each gentle swain and tender nymph, say they,
From a sad tale should go in tears a-way,
From hence quite home should streams of sorrow shed,
And crown'd in grief, steal supperless to bed.
This doctrine is so grave, the sparks won't bear it;
They love to go in humour to their claret.
The cit, who owns a little fun worth buying,
Holds half-a crown too much to pay for crying.
Beside, who knows without these healing arts,
But love might turn your heads, and break your hearts;
And the poor author, by imagin'd wags,
Might people Beth'lem with our Belles and Beaus?
Hence I, who lately bid adieu to pleasure,
Robb'd of my spouse, and my dear virgin treasure;
I, whom you saw despairing breathe my last,
Am free and easy, as if nought had past;
Again put on my airs, and play my fan,
And fear no more that dreadful creature, man
— But whence does this malicious mirth begin! —
I know, ye beasts, you reckon it no sin.
'Tis strange that crimes the same, in diff'rent plays,
Should move our horror, and our laughter raise.
Love's joy, secure the comic actor tries,
But if he's wicked in blank verse, he dies.

E P I L O G U E.

*The farce, where wives prove frail, still makes the best,
And the poor cuckold is a standing jest:*

*But our grave bard, a virtuous son of Ists,
Counts a fold stroke in love among the vices,*

*In blood and wounds a guilty land he dips ye,
And wastes an empire for one ravish'd gipsy.*

*What musty morals fill an Oxford head,
Institutions of pedantic virtue bred!*

*There e'er the stiff Dem at gallantry exclaims,
And call fine men and ladies filthy names;*

*They tell us rakes and jilts corrupt a nation:
—Such is the prejudice of education!*

*Who know better things, will sure approve
These scenes, that shew the boundless power of love*

*Let, when they will, th' Italian things appear,
This play, we trust, shall throng an audience here.*

*Bald Myron's passion, up to frenzy wrought,
Would ill be warbled through an eunuch's throat:*

*His part, at least, his part requires a man;
Let Nicolini act it if he can.*



Act II.

EURYDICE

Scene 5.



*M^r CLARKE in the Character of PRO
Thou Queen of Souls! Thou Rapture of my
what means this pensive Mood??*

BELL'S EDITION.

E U R Y D I C E.

A TRAGEDY.

As written by Mr. MALLEY.

DISTINGUISHING ALSO THE
VARIATIONS OF THE THEATRE,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane.

Regulated from the Prompt-Book,

By PERMISSION of the MANAGERS,

By Mr. HOPKINS, Prompter.



L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN BELL, near Exeter-Exchange, in the Strand.

MDCCLXXVII.

TO HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF

M O N T R O S E.

MY LORD,

I Beg leave to shelter the following tragedy under your patronage; a small, but sincere return of gratitude for the many obligations I have to your Grace, and in particular, for the generous concern with which you supported and supported the interest of this performance: and to which I am greatly indebted for its reputation and success.

Permit me to add, in justice to your Grace, (and I do it with equal pride and pleasure) that I received this indulgence without being obliged to pay for it that adulation and baseness of heart, which is sometimes exacted by the vulgar great; but is more frequently the voluntary, ill-judged offering of mean and venial writers. I am, with the truest zeal and attachment,

My Lord,

Your Grace's most obliged,

And most faithful servant,

D. MALLETT.

P R O L O G U E.

Written by AARON HILL, Esq.

IN youth when modesty and merit meet,
How rare the union, and the force how sweet!
Tho' at small praise our bumble author aims,
His friend may give him what his blind idolatrie
Ladies—to you he makes his chief address;
Form'd to be pray'd to, and even born to bless;
He feels your power himself, and makes it felt;
His scenes will teach each stubborn heart to melt;
And each fair eye that now shines softly bare,
Anon shall show still softer thro' a tear.

Let not constraint your en'rous sighs repress,
Nor will compassion, nor repent distress.
Your sex's strength is in such weakness found,
And sighs and tears but help your charms to wound.
Of all the wonders taught us by the fair,
'Tis strangest, tragedy should lose their care!
Where Love, soft tyrant, in full glory reigns,
And softer beauty holds the world in chains.
Less polish'd, and more bold, the comic muse
Ushers your Cupid, or obstructs his views,
Upholds presuming wit's familiar claim,
And blots out awe from love's diminish'd flame:
Finds or makes faults, and sets them strong in sight,
And dares draw woman just, or vain, or light.
While tragedy, your servant try'd and true,
Still to your fame devoted, and to you,
Enslav'd to love, subdu'd ambition brings,
Firms beauty's power, and crowns it king of kings.

Let wifely attention grace our scene to-night,
And wifely affections move refin'd delight.
Each tender light of life we recommend,
Life, husband, subject, parent, son, and friend;
All your impassion'd interests shall engage,
Love, hopes, and fears, and pity, fire the stage.
Then, when soft sorrow swells the fair-one's breast,
And sad impression mix with nightly rest,
Pleasing remembrance shall our scene supply,
And the sweet saddening influence never die.

D R A M A T I S P E R S O N Æ.

M E N.

	<i>Drury-Lane.</i>
<i>Procles</i> , Tyrant of <i>Epidaurus</i> , in Possession of the Crown of <i>Corinth</i> .	Mr. Clarke
<i>Medon</i> , his Favourite, —	Mr. Packer
<i>Leonidas</i> , a Nobleman, secretly in the Queen's interest, —	Mr. Davies.
<i>Periander</i> , King of <i>Corinth</i> .	Mr. Garrick
<i>Polydore</i> , his Son, —	Mr. Hollan
<i>Ariston</i> , —	Mr. Burton

W O M E N.

<i>Eurydice</i> , Queen of <i>Corinth</i> ,	— Mrs. Cibber
<i>Melissa</i> , her Confidante, —	— Miss W...

Officers, Guards, Attendants.

S C E N E, C O R I N T H.

EURYDI

E U R Y D I C E.

* * * The lines distinguished by inverted commas, 'thus,' are omitted in the Representation, and those printed in *Italics* are the additions of the Theatre.

A C T I.

Eurydice and Melissa.

[Thunder.]

EURYDICE.

Heavenly Powers!

What means this dreadful war of sea and sky?

Dreadful, indeed! It rose not by degrees,
once, a tempest wild and loud.

Far, from the wintry north how keen it howls
The lone towers, that rock with every blast,
Ere threatening ruin on our heads!

— Stand here, and cast thy eyes below,

That ocean to the distant sky,
Confusion fills the raving deep!

Mountain-waves arise! — 'Tis terrible,

I go to the horrors of my fate,

Despair that desolates my soul.

Behold, behold, due west, where yonder rocks
The heaving tides — Oh, sight of woe!

Yon ships, abandon'd to the storm,
Fly with the billows, their drench'd sails

And whirl'd before the rending wind.
O, list them, all good Powers! The storm is high,
And perilous.

They climb a fearful steep, and hang
In surges that mixes with the clouds.

They burst, and headlong down they reel
Into

8 E U R Y D I C E .

Into the yawning gulph. They cannot 'scape.
A sea rowls o'er the foremost.

Mel. Ah ! she strikes

On yonder wave-worn cliff. The fatal shock
Has doubtless shiver'd her strong side. She sinks,
So swiftly down, that scarce the straining eye
Can trace her tallest main. Where is she now ?
Hid in the wild abyfs, with all her crew,
All loft for ever !

Eur. Turn we from the fight,
Too difmal for a woman's eye to bear.
Ill-fated men ! whom, knowing not, I mourn ;
Whence, or what may they be ? Even now, perhaps,
In fome far diftant land, a faithful wife,
Or tender parent, offers vows to Heaven
For their return, and fondly numbers up
The ling'ring months of abfence. Fruitless love !
They never more fhall meet !—By my own ill
Severely taught, I pity them : yet think
Their fate, all full of horror as it feems,
Is rather to be envy'd. They are now
Beyond the hand of fate, at reft for ever ;
While I, Meliffa——

Mel. Ah, Eurydice,

My royal miftrefs, rather think the gods
Would teach you, by this fight of mournful ruin,
Patience and gentler thought. When others too
Are miserable, not to know the worft
Is fome degree of blifs.

Eur. Meliffa, no.

I tell thee, no ill fate, no face of death
Can be fo dreadful as a life like mine.
Call back to thy remembrance what I've been ;
How happy in a husband, and a fon
The rifing boaf of Greece ! Behold me now
Cafte down to loweft intamy ; the flave,
The fport of a foul tyrant, who betray'd me,
And would deftroy my honour. Gracious Heav'n
And fhall this bold offeuder, who has broke
All bonds of holy faith, yet bids his foul
Rejoice and take her eafe ; fhall he long truce
Here in the throne of Corinth, while its lord

E U R Y D I C E .

The great, unhappy Periander, roams
An unknown fugitive ?

Mel. These tears, my Queen,
These faithful tears, which sympathising sorrow
Draws from my eyes, speak the sad share I take
In all your mighty ills.

Eur. Say, now, Melissa,
Is there among the daughters of affliction,
One so forlorn as poor Eurydice ?

A prisoner here, subjected to the power
Of Procles, daily doom'd to bear,
The insult ! his detested love.
How can I equal this ? Why did I trust
Myself to a tyrant ?
His minion's here.

Enter Medon.

O beautiful Queen ! By me, the royal Procles
In service bends him to your charms ;
Your health, and gentle peace of mind
I'll guard for morn, and make your evening fair,
And all your tenderest vows——

But thou inform me
Of the unhappy men, whom I but now
Saw on this coast ?

Who they are ;
And what their fate, these eyes with dread beheld.
They were sent from the morning's chase return'd,
And might have spurr'd on with all his train,
If not for the loss of the noblest of his
Possibles, whom the wild sea
Had driven on the land. But first his love,
In each moment's absence from your eyes
Giving torment, bad me fly
To meet him, and greeting to the matchless fair,
His soul enslav'd.

But he will not bear him back,
But he has wrong'd, betray'd, and ruin'd,
And with nothing, unrelenting scorn,
And man's hate, in just return
Gives me love. The tyrant coward !
Fallen and helpless, to embitter
My miseries himself has caus'd,
And my wretchedness !

Mel.

Med. Your pardon, Madam,
 If I, the humblest of your slaves, presume
 To place before your eyes in faithful prospect,
 That mournful period, full of dread and danger,
 Which late you saw. Behold then your false subjects,
 Wantonly mad, and spurning every tie
 Of sworn obedience, mix'd in one bold treason,
 Threat'ning and universal: your lost husband
 Absent, involv'd in unsuccessful war;
 His troops averse and mutinous. From them
 Bold faction with contagious swiftness spread
 To Corinth too, where the wild herd arous'd
 Insulted you, and drove you to this fortress.
 Say, where was then your hope, when meagre Famine
 Join'd his devouring ravage, and your eyes
 Saw daily, hourly perish, those poor few
 Whose faith had kept them yours?

Eur. Oh, would to Heaven,
 I then had perish'd too!

Med. Such was your state,
 Lost even to hope, when generous Procles flew
 Impatient to your aid, dispers'd and quell'd
 The general treason. May I dare to urge
 These services! But what afe these; his throne,
 His heart is yours; he lays them at your feet;
 He bids you reign in both.

Eur. Thou base of heart!
 To slaves like thee, who flatter and inflame
 Their prince's crimes, are owing half the plague
 That curie mankind. Has not thy cruel man
 Whose guilt this shameful praise of thine brings
 On thy own soul, say, has he not usurp'd,
 With perfdy avow'd, the very crown
 He swore to save? And I too—thy bold in
 Shews I indeed am wretched. But, away;
 'Tis base to parle with thee, the sycophant
 Who leads him on from guilt to guilt, and sw
 He grows a god by sinning.

Med. Ah, my Queen!
 My heart forebodes some fatal consequence
 Will grow of this.

Eur. Why, let it come, Mclissa.

I merit all that fortune can inflict,
For trusting this betrayer, this curs'd P. cles.

Mel. Alas! what could you do?

Eur. I should have dy'd.

He was the known and mortal foe of Corinth.

Mel. Yet his fair-seeming might have won belief
From doubting age, or wary policy.

By frequent, urgent message, he conjur'd you
To save yourself. With open honour own'd

His ancient enmity; but, by each power,

and infernal, swore 'twas past:

ore, that as a king and as a man,

gnation at your impious subjects,

y of your fate, had touch'd his heart.

But Fame had spoke him faithless, bold, ambitious,

as the coward woman in my soul,

orious fear of dying, that betray'd

ue into the deceiver's power.

, my heart, each conscious hour upbraids me,

less to my trust, weak, and unworthy

the base, precarious life I hold.

• Oh, crown of misery! I'm doom'd,

hear the tyrant's impious passion,

rid vows and oaths.

That way indeed

to turn my thoughts. A soul so brutal,

vn with nightly insolence and wine,

ay he not attempt?

r. Oh, curse, to know

I am in his power, and yet compell'd

ffer hated life!—For can I die

unjustifi'd, while yet perhaps

Periander thinks too hardly

the error?—King of gods and men!

iversal eye beholds each thought

ret in the soul, give me to clear

to him; I ask of Heaven no more

ast miseries.

What shouts are these?

[Looking out,

ch' inhuman triumph of the croud,

l-soul'd many, who have watch'd the storm,

ng wrecks, the spoils of perish'd wretches.

Eur.

Eur. Unfeeling beasts of prey!—Methinks the storm
 Is almost overblown. The waves subside,
 And fall their fiercer roarings. But, alas,
 Of all the four, not one remaining sail
 Is to be seen around.

Mel. Either my eyes
 Deceive me, or the good Leonidas
 Bends hitherward his steps, and on his brow
 Sits some afflicting thought.

Eur. Ha! whence is this;
 What mean these secret shiverings, this dark horror
 Of some approaching ill?

Enter Leonidas.

Leon. Forgive me, Madam,
 That I appear before you to impart
 A mournful message; but by Procles' order—

Eur. Whate'er proceeds from him, Leonidas,
 Must needs be fatal to me. But say on.
 No form of ruin is to dreadful now,
 As being in his power.

Leon. Unhappy Queen!
 Your fate might melt the hardest breast, and teach
 Even Cruelty's remorseless eye to weep.
 How shall I speak the rest?

Eur. Leonidas,
 What is this fatal tale, too sad for utterance?
 Alas! why dost thou weep, why turn thy eyes
 Severe on heaven?

Leon. This ruinous storm,
 Whose sudden outrage—

Eur. Ha! what ships were these,
 Say, speak, that sunk but now before our eyes
 In sight of shore?

Leon. The very fleet design'd
 To rescue you; to free repenting Corinth
 From this betrayer, this detested Procles.
 The King was there embark'd.

Eur. Then all is lost!

Mel. Ah, Heaven! she faints.

Leon. Behold, ye gods! this sight,
 Remember the curs'd author of this ruin.—
 My eyes, my soul's in tears to see her thus.

Eur.

Eur. Oh, Perianther, my much-injur'd Lord,
Would I had dy'd for thee! — Ah, gentle maid!
Was it then he, my husband, whom these eyes
Saw perish in the storm; whose fate I wept,
Nor knew that all the cruel wreck was mine?

Mel. Unhappy day!

Eur. Undone Eurydice!

• But I will die — I should have dy'd before,
• When my mean cowardice, my dread of death,
• Betray'd me to false Procles. I had then
• Dy'd innocent; I had not then deserv'd
• A ruin'd husband's curse. Oh, thought of horror!
• Perhaps his latest breath, even in the hour
• Of dreadful fate, charg'd me with all his wrongs,
• His life and honour lost, perhaps expir'd
• In imprecations on me.

Mel. Oh, for pity,

• Forbear these fatal thoughts; they but inflame
• The rage of real ill, and wound you deeper.

Leon. Would tears, my gracious mistress, aught avail us,
Methinks these aged eyes could number drops
With falling clouds, or the perpetual stream.
But while we mourn our enemy rejoices,
And sounds his cruel triumph loud to heaven.

I have bow'd me to his impious will,
Tho' with that strong abhorrence nature feels
At what she holds most mortal; 'twas to turn
Against the traitor his own treacherous arts,
And ruin him more surely. This may be.

And Corinth looks with horror on the hand
That scourges her each hour with whips of scorpions.
She would have some fair chance, at once to rise
And drive him from her throne. [*A Flourish.*]

Mel. These trumpets speak
His near approach.

Eur. Father of human kind,
• Eternal Justice, hear these guilty sounds,
• And bid this tyrant's revel, while a king,
• The great resemblance, float a cold pale corpse,
• Or on the salted beach cast vilely out,
• Unkiss'd, and dishonour'd lies! — Leonides,
• By all my griefs, I beg thee, search these shores,

B

Each

Each cliff and cavern where the wild wave beats,
 For my lov'd Lord, and to these widow'd arms
 Give back his dear remains. ' But Procles comes.

[*Exeunt Eur. and Mel.*]

Enter Procles, Medon, and Attendants.

Proc. Hail, glorious Day! auspicious Fortune, hail!
 From this triumphant hour my future life
 Runs fair and smiling on. The bold attempt,
 Laid dark and deep by my most dreaded foe,
 Is perish'd with its author. From on high
 Heaven arm'd his winds and seas to fight for me
 And victory is mine without my care,
 Almost without my knowledge. Yes, the gods
 The gods themselves, espouse my happy cause!
 For this, let flowery garlands wreath their shrines
 Let heratombs before their altars bleed,
 And triumph reign thro' Corinth. [*Attendants*
Is the Queen

Inform'd of all, Leonidas?

Leon. She is.

Proc. And she receiv'd the news——

Leon. With sad surprise,
 And many tears, my Lord.

Proc. Just the fond sex.
 Such their vain grief; a moment's passing sorrow
 Then all is calm. Be it thy farther care,
 As the receding flood forsakes the shore,
 To make strict search thro' all this coast around
 For Periander's corpse. I would, methinks
 A while indulge my eyes, a while peruse
 The features of a rival once so fam'd,
 So terrible in arms; whose partial fortune
 Soar'd high above, and ever thwarted mine
 In all the dearer aims that swell my thoughts
 Love and ambition.

Leon. Mark this, righteous Heaven!

Med. At length, Sir, all the gods declare
 And fortune is your own. Your native
 Fair Epidaurus, peaceful and resign'd,
 Acknowledges her Lord. Your rival's fate
 Confirms his kingdom yours.

Proc. Yet I am still

Unblest amid this flow of prosp'rous fortune.
 Not all the charms ambition's shoreless wish,
 Empire and kneeling homage, can bestow
 The better joy I long for.

Med. Ah, my Prince!

Forget, or scorn that proud, ill-natur'd fair-one!

Proc. Impossible. By Heaven, my soul can form
 No wish, no thought but her. I tell thee, Medon,
 With blushes tell thee, this proud charmer reigns
 Unbounded o'er my reason. I have try'd
 Each shape, each art of varied love, to win her;
 • Alternate prayers and threats, the soothing skill
 • Of passionate sincerity, the fire
 • Of rapturous vows; but all these arts were vain:
 • Her rooted hate is not to be remov'd.

And 'twas my soul's first aim, the towering point
 Of all my wishes, to prevail in this,
 To triumph o'er my rival too in love.
 That had been great revenge! but baffled here,
 I'm disappointed still.

Med. Believe me, Sir,

When once the fit of wilfulness is o'er,
 The burst of tears discharg'd, she'll quickly soften,
 Stoop to your wishes, and forget a husband
 Who is no more.

Proc. Perdition on his name!

I dread his memory as my rival still.
 But if I have not won her to be mine,
 At least, the hated husband reap'd no joy
 From her fantastick hopes. Stung to madness,
 For ill-requited love, I daily spread
 Sermises of her truth. He thought her false;
 As he abus'd on her, the dire tale
 Was poison to his quiet. Jealousy,
 It all its horrors, must have seiz'd his soul.
 I triumph there!

Med. 'Twas exquisite revenge.

I too, my Lord, who live but for your pleasure,
 Your ever-wishful slave, I too combin'd
 To aid your vengeance. You can still remember,
 When in a dungeon's depth Arion lay,
 Arion, Periander's factious friend.

With looks of seeming pity, I oft mourn'd
 His hard imprisonment, complain'd of you,
 Nay, curs'd your cruelty, 'till I had brought
 His unsuspecting honesty to credit
 My fiction of the Queen. I told him then,
 With well-dissembled hatred of her crime,
 Embittering every circumstance, that she,
 Forgetful of her better fame, had heard
 Your secret passion, and with equal ardor
 Return'd its warmth. Nay, that she often urg'd you
 To wreak your rage on him, the hated friend
 Of Periander. Having thus alarm'd him,
 After a long pause, I let him 'scape at last,
 To find his master out.

Proc. I thank thee, Medon.

But this avails not much. My soul burns in me,
 With furious longings to subdue that woman;
 To bend her pride of virtue to my passion.
 I fancy, in her arms transcendent joys,
 A heaven of higher bliss, not to be found
 In unrelenting beauty, woo'd and won
 At idle leisure. Yet once more I mean
 To try the fortune of my wishes with her;
 And if I am repuls'd, away, at once,
 All little arts of love.

Med. Mean while, the banquet,
 Which pleasure's curious hand hath furnish'd out
 With splendid choice, awaits you, and invites
 To laughing thought and triumph. There thy
 Th' inspiring god of wine, with rose-buds crown'd
 Mirth in his look, and on his lip the band
 Of little playful loves, fills high the bowl,
 And bids it flow unbounded. Music too
 Joins her enchanting voice, and wooes the soul
 With all her powerful skill of moving strains;
 Till the gay hour is quite dissolved in bliss,
 In ecstacy of revel, all unknown
 To lean-look'd Temperance, and his peevish

Proc. Come on then, Medon. Life is but
 A very dream of being: and when death
 Has quench'd this finer flame that moves the soul,
 Beyond is all oblivion, and waste night,

That knows no following dawn; where we shall be
 As we had never been. The present then
 Is only ours: and shall we let it pass,
 Untravell'd, unenjoy'd? No, let us on.
 Hail we the rising shade! and now, while night
 Leads on the secret hour of free delight,
 With wanton gaiety, in naked state,
 Let music, mirth and love around us wait.

[*Exeunt.*

END of the FIRST ACT.

A C T II.

SCENE, *a rocky Coast, terminated by a view of the Ocean.*

Enter Periander.

PERIANDER.

BY the pale glimmering of the falling moon,
 Amid the broken windings of these rocks
 I wander on forlorn, and find no place
 To trust my head, or rest my weary steps.
 Horror pursues me close. In each low blast,
 And murmur of the main, methinks I hear
 The murderous spies of Procles at my heels.
 Thou mournful Queen of heaven! and you, dread gods,
 Who rule the fearful secrecy of night,
 Behold me here, the sport of human chance,
 A nameless wretch, a ruin hardly sav'd
 From the devouring deep. There my last hopes,
 My great revenge, lies buried. Is there more?
 Away, away! a traitor fills my throne,
 He stains his hands in his crimes; and I, the while,
 Roam here a midnight fugitive. Yet this,
 All this I could have borne. He was my foe,
 The jealous rival of my power — But thou,
 In whom my soul had treasur'd up her heaven,
 Friendship, and faith, and love, Eurydice!
 Thou to betray me!

[*Letting himself fall against the Rock.*
 Ha! by the moon's sad beam, I can delery
 The towers that hold this author of my shame.

B 3

Nay,

• Nay, Procles too, perhaps——and may not he,
 • Even now——confusion! death! he may, he d
 • Invade my bed!——Oh, he'll! she smiles to hear
 • The story of my fate!——And now they give
 • A loose to impious joys. All-seeing Powers!
 • And does your vengeance slumber? Are your bolts
 • Reserv'd for me alone?——Ha!——yet 'tis just.
 • Conscience, that in the day of fortune's favour
 • Securely slept, now rouses into strong
 • And dread conviction of her crime. I broke
 • The sacred oath sworn to a dying father,
 • To free my country from her chains. My soul
 • Shakes as I roll this thought. Oh, Providence
 • Awfully just, tho' guilt may shut her eye,
 • Thine ever wakes to mark, to trace, to punish!

Enter Leonidas.

Leon. This way a distant sound alarm'd my ear
 Broken it seem'd to be; the voice of mourning
 And deep distress. Methought it rose just here,
 From these deaf-sounding cliffs. But all is still,
 Save the hoarse deep yet working from the storm
 Some Power direct my steps where I may find,
 By this faint moon-light, my lov'd master's corp
 To save his sacred reliques from the rage
 Of brutish tyranny——Ha! what art thou?
 A man, or fear-form'd shadow of the night?

Per. Leonidas!

Leon. The same. But speak again.

Per. Leonidas!

Leon. Ha! can it be, ye Powers,
 My royal Lord?

Per. [*Coming forward.*] A wretch that he

Leon. Oh, all ye gods! may I believe my
 • 'Tis he! my Prince!——Just Heaven, to th
 • And thus adore thy gracious providence:

• 'Tis most amazing!

Per. Rise, Leonidas.

I am beneath thy care. Thou feed me here
 The last of men, cast off by all good Powers
 Sav'd from the deep to be more lost on shore.

Leon. My king and master, tho' my heart
 With all your mighty ills, I must again

Blest that good Heaven whose providence has sav'd you.
 'Tis great! 'tis wond'rous all! But how, Oh, how
 Have you escap'd the tyrant's jealous search?
 His guards with stern survey rang'd every cliff
 And hollow of these rocks.

Per. I'll tell thee then.

We were in sight of Corinth, when at once
 Broad darkness hid the sky: at once the winds
 Roar'd with mad blast o'er us, and the seas
 In rowling mountains rose. A storm so fierce,
 So big with ruin, baffled our best skill.

Despair struck every heart. The ship ran round
 iddy whirls, and bulg'd on some hid rock.
 dismal moment! still methinks I hear
 general, dying scream of multitudes,
 drowning in th' abyss. How poor a thing
 king then, Leonidas!—I grasp'd
 mating wreck, the big sea roaring round me,
 bursting o'er my head: but bury'd deep
 :neath the whelming tide, at once I lost
 light of heaven and life. A wave, it seems,
 •, 'd me within a cavern's secret depth,
 r yon tall mountain.

Per. Miracle of fate!

God's immediate hand conducted it,
 rely merciful—How shall I tell
 a pangs, what agonies of soul I felt
 ght of your sad wreck?—But, Sir, the Prince,
 it of his fate?

Per. I know not what to think:

to be mine, it seems, to be retched.

et of my fleet, yet riding in the port,

to be command, but with strict charge

and a few hours after. 'Twere in vain

to tell thee now the reason of my order.

Storm, I fear, may have surpris'd him too,

happy boy!

Per. Your own escape, my Lord,

all of wonder, and beyond all hope,

met me to strong faith, that Heaven is still

cern'd for your affairs. But to behold you,

late the first and happiest of mankind,

Alone

‘ Alone and wandering here at the dead hour ;
 No roof but heaven’s high cope to shelter you ;
 No couch but this un hospitable earth,
 To rest your brine-drench’d limbs—it kills my heart.
 Curse on the tyrant !

Per. Pr’ythee, think me not
 So poorly foul’d to stoop beneath the pressure
 Of Fortune’s hand. That were to merit it.
 But there is still behind—Oh, death to honour !
 One crushing blow, that lays me low indeed !
 That sinks me in the dust !

Leon. What do I hear ?
 Your words amaze me !

Per. How, Leonidas !
 Surely thou art no stranger to my thought.
 Procles—Eurydice—Wilt thou not speak,
 To save my shame ? Say, tell me what thou know’st
 Of that bad woman.

Leon. With such watchful care
 The tyrant’s trusted spies observe her steps,
 That, till this fatal evening, when, by order
 Of Procles, I inform’d her of your death,
 I have not seen her once.

Per. Just what I fear’d.
 That guilty secrecy was well contriv’d
 To cover crimes too foul for honest eyes,
 And heaven’s fair light to see. None, none but
 Could gain admittance ; and to him my gates,
 My towers, nay, my bed itself was open !

Leon. Oh, wrong her not, my Lord ! Had
 With what convulsive pangs at heart-telt ang
 What bleeding agonics, she heard the tale
 Of your imagin’d death, your foul wounds
 In pity of her woes. This Procles too,
 Call’d down each power of heaven to witness
 He meant her fair. Heirs was the common
 Of kings, he said, whose place and honour
 To scourge rebellion, in whatever shape,
 Wherever found. And then what was her
 Death, in his ghastliest form, devouring
 Hung instant o’er her head. Oh, think of this,
 And add not to her wrongs !

Per. Ha! wrong her, say'st thou?
 Answer me: has she not entail'd disgrace,
 And vileness on my name? Has she not made me
 The laughter of my toe, the scoff of Procle?
 Oh, curst! is there in all the wrath of heaven
 A plague, a ruin, like that intamy!
 ' Wrong her—I am too well inform'd of all;
 ' Too certain of the bluish stain that cleaves
 ' To me and mine for ever.'"

Leon. Ah, my Lord,
 By all good powers, by your eternal quiet,
 Beg you hear me——

Per. I have heard too much,
 Too much, just gods! to hope for quiet more.
 Those fates inexorable, that pursue
 My life with utmost rigor, would not spare me
 My knowledge of my shame. From my best friend
 Nothing I learnt it— But hast thou e'er told
 That heart of anguish stabb'd by murderous fears,
 And shuddering with ten thousand mortal thoughts!
 That tempest of the soul that knows no calm;
 Singing from love to hate, from doubt to rage,
 Raving agony!

Leon. Alas! my Lord,
 Just me, I weep to hear so sad a tale.

Per. I'll tell thee all! for, Oh! my soul is full,
 And must have vent. My aching memory,
 Still faithful to my torture, brings again
 Those days, those months of horrors I have known.
 Abandon'd to despair. I've uninc'd
 The caverns of my heart. I sought to vent
 My sorrows in the wildness of the woods;
 To wake my flame in their profoundest night.
 The morn'g still brought it back; the midnight-shade
 Could not conceal it. Her lone echoes groan'd
 In answer with my pains; and her Edg'hofia,
 Would bid to rest even in the grave, in me
 Beheld a soul more lost, more curst, than they!

Leon. Oh, Sir, no more——

Per. When I call'd back past time,
 The vernal season, the soft hours of peace
 Unsuspecting love; our growing joys

In rearing one lov'd son ; that heaven of bliss
 Which princes seldom find, and was all ours,
 My soul dy'd in me. ' Solitary, wild ;
 ' I wept, I groan'd, in bitterness of heart.
 ' But when curst Procles flash'd on my remembrance,
 ' My known, my deadly foe — that he of all,
 ' That he had made her vile ! 'twas then, 'tis now
 ' Rage, fury, madness.' — You at last arrous'd it
 To thoughts of vengeance. With all speed I sail'd,
 Feeding my frenzy with the gloomy joy
 Of stabbing the betrayer in her arms ;
 Of plunging both to hell — but this curst storm !
 These treacherous waves !

Leon. Ye gods, what have I heard !
 Alas, alas ! all waves, all storms, are calms
 To jealousy. Oh, my lov'd Lord, beware
 Of that destroyer, that self-torturing fiend,
 Who loves his pain, and feeds the cruel cares
 That prey upon his life ; whose frantic eye
 Is ever open, ever prying round
 For what he dreads to find. ' By all most dear
 ' And inward to my soul, I think the Queen
 ' As pure as Truth herself.' ' This is, by heaven,
 Some dark-laid treachery, the crime of Procles.

Per. Of Procles, say'st thou ?

Leon. Oh, you know him not.
 Lust and ambition are nor all his guilt.
 But now's no time, my Lord,
 For farther talk. I tremble for your life.
 This place is hostile ground ; and danger here
 May find us out, though I
 Hence let us fly, where I may
 In some obscure retreat ; till
 Unravel this perplexity of
 And point us what to do.

Per. Thou good old man
 By heaven, thy matchless h
 Half reconcile me to disgrac
 Yet blushing let me tell thee all my folly —
 Might I but see Eurydice. — Nay, start not :
 I know 'tis base. I know she is beneath
 My coolest scorn. I hate and curse this weak

Yet let me see her—If she still has kept
Her faith inviolate; fallen as I am,
My ruin will be light. If otherwise,
To know the worst will be soft soothing ease
To this hot hell of doubt.

Leon. I wish you, Sir,
To weigh the certain peril that attends
This rash adventure. Should, which Heav'n avert,
Should Procles' guards discover you, Oh, think
What must ensue! Think, in your fate, the Queen
And Prince both ruin'd!

But, my genius prompts.
Calls; and I must on. No face of danger
So dreadful as the vultur-thoughts
Gnaw my heart-strings. But we both are safe.
Noon withdraws her light: and who will dream
Of finding Periander in this ruffet?
When the storm grew big, I threw around me;
I open my vulgar fate, if then I perish'd,
He ever rest unknown; and Procles still
Reigning on his throne—But hark, what sounds?
Leon. The tyrant thus dishonours fortune's favour
His mean pomp and triumph—Yet 'tis well.
The riot rules the hour, and watchful order
Gives his post to dissolute security.
The day now may pass unquestion'd. Come, my Lord,
The way our path lies. May some friendly god
Walk with us, and throw tenfold darkness round. [*Exit.*

Enter Eurydice alone.

Eur. Oh, night of ruin, horror, and despair!
Alas! where beneath thy universal shade
Wretches like me undone? All-ruling gods!
Why have I come to this? Why was my crime
Sited on the guiltless head? O, him
For whom my soul would have met death with joy?
Here shall I turn my eyes? What hope remains
To misery like mine? Oh! I am lost
Beyond the hand of Heav'n to save me now.
Conscience returns not—

Enter Melissa.

Mel. Gracious gods,
Defend my royal mistress! As I watch'd
Without for good Leonidas, this moment

I saw

I saw the tyrant cross the lower court,
 Preceded by his minion: as new risen
 From the mad midnight's feast; his wanton robe
 Loose-flowing from behind, and on his head
 A festal wreath of roses—Ah! he's here.

Enter Procles and Medon.

Proc. Hail, young ey'd god of wine! parent of joys!
 Frolic, and full of thee (while the cold sons
 Of temperance, the fools of thought and care,
 Lie stretch'd in sober slumbers) we, the few
 Of purer flame, exalt each living hour
 With pleasures ever new.—Eurydice!
 Thou queen of souls! thou rapture of my vows!
 What means this pensive mood? Oh, quench not thus
 In fruitless tears those eyes, that wont to smile
 With all love's sweetness, all his dewy beams,
 Diffusing life around thee.

Eur. Hence, thou tyrant,
 And leave me to my sorrows. Ills like mine
 Would draw remembrance and reverence from the savage,
 Who howls with midnight wolves amid the desert.
 In quest of horrid prey. What then art thou?
 Whose brutal rage adds bitterness to woe,
 And anguish to the breaking heart?

Proc. 'Tis well.

• Yet have a care: my temper but ill brood'
 • Upbraiding now. Be wise, and timely
 • The minute of good fortune, that by us
 • Invite thee to be blest.

Eur. Talk'st thou of bliss?

• Thou bane of all my happiness! Cast
 • Cast back thy guilty eyes, and view the
 • Thy soul stands charg'd with: view my
 • Insult, imprisonment, dishonour, ruin
 • All, all this guilt is thine—but Heaven
 • Those gods whom thou hast proudly
 • Will call thee to a dreadful reckoning.

Proc. No.

• The gods and I are friends: they crow
 • With thee the best favour. Come, be thou too mine,
 • And imitate the great example, set thee.

Eur.

Eur. Thou vain and blind in soul! The righteous
 Oſt, in their anger, cloath the worſt of men [gods,
 With all the pride of fond proſperity,
 To make his fall more terrible.

Proc. Confuſion!

Still wayward and perverse!—Off then this tameneſs,
 Theſe ſupple, fawning arts. By all th' impatience
 That goads my ſoul, I will not flatter more.

Know thou art in my power, and——

Eur. Tyrant, no.

I ſcorn thy baſe, unmanly threats—Ah, Heaven!

Duſt thou look calmly on?—But be it ſo.

This friendly dagger ſets me free.

[*Attempting to ſtab herſelf.*]

Proc. Ha! what,

What means thy frantic paſſion? This is wildneſs,

Th' extravagance of female willfulneſs;

It muſt not be: you ſhall be gently forc'd

To live, and to be happy.

Enter an Officer.

Off. Sir, forgive

This rude intrusion. What I bring imports

Your preſent ear. As now I walk'd the round

Of this wide fort, where the ſteep-winding path

Ends at the northern gate, I ſpy'd a ſtranger,

Who ſought to lie conceal'd. Forthwith I rous'd

The neareſt watch; and, ere he was aware,

Surrounded him at once. His ſullen ſilence,

And hands oſt rais'd to heaven with earneſt action,

Convince me he is of no common note.

Eur. My ſoul! what doſt thou hear?

[*Aſide.*]

Proc. 'Tis well. I thank thee.

Haste, ſer him brought before us.

Enter Periander guarded.

Eur. Oh, ye powers!

[*Aſide.*]

Per. Ha! poiſon to my eyes!

[*Aſide.*]

Proc. I knew him not.

His dreſs is poor, and ſpeaks him of the vulgar.

He ſeems to labour with ſome ſtormy thought,

That deeply ſhakes his frame. What art thou? ſay,

Why at this hour of ſilence ling'ring here?

C.

Ha!

Ha! speak, resolve me; or the rack shall tear
Confession from thy pangs.

Per. Fate, thou hast caught me!

But all is equal now.

[*Aside.*]

[*To him.*] Then see before thee

The man on earth whom thou hast injur'd most.

If guilt can know remorse, what must thou feel

At sight of Perander?

Proc. Perander!

Eur. Now, now, we both are ruin'd.

Proc. Heaven, I thank thee.

I form'd but one supreme, one crowning wish,

And thou hast heard it! This is more than triumph!

Eur. Oh, my lov'd Lord!—

Per. Thou canst no more betray me.

For thee, my soul still unobdu'd and free,

Desdains to parle with thine.

Proc. Yet thou art fallen

Beneath my wrath, the vassal of my nod,

To be chastis'd for mirth— Guards, drag him hence,

And plunge him in the dungeon's depth.

Eur. Oh, heav'n!

Per. Away.

Unkingly boaster. Can prosperity

Debase thee to the cowardice of insult?

Thy brutal manners well revenge me on thee:

'They strew thee as thou art—' My nobler

'Th' immortal mind, thy madness cannot

'Thy whips and racks can there impress

As for this weary carcass in thy power,

It is beneath my care. Lead to my dungeon

Chains, scourges, torture, all that nature

Or fears abhorrent, cannot shock my thought

Like thy loath'd sight, and that vile woman

Eur. My Lord, my husband, stay—
hear me—

Shame! rage! distraction!— Cruel tyrant

I'll follow him to death.

Proc. No. By the joys

That swell my soaring thought, you shall not scape me,

Revenge and love combine to crown this night
With matchless bliss.

Eur. Inhuman! hast thou eyes?
Hast thou a heart? and cannot all this wreck
Of ruin'd majesty, ruin'd by thee,
Move one relenting thought, and wake thy pity?
He feels not what I say: repeated crimes
Have frag'd his remorseless soul.—Hear then,
Almighty Jove! behold, and judge the cause
Of Periander! number all his wrongs
In plagues, in horrors—

Proc. Ha! by hell, this raving
But wings his fate. Since thy fond folly weds thee
To ruin with this rival, know he dies:
This very night he dies. Through him I mean
To wound thy heart indeed. Thou shalt behold him
When the rack stretches strong his rending joints,
Bursts all his veins, and hunts the flying soul
Through every limb. Then, when convulsive agony
Grips hideous in his face, mangled and bleeding,
In the last throes of death, thou shalt behold him.

Eur. It is not to be borne! My life dies in me
At the destroying thought—Ah, stay thee, Procles—
Assist me, pitying Heaven!—See then, behold me
Thus prostrate at thy feet. If yet thou hast not
Renounc'd all manhood, feeling, and remorse,
Spare me his life; save only that: all else,
His crown, his throne be thine.

Proc. Off! let me go:

Thy words are lost in air.

Eur. Nay, hear me, Procles.

As is thy hope in Heaven's forgiving goodness,
Shut not thy hear against the cry of misery.

Dismiss us any whither; drive us out

To shame, want, beggary, to every woe

That most embatters life—I yet will bless thee,

Forget my crying wrongs, and own thee merciful.

Procles aside, and pausing.

This woman fools my rage—but to resolve.

No—yes; it shall be so. Rise then, and learn

Thy triumph o'er thy soul. Yes, he shall live,

This Periander whom I deadly hate.

Nay more, he shall be free. Leonidas,
 With such safe conduct as thyself shalt name,
 Attends him to our kingdom's farthest limit.
 This, in the sight of Jove the supreme lord,
 I swear to do; so thou at last consent
 To meet my love—Ha! what! and dost thou frow
 Weigh well what I propose; for on my soul,
 His life or death awaits thy next resolve.

[*Exeunt Procles and Medon.*]

Eur. Then kill me first—He's gone! and now, ye gods,
 Is there among the wretched one so lost,
 So curst as I? Oh, scene of matchless woes!
 Oh, Periander! wert thou sav'd for this?
 Ye holy powers in heaven, to whom belongs
 The fate of virtue, and redress of wrongs,
 Assist, inspire me how to save his life;
 Or to th' unhappy husband join the wife. [Exeunt.]

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

A C T III.

Eurydice and Melissa.

MELISSA.

THIS cheerless morning rises slow and sad.
 The frowning heavens are black with stormy clouds;
 And, o'er the deep, a hovering night of fogs
 Lies dark and motionless.

Eur. That mournful face
 Of Nature is less gloomy than my soul:
 All there is darkness and dismay. Ah, me!
 Was ever night, Melissa, like the last?
 A night of many terrors, many deaths—
 How has my soul out-liv'd it? But, great gods!
 Can mortal strength, can human virtue bear
 What Periander feel? In one day's course,
 Wreck'd, made a captive, sunk into a dungeon,
 To die or live as his curst foe decrees!
 Distraction's in the thought. And what can I
 To save his sacred life?
 Ha! is it Heaven [After a pause.]
 That darts this sudden light into my soul?

This

This glimpse of dawning hope?—It shall be try'd.
Yes, yes, ye powers! my life and fame shall both
Be offer'd up to save his dearer life.

Mel. Alas, what mean you, Madam?

Eur. Mean, Melissa!

To do a noble justice on myself;
A deed for which, in nations yet unborn,
Chaste wives and matrons shall renown my name.
I've wrong'd my husband greatly, and I mean
Ample atonement of my guilty weakness.
Go then, Melissa—

Mel. Whither must I go?

I tremble at your words.

Eur. Yet it sticks here,

This fatal purpose. Can I leave behind me
A doubtful name, insulted, wounded, torn
By cruel calumny? I can; I dare
Throw off the woman, and be dead to all
Those nicer female fears that call so loud,
Importunate, and urging me to live
Till I may clear my truth from all surmise?
Go then, and in my name—"Tis worse than death
To utter it—but go, inform the tyrant;
So Periander lives, and is set free,
I yield me to his wish.

Mel. Forbid it, Heaven!

Eur. Thou faithful, virtuous maid! Know then, my last,
My fix'd resolve. By this I mean to amuse
His brutal hopes, and save me from his violence,
Till Periander is beyond his reach.
Then, if he still dare urge his impious purpose,
A dagger sets me free. This arm at last
Shall do me right as him, myself, or both.

Enter Leonidas.

Eur. Leonidas!

Leon. Ah, Madam!

Eur. Dare I ask

Where Periander is—Ah, where indeed?
Cham'd in a dungeon's sightless depth, amid
Foul damps, and lone & me darkness! Oh, that thought
Draws blood from my torn heart.

Leon. Justice divine!

In thy great day of visitation, mark
 This man of blood. Oh, let him feel the hand
 He dares to disbelieve. To all his counsels
 Send forth, in thy just wrath, that fatal spirit
 Of error and illusion, that foreruns
 The fall of guilty kings.

Ere morning dawn,
 Soft to the dismal dungeon's mouth I stole,
 Where, by the glimmerings of a dying lamp,
 I saw my great unhappy master laid
 On the cold earth along—

Eur. Oh, hide the sad,
 The fatal image from me. ' The dire thought
 Will run me into madness.

' *Leon.* Yet even there,
 Where pale dismay, the prisoner's drear associate,
 Sits ever sad and sleepless, he could rest.
 Superior to the cruel fate that crush'd him,
 He slept as deep as indolence on down.
 These eyes beheld it; and I would not break
 His wish'd repose, but fix'd in silent wonder,
 Stood weeping o'er the sight.'

' *Eur.* Ah, me! my life
 Flows out at every word— What's to be done ?

Leon. Madam, I set my all at stake for him.
 Old as I am, and broken with the load
 Of threescore years, what is a life like mine?
 But as it may be useful to my master?
 Already the sad people know his fate;
 And I, by faithful hands, will try to rouse
 Their pity first, and next their rage. No hour,
 No moment shall be lost.

Eur. Thou good old man!
 What words can speak thy worth? Fair loyalty
 And faith inviolate, which seem'd quite lost
 Among mankind, live in thy virtuous bosom.

Leon. No more of this, my Queen. Might I but see
 This haughty tyrant, in some guilty hour
 Of insolence and riot, when his pride
 Plumes all her vainest wishes, hurl'd at once
 To ruin unforeseen; my labours then,
 My services, were greatly over-paid.

Eur.

Eur. Heaven bear thy pious wish. I too the while,
To save my husband's life, have been contriving —

Leon. Madam, the tyrant—I will find another
More favourable moment. [*Exeunt Eur. and Mel.*
Enter Procles and Medon.

Procl. Hold thyself
Prepar'd, Leonidas: I must employ thee
In an affair of weight. [*Leonidas withdraws.*
Methinks I droop

With more than wonted heaviness of heart.
But I will shake it off, and to the winds
Give every thought of care. 'Tis only fondness,
And fancy sick with hope. Eurydice
Bends to my wishes: and, in her, I hope
That heaven imagin'd that sole bliss, which yet
My search could never meet.

Med. It moves my wonder
To see your love thus wedded to one bosom;
While all around bright crowds of rival beauties
Practise each art of charming, look, and talk,
And live for you alone.

Procl. Alas, my friend!
Poor is the triumph over hearts like these:
This hour they please us, and the next they pall.
But to subdue the pride that scorns to yield;
To fill th' unwilling breast with sighs and longings,
With all the soft distraction of fond love,
Even while it strives against th' invading victor,
And wonders at the change; that, that is conquest!
The plume of pleasure! and from her alone
A glory to be won.

Med. Well, may you find
In this proud fair-one that enchants you thus,
Whate'er imagination's fondest eye
Beholds in captivous vision, or young love
In all his wantonness of power can give.
But yet, forgive your servant's forward zeal,
Mean you to keep the promise you have made her?

Procl. I do.

Med. How, Sir! what set her husband free?

Procl. I mean no less.

Med. Your pardon, Sir: 'tis well.

But have you calmly weigh'd, in reason's scale,
 'The certain consequence? set free your rival?
 A soul made furious with his mighty wrongs;
 Boiling with hate, rage, jealousy, revenge;
 With the full-gather'd storm of deadly passions!
 The gods forbid it, Sir — And all to dry
 A froward woman's tears!

Proc. No, no, my friend;
 Nor liberty nor life shall long be his:
 I never meant him either; but my faith
 Is pass'd to set him free. By that alone
 'The haughty Queen was overcome; and I
 Will keep th' illusive promise to her ear,
 But break it to her hope.

Med. As how, my Lord?

Proc. Such inbred enmity my soul bears his
 As Nature does to ruin, to the grave,
 Where the whole man descends to rise no more.
 Hear then what I intend. 'Thou know'st the fortress,
 That guards our frontier on the Theban side.
 'That way our foe must pass; but thou shalt first
 Post thither on the spur with wary speed:
 And with a chosen band, drawn from the fort,
 Way-lay him on the farther hill, close couch'd
 In the deep covert of those pendant woods,
 That shade the path below.

Med. Conclude it done.

Sleep shall not know my eyes, till his are clos'd
 In everlasting night. As to his prison
 I waited him, he call'd me minion, slave,
 A traitor's parasite, the base-soul'd minister
 Of his loose pleasures; and I will repay him,
 For each opprobrious name, a mortal stab.
 Yes, he shall feel his fate. Insult and taunt,
 Embittering every blow, shall mock his pang,
 And give him sevenfold death.

Proc. So, now to try
 This Perianther thoroughly. Go, Medon,
 Command him hither. [*Exit Medon.*]
 No, I cannot bear
 His last night's haughty look and unnam'd spirit.
 It baffles my revenge, and I shall miss

My noblest triumph; for I meant to bend him
 To base dejection, and to feast my scorn
 With his pale cheek and supplicating eye.
 But I will hunt this pride through each recess,
 Each closer folding of the soul, till I
 Have sunk him to my wish.—Thou, jealousy!
 Almighty tyrant of the human mind,
 Who canst at will unsettle the calm brain,
 O'erturn the seated heart, and shake the man
 Through all his frame with tempest and distraction;
 Rise to my present aid: call up thy powers,
 Thy furious tears, thy blasts of dreadful passion,
 Thy whips, snakes, mortal stings, thy host of horrors;
 Rouse thy whole war against him, and complete
 My purpos'd vengeance.—But he comes to prove it.

Enter Persander, Medon, and Guards.

[*Advancing.*] I have to talk with thee. Thy life, thou
 Depend upon my will—— [know'st,

Per. And therefore I

Am weary of the load. But let the gods,
 Who thus dispeate our fates, account for them,
 And vindicate their justice.

Pro. Be more calm.

The noble mind meets every chance of fortune,
 Unshaken and serene. I, though thy foe,
 Perhaps may mean thee good.

Per. Such good the tiger,

Hungry for death and slaughter, means his prey.
 But know, my soul receives with equal scorn
 Thy hate and hollow love. I am not talk'd
 By thy superior sword, or nobler deed;
 It was the guilt of fate!

Pro. Call we it so.

At least 'tis well thou must of force acknowledge
 Thy crown, thy liberty, thy life and death,
 Hang on my nod. I can dispose of all
 As likes me best.

Per. Ha! dost thou boast of that?

But thou wilt never know how poor a purchase
 Is power and empire gain'd for virtue lost.

Pro. And yet, methinks, I read the difference plain
 In thee and me. Thy virtue and these bonds

I weigh

I weigh in equal scale against the crown
 And sceptre of fair Corinth : and while these,
 The glorious aim of each great heart that dares
 Beyond the narrow sphere of earth-born spirits ;
 While these are mine, I envy not thy tribe,
 A sound, an empty name.

Per. It joys my soul

To find the man, who bears me mortal hate,
 At war too with the gods. 'Tis great revenge !
 Had not vain fortune made thee blind, the thought
 Would change thy purple to the mourner's sack-cloth.
 What are thy glorious acts ?—Thou hast undone
 A woman, weak and worthless.—Yes, ye powers !
 This hero, this fair warrior, well deserv'd
 To fill my vacant seat : he won it nobly !
 Dissembling, perjury, the coward's arms—
 With these he fought his virtuous way to empire.
 Thou seest I know thee.

Proc. Dost thou pretend to me

• The petulant maxims of those sons of earth,
 • Whom the gross vulgar fondly title wise ?
 • Slaves, who to shades and solitude condemn'd,
 • Pine there with all-shunn'd penury and scorn.
 • A monarch is above them, and takes counsel
 • Of his unbounded will, and high ambition,
 • That counts the world his own. I ever held thee
 • My foe, my deadly bane ; and against such
 • Force, fraud, all arts, are lawful. I have won
 • And mean to wear thy crown. *Thou may'st the while
 • Seek some vile cell out, and grow poorly old
 • Amid the talking tribe of moralists.

Per. Through this false face of arrogance, I read

• Thy heart of real terror and dismay.
 • Hence all these coward-boasts. The truly brave,
 • Invincible to pride and fortune's flattery,
 • Know neither fear nor insult.—But I would not,
 • As thou surmissest, dream out useless life
 • In sloth's unactive couch. Nay, I could tell thee,
 • That though I shun thy shameful ways of conquest
 • Still heaven-born glory, won by virtuous deeds,
 • Has been my fair pursuit : still would I seek her

' In toils of war, and in the nobler field
' Of justice, peace, and mercy.'

Proc. My soul longs

To prove thy highest daring, and to meet thee
Amid the din and peril of the battle.
Thy life is in thy hand: thou art no longer
Our prisoner. This moment sets thee free.

Per. How!—but thou dar'st not—Could I find thee
In open day, and honourable arms, [there,
Opposing war to war, as monarchs should,
I would forgive thee all, my crown usurp'd,
These slave-like bonds—But that fair hope is vain.
The fears that haunt thy soul—

Proc. Strike off his fetters.

[To Medon.

Haste, find Leonidas. Bid him prepare
To guard the prisoner to our kingdom's frontier.
There he shall leave him free to chuse what course
His fancy most affects.

Per. What means all this?

Dares guilt then be so brave? and dost thou free
The man whom act of thine shall never win
To owe thee aught but deep and deadly hate?

Proc. Go, see my orders instantly perform'd.

[Medon and Guards retire.

Per. And is it so—I shudder with my tears. [Exit.

Say, tell me first to what is Periander,

' Indebted for this freedom?'

Proc. Well it may

Surprize thy hope: 'twas what I never meant thee.
But that fond woman who enslaves my soul
To all her wishes, and still pities thee,
With idle blandishments entorted from me
A solemn vow to set thee free.

Per. Confusion!

Proc. Thus I, against my better mind, release
My mortal Enemy. But let it speak
The greatness of my love; and what dull husband,
Through all recorded time, e'er gave such proof
Of matchless fondness?

Per. Plagues! perdition! he'll!

Damn'd, damn'd adulteress!--Villain, slave, 'tis false:
Thou ly'st—What thee? Oh, curse—

Proc. At last 'tis done.

[Exit.

Per.

Per. Have I then liv'd to this? to this confusion?
 My foe, the man on earth my soul most loaths,
 Rejoices over me; and she---even she
 Hath join'd his triumph!---Off, away, begone,
 Love, manhood, reason---Come, ye sister-furies,
 Daughters of hate and hell! arise, inflame
 My murderous purpose; pour into my veins
 Your gall, your scorpion-tellness, your keen horrors
 That sting to madness; till my burning vengeance
 Hath her full draught of blood ---

[Walking with a disturbed motion.]

But how! where am I?
 Oh, this poor brain! ten thousand shapes of fury
 Are whirling there, and reason is no more.
 Him! him! a castif black with every vice!
 Debase herself to him!---the thought is hell!
 Well, well---and I, how have I doated on her
 Whole years of fondness! cherish'd, pleas'd, adorn'd her
 With all that love can give---Yet she has done this!
 Confusion on my folly---Ha! she comes.
 Down, down, tempestuous soul: let me be dumb,
 And hide this shameful conflict that unmans me.

Enter Eurydice.

Eur. He must not know my secret fatal pu
 That I am fix'd to die; lest his great soul
 Refuse a life so dearly sav'd---And now,
 All powers that pity human kind, assist me
 In this important hour!
 Oh, Perander---
 And is it thus we meet again!

Per. Ha! see,

She comes prepar'd. By hell, she weeps a
 My rage will leap all bounds.

Eur. My Lord, my love,
 I know you look on me as on the cause,
 The fatal cause of all your ills; too true:
 That guilt is mine---Oh, would to heaven, this head
 Had been laid low in earth ere that sad hour!
 Why did I shrink at ruin? Why not bear
 All pangs, all horrors of besieging famine?
 Alas! my love---But your false talkless subjects,
 To what have they reduc'd us?

Per.

Per. No; not they:

Betrayer! thou alone hast made me wretched.
Oh, death to a king's honour! thou hast sunk me
Into a proverb of reproach; a word
For low contempt, for ribbald scorn to mock at.

Eucl. Just gods! what means my Lord?

Per. Mean!—dost thou ask?

Eur. Heaven! has the traitor then—

Per. Ha! does that gaul thee?

- Perdition!—Woman! Woman!—Yes, thy minion,
- The vile one, has repaid thy broken oath
- With well-match'd perjury; has loudly boasted
- To heaven, and earth, and me, that thou art—Hell!
- The hated word would choke me!

Eur. Oh, dire error!

{*Aside.*
{*To Per.*

My Lord, my only love, by holy faith
I never was disloyal. Rage and penury,
Disease and death, shock not my apprehension
Like that detested crime— I dare no more.
Oh, fly, my love; haste from this fatal place,
And leave me to my fate. Oh, save your life,
While yet 'tis in your power.

Per. My life! Away.

And all thou vilely barter'd for that life
—my truth, and my fair fame? By you blest heaven,
I could have borne all woes that wretchedness
Groans under; age, affliction, pining anguish:
And borne them like a man. I could have smil'd
At fortune's keenest rancor— But to know
Myself deceiv'd in thee! there, there I sink!
There manhood, reason die.

Eur. Oh, ye just powers!

Were ever woes like mine? What are the whips,
Rack, engines, all that murderous cruelty
Hath yet contriv'd— What are they all to this?
'Tis misery that kills the soul itself?
Yet I will bear even this.
Then here, by weeping, bleeding love I beg you,
With streaming eyes, haste from this fatal place.
The tyrant may recall his word; and then—
I cannot utter more.

Per. And thou canst weep!

D

Thou

Thou crocodile ! These false, these lying tears
 Are daggers here. I go—but dost thou hope
 Thy mean dissimulation hides thee from me ?
 Thou hast dishonour'd, ruin'd me ; and now
 My sight is hateful to thee.

But say, tell me,

[*Returning.*

How have I merited these wrongs of thee ?
 What was my crime ? Can all-bestowing love
 Do more than mine for thee ?—When I call back
 The days that are no more—Thou wert my all
 Of happiness ; my soul ne'er knew a joy
 That was not thine ; my doating fondness lull'd
 Its hopes, its fears, its wishes, in thy bosom.
 O heaven and earth !—and yet—Burydice—
 Thou could'st forsake me !

[*Weeps.*

Eur. Oh, this is too much !

Heaven knows, I would have dy'd to save thy life ;
 But we will perish both, both die together.
 Thy tears distract me. I will tell thee all.

Per. Curse on this weakness ! I could tear
 From forth their orbs—Thou exquisite de
 Hence, lest this arm should do a deed of shame,
 And stain me with thy blood.

Eur. Oh, but one moment !

For mercy's sake, allow me one short momen

Per. No ; in the sight of all-beholding Jo
 Here I renounce thee. What a slave to folly
 To thy curs'd arts has Periander liv'd !

Eur. Oh, cruel, cruel ! hast thou cast me
 For ever from thy heart ? By all our loves,
 By the dear pledge of our unspotted flames,
 Grant me one moment !

Here will I hang, grow to thy knees—Yes,
 Drag this bare bleeding bosom on the ground ;
 Yes, use me as the vilest slave—but hear me.

Per. Away, away.

Eur. Then strike me dead at once.

Look here, my love ; I shrink not from the blow.

Per. That were poor vengeance. No, I meditate
 A nobler sacrifice— [Alarms of Trumpets.
 Ha ! what's this ? [Alarm again.

Th' alarm

Th' alarm is urgent, big with war and dread.
I am the sport of fortune.

Enter Melissa.

Mel. Oh, my Lord,
Some wondrous birth of fate is sure disclosing!
Pöcles calls out to arms; his guards swarm round him,
Haste in each step, and fear in every eye.
This way too Medon speeds, and in his train
A gloomy band of soldiers.

Per. Let him come.

Death has no terrors, when to live is shame.

Enter Medon at the head of one party, who hurry the Queen off the Stage; Leonidas at the head of another, who remove the King.

Med. Be quick, secure the Queen.

Eur. What mean'st thou, ruffian?

Must we then part?—Farewel, my Lord, for ever.

Per. Thou too, Leonidas!—Nay, then—

[*Exeunt all but Leonidas.*]

Leon. O, Jove!

Eternal and supreme, whose nod controuls
The fate of empires, whose almighty hand
Subdues the weak, and raises virtue fallen,
Now to this royal sufferer deal thy mercy;
Aid his just arms, and teach mankind to know,
Thy love, eighn justice sways the world below. [Exit.]

END of the THIRD ACT.

A C T I V .

Enter Eurydice and Melissa.

E U R Y D I C E .

W H A T may this mean? The gloomy hand of ruffians,
That bore me hence, vanish'd I know not how.
And hark! no sound, no breath of human voice;
But all around the depth of solitude!
A dumb and death-like stillness! My soul trembles;
And apprehension peoples the lone void,
With fears of horrid form—But what can fate?

What can the wrath of all the gods inflict,
Beyond what I have known?

Mel. My gracious mistress,
This awful moment is perhaps the crisis
Of all your future life. Your guards fled sudden,
And late the neighbouring courts were loud with tumult,
Which dy'd away in slow and fullen murmurs.
Some turn of fate is near. Leonidas
In haste bore hence the King, doubtless to save him
From his dire foe; or at the people's head
Once more to place their sovereign, and restore
You to your former state.

Eur. All otherwise
My thoughts forebode. There is one deadly ill,
Which, Oh, too sure, no time, no chance can heal!
And at the dawn of day, just as these lids
Reluctant clos'd to rest, Arpasia's shade,
My much-lov'd mother, stood confess'd before me,
Pale as the shroud that wound her clay-cold limbs;
Her eyes fix'd on me, still and motionless,
Streaming unreal tears. She groan'd, and thrice,
In low sad murmurs, bade me to her tomb.
To meet her there—And there, in death alone
In the dark grave, can poor Eurydice
Expect repose.

Mel. Oh, no! just Heaven, I hope,
That sees your innocence, has yet in store
Much bliss, and many days of peace for you.

Eur. I know his heart is quite estrang'd, as
For ever shut against the voice of love.
And can my heart survive it? Shall I live
With public infamy? A theme of scorn!
To all licentious tongues? Oh, in that thought,
Death's keenest dart has stabb'd my soul already!
And what comes after is not worth thy ear.

Mel. Ha! Madam, this way cast your eyes, and see
What swarms of men; these flying, those pursuing.

Eur. Now, Lord of battles I join thy powerful arm;
Assert the cause of righteousness — But hark!
The thunder of their shouts grows near and loud.
This way the combat turns. By all my hopes,

The tyrant's party flies! Look, look, Melissa,
Their broken numbers to the fortress bend.

Mel. And now with eager speed they climb th' ascent,
That leads to us.

Eur. But who is he, Melissa,
That, like the God of War, flames foremost yonder?
See his sword lighten, and the foe fly scattering
From his tempestuous arm!—Ha!—yes—Oh, Heaven!
'Tis he, 'tis he himself, 'tis Periander!

Oh, miracle!—He looks again a monarch,
Dreadfully glorious. Throw, all ye Powers, your shield
Of providence before him; think on all
His causeless wrongs, and do him justice now.

Mel. Ah! Procles comes.

Enter Procles, followed by a party of his Guards.

Procl. Confusion! all is lost.

That traitor has undone me; and those slaves,
The false Corinthians, in a moment's flight,
Threw all their gates wide open to the foe.
Of hope abandon'd, and the gods against me,
What now remains?—The Queen! By Heaven, 'tis well!
Their boasted triumph is not yet complete—
She's mine, she's mine, and I am conqueror still!—
You bear this woman thro' the postern gate.

[To one party.]

Down to the southern shore. I sit this moment
For Epidaurus—You, the while, make head *[To another.]*
Against the near pursuit, and bar its progress,
'Till she's secur'd. This is my last great stake;
'Of dearer price than victory.' Away.

Eur. No, tyrant; I will be first. Off, base slaves,
Dare ye, dare earth-born peasants violate,
With your rude touch, the majesty of kings?
Ah, Heaven—

Procl. Be quick;—seen to her raving.

Enter Medon.

Med. Undone, undone! the postern gate is seiz'd.
That curs'd Leonidas—

Procl. Ha! say'st thou, Medon?

Med. By hell, our foes surround us on each hand:
We're taken in the toil.

Procl. Unequal Powers!

And have you then deceiv'd me ? Rais'd me high
 With traiterous kindness, but to plunge me deeper
 In howling desperation ? ' Does the man,
 ' Whom late my foot could spurn, behold my fall ?
 ' And shall I thus ; my great ambition dash'd ;
 ' My love unsatisfy'd ? Shall he yet revel
 ' In her fond arms, and hear her curse my name ?
 ' No ; spite of Heaven, my ruin shall be glorious,
 ' A pomp of horrors. I will make this day
 ' For ever mournful to his aking heart.
 ' Yes, he shall weep in blood amid the shouts
 ' Of victory.' One blow destroys his triumph,
 And levels him at once to my destruction.

{ He draws a dagger.

Eur. Strike, tyrant, and complete thy monstrous crimes.
 See, thou pale coward ; see, a woman braves
 Thy guilty dagger.

Proc. ' Ha ! what's this I feel ?
 ' A shivering dew of horror sweats all o'er me !
 Some Power invisible arrests my arm !
 ' It is Heaven's secret hand.' — But shall I lose
 This only moment ? No ; be strong, my heart
 Be thus against all human thoughts, and scorn
 These warnings of thy hostile gods — ' I is done

*Enter Polydore, Leonidas, and Soldiers ; Poly
 Procles back with his Lance.*

Pol. No, traitor ! murderer ! no ! Heaven is
 Than to permit a life so much its care
 To fall by thy vile hand, Secure the tyrant.

My mother !

Eur. Oh, my son !

Pol. Transporting joy

Eur. Oh, ecstasy !

And do I hold thee in

Thou darling of my

Oh, thou hast sav'd us

Pol. This, this is triumph

And I can ask of bounteous Heaven

Was ever joy so full ? This feeble arm,

Oh,

Oh, pride to think ! has sav'd the sacred lives
From whom I drew my own.

Eur. And is this possible ?

What shall I say ?— But language all is poor

To speak the tender yearnings of my soul.

O Polydore ! did ever parents know

Such transports as do thine ? Did ever son
Deserve so well of parents ?— Good Leonidas,

I saw thee not before ; indeed I could not,
My eyes, my soul were so close fix'd on him.

But say, redouble this day's bliss, and say,

Whence this amazing change ?

Leon. My royal mistress,

The gods have done this. One half of the fleet,

As led by their peculiar hand, escap'd

Yesterday's ruinous storm, and with the dawn

Enter'd the port unseen ; their secret landing

Befriended by the morn's wide-hovering mists.

Instant, inform'd of his great father's tale,

Your Polydore, this gallant, royal youth,

Pour'd forth his eager troops, and at their head,

Swift as heaven's darted fire, flew towards Corinth,

Which open'd wide her arms to take him in.

Procopius speaks the rest.

Eur. O sovereign goodness,

Be thine the praise ; this is thy wond'rous work.

The King, how was he sav'd ?

Leon. Struck with his

The tyrant had to prove

His sacred head, should prevail'd

Procopius fill the hold him,

As our fate needs

Desert our moment saw him

Free from it in the fight—

And to proclaim his triumph.

He would not meet him here.

Procopius, Polydore, and Melissa.

Procopius, and Attendants.

Eur. Thou coward, Guilt !— But

hence !— [Advances towards Proc.

At length the measure of thy crimes is full :

Thy high-plum'd pride lies humbled in the dust ;

And

And awful Justice comes, array'd in terrors,
To make enquiry for the guilt that swells
Thy black account. But I will check my heart,
Nor learn of thee to triumph o'er the fallen.
Bear him to prison.

Proc. Yet, I will be free,
And soon beyond thy power. Knowing the worst,
I laugh at all to come.

Per. [*To Med.*] For thee, thou vile one,
Thou pandar to thy master's lusts, thou sycophant,
(The most pernicious present angry Heaven
Can make to princes whom it means to blind,
And ruin beyond mercy) thy just doom
Is instant. Spurn this slave into the streets.
The furious people, whom his earth-born pride
Has trampled on, and numerous rapines beggar'd,
Will find th' oppressor out, and as they tear
His guilty limbs, think all their wrongs o'erpaid.

[*Exeunt Procles and Medon guarded.*]

Leonidas, my father and preserver,
Rise to my arms. By heaven, 'the joy that sh
' Upon thy brow, adds brightness to the morn!
This wonderful revolution of my fate,
This change, that gives me back my crown and
Rejoices me yet less, than that I owe
The gift to thee.

Leon. Oh, sacred Sir, forbear!
The transport to behold you thus again,
Is great reward. Now your old man can say
He has not liv'd in vain. Ye bounteous Powers,
Dismiss me now in peace for I have seen
My master blest'd!

Per. No recompence can equal
Such matchless goodness. But I will repay thee
A way more pleasing to a soul like
By running still in debt to all thy virtues.
Thou know'st th' unhappy, envy
How perilous the height so near
All round is precipice; and on
Foremost in place and trust, th
Power, passion, pleasure, wait
Thy life has roll'd thro' all the

Of human chance ; and years of hoary thought,
Cool and unpassionate, have taught thee wisdom.
Be still my guide, and save me from the snares
That thus beset me ; save me from myself.

Leon. My heart can only answer to this goodness
Be filled with gratitude and joy . But, Sir,
Forgive me, if I say, another care
Demands your present thought.

Per. [*aside.*] Fatal remembrance !

At once inflam'd my smother'd rage burns up
With fiercer blaze. He must not know the purpose
With which my bosom labours——Yes, my friend,
Of that we'll talk anon ; but now I wish
An hour of privacy.—Ariston, stay. [*Exit Leon.*]
Thus far have I repres'd the storm within me,
He'd down its furious heavings ; but they now
Shall have full flow. I am once more a king.
My foe is in my hand, and breathes this air
But till I doom him dead ; yet is not he
So curs'd, so ruin'd as his conqueror !

Arist. What do I hear, my Lord ?

Per. Ah, good Ariston,
The horrors of thy tale were true ! She has,
She has betray'd me.

Arist. Since the Queen is fallen,
There is no trust in woman——

Per. Nor no hope

For wretched Periander, Not the grave
Can hide me now from scorn ; not length of days
Will wear out this. Oh, never-dying shame !
Worlds yet unbound will hear it, and where'er
The guilty tale is told, my fate will raise
Base mirth, or baser pity.

Arist. Could the Queen

Stoop to a thought of such a kind ? False, fond sex !
Unfix'd by reason, ever wandering wild,
As fancy whirls from jolly on to jolly,
From vanity to vice. My gracious Lord,
She is beneath your anger. Call her out
From all your soul, and be yourself again.
Retain that reason, Sir——

Per. Away ! Can reason

Arrest the whirlwind's wing, or quench the forest,
 Struck by the hand of Jove, when all its woods
 In one broad conflagration blaze to heaven?
 'Tis reason makes me wretched; for it tells me
 How shameful this mad conflict of my passions:
 But does that still their uproar? Here, Aristo,
 Works the wild storm that reason cannot calm:
 I must, I will have ease.

Arist. You may; but, Oh,
 The remedy is dreadful, and will give you
 Swoonings and mortal agonies! I tremble
 To mention it; but such your soul's deep malady,
 No gentler cure can bring the health you want.
 Her death, my Lord—

Per. Ha! death—My soul shrinks back
 From the dread image. How! for ever lose her!
 My queen, my wife!—Behold those eyes no more,
 That were the light of mine! no longer hear
 That voice, whose every sound was harmony!
 Of power to sooth tumultuous rage, and heal
 The wounded heart of anguish—Can it be!
 Oh, misery! Why, why is this!

Arist. Alas,
 You love her still, my Lord, and know it not!

Per. Ye gods, why am I thus driven to and
 By every blast that blows?—It is too true.
 A traitorous softness steals o'er my just rage,
 And melts me to the dorage of low pity.
 Oh, thou mean heart! Is she not false? And I,
 Shall I sit down with *dissimulation*? Take
 Pollution to my *honour* *old*,
 A tale for drunk *and* *The mirth*
 Of midnight *and* *mount*
 Their *triumph* *! the dies*
 I tear her from *and*
 Should issue with *her*
 Do thou prepare a secret
 Of power most swift and
 Upon my fatal summons.

Arist. Spare me, Sir;
 I like not this employ.

Per. It must be thine.

I have no friend in whom to trust but thee ;
And she shall die—But think't thou, good Ariston,
I should not hear her first ?

Arist. Hear her, my Lord !

Would you then have her live ?

Per. No, were my fate

Involv'd in hers, she should not live. But still,
Something within me cries that I should hear her.

It is not, can't be love. 'Tis my revenge,
All direful now, that would enjoy her tears,
Her lying oaths of innocence, her new
And added perjuries ; then sink her down
To the dark world, with all her crimes upon her.

Arist. You see not, Sir, the danger of that meeting.

Is your heart proof against the powerful charm
Of beauty soften'd into sighs, and melting
With the mild languor of imploring eyes,
More winning now, and shedding gentler beams
Thro' showers of sorrow. Think you here behold her,
The kneeling charmer, lovely in her tears,
Pleading for pity, sinking at your feet,
And dying by your frown.

Per. Art thou my friend ?

Oh, merciless ! why dost thou raise before me
This dangerous image ? 'Tis not to be borne.

My brain turns round with madness. Oh, ye Powers !

Why am I not at quiet ? Why is life

For'd on the wretch who strongly begs to die,

In bitterness of soul ? Who asks no more

But the grave's shade and silence, there at last

To sleep for ever, nameless and forgotten ?

Arist. Alas, for pity !—I will talk no more
On this distressful theme.

Per. Ariston, stay.

spite of these tears, spite of this fond distraction,
It shall be done. A king may live unhappy,

But not with loss of honour unreveng'd

'Twas mad to think of this. I will not trust

My eyes against the witchcraft of her charms.

Then sum up all thy firmness, Oh, my soul !

And dare to be accus'd, since thy sad choice

Is shame or misery. I am resolv'd.

Ye gods who watch o'er the chaste marriage Bed,
 Thou Strygian Jove, and all ye powers internal !
 Behold, I kneel, as in your awful presence
 By that invisible, that dreaded lake,
 Th' irrevocable oath that binds even you.
 Here I pronounce, and seal her doom of d

*Enter Eurydice ; she kneels to Perishder,
 and sings at her some time with emotion, singing
 speaking.*

Eur. Not hear me ! not vouchsafe me one poor word !
 'Tis hard indeed—The wretch of many crimes, [*Rising.*
 Whom mercy dares not save, is gentler us'd,
 His rigid judge is less severe than mine.
 Ye Powers, have I deserved this ! Did my heart
 Ere harbour one loose wish ? Yourselves can tell,
 The morning's orient beam is not more pure,
 More stainless than my truth. Was ever fate,
 Were ever woes like mine ? Even in the hour
 Of general joy to all, while pleasing hope
 Sprung fast within my heart, I find myself
 Undone for ever ; sunk to rise no more.
 Not hear me !—then I know my doom is fix'd.
 And shall I stay to hear the foul surmises,
 The scurril taunts, the false upbraiding pity,
 The keen revilings, that must utter in
 My public sentence ? Can there be in death
 Such pangs, such piercing agonies ? Impossible !
 Death is repose and calm, is soft Elysiun
 To thoughts like these, will prevent their triumph,
 And save myself from what 'tis but to lose
 A few unhappy hours.
 The sooner I am dead, the sooner I am free
 The bitterness of this world and mine
 That bait my eyes, that tempt my ears,
 Spite of the woman, and the man,
 No sigh arise, the coward
 When life is thine, and
 A Grecian and a queen must

END of the I.

ACT V.

Periander walking disorder'd, Leonidas following.

LEONIDAS.

O My lov'd master! have I liv'd to see
This fight of woe? Alas! is this to conquer?
Are these the fruits of victory?

Per. Away!

Why nam'st thou victory to me, a slave
Subdu'd and tyranniz'd by his worst foes,
His unrelenting passions? Talk of ruin,
And I will hear thee; talk of hopeless misery;
No other strain befits thy master's triumph.

Leon. This is the language of supreme distress,
Impatient of itself. My gracious Lord,
Forgive an old man's talk, who would this moment,
Might his poor life bring back your peace of mind,
With joy resign it.

Per. That were to bring back

The darted sun-beam, or recall the flight
Of unreturning time. Oh, no! my soul
Has bid the last farewell to happiness,
To hope itself. And yet I thank thy love,
Indeed I do—But leave me for a while.
I would be private.

Leon. Sir, I dare not leave you—

Forgive these tears—I dare not leave you thus
At variance with yourself. I read too plain
The fatal thought that wakes in your bosom.

Per. And wouldst thou have me live this abject thing?
This slave of folly? For I tell thee, blushing
With shame and wrong abhorrence of myself,
I cannot tear that woman from my soul,
False, faithless as she is—Then I will die:
That just revenge is all within my power.

Leon. O Jealousy, thou merciless destroyer,
More cruel than the grave! what ravages
Does thy wild war make in the noblest bosoms!
Too long, my Lord, you listen to the whispers
Of that domestic foe, that bosom traitor.
For mercy's sake, throw not away so rashly

The

The jewel of your soul. Some unseen error
Misleads you from the truth, and ruins her.
Grant her a moment's audience.

Per. I have sworn
That she shall die.

Leon. Is then her sacred life
Of so small price, to cast her thus away
With blind precipitance? Your Queen, my
The fairest form, the most exalted mind,
Once so ador'd and lov'd, to whom your soul
Still cleaves with fondness! Can you give her up,
The mother of your darling, Polydore,
Unheard, untry'd, to death and infamy?
Can you do this?

‘ *Per.* Oh, thou, whose eye beholds
‘ And pities the frail heart of erring man!
‘ Ruler of heaven and earth! or still these passions,
‘ That rage in tempest here, or strike in mercy,
‘ And free me from my pain—What can I do?
‘ My solemn vow is gone up to high heaven,
‘ And wouldst thou have me break it?

‘ *Leon.* That rash oath
‘ Nor does, nor ought to bind. The gods refuse it.
‘ Should you, too late, discover she is wrong'd—
‘ Think on it well—Oh, what a life of horrors
‘ Remains for you! I tremble but to name them.
‘ The sad and silent meltings of vain sorrow;
‘ The thorn of keen remoric; the sting of love,
‘ Inflam'd by fond reflection, hourly sighing
‘ For what he never, never-hopes to find;
‘ With these, but living, but no more to leave you,
‘ Despair accus'd, and the society!
‘ Yet such will be your days and night, and haunt
‘ Your court, your throne, your walks, your couch.
‘ Alas, my

Per. Oh
I would most gladly
All memory of past time
The waking evidence of error
To give her back that virtue
That shone on our first love
Beyond the rest of men, be-

E U R Y D I C E.

52

Honour'd and happy; and my name as odour
Pou'd forth, and breathing freshness all around.
Oh, days of dear delight! That I could fix
For ever there, and think no farther on!
I will, if possible.

Leon. Oh, happy change!
Confirm this gentle purpose, favouring Heaven!
I fly to bring her hither.

Per. Stay thee yet.

I would resolve, but cannot. Love and rage
By turns assail me; melt me now to mercy,
Now rouse me to distraction—Oh, my heart!

Leon. Then punish the sole cause of all your pangs:
On the great criminal, on Procles' head
Discharge the fulness of a righteous vengeance,
And justify the gods. Let the rack tear
The traitor's limbs; and as he howls with anguish,
Extort confession from him of the lies,
The dark aspersions, that have well nigh ruin'd
Your injur'd, virtuous Queen, and toss'd you.

Per. What hast thou done? Oh, that detested name!
Thou know'st it not halt my madness—that curs'd name
Has set my brain on blaze, and call'd up there
Ten thousand turies. Hell! hast thou not heard
What shame and scorn, what vileness and confusion
He heap'd upon my head—and she the cause?

Leon. Oh, Heaven! and is this retribution thine?
Must virtue know what vice alone should feel?

Per. Forbear, fond man. That Heaven thou dar'st
Just, tho' mysterious, leads us on unerring, [accuse,
Thro' ways unmark'd, from guilt to punishment.

How'd, alas! and with strong adjurations
Bound that just vow, to set my country free.

This, to my father, on his bed of death,
Solemn I swore—But, Oh, blind lust of greatness!

Thro' wantonness of will I lightly weigh'd it,
Nor fear'd the hour of terrible account.

That hour is come: and what avails it now

That I with equal hand and gentle rule
Have sway'd my people? I am punish'd most,

Where I had bid my soul be most secure
Of happiness for years—Ha! Polydore!

Enter Polydore.

I said I would be private.

Pol. Oh, my father!

Here let me kneel for ever, weep these eyes
To blindness, and ne'er know a thought of comfort.

Per. What would my Polydore?

Pol. Alas! what means

This common face of woe that meets my sight
Where'er I turn? Even now, while happy Corinth
Blazes with triumph; while the neighbouring shores
Resound to heaven her voice of general joy,
The palace is in tears. Her silent courts
Are dark with mourning, as if Death and Ruin,
Not Victory, had fix'd their mansion here.

Per. There is a cause, my son, a dreadful one.
But leave me to myself.

Pol. Am I then grown

A horror to your eyes? What is my crime,
That thus, with alienated look, you turn
As from some baleful object? Yet, my father,
Oft have you sworn, that in this face you saw,
And lov'd your darling Queen.

Per. Away, thy looks,
Thy words distract me.

Pol. Whither shall I fly?

Where hide this hated head? My mother too,
As now I left her, pressing full her eyes
With fix'd and earnest mournfulness on mine,
Stream'd into tears; then clasp'd me to her bosom
With such sad passion, such transported tremblings,
As parting lovers that must meet no more.
I begg'd to know the cause: Again she press'd me
With louder eagerness, and sighing cry'd,
Say to the King, my heart has never err'd.

Per. By Heaven, my soul melts at the piteous tale.
O Polydore——

Enter an Officer.

Off. My Lord, the prisoner, Medon,
Attends, and prays admittance to your presence.

Per. Ha! Medon! Dost thou dream? Medon alive!
Did I not charge thee strict to

E U R Y D I C E

That moment to the fury of the people,
How hast thou dar'd to disobey?

Off. Dread Sir,

As to his fate I led him, pale and trembling,
At sight of the tumultuous crowd around,
With utmost instance he requested of me
To save him yet a moment; for he had
Secrets of prime concernment that requir'd
The King's immediate ear. We hardly 'scap'd
Into the southern tower; th' unnumber'd rabble,
With cries and threats, demanded forth their foe.
At hazard of my life I ventur'd down,
Sooth'd, flatter'd, promis'd them they should have justice.
They are but now dispers'd.

Per. Leonidas,

My heart misgives me at that miscreant's name.
But let him enter.

Enter Medon.

Med. O King, renown'd for gentleness and mercy!
The noblest praise! Ice prostrate at your feet
A criminal, who comes to merit pardon,
By fair discovery of some weighty truths,
That much import your soul's repose and health.

Per. Say on; and if thy heart has form'd a hope
Of one hour's after-life, take heed thy tale
Be strictly just to truth.

Med. Thus groveling here,
With shame and sharp remorse I own my crime.
Mistaken by that usurper, who, with me,
Now shares the due reward of guilt like ours,
To pleasure him, unhappy that I was!
I told, I know not what of your good Queen.
Would I had perish'd first! for all was false,
And she the most innocent.

Per. Perdition on thee!
What do I hear?

Med. I fill'd Ariston's ears
With monstrous tales, which his plain honesty,
Alas! too rashly credited—

Per. Ye gods!
And could your thunder sleep? Pernicious slave!
Hast thou as many lives as crimes, not one

Should 'scape my justice——' Ah, Leonidas!
 ' Was ever such black treachery?'—Forgive thee!
 ' Thy doom shall be of signal dread and warning
 ' To all succeeding millions.' Drag him hence,

[To the Guards]

And guard him at the peril of your heads.

[Exit Medon guarded.]

Leon. Amazing villainy!

Per. Oh, fly, my son!

Find the poor mourner out, and in my name
 Say all that weeping penitence can plead,
 Or love returning promise. My full heart
 Will more than make it good. And may the power
 Of soft persuasion wait upon thy lips. [Exit Polydore.
 As from enchantment freed, the mists disperse
 By which my eyes were held——That injur'd fair!
 How shall I meet her soft forgiving look,
 Whom I so much have wrong'd!

Leon. Thrice happy turn
 Of unexpected fate!

Per. But let me fly

Into her gentle arms; there lose the horrors
 That have distracted me; there lose myself
 In love's ecstatic joys.

Enter Ariston.

In happy time

'Thou com'st, Ariston. We were both deceiv'd,
 And I revoke my order. But curs'd Procles
 Shall pay me dear for all.

Arist. He has, my Lord,

And the sad tale is terrible. I shrink
 But to recount it. Remembering conscience rous'd,
 And flashing in his face the staring prospect
 Of his past life, furious he dash'd his head
 Against his prison walls. I found him fallen;
 A piteous spectacle; rolling in blood,
 Deform'd with pain: for agonizing death
 Sat hideous on his brow. Faintly he drew
 His parting breath; yet all that breath went forth
 In blasphemies, assaulting Heaven with curses
 The ravings of despair, for
 His impious purpose on the

Per. How dreadful

' This period to a life like his! The hand
Of Heaven is greatly just—But, Oh! my friends,
These strange events have well nigh overturn'd
This tottering brain. I feel know not what
Of joy and terror, high amaze and transport,
All blended here, and working in wild tumult.

' *Leon.* 'Tis but the motion of a troubled sea,
' After fore tempest sinking to a calm.
' All will be well, my *Leon.* Repose and health
' Await you in her arms. What bliss is yours!
' A second union of your meeting souls!
' A better nuptial morn, with love new-rising,
' To shine for ever!

Enter Melissa.

Per. *Melissa!*—*Ha!* *Speak*——

Mel. Oh, my royal mistress!
The dews of death are cold upon her brow.

Per. What mean thy fatal words?

Mel. Falsely accus'd
Of what her soul most loaths, and to despair
By your unkindness urg'd, the Queen, alas!
Has drunk a deadly draught.

Per. Oh, heaven and earth!
Are these at last my hopes? 'Tis I—Oh, horror!
'Tis I have murder'd her——

SCENE *opening, discovers Eurydice sitting, Polydore
kneeling by her.*

Ye righteous gods!

Oh, give her back to life, and to your justice
I bow this guilty head?—What to be done?
Leonidas, Agilston, My, my friends,

' Call, gather all our sages; bid them try
Their sovereign skill, My crown to him that saves her,

Eur. It cannot be. Already death invades
My shivering bosom. Yet a little moment,
And I shall be with those that rest for ever.
But here, in this last awful hour, I swear,
By that dread word, whither my soul is parting,
I never knew pollution. I am still
Your true and loyal wife.

Per.

E, U, R Y D I C E.

Per. I know thou art
Thou dying innocence. / My fatal blindness,
Destruction on my head! has ruin'd thee:
My life! my soul's best joy! and must I lose thee?
Lose thee for ever!—Wretch! rash fool!—Oh, yet
Forgive my madness!

Eur. Thus, in thy lov'd arms
Each unkind thought is lost. Now I live pleas'd:
Now all is well—Death! thou art here— [Dies.

Mel. Ah, she expires! The last dim mist swims o'er
Her closing eyes!

Per. One moment, thou fair spirit,
One moment tarry for me—Thus we join,
To part no more— [He draws his sword to stab himself.

Arist. Ah! Sir—

Leon. My Lord, what means
This fatal fury?

Per. Cruel men, away.
And would you then detain me longer here
On this loath'd spot, to linger out old age
With darkness and despair? To curse the hour
That gave a murderer birth? Would you, my friends,
Have me live thus?

Arist. Ye gods, assuage his grief!

Per. These righteous gods have cast me off for ever—
My broken vow—Oh, terrible! it hangs,
A bursting thunder, o'er my head. 'I see,
' And tremble at the sight, th' enquiring judge,
' Beyond these heavens, high on his throne of terrors,
' His fix'd and dread regard turn'd full upon me!
' And look, behold, the minister of vengeance
' But waits his nod to strike me thro' the centre!

Pol. Alas, my father!

Per. O my son, my son!
I have undone thee too. How dare I look
On that dear face, where thy lost mother's sweetness
Smiles strong reproach, and charms me into madness?
Then farewell, reason; farewell, human converse;
Sun, day, and time, farewell!—All hail, despair!
Eternal darkness, hail!—
No, no; we will not part.
Her clay-cold lips, thus we.

E U R Y D I C E

On her chaste bosom here. Oh, yet, my love!
My better life! Oh, yet lift up thy eyes!
Oh, speak to me!

Leon. Alas, she hears you not!
The soul is fled for ever.

Per. O my Queen!

[He throws himself by the body; the rest stand weeping and silent.]

Arist. Gently raise him.

Per. *[Raising himself up.]* There—save me! 'tis he! the King of terrors!

Lo, how the ghastly vision glares upon me
With his fix'd beamless eyes!—What path is this,
Direary and deep, thro' which he drags me on?
Bless me!—look there—what shivering forms are these,
Thin as the passing air, that skim around me?
And now th' infernal world hath shut me in.—
But see the Furies arm'd! see their fell serpents,
That rouse themselves to sting me! Is there none,
No power, to screen them from me?

Leon. Gracious Sir,

Where is that patience—

Per. Soft—I see her plain.

Yonder on high sit sit amid the gods,
Who wonder at her charms—And dost thou smile
Upon thy murderer?—Thus let me kneel,
And, weeping, worship thee—Ha! seest thou there
Yon flaming pool? And what damo'd soul is that,
Rising from the mid deeps, that beckons me?
He waits me still—By hell, 'tis hated Procles,
The cause of all my ruin!—Traitor,
I come, I fly, to plunge thee deep. Kill
In this red sea of torments—

Arist. He dies!

Per. Oh, wretchiefs hear!

Leon. Bear him gently hence.

Was ever sight like this?—O Jealousy,
This is thy dreadful work. May future times
Learn hence thy power, and mark, with heedful eyes,
From thy blind rage what might, and mischief rise.

END of the Tenth ACT.

EPI.

4

TRILLOGUE

Written by AARON HILL, Esq.

Spoken by a Girl in Boy's cloaths, tripping in hastily

O!h, gentlemen!—I'm come, but was not sent ye:

A voluntier—Pray, does my size content ye?

Man, I am yours; sex, bless'd as Heaven can make ye;

And from this time, weak woman, I forsake ye.

Who'd be a wife, when each new play can teach us,

To what fine ends these lords of ours beseech us?

At first, whate'er they do, they do—so charming!

But mark what follows; frightful, and alarming!

They feed too fast on love, then suck'ning teething,

They can't, forsooth, be kind—because they're jealous.

Who would be woman, then, to sigh and suffer,

And wish, and wait—for the slow-coming proffer?

Not I—farewel to petticoats and stitching,

And welcome dear; dear breeches, more bewitching.

Henceforth, new-moulded, I'll rove, love, and wander,

And fight, and storm, and charm—like Periander.

Born for this dapper age, pert, sport, and clever;

If e'er I grow a man, 'tis now, or never.

Well, but what conduct suits this transformation?

I'll copy some finart soul of conversation.

Should there be war, I'd talk of fighting in trenches,

Should there be peace, I'd toast tea and port wine and trenchers.

Should I be lov'd—Gadso! how should I? No matter,

I'll bow, as you do, and look fustian at her.

And so, who knows, that nayer means to prey ye,

But I'm as good a man as any d—

Well, 'tis a charming frolic, and I'll be content.

Sirs, have I your consent? What say ye to it?

Yes bold—Perhaps they'll read a rivall beau;

I may be what I seem, for aught they know.

Ladies, farewell—I should be deb to leave ye,

Could an increase of pretty fellows grieve ye:

Each, like myself, devoted ne'er to harm ye,

And full as fit, no doubt, to serve and charm ye.



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