Sebastian of Portugal

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SEBASTIAN OF PORTUGAL.

(From an unpublished Dramatic Poem.)

SEBASTIAN, King of Portugal, after his fatal defeat at the battle of Aleazar, in Africa, where he was generally supposed to have perished with his army, returns to Lisbon, with Gonzalez, one of his few surviving followers, and Zamor, a young Arab, who had become attached to him during his wanderings, on the night when his subjects are celebrating the triumphal entry of Philip II. of Spain, who had obtained possession of Portugal, in consequence of the exhausted state to which that country had been reduced.

SCENE.-A Street in Lisbon illuminated.

MANY CITIZENS.

1st Cit.—In sooth, our city wears a goodly mien

With her far-blazing fancs, and festive lamps

Shining from all her marble palaces,

Countless as heaven's fair stars. The humblest lattice

Sends forth its radiance. How the sparkling waves

Fling back the light !

2d Cit.-Aye, 'tis a gallant shew,

And one which serves, like others, to conceal

Things which must not be told.

Let Cit.-What wouldst those say? 24 Cit.-That which may scarce, in

24 Cit.--That which may scarce, in perilous times like these,

Be suid in safety. Hast thou look'd within

Those stately palaces? Were they but peopled

With the high race of warlike nobles, once

Their princely lords, think'st thou, good friend, that now

They would be glittering with this hollow pomp,

To greet a conqueror's entrance?

3d Cit.-Thou say'st well.

None but a land, forsaken of its chiefs,

Had so been lost and won.

4th Cit.-The lot is cast ;

We have but to yield. Hush ! for some stranger comes.

Now, friends, beware !

Let Cit.-Did the king pass this way At morning, with his train ?

2d Cit.-Aye; saw you not

The long and rich procession ?

(Sebastian enters, with Gonzalez and Zamor.)

Sch. (10 Gen.)—This should be The night of some high (estival. E'en thus

My beautiful city to the skies sent up, From her illumin'd fances and towers, a

vpice Of gladness, welcoming our first return

From Afric's coast. Speak thou, Gonzalez ; ask

The cause of this rejoicing. To my heart Deep feelings rash, so mingled and so fast,

My voice perchance might tremble. Ges.—Citizens l

What festal night is this, that all your streets

Are throug'd, and glittering thus?

1st Cif .- Hast thou not heard

Of the king's entry, in triumphal pomp, This very more ?

Gon.....The king !....triumphai pomp ! Thy words are dark.

Sch-Speak yet again 1 mine cars Ring with strange awards 1-Again 1

1st Cit.-I said the king, -

Philip of Spain, and now of Portugal, This manning enter'd, with a conqueror's train,

Our city's royal palace, and for this We hold our festival.

Sch-Thou said'st-the king !

His name ?-I heard it not. Cita-Philip of Spain.

Sel-Philip of Spain !---We slumber, till arous'd

A sudden darkness ?--- All things seen to float Obscurely round me !- Now 'tis past, The streets Are blazing with strange fire. Go, quench those lamps ; They glare upon me, till my very lesin Grows dizzy, and doth whirl. How dar'd ye thus Light up your shrines for him? Gon.-Away, away ! This is no time, no scene-Sch .- Philip of Spain ! How name ye this fair land ?-Why, it it not The free, the chivalrous Portugal ?- The land, By the prood ransom of heroic blood, Won from the Moor of old ?-Did that red stream Sink to the earth, and leave no flary current I' the yeins of noble men, that so its tile, Full swelling at the sound of hostile steps, Might be a kingdom's barrier ? 2d Ci4-That high blood Which should have been our strengh, profusely shed By the rash King Sebastian, bath'd the plain Of fata) Alcazar. Our monarch's guit Hath brought this ruin down-Sel-Must this be heard, And borne, and unchastis'd ?- Man! dar'st thou stand Before me face to face, and thus straigh Thy sovereign? Zam. (to Sebestion.)-Shall I lift it sword, my prince, Against thy focs ? . Gos.-Be still, or all is lost. 2d Cit .--- I dare speak that which all men think and know. 'Tis to Sebastian, and his waste of life. And power, and treasure, that we ore these bonds. Sd Cit .- Talk not of bonds !- May our new monarch rule The weary land in pence !- But who an thou? Whence cam'st thou, haughty stranger, that these things, Known to all nations, should be new in thee ? Sch. (wildly.)-I come from non where the cities lie In ruins, not in chains ! Exit Sciention with Zano . . and Gonzalez. 2d Cit .- He wears the mien Of one that hath commanded, yet his looks And words were strangely wild. 1st Cit .--- Mark'd you his fierce And haughty gesture, and the flash that

broke

From his dark eye, when King Sebastian's name Became out theme?

24 Cit .-- Trust me, there's more in this

This may be lightly said. These are no times

To breathe men's thoughts i' th' open face of Heaven

And car of multitudes. They that woold speak

Of monarchs and their deeds, should keep within

Their quiet homes. Come, let us hence, and then

We'll commune of this stranger.

Eacunt.

SCENE. The Portico of a Palace.

SEBAST LAN-GONZALUZ-ZAMOR.

Sch-Withstand me not. 1 tell thee that my soul,

With all its possionate energies, is rous'd Unto that fearfal strength which mast have way,

E'en like the elements, in their stormy hour

Of mastery o'er creation.

Gos-But they weit

That hour in silence. Oh ! be calm a while;

Thine is not come. My king----

Set-I am no king,

While, in the very palace of my sires,

Aye, where mine eyes first drank the glorious light,

Where my scol's thrilling echoes first awoke

To the high sound of earth's immortal names,

The usurper lives and reigns. I am no king,

Until I cast him thence.

Zare.-Shall not thy voice

Be as a trumpet to th' awakening land?

Will not the bright swords flash like sunbursts forth,

When the brave hear their chief ? Gon --- Peace, Zamor, peace !

Child of the desart, what hast thou to do

With the calm hour of counsel?

Monarch, passe 1

A kingdom's destiny should not be the sport

Of passion's reckless winds. There is a time

When men, in very weariness of heart,

And careless desolation, tam'd to yield

By misery, strong as death, will lay their souls

E'en at the conqueror's feet, as nature sinks,

After long torture, into cold, and dull,

And heavy sleep. But comes there not an hour

Of stern atonement ?- Aye, the slomberer wakes -

In gather'd strength and vengeance !-And the sense

And the remembrance of his agonies Are in themselves as power, whose fear-

fal path

Is like the path of ocean, when the heavens

Take off its interdict !-- Wait thou the hour

Of that high impulse !

Set.-Is it not the sun,

Whose radiant bursting through th' embattled clouds

Doth make it morn ?- The hour of which thou speak'st,

Itself, with all its giory, is the work Of some commanding nature, which doth

and a

The sullen shades disperse 1-Away I e'en' **NOW**

The land's high hearts, the fearless and the true,

Shall know they have a leader !--- Is not the

The mansion of mine own, mine earliest friend,

Sylveira?

Gos .- Aye, its glittering lamps too well

likame the stately vestibule, to leave Our sight a moment's doubt. He ever lor d

Such pageantries I

Sed .- His dweiling thas adorn'd

On such a night !--- yet will I seek him here.

He must be faithful, and to him the first My tale shall be reveal'd .--- A sudden chill Falls on my heart-and yet I will not wrong

My friend with vile suspicion !- He hath been

Link'd all too closely with mine inmost soul!

-And what have I to lose?

Gon-Is their blood nought, Who, without hope, will follow where thou lead'st,

Ev'n unto death?

Sel-Was that a brave man's voice ?

Warrior and friend 1 how keeg, then, hast ł. thou learn'd

To hold thy blood thus dear ? Gon.-Of mine, mine own, Think'st thou I spoke ?--When all is shed

for thee,

Thou'lt know me better ! r

Seb .--- (entering the Palace)-For [Exit. awhile, farewell. . Gon .---- Thus princes read men's hearts !

-Come, follow me,

And if a home is left me still, brave Zamor,

There will I bid thee welcome.

[Ezcant.

SCENE.-A Holl in the Polots. SEDATIAN-SYLVEIRA

SyL-Whence art thou, stranger, and what wouldst thou with me?

' There is a ferry wildness in thine eye, Startling, and almost fearful !

Set.-From the stern,

And vust, and desolate wilderness, whose lord

Is the fierce lion, and whose gentlest wind

Breathes of the tomb, and whose dark children make

The bow and spear their law; men bear not back

That smilingness of aspect, wont to mask The secrets of their spirit, 'midst the stir Of courts and cities !—I have look'd on scenes

Boundless, and strange, and terrible ; I have known

Sufferings, which are not in the shadowy scope

Of wild imagination : and those things

Have stamp'd me with their impress. Man of Peace!

Thou look'st on one familiar with th' extremen

Of grandeur and of misery.

SyL-Stranger, speak

Thy name and purpose briefly, for the time III suits these mysteries. I must hence;

to-night

I feast the Lords of Spain. Sch-Is that a task

For King Sebastian's friend?

SyL-Sebastian's friend !

That name hath lost its meaning. Will the dead

Rise from their silent dwellings, to upbraid

The living for their mirth ?- The grave sets bounds

Unto all human friendship,

Sch-Oa the plain

Of Alcazar, full many a stately flower,

The pride and crown of some high house, was laid

Low in the dust of Afric 3-but of these Sebastian was not one.

Syl.-I am not skill'd

To deal with men of mystery. Take thou off

The strange dark scrutiny of thine eyes from mine.

What mean'st thou ? Speak ! Sol.—Sebastian died not there.

-I read no joy in that cold doubting

micn.

Spl.—Aye. Sci.__Why then Be glad !--- I tell thee that Schastian lives! Think thou on this, he lives !--- Should he return, -For he may yet return-and fnd the friend In whom he trusted with such periet trust As should be Heaven's alone-murit's thou my words? Should be then find this man, not give and arm'd, And watching o'er the heritage of his lord. But, reckless of high fame and loyal fait, Holding luxurious revels with his for; -How would'st thou meet his game? Syl-As I do thine, Keen though it be, and proud. Set .- Why, thou dost quail Before it, e'en as if the burning eve Of the broad san pursued thy shrinting soul Through all its depths. Syl .-- Away !-- He died not there? He should have died, then, with the divalry, And strength, and honour of his kingdom, lost By his impetuous rashness. Sch.-This from thee I -Who hath giv'n power to falschool, that one gaze, At its unmask'd and withering trin. should blight High souls at once ?- I wake .- And this from thee I -There are, whose eyes discern the steret springs Which lie i' th' desart's bosom, and the gold And gems of earth's dim caverns, far helaw The everiasting hills :- but who hash dar d To dream that Heaven's most swith #tribute Invested his mortality, and to boost That through its inmost folds his giver could read One heart, one human heart ?- Why, then, to love And trust is but to lend a traitor sems Of keenest temper, and unerring aim, Wherewith to pierce our souls -B= thos, beware ! -Schastian lives ! Syl-If it be so, and thou Art of his followers still, then bid him seek Far in the wilds, which gave one sepulchre To his proud hosts, a kingdom and a home, For none is left him here.

Is not thy name-Sylveira ?

Sch.-This is to live

As age of wisdom in one hour!-The man

Where empire, as in scorn, o'crpass'd the bounds

E'en of the infinite deep, whose orient realms

Lay bright beneath the morning, while the clouds

Were brooding in their sunset glory still, O'er his majestic regions of the west;

This heir of far dominion shall return,

And, in the very city of his birth,

Shall find no home !----Aye, I will tell him this,

We commune now, a friend's, a monarch's gift,

Unto the chosen of his heart, Sylveira

Should yield him still a welcome ! Syl____ Fare thee well !

I may not pause to hear thee, for thy

words Are full of danger and of snares, perchance

Laid by some treach rous foe. But all in vain.

I mock thy wiles.

Sch---Ha! ha!---The grovelling snake Doth pride himself in his distorted cunning,

Deeming it wisdom !- Nay, thou goest not thus !

What !--- Know'st thou not my spirit was born to hold

Dominion over thine ? thou shalt not cost Those bonds thus lightly from thee. Stand thou there,

And tremble in the presence of thy lord! Syl.—This is all madners.

Set .- Madness (-No [- I say

Tis Reason starting from her sleep, to feel, And see, and know, in all their cold dis-

tinctness, Things which some o'm her in a course of

Things which come o'er her, as a sense of pain

O' th' sudden wakes the dreamer. Stay theo yet !

Be still ! thou'rt us'd to smile and to obsy, Aye, and to weep. I have seen thy tears

flow fast, As from the fulness of a heart o'ercharg'd

With toyal love. Oh! never, never more Let amiles or tears be trasted !----When thy king

Went forth on his disastrons enterprize, Upon thy bed of sickness thou wert laid, And he stood o'er thee with the look of one

Who leaves a dying brother, and his eyes Were fill'd with tears like thine-no! not like thine ! His bosom knew no falsehood, and he dcem'd

Thise clear and stainless as a warrior's shield,

Wherein high deeds and noble forms alone, Are beightly imag'd forth.

Syl-What now avail

These recollections?

Sch-What !-- I have seen thee shrink As a marderer from the eye of light before me i

I have earn'd, (how dearly and how bitterly

It matters not, but I have earn'd at last,)

Deep knowledge, fearfal wisdom !- Now, begone !

Hence to thy guests, and fear not, though amaign'd

E'en of Sebastian's friendship !---Make his scorn,

(For he will scorn thee, as a crouching slave

By all high hearts is scorn'd,) thy right, thy charter,

Unto vile safety !--- Let the secret voice,

Whose low upbraidings will not sleep within thee,

Be as a sign, a token of thy claim

To all such guerdons as are shower'd on traitors,

When noble men are crush'd !-And fear thou not I

'Tis but the kingly cedar which the storm Rends from his mountain-throne; the

ignoble shrub,

Grovelling beneath, may live-

SyL-It is thy part

To tremble for thy life. See .- They that have look d

Upon a heart like thine, should know too

well

The worth of life to tremble !-- Such things make

Brave men, and reckless. Aye, and they whom fate

· Would trample, should be thus. It is enough.

Thos mayst depart.

Syl .-. And thou, if thou dost prize

Thy safety, speed thee hence.

[Exit Sylectre.

Seb .- (alone.)- And this is he Who was as mine own soul !--- Whose image rose

Shadowing my dreams of glory with the thought,

That on the sick man's weary couch he lay,

Pining to share my battles !

(Chorus of voices heard within, & masic.) Ye winds that sweep

The conquer'd billows of the western deep,

Or winder where the morn, Midst the deep glow of Indian heavens is born, Waft o'er bright Isle and giorious worlds the fame Of the crowned Spaniard's name ! Till in each radiant zone,

Its might the nations own, And how to him the vassal-knee,

- Whose sceptre shadows realms from sea to sea !

Sch .-- Away, away !-- this is no place for him

Whose name hath thus resounded, but is now

A spell of desolation f [Exit.

SCENE .- The Gardent of a Royal Villa.

FRANCESCO, AN OLD PRIEST.

Fras.-Why should I linger thus ? how strange the ties

Whereby familiar things, to which our eye

Hath grown, until the deep sad thoughts of years

Have quench'd its early fire, do link themsches

Around man's heart and brain !--- As if they held

A secret and mysterious sympathy

With that invisible world !- Aye, thus we dream ; But Nature is all joy !-She spurns de-

cay

And desolation from her, and doth make All changes but the ministers of her cup, Crown'd high with youth and glory. I shall sicep

Beneath the green sward of the stranger's land ;

And these fair trees, which I have tended borner.

In the vain hope that he might yet return Who grew beneath their shade, to each soft wind,

As in immortal gladness, will be waving All their luxuriant foliage !- Idle thoughts! Yet must our souls put on another being, Ere we can rise above them !

(Sebartian enters.)

Sch-How my steps

Turn to their well-known haunts !--- and yet I seek

A home no longer, but a solitude,

Where a proud heart, in its dark hour of conflict,

May find free scope to breathe !---Who comes ?- 'tis he

Who lov'd me once-No ! scend to love me once,

E'en as a son. I will not trust him now; He must have chang'd ; for are not all men chang'd ? He should be like the rest !-- Good Father, say May one, a stranger in his native land, Explore these scenes of heauty? Frax.— Ask not him, Who, in the fulness of his years, gues forth An outcast from their shades. Sch .--- What ! art thou not The friend, th' instructor of Sebastian's youth. Who first didst pour upon his soul the light Of lofty thought, and unto whom he bade These groves and bowers a calm asylum yield Till his return ? Fran.---Alas ! how few the hearts Still true to him who sever will return! No voice of power ariseth from the das, Where monarchs sleep forgotten. It is e'en As those hast said, and therefore I deput With my white hairs, to exile, and to seek A grave on other shores. Seb .- This shall not be ! Fran.-Stranger, it must be- $T_{\rm M}$ their will, who rule A weary and a wasted land, which asks But rest, if c'en in death. A land, where heart, Once brave and free, is broken ! Sch .--- Think'st thou then A nation's spirit, nurtur'd into power By the majestic, deep remembrances Of elder time, can die ?-Oh, ferbir thought ! Sebastian yet may come, and thou shalt а. 800 The wakening of a people ! 1 Fron -1 have watch'd For his return, until, with hope deferred, My heart hath sicken'd. It is past. And 1 now-Oh ! better far that with his kingly size He slumber'd, or that on his lonely grave The desart-serpent bask'd in Afric's non, Than that he came to look on faithlest friends. And kingdoms lost for ever !- No ! ay trust. Now that the days of evil are upon as, Is, that he perish d in the battle-hour, Bearing his nature's tameless royalty About him, to the last ! Seb .--- So bright a fate £. Was not for him. Fran.---What know'st thou of his lot? There is a cadence in thy voice, which thrills

My spirit as some well-remember'd strain

Which speaks of other days !--- Yet to mine eye Thine aspect is unknown. Say, wert thou one Of his devoted hest? Sch-Oh ! ask no more. I saw the ancient binners of the land Borne down at Alcazar! From .--- But didst thou see Our monarch fall? Sch .-- Prancesco, he hath liv'd Through years of suffering since that fatal day, Frag-Oh God ! my noble prince !how might he bear Scorn, and disgrace, and long captivity? And, if he live, with what upbraiding thoughts Must his high soul be wrung! Sea-No more-po more ! Farewell !--- Yet say, where goest thou ? Fran-I am one To whom all earth is but a solitude, And whose communion is with rocks and waves, And the free mountains, and th' eternal stars. I stand alone, and 'twis my thought to Instr The cross in patient and devoted faith, Through the dark forests and primeval wilds Of the great western world. Sch.__If thou canst find, In all thy father's land, a shelter still, Oh ! leave it not ! for brighter days e'en yet May dawn upon our mountains. From Little knows The stranger, gazing on our sunny hea-VCD8, How man's despending heart may sink and die, Beneath the glorious light wherein our vines Are parpling to luxuriance !- Tis not DOW The time for bope, but patience. Yet if stit Sebastian lives, I will not bid farewell Unto his ruin'd land. ,-(Voice heard singing.) They rais'd no trophy o'er his grave, 1 They sung no dirge of woe, 1 And what is left to tell the brave, That a warrior sleeps below ? ¢ A shatter'd lance, a broken shield, A belm with its white crest torn, 1

And a blood-stain'd tarf on the battlefield, ۱ Where the chief to his rest was borne I

He lies not where his fathers sleep, ŀ But who hath a tomb more proud?

For the boundless wilds his record keep, And a banner is his shroud !

Solar-What strains are these, so mournful, yet so sweet,

And wild as music of the winds? Free.--- Alas !

That monarchs might but look upon the hearts,

Trampled beneath Ambition's chariotwheels.

When rushing to renown !--- Full well I know

That voice, once joyous as the gladdening sounds

Borne upon spring's young becaus !----But its tones

Now tell a common history. 'Tis the tale Of a bright spirit, shadow'd with despair,

And wandering in its darkness. She that sings,

Once, with the sunshine of her brow and

eye, Made all things laugh around her, and call'd up

Light to all hearts. But this was transient. Joy,

And Hope, and Brouty, every flower wherewith

Nature has gifted youth, with him she lov'd.

As by one death-blight, perish'd; and her soul

Is now a world of dreams.

Sch.-And who was he

She lov'd so fatally ?

Fran.-- A noble youth,

To whose high spirit life seem'd but the price

Requir'd for glory. But his generous blood

Won him no fame. He died at Alcazar. Seb .- (covering his face.) Leave me,

old man ! for I can bear no more-Farewell-farewell !

Fran.-What have I said, that thus Thine aspect should be darken'd ?

Seb .- Ask me not.

Fran.-Peace to thy spirit, stranger, and farewell ! Exit. Seb.-(alone.) All men upbraid me;

E'en the few, that still Cling to the old allegiance of their hearts,

Do breathe my name in sad half-mingled tones

Of pity and reproach .- What ! shall I bow

My spirit unto fate, and own my woes

The just and heaven-sent chastening of my guilt ?

What is my guilt ?- Why, kings, with tenfold waste

Of life, have match'd to conquest, and no 1 TOIOP Hath rais'd its cry against them !- Aye, 1 but this Might be, perchance, because the trumpet notes Of victory, swelling like the tempest, drown'd The moan of breaking hearts !--- I nevet paus'd On such a thought till now !--- And hathit been My crime, my rain, that I would not parase In mine uncheck'd career ?-- I will not think ! Nature is round me, and is lovely still, . And will not mock my woes !--- On, na-

tive groves I Along whose grassy path and light arcades

My childhood bounded !--- Founts, which, bright as then,

Are sparkling in the san, and sending forth

Unchang'd your voices-whose wild cadence blends

With the deep whisper of the laurelboughs,

And the glad bird-notes, and the wind's low sigh,

The heart-sick wanderer to your solitudes,

And charm his spirit, if but for one still hour,

With all your mingling summer-melodics,

To brief forgetfulness ! [Erit Schuthan, H.