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HELLAS
A LYRICAL DRAMA

BY
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY



Edited
BY THOMAS J WISE

London
PUBLISHED FOR THE SHELLEY SOCIETY
(For the First Performance of the Drama)
BY REEVES AND TURNER 196 STRAND W C
1886

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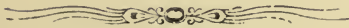
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PREFATORY NOTE.

THE drama of *Hellas* was the last of Shelley's works published during his lifetime. Whilst engaged upon its composition the poet was residing at Pisa, where, early in 1821, he was introduced by his cousin Medwin to Lieutenant Edward Williams—then late of the 8th Dragoons—whose wife, Jane, soon became the object of one of the most earnest of his series of platonic attachments. For the husband also Shelley entertained strong feelings of friendship, and it would appear that it is to his inventive faculty that the "Lyrical Drama" is indebted for its name:—

"He [Shelley] asked me yesterday"—wrote Williams in his diary—"what name he should fix to the drama he is engaged with. I proposed *Hellas*, which he will adopt."

The earliest mention of *Hellas* to be found in its author's published correspondence occurs in a letter addressed to Mr. John Gisborne, and dated Pisa, October 22nd, 1821.¹ In it the writer says:—

". . . I am just finishing a dramatic poem, called *Hellas*, upon the contest now raging in Greece—a sort of

¹ *Essays, Letters from Abroad, &c.*, 1840, vol. ii, p. 334.

imitation of the *Persæ* of Æschylus, full of lyrical poetry. I try to be what I might have been, but am not successful. I find that (I dare say I shall quote wrong):—

‘ Den herrlichsten, den sich der Geist empfängt,
Drängt immer fremd und fremder Stoff sich an.’ ”

On the 10th of April following, Shelley again wrote to Mr. Gisborne :—¹

“ I have received *Hellas*, which is prettily printed, and with fewer mistakes than any poem I ever published. Am I to thank you for the revision of the press? or who acted as midwife to this last of my orphans, introducing it to oblivion, and me to my accustomed failure? May the cause it celebrates be more fortunate than either! Tell me how you like *Hellas*, and give me your opinion freely. It was written without much care, and in one of those few moments of enthusiasm which now seldom visit me, and which make me pay dear for their visits,” &c.

The first edition of *Hellas*, the receipt of a copy of which Shelley acknowledged in the preceding letter, was published by C. and J. Ollier, in the spring of 1822. It is an octavo pamphlet of xi + 60 pages, and was issued in plain wrappers, with a white paper label.

Of this 1822 edition the present is as exact a reproduction as it has been found possible—with types—to obtain. The book has been reprinted word for word and line for line, the text being closely and minutely followed in every particular, each ‘printer’s error,’ ‘dropped letter,’ or other peculiarity of the original being carefully retained.

THOMAS J. WISE.

¹ *Essays, Letters from Abroad, &c.*, 1840, vol. ii, p. 336.

HELLAS.

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HELLAS

A LYRICAL DRAMA

BY

PERCY B. SHELLEY

ΜΑΝΤΙΣ ΕΙΜ' ΕΣΘΛΟΝ 'ΑΓΩΝΩΝ

ŒDIP. COLON.

LONDON

CHARLES AND JAMES OLLIER VERE STREET

BOND STREET

MDCCCXXII

TO
HIS EXCELLENCY
PRINCE ALEXANDER MAVROCORDATO
LATE SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
TO THE HOSPODAR OF WALLACHIA,
THE DRAMA OF HELLAS
IS INSCRIBED
AS AN IMPERFECT TOKEN
OF THE ADMIRATION, SYMPATHY, AND FRIENDSHIP
OF
THE AUTHOR.

PISA,
November 1st, 1821.

PREFACE.

THE poem of *Hellas*, written at the suggestion of the events of the moment, is a mere improvise, and derives its interest (should it be found to possess any) solely from the intense sympathy which the Author feels with the cause he would celebrate.

The subject, in its present state, is insusceptible of being treated otherwise than lyrically, and if I have called this poem a drama from the circumstance of its being composed in dialogue, the licence is not greater than that which has been assumed by other poets who have called their productions epics, only because they have been divided into twelve or twenty-four books.

The *Persæ* of *Æschylus* afforded me the first model of my conception, although the decision of the glorious contest now waging in Greece being yet suspended forbids a catastrophe parallel to the return of *Xerxes* and the desolation of the Persians. I have, therefore, contented myself with exhibiting a series of lyric pictures, and with having wrought upon the curtain of futurity, which falls upon the unfinished scene, such figures of indistinct and

visionary delineation as suggest the final triumph of the Greek cause as a portion of the cause of civilization and social improvement.

The drama (if drama it must be called) is, however, so inartificial that I doubt whether, if recited on the Thespian waggon to an Athenian village at the Dionysiaca, it would have obtained the prize of the goat. I shall bear with equanimity any punishment greater than the loss of such a reward which the Aristarchi of the hour may think fit to inflict.

The only *goat-song* which I have yet attempted has, I confess, in spite of the unfavourable nature of the subject, received a greater and a more valuable portion of applause than I expected or than it deserved.

Common fame is the only authority which I can allege for the details which form the basis of the poem, and I must trespass upon the forgiveness of my readers for the display of newspaper erudition to which I have been reduced. Undoubtedly, until the conclusion of the war, it will be impossible to obtain an account of it sufficiently authentic for historical materials; but poets have their privilege, and it is unquestionable that actions of the most exalted courage have been performed by the Greeks—that they have gained more than one naval victory, and that their defeat in Wallachia was signalized by circumstances of heroism more glorious even than victory.

The apathy of the rulers of the civilized world to the astonishing circumstance of the descendants of that nation to which they owe their civilization—rising as it were from the ashes of their ruin, is something perfectly inexplicable to a mere spectator of the shews of this mortal scene. We are all Greeks. Our laws, our literature, our religion,

our arts, have their root in Greece. But for Greece—Rome, the instructor, the conqueror, or the metropolis of our ancestors, would have spread no illumination with her arms, and we might still have been savages and idolaters; or, what is worse, might have arrived at such a stagnant and miserable state of social institution as China and Japan possess.

The human form and the human mind attained to a perfection in Greece which has impressed its image on those faultless productions, whose very fragments are the despair of modern art, and has propagated impulses which cannot cease, through a thousand channels of manifest or imperceptible operation, to ennoble and delight mankind until the extinction of the race.

The modern Greek is the descendant of those glorious beings whom the imagination almost refuses to figure to itself as belonging to our kind, and he inherits much of their sensibility, their rapidity of conception, their enthusiasm, and their courage. If in many instances he is degraded, by moral and political slavery to the practice of the basest vices it engenders, and that below the level of ordinary degradation; let us reflect that the corruption of the best produces the worst, and that habits which subsist only in relation to a peculiar state of social institution may be expected to cease so soon as that relation is dissolved. In fact, the Greeks, since the admirable novel of "Anastatius" could have been a faithful picture of their manners, have undergone most important changes; the flower of their youth returning to their country from the universities of Italy, Germany, and France, have communicated to their fellow-citizens the latest results of that social perfection of which their ancestors were the origi-

nal source. The university of Chios contained before the breaking out of the revolution eight hundred students, and among them several Germans and Americans. The munificence and energy of many of the Greek princes and merchants, directed to the renovation of their country with a spirit and a wisdom which has few examples, is above all praise.

The English permit their own oppressors to act according to their natural sympathy with the Turkish tyrant, and to brand upon their name the indelible blot of an alliance with the enemies of domestic happiness, of Christianity and civilization.

Russia desires to possess, not to liberate Greece; and is contented to see the Turks, its natural enemies, and the Greeks, its intended slaves, enfeeble each other until one or both fall into its net. The wise and generous policy of England would have consisted in establishing the independence of Greece, and in maintaining it both against Russia and the Turk;—but when was the oppressor generous or just?

The Spanish Peninsula is already free. France is tranquil in the enjoyment of a partial exemption from the abuses which its unnatural and feeble government are vainly attempting to revive. The seed of blood and misery has been sown in Italy, and a more vigorous race is arising to go forth to the harvest. The world waits only the news of a revolution of Germany to see the tyrants who have pinnacled themselves on its supineness precipitated into the ruin from which they shall never arise. Well do these destroyers of mankind know their enemy, when they impute the insurrection in Greece to the same spirit before which they tremble throughout the rest of Europe, and

that enemy well knows the power and the cunning of its opponents, and watches the moment of their approaching weakness and inevitable division to wrest the bloody sceptres from their grasp.

HELLAS

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MAHMUD.

HASSAN

DAOOD.

AHASUERUS, *a Jew.*

Chorus of Greek Captive Women.

Messengers, Slaves and Attendants.

SCENE, *Constantinople.*

TIME, *Sunset.*

HELLAS

A LYRICAL DRAMA.

Scene, a Terrace on the Seraglio.

MAHMUD (*sleeping*), *an Indian Slave sitting beside his Couch.*

CHORUS OF GREEK CAPTIVE WOMEN.

WE strew these opiate flowers

On thy restless pillow,—

They were stript from Orient bowers,

By the Indian billow.

Be thy sleep

Calm and deep,

Like their's who fell—not our's who weep!

INDIAN.

Away, unlovely dreams!

Away, false shapes of sleep!

Be his, as Heaven seems,

Clear, and bright, and deep!

Soft as love, and calm as death,
Sweet as a summer night without a breath.

CHORUS.

Sleep, sleep ! our song is laden
With the soul of slumber ;
It was sung by a Samian maiden,
Whose lover was of the number
Who now keep
That calm sleep
Whence none may wake, where none shall weep.

INDIAN.

I touch thy temples pale !
I breathe my soul on thee !
And could my prayers avail,
All my joy should be
Dead, and I would live to weep,
So thou might'st win one hour of quiet sleep.

CHORUS.

Breathe low, low
The spell of the mighty mistress now !
When Conscience hulls her sated snake,
And Tyrants sleep, let Freedom wake.
Breathe low—low
The words which, like secret fire, shall flow
Through the veins of the frozen earth—low, low !

SEMICHORUS 1st.

Life may change, but it may fly not ;
 Hope may vanish, but can die not ;
 Truth be veil'd, but still it burneth ;
 Love repulsed,—but it returneth :

SEMICHORUS 2d.

Yet were life a charnel where
 Hope lay coffin'd with Despair ;
 Yet were truth a sacred lie,
 Love were lust—

SEMICHORUS 1st.

If Liberty

Lent not life its soul of light,
 Hope its iris of delight,
 Truth its prophet's robe to wear,
 Love its power to give and bear.

CHORUS.

In the great morning of the world,
 The spirit of God with might unfurl'd
 The flag of Freedom over Chaos,
 And all its banded anarchs fled,
 Like vultures frighted from Imaus,
 Before an earthquake's tread.—
 So from Time's tempestuous dawn
 Freedom's splendour burst and shone :—
 Thermopylæ and Marathon

Caught, like mountains beacon-lighted,
 The springing Fire.—The winged glory
 On Philippi half-alighted,
 Like an eagle on a promontory.
 Its unwearied wings could fan
 The quenchless ashes of Milan. (1)
 From age to age, from man to man,
 It lived ; and lit from land to land,
 Florence, Albion, Switzerland.
 Then night fell ; and, as from night,
 Re-assuming fiery flight,
 From the West swift Freedom came,
 Against the course of Heaven and doom.
 A second sun array'd in flame,
 To burn, to kindle, to illumine.
 From far Atlantis its young beams
 Chased the shadows and the dreams
 France, with all her sanguine steams,
 Hid, but quench'd it not ; again
 Through clouds its shafts of glory rain
 From utmost Germany to Spain.
 As an eagle fed with morning
 Scorns the embattled tempests warning,
 When she seeks her aiëry hanging
 In the mountain-cedar's hair,
 And her brood expect the clanging
 Of her wings through the wild air,

Sick with famine :—Freedom, so
 To what of Greece remaineth now
 Returns ; her hoary ruins glow
 Like Orient mountains lost in day ;
 Beneath the safety of her wings
 Her renovated nurselings prey,
 And in the naked lightnings
 Of truth they purge their dazzled eyes.
 Let Freedom leave—where'er she flies,
 A Desart, or a Paradise :
 Let the beautiful and the brave
 Share her glory, or a grave.

SEMICHORUS 1st.

With the gifts of gladness
 Greece did thy cradle strew ;

SEMICHORUS 2d.

With the tears of sadness
 Greece did thy shroud bedew !

SEMICHORUS 1st.

With an orphan's affection
 She follow'd thy bier through Time ;

SEMICHORUS 2d.

And at thy resurrection
 Re-appeareth, like thou, sublime !

SEMICHORUS 1st.

If Heaven should resume thee,
 To Heaven shall her spirit ascend ;

HELLAS.

SEMICHORUS 2d.

If Hell should entomb thee,
To Hell shall her high hearts bend.

SEMICHORUS 1st.

If Annihilation——

SEMICHORUS 2d.

Dust let her glories be !
And a name and a nation
Be forgotten, Freedom, with thee !

INDIAN.

His brow grows darker—breathe not—move not !
He starts—he shudders—ye that love not,
With your panting loud and fast,
Have awaken'd him at last.

MAHMUD (*starting from his sleep.*)

Man the Seraglio-guard ! make fast the gate.
What ! from a cannonade of three short hours ?
'Tis false ! that breach towards the Bosphorus
Cannot be practicable yet—who stirs ?
Stand to the match ; that when the foe prevails
One spark may mix in reconciling ruin
The conqueror and the conquered ! Heave the tower
Into the gap—wrench off the roof.

(*Enter HASSAN.*)

Ha ! what !

The truth of day lightens upon my dream
And I am Mahmud still.

HASSAN.

Your Sublime Highness

Is strangely moved.

MAHMUD.

The times do cast strange shadows
On those who watch and who must rule their course.
Lest they, being first in peril as in glory,
Be whelmed in the fierce ebb :—and these are of them.
Thrice has a gloomy vision hunted me
As thus from sleep into the troubled day ;
It shakes me as the tempest shakes the sea,
Leaving no figure upon memory's glass.
Would that—no matter. Thou didst say thou knewest
A Jew, whose spirit is a chronicle
Of strange and secret and forgotten things.
I bade thee summon him :—'tis said his tribe
Dream, and are wise interpreters of dreams.

HASSAN.

The Jew of whom I spake is old,—so old
He seems to have outlived a world's decay ;
The hoary mountains and the wrinkled ocean
Seem younger still than he ;—his hair and beard
Are whiter than the tempest-sifted snow ;
His cold pale limbs and pulseless arteries
Are like the fibres of a cloud instinct

With light, and to the soul that quickens them
 Are as the atoms of the mountain-drift
 To the winter wind :—but from his eye looks forth
 A life of unconsumed thought which pierces
 The present, and the past, and the to-come.
 Some say that this is he whom the great prophet
 Jesus, the son of Joseph, for his mockery
 Mocked with the curse of immortality.
 Some feign that he is Enoch : others dream
 He was pre-adamite and has survived
 Cycles of generation and of ruin.
 The sage, in truth, by dreadful abstinence
 And conquering penance of the mutinous flesh,
 Deep contemplation, and unwearied study,
 In years outstretch'd beyond the date of man,
 May have attained to sovereignty and science
 Over those strong and secret things and thoughts
 Which others fear and know not.

MAHMUD.

I would talk

With this old Jew.

HASSAN.

Thy will is even now
 Made known to him, where he dwells in a sea-cavern
 'Mid the Demonesi, less accessible
 Than thou or God ! He who would question him

Must sail alone at sunset, where the stream
 Of Ocean sleeps around those foamless isles,
 When the young moon is westering as now,
 And evening airs wander upon the wave ;
 And when the pines of that bee-pasturing isle,
 Green Erebinthus, quench the fiery shadow
 Of his gilt prow within the sapphire water,
 Then must the lonely helmsman cry aloud
 Ahasuerus ! and the caverns round
 Will answer Ahasuerus ! If his prayer
 Be granted, a faint meteor will arise
 Lighting him over Marmora, and a wind
 Will rush out of the sighing pine-forest,
 And with the wind a storm of harmony
 Unutterably sweet, and pilot him
 Through the soft twilight to the Bosphorus :
 Thence at the hour and place and circumstance
 Fit for the matter of their conference
 The Jew appears. Few dare, and few who dare
 Win the desired communion—but that shout
 Bodes——

(a shout within)

MAHMUD.

Evil, doubtless ; like all human sounds.

Let me converse with spirits.

HASSAN.

That shout again.

MAHMUD.

This Jew whom thou hast summon'd—

HASSAN.

Will be here—

MAHMUD.

When the omnipotent hour to which are yoked
 He, I, and all things shall compel—enough.
 Silence those mutineers—that drunken crew,
 That crowd about the pilot in the storm.
 Ay! strike the foremost shorter by a head!
 They weary me, and I have need of rest.
 Kings are like stars—they rise and set, they have
 The worship of the world, but no repose.

(Exeunt severally.)

CHORUS. (2)

Worlds on worlds are rolling ever
 From creation to decay,
 Like the bubbles on a river
 Sparkling, bursting, borne away.
 But they are still immortal
 Who, through birth's orient portal
 And death's dark chasm hurrying to and fro,
 Clothe their unceasing flight
 In the brief dust and light
 Gather'd around their chariots as they go;

New shapes they still may weave,
New gods, new laws receive,
Bright or dim are they as the robes they last
On Death's bare ribs had cast.

A power from the unknown God,
A Promethean conqueror came ;
Like a triumphal path he trod
The thorns of death and shame.
A mortal shape to him
Was like the vapour dim
Which the orient planet animates with light ;
Hell, Sin and Slavery came,
Like blood-hounds mild and tame,
Nor prey'd, until their Lord had taken flight ;
The moon of Mahomet
Arose, and it shall set :
While blazon'd as on heaven's immortal noon
The cross leads generations on.

Swift as the radiant shapes of sleep
From one whose dreams are Paradise
Fly, when the fond wretch wakes to weep,
And day peers forth with her blank eyes ;
So fleet, so faint, so fair,
The powers of earth and air
Fled from the folding star of Bethlehem :

Apollo, Pan, and Love,
 And even Olympian Jove
 Grew weak, for killing Truth had glared on them ;
 Our hills and seas and streams
 Dispeopled of their dreams,
 Their waters turned to blood, their dew to tears,
 Wailed for the golden years.

Enter MAHMUD, HASSAN, DAOOD, and others.

MAHMUD.

More gold ? our ancestors bought gold with victory,
 And shall I sell it for defeat ?

DAOOD.

The Janizars

Clamour for pay.

MAHMUD.

Go ! bid them pay themselves
 With Christian blood ! Are there no Grecian virgins
 Whose shrieks and spasms and tears they may enjoy ?
 No infidel children to impale on spears ?
 No hoary priests after that Patriarch (3)
 Who bent the curse against his country's heart,
 Which clove his own at last ? Go ! bid them kill,
 Blood is the seed of gold.

DAOOD..

It has been sown,

And yet the harvest to the sicklemen
Is as a grain to each.

MAHMUD.

Then, take this signet,
Unlock the seventh chamber in which lie
The treasures of victorious Solyman.
An empire's spoil stored for a day of ruin.
O spirit of my sires! is it not come?
The prey-birds and the wolves are gorged and sleep;
But these, who spread their feast on the red earth,
Hunger for gold, which fills not.—See them fed;
Then, lead them to the rivers of fresh death.

(Exit DAOD.)

O! miserable dawn, after a night
More glorious than the day which it usurp'd!
O, faith in God! O, power on earth! O, word
Of the great prophet, whose o'ershadowing wings
Darken'd the thrones and idols of the West,
Now bright!—For thy sake cursed be the hour,
Even as a father by an evil child,
When the Orient moon of Islam roll'd in triumph
From Caucasus to White Ceraunia!
Ruin above, and anarchy below;
Terror without, and treachery within;
The Chalice of destruction full, and all
Thirsting to drink; and who among us dares
To dash it from his lips? and where is Hope?

H A S S A N.

The lamp of our dominion still rides high ;
One God is God—Mahomet is his prophet.
Four hundred thousand Moslems from the limits
Of utmost Asia, irresistibly
Throng, like full clouds at the Sairocco's cry ;
But not like them to weep their strength in tears :
They bear destroying lightning, and their step
Wakes earthquake to consume and overwhelm,
And reign in ruin. Phrygian Olympus,
Tmolus, and Latmos, and Mycale, roughen
With horrent arms ; and lofty ships even now,
Like vapours anchor'd to a mountain's edge,
Freighted with fire and whirlwind, wait at Scala
The convoy of the ever-veering wind.
Samos is drunk with blood ;—the Greek has paid
Brief victory with swift loss and long despair.
The false Moldavian serfs fled fast and far,
When the fierce shout of Allah-illa-Allah !
Rose like the war-cry of the northern wind
Which kills the sluggish clouds, and leaves a flock
Of wild swans struggling with the naked storm.
So were the lost Greeks on the Danube's day !
If night is mute, yet the returning sun
Kindles the voices of the morning birds ;
Nor at thy bidding less exultingly

Than birds rejoicing in the golden day,
The Anarchies of Africa unleash
Their tempest-winged cities of the sea,
To speak in thunder to the rebel world.
Like sulphurous clouds, half-shattered by the storm,
They sweep the pale Ægean, while the Queen
Of Ocean, bound upon her island-throne,
Far in the West sits mourning that her sons
Who frown on Freedom spare a smile for thee :
Russia still hovers, as an eagle might
Within a cloud, near which a kite and crane
Hang tangled in inextricable fight,
To stoop upon the victor ;—for she fears
The name of Freedom, even as she hates thine.
But recreant Austria loves thee as the Grave
Loves Pestilence, and her slow dogs of war,
Flesh'd with the chase, come up from Italy,
And howl upon their limits ; for they see
The panther, Freedom, fled to her old cover,
Amid seas and mountains, and a mightier brood
Crouch round. What Anarch wears a crown or mitre,
Or bears the sword, or grasps the key of gold,
Whose friends are not thy friends, whose foes thy foes ?
Our arsenals and our armories are full ;
Our forts defy assault ; ten thousand cannon
Lie ranged upon the beach, and hour by hour

Their earth-convulsing wheels affright the city ;
 The galloping of fiery steeds makes pale
 The Christian merchant ; and the yellow Jew
 Hides his hoard deeper in the faithless earth.
 Like clouds, and like the shadows of the clouds,
 Over the hills of Anatolia,
 Swift in wide troops the Tartar chivalry
 Sweep ;—the far flashing of their starry lances
 Reverberates the dying light of day.
 We have one God, one King, one Hope, one Law ;
 But many-headed Insurrection stands
 Divided in itself, and soon must fall.

MAHMUD.

Proud words, when deeds come short, are seasonable :
 Look, Hassan, on yon crescent moon, emblazon'd
 Upon that shatter'd flag of fiery cloud
 Which leads the rear of the departing day ;
 Wan-emblem of an empire fading now !
 See how it trembles in the blood-red air,
 And like a mighty lamp whose oil is spent
 Shrinks on the horizon's edge, while, from above,
 One star with insolent and victorious light
 Hovers above its fall, and with keen beams,
 Like arrows through a fainting antelope,
 Strikes its weak form to death.

HASSAN.

Even as that moon,

Renews itself——

MAHMUD.

Shall we be not renew'd !

Far other bark than our's were needed now
 To stem the torrent of descending time :
 The spirit that lifts the slave before his lord
 Stalks through the capitals of armed kings,
 And spreads his ensign in the wilderness :
 Exults in chains ; and, when the rebel falls,
 Cries like the blood of Abel from the dust ;
 And the inheritors of the earth, like beasts
 When earthquake is unleashed, with idiot fear
 Cower in their kingly dens—as I do now.
 What were Defeat when Victory must appal ?
 Or Danger, when Security looks pale ?—
 How said the messenger—who, from the fort
 Islanded in the Danube, saw the battle
 Of Bucharest ?—that—

HASSAN.

Ibrahim's scymitar

Drew with its gleam swift victory from heaven,
 To burn before him in the night of battle—
 A light and a destruction.

MAHMUD.

Ay! the day

Was our's: but how?—

HASSAN.

The light Wallachians,
The Arnaut, Servian, and Albanian allies
Fled from the glance of our artillery
Almost before the thunderstone alit.
One half the Grecian army made a bridge
Of safe and slow retreat, with Moslem dead;
The other—

MAHMUD.

Speak—tremble not.—

HASSAN.

Islanded

By victor myriads, formed in hollow square
With rough and steadfast front, and thrice flung back
The deluge of our foaming cavalry;
Thrice their keen wedge of battle pierced our lines.
Our baffled army trembled like one man
Before a host, and gave them space; but soon,
From the surrounding hills, the batteries blazed,
Kneading them down with fire and iron rain:
Yet none approached; till, like a field of corn
Under the hook of the swart sickleman,
The band, intrench'd in mounds of Turkish dead,

Grew weak and few.—Then said the Pacha, “Slaves,
Render yourselves—they have abandoned you—
What hope of refuge, or retreat, or aid ?
We grant your lives:” “Grant that which is thine own !”
Cried one, and fell upon his sword and died !
Another—“God, and man, and hope abandon me ;
But I to them, and to myself, remain
Constant:”—he bowed his head, and his heart burst.
A third exclaimed, “There is a refuge, tyrant,
Where thou darest not pursue, and canst not harm,
Should’st thou pursue ; there we shall meet again.”
Then held his breath, and, after a brief spasm,
The indignant spirit cast its mortal garment
Among the slain—dead earth upon the earth !
So these survivors, each by different ways,
Some strange, all sudden, none dishonourable,
Met in triumphant death ; and when our army
Closed in, while yet wonder, and awe, and shame,
Held back the base hyenas of the battle
That feed upon the dead and fly the living,
One rose out of the chaos of the slain :
And if it were a corpse which some dread spirit
Of the old saviours of the land we rule
Had lifted in its anger wandering by ;—
Or if there burn’d within the dying man
Unquenchable disdain of death, and faith

Creating what it feign'd ;—I cannot tell—
But he cried, “Phantoms of the free, we come !
Armies of the Eternal, ye who strike
To dust the citadels of sanguine kings,
And shake the souls throned on their stony hearts,
And thaw their frostwork diadems like dew ;—
O ye who float around this clime, and weave
The garment of the glory which it wears,
Whose fame, though earth betray the dust it clasp'd,
Lies sepulchred in monumental thought ;—
Progenitors of all that yet is great,
Ascribe to your bright senate, O accept
In your high ministrations, us, your sons—
Us first, and the more glorious yet to come !
And ye, weak conquerors ! giants who look pale
When the crush'd worm rebels beneath your tread,
The vultures and the dogs, your pensioners tame,
Are overgorged ; but, like oppressors, still
They crave the relic of Destruction's feast.
The exhalations and the thirsty winds
Are sick with blood ; the dew is foul with death ;
Heaven's light is quench'd in slaughter : thus, where'er
Upon your camps, cities, or towers, or fleets,
The obscene birds the reeking remnants cast
Of these dead limbs,—upon your streams and mountains,
Upon your fields, your gardens, and your house-tops,

Where'er the winds shall creep, or the clouds fly,
 Or the dews fall, or the angry sun look down
 With poison'd light—Famine and Pestilence,
 And Panic, shall wage war upon our side !
 Nature from all her boundaries is moved
 Against ye : Time has found ye light as foam.
 The Earth rebels ; and Good and Evil stake
 Their empire o'er the unborn world of men
 On this one cast ;—but ere the die be thrown,
 The renovated genius of our race,
 Proud umpire of the impious game, descends
 A seraph-winged Victory, bestriding
 The tempest of the Omnipotence of God,
 Which sweeps all things to their appointed doom,
 And you to oblivion !"—— More he would have said,
 But—

MAHMUD.

Died—as thou shouldst ere thy lips had painted
 Their ruin in the hues of our success.
 A rebel's crime gilt with a rebel's tongue !
 Your heart is Greek, Hassan.

HASSAN.

It may be so :

A spirit not my own wrench'd me within,
 And I have spoken words I fear and hate ;
 Yet would I die for—

MAHMUD.

Live! O live! outlive
Me and this sinking empire. But the fleet —

HASSAN.

Alas!—

MAHMUD.

The fleet which, like a flock of clouds
Chased by the wind, flies the insurgent banner.
Our winged-castles from their merchant ships!
Our myriads before their weak pirate bands!
Our arms before their chains! our years of empire
Before their centuries of servile fear!
Death is awake! Repulsed on the waters,
They own no more the thunder-bearing banner
Of Mahmud; but, like hounds of a base breed,
Gorge from a stranger's hand, and rend their master.

HASSAN.

Latmos, and Ampelos, and Phanæ, saw
The wreck —

MAHMUD.

The caves of the Icarian isles
Hold each to the other in loud mockery,
And with the tongue as of a thousand echoes,
First of the sea-convulsing fight—and, then,—
Thou darest to speak—senseless are the mountains;
Interpret thou their voice!

HASSAN.

My presence bore
A part in that day's shame. The Grecian fleet
Bore down at day-break from the North, and hung
As multitudinous on the ocean line,
As cranes upon the cloudless Thracian wind.
Our squadron, convoying ten thousand men,
Was stretching towards Nauplia when the battle
Was kindled.—
First through the hail of our artillery
The agile Hydriote barks with press of sail
Dashed :—ship to ship, cannon to cannon, man
To man were grappled in the embrace of war,
Inextricable but by death or victory.
The tempest of the raging fight convulsed
To its chrystalline depths that stainless sea,
And shook Heaven's roof of golden morning clouds,
Poised on an hundred azure mountain-isles.
In the brief trances of the artillery
One cry from the destroy'd and the destroyer
Rose, and a cloud of desolation wrapt
The unforeseen event, till the north wind
Sprung from the sea, lifting the heavy veil
Of battle-smoke—then victory—victory !
For, as we thought, three frigates from Algiers
Bore down from Naxos to our aid, but soon

The abhorred cross glimmered behind, before,
Among, around us ; and that fatal sign
Dried with its beams the strength in Moslem hearts,
As the sun drinks the dew.—What more ? We fled !—
Our noonday path over the sanguine foam
Was beacon'd,—and the glare struck the sun pale
By our consuming transports: the fierce light
Made all the shadows of our sails blood-red,
And every countenance blank. Some ships lay feeding
The ravening fire, even to the water's level ;
Some were blown up ; some, settling heavily,
Sunk ; and the shrieks of our companions died
Upon the wind, that bore us fast and far,
Even after they were dead. Nine thousand perish'd !
We met the vultures legion'd in the air
Stemming the torrent of the tainted wind ;
They, screaming from their cloudy mountain peaks,
Stooped through the sulphurous battle-smoke and perch'd
Each on the weltering carcass that we loved,
Like its ill angel or its damned soul,
Riding upon the bosom of the sea.
We saw the dog-fish hastening to their feast.
Joy waked the voiceless people of the sea,
And ravening Famine left his ocean cave
To dwell with war, with us, and with despair.

We met night three hours to the west of Patmos,
And with night, tempest——

MAHMUD.

Cease!

(Enter a Messenger.)

MESSENGER.

Your Sublime Highness,
That Christian hound, the Muscovite ambassador,
Has left the city.—If the rebel fleet
Had anchor'd in the port, had victory
Crowned the Greek legions in the Hippodrome,
Panic were tamer.—Obedience and Mutiny,
Like giants in contention planet-struck,
Stand gazing on each other.—There is peace
In Stamboul.—

MAHMUD.

Is the grave not calmer still?
Its ruins shall be mine.

HASSAN.

Fear not the Russian:
The tiger leagues not with the stag at bay
Against the hunter.—Cunning, base, and cruel,
He crouches, watching till the spoil be won,
And must be paid for his reserve in blood.
After the war is fought, yield the sleek Russian

That which thou can'st not keep, his deserved portion
 Of blood, which shall not flow through streets and fields,
 Rivers and seas, like that which we may win,
 But stagnate in the veins of Christian slaves !

(Enter second Messenger.)

SECOND MESSENGER.

Nauplia, Tripolizza, Mothon, Athens,
 Navarin, Artas, Monembasia,
 Corinth and Thebes are carried by assault,
 And every Islamite who made his dogs
 Fat with the flesh of Galilean slaves
 Passed at the edge of the sword : the lust of blood
 Which made our warriors drunk, is quench'd in death ;
 But like a fiery plague breaks out anew
 In deeds which make the Christian cause look pale
 In its own light. The garrison of Patras
 Has store but for ten days, nor is there hope
 But from the Briton : at once slave and tyrant
 His wishes still are weaker than his fears,
 Or he would sell what faith may yet remain
 From the oaths broke in Genoa and in Norway ;
 And if you buy him not, your treasury
 Is empty even of promises—his own coin.
 The freedman of a western poet chief (‡)
 Holds Attica with seven thousand rebels,
 And has beat back the Pacha of Negropont :

The aged Ali sits in Yanina
 A crownless metaphor of empire :
 His name, that shadow of his withered might,
 Holds our besieging army like a spell
 In prey to famine, pest, and mutiny ;
 He, bastion'd in his citadel, looks forth
 Joyless upon the sapphire lake that mirrors
 The ruins of the city where he reigned
 Childless and sceptreless. The Greek has reap'd
 The costly harvest his own blood matured,
 Not the sower, Ali—who has bought a truce
 From Ypsilanti with ten camel loads
 Of Indian gold.

(Enter a third Messenger.)

MAHMUD.

What more ?

THIRD MESSENGER.

The Christian tribes
 Of Lebanon and the Syrian wilderness
 Are in revolt ;—Damascus, Hems, Aleppo
 Tremble ;—the Arab menaces Medina,
 The Ethiop has intrench'd himself in Sennaar,
 And keeps the Egyptian rebel well employ'd,
 Who denies homage, claims investiture
 As price of tardy aid. Persia demands
 The cities on the Tigris, and the Georgians
 Refuse their living tribute. Crete and Cyprus,

Like mountain-twins that from each other's veins
Catch the volcano-fire and earthquake spasm,
Shake in the general fever. Through the city,
Like birds before a storm, the Santons shriek,
And prophecyings horrible and new
Are heard among the crowd : that sea of men
Sleeps on the wrecks it made, breathless and still.
A Dervise, learned in the Koran, preaches
That it is written how the sins of Islam
Must raise up a destroyer even now.

The Greeks expect a Saviour from the west, (⁵)
Who shall not come, men say, in clouds and glory,
But in the omnipresence of that spirit
In which all live and are. Ominous signs
Are blazon'd broadly on the noon-day sky :
One saw a red cross stamp'd upon the sun ;
It has rain'd blood ; and monstrous births declare
The secret wrath of Nature and her Lord.
The army encamp'd upon the Cydaris,
Was roused last night by the alarm of battle,
And saw two hosts conflicting in the air,
The shadows doubtless of the unborn time
Cast on the mirror of the night. While yet
The fight hung balanced, there arose a storm
Which swept the phantoms from among the stars.
At the third watch the spirit of the plague

Was heard abroad flapping among the tents ;
 Those who relieved watch found the sentinels dead.
 The last news from the camp is, that a thousand
 Have sickened, and——

(Enter a fourth Messenger.)

MAHMUD.

And thou, pale ghost, dim shadow
 Of some untimely rumour, speak !

FOURTH MESSENGER.

One comes

Fainting with toil, covered with foam and blood :
 He stood, he says, upon Clelonite's
 Promontory, which o'erlooks the isles that groan
 Under the Briton's frown, and all their waters
 Then trembling in the splendour of the moon,
 When as the wandering clouds unveil'd or hid
 Her boundless light, he saw two adverse fleets
 Stalk through the night in the horizon's glimmer,
 Mingling fierce thunders and sulphureous gleams,
 And smoke which strangled every infant wind
 That sooth'd the silver clouds through the deep air.
 At length the battle slept, but the Sirocco
 Awoke, and drove his flock of thunder-clouds
 Over the sea-horizon, blotting out
 All objects—save that in the faint moon-glimpse
 He saw, or dream'd he saw, the Turkish admiral

And two the loftiest of our ships of war,
 With the bright image of that Queen of Heaven
 Who hid, perhaps, her face for grief, reversed ;
 And the abhorred cross—

(Enter an Attendant.)

ATTENDANT.

Your Sublime Highness

The Jew, who ——

MAHMUD.

Could not come more seasonably :

Bid him attend. I'll hear no more ! too long
 We gaze on danger through the mist of fear,
 And multiply upon our shatter'd hopes
 The images of ruin. Come what will !
 To-morrow and to-morrow are as lamps
 Set in our path to light us to the edge
 Through rough and smooth, nor can we suffer aught
 Which he inflicts not in whose hand we are.

(Exeunt.)

SEMICHORUS 1st.

Would I were the winged cloud
 Of a tempest swift and loud !

I would scorn

The smile of morn

And the wave where the moon rise is born !

I would leave

The spirits of eve

A shroud for the corpse of the day to weave
From other threads than mine !
Bask in the blue noon divine

Who would, not I.

SEMICHORUS 2nd.

Whither to fly ?

SEMICHORUS 1st.

Where the rocks that gird th' Ægean
Echo to the battle pæan

Of the free—

I would flee

A tempestuous herald of victory !

My golden rain

For the Grecian slain

Should mingle in tears with the bloody main,

And my solemn thunder knell

Should ring to the world the passing bell

Of tyranny !

SEMICHORUS 2nd.

Ah king ! wilt thou chain

The rack and the rain ?

Wilt thou fetter the lightning and hurricane ?

The storms are free,

But we—

CHORUS.

O Slavery! thou frost of the world's prime,
 Killing its flowers and leaving its thorns bare!
 Thy touch has stamped these limbs with crime,
 These brows thy branding garland bear,
 But the free heart, the impassive soul
 Scorn thy control!

SEMICHORUS 1st.

Let there be light! said Liberty,
 And like sunrise from the sea,
 Athens arose!—Around her born,
 Shone like mountains in the morn
 Glorious states;—and are they now
 Ashes, wrecks, oblivion?

SEMICHORUS 2nd.

Go,
 Where Thermæ and Asopus swallow'd
 Persia, as the sand does foam.
 Deluge upon deluge follow'd,
 Discord, Macedon, and Rome:
 And lastly thou!

SEMICHORUS 1st.

Temples and towers,
 Citadels and marts, and they
 Who live and die there, have been ours,
 And may be thine, and must decay;

But Greece and her foundations are
 Built below the tide of war,
 Based on the crystalline sea
 Of thought and its eternity ;
 Her citizens, imperial spirits,
 Rule the present from the past,
 On all this world of men inherits
 Their seal is set.

SEMICHORUS 2nd.

Hear ye the blast,
 Whose Orphic thunder thrilling calls
 From ruin her Titanian walls ?
 Whose spirit shakes the sapless bones
 Of Slavery ? Argos, Corinth, Crete
 Hear, and from their mountain thrones
 The dæmons and the nymphs repeat
 The harmony.

SEMICHORUS 1st.

I hear ! I hear !

SEMICHORUS 2nd.

The world's eyeless charioteer,
 Destiny, is hurrying by !
 What faith is crushed, what empire bleeds
 Beneath her earthquake-footed steeds ?
 What eagle-winged victory sits
 At her right hand ? what shadow flits

Before ? what splendour rolls behind ?

Ruin and renovation cry

Who but We ?

SEMICHORUS 1st.

I hear ! I hear !

The hiss as of a rushing wind,

The roar as of an ocean foaming,

The thunder as of earthquake coming.

I hear ! I hear !

The crash as of an empire falling,

The shrieks as of a people calling

Mercy ! mercy !—How they thrill !

Then a shout of “kill ! kill ! kill !”

And then a small still voice, thus—

SEMICHORUS 2d.

For

Revenge and wrong bring forth their kind,

The foul cubs like their parents are,

Their den is in the guilty mind,

And Conscience feeds them with despair.

SEMICHORUS 1st.

In sacred Athens, near the fane

Of Wisdom, Pity's altar stood :

Serve not the unknown God in vain,

But pay that broken shrine again,

Love for hate and tears for blood.

(*Enter MAHMUD and AHASUERUS.*)

MAHMUD.

Thou art a man thou sayest even as we.

AHASUERUS.

No more!

MAHMUD.

But raised above thy fellow men
By thought, as I by power.

AHASUERUS.

Thou sayest so.

MAHMUD.

Thou art an adept in the difficult lore
Of Greek and Frank philosophy; thou numberest
The flowers, and thou measurest the stars;
Thou severest element from element;
Thy spirit is present in the past, and sees
The birth of this old world through all its cycles
Of desolation and of loveliness,
And when man was not, and how man became
The monarch and the slave of this low sphere,
And all its narrow circles—it is much—
I honour thee, and would be what thou art
Were I not what I am; but the unborn hour,
Cradled in fear and hope, conflicting storms,
Who shall unveil? Nor thou, nor I, nor any
Mighty or wise. I apprehend not

What thou hast taught me, but I now perceive
 That thou art no interpreter of dreams ;
 Thou dost not own that art, device, or God,
 Can make the future present—let it come !
 Moreover thou disdainest us and ours ;
 Thou art as God, whom thou contemplatest.

A H A S U E R U S .

Disdain thee ?—not the worm beneath thy feet !
 The Fathomless has care for meaner things
 Than thou canst dream, and has made pride for those
 Who would be what they may not, or would seem
 That which they are not. Sultan ! talk no more
 Of thee and me, the future and the past ;
 But look on that which cannot change—the One
 The unborn and the undying. Earth and ocean,
 Space, and the isles of life or light that gem
 The sapphire floods of interstellar air,
 This firmament pavilion'd upon chaos,
 With all its cressets of immortal fire,
 Whose outwall, bastioned impregnably
 Against the escape of boldest thoughts, repels them
 As Calpe the Atlantic clouds—this Whole
 Of suns, and worlds, and men, and beasts, and flowers,
 With all the silent or tempestuous workings
 By which they have been, are, or ceased to be,
 Is but a vision ;—all that it inherits

Are motes of a sick eye, bubbles and dreams ;
 Thought is its cradle and its grave, nor less
 The future and the past are idle shadows
 Of thought's eternal flight—they have no being :
 Nought is but that which feels itself to be.

MAHMUD.

What meanest thou ? Thy words stream like a tempest
 Of dazzling mist within my brain—they shake
 The earth on which I stand, and hang like night
 On Heaven above me. What can they avail ?
 They cast on all things surest, brightest, best,
 Doubt, insecurity, astonishment.

AHASUERUS.

Mistake me not ! All is contained in each.
 Dodona's forest to an acorn's cup
 Is that which has been, or will be, to that
 Which is—the absent to the present. Thought
 Alone, and its quick elements, Will, Passion,
 Reason, Imagination, cannot die ;
 They are, what that which they regard appears,
 The stuff whence mutability can weave
 All that it hath dominion o'er, worlds, worms,
 Empires, and superstitions. What has thought
 To do with time, or place, or circumstance ?
 Would'st thou behold the future ?—ask and have !

Knock and it shall be opened—look and, lo!
 The coming age is shadowed on the past
 As on a glass.

MAHMUD.

Wild, wilder thoughts convulse
 My spirit—Did not Mahomet the Second
 Win Stamboul?

AHASUERUS.

Thou would'st ask that giant spirit
 The written fortunes of thy house and faith.
 Thou would'st cite one out of the grave to tell
 How what was born in blood must die.

MAHMUD.

Thy words

Have power on me! I see——

AHASUERUS.

What hearest thou?

MAHMUD.

A far whisper——
 Terrible silence.

AHASUERUS.

What succeeds?

MAHMUD.

The sound ()

As of the assault of an imperial city,

The hiss of inextinguishable fire,
 The roar of giant cannon; the earthquaking
 Fall of vast bastions and precipitous towers,
 The shock of crags shot from strange engin'ry,
 The clash of wheels, and clang of armed hoofs,
 And crash of brazen mail as of the wreck
 Of adamantine mountains—the mad blast
 Of trumpets, and the neigh of raging steeds,
 And shrieks of women whose thrill jars the blood,
 And one sweet laugh, most horrible to hear,
 As of a joyous infant waked and playing
 With its dead mother's breast, and now more loud
 The mingled battle-cry,—ha! hear I not
Εν τούτῳ νικῆ. Allah, Illah, Allah!

AHASUERAS.

The sulphurous mist is raised—thou see'st—

MAHMUD.

A chasm,

As of two mountains in the wall of Stamboul;
 And in that ghastly breach the Islamites,
 Like giants on the ruins of a world,
 Stand in the light of sunrise. In the dust
 Glimmers a kingless diadem, and one
 Of regal port has cast himself beneath
 The stream of war. Another proudly clad
 In golden arms spurs a Tartarian barb

Into the gap, and with his iron mace
 Directs the torrent of that tide of men,
 And seems—he is—Mahomet !

A H A S U E R U S.

What thou see'st
 Is but the ghost of thy forgotten dream.
 A dream itself, yet less, perhaps, than that
 Thou call'st reality. Thou may'st behold
 How cities, on which Empire sleeps enthroned,
 Bow their tower'd crests to mutability.
 Poised by the flood, e'en on the height thou holdest,
 Thou may'st now learn how the full tide of power
 Ebbs to its depths.—Inheritor of glory,
 Conceived in darkness, born in blood, and nourished
 With tears and toil, thou see'st the mortal throes
 Of that whose birth was but the same. The Past
 Now stands before thee like an Incarnation
 Of the To-come ; yet would'st thou commune with
 That portion of thyself which was ere thou
 Didst start for this brief race whose crown is death,
 Dissolve with that strong faith and fervent passion
 Which called it from the uncreated deep,
 Yon cloud of war, with its tempestuous phantoms
 Of raging death ; and draw with mighty will
 The imperial shade hither.

(*Exit* A H A S U E R U S.)

MAHMUD.

Approach!

PHANTOM.

I come

Thence whither thou must go! The grave is fitter
 To take the living than give up the dead;
 Yet has thy faith prevail'd, and I am here.
 The heavy fragments of the power which fell
 When I arose, like shapeless crags and clouds,
 Hang round my throne on the abyss, and voices
 Of strange lament soothe my supreme repose,
 Wailing for glory never to return.—

A later Empire nods in its decay:

The autumn of a greener faith is come,
 And wolfish change, like winter, howls to strip
 The foliage in which Fame, the eagle, built
 Her aiëry, while Dominion whelped below.
 The storm is in its branches, and the frost
 Is on its leaves, and the blank deep expects
 Oblivion on oblivion, spoil on spoil,
 Ruin on ruin:—Thou art slow, my son;
 The Anarchs of the world of darkness keep
 A throne for thee, round which thine empire lies
 Boundless and mute; and for thy subjects thou,
 Like us, shalt rule the ghosts of murdered life,
 The phantoms of the powers who rule thee now—

Mutinous passions, and conflicting fears,
 And hopes that sate themselves on dust and die!—
 Stript of their mortal strength, as thou of thine.
 Islam must fall, but we will reign together
 Over its ruins in the world of death:—
 And if the trunk be dry, yet shall the seed
 Unfold itself even in the shape of that
 Which gathers birth in its decay. Woe! woe!
 To the weak people tangled in the grasp
 Of its last spasms.

MAHMUD.

Spirit, woe to all!

Woe to the wronged and the avenger! Woe
 To the destroyer, woe to the destroyed!
 Woe to the dupe, and woe to the deceiver!
 Woe to the oppressed, and woe to the oppressor!
 Woe both to those that suffer and inflict;
 Those who are born and those who die! but say,
 Imperial shadow of the thing I am,
 When, how, by whom, Destruction must accomplish
 Her consummation?

PHANTOM.

Ask the cold pale Hour,
 Rich in reversion of impending death,
 When *he* shall fall upon whose ripe grey hairs
 Sit Care, and Sorrow, and Infirmary—

The weight which Crime, whose wings are plumed
 with years,
 Leaves in his flight from ravaged heart to heart
 Over the heads of men, under which burthen
 They bow themselves unto the grave : fond wretch !
 He leans upon his crutch, and talks of years
 To come, and how in hours of youth renewed
 He will renew lost joys, and ——

Voice without.

Victory ! Victory !

(The Phantom vanishes.

MAHMUD.

What sound of the importunate earth has broken
 My mighty trance ?

Voice without.

Victory ! Victory !

MAHMUD.

Weak lightning before darkness ! poor faint smile
 Of dying Islam ! Voice which art the response
 Of hollow weakness ! Do I wake and live ?
 Were there such things, or may the unquiet brain,
 Vexed by the wise mad talk of the old Jew,
 Have shaped itself these shadows of its fear ?
 It matters not !—for nought we see or dream
 Possess, or lose, or grasp at, can be worth
 More than it gives or teaches. Come what may

The future must become the past, and I
 As they were to whom once this present hour,
 This gloomy crag of time to which I cling,
 Seemed an Elysian isle of peace and joy
 Never to be attained.—I must rebuke
 This drunkenness of triumph ere it die,
 And dying, bring despair. Victory ! poor slaves !

(Exit Mahmud.)

Voice without.

Shout in the jubilee of death ! The Greeks
 Are as a brood of lions in the net
 Round which the kingly hunters of the earth
 Stand smiling. Anarchs, ye whose daily food
 Are curses, groans, and gold, the fruit of death
 From Thule to the girdle of the world,
 Come, feast ! the board groans with the flesh of men ;
 The cup is foaming with a nation's blood,
 Famine and Thirst await ! eat, drink, and die !

SEMICHORUS 1st.

Victorious Wrong, with vulture scream,
 Salutes the risen sun, pursues the flying day !

I saw her, ghastly as a tyrant's dream,
 Perch on the trembling pyramid of night,
 Beneath which earth and all her realms pavilioned lay
 In visions of the dawning undelight.

Who shall impede her flight ?

Who rob her of her prey ?

Voice without.

Victory ! Victory ! Russia's famish'd eagles
Dare not to prey beneath the crescent's light.
Impale the remnant of the Greeks ! despoil !
Violate ! make their flesh cheaper than dust !

SEMICHORUS 2d.

Thou voice which art
The herald of the ill in splendour hid !
Thou echo of the hollow heart
Of monarchy, bear me to thine abode
When desolation flashes o'er a world destroyed :
Oh, bear me to those isles of jagged cloud
Which float like mountains on the earthquake, mid
The momentary oceans of the lightning,
Or to some toppling promontory proud
Of solid tempest whose black pyramid,
Riven, overhangs the founts intensely brightning
Of those dawn-tinted deluges of fire
Before their waves expire,
When heaven and earth are light, and only light
In the thunder night !

Voice without.

Victory ! Victory ! Austria, Russia, England,
And that tame serpent, that poor shadow, France,
Cry peace, and that means death when monarchs speak.
Ho, there ! bring torches, sharpen those red stakes,

These chains are light, fitter for slaves and poisoners
Than Greeks. Kill ! plunder ! burn ! let none remain.

SEMICHORUS 1st.

Alas ! for Liberty !

If numbers, wealth, or unfulfilling years,

Or fate, can quell the free !

Alas ! for Virtue, when

Torments, or contumely, or the sneers

Of erring judging men

Can break the heart where it abides.

Alas ! if Love, whose smile makes this obscure world splendid,

Can change with its false times and tides,

Like hope and terror,—

Alas for Love !

And Truth, who wanderest lone and unbefriended,

If thou canst veil thy lie-consuming mirror

Before the dazzled eyes of Error,

Alas for thee ! Image of the Above.

SEMICHORUS 2d.

Repulse, with plumes from conquest torn,

Led the ten thousand from the limits of the morn

Through many an hostile Anarchy !

At length they wept aloud, and cried, “ the Sea ! the Sea ! ”

Through exile, persecution, and despair,

Rome was, and young Atlantis shall become

The wonder, or the terror, or the tomb

Of all whose step wakes power lulled in her savage lair :

But Greece was as a hermit child,

Whose fairest thoughts and limbs were built

To woman's growth, by dreams so mild,

She knew not pain or guilt ;

And now, O Victory, blush ! and Empire tremble

When ye desert the free—

If Greece must be

A wreck, yet shall its fragments re-assemble,

And build themselves again impregnably

In a diviner clime.

To Amphionic music on some Cape sublime,

Which frowns above the idle foam of Time.

SEMICHORUS 1st.

Let the tyrants rule the desert they have made ;

Let the free possess the paradise they claim ;

Be the fortune of our fierce oppressors weighed

With our ruin, our resistance, and our name !

SEMICHORUS 2d.

Our dead shall be the seed of their decay,

Our survivors be the shadow of their pride,

Our adversity a dream to pass away—

Their dishonour a remembrance to abide !

Voice without.

Victory ! Victory ! The bought Briton sends

The keys of ocean to the Islamite.—

Now shall the blazon of the cross be veil'd,
 And British skill directing Othman might,
 Thunder-strike rebel victory. O keep holy
 This jubilee of unrevenged blood—
 Kill ! crush ! despoil ! Let not a Greek escape !

SEMICHORUS 1st.

Darkness has dawn'd in the East
 On the noon of time :
 The death-birds descend to their feast,
 From the hungry clime.
 Let Freedom and Peace flee far
 To a sunnier strand,
 And follow Love's folding star
 To the Evening land !

SEMICHORUS 2d.

The young moon has fed
 Her exhausted horn,
 With the sunset's fire :
 The weak day is dead,
 But the night is not born ;
 And, like loveliness panting with wild desire
 While it trembles with fear and delight,
 Hesperus flies from awakening night,
 And pants in its beauty and speed with light
 Fast flashing, soft, and bright.
 Thou beacon of love ! thou lamp of the free !

Guide us far, far away,
 To climes where now veil'd by the ardour of day
 Thou art hidden

From waves on which weary noon,
 Faints in her summer swoon,
 Between Kingless continents sinless as Eden,
 Around mountains and islands inviolably
 Prankt on the sapphire sea.

SEMICHORUS 1st.

Through the sunset of hope,
 Like the shapes of a dream,
 What Paradise islands of glory gleam !

Beneath Heaven's cope,
 Their shadows more clear float by—
 The sound of their oceans, the light of their sky,
 The music and fragrance their solitudes breathe
 Burst, like morning on dream, or like Heaven on
 death

Through the walls of our prison ;
 And Greece, which was dead, is arisen !

CHORUS.

The world's great age begins anew,(7)
 The golden years return,
 The earth doth like a snake renew
 Her winter weeds outworn :
 Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam,
 Like wrecks of a dissolving dream.

A brighter Hellas rears its mountains
 From waves serener far ;
 A new Peneus rolls his fountains
 Against the morning-star.
 Where fairer Tempes bloom, there sleep
 Young Cyclads on a sunnier deep.
 A loftier Argos cleaves the main,
 Fraught with a later prize ;
 Another Orpheus sings again,
 And loves, and weeps, and dies.
 A new Ulysses leaves once more
 Calypso for his native shore.

O, write no more the tale of Troy,
 If earth Death's scroll must be !
 Nor mix with Laian rage the joy
 Which dawns upon the free :
 Although a subtler Sphinx renew
 Riddles of death Thebes never knew.

Another Athens shall arise,
 And to remoter time
 Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,
 The splendour of its prime.
 And leave, if nought so bright may live,
 All earth can take or Heaven can give.

Saturn and Love their long repose⁽⁸⁾

Shall burst, * * * *

* * * * *

* * * * *

Not gold, not blood, their altar dowers
But votive tears and symbol flowers.

O cease! must hate and death return?

Cease! must men kill and die?

Cease! drain not to its dregs the urn

Of bitter prophecy.

The world is weary of the past,

O might it die or rest at last!

THE END.

NOTES.

(1) *The quenchless ashes of Milan.*

Milan was the centre of the resistance of the Lombard league against the Austrian tyrant. Frederic Barbarossa burnt the city to the ground, but liberty lived in its ashes, and it rose like an exhalation from its ruin. See Sismondi's "*Histoire des Républiques Italiennes*," a book which has done much towards awakening the Italians to an imitation of their great ancestors.

(2) *The Chorus.*

The popular notions of Christianity are represented in this chorus as true in their relation to the worship they superseded, and that which in all probability they will supersede, without considering their merits in a relation more universal. The first stanza contrasts the immortality of the living and thinking beings which inhabit the planets, and to use a common and inadequate phrase, *clothe themselves in matter* with the transience of the noblest manifestations of the external world.

The concluding verses indicate a progressive state of more or less exalted existence, according to the degree of perfection which every distinct intelligence may have attained. Let it not be supposed that I mean to dogmatize upon a subject, concerning which all men are equally ignorant, or that I think the Gordian knot of the origin of evil can be disentangled by that or any similar assertions. The received hypothesis of a Being resembling men in the moral attributes of his nature, having called us out of non-existence, and after inflicting on us the

misery of the commission of error, should superadd that of the punishment and the privations consequent upon it, still would remain inexplicable and incredible. That there is a true solution of the riddle, and that in our present state that solution is unattainable by us, are propositions which may be regarded as equally certain : meanwhile, as it is the province of the poet to attach himself to those ideas which exalt and ennoble humanity, let him be permitted to have conjectured the condition of that futurity towards which we are all impelled by an extinguishable thirst for immortality. Until better arguments can be produced than sophisms which disgrace the cause, this desire itself must remain the strongest and the only presumption that eternity is the inheritance of every thinking being.

(³) *No hoary priest after that Patriarch.*

The Greek Patriarch after having been compelled to fulminate an anathema against the insurgents was put to death by the Turks.

Fortunately the Greeks have been taught that they cannot buy security by degradation, and the Turks, though equally cruel, are less cunning than the smooth-faced tyrants of Europe. As to the anathema, his Holiness might as well have thrown his mitre at Mount Athos for any effect that it produced. The chiefs of the Greeks are almost all men of comprehension and enlightened views on religion and politics.

(⁴) *The freedman of a western poet chief.*

A Greek who had been Lord Byron's servant commands the insurgents in Attica. This Greek, Lord Byron informs me, though a poet and an enthusiastic patriot, gave him rather the idea of a timid and unenterprising person. It appears that circumstances make men what they are, and that we all contain the germ of a degree of degradation or of greatness whose connexion with our character is determined by events.

(⁵) *The Greeks expect a Saviour from the West.*

It is reported that this Messiah had arrived at a sea-port near Lacedæmon in an American brig. The association of names and ideas is irresistibly ludicrous, but the prevalence of such a rumour strongly marks the state of popular enthusiasm in Greece.

(⁶) *The sound is of an Assault of an Imperial City.*

For the vision of Mahmud of the taking of Constantinople in 1445, See Gibbon's "*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*," vol. xii. p. 223.

The manner of the invocation of the spirit of Mahomet the Second will be censured as over subtle. I could easily have made the Jew a regular conjuror, and the Phantom an ordinary ghost. I have preferred to represent the Jew as disclaiming all pretension, or even belief, in supernatural agency, and as tempting Mahmud to that state of mind in which ideas may be supposed to assume the force of sensations through the confusion of thought with the objects of thought, and the excess of passion animating the creations of imagination.

It is a sort of natural magic, susceptible of being exercised in a degree by any one who should have made himself master of the secret associations of another's thoughts.

Note (⁷)

The final Chorus is indistinct and obscure, as the event of the living drama whose arrival it foretells. Prophecies of wars, and rumours of wars, &c. may safely be made by poet or prophet in any age, but to anticipate however darkly a period of regeneration and happiness is a more hazardous exercise of the faculty which bards possess or feign. It will remind the reader "*magno nec proximus intervallo*" of Isaiah and Virgil, whose ardent spirits overleaping the actual reign of evil which we endure and bewail, already saw the possible and perhaps approaching state of society in which the "*lion shall lie down with the lamb*," and "*omnis feret omnia tellus*." Let these great names be my authority and my excuse.

(⁸) *Saturn and Love their long repose shall burst.*

Saturn and Love were among the deities of a real or imaginary state of innocence and happiness. *All those who fell*, or the Gods of Greece, Asia, and Egypt; and *the many unsubdued*, or the monstrous objects of the idolatry of China, India, the Antarctic islands, and the native tribes of America, certainly have reigned over the understandings of men in conjunction or in succession, during periods in which all we know of evil has been in a state of portentous, and, until the revival of learning and the arts, perpetually increasing activity. The Grecian gods seem indeed to have been personally more innocent, although it cannot be said, that as far as temperance and chastity are concerned, they gave very edifying examples. The horrors of the Mexican, the Peruvian, and the Indian superstitions are well known.

WRITTEN ON HEARING THE NEWS OF THE
DEATH OF NAPOLEON.

What ! alive and so bold, oh earth ?

Art thou not overbold ?

What ! leapest thou forth as of old

In the light of thy morning mirth,

The last of the flock of the starry fold ?

Ha ! leapest thou forth as of old ?

Are not the limbs still when the ghost is fled,

And canst thou move, Napoleon being dead ?

How ! is not thy quick heart cold ?

What spark is alive on thy hearth ?

How ! is not *his* death-knell knolled ?

And livest *thou* still, Mother Earth ?

Thou wert warming thy fingers old

O'er the embers covered and cold

Of that most fiery spirit, when it fled—

What, Mother, do you laugh now he is dead ?

“ Who has known me of old,” replied Earth,

“ Or who has my story told ?

It is thou who art overbold.”

And the lightning of scorn laughed forth

As she sung, “ to my bosom I fold

All my sons when their knell is knolled,

And so with living motion all are fed,

And the quick spring like weeds out of the dead.

“Still alive and still bold,” shouted Earth,
“I grow bolder and still more bold.
The dead fill me ten thousand fold
Fuller of speed, and splendour, and mirth,
I was cloudy, and sullen, and cold,
Like a frozen chaos uprolled,
Till by the spirit of the mighty dead
My heart grew warm. I feed on whom I fed.

Aye, alive and still bold,” muttered Earth,
“Napoleon’s fierce spirit rolled,
In terror and blood and gold,
A torrent of ruin to death from his birth.
Leave the millions who follow to mould
The metal before it be cold;
And weave into his shame, which like the dead
Shrouds me, the hopes that from his glory fled.

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THE SHELLEY SOCIETY.

PUBLICATIONS FOR 1886-7.

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PUBLICATIONS FOR 1886.

The Society's Publications for 1886 will be at least the following twelve:—

1. Shelley's *Adonais*: an Elegy on the Death of John Keats. Pisa, 4to, 1821. A Facsimile Reprint on hand-made Paper; edited, with a Bibliographical Introduction, by Thomas J. Wise. (*Second Edition, Revised.*) Price 10s. Boards. [Issued.]

2. Shelley's Review of Hogg's novel, "Memoirs of Prince Alexy Haimatoff." Now first reprinted from *The Critical Review*, Dec. 1814, on hand-made Paper, with an Extract from Prof. Dowden's article, "Some Early Writings of Shelley" (*Contemp. Rev.*, Sept. 1884). Edited, with an Introductory Note, by Thos. J. Wise. (*Second Edition, Revised.*) Price 2s. 6d. Boards. [Issued.]

3. Shelley's *Alastor, or The Spirit of Solitude; and other Poems*. London, fcap. 8vo, 1816. A Facsimile Reprint on hand-made Paper, with a new Preface by Bertram Dobell. (*Second Edition, Revised.*) Price 6s. Boards. [Issued.]

4. Shelley's *Hellas, a Lyrical Drama*. London, 8vo, 1822. A Facsimile Reprint on hand-made Paper ; together with Shelley's *Prologue to Hellas*, and Notes by Dr. Garnett and Mary W. Shelley. Edited, with an Introduction, by Thos. J. Wise. Presented by Mr. F. S. Ellis. *Price 8s. Boards.* [Issued.]

5. Shelley's *Epipsychidion*. London, 8vo, 1821. Facsimile Reprint on hand-made Paper ; with an Introduction by the Rev. Stopford A. Brooke, M.A. Presented and edited by Mr. R. A. Potts. *Price 6s. Boards.* [Issued.]

6. Shelley's *Address to the Irish People*. Dublin, 8vo, 1812. A Facsimile Reprint on hand-made Paper ; edited, with an Introduction, by Thos. J. Wise. Presented by Mr. Walter B. Slater. *Price 5s. Boards.* [Issued.]

7. Shelley's *Cenci* (for the Society's performance in May), with a prologue by Dr. John Todhunter ; an Introduction and Notes by Harry Buxton Forman and Alfred Forman ; and a Portrait of Beatrice Cenci. *Price 2s. 6d. Boards.* [Issued.]

8. Shelley's *Vindication of Natural Diet*. London, 12mo, 1813. A Reprint, 1882, with a Prefatory Note by H. S. Salt and W. E. A. Axon. Presented by Mr. Axon. (*Second Edition.*) [Issued.]

9. *A Memoir of Shelley*, with a fresh Preface, by William Michael Rossetti ; a Portrait of Shelley ; and an engraving of his Tomb. (*Second Edition, with Contents and a full Index.*) [Issued.]

10. *The Shelley Library : an Essay in Bibliography.*
Part I. 'First Editions and their Reproductions.' By
H. Buxton Forman. [Issued.]

11. Shelley's *Necessity of Atheism.* Worthing, 12mo
(N.D. but 1811). A Facsimile Reprint on hand-made
Paper. Edited, with an Introduction, by Thos. J. Wise.
Presented by the Editor. Price 4s. Boards. [Preparing.]

12. The Shelley Society's *Note-Book*, edited by the
Honorary Secretary. Part I, Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4 are
already published. Nos. 5 and 6 will be issued in due
course. Other Numbers will follow as material comes
in. Part I. of Mr. T. J. Wise's *Trial-List of Shelleyana*
(including all books of Shelleyan Biography, Biblio-
graphy, and Criticism; Magazine articles; Reviews;
Notices; &c., &c.) will appear in an early number of
the *Note-Book*.

Also a cheap edition of *Hellas* for the Society's per-
formance. Price 3s. boards (on fine paper), or 2s. in
wrappers. [Issued.]

Additional copies of such of the Society's
Publications as are on sale can be obtained
from its Publishers or Agents, or through any
bookseller.

Publishers :

REEVES AND TURNER, 196, Strand, London, W.C.

Agents :

CHARLES HUTT, Clement's Inn Gateway, Strand,
London, W.C.

B. DOBELL, 66, Queen's Crescent, Haverstock Hill,
London, N.W.

PUBLICATIONS FOR 1887.

The Society's Publications for 1887 will probably be the following twelve works, or as many of them as the funds at their disposal will enable the Committee to produce. It is hoped that the first four will be ready by New Year's Day, so that they may be sent out to Members as each pays his subscription :—

1. Biographical Articles on Shelley, Part I : those by Stockdale, from his *Budget* 1826-7 ; by Hogg, from *The New Monthly Magazine*, 1832-3 ; by a Newspaper Editor, from *Fraser*, June, 1841 ; by Thornton Hunt, from *The Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1863 ; and by Peacock, from *Fraser*, 1858, 1860, and 1862. With two Portraits. Edited by Thomas J. Wise. [Preparing.]

2. Robert Browning's *Essays and Poems on Shelley*. With a portrait of Mr. Browning, and Forewords by F. J. Furnivall. [Preparing.]

3. *Posthumous Fragments of Margaret Nicholson*. 4to. 1810. With an Introduction, and a Portrait of Margaret Nicholson. [Preparing.]

4. A Facsimile of Mr. H. Buxton Forman's copy of *Laon and Cythna* as corrected by Shelley into the *Revolt of Islam*. Edited, with an Introduction, by H. Buxton Forman ; presented by a Member. [Preparing.]

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5. *A Letter to Lord Ellenborough*. 8vo. (Not dated, but 1812.) Reproduced from the unique copy of the original in the possession of Sir Percy Shelley. With an Introduction.

6. *Proposals for an Association of Philanthropists*. 8vo. (Not dated, but 1812.) Reproduced, with an Introduction, from Sir Percy Shelley's copy of the original.

7. Shelley's *Masque of Anarchy*, 1832. Edited, with an Introduction, by Sydney E. Preston. Presented by the Editor.

8. A Facsimile of Mr. H. Buxton Forman's copy of *Queen Mab*, with Shelley's corrections. Edited, with an Introduction, by H. Buxton Forman.

9. The *Shelley Primer*, by Mr. H. S. Salt. This will be published by Reeves and Turner early in 1887, and the Society will take a copy for each of its Members.

10. The Shelley Society's *Papers*, Part I. by the Rey. Stopford A. Brooke, M.A.; H. Buxton Forman; Henry Sweet, M.A.; Mathilde Blind; and W. M. Rossetti. Part I, No. 1 (containing the Inaugural Address on "Shelley" delivered to the Society on March 10th last) is now at press.

11. The Shelley Society's *Papers*, Part II, containing the chief Papers read during 1887.

12. The Shelley Society's *Note-Book*, Part II, edited by the Honorary Secretary.

The Society's performance of *The Cenci* will be repeated, with Mr. Hermann Vezin as the Count, and Miss Alma Murray as Beatrice, early in May 1887; and the *Hellas* in the autumn of the same year.

The Committee hope that some Members will give the Society other Facsimile Reprints. An estimate of the cost of reproducing all the original editions of Shelley's different works will be given shortly in the Society's *Note-Book*. Two or more friends may well join in the gift of a book.

Shelley's Autobiography, by Mr. W. M. Rossetti—see Prospectus, p. 9, Series IV, No. 6,—has long been prepared, and can be revised, completed, and sent to press, as soon as the Society has money enough to print it. This could be in 1888 if the Society's membership reaches the number of 500 in 1886.

The Committee is also anxious to commence the publication, *in exact facsimile*, of the more important of Shelley's Manuscripts, and will be glad to receive offers of financial or other assistance towards that object.

RICHARD CLAY & SONS,
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