

PR  
3461  
F67m

A  
0  
0  
0  
0  
0  
0  
5  
8  
5  
0



UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY

Francklin

Matilda

California  
ional  
lity



THE LIBRARY  
OF  
THE UNIVERSITY  
OF CALIFORNIA  
LOS ANGELES





U  
M  
CH  
1100

M A T I L D A :

A

T R A G E D Y.

As it is performed at the

T H E A T R E - R O Y A L,

I N

D R U R Y - L A N E.

By the AUTHOR of the EARL OF WARWICK.

D U B L I N :

Printed for J. EXSHAW, W. SLEATER, J. POTTS,  
D. CHAMBERLAINE, J. WILLIAMS, W. WILSON,  
J. SHEPPARD, J. A. HUSBAND, R. MONCRIEFFE,  
R. MARCHBANK, T. WALKER, C. JENKIN, and  
J. HILLARY. M. DCC. LXXV.

M A T H E M A T I C S

T R A G E D Y

T H E A T T E N - F O U R T H

D R O Y L A N E

Printed by J. Johnson, St. Paul, Minn.  
In conformity with the Act of Congress,  
passed March 3, 1879, for the  
Registration of Copyrights in  
Literary, Artistic, and Scientific  
Works.

# DEDICATION.

TO THE PUBLIC. PR

S I R,

3461  
F67m

**P**ERMIT me to return you my unfeigned thanks for your kind reception of this TRAGEDY on the stage, and to request the continuance of your favour to it in the closet. It would be the highest ingratitude in me to forget the only patron I ever had the good fortune to meet with, by whose powerful assistance I have been enabled to defeat the combined forces of envy, malice and detraction. I must at the same time fairly confess, my victory over the enemy was owing, I believe, as many other victories have been, more to the art and prowess of my OFFICERS than to any extraordinary merit of my own. To the first in command, Miss YOUNGE, I have infinite obligations, which I shall always gratefully acknowledge, tho' I may never have it in my power to repay them; nor can the skill and conduct of my generals, REDDISH, SMITH and PALMER, be sufficiently admired. To your patronage and protection I most heartily and sincerely recommend them: If I have been the happy instrument of giving them a favourable opportunity of rising in YOUR esteem, it will give me the greatest satisfaction. YOU can best distinguish their merit, and YOU alone are able to reward it.

*I am, Sir, your much obliged,*

*And devoted humble Servant, -*

A 2

*The Author.*

881302



Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

MORCAR,	}	<i>Earl of Mercia,</i>	{	Mr. REDDISH.
EDWIN,	}	<i>Earl of Northumberland,</i>	{	Mr. SMITH.
SIWARD,	}	<i>Morcar's friend,</i>	{	Mr. PALMER.

OFFICERS, &c.

W O M E N.

MATILDA,	}	<i>A prisoner in the camp of Morcar,</i>	{	Miss YOUNGE.
BERTHA,	}	<i>Her friend,</i>	{	Miss PLATT.

SCENE, MORCAR'S Camp, and the Environs near  
NOTTINGHAM.



# P R O L O G U E.

WRITTEN BY A FRIEND.

SPOKEN BY MR. SMITH.

*A Tragic Tale, from Norman William's Age,  
Simple, and unadorn'd, attempts the Stage.  
Our silly Bard, more simple than his Tale,  
Thinks on your polish'd Manners to prevail;  
What in those barb'rous Days were counted Crimes,  
Are Slips of course in these enlighten'd Times:  
Let not your Ancestors too rude appear,  
Though firm in Friendship, and in Love sincere.  
Love then like Glory did each Heart inflame,  
Beauty was Virtue, and to win it, Fame.  
Now Lovers lose their Mistresses with Grace,  
As at New-Market they would lose a Race,  
Where, if in Hopes they seem a little cross'd,  
'Tis for the Money of the Match that's lost.  
When Tilts and Tournaments call'd forth the Brave,  
The Fame of spotless Innocence to save,  
Each gallant Knight prefer'd his Love to Life,  
For then the greatest Blessing was a Wife:  
To prove their Chastity the dauntless Fair  
Would walk through Flames, nor singe a single Hair;  
Nay, some so chaste, so cold to all Desire,  
Not only 'scap'd it, they put out the Fire!  
But now no Heroes die for Love's sweet Passion,  
And fiery Trials are quite out of Fashion.  
Ye Sons of Frailty—you whom Rage devours,  
For you this Night the Muse exerts her Pow'rs;  
With crimson Hands, pale Cheeks, and blood-shot Eyes;  
She bids the Furies in their Terrors rise!*

## P R O L O G U E.

*In Valour's Breast their Scorpion Stings they dart,  
First fire the Brain, and then corrupt the Heart.  
But what avails all Virtue! Passion's Gust,  
Like Whirlwinds, drive it from the Heart like Dust;  
When Reason dawns, well may Repentance mourn  
Love, Friendship, Duty, by the Roots up-torn.  
To sooth this fatal Vice, the Flatterer tells  
In stormy Minds how warmest Friendship dwells;  
The Tree whose sheltering Arms spread kindly round,  
If Light'ning-struck, lies blasted on the Ground;  
In vain will Merits past Indulgence claim,  
One Moment's Rashness blasts whole Years of Fame.*

EPILOGUE.

# E P I L O G U E.

By the AUTHOR of the TRAGEDY.

SPOKEN BY MISS YOUNGE.

*H*A! ha! poor Creature! how you trembling stand!  
Come to the Bar, Sir, and hold up your Hand;  
You won't—by Council then you'd have it done,  
And I must plead your Cause—well, get you gone.

[Coming forward to the Audience.

*N*ow for the great Tribunal of Old Drury;  
Are you all sworn there—Gentlemen of the Jury?  
Good Men, and true, I hope—stay, let me see,  
Amongst you all he challenges—but three.  
Physicians, Lawyers, Parsons he admits,  
Beaux, Ladies, Courtiers, Maccaronies, Cits,  
And only scratches—Critics, News-writers, and Wits. }

*T*he Critic first we banish from our Session,  
Death is his Trade, and Damning—his Profession;  
Disqualify'd—because, to say no further,  
Butchers are never heard in Case of Murther.

*N*ext we disclaim th' Artificers of News,  
Who live by Fibs, and flourish by Abuse;  
They must condemn, or lose their daily Bread;  
If they don't cut, and slash—they're never read;  
Like fabled Giants here they roam for Food,  
And Fe! Fa! Fum! snuff up an Author's Blood;  
In the next Ledger hang him up to roast,  
Or tear him Piece-meal in—the Morning-Post.

*T*o Wits we last except, and 'bove all other,  
The Hero of our Tale—a Rival Brother!

# EPILOGUE.

*As Rogues, just'scap'd the Gallows, join the Shrieves,  
 Turn Hangmen, and tuck up their Fellow-Thieves;  
 So Bards condemn'd, exert the Critic's Skill,  
 And execute their Brethren of the Quill!  
 If like their own, indeed, the Brat should die,  
 They'll gladly join to write—its Elegy;  
 But if the Child is strong, and like to live,  
 That is a Crime they never can forgive.*

*From such let English Juries still be free,  
 Our Author here appeals to your Decree,  
 The Public is—a Court of Equity.* }
   
*If he has shock'd your Taste, your Sense, or Reason,  
 Or against Nature guilty been of Treason,  
 Off with his Head;—but if with honest Art,  
 His well-meant Scenes have touch'd the feeling Heart;  
 If they have rais'd your Pity, wak'd your Fears,  
 Or sweetly have “beguil'd you of your Tears,”  
 Let venial Errors your Indulgence claim,  
 Your Voice his Triumph, your Applause his Fame.*

*Speak by your Foreman—what says Goodman Pit?  
 Will you condemn the Prisoner, or acquit?  
 Your Verdict, Sirs, Not Guilty—if you please—  
 You smile—Acquitted—hope you'll pay his Fees.*



# M A T I L D A :

## A T R A G E D Y.

\*

---

### A C T I.

SCENE, MATILDA'S Tent, with a view of the  
*distant country.*

MATILDA, BERTHA.

MATILDA.

**I** Thank thee, gentle Bertha, for thy goodness ;  
If aught cou'd sooth the anguish of my soul,  
Or raise it from the horrors of despair  
To hope and joy, 'twou'd be thy gen'rous friendship :  
But I am sunk so deep in misery,  
That comfort cannot reach me.

A 5

Bert.

---

\* *The reader will meet with some lines which, to shorten  
the scenes, were omitted in the representation.*

*Bert.* Talk not thus,  
My sweet Matilda; innocence, like thine,  
Must be the care of all-directing heav'n.  
Already hath the interposing hand  
Of Providence redeem'd thee from the rage  
Of savage war, and shelter'd thee within  
This calm asylum. Mercia's potent Earl,  
The noble Morcar, will protect thy virtues,  
And, if I err not, wishes but to share  
His conquests with thee.

*Matil.* O, my friend, oft times  
The flow'ry path that tempts our wand'ring steps  
But leads to mis'ry; what thou fondly deem'st  
My soul's best comfort, is its bitt'rest woe.  
Earl Morcar loves me. To the gen'rous mind  
The heaviest debt is that of gratitude,  
When 'tis not in our power to repay it.

*Bert.* Oft have I heard thee say, to him thou ow'st  
Thy honour and thy life.

*Matil.* I told thee truth.  
Beneath my father's hospitable roof,  
I spent my earlier happier days in peace  
And safety: When the Norman conqueror came,  
Discord, thou know'st, soon lit her fatal torch,  
And spread destruction o'er this wretched land.  
The loyal Ranulph flew to William's aid,  
And left me to a faithful peasant's care,  
Who liv'd, sequester'd in the fertile plains  
Of rich Northumbria: There awhile I dwelt  
In sweet retirement, when the savage Malcolm  
Rush'd on our borders.

*Bert.* I remember well  
The melancholy hour. Confusion rag'd  
On ev'ry side, and desolation spread  
Its terrors round us. How did'st thou escape?

*Matil.*



*Matil.* A crew of desp'rate ruffians seiz'd upon me,  
 A helpless prey: For, O! he was not there,  
 Who best cou'd have defended his Matilda.  
 Then had I fall'n a wretched sacrifice  
 To brutal rage, and lawless violence,  
 Had not the gen'rous Morcar interpos'd  
 To save me: Tho' he join'd the guilty cause  
 Of soul rebellion, yet his soul abhor'd  
 Such violation. At his awful voice  
 The surly ruffians left me, and retir'd.  
 He bore me, half expiring in his arms,  
 Back to his tent; with ev'ry kind attention  
 There strove to sooth my griefs, and promis'd, soon  
 As fit occasion offer'd, to restore me  
 To my afflicted father.

*Bert.* Something sure  
 Was due to gen'rous Morcar for his aid,  
 So timely given.

*Matil.* No doubt: But mark what follow'd.  
 In my deliverer too soon I found  
 An ardent lover, sighing at my feet.

*Bert.* And what is there the proudest of our sex:  
 Cou'd wish for more? To be the envy'd bride  
 Of noble Morcar, first of England's peers,  
 In fame and fortune.

*Matil.* Never trust, my Bertha,  
 To outward shew. 'Tis not the smiles of fortune,  
 The pomp of wealth, or splendor of a court,  
 Can make us happy. In the mind alone,  
 Rests solid joy, and true felicity,  
 Which I can never taste: For, O, my friend!  
 A secret sorrow weighs upon my heart.

*Bert.* Then pour it in the bosom of thy friend;  
 Let me partake it with thee.

*Matil!*



*Matil.*

Gen'rous maid!

Know then, for nought will I conceal from thee,  
 I honour Mercia's Earl, revere his virtues,  
 And wish I cou'd repay him with myself;  
 But, blushing, I acknowledge it, the heart  
 His vows solicit, is not mine to give.

*Bert.* Has then some happier youth——*Matil.*

Another time

I'll tell thee all the story of our loves.  
 But, O, my Bertha! did'st thou know to whom  
 My virgin faith is plighted, thou wou'd say  
 I am indeed unhappy.

*Bert.*

Cou'd Matilda

Bestow the treasure of her heart on one  
 Unworthy of her choice?

*Matil.*

Unworthy! No.

I glory in my passion for the best,  
 The loveliest of his sex. O! he was all  
 That bounteous nature, prodigal of charms,  
 Did on her choicest fav'rite e'er bestow.  
 His graceful form and sweet deportment spoke  
 The fairer beauties of his kindred soul,  
 Where ev'ry grace and ev'ry virtue shone.  
 But thou wilt tremble, Bertha, when I tell thee,  
 He is Earl Morcar's—brother.

*Bert.*

Ha! his brother!

The noble Edwin? Often have I heard  
 My father——

*Matil.*

Did Lord Edrick know him then?

*Bert.* He knew his virtues, and his fame in arms,  
 And often wou'd lament the dire effects  
 Of civil discord, that cou'd thus dissolve  
 The ties of nature, and of brethren make  
 The bitt'rest foes. If right I learn, Lord Edwin

Is William's firmest friend, and still supports  
His royal master.

*Matil.* Yes, my Bertha, there  
I still find comfort: Edwin ne'er was stain'd  
As Morcar is, with foul disloyalty,  
But stands betwixt his sov'reign and the rage  
Of rebel multitudes, to guard his throne.  
If nobly fighting in his country's cause,  
My hero falls, I shall not weep alone;  
The king he lov'd and honour'd, will lament him,  
And grateful England mix her tears with mine.

*Bert.* And doth Earl Morcar know of Edwin's love?

*Matil.* O, no! I would not for a thousand worlds  
He shou'd suspect it, lest his fiery soul  
Shou'd catch th' alarm, and kindle to a flame  
That might destroy us all.

*Bert.* I know his warmth  
And vehemence of temper, unrestrain'd  
By laws, and spurning at the royal pow'r  
Which he contemns, he rules despotic here.

*Matil.* Alas! how man from man, and brother oft  
From brother differs! Edwin's tender passion  
Is soft and gentle as the balmy breath  
Of vernal zephyrs; whilst the savage north,  
That curls the angry ocean into storms,  
Is a faint image of Earl Morcar's love:  
'Tis rage, 'tis fury all. When last we met  
He knit his angry brow, and frown'd severe  
Upon me; then, with wild distracted look,  
Bade me beware of trifling with his passion,  
He wou'd not brook it—trembling I retired,  
And bath'd my couch in tears.

*Bert.* Unhappy maid!  
But time, that softens ev'ry human woe,  
Will bring some blest event, and lighten thine.

*Matil,*

*Matil.* Alas ! thou know'st not what it is to love.  
 Haply thy tender heart hath never felt  
 The tortures of that foul-bewitching passion.  
 Its joys are sweet and poignant, but its pangs  
 Are exquisite, as I have known too well :  
 For, O ! my Bertha, since the fatal hour  
 When Edwin left me, never hath sweet peace,  
 That us'd to dwell with all its comforts here,  
 E'er deigned to visit this afflicted breast.

*Bert.* Too plain, alas ! I read thy sorrows grief ;  
 Sits in sad triumph on thy faded cheek,  
 And half obscures the lustre of thy beauties.

*Matil.* Talk not of beauty, 'tis our sex's bane,  
 And leads but to destruction. I abhor  
 The fatal gift. O ! would it had pleas'd heav'n  
 To brand my homely features with the mark  
 Of foul deformity, or let me pass  
 Unknown, and undistinguish'd from the herd  
 Of vulgar forms, save by the partial eye  
 Of my lov'd Edwin ; then had I been blest  
 With charms unenvy'd, and a guiltless love.

*Bert.* Where is thy Edwin now ?

*Matil.* Alas ! I know not.  
 'Tis now three years since last these eyes beheld  
 Their dearest object. In that humble vale,  
 Whence, as I told thee, Malcolm's fury drove me,  
 There first we met. O ! how I cherish still  
 The fond remembrance ! There we first exchange'd  
 Our mutual vows, the day of happiness  
 Was fixt ; it came, and in a few short hours  
 He had been made indissolubly mine,  
 When fortune, envious of our happiness  
 And William's danger, call'd him to the field.

*Bert.* And since that parting have ye never met ?

*Matil.*

*Matil.* O never, Bertha, never but in thought.  
 Imagination, kind anticipator  
 Of love's pleasures, brings us oft' together.  
 Oft' as I sit within my lonely tent,  
 And cast my wishful eyes o'er yonder plain,  
 In ev'ry passing traveller I strive  
 To trace his image, hear his lovely voice  
 In ev'ry sound, and fain wou'd flatter me  
 Edwin still lives, still loves his lost Matilda.

*Bert.* Who knows but fate, propitious to thy love,  
 May guide him hither.

*Matil.* Gracious heav'n forbid!  
 Consider, Bertha, if the chance of war  
 Shou'd this way lead him, he must come in arms  
 Against his brother: Oh! 'tis horrible  
 To think on. Shou'd they meet, and Edwin fall,  
 What shall support me? And if vict'ry smiles  
 Upon my love, how dear will be the purchase  
 By Morcar's blood! Then must I lose my friend,  
 My guardian, my protector—ev'ry way  
 Matilda must be wretched.

*Bert.* Is there ought  
 In Bertha's pow'r?

*Matil.* Wilt thou dispatch, my friend,  
 Some trusty messenger with these?—Away.

*(gives her letters.)*  
 I'll meet thee in my tent—farewel. *[Exit Berth.]*

*Matil. (alone)* Mean time  
 One hope remains, the gen'rous Siward—he  
 Might save me still. His sympathetic heart  
 Can feel for the afflicted.—I have heard,  
 (Such is the magic pow'r of sacred friendship)  
 When the impetuous Morcar scatters fear  
 And terror round him, he, and he alone

Can stem the rapid torrent of his passion,  
 And bend him, tho' reluctant, to his will;  
 And see, in happy hour, he comes this way.  
 Now fortune, be propitious! if there be,  
 As I have heard, an eloquence in grief,  
 And those can most persuade, who are most wretched,  
 I shall not pass unpitied.

*Enter SIWARD.*

*Siw.* Ha! in tears,  
 Matilda! What new grief, what cruel foe  
 To innocence and beauty, thus cou'd vex  
 Thy gentle spirit?

*Matil.* Canst thou ask the cause,  
 When thou behold'st me still in shameful bonds.  
 A wretched captive, friendless and forlorn,  
 Without one ray of hope to sooth my sorrows.

*Siw.* Can she, whose beauteous form, and fair de-  
 Charm ev'ry eye, and conquer ev'ry heart, (meanor,  
 Can she be wretched? can she want a friend,  
 Whom Siward honours, and whom Morcar loves?  
 O! if thou knew'st with what unceasing ardor,  
 What unexampled tenderness and truth,  
 He doats upon thee, sure thou might'st be wrought  
 At least to pity.

*Matil.* Urge no more, my Lord,  
 Th' ungrateful subject; but too well I know  
 How much thy friend deserves, how much, alas,  
 I owe him!—If it be Earl Morcar's wish  
 To make me happy, why am I detain'd  
 A pris'ner here? Spite of his solemn promise  
 He would restore me to my royal master,  
 Or send me back to the desiring arms  
 Of the afflicted Ranulph, who in tears



Of bitt'rest anguish, mourns his long-lost daughter?  
 Surely, my lord, it ill becomes a soldier  
 To forfeit thus his honour and his word.

*Siw.* I own it; yet the cause pleads strongly for him.  
 If by thy own too powerful charms misled,  
 He deviates from the paths of rigid honour,  
 Matilda might forgive. Thou know'st he lives  
 But in thy smiles; his love-enchanted soul  
 Hangs on those beauties he would wish to keep  
 For ever in his sight.

*Matil.* Indulgent heav'n  
 Keep me for ever from it! O, my Lord!  
 If e'er thy heart with gen'rous pity glow'd  
 For the distress'd; if e'er thy honest zeal  
 Cou'd boast an influence o'er the man you love;  
 O! now exert thy pow'r, assist, direct,  
 And save thy friend from ruin and Matilda.  
 There are, my Lord, who most offend, where most  
 They wish to please. Such often is the fate  
 Of thy unhappy friend, when he pours forth  
 His ardent soul in vows of tend'rest passion;  
 'Tis with such rude and boist'rous violence  
 As suits but ill the hero or the lover.

*Siw.* I know his weakness, know his follies all,  
 And feel 'em but too well: He loves with transport,  
 And hates with fury. Warm'd with fierce desire,  
 Or strong resentment, his impetuous soul  
 Is hurried on, till reason quits her seat,  
 And passion takes the loosely-flowing rein;  
 Then all is rage, confusion, and despair.  
 And yet, when cool reflection hath remov'd  
 The veil of error, he will weep his faults  
 With such a sweet contrition, as wou'd melt  
 The hardest heart to pity and forgiveness.  
 O! he has virtues that may well atone

For all his venial rashness, that deserve  
 A sov'reign's love, and claim a nation's praise;  
 Virtues that merit happiness and thee.  
 Why wilt thou thus despise my noble friend?  
 His birth and fortune, with the rank he bears  
 Amongst the first of England's peers, will raise thee  
 As far above thy sex, in wealth and pow'r,  
 As now thou art in beauty.

*Matil.*

O, my Lord!

'Tis not the pride, the luxury of life,  
 The splendid robe and glitt'ring gem, that knits  
 The lasting bonds of mutual happiness:  
 Where manners differ, where affections jarr,  
 And will not kindly mix together, where  
 The sweet harmonious concord of the mind  
 Is wanting, all is misery and woe.

*Siw.* By heav'n, thou plead'st thy own and virtue's  
 With such bewitching eloquence, the more (cause,  
 Thy heart, alarm'd by diffidence, still urges  
 Against this union with my friend, the more  
 I wish to see him blest with worth like thine.

*Matil.* My Lord, it must not be; for grant him all  
 The fair perfections you already see,  
 And I cou'd wish to find, there is a bar  
 That must for ever disunite us——Born  
 Of Norman race, and from my earliest years  
 Attach'd to William's cause; I love my king  
 And wish my country's peace: That king, my Lord,  
 Whom Morcar wishes to dethrone; that peace  
 Which he destroys: Had he an angel's form,  
 With all the virtues that adorn his sex,  
 With all the riches fortune can bestow,  
 I wou'd not wed a traitor.

*Siw.* Call not his errors by so harsh a name;  
 He has been deeply wrong'd, and souls like his,

Must



Must feel the wounds of honour, and resent them.  
 Alas! with thee I weep my country's fate,  
 Nay wish, perhaps, as well to William's cause,  
 And England's peace, as can the loyal daughter  
 Of gallant Ranulph, and wou'd, therefore, joy  
 To see Matilda lend a gracious ear  
 To Morcar's suit. Thy reconciling charms  
 Might sooth his troubled soul, might heal the wounds  
 Of bleeding England, and unite us all  
 In one bright chain of harmony and love.  
 The gallant Edwin too——

*Matil.* Ha! what of him?

Know'st thou that noble youth?

*Siw.* So many years  
 Have past since last we met, by diff'rent views,  
 And our unhappy feuds, so long divided,  
 I should not recollect him; but report  
 Speaks loudly of his virtues. He, no doubt,  
 If yet he lives——

*Matil.* Yet lives!—Why, what, my Lord?

*Siw.* You seem much mov'd.

*Matil.* Forgive me, but whene'er  
 This sad idea rises to my mind,  
 Of brother against brother arm'd, my soul  
 Recoils with horror.

*Siw.* 'Tis a dreadful thought;  
 Wou'd I cou'd heal that cruel breach! but then  
 Thou might'st do much, the task is left for thee.

*Matil.* For me? Alas! it is not in my pow'r.

*Siw.* In thine, and thine alone. O think, Matilda!  
 How great thy glory, and how great thy praise,  
 To be the blessed instrument of peace;  
 The band of union 'twixt contending brothers.  
 Thou see'st them now, like two descending floods,  
 Whose rapid torrents meeting, half o'erwhelm

The neigh'ring plains: Thy gentle voice might still  
The angry waves, and bid their waters flow  
In one united stream, to bless the land.

*Matil.* That flatt'ring thought beams comfort on my  
Amidst my sorrows; bear me witness, heav'n! (soul,  
Cou'd poor Matilda be the happy means  
Of reconcilment: Cou'd these eyes behold  
The noble youths embracing, and embrac'd  
In the firm cords of amity and love:  
O! it would make me ample recompence  
For all my griefs, nor would I more complain,  
But rest me in the silent grave, well pleas'd  
To think, at last, I had not liv'd in vain.

*Siw.* Cherish that virtuous thought, illustrious maid,  
And let me hope my friend may still be happy.

*Matil.* I wish it from my soul: But see, my Lord,  
Earl Morcar comes this way, with hasty steps,  
Across the lawn. I must retire: Farewel!  
You'll not forget my humble suit.

*Siw.* O! no,  
I will do all that loveliest innocence  
And worth like thine, deserve. Farewel: Mean time  
Remember, Siward's every wish, the bliss  
Of Morcar, Edwin's life, the public peace,  
And England's welfare, all depend—on thee.

[*Exit Matilda.*

*Siw. (alone)* There's no alternative but this; my friend  
Must quit Matilda, or desert the cause  
We've rashly promis'd to support—Perhaps  
The last were best—both shall be try'd—he comes.

*Enter MORCAR.*

*Morc.* O, Siward! was not that  
The fair Matilda, whom you parted from?

*Siw.*

*Siw.* It was.

*Morc.* What says she? the dear, cruel maid!  
Is she still deaf? inexorable still?

*Siw.* You must not think of her.

*Morc.* What say'st thou, Siward?  
Not think of her!

*Siw.* No. Root her from thy heart,  
And gaze no more. I blush to see my friend  
So lost to honour: Is it for a man,  
On whom the fate of England may depend,  
To quit the dang'rous post, where duty calls,  
And all the bus'ness of the war, to sigh  
And whine in corners for a captive woman?  
Resume the hero, Morcar, and subdue  
This idle passion.

*Morc.* Talk not thus of love,  
The great refiner of the human heart,  
The source of all that's great, of all that's good;  
Of joy, of pleasure—If it be a weakness,  
It is a weakness which the best have felt;  
I wou'd not wish to be a stranger to it.

*Siw.* Let me entreat thee, if thou valuest life,  
Or fame, or honour, quit Matilda.

*Morc.* Yes:  
I thank you for your counsel. 'Tis th' advice  
Of cold unfeeling wisdom, kindly meant  
To make me prudent, and to leave me wretched:  
But thus it is, that proud exulting health  
Is ever ready to prescribe a cure  
For pain and sickness which it never knew.

*Siw.* There too thou err'st; for I have known its joys  
And sorrows too. In early life I lost  
The partner of my soul. E'er since that hour  
I bade adieu to love, and taught my soul  
To offer her devotions at the shrine

Of sacred friendship; there *my* vows are paid:  
Morcar best knows the idol of my worship.

*Morc.* I know and love thee for it: But O! my friend,  
I cannot force this tyrant from my breast;  
E'en now I feel her here, she sits enthron'd,  
Within the foldings of my heart, and he  
Who tears her thence must draw the life-blood from me.  
My morning slumbers, and my midnight dreams,  
Are haunted by Matilda.

*Siw.* To be thus  
The slave of one that scorns thee, O! 'tis base,  
Mean and unworthy of thee.

*Morc.* I will bear  
That scorn no longer: Thou hast rous'd me, Siward;  
I will enjoy the glorious prize; she's mine,  
By right of conquest mine. I will assert  
A victor's claim, and force her to be happy.

*Siw.* That must not be. It ill becomes the man  
Who takes up arms against a tyrant's pow'r,  
T' adopt a tyrant's maxims; force and love  
Are terms that never can be reconcil'd.  
You will not, must not do it.

*Morc.* Must not! who  
Shall dare oppose me!

*Siw.* Honour, conscience, love,  
The sense of shame, your virtue, and your friend.  
Whilst I have life, or pow'r, I will not see  
Matilda wrong'd.

*Morc.* You are her champion then  
It seems, her favour'd, happy friend, perhaps  
Her fond admirer too. Ill-fated Morcar!  
I see it but too well. I'm lost, abandon'd;  
Alike betray'd by friendship and by love.  
I thank you, Sir, you have perform'd your office,  
And merit your reward.

*Siw.* Unkind reproach !  
 Did I for this desert my Sov'reign's cause,  
 My peaceful home, and all its joys, to serve  
 Ungrateful Morcar ? Why did I rebel ?  
 The haughty William never injur'd me.  
 For thee alone I fought, for thee I conquer'd ;  
 And, but for thee, long since I had employ'd  
 My gallant soldiers to a nobler purpose,  
 Than loit'ring thus in idle camp to hear  
 A love-sick tale, and sooth a mad man's phrenzy.

*Morc.* You could ? Away, and leave me then  
 With-draw  
 Your boasted aid, and bid Northumbria's sons  
 Bend to the tyrant's yoke, whilst I alone  
 Defend the cause of freedom, and my country.  
 Here let us part. Remove your loiterers,  
 And join th' usurper.

*Siw.* Mark the diff'rence now  
 Betwixt blind passion and undaunted friendship :  
 You are impatient of the keen reproof,  
 Because you merit : I can bear it all,  
 Because I've not deserv'd it.

*Enter an OFFICER.*

*Offic.* Good, my Lords,  
 Forgive this rough intrusion, but the danger,  
 I trust, will plead my pardon. As I watch'd  
 From yonder tow'r, a dusky cloud appear'd,  
 As if from distant troops advancing, soon  
 I saw their armour glitter in the sun ;  
 With rapid motion they approach'd ; each moment  
 We must expect them here.

*Siw.*

*Siw.* Why, let 'em come,  
 Already I have order'd fit disposal  
 Of all our little force. Away, good Osmond,  
 Be silent and be ready. *(Exit Officer.)*

Now, my friend,  
 Thou art as welcome to thy Siward's breast,  
 As dear as ever.—When the man I love,  
 Walks in the paths of error, I reprove him  
 With honest freedom; but when danger comes  
 Upon him, I forget his faults, and flee  
 With all a lover's ardour to his rescue;  
 His sorrows and his wants alone remember'd,  
 And all his follies buried in oblivion.

*Morc.* Thou hast disarmed me now. This pierces more  
 Than all the bitter poison of reproach,  
 Which thou hast pour'd upon me. O! 'twas treason  
 Against the sacred majesty of friendship,  
 To doubt thy honour, or suspect thy virtue.  
 Thou wilt forgive: But when the wounded mind  
 Is torn with passion, ev'ry touch is pain;  
 You should not probe so deeply.

*Siw.* 'Twas my duty.  
 But come, no more of that. The foe advances.  
 If we succeed, as my prophetic soul  
 Foretels we shall—I have some comfort for you—  
 If not, we'll borrow courage from despair,  
 And die like men. Thou stand'st upon the rock  
 Of danger, and the yawning precipice  
 Opens before us; I will snatch thee from it,  
 Or leap the gulph, and perish with my friend.

*The End of the First Act.*



## A C T II.

SCENE, *a Fortrefs belonging to MORCAR.*E D W I N *alone (in chains.)*

E D W I N.

IT is the will of heav'n, and must be done.  
 The hard-fought field is lost, and here I am  
 A pris'ner in my brother's camp: alas!  
 That fortune thus shou'd guide me to a foe  
 Whom most I wish'd to shun! We little thought  
 The troops by Morcar led, had this way bent  
 Their ill-directed course: but Providence  
 Hath so ordain'd, perhaps, to heal the wounds  
 Of civil discord. O! unhappy Edwin,  
 For what art thou reserv'd? No matter what:  
 Since fate depriv'd me of my dear Matilda,  
 Whom I for three long years have fought in vain;  
 Life hath been irksome to me: this, perchance,  
 May end it—For, who knows if nature yet  
 May live within the conqu'ror's breast, to plead  
 A brother's pardon? Yet he knows me not,  
 But soon he must—Ha! who comes here? Earl  
 Siward!—

The second in command, to whom, o'erpower'd  
 By circling foes, and fainting with my wounds,  
 I yielded up my sword. If fame say true,  
 He bears a mind too great to look with scorn  
 On the oppress'd, or triumph o'er misfortune.

B

*Enter*



*Enter SIWARD.*

*Siw.* Stranger, whoe'er thou art, be comforted;  
Thy fate hath thrown thee into noble hands,  
Who know thy merit. May I ask thy name?

*Edw.* I am a poor abandon'd wretch, the sport  
Of fortune; one whose least affliction is  
To be a captive, and from ev'ry eye  
Wou'd wish to hide the story of my fate:  
Too soon my name and sorrows will be known.

*Siw.* Respect is ever due to misery:  
I will not urge thee further; all I hope,  
That gen'rous pity could afford to sooth  
Calamity like thine, by my command  
Hath been extended to thee. Here awhile  
You must remain a pris'ner, but ere long  
I hope to greet thee by a fairer name,  
And rank thee as our friend.

*Edw.* Your gen'rous orders  
Have been obey'd, and I acknowledge it  
With grateful heart. May I not ask the fate  
Of him who fought so nobly by my side,  
That brave old man.

*Siw.* The gallant Ranulph—

*Edw.* Yes;

My fellow captive.

*Siw.* He is safe and free.

*Edw.* Ha! free! Thank heav'n!

*Siw.* The gen'rous Morcar, urg'd  
By my entreaties, pardon'd and releas'd him,  
Tho' much our soldiers murmur'd, and demanded  
His life and your's; a sacrifice, they said,  
Due to the manes of their slaughter'd friends;  
But mercy has prevail'd.

*Edw.*

*Edw.* What e'er becomes  
 Of an unhappy wanderer, like me,  
 For your kind treatment of the aged Ranulph,  
 Accept my thanks ; it was a precious boon ;  
 Morcar may find me not unworthy of it.  
 To day I am his captive, but to-morrow  
 May see me his deliverer : for know  
 My royal master, the victorious William,  
 With eagle swiftness, soon will follow me  
 With twenty times your force. As this shall prove  
 Or true, or false, so deal with me ; remember  
 I warn'd you of it.

*Siw.* And remember thou  
 That I with joy receive the welcome news :  
 Welcome to me, for I am William's friend.

*Edw.* Thou can't not then be mine, or England's foe :  
 With such a heart as thine, so nobly form'd  
 To feel for the afflicted, satisfy'd,  
 For thou seem'st, of William's royal right,  
 What cou'd engage thee in this foul revolt,  
 This base rebellion ?

*Siw.* What but the great bond  
 Of kindred souls, inviolable friendship !  
 The only solid bliss on this side heav'n,  
 That doubles all the joys of human life,  
 And, by dividing, lessens ev'ry woe.

*Edw.* Who knows but this day's sad event may prove  
 The happy means to heal a nation's wounds,  
 And sooth our jarring factions into peace ?

*Siw.* Had Morcar thought with me, long since that end  
 Had been obtain'd ; but Morcar is—

*Edw.* Inexorable.  
 So I have heard, and therefore little hope  
 To change his nature. O ! cou'd he be wrought  
 To sweet oblivion of his wrongs ; to bury

His deep resentment: Mine shou'd be the task,  
A task, heav'n knows, I wou'd with joy perform,  
'To reconcile offended majesty:

To soften all his errors, plead his pardon,  
And give my sov'reign one brave soldier more.

*Siw.* When next we meet I trust it shall be so:  
Mean time, let me prepare him for the change;  
Retire a while—ere long we'll send for thee,  
For ev'ry moment I expect him here:  
Thy freedom and thy happiness shall be  
My first concern, for thou hast well deserv'd it.

*Edw.* Farewel. Be quick in your resolves; the time  
Requires it; and be wise ere 'tis too late.

[*Exit Edwin.*]

S I W A R D. (*alone*)

I hope we shall. This well-tim'd victory,  
If rightly us'd, may smooth our way to peace.  
Now, Morcar, all thy happiness depends  
Upon thyself alone. Now, friendship, raise  
Thy pow'ful voice, and force him to be happy.  
He will, he must—he comes—

*Enter MORCAR.*

*Siw.* My conqu'ror, welcome!

*Morc.* Thrice welcome to my arms, my noble Siward;  
At length we meet in joy, the day is ours;  
Thanks to thy friendly aid.

*Siw.* We must not boast;  
'Twas hardly purchas'd, and has cost us dear:  
You follow'd 'em too close.

*Morc.* I own 'twas rash;  
My youthful ardor urg'd the keen pursuit  
'Too far; and but for thee I had been lost.

In war, thy arm protects me, and in peace,  
Thy councils guide. O! how shall I return  
Thy goodness? Thou wert born to save thy friend.

*Siw.* Away, I'll not be thank'd. I've done my duty,  
And if thou think'st thyself indebted for it,  
Repay me not with flatt'ry, but with love.  
E'er since my soul with thine, congenial met  
In social bands, and mark'd thee for her own,  
Thy int'rest and thy happiness have been  
My first ambition; and when thou art blest  
With all thy soul can wish for, Siward then,  
And then alone, will have his full reward.

*Morc.* O, unexampled faithfulness and truth!  
But say, my Siward, is our loss so great?

*Siw.* The flow'r of half our troops. But 'tis not now  
A time to weep, for I have glorious tidings,  
That much imports thy happiness.

*Morc.*

Ha! what?

*Siw.* Know that amongst our captives I have ta'en  
A noble prize, will make us full amends  
For ev'ry loss—the gallant Ranulph.

*Morc.*

Ha!

Matilda's father! then I'm satisfy'd.  
The wily chief! by heav'n he shall repay me  
For her unkindness: Give him to my rage,  
To my resentment, to my injur'd love.  
Where is he, Siward?

*Siw.*

I have set him free.

*Morc.* Ha! free! Thy ill-tim'd mercy hath betray'd  
Our cause. The tyrant wou'd have ransom'd him  
With half his kingdom.

*Siw.*

Still thy rapid passions  
O'erpow'r thy reason. What if it shou'd serve  
A better purpose; smooth thy paths to bliss,  
And gain Matilda for thee!

*Morc.* O, my friend!

My Siward, do not flatter me: By heav'n,  
Her kind consent wou'd give my ravish'd soul  
More true and heart-felt happiness, than cou'd  
A thousand vict'ries o'er the proud usurper.

*Siw.* Know then, I gave him liberty and life  
On these conditions—That he shou'd withdraw  
His pow'rs from William's aid, and never more  
Assist his cause; the time wou'd come, I told him,  
That he shou'd know to whom he ow'd the boon,  
And how he might repay it.

*Morc.* That was kind,  
Indeed, my Siward, that was like a friend.  
O! thou reviv'st my drooping heart; but tell me,  
Did my Matilda, let me call her mine,  
Did she acknowledge, did she thank thee for it?

*Siw.* O! I assum'd no merit; but to thee,  
And to thy gen'rous, unexampled love,  
Did I attribute all. She sigh'd, and wept,  
Pour'd forth a thousand blessings on thy head——

*Morc.* And dost thou think, my Siward, that one ray  
Of hope remains?

*Siw.* The clouds already vanish,  
The prospect brightens round thee; haste and seize  
The lucky moment. When the gen'rous mind  
Is sooth'd by obligation, sooth it opens  
To the mild dictates of humanity,  
And softens into sympathy and love.

*Morc.* O, Siward! cou'd'st thou teach me but to win  
That lovely maid——

*Siw.* The task is half perform'd  
Already, and my friend shall soon be bless'd.  
One thing, and one alone, remains to fix  
Her doubtful heart, if yet a doubt remains.

*Morc.* O! name it, Siward; if 'tis in the pow'r  
Of wealth to purchase, or of victory,  
In the fair field of glory to acquire,  
It shall not long be wanting.

*Siw.* It requires  
No price, but such as Morcar well can pay;  
No vict'ry, but the vict'ry o'er thyself,  
And thy own passions—Give up thy resentment,  
Make peace with William, and Matilda's thine.

*Morc.* Matilda mine! and must I purchase her  
At the dear price of honour? with the loss  
Of all my soul, holds dear, my country's welfare?  
My word——

*Siw.* Away! whilst prudence warranted;  
Our honest zeal, I was the first to aid  
Thy just revenge; but valour ill-advic'd,  
And ill-exerted in a hopeless cause,  
Degen'rate into rashness. You mistake  
The pride of honour, for the pride of virtue.

*Morc.* And wou'd'st thou have me bend beneath the  
Of ignominious slav'ry, quit the cause (yoke:  
Of heav'n-born freedom, and betray my friends?

*Siw.* I'd have thee just and happy—We have been  
Successful, let us now be generous,  
Whilst we have something to bestow; nor wait  
Till fickle fortune from our brow shall tear  
The blasted wreath, and leave us nought to give.  
Too long already have we sacrific'd  
At proud ambition's altar, to revenge;  
Now let us offer at the shrine of peace,  
And sacrifice——

*Morc.* To love, and to Matilda;  
It shall be so—the struggle's past—away,  
My Siward, haste, and tell her, I obey;  
Her laws, her king, her master shall be mine;:



I have no will but hers, and in her eyes  
Will read my duty—Yet a moment stay,  
What will my brave companions of the war,  
My fellow soldiers say? Will they approve  
This unexpected change?

*Siw.*

I know them firm

In their obedience, and resolv'd to act  
As you command—But I will see 'em strait,  
And urge such pow'rful reasons as may best  
Secure them to our purpose. Fare thee well.

*Morc.* Siward, thy kind anticipating care  
Prevents my ev'ry wish—But say, my friend,  
Where is the gallant chief, whom we subdu'd,  
Who fought so hardly, and so nobly fell?

*Siw.* In yonder tent, a wretched pris'ner still,  
He counts the tedious hours; a heavy gloom  
Sits on his brow, as if some deep-felt sorrow  
Oppress'd his noble mind—We must release him.

*Morc.* Thou know'st, my Siward, thrice we had o'er-  
His troops, and thrice his single valour turn'd (pow'r'd  
The fortune of the day: Since first I trod  
The paths of glory, ne'er did I behold  
Such deeds of valour wrought by mortal hand;  
I almost envy'd, though I conquer'd him.  
He wore his beaver up, nor could I trace  
His features, but he bears a noble form:  
Know'st thou his quality or name?

*Siw.*

Not yet;

He seems industrious to conceal them both  
From ev'ry eye.

*Morc.*

Some deity protects him,

As its peculiar care, for as I rais'd  
My sword against him, whether the soft passion  
That triumphs o'er me, had unmann'd my soul,  
I know not; but, bereft of all its pow'r,

My



My nerveless arm dropp'd ineffectual down,  
And let him 'scape me.

*Siw.* 'Tis most true, I saw  
And wonder'd at it. When you left the field,  
With desp'rate rage he rush'd intrepid on,  
And seem'd to court his fate, till circling foes  
Compell'd him to resign, and yield his sword.

*Morc.* Away. I burn with ardor to forgive,  
To free, and to embrace him: fly, my Siward.  
Let him approach, he cou'd not wish to meet  
In happier hour, the master of his fate,  
For now, methinks, I cou'd be reconcil'd  
To ev'ry foe. Away, my Siward, haste  
And send him to me.

*Siw.* Treat him like a friend,  
He may be useful. Such distinguish'd merit  
Must have its influence, he commands, no doubt,  
The royal ear, and may procure such terms  
As William may with honour yield, and we  
Without a blush accept. *(Exit Siward.)*

*Morc. (alone)* Farewel. And now  
How stands the great account? Can I acquit  
Myself, or shall I be condemn'd before  
Thy great tribunal, all-repaying justice?  
But fair Matilda wipes out ev'ry stain,  
'Tis she commands me to forgive, and she  
Must be obey'd; I'm not the first apostate.  
From honour's cause the tyrant love has made.  
My friend too urg'd the change——

*(Guards bring in Edwin chained.)*  
He's here—Strike off  
Those ignominious chains—he has deserv'd  
A better fate. *(Guards unchain him.)*

Stranger, who'er thou art, *(turning to Edwin.)*  
Thy gallant bearing in th' unequal conflict,

For we had twice thy numbers, hath endear'd  
 A soldier to a soldier. Vulgar minds  
 To their own party, and the narrow limits  
 Of partial friendship, meanly may confine  
 Their admiration; but the brave will see,  
 And seeing, praise the virtues of a foe.

*Edw. (aside.)* O, pow'ful nature, how thou work'st  
 within me!

*Morc.* Still silent! still conceal'd! perchance thou  
 Knowing thy rank and name, I might recal (fear'st,  
 My promis'd pardon; but be confident,  
 For by that sacred honour, which I hold  
 Dearer than life, I promise here to free,  
 And to protect thee: did'st thou hide from me  
 My deadliest foe: Shou'd William's self appear  
 Before me, he who hath so deeply wrong'd me,  
 So long oppos'd: Nay, shou'd I hear the voice  
 Of that advent'rous, rash, misguided youth,  
 Whom yet I cannot hate—my cruel brother,  
 I cou'd forgive him.

*Edw. (discovering himself.)* Then behold him here.

*Morc.* Edwin! Amazement! By what wond'rous  
 Mysterious Providence, do'st thou unfold (means,  
 Thy secret purposes? I little thought  
 When last we met, what heav'n-protected victim  
 Escap'd my sword.

*Edw.* With horror I recal  
 The dreadful circumstance. Throughout the battle  
 I knew, and carefully avoided thee.

*Morc.* O, Edwin! how, on this propitious day,  
 Have vict'ry, fame and friendship, fortune, love  
 And nature, all conspir'd to make me blest!  
 We have been foes too long—Of that no more.  
 My Edwin, welcome! Once more to thy arms  
 Receive a brother.

*Edw.*

*Edw.* Yet a moment stay:  
 By nature touch'd the same accordant string  
 That vibrates on thy heart now beats on mine;  
 But honour, and the duty which I owe  
 The best of kings, restrain the fond embrace  
 I wish to share, and bid me ask, if yet  
 In Morcar I behold my fov'reign's foe.  
 If it be so, take back thy proffer'd freedom,  
 Take back my forfeit life: I wou'd not wish  
 To be indebted for it to—a traitor.

*Morc* Perhaps I may deserve a better name;  
 Perhaps I may be chang'd.

*Edw.* I hope thou art;  
 For this I came, for this I yielded to thee,  
 To tell thee William's strength is ev'ry hour  
 Increasing: if thou mean'st to make thy peace,  
 Now is the crisis——

*Morc.* Edwin, stop, nor urge  
 Such mean unworthy motives as alone  
 Cou'd thwart my purpose. Morcar cannot fear,  
 But Morcar can be gen'rous: for know,  
 Before I saw thee here I had resolv'd  
 To sheath my sword and be the conqu'ror's friend;  
 For O! there is a cause——

*Edw.* Whate'er the cause,  
 Th' effect is glorious. Now thou art again  
 My brother. Here, let us once more unite  
 The long-dissolv'd cord. *(They embrace.)*

*Morc.* And never more  
 May blind resentment, faction, party, rage,  
 Envy, or jealous fear, dissolve the tye!  
 And now, my Edwin, blushing, I confess,  
 Not to thy tender care for Morcar's safety,  
 To friendship's council, or to reason's voice,  
 Owe we this wish'd for change. A female hand  
 Directs and wills it.

*Edw.*

*Edw.* Ha! a woman!

*Morc.* Yes,

If such I ought to call that form divine,  
Which triumphs here, who rules my ev'ry thought,  
My ev'ry action guides. In yonder tent  
A beauteous captive dwells, who hath enslav'd  
Her conqu'ror: She demands the sacrifice;  
She wou'd not give her hand to William's foe,  
And therefore, only, Morcar is his friend.

*Edw.* I cou'd have wish'd that this important change  
Were to the hero, not the lover, due.

*Morc.* I am above deceit, and own my weakness;  
But thou shalt see her—Yes, my Edwin, thou  
Shalt bear the welcome tidings to my love;  
Thy presence will bear witness to the change;  
Thy freedom, and the joyful news thou bring'st  
Of our blest union, will confirm it to her.  
Wilt thou, my Edwin—

*Edw.* Do not ask me what  
I must refuse. I wou'd do much to serve  
A friend and brother; but a task of joy  
Ill suits a soul oppress'd with griefs like mine.  
O! I cou'd tell thee—but 'twou'd be unkind,  
When thou art ent'ring on the paths of bliss,  
To stop thee with my melancholy tale.

*Morc.* What e'er thy griefs, I pity, and hereafter  
May find the means to lessen, or remove them;  
Mean time this tender office may divert  
Thy sorrows; nay, if thou deny'st me, Edwin,  
I shall not think our union is sincere.

*Edw.* Then be it so.

*Morc.* I'll send a trusty slave  
That shall conduct thee to her. Soon I mean  
To follow thee—away—begone and prosper.

But,

But, O, my brother! if thou hast a heart  
 That is not steel'd with stoic apathy  
 Against the magic of all conqu'ring love,  
 Beware of beauty's pow'r; for she has charms  
 Wou'd melt the frozen breast of hoary age,  
 Or draw the lonely hermit from his cell  
 To gaze upon her.

*Edw.* Know, thy fears are vain;  
 For long, long since, by honor's sacred eyes,  
 United to the loveliest of her sex,  
 Edwin, like Morcar, is to one alone  
 Devoted, and my heart is fix'd as thine.

*Morc.* Then I am blest. Thy sympathetic soul,  
 With warmer feelings, shall express my passion,  
 Wak'd by the fond remembrance of thy own.

Go then, thy kind returning friendship prove,  
 Go, plead with all the eloquence of love;  
 And as thou do'st thy brother's anguish tell,  
 Still on thy lips may soft persuasion dwell!  
 Urge my fond suit with energy divine,  
 Nor cease till thou hast made the lovely captive mine.

*The End of the Second Act.*

A C T

## A C T III.

SCENE, MATILDA'S Tent, with a distant view  
of the Camp.

MATILDA BERTHA.

MATILDA.

O, Bertha! I have had such frightful dreams,  
They harrow'd up my soul.

*Bert.*

It is the work

Of busy fancy in thy troubled mind;  
Give it no heed.

*Matil.*

O! it was more, much more

Than fancy ever form'd; 'twas real all;  
It haunts me still, and ev'ry circumstance  
Is now before me; but I'll tell thee all.  
Scarce had I clos'd my eyes, to seek that rest  
Which long had been a stranger, when methought:  
Alone I wander'd thro' a mazy wood,  
Beset with thorns and briars on ev'ry side;  
The mournful image of my wretched state:  
When, from a winding walk, the beauteous form  
Of my lov'd Edwin, seem'd to glide across,  
And ran with haste to meet me: But, behold!  
A tyger rush'd between, and seiz'd upon him:  
I shriek'd aloud.

*Bert.*

'Twas terrible.

*Matil.*

But mark

What follow'd; for a gleam of light broke in,  
And sav'd me from despair: When 'cross the glade

A gen'rous



A gen'rous lyon, as with pity mov'd  
 At the unequal conflict, darted forth  
 And sprung with vengeance on the spotted beast,  
 Who turn'd with fury on his nat'ral foe,  
 And loos'd my Edwin; he escap'd, and fled:  
 I wak'd in agonies.

*Bert.*

Be comforted;

The dream presages good: Some gen'rous friend  
 Shall save him from the perils of the war,  
 And give him to thy longing arms again.

*Matil.* O, never, never!

*Enter an OFFICER.*

*Officer.* Noble lady, one  
 From William's camp, by Morcar's orders sent,  
 Wou'd crave a minute's conference, and says  
 He bears some news that may be welcome.

*Matil.*

Ha!

From William's camp! O, flatt'ring hope! who knows  
 But he may bring some tidings of my love!  
 Tidings, perhaps, I may not wish to hear.  
 Perhaps he comes to speak of Edwin's death;  
 Or Edwin's falshood—Be it as it may,  
 I cannot be more wretched than I am.  
 Conduct him hither.

*(Exit Officer.)*

O, my flutt'ring heart!

Look yonder! how imagination forms  
 What most we wish for; see, he comes—It is,  
 It is my Edwin—Save me, Bertha! O!

*(as he enters she faints.)*

*Enter EDWIN.*

*Edw.* What do I see? Matilda here! she faints!

Am.

Am I deserted then? abandon'd, lost,  
Betray'd by her I love? She breathes, she lives!  
But not for me—for Morcar; for my brother.

MATILDA, (*to Bertha*)

Where is he? O! it was delusion all;  
The form deceiv'd me. Had it been my love,  
He wou'd have flown with rapture to me—See  
He stands far off, and will not look upon me.

*Edw.* I dare not.

*Matil.* Is it thus we meet again?  
Is this the kind, the tender, faithful Edwin?

*Edw.* Art thou Matilda? Speak; for I am lost  
In wild astonishment. It cannot be.  
In Morcar's camp! Is this the lovely captive  
That I shou'd meet?

*Matil.* All-seeing heav'n,  
Bear witness for me: If, from that sad hour  
When last we parted, this devoted heart  
Hath ever wander'd, ever cast one thought,  
Or form'd a wish for any bliss but thee,  
Despise me, Edwin; slight me, cast me off  
To infamy and shame.

*Edw.* I must, I must  
Believe thee; Yet, 'tis strange—when thou shalt know  
From whom I came, and what my errand here.  
Thou wilt not call me cruel or unkind,  
When I shall tell thee I am come to claim  
Another's right, O! heav'n, another's right  
To my Matilda; to request thy hand  
For Morcar.

*Matil.* For thy brother!

*Edw.* Yes, ev'n now  
We parted.—Here he told me I should meet  
A beauteous captive; little did I think

It was Matilda, whom he long had woo'd ;  
 Whose gen'rous heart, he hop'd, wou'd now accept  
 A convert made to loyalty by love ;  
 She only waited for that blest event,  
 With mutual ardour to return his passion.  
 Can it be thus ? Alas ! thy presence here  
 Confirms it but too well.

*Matil.*

Appearance oft,

By strange events and causeless jealousy,  
 Confounds the guilty with the innocent.  
 But sure my Edwin's noble mind disdains  
 To cherish low suspicion ; 'tis a vice  
 Abhorrent to thy nature, and Matilda  
 Will never practice it on thee. True love  
 Knows not distrust, or diffidence, but rests  
 On its own faith secure, and hopes to meet  
 The truth it merits.

*Edw.*

Can this be the voice

Of falshood ?—Can those lips ?——

*Matil.*

Mistaken man !

Cou'dst thou e'er credit the delusive tale ?  
 Cou'dst thou believe I had so soon forgot  
 My plighted faith ? But since I am suspected,  
 Return, and bear this answer back to Morcar.  
 First say, I thank him for the choice he made  
 Of thee to be the herald of his love ;  
 For what is there Matilda can refuse,  
 That Edwin could request ?

*Edw.*

O ! that recalls

A thousand tender thoughts——

*Matil.*

Go tell him too,

What e'er I rashly promis'd but to gain  
 A few short moments, to preserve my king,  
 And save a father's life, I never meant  
 To feign a passion which I cou'd not feel ;

For I was destin'd to another's arms ;  
 To one, who now regardless of his vows  
 To poor Matilda, after three long years  
 Of cruel absence from her, comes at last  
 To doubt her honour, and suspect her love.

*Edw.* O! never, never. Sooner will I doubt  
 The pow'rs of nature, and believe these eyes  
 Can misinterpret ev'ry object here,  
 Than think thee false. O! take me to thy arms  
 And bury all my doubts.—Can't thou forgive  
 The jealous warmth of agonizing passion ?

*Matil.* I can : I must. But say, to what blest chance  
 Am I indebted for this happy moment ?

*Edw.* The chance of war. I am a pris'ner here,  
 And but for thee——

*Matil.* When I shall tell thee all  
 That I have suffer'd since we parted last  
 Thou wilt not blame, but pity poor Matilda.  
 Mean while be calm ; it is not now a time  
 For idie doubts and visionary fears  
 When real dangers threat. I see already,  
 By thy imperfect tale, what misery  
 Must soon await us, when the fiery Earl  
 Shall know this strange event.

*Edw.* And wherefore know it ?  
 Why not conceal our passion, till some means  
 Of freedom offer ?

*Matil.* I abhor the thought.  
 No, Edwin, no. The crisis of our fate  
 Approaches. Never let us stain our loves  
 With crooked fraud and base dissimulation.  
 Hark ! did'st thou hear a voice in yonder grove ?  
 Siward in conf'rence with the haughty Earl ;  
 Behold them—see—they part—and Morcar hastes

With

With quick impatient step, to know his fate.  
Now summon all thy pow'rs.

*Edw.*

I am prepar'd.

He comes: a few short minutes will determine  
Whether Matilda plays the hypocrite,  
Or is deserving of her Edwin's love.

*Enter MORCAR.*

*Morc.* At length I hope Matilda's satisfy'd.  
Edwin has told thee what a sacrifice  
My heart hath made. Ambition, glory, pride,  
And fierce resentment bend beneath thy pow'r,  
And yield the palm to all-subduing love.  
Yes, thou hast conquer'd. I am William's friend;  
The struggle's past. I have perform'd the task  
Assign'd, and come to claim my just reward.

*Matil.* By virtuous acts the self-approving mind  
Is amply paid, nor seeks a recompence  
From ought beside. You have redeem'd your honour,  
Turn'd to the paths of duty, and discharg'd  
The debt you owe your country, and your king:  
England and William will be grateful for it.  
What can you wish for more?

*Morc.*

There is a prize,

More welcome far, beyond what e'er a king  
Or kingdom can bestow—thy love——

*Matil.*

My lord!

*Morc.* If to have sav'd thee from the brutal rage  
Of pitiless ruffians; if to have renounc'd  
A victor's claim, and be myself the slave  
Of her I conquer'd; if to have releas'd  
My bitt'rest foe, because ally'd to thee;  
If, after all my cruel wrongs, t' accept

The

The proud oppressor's hand, can merit ought,  
I am not quite unworthy of the boon.

*Matil.* The good and just, my lord, demand our praise,  
And gen'rous deeds will claim the tribute due,  
The debt of humble gratitude; but love,  
Love, that must mark the colour of our days  
For good or ill, for happiness or woe.  
'Tis not the gift of fortune, or of fame,  
Nor earn'd by merit, nor acquir'd by virtue,  
All the rich treasures, which, or wealth, or pow'r  
Have to bestow, can never purchase that  
Which the free heart alone itself must give.

*Morc.* Give it with freedom then to him who most  
Hath study'd to deserve——

*Matil.* You talk, my lord,  
As if the right of conquest cou'd bestow  
A right more precious, and a dearer claim;  
But know, for now 'tis time to throw aside  
The veil that long hath hid from Morcar's eyes  
The secret of my soul; and say at last  
I never can be thine.

*Morc.* Ha! Never! O,  
Recal that word!

*Matil.* I must not: Edwin knows  
There is a bar of adamant between,  
That must for ever part us.

*Morc.* Ha! for ever!  
Distraction! can it be? Take heed, Matilda,  
I am not to be mock'd thus. O, my brother!  
Did'st thou not hear her? But astonishment  
Has clos'd thy lips in silence—Never mine!  
And wherefore not be mine? *(turning to Matilda.*

*Matil.* Because I am  
Another's—Well I know our hapless sex,  
So custom wills, and arbitrary man,  
Is taught in fearful silence to conceal

The



The honest feelings of a tender heart :  
 Else, wherefore shou'd Matilda blush to own  
 A virtuous passion for the best of men ?

*Morc.* A virtuous passion ! grant me patience, heav'n !  
 I am betray'd, abandon'd, lost. Another's !  
 Some fawning slave, some Norman plunderer,  
 Rich with the ravish'd spoils of English valour,  
 Hath snar'd her easy heart, and tortur'd mine.  
 But I will drag him from his dark abode ;  
 Where e'er he lurks, he shall not 'scape my vengeance.  
 Thou hear'st her, Edwin.

*Edw.* Aye ! Who wou'd not wish  
 To hear the voice of nature, and of love,  
 Thus nobly pleading by the lips of truth ?

*Morc.* Amazement ! Thou art link'd with the vile  
 That hath usurp'd my right. All, all conspire (slave  
 To make me wretched.

*Edw.* Why shou'd Morcar think  
 That lovely maid wou'd act beneath herself,  
 And make so mean a choice ? Now, on my soul,  
 I doubt not but the object of her love  
 Hath earn'd the glorious prize, and will be found  
 Deserving of it.

*Morc.* Thou know'st him then ?

*Edw.* I do ;

Know him as brave, as noble as thyself :  
 One who wou'd scorn, howe'er the outward act  
 Might seem unworthy of him, to do ought  
 That shou'd disgrace his family and name,  
 A man he is of yet untainted honour,  
 Of birth and valour equal to thy own,  
 Though fortune frowns upon him.

*Morc.* Now by heav'n,  
 But that I know thy eyes were never blest  
 With my Matilda's charms, I shou'd suspect  
 Thou hadst betray'd the sacred trust repos'd

In thy false heart, by unsuspecting friendship,  
And wer't thyself the traitor.

*Edw.*

Think so still.

Let fancy, ever busy to torment  
The jealous mind, alarm thee with the thought  
Of seeing him whom thou hast thus revil'd ;  
Stand forth and dare the proof ; suppose him here  
Before thee, ready to assert his claim,  
His prior right to all the joys that love  
And fair Matilda can bestow : Then look  
On me, and know thy rival in—thy brother.

*Morc.* Confusion ! horror ! misery ! O, heav'n !  
Can't thou behold such complicated guilt,  
Such unexampled perfidy, and yet  
With-hold thy vengeance ? Let thy light'nings blast  
The base betrayer ! O, Matilda ! false,  
Deceitful, cruel woman !

*Matil.*

'Tis the lot

Of unprotected innocence to meet  
The cruel censure, which to guilt alone  
Is due. I've not deceiv'd, I've not betray'd thee ;  
And wou'd'st thou listen to the artless tale  
I cou'd unfold——

*Morc.*

Away ! I will not hear,

Nor see, nor think of thee. Deceitful villain !  
Was this thy kind concern for Morcar's safety ?  
Was it for this that subtle Edwin came  
A willing captive ? Boasted William's strength,  
And lur'd me to a base, inglorious peace ?  
That, like a midnight ruffian, he might steal,  
Unseen and unsuspected on my love,  
And rob me of Matilda.

*Edw.*

I abhor

A thought so mean ; the bare suspicion stains,  
With such foul blot, my honour and my name,

I will

I will not deign to answer thee. My birth  
 Alone might prove, to any sense but thine,  
 That I disdain it: 'Tis enough to say  
 I am Earl Morcar's brother.

*Morc.* I disclaim  
 All ties of nature, or of friendship with thee,  
 And henceforth hold thee as my deadliest foe:  
 As such I will pursue thee, slave, for know  
 Thou art my pris'ner still—Who waits there? Seize  
 And guard this traitor——

*(Guards enter and seize on Edwin.)*

MATILDA, *(kneeling to Morcar.)*

O, my lord! if e'er  
 Soft pity touch'd thy breast, if e'er thy heart  
 Felt the warm glow of sympathetic grief  
 For the unhappy, do not let the rage  
 Of thoughtless passion urge thee to a deed  
 Of horror, which, too late, thou wilt repent.  
 O, spare a guiltless brother, spare thyself  
 The bitter pangs of sad remorse that soon  
 Shall harrow up thy soul, when radiant truth  
 Shall flash conviction on thee. O! forgive  
 And pity——

*Edw.* Rise, Matilda: 'Tis beneath  
 The dignity of innocence to kneel  
 Before proud guilt, and supplicate a tyrant.

MATILDA, *(rising.)*

I feel the just reproach—Forgive me, Edwin;  
 Henceforth I never will disgrace thy love,  
 By mean submission. Morcar, if thou hop'st  
 For future peace, or pardon, set us free.

*Morc.* I'll hear no more, convey her to her tent.

*Matil.* Edwin, adieu! If honour, virtue, truth,  
 And mutual love, protect the innocent,

We yet shall meet in happiness—farewel!

[*Exit Matilda guarded.*]

*Morc.* Let none have entrance there, but faithful  
Siward.

Wou'd he were here, that I might pour my sorrows  
Into his friendly bosom! O, Siward!  
Where art thou?—Ha, he comes!

*Enter SIWARD.*

*Siw.* My Lord, the troops,  
Flush'd with their late success, refuse all terms  
Of peace with William, and cry out for war  
And vengeance——

*Morc.* They shall have it. Now, by heav'n,  
Thou bring'st me glorious tidings—well, what more?

*Siw.* They have discover'd that the noble pris'ner,  
Who had surrender'd, is thy brother Edwin;  
This hath alarm'd them; they suspect you both  
Of vile collusion, to betray their cause,  
And yield them to the tyrant. If, they say,  
You mean them fair, let Edwin be confin'd  
And answer for the treason, with his life.

*Morc.* And so he shall: They cou'd not ask a boon  
Which Morcar wou'd more readily bestow;  
Already their request is granted.—See  
The traitor is secur'd. All-seeing heav'n!  
Thou see'st how justice will o'ertake the wicked!

*Siw.* What can this mean? Since last I saw my friend,  
How the fair day that shone so bright upon us,  
Is suddenly o'ercast.

*Morc.* Alas, my Siward!  
When thou shalt know—but 'tis enough to say  
Matilda's false, and Edwin is—a villain.

*Siw.*

*Siw.* Amazement! can it be?

*Morc.* It is too true;

And I am lost for ever. O, Matilda!

Deceitful woman!

*Siw.* 'Tis not now a time

For idle plaints: Consult your safety: Fly

This moment to the camp——your presence there,

And that alone, may quell the rising storm:

Leave Edwin to my care.

*Morc.* I go, my Siward,

Safe in thy friendship; I entrust to thee

My just revenge. Yon moss-grown tow'r that hangs

O'er the deep flood——'tis under thy command——

Place double guard—he must not 'scape——his fate

Shall be determin'd soon. What e'er it prove,

It cannot be more wretched than my own. [*Exit Morc.*]

EDWIN, SIWARD.

EDWIN. (*pointing to the guards.*)

Where is my dungeon? My conductors here

Wait but your orders; give 'em their commission;

For you, it seems, Sir, are to execute

The friendly office: Do it, and be happy.

*Siw.* Guards, set your pris'ner free——Thou little  
know'st

Of Siward's soul, to think it joys in ought

That gives another pain. I've learnt too well,

In sad affliction's hard, but wholesome school,

The lesson of humanity.

*Edw.* O gen'rous Siward, if thou hast a heart

To feel for others mis'ries, pity mine,

And poor Matilda's: She has not deserv'd

A fate like this.

*Siw.* Alas! it rives my soul  
 To see the tender bonds of amity  
 Thus torn asunder by the very means,  
 I fondly thought for ever wou'd unite them ;  
 And the fair structure, which my hopes had rais'd,  
 Of love and friendship, in a moment shrunk  
 From its weak base, and bury'd all in ruin.  
 If thou can'st prove thy innocence, as yet  
 I hope thou wilt, for in that noble mein  
 I read a conscious pride, that wou'd not stoop  
 To ought that's base—Still may I hope to heal  
 These bleeding wounds, and sooth him to forgiveness.  
 Mean time be free. Give me thy sacred word,  
 The soldier's oath, thou wilt be found when e'er  
 I call upon thee ; and yon tent alone  
 Shall be thy prison ; free to range around,  
 Far as my guard extends.

*Edw.* Accept my thanks,  
 The humble tribute of a grateful heart ;  
 'Tis all I have to give. The time may come  
 When Edwin shall repay thee as he ought.

*Siw.* Is there ought more, which honour, and the duty  
 I owe my friend, permit me to bestow,  
 That thou wou'dst ask ?

*Edw.* O, grant me to behold  
 That injur'd maid, to take my last farewell ;  
 Then act as fate and Morcar shall determine. O  
 I give the pledge of safety thou requir'st,  
 And will be found—speak, wilt thou listen to me ?

*Siw.* Of that we'll talk hereafter—come—within  
 I'll hear thy story—Thou but know'st me yet  
 As Morcar's friend ; hereafter thou may'st find  
 I am still more the friend—of truth and virtue.



## A C T IV.

SCENE, *An Apartment belonging to SIWARD, opening to a wood.*

EDWIN, MATILDA.

EDWIN.

**T**HANKS to the noble Siward's gen'rous pity  
For the distress'd; once more we meet, Matilda,  
But only meet, alas! to mourn our fate,  
To feel each others woes, and to be wretched.

*Matil.* Eternal blessings wait on him who thus  
Cou'd sweeten sorrow's bitter draught, and make  
Captivity a blessing! O, my Edwin!  
A few short moments spent with those we love,  
Is worth an age of common life.

*Edw,* With thee  
Indeed it is; but we are on the verge  
Of a dark precipice, and ev'ry step  
Is dangerous. If Morcar shou'd return,  
And find us here together, we are lost  
For ever; thou hast seen, and seen with horror,  
The desp'rate rage of his tumultuous soul,  
Let us avoid it, let us——

*Matil.* What, my love?  
Thou art my guide, protector, guardian, all  
I have to boast on earth. O! teach me where  
To find some blest asylum for my woes,  
And guide my footsteps to the paths of peace.

*Edw.* Let me entreat thee then——

*Matil.* O, speak! thou know'st  
I have no will but thine.

*Edw.* Then leave me, leave  
This hated roof: I have a friend within,  
Who shall conduct thee to the royal camp  
In safety; bear this signet to the king,  
He will protect thee, and what ever fate  
Decrees for me, Matilda may be happy.

*Matil.* O! never, never: Safety dwells with thee,  
And thee alone. Without my faithful Edwin,  
The peopled city, and the crouded court,  
Wou'd be a desert to me. No, my love,  
We will not part: The same benignant pow'r  
That led thee hither, that, beyond my hopes  
Brought my lost Edwin to their arms again,  
Will still protect that virtue which it loves.

*Edw.* Did'st thou not tell me, that this very morn  
Thou had'st determin'd, as the only means  
To shun my brother's love, on sudden flight?

*Matil.* But then I shou'd have fled in search of thee.

*Edw.* Thou winning softness! how shall I reward  
Such unexampled tenderness and truth!

*Matil.* By flying with me. Come, my love, lead on,  
I'll follow thee to dangers and to death;  
Nor perils shall affright, nor labours tire,  
When thou art with me.

*Edw.* No: It must not be.

*Matil.* Why? What shou'd keep thee here?

*Edw.* The ties of honour.

*Matil.* And are they stronger than the bonds of love?

*Edw.* To Siward's kind indulgence, well thou  
know'st,

I owe this little interval of peace,  
This transient gleam of happiness with thee;  
And shou'd I break my sacred word, his life

Might answer for it; wou'd'st thou have me thus  
 Repay his kindness? No, my love; I may  
 Be wretched, but I cannot be ungrateful.

*Matil.* Must thou return then to that hateful prison  
 When Morcar comes?

*Edw.* I must. O! think when I  
 Am pent within a loathsome dungeon, who  
 Shall shelter then thy unprotected virtue?  
 No Edwin there to succour thee: Who knows  
 What brutal lust and pow'r may dare to act,  
 On a deserted, beauteous, friendless woman?  
 Distracting thought! A monarch's vengeance then  
 Wou'd come too late; wou'd make me poor amends  
 For my Matilda's violated charms.

*Matil.* He cannot be so mean, so base of soul,  
 Or if he shou'd, I have a dagger here  
 To save me from dishonour.

*Edw.* What! by death?  
 Dreadful alternative! O! hazard not  
 Thy precious life, but seize the lucky moment  
 Which fortune gives us, ere it be too late.

*Matil.* Urge me no more; already I have felt,  
 Too deeply felt, the pangs of absence from thee:  
 Another separation wou'd be worse  
 Than death, and all its terrors. No my love;  
 We are embark'd on a tumultuous sea,  
 And must abide the fury of the storm.  
 The waves of angry fortune *may* o'erwhelm  
 But *shall not* part us: We will stem the torrent,  
 Brave the proud ocean's rage, and gain the harbour  
 Of peace and happiness—or *sink* together.

*Edw.* Thou hast foretold the tempest, and behold:  
 It rushes on us.

*Enter MORCAR and HAROLD.*

*Matil.* Ha! Earl Morcar here!

*Morc.* Harold, I thank thee; thy intelligence  
Was but too true. *(turning to Edwin.)*

Traitor! who set thee free?  
They wou'd have 'scap'd my vengeance—false Matilda?  
'Tis thus I am rewarded for my love,  
My ill-tim'd mercy to a thankless brother.  
Back to thy dungeon, slave. Guards, drag him hence,  
To prison, and to death. *(to the soldiers.)*

*Edw.* Or death, or life,  
Are equal to me, if I must be torn  
From my Matilda. But, whate'er thy purpose,  
Be speedy in thy vengeance, nor delay  
The cruel work; for know, thy master comes,  
William approaches—to revenge my cause.

*Morc.* But not to save thee.

*Edw.* Then farewell, Matilda,  
Perhaps for ever—If we meet no more  
Thou wilt remember—But I will not doubt  
Thy honour, or thy love. I know thy truth.  
Know thou wilt act as best becomes thy fate,  
Whate'er it be, and worthy of thyself.

*Matil.* Of thee, my Edwin, rather say of thee.  
Yes; I will copy well thy bright example;  
I'll not disgrace thy love with woman's weakness,  
But part without a tear. I will but stay  
To tell thy tyrant brother how I hate,  
How I despise him, and then follow thee.

*Morc.* I'll hear no more—begone!—away with him.  
For thee, Matilda—— *[Exeunt guards with Edwin.]*

*Matil.* What for me remains  
I know too well; thy odious love, reproach  
Unmerited, and threats which I despise.

Thou

Thou think'st I have deceiv'd thee—think so still.  
 Enjoy thy error. Thou believ'st us guilty ;  
 'Twill make thee happy now—Perchance to find  
 Us innocent, may be thy punishment hereafter.

*Morc.* Aye, 'twas a proof of innocence to fly,  
 Thou and thy paramour together.

*Matil.*

No ;

I scorn a thought so mean. Cou'd I have left  
 My Edwin, long ere this I might have been  
 Beyond the reach of tyranny : beyond  
 Thy hated pow'r ; and safe beneath the wing  
 Of sacred majesty, in William's care.

*Morc.* In William's care !

*Matil.*

Thy conqueror's—for know  
 The hero comes—to scatter blessings round him,  
 To heal his country's wounds, chastise rebellion,  
 And punish false perfidious slaves like thee.

*Morc.* By heav'ns ! she braves my wrath, insults my  
 And triumphs o'er her slave. (weakness,

*Matil.*

There was a time,

When with an eye of pity, I beheld  
 Thy hopeless love ; when I conceal'd my passion  
 For the dear idol of my heart, because  
 I fear'd 'twould make thee wretched ; but thy rage,  
 Thy cruel treatment of a guiltless brother,  
 Has cancell'd all.

*Morc.*

Then, mark me : If thou hop'st.  
 For Edwin's freedom, shake off this vile passion ;  
 Yield thy proud heart to him who best deserves it,  
 And meet me at the altar—Two hours hence  
 I shall expect thee there—Beyond that time  
 He may not live to thank thee for thy bounty.

*Matil.* Then let him perish—glut thy tyrant soul  
 With vengeance : bathe it in a brother's blood.  
 All ruffian, all barbarian, as thou art,

'Thou can'st not murder his immortal fame :  
 Thou can'st not rob him of Matilda's love.  
 But know—when he, for whom alone this pulse  
 Wou'd wish to beat, this lazy blood to flow  
 Within my veins, when he shall be no more ;  
 Another life shall satiate thy revenge ;  
 Another victim shall attend thy triumph.

*Morc.* Thou talk'st it nobly—'tis the common trick,  
 The affectation of thy sex to boast  
 A fancied firmness, which ye never knew ;  
 But with affrighted nature thou wou'd'st shrink  
 When death approaches.

*Matil.* Put me to the proof.  
 If thou wou'd'st punish Edwin, know he lives  
 Within this breast—strike home, and pierce him there.

*Morc.* Imperious woman ! thou defy'st my pow'r,  
 And let it crush thee. If thy country bleeds  
 In ev'ry vein ; if perjur'd Edwin falls,  
 As soon he shall, a victim to my rage ;  
 Thou art the murd'rer ; thou the parricide :  
 I stand absolv'd ; the guilt is all thy own.

*Matil.* If it be guilt to suffer keen reproach,  
 Pain, persecution, terror, chains and death  
 For him I love, rather than stain my soul  
 With foul disloyalty, I am indeed  
 The guiltiest of my sex, and well deserve  
 The pangs I feel.

*Morc.* Thou'st driv'n me to the pit  
 Of black despair, and I will drag thee down  
 To share the dreadful ruin thou hast made.

*Matil.* I know thy savage purpose ; but remember,  
 The hour approaches when thou shalt repent  
 This base, unmanly triumph. William comes :  
 Hear that and tremble, thou unnat'ral brother ;  
 Nor rocks, nor caves shall hide thee from his vengeance ;  
 Inglorious



Inglorious and unpitied, shalt thou fall,  
 And after ages shall consign thy name  
 To endless scorn, and infamy immortal. [*Exit Matilda.*]

*Morc.* Inexorable judge! I stand condemn'd,  
 And shall await my doom; but not alone  
 Or unreveng'd shall Morcar fall—henceforth  
 I bid adieu to love, and all his train  
 Of fond delusions—Vengeance! I am thine,  
 And thine alone: Thou daughter of despair!  
 Destructive goddess! come, possess my soul  
 With all thy terrors—Yes; it shall be so.  
 A few short hours are all that niggard fate  
 Will deign to spare me; I'll employ 'em well,  
 For I will crowd into the narrow circle  
 A little age of misery and horror:  
 Ha! Siward here! what brought thee hither?

*Enter SIWARD.*

*Siw.*

Pity.

For the distress'd, I knew thou wert unhappy,  
 And came where duty call'd, to pour the balm  
 Of friendship in, and heal thy wounded heart.

*Morc.* O, they have pierc'd too deep; ev'n thou, my  
 Thou hast betray'd me: was it not unkind (friend,  
 To set my pris'ner free; to let him meet  
 Matilda, and conspire against my life?

*Siw.* Impossible! by heav'n the artful story  
 He told, so wrought upon my easy soul,  
 I thought him innocent.

*Morc.*

Hast thou not heard—

*Siw.* From Harold only an imperfect tale,  
 So strange I cou'd not credit it.

*Morc.*

Alas!

'Tis all too true: I am the veriest slave,

The

The meanest wretch that e'er was trampled on  
 By an imperious woman: O, my friend!  
 My Siward! I have nought on earth but thee:  
 Shou'd'st thou forsake me in this hour of terror!  
 But sure thou wilt not.

*Siw.*

No: Whate'er the will  
 Of wayward fortune may determine for us,  
 Behold *me* ready to partake thy fate.  
 If we must sue for peace, let Siward bear  
 The olive for thee: if once more we cast  
 The desp'rate dye of battle, let me perish  
 By Morcar's side. Come, let us on together;  
 Shake off this load of unavailing sorrow,  
 And seek the field; there, if we fall, we fall  
 With honour: if we rise, we rise to—glory.

*Morc.* Talk not of glory to a wretch like me,  
 Bereft of ev'ry hope. There was a time  
 When that enliv'ning call wou'd have awak'd  
 My active spirit, and this drooping heart  
 Bounded with joy; but my Matilda's lost:  
 Revenge alone——

*(Enter a messenger to Siward with letters.)*

*Siw.*

From Walscöff these;

'Tis well—retire.

*[Exit messenger.]*

*(Reads)*——How's this? then all is lost.

He writes me here, that William's fame in arms,  
 Spite of his cruel and oppressive laws,  
 Hath rais'd him friends in ev'ry part: already  
 The northern rebels are dispers'd, and thousands  
 Flock to the royal standard. To resist—  
 Were madness.

*Morc.*

And to yield were cowardice

More shameful——

*Siw.*

What must we resolve on?

*Morc.*

*Morc.*

Death:

The wretches only hope, the wish'd-for end  
 Of ev'ry care, but I wou'd meet him cloath'd  
 In all his terrors, with his reeking spear,  
 Dipt in the blood of an ungrateful mistress;  
 And a false happy rival; then, my Siward,  
 Shalt thou behold me welcome the kind stroke,  
 And smile in agony.

*Siw.*

Unhappy youth!

The storm beats hard upon thee; but our fate  
 Will soon be fixt, for William comes to-morrow.

*Morc.* To-morrow! ha! then something must be done,  
 And quickly too. If William comes, he comes  
 To triumph over us: then, my Siward, who  
 Shall punish Edwin? who—shall wed Matilda?  
 I cannot bear it—If thou lov'st me, Siward;  
 For now I mean to try thy virtue;—swear  
 By all the pow'rs that wait on injur'd honour,  
 What e'er my anxious soul requests of thee,  
 Thou'lt not refuse it.

*Siw.*

By the hallow'd flame

Of sacred friendship, that within this breast,  
 Since the first hour I seal'd thee for my own,  
 With unremitted ardor still hath glow'd,  
 I will not—Speak, my Morcar, here I swear  
 To aid thy purpose.

*Morc.*

'Tis enough; and now

Come near and mark me: Thou command'st the tow'rs  
 Where Edwin is confin'd.

*Siw.*

I do.

*Morc.*

Methinks

It were an easy task—you understand me—  
 Justice is slow, and—William comes to-morrow.  
 Thy friendly hand—

*Siw.*

My lord!

*Morc.*

*Morc.* Thou trembl'st—Well another time, my Siward,  
We'll talk on't—shall we not? Thou mean'st to do  
As thou hast promis'd?

*Siw.* Certainly.

*Morc.* Then speak,  
And do not trifle with me.

*Siw.* Sure, my lord,  
You cannot mean to——

*Morc.* Is he not a villain?

*Siw.* I fear he may be so.

*Morc.* A hypocrite?

*Siw.* He hath, perhaps, deceiv'd you, and deserves——

*Morc.* To perish.

*Siw.* No; to suffer, not to die;  
Or, if to perish, not by *Morc*'s hand,  
Or *Siward*'s—O! 'tis horrible to shed  
A brother's blood——

*Morc.* A rival's.

*Siw.* Nature——

*Morc.* Love——

*Siw.* Humanity——

*Morc.* Matilda——

*Siw.* (*aside*) Gracious heav'n!  
That passion thus should root up ev'ry sense  
Of good and evil in the heart of man,  
And change him to—a Monster.

*Morc.* Hence! away,  
And leave me—From this moment I will herd  
With the wild savage in yon leafless desert,  
Nor trust to friendship—but another hand——

*Siw.* (*mus'g.*) Ha! that alarms me—then it must be  
And yet how far—— (so;

*Morc.* You pause.

*Siw.* I am resolv'd.

*Morc.* On what?

*Siw.*

*Siw.* To serve, to honour, to—obey you.  
Edwin shall ne'er disturb thy peace again.

*Morc.* O glorious instance of exalted friendship!  
My other self, my best, my dear-lov'd Siward—  
Conscience! thou busy monitor, away  
And leave me—Siward, when shall it be done?  
To night, my Siward, shall it not?

*Siw.* Or never.

*Morc.* Let me but see the proud Matilda weep;  
Let me but hear the music of her groans  
And fate my soul with vengeance—For the rest  
'Tis equal all. But tell me, Siward, say,  
How shall I know the bloody moment? What,  
Shall be the welcome signal?

*Siw.* When thou hear'st  
The solemn curfeu sound, conclude  
The business done—Farewel. When I return  
With tears of joy thou shalt my zeal commend,  
And own that Siward was indeed thy friend.

*The End of the Fourth Act.*

**ACT**

## A C T V.

SCENE, *A Gothic Hall.*

MORCAR, HAROLD.

MORCAR.

T REASON and foul rebellion in my camp!  
But I was born to be for ever wretched,  
The sport of fortune. These base mutineers——

*Har.* Your presence on the battlements, my lord,  
Dispers'd 'em soon; they hang their heads in silence,  
And all is peace.

MORCAR, *(to himself.)*

It is not so within.

Wou'd it were done or——

*Har.* What, my Lord?*Morc.* No matter.

What urg'd my foldiers to rebel?

*Har.* 'Tis thought.The gallant captive did by secret means  
Excite them to revolt.*Morc.* It must be so.By heav'n thou mak'st me happy with the tidings:  
His head shall pay the forfeit.*Har.* Whilst he lives

We are not safe.

*Morc.* No more we are, good Harold;  
'Tis fit he perish, is it not? What say'st thou?*Har.* Prudence demands his life to save your own.*Morc.*



*Morc.* O! thou hast given such comfort to my soul—

*Har.* My Lord——

*Morc.* Be watchful: Bring me early notice  
Of ev'ry motion: Go. (*Exit Har.*)

Or I must fall,

Or Edwin—Hence, ye visionary fears;  
Ye vain chimeras, hence—It is no matter:  
Conscience, I heed thee not; 'tis self-defence,  
Nature's first law, and I must stand acquitted.  
The prudent Siward seem'd to hesitate,  
As if he wish'd, but knew not how to shun  
The office. He who cou'd behold my tortures,  
With all that cold tranquillity, wou'd ne'er  
Have ventur'd to remove them. But I've trusted  
The sword of vengeance to a safer hand.  
What ho! Who waits?

*Enter an OFFICER.*

That soldier whom thou saw'st  
In private conf'rence with me, is he gone  
As I directed him?

*Offic.* My Lord, even now  
I saw him hast'ning tow'rd the tow'r.

*Morc.* 'Tis well.  
When he returns conduct him to me—Stay;  
If Siward comes this way, I'm not at leisure:  
I will not see him. (*Starts.*) Hark! did'st thou not hear  
The solemn curfeu?

*Offic.* No, my Lord.

*Morc.* Not hear it!  
It shocks my soul with horror—Hark! again!  
Hollow and dreadful! Sure thy faculties  
Are all benumb'd.

*Offic.* Indeed, I heard it not.

*Morc.* Away, and leave me to myself, (*Exit Offic.*)  
Methought

Methought

I heard a voice cry—stop—it is thy brother :  
 We lov'd each other well ; our early years  
 Were spent in mutual happiness together :  
 Matilda was not there—I do remember  
 One day, in sportive mood, I rashly plung'd  
 Into the rapid flood, which had well nigh  
 O'erwhelm'd me ; when the brave, the gallant Edwin,  
 Rush'd in and sav'd me—Shall I, in return,  
 Destroy my kind preserver ? Horrid thought !  
 Forbid it, heav'n ! (*pauses.*) I am myself again.  
 All pow'rful nature ! once more I am thine.  
 He shall not die—Who's there——

*Enter an OFFICER.*

My Oswald ! fly,

Fly to the tow'r this moment, haste and save  
 My brother—Some base ruffian——

*Offic.*

If, my Lord,

You mean the noble pris'ner there, I fear  
 It is too late : This moment as I pass'd  
 The citadel, I saw a mangled corse  
 Drawn forth by Siward's order——

*Morc.*

Slave, thou ly'st.

Away this moment, bring me better news  
 On peril of thy life.

*[Exit Offic.]*

Who knows but heav'n,

In gracious pity, still may interpose  
 And save me from the guilt ? It is not done ;  
 It shall not—*must* not be——All's quiet yet ;  
 I have not heard the signal. (*The bell tolls.*)

Hark ! he's dead :

My brother's dead—O ! cover me, ye shades  
 Of everlasting night ! Hide, if ye can,  
 A murth'rer from himself. Ha ! see he comes :

His

His wounds are bleeding still ; his angry eyes  
 Glare full upon me. Speak—what wou'd'st thou have ?  
 Matilda shall be thine : He smiles and leave me——

*(he pauses and recovers himself.)*

'Twas but the error of my troubled soul.

O! guilt, guilt, guilt ! *(throws himself down.)*

Here will I lay me down,

And end my days in bitterness and anguish.

*Enter SIWARD.*

Who's there ? Ha ! Siward here. *(rises.)*

Speak, murth'rer, speak,

Where is my brother ? Villain, thou hast snar'd

My soul ; my honour's stain'd, my fame destroy'd,

And my sweet peace of mind is lost for ever.

*Siw.* Matilda will restore it.

*Morc.*

Never, never.

The price of blood ! No : Cou'd Matilda bring

The vanquish'd world, in dow'ry with her charms,

I wou'd not wed her. O ! cou'd I recal

One hasty moment, one rash, cruel act——

But 'twas thy savage hand that——

*Siw.*

I receiv'd

Your orders : 'Twas my duty to obey them.

*Morc.* Where slept thy friendship then ? Thou

know'st despair

And madness urg'd me to it——but for thee——

Thy callous heart had never felt the pangs,

The agonies of disappointed love ;

Thou did'st not know Matilda—Curs'd obedience !

How often has thy insolence oppos'd

Thy master and thy prince ? how often dar'd

To thwart *my* will, and execute thy own :

But when I bade thee do a deed of horror,

And shed a brother's blood——thou cou'd'st obey me.

*Siw.* Away ! this is the trick of self-delusion,

The common cant of hypocrites, who rail  
 At others guilt, to mitigate their own ?  
 I've been the mean, the servile instrument  
 Of thy base vengeance ; but thou had'st prepar'd  
 Another, a low ruffian, to perform  
 The bloody office ; I detest thee for it,  
 Despise, abhor thee.

*Morc.* Thou wert once my friend.

*Siw.* Henceforth I am thy foe—Thou hast destroy'd  
 The best of brothers, and the best of men.

*Morc.* Despis'd by Siward—then my cup of sorrow  
 Is full, indeed—But this shall————

(*Attempts to kill himself, Siward wrests the sword from him.*)

Ha ! disarm'd !

But coward guilt is weak as infancy ;  
 It was not so before I murder'd Edwin.

*Siw.* The murd'rer's punishment shou'd be to live,  
 And shall be thine ; thou know'st not half thy guilt  
 Nor half thy sorrows : I shall rend thy soul.  
 Prepare thee for another deeper wound ;  
 And know that Edwin lov'd thee, in his hand,  
 Whilst mine was lifted up for his destruction,  
 I found this paper, 'tis the counterpart  
 Of one he had dispatch'd to William, read it  
 And tremble at thy complicated guilt.

*MORCAR, (taking the paper)*

What's here ? He pleads my pardon with the king,  
 Ascribes my frantic zeal, in Edgar's cause,  
 To ill-advis'd warmth, and recommends  
 His—murderer to mercy : Horrid thought !  
 I am the vilest, most abandon'd slave  
 That e'er disgrac'd humanity—O, Siward !  
 If thou hast yet, among the dying embers  
 Of our long friendship, one remaining spark  
 Of kind compassion for the wretched Morcar,

Lend me thy aid to shake off the sad load  
Of hated life that presses sore upon me.

*Siw.* Tho' thou'rt no longer worthy of my friendship,  
Deaf to the cries of nature, and the voice  
Of holy truth, that wou'd have council'd thee  
To better deeds, yet hath my foolish heart  
Some pity for thee—After crimes like these,  
There is but one way left—Say, wilt thou patient wait  
Till I return?

*Morc.* I will.

*Siw.* Remember, Morcar,  
You promis'd me—I have a draught within,  
Of wondrous pow'r, that in a moment lulls  
The tortur'd soul to sweet forgetfulness  
Of all its woes: I'll haste and bring it thee,  
'Twill give thee rest and peace. [*Exit Siward.*]

*Morc.* I hope for ever,  
But where's the lost Matilda? who shall comfort  
That dear unhappy maid, whom I have robb'd  
Of ev'ry bliss. O, save me from the sight,  
Ye pitying pow'rs!

*Enter MATILDA.*

She comes—distraction!

*Matil.* O!

My lord, permit—

*Morc.* Away—I know thee not.

*Matil.* Not know me! 'tis the poor distress'd Matilda,  
Who comes to ask forgiveness for the rage  
Of frantic love; the madness of despair,  
That urg'd me to such wrath and bitterness  
Of keen reproach; but pardon—(*kneels.*)

Gen'rous Morcar,  
A woman's weakness: Speak and make me blest.  
Alas! he hears me not.

*Morc.* Matilda, rise;  
I pray thee leave me—(*weeps.*)

*Matil.*

*Matil.* Gracious heav'n! he weeps;  
Propitious omen! O, my lord! those tears  
Are the soft marks of sympathizing woe,  
And seem to say, I shall not plead in vain.

*Morc.* Ask what thou wilt, for know, so dear I hold  
Matilda's happiness, that, here I swear,  
If all the kingdoms of the peopled earth  
Were mine to give, I'd lay them at her feet:  
But much I fear they wou'd not make her happy.

*Matil.* Alas! my lord, Matilda's happiness  
Is center'd all in one dear precious jewel;  
'Tis in *thy* keeping——Edwin——

*Morc.* What of him?

*Matil.* Is innocent.

*Morc.* I know it.

*Matil.* Just and good;  
He never meant to injure thee, indeed  
He did not.

*Morc.* I believe it, for his nature  
Was ever mild and gentle.

*Matil.* Good, my lord,  
You mock me.

*Morc.* No, Matilda; speak, go on,  
And praise him: I cou'd talk to thee for ever  
Of Edwin's virtues——

*Matil.* Then thou wou'd'st not hurt  
His precious life, thou wou'd'st not——

*Morc.* I wou'd give  
A thousand worlds to save him.

*Matil.* Wou'd'st thou? then  
My pray'rs are heard, thou hast forgiv'n all,  
And I am happy. Speak, is Edwin free?

*Morc.* From ev'ry care—wou'd I were half so blest!

*Matil.* What mean you? Ha! thy eyes are fixt with  
horror,

Thy looks are wild. What hast thou done? O! speak.

*Morc.*



*Morc.* Matilda, if thou com'st for Edwin's life,  
It is too late—for Edwin is no more.

*Matil.* And is my Edwin slain?

*Morc.* Aye: Basely murder'd.

O! 'twas the vilest, most unnat'ral deed  
That e'er—

*Matil.* Blasted be the cruel hand  
That dealt the blow! O, may his guilty heart  
Ne'er taste of balmy peace, or sweet repose!

*Morc.* But ever, by the vulture conscience, torn;  
Bleed inward, still unpity'd, till he seek  
For refuge in the grave.

*Matil.* Nor find it there.

*Morc.* 'Tis well: Thy curses are accomplish'd all;  
I feel 'em here within—for know—'twas I.  
I gave the fatal order, and my friend,  
My Siward, has too faithfully perform'd it.

*Matil.* Siward! impossible! There dwells not then  
In human breast, or truth or virtue—O!  
Unnat'ral brother!—but I will be calm.

*Morc.* Alas! thy fate is happiness to mine;  
For thou art innocent.

*Morc.* And soon, I hope,  
To be rewarded for it. O! my Edwin,  
Matilda soon shall follow thee—thou think'st  
I am unarm'd, deserted; doom'd like thee  
To hated life; but know, I have a friend,  
A bosom-friend, and prompt, as thine, to enter  
On any bloody service I command. (*Draws a dagger.*)

*Morc.* Command it then for justice, for revenge,  
Behold! my bosom rises to the blow;  
Strike here, and end a wretched murd'rer—

*Matil.* No;

That were a mercy thou hast not deserv'd;  
I shall not seek revenge in Morcar's death,  
In mine thou shalt be wretched—

(*Attempts to stab herself; Morcar lays hold of the dagger.*)

*Morc.*

*Morc.* Stop, Matilda——

Stop thy rash hand, the weight of Edwin's blood  
Sits heavy on my heart. O! do not pierce it  
With added guilt.

*Matil.* No more, I must be gone  
To meet my Edwin, who already chides  
My ling'ring steps, and beckons me away.

*Morc.* Yet hear me! O! if penitence and pray'r,  
If deep contrition, sorrow and remorse  
Cou'd bring him back to thy desiring eyes,  
O! with what rapture wou'd I yield him now  
To thee, Matilda---bear me witness---Ha! (*starts.*)  
'Tis he---Look up, dear injur'd maid---he comes  
To claim my promise.

*Matil.* It is, it is my Edwin!

(*Enter Siward and Edwin: Edwin runs and  
embraces Matilda.*)

*Morc.* O unexpected bliss! what gracious hand—

*Siw.* Behold the cordial draught I promis'd you!  
I knew thy noble nature, when the storm  
Of passion had subsided, wou'd abhor  
A deed so impious—'Tis the only time  
That Siward ever did deceive his friend.  
Can'st thou forgive?

*Morc.* Forgive thee! O thou art  
My guardian angel, sent by gracious heav'n  
To save me from perdition. O, my brother!  
I blush to stand before thee—wilt thou take  
From these polluted hands one precious gift?  
'Twill make thee full amends for all thy wrongs.  
Accept her, and be happy.

(*He joins the hands of Edwin and Matilda, then turning  
to Siward*)

That vile slave

Whom I employ'd——

*Siw.*

*Siw.* I guess'd his horrid purpose,  
 Watch'd ev'ry step, and as the villain aim'd  
 His ponyard at the guiltless Edwin's breast,  
 Turn'd sudden round, and plung'd it in his own.  
 The bloody corse was dragg'd——

*Morc.* I know the rest.  
 O, Siward! from what weight of endless woe  
 Hath thy blest hand preserv'd me!

*Edw.* O, my Matilda! how shall we repay  
 Our noble benefactor? Much I owe  
 To gallant Siward, but to Morcar more:  
 Thou gav'st me life, but my kind, gen'rous brother  
 Enhanc'd the gift, and bless'd me with Matilda.

*Matil. (to Morc.)* Words are too poor to thank thee as  
 Accept this tribute of a grateful heart, (I ought;  
 These tears of joy; and, O! may ev'ry curse  
 My frantic grief for Edwin pour'd upon thee,  
 Be chang'd to dearest blessings on thy head!

*Morc.* Alas! thy blessings cannot reach me. Guilt  
 May plead for pardon, but can never boast  
 A claim to happiness: I only ask  
 A late forgiveness. If a life of sorrow,  
 And deep remorse, can wash my crimes away,  
 Let 'em be bury'd with me in oblivion,  
 And do not curse the memory of— Morcar.

*(turning to Edwin.)*  
 O, Edwin! say, can'st thou forgive the crime  
 Of frantic love, of madness and despair?

*Edw.* As in my latest hour from heav'n I hope  
 Its kind indulgence for my errors past,  
 Ev'n so, my brother, from my soul I pardon  
 And pity thee.

*Morc.* Then I shall die in peace.

*Edw.* Talk not of death, my brother, thou must live  
 To see our happiness complete, to hear

**University of California**  
**SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY**  
405 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024-1388  
Return this material to the library  
from which it was borrowed.

RNIA™

Gaylord

PAMPHLET BINDER

Syracuse, N. Y.  
Stockton, Calif.

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 000 000 585 0

PR  
3461  
F67m

Unive  
Sou  
Li