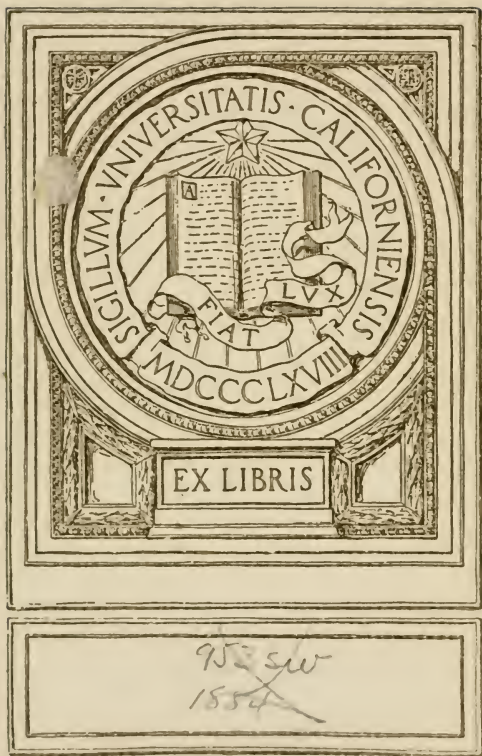


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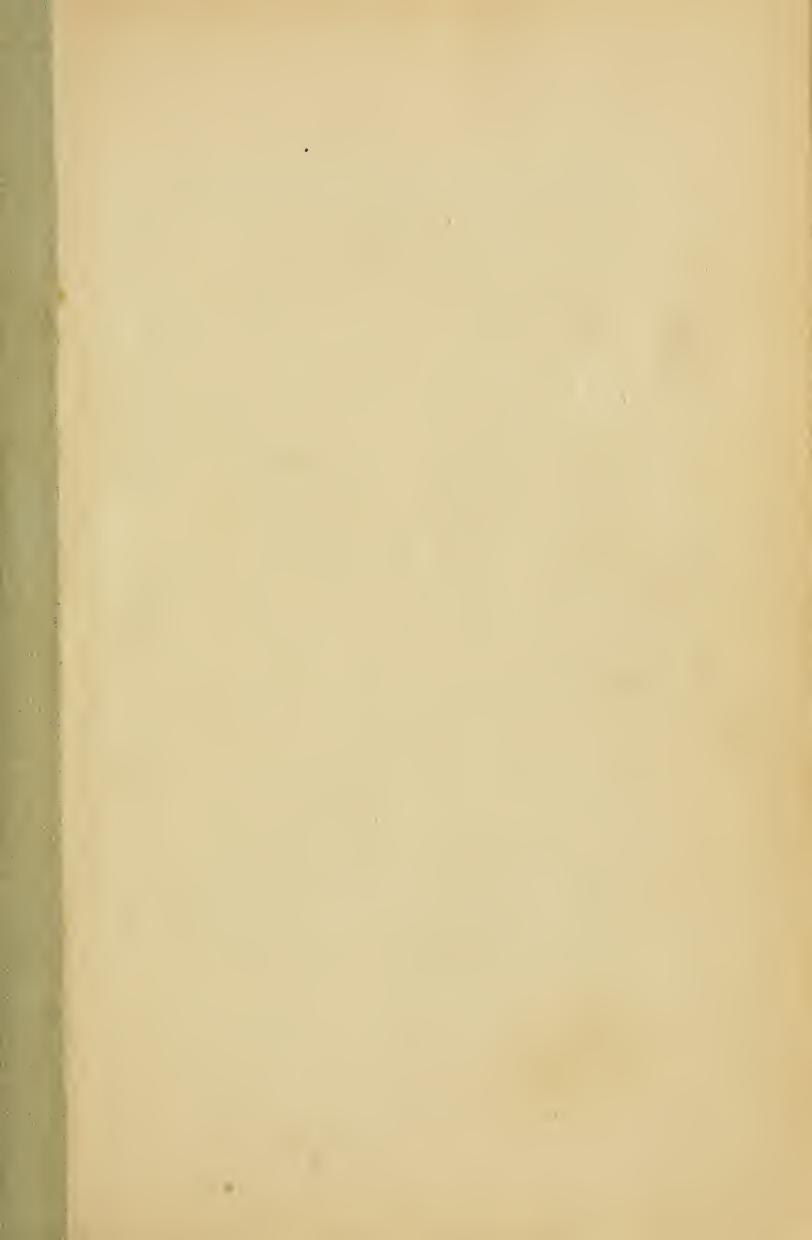
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*A. C. Swinburne*



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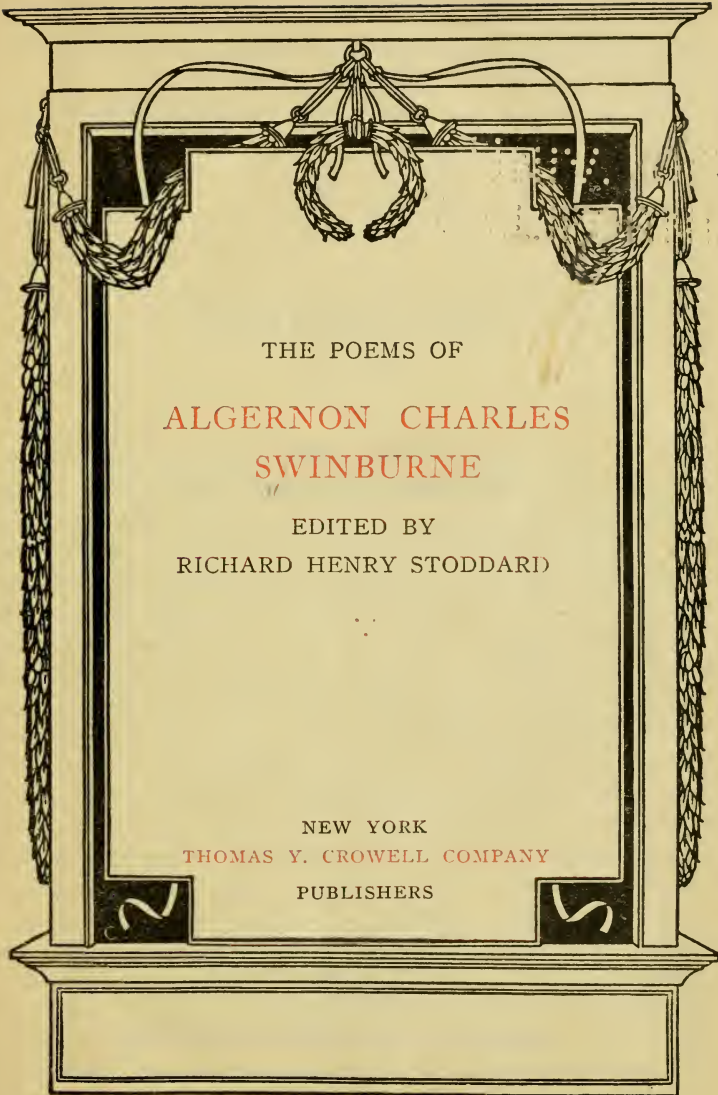
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THE POEMS OF  
**ALGERNON CHARLES  
SWINBURNE**

EDITED BY  
RICHARD HENRY STODDARD

NEW YORK  
THOMAS Y. CROWELL COMPANY  
PUBLISHERS

1884  
29-1708

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By THOMAS Y. CROWELL & Co.

*Printed in the United States of America*



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## INTRODUCTION.

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IF the history of English poetry teaches us any thing, it teaches us that the succession of poets who have illustrated it since Chaucer is divided into two classes, one of which may be said to represent the characteristics of the periods wherein it flourished, while the other may be said to represent the characteristics of the line which it perpetuates. Belonging to the first class were the successors of Shakespeare, who was an evolution of the dramatic element of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; the successors of Dryden, particularly Pope, who was an evolution of the satiric element of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; and the successors of Thomson, particularly Cowper and Wordsworth, who were an evolution of the nature-element of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There are, of course, other elements than those I have indicated, in the verse of these poets and their followers, for no poet worthy of the name was ever content to play upon one string; but it was rather as evolutions of these elements that they rose to distinction, and are remembered now, than as intense individualities such as from time to time appear in religion, in philosophy, in politics, and in art, and found dynasties. The first of these powerful personalities in English poetry was Christopher Marlowe. Born two months before Shakespeare, the son of a shoemaker at Canterbury, nothing is known of his childhood or youth except that he was admitted to the King's School in his native city,

where he remained three or four years ; and that he was removed to Cambridge, where he became a member of Benet College, and was matriculated as pensioner shortly after the completion of his seventeenth year. Two years later he took the degree of A.B., and, four years later, that of A.M. He is believed to have owed his maintenance at college to some wealthy relative, or some patron whose favor he won by early indications of genius ; and it is plain, Dyce thinks, that he was educated with a view to one of the learned professions : most probably he was intended for the Church. But churchman he was not to be ; for, like Greene and Nash, who had preceded him, he made his way up to London, and became a player and a dramatist. Precisely when this occurred has not been ascertained : all that is certain is, that his first play, the first part of "Tamburlaine the Great," was performed at the Curtain before his twenty-third year.

The earliest flowering of the English drama, the germs of which must be sought in the rude interludes of Skelton and Heywood, was the "Gorboduc" of Sackville and Newton, which was played before Queen Elizabeth at Whitehall, about two years anterior to the birth of Marlowe. The production of "Gorboduc" was an important event, partly because it was the first work written in English for scenic representation that deserved the name of a tragedy, but more because it was the first in which the rhyming quatrains, or couplets, of earlier playwrights were supplanted by the new measure, blank verse, which Lord Surrey had discovered more than twenty years before. Professing to deal with history, — for Gorboduc figures in the old chronicles as a king of Britain, — it was followed by a series of more or less historical plays, among which may be mentioned "Appius and Virginia," "Damon and Pythias," "Cambyses," "Marius and Sylla," "The Battle of Alcazar," "Edward I.," "Alphonsus, King of Arragon," and lastly "Tamburlaine the Great." If Marlowe went up to London, as he is supposed to have done, with the expectation of finding a larger field for the exercise of his talents there than at Cambridge, he went at the right time ; for never before nor since was the demand for such talents as he possessed so clamorous or so constant. It had been stimulated, if not created, by three or four

men like himself, one being Thomas Nash, who had been his contemporary at Cambridge; another, Robert Greene, also a Cambridge man; and a third, George Peele, who had taken the degree of M.A. at Oxford. They were authors, in that they wrote for their livelihood, and hack-writers, in that they wrote what the stationers wanted. Of the three, Greene was the most popular; for he had a knack of scribbling stories that hit the taste of the time, and he could manufacture a play at a pinch when he had an order for one. They were loose and careless livers, rioting at taverns and ordinaries when a successful play or pamphlet put money in their purses, and skulking in out-of-the-way lodgings when their money was gone. The period was prolific in poets, of whom the most noted were Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, who, besides "Gorboduc," had written the Induction to "The Mirror for Magistrates;" Edmund Spenser, who had written the "Shepherd's Calendar;" William Warner, who had written "Albion's England;" John Lyly, who had written "Euphues," and several court comedies; George Gascoigne, who had written "The Steel Glass," and other poesies; and George Whetstone, who had written "Promos and Cassandra," which was one day to be of use to Shakespeare in writing "Measure for Measure." It was to make his way among poets like these, whose works were no doubt known to him, that Marlowe went up to London; and he made his way at once with "Tamburlaine," greatly to the dissatisfaction of Nash, — who, in his preliminary epistle to Greene's "Menaphon," satirized him and his measure, which he described as the swelling bombast of bragging blank verse, — as well as to the dissatisfaction of Greene himself, whose popularity as a dramatist was suddenly eclipsed. One must be somewhat familiar with Elizabethan poetry before he can fully understand the significance of the dramatic revolution that followed the production of "Tamburlaine." He should at least read "Gorboduc," and two or three of the plays of Peele and Greene, — say, Peele's "Arraignment of Paris," and Greene's "Orlando Furioso," — before he reads "Tamburlaine," which will amply repay him for that dreary preparation, and clearly demonstrate the superior genius of Marlowe. Conscious of his powers, and confident

of himself, he had a greater aptitude for dramatic writing than any of his contemporaries. His impetuous spirit refused to be fettered by rhyme, which he felt was inadequate for dramatic purposes; and, if Surrey had not discovered blank verse, we may be sure that he would have discovered it, for his use of it, all things considered, was the greatest discovery of all. He was the first to divine its capacities, and to develop them heroically. He knew what he was about when he sat down to write "Tamburlaine."

"From jiggling veins of rhyming mother-wits,  
And such conceits as clownage keeps in pay,  
We'll lead you to the stately tent of war,  
Where you shall hear the Scythian Tamburlaine  
Threatening the world with high astounding terms,  
And scourging kingdoms with his conquering sword.  
View but his picture in this tragic glass,  
And then applaud his fortunes as you please."

The first part of "Tamburlaine," which was represented, we are assured, before Marlowe had attained his twenty-third year, was speedily succeeded by the second part.

"The general welcomes Tamburlaine receiv'd,  
When he arrivèd last upon the stage,  
Have made our poet pen his Second Part,  
Where Death cuts off the progress of his pomp,  
And murderous Fates throw all his triumphs down."

"Tamburlaine" was succeeded by "The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus," "The Jew of Malta," "Edward the Second," and "The Massacre of Paris." It may interest the reader of this sketch to know that the celebrated actor Edward Allyn, the founder of Dulwich College, played the part of Tamburlaine in a copper-laced coat and red velvet breeches, and the part of Barabas the Jew with a false nose. It would seem, indeed, as Dyce has pointed out, that, on the early English stage, the children of Israel were always furnished with an extra quantity of nose, as if a race so universally hated could hardly be made to appear too ugly. The career of Marlowe was

more illustrious, it seems to me, than that of any other English poet ; for no other English poet, so far as I remember, ever surpassed all his contemporaries at so early an age as he, or ever achieved so much distinction by his first work. Other poets, the most eminent, served their apprenticeship in the divine art : from the beginning, Marlowe was a master. That his success was resented, as we are told it was, by Greene and Nash, was natural ; for, not to insist upon the jealousy and envy with which the poetic temperament has always been credited, and of which they had, no doubt, their full share, it touched them in that vital part, — the pocket. They had the market to themselves before this young interloper from Cambridge set up a stall of his own, and had his wares preferred to theirs. It was monstrous, sirs, monstrous.

The personal history of Marlowe was probably not worse than the personal history of most of his dramatic contemporaries, — certainly not worse than that of Greene, — but at best it was bad enough. He was dissolute, debauched, profligate, addicted to his cups ; a swaggering roisterer, always ready for brawls. But others were as ready as he ; and among them was one Francis Archer, with whom he was feasting one summer-day at Deptford, and upon whom, while they were playing at backgammon, he suddenly drew his dagger, intending to stab him in the back. The intention was perceived by Archer, who avoided the blow, and, drawing his own dagger, struck him in the eye, bringing away the brains as he withdrew the weapon. In a few hours he was dead. Such was Christopher Marlowe, who perished in his thirtieth year, the greatest poet of his age, with the exception of William Shakespeare, whose greatness had still to manifest itself. The death of Marlowe was seized upon with avidity by the Puritans, and he was held up as an awful example of the judgment of God. He was a free-thinker, an atheist, a blasphemer ; there was no known crime that was not imputed to him. As no one man could have been guilty of all the wickedness he was charged with, and as one of his accusers was afterwards hanged at Tyburn, let us charitably render the Scotch verdict — “ Not proven.” The Devil himself is not as black as he is painted by the theologians.

The great gift of poetry — the greatest which Heaven has conferred upon mankind, and the one which, if well balanced and wisely exercised, confers the greatest pleasure on mankind — is a dangerous gift to its possessor. It separates him from his fellows, whose pursuits are of material and not spiritual things; and it creates for him a life in which they have no share. A law unto itself, it is lawlessness to them. If we cast our eyes back from the poets of the nineteenth century to the poets of the sixteenth century, — from Swinburne to Marlowe, say, — they will not rest upon many who command respect for what they were, as well as what they wrote; who were men first, and poets afterward. We find, in this small group of immortals, the gracious figure of Shakespeare, the stern figure of Milton, the thoughtful figure of Wordsworth: we do not find Burns there, nor Byron, nor Shelley. Many of the errors with which the personal history of the English poets is stained were, no doubt, temperamental; others appear to have been hereditary: but the greater number, I fear, were sheer wilfulness. The consciousness of great powers is a misfortune to all but the greatest minds, for these alone distinguish between their use and abuse.

“Oh! it is excellent  
To have a giant’s strength, but it is tyrannous  
To use it like a giant.”

Power for power’s sake is not poetry. Byron never learned this truth; but the young Keats — the manikin whom he wished somebody would flay alive — knew it instinctively. Hear him: —

“A drainless shower  
Of light is poesy: ’tis the supreme of power;  
’Tis might half slumbering on its own right arm;  
The very archings of her eyelids charm  
A thousand willing agents to obey;  
And still she governs with the mildest sway:  
But strength alone, though of the Muses born,  
Is like a fallen angel; trees uptorn,  
Darkness and worms, and shrouds, and sepulchres,  
Delight it; for it feeds upon the burrs

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And thorns of life ; forgetting the great end  
Of poesy, — that it should be a friend  
To soothe the cares, and lift the thoughts, of man."

As we define poetry, which is not to be defined, so we divide the poets into schools, which, strictly speaking, are not schools. The poetry of different periods is marked by certain characteristics, which are strong in some poets and weak in others, and which suggest other characteristics that have not yet manifested themselves. What most impresses me in the poetry of Marlowe, — a feeling of prodigality, a sense of daring, the splendor of a fiery spirit, — I find in no poet since, save in Algernon Charles Swinburne. I find great qualities in the old dramatists, — in Kyd, in Chapman, in Tourneur, in Ford, in Webster, — strange passions, strong situations, the terror and the pathos of tragedy ; but, with the exception of the scenes of Webster, they are not the body of their work, but rather the light that is flashed upon it, and the darkness in which that light is suddenly swallowed up. When we have left the great race of the old dramatists, — of whom Shirley, Lamb says, was the last, — we have left the glory and the greatness of English verse. We are among clever men, — satirists and wits, like Dryden and Pope and their followers, writers of natural description like Thomson, writers of pastorals and elegies, like Shenstone and Lyttleton ; but we are not among poets, — not among the makers. There is that in Collins and Gray which commands our admiration ; in Cowper, which commands our respect ; in Burns, which commands our love, — which ripples in smiles, and melts in the mist of tears. But the fervor, the force, the elemental energy of the old masters, is not theirs. They are fettered by poetic traditions. These traditions were loosened by Wordsworth and Coleridge, who quickened the materiality of their predecessors by the injection of their own personality, which they mistook for philosophy ; and by Scott, who discovered the metrical romance in balladry, or recovered it from this balladry, wherein, like the famous old German emperor, it had long slumbered, hearkening in dreams for the striking of the hour that was to awaken it. The fetters were loosened, but not broken, until Byron and Shelley rose in their young might, and indig-

nantly rent them asunder, restoring to song its ancient kingdom, and to man his freedom of mind. One has not to read far in Byron and Shelley, before he feels that a new force is at work in English verse, and the determination of this feeling in himself is the determination of his intellectual condition. If he believes in the old order of things, it is a destructive force, and he condemns it: if he believes in a new order of things, it is a reconstructive force, and he applauds it. But whatever he believes, he recognizes the force. It is directed, in the poetry of Byron, against society and politics; in the poetry of Shelley, against society, politics, and religion. One struck at the State, the other at the State and the Church. Of course their poetry was informed with other elements than those that are implied in this brief statement, for they were poets as well as revolutionists, — creators as well as destroyers; but in the main it was what I have indicated, — a fearless, resolute warfare with whatever men worshipped and feared. It is not ended yet, but it will be one day.

“ For freedom’s battle, once begun,  
Bequeathed by bleeding sire to son,  
Though baffled oft, is ever won.”

There have been no sudden makings of splendid names in England since the creator of “Childe Harold” woke up one morning, and found himself famous; but there have since been mornings there when other creators have woke up, and found themselves not undistinguished. It was not so difficult to startle the readers of English verse in the second decade of the century as in the seventh; for, whatever we may think of the poets of the former, it is certain they had not taken so strong a hold on their contemporaries as the poets of the latter, who had attained an excellence not before dreamed of, and who appeared to occupy every kingdom and province of song. The glory of Scott was the last red tints of a setting sun, and the glory of Wordsworth the first mild radiance of a rising moon, when Byron came like a comet, and paled their ineffectual fires. It was neither moonrise nor sunset when Swinburne came, but the full splendor of noontide, — the noontide of which the genius of Tennyson was



the golden light, and the genius of Browning the concourse of circumambient clouds. Between the fleeting shadow of these clouds and the girdling spaces of sunshine he stepped forth, — a slight figure in the garments of the Greek priesthood, — youthful but for the grave, far-off look in his eyes, and passionate but for the cold severity of his mien. Young priest of an old religion, he rekindled the fire upon its antique altar, and restored the worship of its imperious gods. Such was the coming of Swinburne with “Atalanta in Calydon.” Regarded reverently at all times by the few poets who were scholars, the study of Greek poetry was productive of but little in England after Chapman finished his translation of Homer. Other translations of lesser Greek poets followed, and other translations of Homer, the chiefest being the heroic version of Pope, — which the great critic Bentley admitted to be a pretty poem, though it was not Homer, — and the blank-verse rendering of Cowper, which was more faithful and less readable. The genius of Greek poetry was alien to the English mind until it revealed itself to the young imagination of Keats, who wore it in his heart of hearts, not because he was a scholar, — for a scholar he was not, — but because he was a Greek. There are a thousand faults in “Endymion,” but the unpardonable fault of falsehood is not one of them. It is true, everywhere true to the spirit of Greek pastoral poetry, of which it was the first, and is the last, example in English song. How thoroughly the genius of Keats was possessed with the beautiful mythology of Greece, and how rapidly it matured his wonderful genius, which in writing “Endymion” outgrew the lush luxuriance of manner which is the worst defect of that poem, we see in his Odes “To Psyche,” and “On a Grecian Urn,” — exquisite productions in the purest style of art, — and in the fragment of “Hyperion,” wherein magnificence of conception and severity of expression are alike conspicuous, and where, for the first time, the epical height of the Greeks is attained by an English poet. The secret of “Hyperion” and “Endymion” inhered in the temperament of Keats, who *was* a Greek, as one of his friends declared. The secret of “Atalanta in Calydon” was an outcome of the scholarship of Swinburne; for only a scholar, and a ripe one, — a Grecian as distinguished from

a Greek, — could have written that noble tragedy. It demanded more than the affluent sympathy of Keats: it demanded a fulness of knowledge which was denied him, — knowledge of the intention which was the inspiration of Greek tragedy, of the laws by which it was governed, and of the end to which it was directed, and which was to awaken by the simplest means emotions of pity and terror. If the inspiration of "Atalanta in Calydon" could have been drawn from any source other than the scholarship of Swinburne, I do not know where to look for it among the writings of his contemporaries or predecessors. He must have admired the Hellenics of Landor, who, like himself, was a Greek, though of a different type; but a profounder feeling than admiration for those noble productions, the spirit of which is idyllic rather than dramatic, was exercised in the shaping of his tragedy. He was charmed, no doubt, with Tennyson's "Ulysses," the repose of which is suggestive of the descriptive passages in Greek tragedy, and also, no doubt, with Browning's "Artemis Prologuizes," the art of which is of a sterner cast; but neither could have discovered his genius for him, or directed him in the path he had chosen. He could not have been helped by Arnold's "Empedocles on Ætna," still less by his tragedy of "Merope."

What Marlowe's "Tamburlaine the Great" was in our dramatic literature, of which it was the first ripe flower, the first triumphant voice, — such was Swinburne's "Atalanta in Calydon." There was nothing like it in English verse before it appeared, and there has been nothing like it since. It was the first and last awakening of the tragic Muse of Greece, — a stern, magnificent, awful spirit, speaking the large language of the gods, and moving to her end like Fate. The qualities by which the blank verse of Marlowe is distinguished — the strength which impelled his contemporaries to call it a "mighty line," its daring use, not to say abuse, of language, and its wild, stormy music — are conspicuous in "Atalanta in Calydon." The originality of Swinburne's blank verse is as absolute as the originality of Marlowe's blank verse. It is an instrument upon which he was the first to play, and whose volume of sound no hand save his could evoke and control. One needs to be a poet in order to comprehend

the difficulties it overcomes, and the triumphs it achieves, — the art, in short, of which it is so magnificent an example. But one need not be a poet in order to feel its solemnity, its grandeur, its greatness, and the weight of the stern, dark thought with which it is charged. And one need not be a poet to feel that he never before encountered such an opulence of diction, such a wealth of words, such a largess of language, as Swinburne showers upon his song. And it is not merely language, of which there is a sufficiency in the poetry of the period, which is rather employed in the coining of phrases than of thoughts : it is the best, the strongest, the most poetic, with which the vocabulary of any modern poet was ever enriched. It is a royal treasure-house, the resources of which are incalculable and inexhaustible. Another quality to be noted in Swinburne, and one which allies him to the masters, is his sense of rhythm, — the music which is the inspiration and creation of metrical thought, and in which it lives, moves, and has its being. We find it in the great works of Shakespeare, and in his songs : in the early poems of Milton, — the songs in “*Comus*,” and passages in “*Paradise Lost* ;” and occasionally in Beaumont and Fletcher. We do not find it in Dryden and Pope, or, to come to our own time, in Scott or Byron. They knew nothing of the unheard melodies of which Keats tells us, but played, with their pipes or their trumpets, the old tunes which had been handed down to them, and from which such life as they may once have had had long since departed. It was otherwise with Swinburne, whose sense of music was profound, and who had, besides, an ear of his own which taught him, that, much as the masters had accomplished, they had not discovered all the secrets of English verse, particularly the great secret which underlies all great poetry, — the compulsion of discords into harmonies. The combinations of sound which run so strangely through Swinburne’s poetry, and which cannot but end, one would think, in the harshest discords, become, in his hands, rivers of sonorous music, which rush and roar along their several ways until they reach the sea, and are swallowed up in its long, tumultuous, endless harmony.

When the history of English verse in the nineteenth century comes to be written, Swinburne will certainly figure in one chapter, and as

prominently as any of his contemporaries or predecessors. This chapter will be devoted to the poetic drama, which will be considered — which cannot fail to be considered — a sorry survival of the poetic drama of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It will contain the great names of Byron, and Coleridge, and Shelley, and Browning, and Tennyson, and the lesser names of Maturin, and Milman, and Knowles, and Talfourd, and Bulwer; but it will contain no great works, unless the historian of the future shall persuade himself that “Pippa Passes,” and “Colombe’s Birthday,” and “A Blot on the ‘Scutcheon” are such. There were great possibilities in Beddoes, who conceived dramatic situations as strong as those of Webster; but unfortunately they mastered him before he could master them, and so remained suggestions, — fragments, —

“Like the red outline of beginning Adam.”

There are two intellectual movements in this century, which are detrimental to, if they are not destructive of, the poetic drama. The first, the creative movement, which two centuries ago was exercised in the poetic drama, is now exercised in the prose novel, the second, the poetic movement, which was then exercised in a general lyrical exaltation, is now exercised in the narrow province of personality. Men who, in the days of Shakespeare, would have written plays, in our day have written novels; and other men, who, in those days, would at least have tried to write plays, are content in ours to write productions which they hope will pass muster as plays on account of the pretty personal poetry with which they are so lavishly bestrewn! Two gifts are indispensable to the dramatic poet: one is the power of forgetting himself, the other the power of remembering his characters. But these gifts have not been bestowed upon the poets of our time, who are always remembering themselves, and always forgetting their characters, and consequently are not dramatic poets. Swinburne occupies a prominent place among the crowd of contributors to the poetic drama of the nineteenth century, and occupies it justly, as it seems to me. There is nothing in the whole range of the English drama with which his trilogy of plays of which *Mary, Queen of Scots*,

is the heroine, can be compared ; and whether one likes it or not, it is certainly a remarkable work. It is remarkable for the skill with which he has delineated the character and passions of that strange woman, — siren of hearts, who clung to the hearts she broke, loving the love if not the lover ; angel of light and darkness, and beautiful in both, — and it is remarkable for its length, which exceeds that of any dramatic work in the language, as the length of “*The Ring and the Book*” exceeds that of any narrative poem. It is an epical tragedy.

Every thing that Swinburne has written is stamped with his individuality, — a confident and wilful originality, which is at once the source of his strength and his weakness. He held it in check when he wrote “*Atalanta in Calydon* ;” but when he wrote his “*Poems and Ballads*,” it ran away with him, and he has never succeeded in mastering it since. He was poet enough and critic enough to know that “*Poems and Ballads*” would provoke censure. The world may be mistaken in many things, but it is not likely to be mistaken in so simple a thing as its own sense of morality. It knows — we all know — that we are not living in a state of nature. We have outlived its liberty, its wild will, its strong instincts, — the license of its thoughts and manners. We outlived all those before the first poet sang, and we will not let the last poet recall them. There is no poetry in them, there is not art in them : they are bad poetry, they are bad art, and, worse than all, they are hideously immoral. Some such feeling as this startled the countrymen of Swinburne in “*Poems and Ballads*.” Purlblind to many things, there is no limit to their vision when their eyes are once open. They saw nothing objectionable in the scene between Sebald and Ottima in “*Pippa Passes*,” which they had been reading for twenty years ; and nothing objectionable in “*Chastelard*,” which they were then reading. But “*Poems and Ballads*” shocked them into one of those sudden spasms of virtuous indignation to which they are subject ; and they straightway proceeded to magnify the poet’s offences. They explained his veiled allusions, and dragged his hidden meanings to light. What an ordinary reader would not have understood, they compelled him to understand, committing in their criticism the very fault that Swinburne committed in his poetry.

What went to the genesis of these poems is a literary or personal secret which it will behoove the biographers of Swinburne to discover. He may have written them as so many dramatic studies, or he may have written them as so many expressions of himself. But for whatever purpose they may have been written, they did not and could not have come from a healthy mind : they are morbid, feverous, diseased, — sick unto death with the awful sickness of the soul. It was in his genius to write them, and live ; but not to regain the health, the strength, the sanity, that were his when he wrote “*Atalanta in Calydon*.”

It is the fortune, or the misfortune, of Swinburne, that he has not been criticised : he has been praised and abused, but criticised never. He was accepted at once, as he should have been ; but he was not questioned, when he should have been questioned over and over. His intentions have not been examined, nor his methods scrutinized. He may be one of the masters of song, or he may be only one of its scholars : we have to judge for ourselves which he is. I have read, I believe, all that he has written, — with admiration for much, which I feel is very fine ; with regret for more, which I know is very faulty. He has great poetic gifts, but he is not a great poet ; for no man can be a great poet who is not a wise and solid thinker, and whose language is not large and direct.

I made a careful study of Swinburne’s genius a year or two ago, taking for my text his only attempt at a narrative poem, “*Tristram of Lyonesse* ;” and, as what I wrote then expresses what I think now, I shall repeat the substance of it here. I began by saying that it was a little curious, in view of the tendency of the modern English mind towards literary studies, that no one had yet made a study of his genius and his method of working, both of which were remarkable, and remarkably faulty. They were faulty, I said ; for measured by the large methods of the great English poets, and the scope and style of their work, his work was exceedingly narrow, and his method merely a manner. He has published a dozen or more volumes of verse ; but he has written no line that lingers in the memory, and has uttered nothing that resembles a thought. This could not have been the

case if he had been gifted with unusual mental endowments ; for many a lesser poet has occasionally thought to some purpose, and has written verses that are remembered. One of his defects, perhaps his prime defect, is the brilliancy and force of his vocabulary. No poet ever excelled him in the profusion with which he throws off rich and picturesque and spirited words : he is a perfect master of epithets. His pages are luminous mists of language, the exact meaning of which, and their bearing upon the matter in hand, it is generally difficult to discover, they are so bravely put forth, and with such sonorous pomps of sound. For his music is never less, but often more, than his sense. He is a wonderful musician, if nothing else. He appears to have a great command of words ; but when one looks into his manner carefully, one is struck with the really small number at his command, or, to state it more critically, with the rapidity with which the same words are perpetually turning up, and the little they really signify. The effects of brightness, for example, are indicated five times in the first nine lines of "Tristram of Lyonesse," and are scattered bewilderingly throughout the whole poem. Every thing is suggestive of imagery ; but when one attempts to grasp the imagery it proves a *fata morgana*, which disappears, flitting from page to page and resting nowhere. He abounds with allusions to the great objects of nature, the sky and the sun, and day and night ; but he never brings them before us as we are accustomed to see them, — for the simple reason, perhaps, that he has never seen them as they are, but as they seem to him through the haze of what he would call his imagination. The world as it flashes and glimmers in his lines is a very different world from the spot which men call earth ; obeying other planetary conditions than that, and exhibiting a flora and fauna of startling novelty. The qualities I mentioned were as evident, I said, in Swinburne's early work as in his latest, though they were not so abundant there, nor of such permanent significance. There was a time when he might have overcome them, or at least have put them under the restraint of his critical powers ; but, unfortunately, that time is past, for what at first was a tentative manner has now become a determined vice, which mars all his intellectual efforts. It is due to him to say

vocabulary, which resembles nothing so much as the luxuriance of a tropical forest. The same defect marked the tentative career of Keats, while he was writing "Endymion," the sense of which often depends upon the good or bad luck of the poet in finding the necessary rhyme; but Keats outgrew this defect so rapidly, that, in little more than a year after the completion of "Endymion," he began "Hyperion." Swinburne wanders as aimlessly in "Tristram of Lyonesse" as if he had selected "Endymion" as a model, — a model that he has fallen short of, in that he nowhere reproduces that exquisite sense of poetic luxury, and that trembling sensitiveness to beauty, which are vital in all that Keats wrote, — even in the bits of doggerel which croon out brokenly in his careless letters. What he probably had before him in writing "Tristram of Lyonesse," or what he read before he sat down to write it, was "Lamia," the music of whose heroic lines, as varied and strengthened by occasional triplets and alexandrines, appears to have impressed him; but not powerfully, for he remembered it only at long intervals, and then merely as an effect which it might be well to try again, and in rapid succession. What Dryden and Keats intended and accomplished by these departures from the laws of the heroic couplet, he seems never to have perceived.

But enough of "Tristram of Lyonesse," which I have not reprinted, out of consideration for the readers of this volume, whose poetic patience I had no right to burden; and enough — more than enough — of criticism of Swinburne. What I set out to do was to select what was best in his poetry; and, as this seemed to lie in three directions, I followed them carefully, — first in the narrow province of Greek tragedy, next in the broad world of the English drama, and last in the enchanted region of romantic verse. If I have done what I sought to do, I have honored the genius of Algernon Charles Swinburne.

R. H. STODDARD.



# CONTENTS.

|   | PAGE |   | PAGE |
|---|------|---|------|
| ATALANTA IN CALYDON . . . . .                 | 5    | POEMS AND BALLADS:                          |      |
| ERECHTHEUS: A tragedy . . . . .               | 44   | ✓ A Forsaken Garden . . . . .               | 530  |
| CHASTELARD: A tragedy . . . . .               | 77   | Relics . . . . .                            | 532  |
| BOTHWELL: A tragedy . . . . .                 | 130  | Sestina . . . . .                           | 533  |
| MARY STUART: A tragedy . . . . .              | 378  | A Wasted Vigil . . . . .                    | 534  |
| POEMS AND BALLADS:                            |      | The Complaint of Lisa . . . . .             | 535  |
| A Leave-taking . . . . .                      | 468  | For the Feast of Giordano Bruno . . . . .   | 538  |
| Itylus . . . . .                              | 469  | ✓ Ave atque Vale . . . . .                  | 539  |
| Rondel . . . . .                              | 470  | Memorial Verses . . . . .                   | 543  |
| A Litany . . . . .                            | 470  | Age and Song . . . . .                      | 547  |
| A Lamentation . . . . .                       | 472  | In Memory of Barry Cornwall . . . . .       | 547  |
| Anima Anceps . . . . .                        | 473  | Epicede . . . . .                           | 548  |
| Song before Death . . . . .                   | 474  | Inferiæ . . . . .                           | 549  |
| Rococo . . . . .                              | 474  | A Birth-Song . . . . .                      | 549  |
| ✓ A Ballad of Burdens . . . . .               | 475  | Ex-Voto . . . . .                           | 550  |
| Before the Mirror . . . . .                   | 476  | Pastiche . . . . .                          | 552  |
| ✓ In Memory of Walter Savage Landor . . . . . | 477  | Before Sunset . . . . .                     | 552  |
| A Song in Time of Order, 1852 . . . . .       | 478  | Song . . . . .                              | 552  |
| A Song in Time of Revolution, 1860 . . . . .  | 478  | A Vision of Spring in Winter . . . . .      | 552  |
| To Victor Hugo . . . . .                      | 480  | At Parting . . . . .                        | 554  |
| Before Dawn . . . . .                         | 482  | The White Czar . . . . .                    | 555  |
| ✓ The Garden of Proserpine . . . . .          | 483  | Rizpah . . . . .                            | 555  |
| Love at Sea . . . . .                         | 484  | To Louis Kossuth . . . . .                  | 556  |
| April . . . . .                               | 485  | The Pilgrims . . . . .                      | 556  |
| Before Parting . . . . .                      | 486  | The Litany of Nations . . . . .             | 558  |
| The Sundew . . . . .                          | 486  | Christmas Antiphones . . . . .              | 561  |
| An Interlude . . . . .                        | 487  | • Mater Dolorosa . . . . .                  | 564  |
| Hendecasyllabics . . . . .                    | 488  | Mater Triumphalis . . . . .                 | 566  |
| ✓ Sapphics . . . . .                          | 488  | Siena . . . . .                             | 569  |
| At Eleusis . . . . .                          | 490  | Cor Cordium . . . . .                       | 573  |
| August . . . . .                              | 493  | Tiresias . . . . .                          | 573  |
| A Christmas Carol . . . . .                   | 494  | An Appeal . . . . .                         | 581  |
| The Masque of Queen Bersabe . . . . .         | 495  | Perinde ac Cadaver . . . . .                | 582  |
| St. Dorothy . . . . .                         | 500  | The Oblation . . . . .                      | 583  |
| The Two Dreams . . . . .                      | 508  | A Song of Italy . . . . .                   | 583  |
| Aholibah . . . . .                            | 515  | Thalassius . . . . .                        | 595  |
| Madonna Mia . . . . .                         | 518  | Herse . . . . .                             | 603  |
| The King's Daughter . . . . .                 | 518  | Eight Years Old . . . . .                   | 604  |
| May Janet . . . . .                           | 519  | "Non Dolet" . . . . .                       | 605  |
| The Bloody Son . . . . .                      | 520  | Lines on the Death of Edward John . . . . . |      |
| The Sea-Swallows . . . . .                    | 521  | Trelawny . . . . .                          | 606  |
| The Year of Love . . . . .                    | 522  | Off Shore . . . . .                         | 607  |
| The Last Oracle . . . . .                     | 523  | Evening on the Broad's . . . . .            | 609  |
| In the Bay . . . . .                          | 525  | OR The Emperor's Progress . . . . .         | 612  |

|   | PAGE |                                 | PAGE       |
|---|------|---------------------------------|------------|
| <b>POEMS AND BALLADS:</b>                                     |      | <b>SONNETS:</b>                 |            |
| Six Years Old . . . . .                                       | 613  | Beaumont and Fletcher . . . . . | 628        |
| A Parting Song . . . . .                                      | 614  | Philip Massinger . . . . .      | 623        |
| By the North Sea . . . . .                                    | 615  | John Ford . . . . .             | 629        |
| <b>SONNETS:</b>   |      | John Webster . . . . .          | 629        |
| To William Bell Scott . . . . .                               | 625  | Thomas Decker . . . . .         | 629        |
| On the Deaths of Thomas Carlyle and<br>George Eliot . . . . . | 625  | Thomas Middleton . . . . .      | 630        |
| After looking into Carlyle's Reminis-<br>cences . . . . .     | 625  | Thomas Heywood . . . . .        | 630        |
| A Last Look . . . . .   | 626  | John Marston . . . . .          | 630        |
| Dickens . . . . .   | 626  | George Chapman . . . . .        | 630        |
| On Lamb's Specimens of Dramatic<br>Poets . . . . .            | 627  | John Day . . . . .              | 631        |
| Christopher Marlowe . . . . .                                 | 627  | James Shirley . . . . .         | 631        |
| William Shakespeare . . . . .                                 | 627  | The Tribe of Benjamin . . . . . | 631        |
| Ben Jonson . . . . .  | 628  | Anonymous Plays . . . . .       | 632        |
| <b>GENERAL INDEX OF TITLES AND FIRST LINES</b>                |      | The Many . . . . .              | 633        |
|   |      | Epilogue . . . . .              | 633        |
|   |      |                                 | <b>635</b> |

# ATALANTA IN CALYDON.

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TO THE MEMORY

OF

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

I NOW DEDICATE, WITH EQUAL AFFECTION, REVERENCE, AND REGRET,  
A POEM INSCRIBED TO HIM WHILE YET ALIVE IN WORDS WHICH ARE NOW RETAINED  
BECAUSE THEY WERE LAID BEFORE HIM:  
AND TO WHICH, RATHER THAN CANCEL THEM, I HAVE ADDED SUCH OTHERS AS WERE EVOKED  
BY THE NEWS OF HIS DEATH:  
THAT THOUGH LOSING THE PLEASURE I MAY NOT LOSE THE HONOR OF INSCRIBING  
IN FRONT OF MY WORK  
THE HIGHEST OF CONTEMPORARY NAMES.

ὄχρεο δὴ Βορέηθεν ἀπότροπος ἄλλά σε Νύμφαι  
ἤγαγον ἰσπασίαν ἠδύπνοοι καθ' ἅλα,  
πληροῦσαι μέλιτος θεόθεν στόμα, μὴ τι Ποσειδῶν  
βλάβῃ, ἐν ὣσιν ἔχων σὴν μελίγηρυν ὕπα,  
τοῖος ἰοιδὸς ἔφυς· ἡμεῖς δ' ἔτι κλαίμεν, οἱ σου  
δενόμεθ' οἰχομένου, καί σε ποθοῦμεν αἰεί.  
εἶπε δὲ Πιερίδων τις ἀναστρεφθεῖσα πρὸς ἄλλην·  
ἦλθεν, ἰδοῦ, πάντων φίλτατος ἦλθε βροτῶν,  
στέμματα δρεψόμενος νεοθηλέα χερσὶ γεραιαῖς,  
καὶ πολὺν δάφνας ἀμφεκύλυσε κάρυ  
ἠδύ τι Σικελικαῖς ἐπὶ πηκτίσιν, ἠδύ τι χόρδαῖς,  
ἀσόμενος· πολλὴν γὰρ μετέβαλλε λύραν,  
πολλάκι δ' ἐν βήσσαισι καθήμενον εὖρεν Ἀπόλλων·  
ἄνθεσι δ' ἴστεψεν, τερπνὰ δ' ἔδωκε λέγειν,  
Πᾶνα γ' αἰέμνηστόν τε Πίτυν Κόρυθόν τε δύσεδον·  
ἦν γ' ἐφίλησε θεὸν θνητὸς Ἀμαδρῦαδα·  
πόντου δ' ἐν μεγάροισιν ἐκοίμισε Κυμοδάμειαν,  
τήν γ' Ἀγαμεμνονίαν παῖδ' ἀπέδωκε πατρὶ,  
πρὸς δ' ἱερὸς Δελφοῦς θεόπληκτον ἐπεμψεν Ὀρεστήν·  
τεμρόμενον στυγεραῖς ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα θεαῖς.

ὄψεο δὴ καὶ ἀνευθε φίλων καὶ ἀνευθεν αἰοιδῆς.  
 δρεψόμενος μαλακῆς ἄνθεα Περσεφόνης.  
 ὄψεο· κοῦκ ἔτ' ἔσει, κοῦκ αὖ ποτέ σοι παρεδοῦμαι  
 ἀζόμενος, χειρῶν χερσὶ θιγῶν ὀσίαις·  
 νῦν δ' αὖ μνησόμενον γλυκύπικρος ὑπήλυθεν αἰδῶς,  
 οἷα τυχῶν οἴου πρὸς σέθεν οἶος ἔχω·  
 οὔποτε σοῖς, γέρον, ὄμμα φίλοις φίλον ὄμμασι τέρψω,  
 σῆς, γέρον, ἀψάμενος, φίλτατε, δεξιτερᾶς  
 ἢ ψαφαρᾷ κόνις, ἢ ψαφαρὸς βίός ἐστι· τί τούτων  
 μείον ἐφημερίων; οὐ κόνις ἀλλὰ βίος.  
 ἀλλά μοι ἡδύτερός γε πέλεις πολὺ τῶν ἔτ' ἐόντων,  
 ἔπλεο γάρ· σοὶ μὴν ταῦτα θανόντι φέρω,  
 παῦρα μὲν, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ κῆρος ἐτήτυμα· μηδ' ἀποτρεφθῆς,  
 πρὸς δὲ βαλῶν ἔτι νῦν ἡσυχον ὄμμα δέχου.  
 οὐ γὰρ ἔχω, μέγα δὴ· τι θέλων, σέθεν ἄξια δοῦμαι  
 θαπτομένου περ' ἀπῶν· οὐ γὰρ ἐνεστιν ἔμοι·  
 οὐδὲ μελικρήτου παρέχειν γάνος· εἰ γὰρ ἐνεῖη  
 καὶ σε χεροῖν ψαύσαι καὶ σέ ποτ' αὐθις ἰδεῖν,  
 δάκρυσί τε σπονδαῖς τε κῆρα φίλον ἀμφοπολεύειν  
 ὀφθαλμοῦς θ' ἱεροῦς σοῖς ἱερόν τε δέμας.  
 εἶθ' ὄφελον· μάλα γὰρ τάδ' ἂν ἀμπαύσειε μερίμνης·  
 νῦν δὲ πρόσωθεν ἀνευ σήματος οἰκτον ἄγω·  
 οὐδ' ἐπιτυμβίδιον θρηγῶ μέλος, ἀλλ' ἀπαμνηθεῖς,  
 ἀλλ' ἀπάνευθεν ἔχων ἀμφιδακρυτὰ πάθη.  
 ἀλλὰ σὺ χαῖρε θανῶν, καὶ ἔχων γέρας ἴσθι πρὸς ἀνδρῶν  
 πρὸς τε θεῶν, ἐνέροις εἰ τις ἐπεστι θεός.  
 χαῖρε γέρον, φίλε χαῖρε πατὲρ, πολὺ φέρτατ' αἰοιδῶν  
 ὧν ἰδομεν, πολὺ δὴ φέρτατ' ἀεισομένων·  
 χαῖρε, καὶ ὄλβον ἔχουσι, οἷόν γε θανόντες ἔχουσιν,  
 ἡσυχίαν ἔχθρας καὶ φιλότῆτος ἄτερ.

σῆματος οἰχομένου σοι μνήματ' ἐς ἴστερον ἔσται,  
σοὶ τε φίλῃ μνήμη μνήματος οἰχομένου ·  
ὄν Χάριτες κλαίουσι θεαί, κλαίει δ' Αφροδίτη  
καλλιχόροις Μουσῶν τερψαμένη στεφάνοις  
οὐ γὰρ ἄπαξ ἱερούς ποτε γῆρας ἔτριψεν ἰοιδούς ·  
τήνδε τὸ σὸν φαίνει μνήμα τόδ' ἀγλαΐαν.  
ἢ φίλος ἦς μακάρεσσι βροτῶς, σοὶ δ' εἰ τι Νύμφαι  
δῶρα ποθεινὰ νέμειν, ὑστατα δῶρ', ἔδοσαν.  
τὰς νῦν χάλκεος ὕπνος ἔβη καὶ ἀνήνεμος αἰὼν,  
καὶ συνθαπτομένοι μοῖραν ἔχουσι μίαν.  
εὐδεις καὶ σὺ, καλὸν καὶ ἀγάκλυτον ἐν χθονὶ κοίλῃ  
ὕπνον ἐφικόμενος, σῆς ἀπόνοσφι πάτρας,  
τῆλε παρὰ ξανθοῦ Τυρσηνικὸν οἶδμα καθεύδεις  
νάματος, ἢ δ' ἔτι σὴ μαῖά σε γαῖα ποθεῖ,  
ἀλλ' ἀπέχεις, καὶ πρόσθε φιλόπτολις ὦν περ ἀπείπας ·  
εὐδε · μάκαρ δ' ἡμῖν οὐδ' ἀμέγαρτος ἔσει.  
βαῖδς ἐπιχθονίων γε χρόνος καὶ μοῖρα κρατῆσει,  
τοὺς δέ ποτ' ἐφροσύνη τοὺς δέ ποτ' ἄλγος ἔχει ·  
πολλάκι δ' ἢ βλάπτει φάος ἢ σκότος ἀμφικαλύπτει  
μυρομένους, δάκνει δ' ὕπνος ἐγρηγοράς ·  
οὐδ' ἔθ' ὄτ' ἐν τύμβοισι κατέδραθεν ὄμμα θανόντων  
ἢ σκότος ἢ τι φάος δῆξεται ἠελίου ·  
οὐδ' ὕναρ ἐννύχιον καὶ ἐνύπνιον οὐδ' ὕπαρ ἔσται  
ἢ ποτε τερπομένοις ἢ ποτ' ὕδρομένοις ·  
ἀλλ' ἓνα πάντες ἕει θάκον συνέχουσι καὶ ἔδραν  
ἀντὶ βροτῆς ἄβροτον, κάλλιμον ἄντι κακῆς.

# ATALANTA IN CALYDON.

## THE PERSONS.

CHIEF HUNTSMAN.  
CHORUS.  
ALTHÆA.

MELEAGER.  
CENEUS.  
ATALANTA.

TOXEUS.  
PLEXIPPUS.  
HERALD.

MESSENGER.  
SECOND MESSENGER.

ἴστω δ' ὅστις οὐχ ὑπόπτερος  
φροντίσιν δαίης,  
τὰν ἄ παιδολύμας τάλαινα Θεστίας μήσατο  
πυρδαῆ τινα πρόνοιαν,  
καταίθουσα παιδὸς δαφινὸν

δαλὸν ἤλικ' ἐπεὶ μολῶν  
ματρώθεν κελάδησε  
σύμμετρόν τε διαί βίου  
μυρόκραντον ἐς ἄμαρ.

ÆSCH. Cho. 602-612.

## THE ARGUMENT.

ALTHÆA, daughter of Thestius and Eurythemis, queen of Calydon, being with child of Meleager her first-born son, dreamed that she brought forth a brand burning. And, upon his birth, came the three Fates, and prophesied of him three things, namely these: that he should have great strength of his hands, and good fortune in this life, and that he should live no longer when the brand then in the fire were consumed; wherefore his mother plucked it forth, and kept it by her. And the child, being a man grown, sailed with Jason after the fleece of gold, and won himself great praise of all men living; and, when the tribes of the North and West made war upon Ætolia, he fought against their army, and scattered it. But Artemis, having at the first stirred up these tribes to war against Ceneus king of Calydon, because he had offered sacrifice to all the gods saving her alone, but her he had forgotten to honor, was yet more wroth because of the destruction of this army, and sent upon the land of Calydon a wild boar which slew many and wasted all their increase, but him could none slay, and many went against him and perished. Then were all the chief men of Greece gathered together, and among them Atalanta daughter of Iasius the Arcadian, a virgin; for whose sake Artemis let slay the boar, seeing she favored the maiden greatly; and Meleager having despatched it gave the spoil thereof to Atalanta, as one beyond measure enamoured of her; but the brethren of Althæa his mother, Toxeus and Plexippus, with such others as misliked that she only should bear off the praise whereas many had borne the labor, laid wait for her to take away her spoil; but Meleager fought against them, and slew them: whom when Althæa their sister beheld, and knew to be slain of her son, she waxed for wrath and sorrow like as one mad, and, taking the brand whereby the measure of her son's life was meted to him, she cast it upon a fire; and with the wasting thereof his life likewise wasted away, that being brought back to his father's house he died in a brief space; and his mother also endured not long after for very sorrow; and this was his end, and the end of that hunting.

*Chief Huntsman.* Maiden, and mistress of the months and stars  
Now folded in the flowerless fields of heaven,  
Goddess whom all gods love with three-fold heart,

Being treble in thy divided deity,  
A light for dead men and dark hours,  
a foot  
Swift on the hills as morning, and a hand  
To all things fierce and fleet that roar  
and range

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Mortal, with gentler shafts than snow<br>or sleep;   | Euenus, wedded with the straitening<br>sea.  |
| Hear now and help and lift no violent<br>hand,   | For in fair time thou comest; come also<br>thou,   |
| But favorable and fair as thine eye's<br>beam  | Twin-born with him, and virgin, Arte-<br>mis,  |
| Hidden and shown in heaven; for I all<br>night   | And give our spears their spoil, the<br>wild boar's hide,  |
| Amid the king's hounds and the hunting<br>men  | Sent in thine anger against us for sin<br>done   |
| Have wrought and worshipped toward<br>thee; nor shall man  | And bloodless altars without wine or<br>fire.  |
| See goodlier hounds or deadlier edge<br>of spears;   | Him now consume thou; for thy sacri-<br>fice   |
| But for the end, that lies unreached at yet<br>Between the hands and on the knees of<br>gods.      | With sanguine-shining steam divides<br>the dawn,   |
| O fair-faced sun killing the stars and<br>dews   | And one, the maiden rose of all thy<br>maids,  |
| And dreams and desolation of the night!<br>Rise up, shine, stretch thine hand out,<br>with thy bow | Arcadian Atalanta, snowy-souled,<br>Fair as the snow and footed as the wind,<br>From Ladon and well-wooded Mænalus<br>Over the firm hills and the fleeting sea |
| Touch the most dimmest height of trem-<br>bling heaven,  | Hast thou drawn hither, and many an<br>armed king,   |
| And burn and break the dark about thy<br>ways,   | Heroes, the crown of men, like gods in<br>fight.   |
| Shot through and through with arrows;<br>let thine hair  | Moreover out of all the Ætolian land,<br>From the full-flowered Lelantian pas-<br>ture   |
| Lighten as flame above that flameless<br>shell   | To what of fruitful field the son of<br>Zeus   |
| Which was the moon, and thine eyes<br>fill the world   | Won from the roaring river and labor-<br>ing sea   |
| And thy lips kindle with swift beams;<br>let earth   | When the wild god shrank in his horn<br>and fled   |
| Laugh, and the long sea fiery from thy<br>feet   | And foamed and lessened through his<br>wrathful fords,   |
| Through all the roar and ripple of<br>streaming springs  | Leaving clear lands that steamed with<br>sudden sun,   |
| And foam in reddening flakes and flying<br>flowers   | These virgins with the lightening of<br>the day  |
| Shaken from hands and blown from lips<br>of nymphs   | Bring thee fresh wreaths and their own<br>sweeter hair,  |
| Whose hair or breast divides the wan-<br>dering wave   | Luxurious locks and flower-like mixed<br>with flowers,   |
| With salt close tresses cleaving lock to<br>lock,  | Clean offering, and chaste hymns; but<br>me the time   |
| All gold, or shuddering and unfurrowed<br>snow;  | Divides from these things; whom do<br>thou not less  |
| And all the winds about thee with their<br>wings,  | Help and give honor, and to mine<br>hounds good speed,   |
| And fountain-heads of all the watered<br>world;  | And edge to spears, and luck to each<br>man's hand.  |
| Each horn of Acheloüs, and the green   |  |



*Chorus.* When the hounds of spring  
 are on winter's traces,  
 The mother of months in meadow or  
 plain  
 Fills the shadows and windy places  
 With lisp of leaves and ripple of  
 rain;  
 And the brown bright nightingale am-  
 orous  
 Is half assuaged for Itylus,  
 For the Thracian ships and the foreign  
 faces,  
 The tongueless vigil, and all the pain.

Come with bows bent and with empty-  
 ing of quivers,  
 Maiden most perfect, lady of light,  
 With a noise of winds and many riv-  
 ers,  
 With a clamor of waters, and with  
 might;  
 Bind on thy sandals, O thou most  
 fleet,  
 Over the splendor and speed of thy  
 feet;  
 For the faint east quickens, the wan  
 west shivers,  
 Round the feet of the day and the  
 feet of the night.

Where shall we find her, how shall we  
 sing to her,  
 Fold our hands round her knees, and  
 cling?  
 O that man's heart were as fire and  
 could spring to her,  
 Fire, or the strength of the streams  
 that spring!  
 For the stars and the winds are unto  
 her  
 As raiment, as songs of the harp-  
 player;  
 For the risen stars and the fallen cling  
 to her,  
 And the southwest-wind and the west-  
 wind sing.

For winter's rains and ruins are over,  
 And all the season of snows and  
 sins;  
 The days dividing lover and lover,  
 The light that loses, the night that  
 wins;

And time remembered is grief forgot-  
 ten,  
 And frosts are slain and flowers begot-  
 ten,  
 And in green underwood and cover  
 Blossom by blossom the spring be-  
 gins.

The full streams feed on flower of  
 rushes,  
 Ripe grasses trammel a travelling  
 foot,  
 The faint fresh flame of the young  
 year flushes  
 From leaf to flower and flower to  
 fruit;  
 And fruit and leaf are as gold and  
 fire,  
 And the oat is heard above the lyre,  
 And the hoofed heel of a satyr crushes  
 The chestnut-husk at the chestnut-  
 root.

And Pan by noon and Bacchus by  
 night,  
 Fleeter of foot than the fleet-foot kid,  
 Follows with dancing and fills with  
 delight  
 The Mænad and the Bassarid;  
 And soft as lips that laugh and hide  
 The laughing leaves of the trees di-  
 vide,  
 And screen from seeing and leave in  
 sight  
 The god pursuing, the maiden hid.

The ivy falls with the Bacchanal's hair  
 Over her eyebrows hiding her eyes;  
 The wild vine slipping down leaves  
 bare  
 Her bright breast shortening into  
 sighs;  
 The wild vine slips with the weight of  
 its leaves,  
 But the berried ivy catches and cleaves  
 To the limbs that glitter, the feet that  
 scare  
 The wolf that follows, the fawn that  
 flies.

*Althæa.* What do ye singing? what  
 is this ye sing?

*Chorus.* Flowers bring we, and pure  
 lips that please the gods,

And raiment meet for service: lest the day

Turn sharp with all its honey in our lips.

*Althæa.* Night, a black hound, follows the white fawn day,

Swifter than dreams the white flown feet of sleep;

Will ye pray back the night with any prayers?

And though the spring put back a little while

Winter, and snows that plague all men for sin,

And the iron time of cursing, yet I know

Spring shall be ruined with the rain, and storm

Eat up like fire the ashen autumn days.

I marvel what men do with prayers awake

Who dream and die with dreaming; any god,

Yea the least god of all things called divine,

Is more than sleep and waking; yet we say,

Perchance by praying a man shall match his god.

For if sleep have no mercy, and man's dreams

Bite to the blood and burn into the bone,

What shall this man do waking? By the gods,

He shall not pray to dream sweet things to-night,

Having dreamt once more bitter things than death.

*Chorus.* Queen, but what is it that hath burnt thine heart?

For thy speech flickers like a blown-out flame.

*Althæa.* Look, ye say well, and know not what ye say;

For all my sleep is turned into a fire, and all my dreams to stuff that kindles it.

*Chorus.* Yet one doth well being patient of the gods.

*Althæa.* Yea, lest they smite us with some four-foot plague.

*Chorus.* But when time spreads find out some herb for it.

*Althæa.* And with their healing herbs infect our blood.

*Chorus.* What ails thee to be jealous of their ways?

*Althæa.* What if they give us poisonous drinks for wine?

*Chorus.* They have their will; much talking mends it not.

*Althæa.* And gall for milk, and cursing for a prayer?

*Chorus.* Have they not given life, and the end of life?

*Althæa.* Lo, where they heal, they help not; thus they do,

They mock us with a little piteousness,

And we say prayers, and weep; but at the last,

Sparing a while, they smite and spare no whit.

*Chorus.* Small praise man gets dispraising the high gods:

What have they done that thou dishonorest them?

*Althæa.* First Artemis for all this harried land

I praise not, and for wasting of the boar That mars with tooth and tusk and fiery

feet

Green pasturage and the grace of standing corn

And meadow and marsh with springs and unblown leaves,

Flocks and swift herds and all that bite sweet grass,

I praise her not; what things are these to praise?

*Chorus.* But when the king did sacrifice, and gave

Each god fair dues of wheat and blood and wine,

Her not with bloodshed nor burnt-offering

Revered he, nor with salt or cloven cake;

Wherefore being wroth she plagued the land; but now

Takes off from us fate and her heavy things.

Which deed of these twain were not good to praise?

For a just deed looks always either way  
With blameless eyes, and mercy is no  
fault.

*Althæa.* Yea, but a curse she hath  
sent above all these

To hurt us where she healed us; and  
hath lit

Fire where the old fire went out, and  
where the wind

Slackened, hath blown on us with dead-  
lier air.

*Chorus.* What storm is this that tight-  
ens all our sail?

*Althæa.* Love, a thwart sea-wind full  
of rain and foam.

*Chorus.* Whence blown, and born  
under what stormier star?

*Althæa.* Southward across Euenus  
from the sea.

*Chorus.* Thy speech turns toward  
Arcadia like blown wind.

*Althæa.* Sharp as the north sets when  
the snows are out.

*Chorus.* Nay, for this maiden hath no  
touch of love.

*Althæa.* I would she had sought in  
some cold gulf of sea

Love, or in dens where strange beasts  
lurk, or fire,

Or snows on the extreme hills, or iron  
land

Where no spring is; I would she had  
sought therein

And found, or ever love had found her  
here.

*Chorus.* She is holier than all holy  
days or things,

The sprinkled water or fume of perfect  
fire;

Chaste, dedicated to pure prayers, and  
filled

With higher thoughts than heaven; a  
maiden clean,

Pure iron, fashioned for a sword; and  
man

She loves not; what should one such  
do with love?

*Althæa.* Look you, I speak not as one  
light of wit,

But as a queen speaks, being heart-  
vexed; for oft

I hear my brothers wrangling in mid  
hall,

And am not moved; and my son chid-  
ing them,

And these things nowise move me, but  
I know

Foolish and wise men must be to the  
end,

And feed myself with patience; but this  
most,

This moves me, that for wise men as  
for fools

Love is one thing, an evil thing, and  
turns

Choice words and wisdom into fire and  
air.

And in the end shall no joy come, but  
grief,

Sharp words and soul's division and  
fresh tears

Flower-wise upon the old root of tears  
brought forth,

Fruit-wise upon the old flower of tears  
sprung up,

Pitiful sighs, and much regrafted pain.  
These things are in my presage, and  
myself

Am part of them and know not; but  
in dreams

The gods are heavy on me, and all the  
fates

Shed fire across my eyelids mixed with  
night,

And burn me blind, and disilluminate  
My sense of seeing, and my perspicuous  
soul

Darken with vision; seeing I see not,  
hear

And hearing am not holpen, but mine  
eyes

Stain many tender broideries in the bed  
Drawn up about my face that I may  
weep

And the king wake not; and my brows  
and lips

Tremble and sob in sleeping, like swift  
flames

That tremble, or water when it sobs  
with heat

Kindled from under; and my tears fill  
my breast

And speck the fair dyed pillows round  
the king

With barren showers and salter than  
the sea.

Such dreams divide me dreaming; for  
     long since  
 I dreamed that out of this my womb  
     had sprung  
 Fire and a firebrand; this was ere my  
     son,  
 Meleager, a goodly flower in fields of  
     fight,  
 Felt the light touch him coming forth,  
     and wailed  
 Childlike; but yet he was not; and in  
     time  
 I bare him, and my heart was great;  
     for yet  
 So royally was never strong man born,  
 Nor queen so nobly bore as noble a  
     thing  
 As this my son was: such a birth God  
     sent  
 And such a grace to bear it. Then  
     came in  
 Three weaving women, and span each  
     a thread,  
 Saying This for strength and That for  
     luck, and one  
 Saying Till the brand upon the hearth  
     burn down,  
 So long shall this man see good days  
     and live.  
 And I with gathered raiment from the  
     bed  
 Sprang, and drew forth the brand, and  
     cast on it  
 Water, and trod the flame bare-foot,  
     and crushed  
 With naked hand spark beaten out of  
     spark  
 And blew against and quenched it; for  
     I said,  
 These are the most high Fates that  
     dwell with us,  
 And we find favor a little in their sight,  
 A little, and more we miss of, and much  
     time  
 Foils us; howbeit they have pitied me,  
     O son,  
 And see most piteous, thee a tenderer  
     thing  
 Than any flower of fleshly seed alive.  
 Wherefore I kissed and hid him with  
     my hands,  
 And covered under arms and hair, and  
     wept,

And feared to touch him with my tears  
     and laughed;  
 So light a thing was this man, grown so  
     great  
 Men cast their heads back, seeing  
     against the sun  
 Blaze the armed man carven on his  
     shield, and hear  
 The laughter of little bells along the  
     brace  
 Ring, as birds singing or flutes blown,  
     and watch,  
 High up, the cloven shadow of either  
     plume  
 Divide the bright light of the brass,  
     and make  
 His helmet as a windy and wintering  
     moon  
 Seen through blown cloud and plume-  
     like drift, when ships  
 Drive, and men strive with all the sea,  
     and oars  
 Break, and the beaks dip under, drink-  
     ing death;  
 Yet was he then but a span long, and  
     moaned  
 With inarticulate mouth inseparate  
     words,  
 And with blind lips and fingers wrung  
     my breast  
 Hard, and thrust out with foolish hands  
     and feet,  
 Murmuring, but those gray women  
     with bound hair  
 Who fright the gods frightened not him;  
     he laughed  
 Seeing them, and pushed out hands to  
     feel and haul  
 Distaff and thread, intangible; but  
     they  
 Passed, and I hid the brand, and in my  
     heart  
 Laughed likewise, having all my will of  
     heaven.  
 But now I know not if to left or right  
 The gods have drawn us hither; for  
     again  
 I dreamt, and saw the black brand  
     burst on fire  
 As a branch bursts in flower, and saw  
     the flame  
 Fade flower-wise, and Death came and  
     with dry lips

Blew the charred ash into my breast;  
 and Love  
 Trampled the ember and crushed it  
 with swift feet.  
 This I have also at heart; that not for  
 me,  
 Not for me only or son of mine, O girls,  
 The gods have wrought life, and desire  
 of life,  
 Heart's love and heart's division; but  
 for all  
 There shines one sun and one wind  
 blows till night.  
 And when night comes the wind sinks  
 and the sun,  
 And there is no light after, and no  
 storm,  
 But sleep and much forgetfulness of  
 things.  
 In such wise I gat knowledge of the gods  
 Years hence, and heard high sayings of  
 one most wise,  
 Eurhythemis my mother, who beheld  
 With eyes alive and spake with lips of  
 these  
 As one on earth disflashed and disallied  
 From breath or blood corruptible; such  
 gifts  
 Time gave her, and an equal soul to  
 these  
 And equal face to all things; thus she  
 said.  
 But whatsoever intolerable or glad  
 The swift hours weave and unweave, I  
 go hence  
 Full of mine own soul, perfect of my-  
 self,  
 Toward mine and me sufficient; and  
 what chance  
 The gods cast lots for and shake out  
 on us,  
 That shall we take, and that much bear  
 withal.  
 And now, before these gather to the  
 hunt,  
 I will go arm my son and bring him  
 forth,  
 Lest love or some man's anger work  
 him harm.

*Chorus.* Before the beginning of years  
 There came to the making of man  
 Time, with a gift of tears;  
 Grief, with a glass that ran;

Pleasure, with pain for leaven;  
 Summer, with flowers that fell;  
 Remembrance fallen from heaven,  
 And madness risen from hell;  
 Strength without hands to smite;  
 Love that endures for a breath;  
 Night, the shadow of light,  
 And life, the shadow of death.

And the high gods took in hand  
 Fire, and the falling of tears,  
 And a measure of sliding sand  
 From under the feet of the years;  
 And froth and drift of the sea;  
 And dust of the laboring earth;  
 And bodies of things to be  
 In the houses of death and of birth;  
 And wrought with weeping and laugh-  
 ter,  
 And fashioned with loathing and love,  
 With life before and after  
 And death beneath and above,  
 For a day and a night and a morrow,  
 That his strength might endure for a  
 span  
 With travail and heavy sorrow,  
 The holy spirit of man.

From the winds of the north and the  
 south  
 They gathered as unto strife;  
 They breathed upon his mouth,  
 They filled his body with life;  
 Eyesight and speech they wrought  
 For the veils of the soul therein,  
 A time for labour and thought,  
 A time to serve and to sin;  
 They gave him light in his ways,  
 And love, and a space for delight,  
 And beauty and length of days,  
 And night, and sleep in the night.  
 His speech is a burning fire;  
 With his lips he travaileth;  
 In his heart is a blind desire,  
 In his eyes foreknowledge of death;  
 He weaves, and is clothed with derision;  
 Sows, and he shall not reap;  
 His life is a watch or a vision  
 Between a sleep and a sleep.

*Meleager.* O sweet new heaven and  
 air without a star,  
 Fair day, be fair and welcome, as to  
 men

With deeds to do and praise to pluck  
from thee.

Come forth a child, born with clear  
sound and light,

With laughter and swift limbs and  
prosperous looks;

That this great hunt with heroes for  
the hounds

May leave thee memorable and us well  
sped.

*Althæa.* Son, first I praise thy prayer,  
then bid thee speed;

But the gods hear men's hands before  
their lips,

And heed beyond all crying and sacri-  
fice

Light of things done and noise of  
laboring men.

But thou, being armed and perfect for  
the deed,

Abide; for like rain-flakes in a wind  
they grow,

The men thy fellows, and the choice of  
the world,

Bound to root out the tuskèd plægue,  
and leave

Thanks and safe days and peace in  
Calydon.

*Meleager.* For the whole city and all  
the low-lying land

Flames, and the soft air sounds with  
them that come;

The gods give all these fruit of all  
their works.

*Althæa.* Set thine eye thither and fix  
thy spirit and say

Whom there thou knowest; for sharp  
mixed shadow and wind

Blown up between the morning and  
the mist,

With steam of steeds and flash of  
bridle or wheel,

And fire, and parcels of the broken dawn,  
And dust divided by hard light, and  
spears

That shine and shift as the edge of  
wild beasts' eyes,

Smite upon mine; so fiery their blind  
edge

Burns, and bright points break up and  
baffle day.

*Meleager.* The first, for many I know  
not, being far off,

Peleus the Larissæan, couched with  
whom

Sleeps the white sea-bred wife and  
silver-shod,

Fair as fled foam, a goddess; and their  
son

Most swift and splendid of men's chil-  
dren born,

Most like a god, full of the future  
fame.

*Althæa.* Who are these shining like  
one sundered star?

*Meleager.* Thy sister's sons, a double  
flower of men.

*Althæa.* O sweetest kin to me in all  
the world,

O twin-born blood of Leda, gracious  
heads

Like kindled lights in untempestuous  
heaven,

Fair flower-like stars on the iron foam  
of fight,

With what glad heart and kindliness of  
soul,

Even to the staining of both eyes with  
tears

And kindling of warm eyelids with  
desire,

A great way off I greet you, and re-  
joice

Seeing you so fair, and moulded like as  
gods.

Far off ye come, and least in years of  
these,

But lordliest, but worth love to look  
upon.

*Meleager.* Even such (for sailing  
hither I saw far hence,

And where Eurotas hollows his moist  
rock

Nigh Sparta with a strenuous-hearted  
stream)

Even such I saw their sisters; one  
swan-white,

The little Helen, and less fair than she  
Fair Clytæmnestra, grave as pasturing  
fawns

Who feed and fear some arrow; but at  
whiles,

As one smitten with love or wrung  
with joy,

She laughs and lightens with her eyes  
and then

Weeps; whereat Helen, having laughed,  
 weeps too,  
 And the other chides her, and she being  
 child speaks nought,  
 But cheeks and lips and eyelids kisses  
 her,  
 Laughing; so fare they, as in their  
 bloomless bud  
 And full of unblown life, the blood of  
 gods.

*Althæa.* Sweet days befall them and  
 good loves and lords,  
 And tender and temperate honors of  
 the hearth,  
 Peace, and a perfect life and blameless  
 bed.

But who shows next an eagle wrought  
 in gold,  
 That flames and beats broad wings  
 against the sun  
 And with void mouth gapes after  
 emptier prey?

*Meleager.* Know by that sign the  
 reign of Telamon  
 Between the fierce mouths of the en-  
 counterer brine  
 On the strait reefs of twice-washed  
 Salamis.

*Althæa.* For like one great of hand  
 he bears himself,  
 Vine-chapleted, with savors of the sea,  
 Glittering as wine and moving as a  
 wave.

But who girt round there roughly fol-  
 lows him?

*Meleager.* Ancæus, great of hand, an  
 iron bulk,  
 Two-edged for fight as the axe against  
 his arm,

Who drives against the surge of stormy  
 spears

Full-sailed; him Cepheus follows, his  
 twin-born,

Chief name next his of all Arcadian men.

*Althæa.* Praise be with men abroad;  
 chaste lives with us,  
 Home-keeping days and household  
 reverences.

*Meleager.* Next by the left unsan-  
 dalled foot know thou

The sail and oar of this Ætolian land,  
 Thy brethren, Toxeus and the violent-  
 souled

Plexippus, over-swift with hand and  
 tongue;

For hands are fruitful, but the ignorant  
 mouth

Blows and corrupts their work with  
 barren breath.

*Althæa.* Speech too bears fruit, being  
 worthy; and air blows down

Things poisonous, and high-seated vio-  
 lences,

And with charmed words and songs  
 have men put out

Wild evil, and the fire of tyrannies.

*Meleager.* Yea, all things have they,  
 save the gods and love.

*Althæa.* Love thou the law and cleave  
 to things ordained.

*Meleager.* Law lives upon their lips  
 whom these applaud.

*Althæa.* How sayest thou these? what  
 god applauds new things?

*Meleager.* Zeus, who hath fear and  
 custom under foot.

*Althæa.* But loves not laws thrown  
 down and lives awry.

*Meleager.* Yet is not less himself than  
 his own law.

*Althæa.* Nor shifts and shuffles old  
 things up and down.

*Meleager.* But what he will remoulds  
 and discreates.

*Althæa.* Much, but not this, that each  
 thing live its life.

*Meleager.* Nor only live, but lighten  
 and lift up higher.

*Althæa.* Pride breaks itself, and too  
 much gained is gone.

*Meleager.* Things gained are gone,  
 but great things done endure.

*Althæa.* Child, if a man serve law  
 through all his life

And with his whole heart worship,  
 him all gods

Praise; but who loves it only with his  
 lips,

And not in heart and deed desiring  
 it

Hides a perverse will with obsequious  
 words;

Him heaven infatuates and his twin-  
 born fate

Tracks, and gains on him, scenting sins  
 far off,

And the swift hounds of violent death  
 devour.  
 Be man at one with equal-minded gods,  
 So shall he prosper; not through laws  
 torn up,  
 Violated rule and a new face of things.  
 A woman armed makes war upon her-  
 self,  
 Unwomanlike, and treads down use  
 and wont  
 And the sweet common honor that  
 she hath,  
 Love, and the cry of children, and the  
 hand  
 Trothplight and mutual mouth of mar-  
 riages.  
 This doth she, being unloved; whom if  
 one love,  
 Not fire nor iron and the wide-mouthed  
 wars  
 Are deadlier than her lips or braided  
 hair.  
 For of the one comes poison, and a  
 curse  
 Falls from the other and burns the lives  
 of men.  
 But thou, son, be not filled with evil  
 dreams,  
 Nor with desire of these things; for  
 with time  
 Blind love burns out; but if one feed it  
 foul  
 Till some discoloring stain dyes all his  
 life,  
 He shall keep nothing praiseworthy,  
 nor die  
 The sweet wise death of old men hon-  
 orable,  
 Who have lived out all the length of all  
 their years  
 Blanceless, and seen well-pleased the  
 face of gods,  
 And without shame and without fear  
 have wrought  
 Things memorable, and while their days  
 held out  
 In sight of all men and the sun's great  
 light  
 Have gat them glory and given of their  
 own praise  
 To the earth that bare them and the day  
 that bred,  
 Home friends and far-off hospitalities,  
 And filled with gracious and memorial  
 fame  
 Lands loved of summer or waded by  
 violent seas,  
 Towns populous and many unrooted  
 ways,  
 And alien lips and native with their  
 own.  
 But when white age and venerable  
 death  
 Mow down the strength and life within  
 their limbs,  
 Drain out the blood and darken their  
 clear eyes,  
 Immortal honor is on them, having  
 past  
 Through splendid life and death desir-  
 able  
 To the clear seat and remote throne of  
 souls,  
 Lands indiscoverable in the unheard-  
 of west,  
 Round which the strong stream of a  
 sacred sea  
 Rolls without wind forever, and the  
 snow  
 There shows not her white wings and  
 windy feet,  
 Nor thunder nor swift rain saith any  
 thing,  
 Nor the sun burns, but all things rest  
 and thrive;  
 And these, filled full of days, divine and  
 dead,  
 Sages and singers fiery from the god,  
 And such as loved their land and all  
 things good  
 And, best beloved of best men, liberty,  
 Free lives and lips, free hands of men  
 free-born,  
 And whatsoever on earth was honora-  
 ble  
 And whosoever of all the ephemeral  
 seed,  
 Live there a life no liker to the gods  
 But nearer than their life of terrene  
 days.  
 Love thou such life, and look for such  
 a death.  
 But from the light and fiery dreams of  
 love  
 Spring heavy sorrows and a sleepless  
 life,



Visions not dreams, whose lids no  
 charm shall close,  
 Nor song assuage them waking; and  
 swift death  
 Crushes with sterile feet the unripening  
 ear,  
 Treads out the timeless vintage; whom  
 do thou  
 Eschewing embrace the luck of this thy  
 life,  
 Not without honor; and it shall bear  
 to thee  
 Such fruit as men reap from spent hours  
 and wear,  
 Few men, but happy; of whom be thou,  
 O son,  
 Happiest, if thou submit thy soul to  
 fate,  
 And set thine eyes and heart on hopes  
 high-born  
 And divine deeds and abstinence divine.  
 So shalt thou be toward all men all thy  
 days  
 As light and might communicable, and  
 burn  
 From heaven among the stars above  
 the hours,  
 And break not as a man breaks nor  
 burn down:  
 For to whom other of all heroic names  
 Have the gods given his life in hand as  
 thine?  
 And gloriously hast thou lived, and  
 made thy life  
 To me that bare thee and to all men  
 born  
 Thankworthy, a praise forever; and  
 hast won fame  
 When wild wars broke all round thy  
 father's house,  
 And the mad people of windy mountain  
 ways  
 Laid spears against us like a sea, and  
 all  
 Ætolia thundered with Thessalian  
 hoofs;  
 Yet these, as wind baffles the foam, and  
 beats  
 Straight back the relaxed ripple, didst  
 thou break  
 And loosen all their lances, till undone  
 And man from man they fell; for ye  
 twain stood

God against god, Ares and Artemis,  
 And thou the mightier, wherefore she  
 unleashed  
 A sharp-toothed curse thou too shalt  
 overcome;  
 For in the greener blossom of thy life  
 Ere the full blade caught flower, and  
 when time gave  
 Respite, thou didst not slacken soul nor  
 sleep,  
 But with great hand and heart seek  
 praise of men  
 Out of sharp straits and many a grievous  
 thing,  
 Seeing the strange foam of undivided  
 seas  
 On channels never sailed in, and by  
 shores  
 Where the old winds cease not blowing,  
 and all the night  
 Thunders, and day is no delight to  
 men.  
*Chorus.* Meleager, a noble wisdom  
 and fair words  
 The gods have given this woman: hear  
 thou these.  
*Meleager.* O mother, I am not fain to  
 strive in speech  
 Nor set my mouth against thee, who art  
 wise  
 Even as they say, and full of sacred  
 words.  
 But one thing I know surely, and cleave  
 to this;  
 That though I be not subtle of wit as  
 thou  
 Nor womanlike to weave sweet words,  
 and melt  
 Mutable minds of wise men as with  
 fire,  
 I too, doing justly and reverencing the  
 gods,  
 Shall not want wit to see what things  
 be right.  
 For whom they love and whom reject,  
 being gods,  
 There is no man but seeth, and in good  
 time  
 Submits himself, refraining all his heart.  
 And I too, as thou sayest, have seen  
 great things;  
 Seen elsewhere, but chiefly when the  
 sail

First caught between stretched ropes  
 the roaring west,  
 And all our oars smote eastward, and  
 the wind  
 First flung round faces of seafaring men  
 White splendid snow-flakes of the sun-  
 dering foam,  
 And the first furrow in virginal green  
 sea  
 Followed the plunging ploughshare of  
 hewn pine,  
 And closed, as when deep sleep sub-  
 dues man's breath  
 Lips close and heart subsides; and clos-  
 ing, shone  
 Sunlike with many a Nereid's hair, and  
 moved  
 Round many a trembling mouth of  
 doubtful gods,  
 Risen out of sunless and sonorous gulfs  
 Through waning water and into shallow  
 light,  
 That watched us; and when flying the  
 dove was snared  
 As with men's hands, but we shot after  
 and sped  
 Clear through the irremeable Symple-  
 gades;  
 And chiefiest when hoar beach and  
 herbless cliff  
 Stood out ahead from Colchis, and we  
 heard  
 Clefts hoarse with wind, and saw through  
 narrowing reefs  
 The lightning of the intolerable wave  
 Flash, and the white wet flame of break-  
 ers burn  
 Far under a kindling south-wind, as a  
 lamp  
 Burns and bends all its blowing flame  
 one way;  
 Wild heights untravell'd of the wind,  
 and vales  
 Cloven seaward by their violent streams,  
 and white  
 With bitter flowers and bright salt scurf  
 of brine;  
 Heard sweep their sharp swift gales, and  
 bowing birdwise  
 Shriek with birds' voices, and with furi-  
 ous feet  
 Tread loose the long skirts of a storm;  
 and saw

The whole white Euxine clash<sup>no</sup> together  
 and fall  
 Full-mouthed, and thunder<sup>ser</sup> is from a  
 thousand throats  
 Yet we drew thither, and won<sup>no</sup> the fleece.  
 and won  
 Medea, deadlier than the<sup>ht</sup> sea; but  
 there  
 Seeing many a wonder, ar<sup>ng</sup> id fearfu  
 things to men,  
 I saw not one thing like this<sup>wi</sup> one see  
 here,  
 Most fair and fearful, feminine,<sup>the</sup> a god,  
 Faultless; whom I that love not,<sup>ng</sup> bein  
 unlike,  
 Fear, and give honor, and choose from  
 all the gods.  
*Æneus.* Lady, the daughter of Thes-  
 tius, and thou, son,  
 Not ignorant of your strife nor light of  
 wit,  
 Scared with vain dreams and fluttering  
 like spent fire,  
 I come to judge between you, but a  
 king  
 Full of past days and wise from years  
 endured.  
 Nor thee I praise, who art fain to undo  
 things done:  
 Nor thee, who art swift to esteem them  
 overmuch.  
 For what the hours have given is given,  
 and this  
 Changeless; howbeit these change, and  
 in good time  
 Devise new things and good, not one  
 thing still.  
 Us have they sent now, at our need for  
 help,  
 Among men armed a woman, foreign  
 born,  
 Virgin, not like the natural flower of  
 things  
 That grows and bears, and brings forth  
 fruit, and dies;  
 Unlovable, no light for a husband's  
 house,  
 Espoused; a glory among unwedded  
 girls,  
 And chosen of gods who reverence  
 maidenhood.  
 These too we honor in honoring her  
 but thou,

Abstain thy feet from following, and  
thine eyes

From amorous touch; nor set toward  
hers thine heart,

Son, lest hate bear no deadlier fruit  
than love.

*Althea.* O king, thou art wise, but  
wisdom halts; and just,

But the gods love not justice more than  
fate,

And smite the righteous and the violent  
mouth,

And mix with insolent blood the rever-  
ent man's,

And bruise the holier as the lying lips.

Enough; for wise words fail me, and  
my heart

Takes fire and trembles flamewise, O  
my son,

O child, for thine head's sake; mine  
eyes wax thick,

Turning toward thee, so goodly a weap-  
oned man,

So glorious; and for love of thine own  
eyes

They are darkened, and tears burn  
them, fierce as fire,

And my lips pause and my soul sinks  
with love.

But by thine hand, by thy sweet life  
and eyes,

By thy great heart and these clasped  
knees, O son,

I pray thee that thou slay me not with  
thee.

For there was never a mother woman-  
born

Loved her sons better; and never a  
queen of men

More perfect in her heart toward whom  
she loved.

For what lies light on many and they  
forget,

Small things and transitory as a wind  
o' the sea,

I forget never; I have seen thee all  
thine years

A man in arms, strong and a joy to  
men

Seeing thine head glitter and thine  
hand burn its way

Through a heavy and iron furrow of  
sundering spears;

But always also a flower of three suns  
old,

The small one thing that lying drew  
down my life

To lie with thee and feed thee; a child  
and weak,

Mine, a delight to no man, sweet to  
me.

Who then sought to thee? who gat  
help? who knew

If thou wert goodly? nay, no man at  
all.

Or what sea saw thee, or sounded with  
thine oar,

Child? or what strange land shone  
with war through thee?

But fair for me thou wert, O little life,  
Fruitless, the fruit of mine own flesh,

and blind,  
More than much gold, ungrown, a fool-  
ish flower.

For silver nor bright snow nor feather  
of foam

Was whiter, and no gold yellower than  
thine hair,

O child, my child; and now thou art  
lordlier grown,

Not lovelier, nor a new thing in mine  
eyes,

I charge thee by thy soul and this my  
breast,

Fear thou the gods and me and thine  
own heart,

Lest all these turn against thee; for  
who knows

What wind upon what wave of altering  
time

Shall speak a storm and blow calamity?  
And there is nothing stable in the

world  
But the gods break it; yet not less, fair

son,  
If but one thing be stronger, if one en-  
dure,

Surely the bitter and the rooted love  
That burns between us, going from me

to thee,  
Shall more endure than all things.

What dost thou,  
Following strange loves? why wilt thou

kill mine heart?

Lo, I talk wild and windy words, and  
fall

From my clear wits, and seem of mine  
own self

De-throned, dispraised, dis-seated; and  
my mind,

That was my crown, breaks, and mine  
heart is gone,

And I am naked of my soul, and stand  
Ashamed, as a mean woman; take thou  
thought:

Live if thou wilt, and if thou wilt not,  
look,

The gods have given thee lite to lose  
or keep,

Thou shalt not die as men die, but  
thine end

Fallen upon thee shall break me un-  
aware.

*Melceger.* Queen, my whole heart is  
molten with thy tears,

And my limbs yearn with pity of thee,  
and love

Compels with grief mine eyes and la-  
boring breath:

For what thou art I know thee, and  
this thy breast

And thy fair eyes I worship, and am  
bound

Toward thee in spirit and love thee in  
all my soul.

For there is nothing terribler to men  
Than the sweet face of mothers, and  
the might.

But what shall be, let be; for us the day  
Once only lives a little, and is not found.  
Time and the fruitful hour are more  
than we,

And these lay hold upon us; but thou,  
God,

Zeus, the sole steersman of the helm of  
things,

Father, be swift to see us, and as thou  
wilt

Help: or if adverse, as thou wilt,  
refrain.

*Chorus.* We have seen thee, O Love,  
thou art fair; thou art goodly, O  
Love;

Thy wings make light in the air as the  
wings of a dove.

Thy feet are as winds that divide the  
stream of the sea;

Earth is thy covering to hide thee, the  
garment of thee.

Thou art swift and subtle and blind  
a flame of fire;

Before thee the laughter, behind thee  
the tears of desire;

And twain go forth beside thee, a man  
with a maid;

Her eyes are the eyes of a bride whose  
delight makes afraid;

As the breath in the buds that stir  
her bridal breath:

But Fate is the name of her; and his  
name is Death.

For an evil blossom was born  
Of sea-foam and the frothing of blood,

Blood-red and bitter of fruit,  
And the seed of it laughter and  
tears,

And the leaves of it madness and scorn:  
A bitter flower from the bud,

Sprung of the sea without root,  
Sprung without graft from  
years.

The west of the world was unturn  
That is woven of the day on the  
night,

The hair of the hours was not white  
Nor the raiment of time overworn,

When a wonder, a world's delight,  
A perilous goddess was born;

And the waves of the sea as she came  
Clove, and the foam at her feet,

Fawning, rejoiced to bring forth  
A fleshly blossom, a flame

Filling the heavens with heat  
To the cold white ends of the north.

And in air the clamorous birds,  
And men upon earth that hear

Sweet articulate words  
Sweetly divided apart,

And in shallow and channel and mere  
The rapid and footless herds,

Rejoiced, being foolish of heart.

For all they said upon earth,  
She is fair, she is white like a dove,

And the life of the world in her  
breath

Breathes, and is born at her birth,  
For they knew thee for mother of love,

And knew thee not mother of death.

What hadst thou to do being born,  
 Mother, when winds were at ease,  
 As a flower of the springtime of corn,  
 A flower of the foam of the seas?  
 Or bitter thou wast from thy birth,  
 Aphrodite, a mother of strife;  
 Or before thee some rest was on earth,  
 A little respite from tears,  
 A little pleasure of life;  
 Or life was not then as thou art,  
 But as one that waxeth in years  
 Sweet-spoken, a fruitful wife;  
 Earth had no thorn, and desire  
 No sting, neither death any dart;  
 What hadst thou to do amongst  
 these,  
 Thou, clothed with a burning fire,  
 Thou, girt with sorrow of heart,  
 Thou, sprung of the seed of the  
 seas  
 As an ear from a seed of corn,  
 As a brand plucked forth of a pyre,  
 As a ray shed forth of the morn,  
 For division of soul and disease,  
 For a dart and a sting and a thorn?  
 What ailed thee then to be born?

Was there not evil enough,  
 Mother, and anguish on earth  
 Born with a man at his birth,  
 Wastes underfoot, and above  
 Storm out of heaven, and dearth  
 Shaken down from the shining thereof,  
 Wrecks from afar overseas  
 And peril of shallow and firth,  
 And tears that spring and increase  
 In the barren places of mirth,  
 That thou, having wings as a dove,  
 Being girt with desire for a girth,  
 That thou must come after these,  
 That thou must lay on him love?

Thou shouldst not so have been born:  
 But death should have risen with  
 thee,  
 Mother, and visible fear,  
 Grief, and the wringing of hands,  
 And noise of many that mourn;  
 The smitten bosom, the knee  
 Bowed, and in each man's ear  
 A cry as of perishing lands,  
 A moan as of people in prison,  
 A tumult of infinite griefs;

And thunder of storm on the  
 sands,  
 And wailing of wives on the shore;  
 And under thee newly arisen  
 Loud shoals and shipwrecking reefs,  
 Fierce air and violent light;  
 Sail rent and sundering oar,  
 Darkness, and noises of night;  
 Clashing of streams in the sea,  
 Wave against wave as a sword,  
 Clamor of currents, and foam;  
 Rains making ruin on earth,  
 Winds that wax ravenous and roam  
 As wolves in a wolfish horde;  
 Fruits growing faint in the tree,  
 And blind things dead in their  
 birth:  
 Famine, and blighting of corn,  
 When thy time was come to be  
 born.

All these we know of; but thee  
 Who shall discern or declare?  
 In the uttermost ends of the sea  
 The light of thine eyelids and hair,  
 The light of thy bosom as fire  
 Between the wheel of the sun  
 And the flying flames of the air?  
 Wilt thou turn thee not yet nor  
 have pity,  
 But abide with despair and desire  
 And the crying of armies undone,  
 Lamentation of one with another  
 And breaking of city by city;  
 The dividing of friend against friend,  
 The severing of brother and  
 brother;  
 Wilt thou utterly bring to an end?  
 Have mercy, mother!

For against all men from of old  
 Thou hast set thine hand as a curse,  
 And cast out gods from their places  
 These things are spoken of thee.  
 Strong kings and goodly with gold  
 Thou hast found out arrows to pierce,  
 And made their kingdoms and races  
 As dust and surf of the sea.  
 All these, overburdened with woes  
 And with length of their days waxen  
 weak,  
 Thou slewest; and sentest more  
 over

Upon Tyro an evil thing,  
 Rent hair and a fetter and blows  
 Making bloody the flower of the  
 cheek,  
 Though she lay by a god as a  
 lover,  
 Though fair, and the seed of a  
 king.  
 For of old, being full of thy fire,  
 She endured not longer to wear  
 On her bosom a saffron vest,  
 On her shoulder an ashwood  
 quiver;  
 Being mixed and made one through  
 desire  
 With Enipeus, and all her hair  
 Made moist with his mouth, and  
 her breast  
 Filled full of the foam of the  
 river.  
*Atalanta.* Sun, and clear light among  
 green hills, and day  
 Late risen and long sought after, and  
 you just gods  
 Whose hands divide anguish and rec-  
 ompense,  
 But first the sun's white sister, a maid  
 in heaven,  
 On earth of all maids worshipped—  
 hail, and hear,  
 And witness with me if not without sign  
 sent,  
 Not without rule and reverence, I a  
 maid  
 Hallowed, and huntress holy as whom  
 I serve,  
 Here in your sight and eyeshot of these  
 men  
 Stand, girt as they toward hunting, and  
 my shafts  
 Drawn; wherefore all ye stand up on  
 my side,  
 If I be pure and all ye righteous gods,  
 Lest one revile me, a woman, yet no  
 wife,  
 That bear a spear for spindle, and this  
 bow strung  
 For a web woven; and with pure lips  
 salute  
 Heaven, and the face of all the gods,  
 and dawn  
 Filling with maiden flames and maiden  
 flowers

The starless fold o' the stars, and mak-  
 ing sweet  
 The warm wan heights of the air, moon-  
 trodden ways  
 And breathless gates and extreme hills  
 of heaven.  
 Whom, having offered water and blood-  
 less gifts,  
 Flowers, and a golden circlet of pure  
 hair,  
 Next Artemis I bid be favorable  
 And make this day all golden, hers and  
 ours,  
 Gracious and good and white to the  
 unblamed end.  
 But thou, O well-beloved, of all my  
 days  
 Bid it be fruitful, and a crown for all,  
 To bring forth leaves and bind round  
 all my hair  
 With perfect chaplets woven for thine  
 of thee.  
 For not without the word of thy chaste  
 mouth,  
 For not without law given and clean  
 command,  
 Across the white straits of the running  
 sea  
 From Elis even to the Acheloian horn,  
 I with clear winds came hither and gen-  
 tle gods,  
 Far off my father's house, and left un-  
 cheered  
 Iasius, and uncheered the Arcadian hills  
 And all their green-haired waters, and  
 all woods  
 Disconsolate, to hear no horn of mine  
 Blown, and behold no flash of swift  
 white feet.  
*Meleager.* For thy name's sake and  
 awe toward thy chaste head,  
 O holiest Atalanta, no man dares  
 Praise thee, though fairer than whom  
 all men praise,  
 And godlike for thy grace of hallowed  
 hair  
 And holy habit of thine eyes, and feet  
 That make the blown foam neither  
 swift nor white  
 Though the wind winnow and whirl it,  
 yet we praise  
 Gods, found because of thee adora-  
 ble

And for thy sake praiseworthyest from  
all men :

Thee therefore we praise also, thee as  
these,

Pure, and a light lit at the hands of  
gods.

*Toxeus.* How long will ye whet spears  
with eloquence,

Fight, and kill beasts dry-handed with  
sweet words?

Cease, or talk still and slay thy boars  
at home.

*Plexippus.* Why, if she ride among  
us for a man,

Sit thou for her and spin; a man grown  
girl

Is worth a woman weaponed; sit thou  
here.

*Meleager.* Peace, and be wise; no  
gods love idle speech.

*Plexippus.* Nor any man a man's  
mouth woman-tongued.

*Meleager.* For my lips bite not sharp-  
er than mine hands.

*Plexippus.* Nay, both bite soft, but  
no whit softly mine.

*Meleager.* Keep thine hands clean;  
they have time enough to stain.

*Plexippus.* For thine shall rest and  
wax not red to-day.

*Meleager.* Have all thy will of words;  
talk out thine heart.

*Althaea.* Refrain your lips, O brethren,  
and my son,

Lest words turn snakes and bite you  
uttering them.

*Toxeus.* Except she give her blood  
before the gods,

What profit shall a maid be among  
men?

*Plexippus.* Let her come crowned and  
stretch her throat for a knife,

Bleat out her spirit, and die, and so shall  
men

Through her too prosper and through  
prosperous gods;

But nowise through her living; shall  
she live

A flower-bud of the flower-bed, or sweet  
fruit

For kisses and the honey-making mouth,  
And play the shield for strong men and

the spear?

Then shall the heifer and her mate loo  
horns,

And the bride overbear the groom, and  
men

Gods; for no less division sunders these;  
Since all things made are seasonable in

time,

But if one alter unseasonable are all.

But thou, O Zeus, hear me that I may  
slay

This beast before thee and no man  
halve with me

Nor woman, lest these mock thee,  
though a god,

Who hast made men strong, and thou  
being wise be held

Foolish; for wise is that thing which  
endures.

*Atalanta.* Men, and the chosen of all  
this people, and thou,

King, I beseech you, a little bear with  
me.

For if my life be shameful that I live,  
Let the gods witness, and their wrath;

but these

Cast no such word against me. Thou,  
O mine,

O holy, O happy goddess, if I sin

Changing the words of women and the  
works

For spears and strange men's faces,  
hast not thou

One shaft of all thy sudden seven that  
pierced

Seven through the bosom or shining  
throat or side,

All couched about one mother's loosen-  
ing knees,

All holy born, engrafted of Tantalus?  
But if toward any of you I am over

bold

That take thus much upon me, let him  
think

How I, for all my forest holiness,

Fame, and this armed and iron maiden-  
hood,

Pay thus much also; I shall have no  
man's love

Forever, and no face of children born  
Or feeding lips upon me or fastening

eyes

Forever, nor being dead shall kings my  
sons

Mourn me and bury, and tears on  
daughters' cheeks  
Burn; but a cold and sacred life, but  
strange,  
But far from dances and the back-  
blowing torch,  
Far off from flowers or any bed of man,  
Shall my life be forever: me the snows  
That face the first o' the morning, and  
cold hills  
Full of the land-wind and sea-travelling  
storms  
And many a wandering wing of noisy  
nights  
That know the thunder and hear the  
thickening wolves —  
Me the utmost pine and footless frost  
of woods  
That talk with many winds and gods,  
the hours  
Re-risen, and white divisions of the  
dawn,  
Springs thousand-tongued with the in-  
termitting reed,  
And streams that murmur of the mother  
snow —  
Me these allure, and know me; but no  
man  
Knows, and my goddess only. Lo  
now, see  
If one of all you these things vex at all.  
Would God that any of you had all the  
praise  
And in no manner of memory when I  
die,  
So might I show before her perfect eyes  
Pure, whom I follow, a maiden to my  
death.  
But for the rest let all have all they  
will;  
For is it a grief to you that I have part,  
Being woman merely, in your male  
might and deeds  
Done by main strength? yet in my body  
is throned  
As great a heart, and in my spirit, O  
men,  
I have not less of godlike. Evil it were  
That one a coward should mix with you,  
one hand  
Fearful, one eye abase itself; and these  
Well might ye hate and well revile, not  
me.

For not the difference of the several  
flesh  
Being vile or noble or beautiful or base  
Makes praiseworthy, but purer spirit  
and heart  
Higher than these meaner mouths and  
limbs, that feed,  
Rise, rest, and are and are not; and for  
me,  
What should I say? but by the gods of  
the world  
And this my maiden body, by all oaths  
That bind the tongue of men and the  
evil will,  
I am not mighty-minded, nor desire  
Crowns, nor the spoil of slain things  
nor the fame;  
Feed ye on these, eat and wax fat; cry  
out,  
Laugh, having eaten, and leap without  
a lyre;  
Sing, mix the wind with clamor, smile  
and shake  
Sonorous timbrels and tumultuous hair,  
And fill the dance up with tempestuous  
feet.  
For I will none; but having prayed my  
prayers  
And made thank-offering for prosperi-  
ties,  
I shall go hence, and no man see me  
more.  
What thing is this for you to shout me  
down,  
What, for a man to grudge me this my  
life  
As it were envious of all yours, and I  
A thief of reputations? nay, for now,  
If there be any highest in heaven, a god  
Above all thrones and thunders of the  
gods  
Throned, and the wheel of the world  
roll under him,  
Judge he between me and all of you, and  
see  
If I transgress at all: but ye, refrain  
Transgressing hands and reinless  
mouths, and keep  
Silence, lest by much foam of violent  
words  
And proper poison of your lips ye die.  
*Æneus.* O flower of Tegea, maiden,  
fleetest foot



And holiest head of women, have good  
cheer  
Of thy good words : but ye, depart with  
her  
In peace and reverence, each with  
blameless eye  
Following his fate; exalt your hands  
and hearts,  
Strike, cease not, arrow on arrow and  
wound on wound,  
And go with gods, and with the gods  
return.

*Chorus.* Who hath given man speech?  
or who hath set therein

A thorn for peril and a snare for  
sin?

For in the word his life is and his  
breath,

And in the word his death,  
'That madness and the infatuate heart  
may breed

From the word's womb the deed  
And life bring one thing forth ere 'all  
pass by,

Even one thing which is ours yet can-  
not die,—

Death. Hast thou seen him ever any-  
where,

Time's twin-born brother, imperishable  
as he

Is perishable and plaintive, clothed  
with care

And mutable as sand,  
But death is strong and full of blood  
and fair

And perdurable and like a lord of  
land?

Nay, time thou seest not, death thou  
wilt not see

Till life's right hand be loosened from  
thine hand,

And thy life-days from thee.  
For the gods very subtly fashion

Madness with sadness upon earth :  
Not knowing in any wise compassion,

Nor holding pity of any worth ;  
And many things they have given and  
taken,

And wrought and ruined many things ;  
The firm land have they loosed and  
shaken,

And sealed the sea with all her  
springs ;

They have wearied time with heavy  
burdens,

And vexed the lips of life with breath :  
Set men to labor and given them guer-  
dons,

Death, and great darkness after death :  
Put moans into the bridal measure

And on the bridal wools a stain ;  
And circled pain about with pleasure,

And girdled pleasure about with pain ;  
And strewed one marriage-bed with

tears and fire  
For extreme loathing and supreme de-  
sire.

What shall be done with all these tears  
of ours?

Shall they make water-springs in the  
fair heaven

To bathe the brows of morning? or like  
flowers

Be shed and shine before the starriest  
hours,

Or made the raiment of the weeping  
Seven?

Or rather, O our masters, shall they be  
Food for the famine of the grievous sea.

A great well-head of lamentation  
Satiating the sad gods? or fall and flow

Among the years and seasons to an  
fro,

And wash their feet with tribulation  
And fill them full with grieving ere

they go?  
Alas, our lords, and yet alas again!

Seeing all your iron heaven is gilt as  
gold

But all we smite thereat in vain ;  
Smite the gates barred with groanings

manifold,  
But all the floors are paven with our

pain.  
Yea, and with weariness of lips and

eyes,  
With breaking of the bosom, and with

sighs,  
We labor, and are clad and fed with

grief  
And filled with days we would not fain  
behold

And nights we would not hear of; we  
wax old,

All we wax old and wither like a leaf

We are outcast, strayed between bright  
 sun and moon;  
 Our light and darkness are as leaves  
 of flowers,  
 Black flowers and white, that perish;  
 and the noon  
 As midnight, and the night as day-  
 light hours.  
 A little fruit a little while is ours,  
 And the worm finds it soon.

But up in heaven the high gods one by  
 one  
 Lay hands upon the draught that  
 quickeneth,  
 Fulfilled with all tears shed and all  
 things done,  
 And stir with soft imperishable breath  
 The bubbling bitterness of life and  
 death,  
 And hold it to our lips, and laugh; but  
 they  
 Preserve their lips from tasting night  
 or day,  
 Lest they too change and sleep, the  
 fates that spun,  
 The lips that made us and the hands  
 that slay;  
 Lest all these change, and heaven  
 bow down to none,  
 Change and be subject to the secular  
 sway  
 And terrene revolution of the sun.  
 Therefore they thrust it from them,  
 putting time away.

I would the wine of time, made sharp  
 and sweet  
 With multitudinous days and nights  
 and tears  
 And many mixing savors of strange  
 years,  
 Were no more trodden of them under  
 feet,  
 Cast out and spilt about their holy  
 places:  
 That life were given them as a fruit to eat  
 And death to drink as water; that the  
 light  
 Might ebb, drawn backward from their  
 eyes, and night  
 Hide for one hour the imperishable  
 faces.

That they might rise up sad in heaven,  
 and know  
 Sorrow and sleep, one paler than young  
 snow,  
 One cold as blight of dew and ruinous  
 rain;  
 Rise up and rest and suffer a little, and  
 be  
 Awhile as all things born with us and  
 we,  
 And grieve as men, and like slain  
 men be slain.

For now we know not of them; but  
 one saith  
 The gods are gracious, praising God;  
 and one,  
 When hast thou seen? or hast thou felt  
 his breath  
 Touch, nor consume thine eyelids as  
 the sun,  
 Nor fill thee to the lips with fiery death?  
 None hath beheld him, none  
 Seen above other gods and shapes of  
 things,  
 Swift without feet and flying without  
 wings,  
 Intolerable, not clad with death or life,  
 Insatiable, not known of night or  
 day,  
 The lord of love and loathing and of  
 strife,  
 Who gives a star, and takes a sun  
 away;  
 Who shapes the soul, and makes her a  
 barren wife  
 To the earthly body and grievous  
 growth of clay;  
 Who turns the large limbs to a little  
 flame,  
 And binds the great sea with a little  
 sand;  
 Who makes desire, and slays desire  
 with shame;  
 Who shakes the heaven as ashes in  
 his hand;  
 Who, seeing the light and shadow for  
 the same,  
 Bids day waste night as fire devours  
 a brand,  
 Smites without sword, and scourges  
 without rod,—  
 The supreme evil, God.

Yea, with thine hate, O God, thou hast  
 covered us,  
 One saith, and hidden our eyes away  
 from sight,  
 And made us transitory and hazardous,  
 Light things and slight;  
 Yet have men praised thee, saying, He  
 hath made man thus,  
 And he doeth right.  
 Thou hast kissed us, and hast smitten;  
 thou hast laid  
 Upon us with thy left hand life, and said,  
 Live: and again thou hast said, Yield  
 up your breath,  
 And with thy right hand laid upon us  
 death.  
 Thou hast sent us sleep, and stricken  
 sleep with dreams,  
 Saying, Joy is not, but love of joy  
 shall be;  
 Thou hast made sweet springs for all  
 the pleasant streams,  
 In the end thou hast made them bitter  
 with the sea.  
 Thou hast fed one rose with dust of  
 many men;  
 Thou hast marred one face with fire  
 of many tears;  
 Thou hast taken love, and given us  
 sorrow again;  
 With pain thou hast filled us full to  
 the eyes and ears.  
 Therefore because thou art strong, our  
 father, and we  
 Feeble; and thou art against us, and  
 thine hand  
 Constrains us in the shallows of the sea  
 And breaks us at the limits of the  
 land;  
 Because thou hast bent thy lightnings  
 as a bow,  
 And loosed the hours like arrows;  
 and let fall  
 Sins and wild words and many a wingèd  
 woe  
 And wars among us, and one end of  
 all;  
 Because thou hast made the thunder,  
 and thy feet  
 Are as a rushing water when the skies  
 Break, but thy face as an exceeding heat,  
 And flames of fire the eyelids of  
 thine eyes;

Because thou art over all who are over  
 us;  
 Because thy name is life, and our  
 name death;  
 Because thou art cruel, and men are  
 piteous,  
 And our hands labor, and thine hand  
 scattereth:  
 Lo, with hearts rent and knees made  
 tremulous,  
 Lo, with ephemeral lips and casual  
 breath,  
 At least we witness of thee ere we  
 die  
 That these things are not otherwise,  
 but thus;  
 That each man in his heart sightheth,  
 and saith,  
 That all men even as I,  
 All we are against thee, against thee,  
 O God most high.  
 But ye, keep ye on earth  
 Your lips from over-speech,  
 Loud words and longing are so little  
 worth;  
 And the end is hard to reach.  
 For silence after grievous things is  
 good,  
 And reverence, and the fear that  
 makes men whole,  
 And shame, and righteous governance  
 of blood,  
 And lordship of the soul.  
 But from sharp words and wits men  
 pluck no fruit,  
 And gathering thorns they shake the  
 tree at root;  
 For words divide and rend;  
 But silence is most noble till the end.  
*Althea.* I heard within the house a  
 cry of news,  
 And came forth eastward hither, where  
 the dawn  
 Cheers first these warder gods that face  
 the sun,  
 And next our eyes unrisen; for unaware  
 Came clashes of swift hoofs and tram-  
 pling feet,  
 And through the windy pillared corri-  
 dor  
 Light sharper than the frequent flames  
 of day  
 That daily fill it from the fiery dawn;

Gleams, and a thunder of people that  
cried out,  
And dust and hurrying horsemen; lo  
their chief,  
That rode with Ceneus rein by rein,  
returned.  
What cheer, O herald of my lord the  
king?

*Herald.* Lady, good cheer and great:  
the boar is slain.

*Chorus.* Praised be all gods that look  
toward Calydon.

*Althæa.* Good news and brief; but  
by whose happier hand?

*Herald.* A maiden's and a prophet's  
and thy son's.

*Althæa.* Well fare the spear that  
severed him and life.

*Herald.* Thine own, and not an alien,  
hast thou blest.

*Althæa.* Twice be thou too for my  
sake blest and his.

*Herald.* At the king's word I rode  
afoam for thine.

*Althæa.* Thou sayest he tarrieth till  
they bring the spoil?

*Herald.* Hard by the quarry, where  
they breathe, O queen.

*Althæa.* Speak thou their chance;  
but some bring flowers, and  
crown

These gods and all the lintel, and shed  
wine,

Fetch sacrifice and slay; for Heaven is  
good.

*Herald.* Some furlongs northward  
where the brakes begin,

West of that narrowing range of war-  
rior hills

Whose brooks have bled with battle  
when thy son

Smote Acarnania, there all they made  
halt,

And with keen eye took note of spear  
and hound,

Royally ranked: Laertes island-born,  
The young Gerenian Nestor, Panopeus,  
And Cepheus and Ancæus, mightiest  
thewed,

Arcadians; next, and evil-eyed of these,  
Arcadian Atalanta, with twain hounds  
lengthening the leash, and under nose  
and brow

Glittering with lipless tooth and fire-  
swift eye;

But from her white braced shoulder the  
plumed shafts

Rang, and the bow shone from her  
side; next her

Meleager, like a sun in spring that  
strikes

Branch into leaf and bloom into the  
world,

A glory among men meaner; Iphicles,  
And following him that slew the biform  
bull

Pirithous, and divine Eurytion,

And, bride-bound to the gods, Æacides;  
Then Telamon his brother, and Argive-  
born

The seer and sayer of visions and of  
truth,

Amphiaraus; and a fourfold strength,

Thine, even thy mother's and thy sis-  
ter's sons;

And recent from the roar of foreign  
foam

Jason, and Dryas twin-begot with war,  
A blossom of bright battle, sword and  
man

Shining; and Idas; and the keenest  
eye

Of Lynceus; and Admetus twice-es-  
poused;

And Hippasus and Hyleus, great in  
heart.

These having halted bade blow horns,  
and rode

Through woods and waste lands cleft  
by stormy streams,

Past yew-trees and the heavy hair of  
pines,

And where the dew is thickest under  
oaks,

This way and that; but questing up  
and down

They saw no trail, nor scented; and  
one said, —

Plexippus, — Help, or help not, Arte-  
mis,

And we will flay thy boar-skin with  
male hands;

But saying, he ceased and said not that  
he would,

Seeing where the green ooze of a sun-  
struck marsh

Shook with a thousand reeds untunable,  
 And in their moist and multitudinous  
 flower  
 Slept no soft sleep, with violent visions  
 fed,  
 The blind bulk of the immeasurable  
 beast.  
 And seeing, he shuddered with sharp  
 lust of praise  
 Through all his limbs, and launched a  
 double dart,  
 And missed; for much desire divided  
 him,  
 Too hot of spirit and feebler than his  
 will,  
 That his hand failed, though fervent;  
 and the shaft,  
 Sundering the rushes, in a tamarisk stem  
 Shook, and stuck fast. Then all abode  
 save one,  
 The Arcadian Atalanta: from her side  
 Sprang her hounds, laboring at the  
 leash, and slipped,  
 And plashed ear-deep with plunging  
 feet; but she,  
 Saying, Speed it as I send it for thy  
 sake,  
 Goddess, drew bow and loosed; the  
 sudden string  
 Rang, and sprang inward, and the  
 waterish air  
 Hissed, and the moist plumes of the  
 songless reeds  
 Moved as a wave which the wind moves  
 no more.  
 But the boar heaved half out of ooze  
 and slime  
 His tense flank trembling round the  
 barbèd wound,  
 Hateful; and fiery with invasive eyes  
 And bristling with intolerable hair  
 Plunged, and the hounds clung, and  
 green flowers and white  
 Reddened and broke all round them  
 where they came.  
 And charging with sheer tusk he drove,  
 and smote  
 Hyleus; and sharp death caught his  
 sudden soul,  
 And violent sleep shed night upon his  
 eyes.  
 Then Peleus, with strong strain of hand  
 and heart,

Shot; but the sidelong arrow slid, and  
 flew  
 His comrade born and loving country-  
 man,  
 Under the left arm smitten, as he no  
 less  
 Poised a like arrow; and bright blood  
 brake afoam,  
 And falling, and weighed back by clam-  
 orous arms,  
 Sharp rang the dead limbs of Eurytion.  
 Then one shot happier, the Cadmean  
 seer,  
 Amphiarus; for his sacred shaft  
 Pierced the red circlet of one ravening  
 eye  
 Beneath the brute brows of the san-  
 guine boar,  
 Now bloodier from one slain; but he  
 so galled  
 Sprang straight, and rearing cried no  
 lesser cry  
 Than thunder and the roar of winter-  
 ing streams  
 That mix their own foam with the yel-  
 lower sea;  
 And as a tower that falls by fire in  
 fight  
 With ruin of walls and all its archery,  
 And breaks the iron flower of wa-  
 beneath,  
 Crushing charred limbs and molten  
 arms of men;  
 So through crushed branches and the  
 reddening brake  
 Clamored and crashed the fervor of  
 his feet,  
 And trampled, springing sideways from  
 the tusk,  
 Too tardy a moving mould of heavy  
 strength,  
 Ancæus; and as flakes of weak-winged  
 snow  
 Break, all the hard thews of his heav-  
 ing limbs  
 Broke, and rent flesh fell every way,  
 and blood  
 Flew, and fierce fragments of no more  
 a man.  
 Then all the heroes drew sharp breath,  
 and gazed,  
 And smote not; but Meleager, but thy  
 son,

Right in the wild way of the coming  
curse  
Rock-rooted, fair with fierce and fast-  
tened lips,  
Clear eyes, and springing muscle and  
shortening limb—  
With chin aslant indrawn to a tighten-  
ing throat,  
Grave, and with gathered sinews, like  
a god,—  
Aimed on the left side his well-handled  
spear  
Grasped where the ash was knottiest  
hewn, and smote,  
And with no missile wound, the mon-  
strous boar  
Right in the hairiest hollow of his hide  
Under the last rib, sheer through bulk  
and bone,  
Deep in; and deeply smitten, and to  
death,  
The heavy horror with his hanging  
shafts  
Leapt, and fe'l furiously, and from  
raging lips  
Foamed out the latest wrath of all his  
life.  
And all they praised the gods with  
mightier heart,  
Zeus and all gods, but chieftiest Artemis,  
Seeing; but Meleager bade whet knives  
and flay,  
Strip and stretch out the splendour of  
the spoil;  
And hot and horrid from the work all  
these  
Sat, and drew breath, and drank and  
made great cheer,  
And washed the hard sweat off their  
calmer brows.  
For much sweet grass grew higher than  
grew the reed,  
And good for slumber, and every holier  
herb,  
Narcissus, and the low-lying melilote,  
And all of goodliest blade and bloom  
that springs  
Where, hid by heavier hyacinth, violet  
buds  
Blossom and burn; and fire of yellower  
flowers  
And light of crescent lilies, and such  
leaves

As fear the faun's and know the  
dryad's foot;  
Olive and ivy and poplar dedicate,  
And many a wellspring over-watched of  
these.  
There now they rest; but me the king  
bade bear  
Good tidings to rejoice this town and  
thee.  
Wherefore be glad, and all ye give  
much thanks,  
For fallen is all the trouble of Calydon.  
*Althæa.* Laud ye the gods; for this  
they have given is good,  
And what shall be, they hide until their  
time.  
Much good and somewhat grievous hast  
thou said,  
And either well; but let all sad things  
be,  
Till all have made before the prosperous  
gods  
Burnt-offering, and poured out the floral  
wine.  
Look fair, O gods, and favorable; for  
we  
Praise you with no false heart or flatter-  
ing mouth,  
Being merciful, but with pure souls and  
prayer.  
*Herald.* Thou hast prayed well; for  
whoso fears not these,  
But once being prosperous waxes huge  
of heart,  
Him shall some new thing unaware  
destroy.  
*Chorus.* O that I now, I too were  
By deep wells and water-floods,  
Streams of ancient hills, and where  
All the wan green places bear  
Blossoms cleaving to the sod,  
Fruitless fruit, and grasses fair,  
Or such darkest ivy-buds  
As divide thy yellow hair,  
Bacchus, and their leaves that nod  
Round thy fawnskin brush the bare  
Snow-soft shoulders of a god;  
There the year is sweet, and there  
Earth is full of secret springs,  
And the fervent rose-cheeked hours,  
Those that marry dawn and noon,  
There are sunless, there look pale  
In dim leaves and hidden air,

Pale as grass or latter flowers  
 Or the wild vine's wan wet rings  
 Full of dew beneath the moon,  
 And all day the nightingale  
 Sleeps, and all night sings;  
 There in cold remote recesses  
 That nor alien eyes assail,  
 Feet, nor imminence of wings,  
 Nor a wind nor any tune,  
 Thou, O queen and holiest,  
 Flower the whitest of all things,  
 With reluctant lengthening tresses  
 And with sudden splendid breast  
 Save of maidens un beholden,  
 There art wont to enter, there  
 Thy divine swift limbs and golden  
 Maiden growth of unbound hair,  
 Bathed in waters white,  
 Shine, and many a maid's by thee  
 In moist woodland or the hilly  
 Flowerless brakes where wells abound  
 Out of all men's sight;  
 Or in lower pools that see  
 All their marges clothed all round  
 With the innumerable lily,  
 Whence the golden-girdled bee  
 Flits through flowering rush to fret  
 White or duskiè violet,  
 Fair as those that in far years  
 With their buds left luminous  
 And their little leaves made wet  
 From the warmer dew of tears,  
 Mother's tears in extreme need,  
 Hid the limbs of Iamus,  
 Of thy brother's seed;  
 For his heart was piteous  
 Toward him, even as thine heart now  
 Pitiful toward us;  
 Thine, O goddess, turning hither  
 A benignant blameless brow;  
 Seeing enough of evil done  
 And lives withered as leaves wither  
 In the blasting of the sun;  
 Seeing enough of hunters dead,  
 Ruin enough of all our year,  
 Herds and harvests slain and shed,  
 Herdsmen stricken many an one,  
 Fruits and flocks consumed together,  
 And great length of deadly days.  
 Yet with reverent lips and fear  
 Turn we toward thee, turn and praise  
 For this lightening of clear weather  
 And prosperities begun.

For not seldom, when all air  
 As bright water without breath  
 Shines, and when men fear not, fate  
 Without thunder un aware  
 Breaks, and brings down death.  
 Joy with grief ye great gods give,  
 Good with bad, and overbear  
 All the pride of us that live,  
 All the high estate,  
 As ye long since overbore,  
 As in old time long before,  
 Many a strong man and a great,  
 All that were.  
 But do thou, sweet, otherwise,  
 Having heed of all our prayer,  
 Taking note of all our sighs;  
 We beseech thee by thy light,  
 By thy bow, and thy sweet eyes,  
 And the kingdom of the night,  
 Be thou favorable and fair;  
 By thine arrows and thy might  
 And Orion overthrown;  
 By the maiden thy delight,  
 By the indissoluble zone  
 And the sacred hair.

*Messenger.* Maidens, if ye will sing  
 now, shift your song,  
 Bow down, cry, wail for pity; is this a time  
 For singing? nay, for strewing of dust  
 and ash,  
 Rent raiment, and for bruising of the  
 breast.

*Chorus.* What new thing wolf-like  
 lurks behind thy words?  
 What snake's tongue in thy lips? what  
 fire in the eyes?

*Messenger.* Bring me before the  
 queen, and I will speak.

*Chorus.* Lo, she comes forth as from  
 thank-offering made.

*Messenger.* A barren offering for a  
 bitter gift.

*Althæa.* What are these borne on  
 branches, and the face  
 Covered? no mean men living, but now  
 slain  
 Such honor have they, if any dwell  
 with death.

*Messenger.* Queen, thy twain brethren  
 and thy mother's sons.

*Althæa.* Lay down your dead till I  
 behold their blood  
 If it be mine indeed, and I will weep.

- Messenger.* Weep if thou wilt, for these men shall no more.
- Althea.* O brethren, O my father's sons, of me Well loved and well reputed, I should weep Tears dearer than the dear blood drawn from you But that I know you not uncomforted, Sleeping no shameful sleep, however slain, For my son surely hath avenged you dead.
- Messenger.* Nay, should thine own seed slay himself, O queen?
- Althea.* Thy double word brings forth a double death.
- Messenger.* Know this then singly, by one hand they fell.
- Althea.* What mutterest thou with thine ambiguous mouth?
- Messenger.* Slain by thy son's hand: is that saying so hard?
- Althea.* Our time is come upon us: it is here.
- Chorus.* O miserable, and spoiled at thine own hand!
- Althea.* Wert thou not called Meleager from this womb?
- Chorus.* A grievous huntsman hath it bred to thee.
- Althea.* Wert thou born fire, and shalt thou not devour?
- Chorus.* The fire thou madest, will it consume even thee?
- Althea.* My dreams are fallen upon me: burn thou too.
- Chorus.* Not without God are visions born and die.
- Althea.* The gods are many about me; I am one.
- Chorus.* She groans as men wrestling with heavier gods.
- Althea.* They rend me, they divide me, they destroy.
- Chorus.* Or one laboring in travail of strange births.
- Althea.* They are strong, they are strong: I am broken, and these prevail.
- Chorus.* The god is great against her: she will die.
- Althea.* Yea, but not now; for my heart too is great.
- I would I were not here in sight of the sun.
- But thou, speak all thou sawest, and I will die.
- Messenger.* O queen, for queenlike hast thou borne thyself, A little word may hold so great mischance.
- For, in division of the sanguine spoil, These men thy brethren wrangling bade yield up The boar's head and the horror of the hide, That this might stand a wonder in Calydon, Hallowed; and some drew toward them; but thy son, With great hands grasping all that weight of hair, Cast down the dead heap clanging and collapsed At female feet, saying, This thy spoil, not mine, Maiden, thine own hand for thyself hath reaped, And all this praise God gives thee: she thereat Laughed, as when dawn touches the sacred night The sky sees laugh and redden and divide Dim lips and eyelids virgin of the sun, Hers, and the warm slow breasts of morning heave, Fruitful, and flushed with flame from lamp-lit hours, And maiden undulation of clear hair Color the clouds; so laughed she from pure heart Lit with a low blush to the braided hair, And rose-colored and cold like very dawn, Golden and godlike, chastely with chaste lips, A faint grave laugh; and all they held their peace, And she passed by them. Then one cried, Lo now, Shall not the Arcadian shoot out lips at us, Saying all we were despoiled by this one girl?



And all they rode against her violently,  
 And cast the fresh crown from her hair,  
 and now  
 They had rent her spoil away, dishonor-  
 ing her,  
 Save that Meleager, as a tame lion  
 chafed,  
 Bore on them, broke them, and as fire  
 cleaves wood  
 So clove and drove them, smitten in  
 twain; but she  
 Smote not nor heaved up hand; and  
 this man first,  
 Plexippus, crying out, This for love's  
 sake, sweet,  
 Drove at Meleager, who with spear  
 straightening  
 Pierced his cheek through; then Toxeus  
 made for him,  
 Dumb, but his spear spake; vain and  
 violent words,  
 Fruitless: for him too, stricken through  
 both sides  
 The earth felt falling, and his horse's  
 foam  
 Blanched thy son's face, his slayer.  
 And these being slain,  
 None moved nor spake; but Ceneus  
 bade bear hence  
 These made of heaven infatuate in  
 their deaths,  
 Foolish; for these would baffle fate,  
 and fell.  
 And they passed on, and all men  
 honored her,  
 Being honorable, as one revered of  
 heaven.  
*Althæa.* What say you, women? is  
 all this not well done?  
*Chorus.* No man doth well but God  
 hath part in him.  
*Althæa.* But no part here; for these  
 my brethren born  
 Ye have no part in, these ye know not of  
 As I that was their sister, a sacrifice  
 Slain in their slaying. I would I had  
 died for these;  
 For this man dead walked with me,  
 child by child,  
 And made a weak staff for my feebler  
 feet  
 With his own tender wrist and hand,  
 and held

And led me softly, and showed me gold  
 and steel  
 And shining shapes of mirror and  
 bright crown,  
 And all things fair; and threw light  
 spears, and brought  
 Young hounds to huddle at my feet,  
 and thrust  
 Tame heads against my little maiden  
 breasts,  
 And please me with great eyes; and  
 those days went,  
 And these are bitter, and I a barren  
 queen  
 And sister miserable, a grievous thing,  
 And mother of many curses; and she  
 too,  
 My sister Leda, sitting overseas  
 With fair fruits round her, and her  
 faultless lord,  
 Shall curse me, saying, A sorrow and  
 not a son,  
 Sister, thou barest, even a burning fire,  
 A brand consuming thine own soul and  
 me.  
 But ye now, sons of Thestius, make  
 good cheer,  
 For ye shall have such wood to funeral  
 fire  
 As no king hath; and flame that once  
 burnt down  
 Oil shall not quicken, or breath relume,  
 or wine  
 Refresh again; much costlier than fine  
 gold,  
 And more than many lives of wander-  
 ing men.  
*Chorus.* O queen, thou hast yet with  
 thee love-worthy things, —  
 Thine husband, and the great strength  
 of thy son.  
*Althæa.* Who shall get brothers for  
 me while I live?  
 Who bear them? who bring forth in  
 lieu of these?  
 Are not our fathers and our brethren  
 one,  
 And no man like them? are not mine  
 here slain?  
 Have we not hung together, he and I,  
 Flowerwise feeding as the feeding bees,  
 With mother-milk for honey? and this  
 man too,

Dead, with my son's spear thrust be-  
 tween his sides,  
 Hath he not seen us, later born than he,  
 Laugh with lips filled, and laughed  
 again for love?  
 There were no sons then in the world,  
 nor spears,  
 Nor deadly births of women; but the  
 gods  
 Allowed us, and our days were clear of  
 these.  
 I would I had died unwedded, and  
 brought forth  
 No swords to vex the world; for these  
 that spake  
 Sweet words long since, and loved me,  
 will not speak  
 Nor love nor look upon me; and all  
 my life  
 I shall not hear nor see them living  
 men.  
 But I too living, how shall I now live?  
 What life shall this be with my son, to  
 know  
 What hath been, and desire what will  
 not be,  
 Look for dead eyes, and listen for dead  
 lips,  
 And kill mine own heart with remem-  
 bering them,  
 And with those eyes that see their  
 slayer alive  
 Weep, and wring hands that clasp him  
 by the hand?  
 How shall I bear my dreams of them,  
 to hear  
 False voices, feel the kisses of false  
 mouths  
 And footless sound of perished feet,  
 and then  
 Wake, and hear only, it may be, their  
 own hounds  
 Whine masterless in miserable sleep,  
 And see their boar-spears and their  
 beds and seats  
 And all the gear and housings of their  
 lives  
 And not the men? Shall hounds and  
 horses mourn,  
 Pine with strange eyes, and prick up  
 hungry ears,  
 Famish and fail at heart for their dear  
 lords,

And I not heed at all? and those blind  
 things  
 Fall off from life for love's sake, and I  
 live?  
 Surely some death is better than some  
 life,  
 Better one death for him and these and  
 me.  
 For, if the gods had slain them, it may  
 be  
 I had endured it; if they had fallen by  
 war,  
 Or by the nets and knives of privy death  
 And by hired hands while sleeping, this  
 thing too  
 I had set my soul to suffer; or this hunt,  
 Had this despatched them, under tusk  
 or tooth  
 Torn, sanguine, trodden, broken; for  
 all deaths  
 Or honorable, or with facile feet  
 avenged  
 And hands of swift gods following, all  
 save this,  
 Are bearable. But not for their sweet  
 land  
 Fighting, but not a sacrifice, lo these  
 Dead; for I had not then shed all mine  
 heart  
 Out at mine eyes: then either with good  
 speed,  
 Being just, I had slain their slayer aton-  
 ingly,  
 Or strewn with flowers their fire, and on  
 their tombs  
 Hung crowns, and over them a song,  
 and seen  
 Their praise outflame their ashes: for  
 all men,  
 All maidens, had come thither, and  
 from pure lips  
 Shed songs upon them, from heroic  
 eyes  
 Tears; and their death had been a  
 deathless life;  
 But now, by no man hired nor alien  
 sword,  
 By their own kindred are they fallen, in  
 peace,  
 After much peril, friendless among  
 friends,  
 By hateful hands they loved; and how  
 shall mine

Touch these returning red and not from  
 war,  
 These fatal from the vintage of men's  
 veins,  
 Dead men my brethren? how shall  
 these wash off  
 No festal stains of undelightful wine,  
 How mix the blood, my blood on them,  
 with me,  
 Holding mine hand? or how shall I  
 say, Son,  
 That am no sister? But by night and  
 day  
 Shall we not sit and hate each other,  
 and think  
 Things hate-worthy? not live with  
 shamefast eyes,  
 Browbeaten, treading soft with fearful  
 feet,  
 Each unupbraided, each without rebuke  
 Convicted, and without a word reviled  
 Each of another? and I shall let thee  
 live  
 And see thee strong, and hear men for  
 thy sake  
 Praise me, but these thou wouldest not  
 let live  
 No man shall praise forever? these  
 shall lie  
 Dead, unbeloved, unholpen, all through  
 thee?  
 Sweet were they toward me living, and  
 mine heart  
 Desired them, but was then well satis-  
 fied,  
 That now is as men hungered; and  
 these dead  
 I shall want always to the day I die.  
 For all things else and all men may  
 renew;  
 Yea, son for son the gods may give  
 and take,  
 But never a brother or sister any more.  
*Chorus.* Nay, for the son lies close  
 about thine heart,  
 Full of thy milk, warm from thy womb,  
 and drains  
 Life, and the blood of life, and all thy  
 fruit,  
 Eats thee and drinks thee as who breaks  
 bread and eats,  
 Treads wine and drinks, thyself, a sect  
 of thee;

And if he feed not, shall not thy flesh  
 faint?  
 Or drink not, are not thy lips dead for  
 thirst?  
 This thing moves more than all things,  
 even thy son,  
 That thou cleave to him; and he shall  
 honor thee,  
 Thy womb that bare him and the breasts  
 he knew,  
 Reverencing most for thy sake all his  
 gods.  
*Althæa.* But these the gods too gave  
 me; and these my son,  
 Not reverencing his gods, nor mine own  
 heart,  
 Nor the old sweet years, nor all venera-  
 ble things,  
 But cruel, and in his ravin like a beast,  
 Hath taken away to slay them: yea,  
 and she,  
 She the strange woman, she the flower,  
 the sword,  
 Red from spilt blood, a mortal flower  
 to men,  
 Adorable, detestable, — even she  
 Saw with strange eyes, and with strange  
 lips rejoiced,  
 Seeing these mine own slain of mine  
 own, and me  
 Made miserable above all miseries  
 made,  
 A grief among all women in the world,  
 A name to be washed out with all men's  
 tears.  
*Chorus.* Strengthen thy spirit: is this  
 not also a god,  
 Chance, and the wheel of all necessi-  
 ties?  
 Hard things have fallen upon us from  
 harsh gods,  
 Whom, lest worse hap, rebuke we not  
 for these.  
*Althæa.* My spirit is strong against  
 itself, and I  
 For these things' sake cry out on mine  
 own soul,  
 That it endures outrage, and dolorous  
 days,  
 And life, and this inexpiable impo-  
 tence.  
 Weak am I, weak and shameful; my  
 breath drawn

Shames me, and monstrous things and  
 violent gods.  
 What shall atone? what heal me? what  
 bring back  
 Strength to the foot, light to the face?  
 what herb  
 Assuage me? what restore me? what  
 release?  
 What strange thing eaten or drunken,  
 O great gods,  
 Make me as you, or as the beasts that  
 feed,  
 Slay and divide and cherish their own  
 hearts?  
 For these ye show us; and we less than  
 these  
 Have not wherewith to live as all these  
 things  
 Which all their lives fare after their  
 own kind  
 As who doth well rejoicing; but we ill,  
 Weeping or laughing, we whom eye-  
 sight fails,  
 Knowledge and light of face and per-  
 fect heart,  
 And hands we lack, and wit; and all  
 our days  
 Sin, and have hunger, and die infatu-  
 ated.  
 For madness have ye given us, and not  
 health,  
 And sins whereof we know not; and  
 for these  
 Death, and sudden destruction, un-  
 aware.  
 What shall we say now? what thing  
 comes of us?  
*Chorus.* Alas! for all this all men  
 undergo.  
*Althaa.* Wherefore I will not that these  
 twain, O gods,  
 Die as a dog dies, eaten of creeping  
 things,  
 Abominable, a loathing; but though  
 dead  
 Shall they have honor and such fune-  
 real flame  
 As strews men's ashes in their enemies'  
 face,  
 And blinds their eyes who hate them:  
 lest men say,  
 "Lo how they lie, and living had great  
 kin;

And none of these hath pity of them,  
 and none  
 Regards them lying, and none is wrung  
 at heart,  
 None moved in spirit for them, naked  
 and slain,  
 Abhorred, abased, and no tears comfort  
 them;"  
 And in the dark this grieve Eurythemis,  
 Hearing how these her sons come down  
 to her  
 Unburied, unavenged, as kinless men,  
 And had a queen their sister. That  
 were shame  
 Worse than this grief. Yet how to  
 atone at all  
 I know not; seeing the love of my born  
 son,  
 A new-made mother's new-born love,  
 that grows  
 From the soft child to the strong man,  
 now soft,  
 Now strong as either, and still one sole  
 same love,  
 Strives with me, no light thing to strive  
 withal:  
 This love is deep, and natural to man's  
 blood,  
 And ineffaceable with many tears.  
 Yet shall not these rebuke me, though  
 I die,  
 Nor she in that waste world with all  
 her dead,  
 My mother, among the pale flocks fallen  
 as leaves,  
 Folds of dead people, and alien from  
 the sun;  
 Nor lack some bitter comfort, some  
 poor praise,  
 Being queen, to have borne her daugh-  
 ter like a queen  
 Righteous; and though mine own fire  
 burn me too,  
 She shall have honor, and these her  
 sons, though dead.  
 But all the gods will, all they do, and  
 we  
 Not all we would, yet somewhat; and  
 one choice  
 We have, to live and do just deeds and  
 die.  
*Chorus.* Terrible words she com-  
 munes with, and turns

Swift fiery eyes in doubt against herself,  
And murmurs as who talks in dreams  
with death.

*Althæa.* For the unjust also dieth,  
and him all men

Hate, and himself abhors the unright-  
eousness,

And seeth his own dishonor intoler-  
able.

But I being just, doing right upon my-  
self,

Slay mine own soul, and no man born  
shames me.

For none constrains nor shall rebuke,  
being done,

What none compelled me doing; thus  
these things fare.

Ah, ah! that such things should so  
fare; ah me!

That I am found to do them and endure,  
Chosen and constrained to choose, and

bear myself

Mine own wound through mine own  
flesh to the heart

Violently stricken, a spoiler and a spoil,  
A ruin ruinous, fallen on mine own

son.

Ah, ah! for me too as for these; alas!  
For that is done that shall be, and mine

hand

Full of the deed, and full of blood mine  
eyes,

That shall see never nor touch any thing  
Save blood unstanch'd and fire un-

quenchable.

*Chorus.* What wilt thou do? what  
ails thee? for the house

Shakes ruinously: wilt thou bring fire  
for it?

*Althæa.* Fire in the roofs, and on the  
iintels fire.

Lo ye, who stand and weave, between  
the doors,

There; and blood drips from hand and  
thread, and stains

Threshold and raiment and me passing  
in

Flecked with the sudden sanguine drops  
of death.

*Chorus.* Alas that time is stronger  
than strong men,

Fate than all gods! and these are fallen  
on us.

*Althæa.* A little since, and I was glad;  
and now

I never shall be glad or sad again.

*Chorus.* Between two joys a grief  
grows unaware.

*Althæa.* A little while, and I shall  
laugh; and then

I shall weep never, and laugh not any  
more.

*Chorus.* What shall be said? for  
words are thorns to grief.

Withhold thyself a little, and fear the  
gods.

*Althæa.* Fear died when these were  
slain; and I am as dead,

And fear is of the living; these fear  
none.

*Chorus.* Have pity upon all people  
for their sake.

*Althæa.* It is done now: shall I put  
back my day?

*Chorus.* An end is come, an end.  
this is of God.

*Althæa.* I am fire, and burn myself:  
keep clear of fire.

*Chorus.* The house is broken, is  
broken; it shall not stand.

*Althæa.* Woe, woe for him that  
breaketh; and a rod

Smote it of old, and now the axe is  
here.

*Chorus.* Not as with sundering of the  
earth,

Nor as with cleaving of the sea,  
Nor fierce foreshadowings of a

birth,  
Nor flying dreams of death to

be,  
Nor loosening of the large world's

girth,  
And quickening of the body of night,

And sound of thunder in men's  
ears,

And fire of lightning in men's sight,  
Fate, mother of desires and fears,

Bore unto men the law of tears.  
But sudden, an unfathered lame,

And broken out of night, she  
shone,—

She, without body, without name,  
In days forgotten and foregone;

And heaven rang round her as she  
came,

Like smitten cymbals, and lay bare ;  
 Clouds and great stars, thunders  
 and snows,  
 The blue sad fields and folds of air,  
 The life that breathes, the life that  
 grows,  
 All wind, all fire, that burns or  
 blows,  
 Even all these knew her : for she is  
 great,  
 The daughter of doom, the mother  
 of death,  
 The sister of sorrow ; a lifelong  
 weight  
 That no man's finger lighteneth,  
 Nor any god can lighten fate ;  
 A landmark seen across the way  
 Where one race treads as the other  
 trod ;  
 An evil sceptre, an evil stay,  
 Wrought for a staff, wrought for a  
 rod,  
 The bitter jealousy of God.

For death is deep as the sea,  
 And fate as the waves thereof.  
 Shall the waves take pity on thee,  
 Or the south-wind offer thee love ?  
 Wilt thou take the night for thy day,  
 Or the darkness for light on thy way,  
 Till thou say in thine heart  
 Enough ?  
 Behold, thou art over fair, thou art over  
 wise ;  
 The sweetness of spring in thine hair,  
 and the light in thine eyes.  
 The light of the spring in thine eyes,  
 and the sound in thine ears ;  
 Yet thine heart shall wax heavy with  
 sighs, and thine eyelids with  
 tears.  
 Wilt thou cover thine hair with gold,  
 and with silver thy feet ?  
 Hast thou taken the purple to fold thee,  
 and made thy mouth sweet ?  
 Behold, when thy face is made bare, he  
 that loved thee shall hate ;  
 Thy face shall be no more fair at the  
 fall of thy fate.  
 For thy life shall fall as a leaf, and be  
 shed as the rain ;  
 And the veil of thine head shall be  
 grief ; and the crown shall be pain.

*Althæa.* Ho, ye that wail, and ye that  
 sing, make way  
 Till I be come among you. Hide your  
 tears,  
 Ye little weepers, and your laughing  
 lips,  
 Ye laughers, for a little ; lo mine eyes  
 That outweep heaven at rainiest, and  
 my mouth  
 That laughs as gods laugh at us !  
 Fate's are we,  
 Yet fate is ours a breathing-space ; yea,  
 mine,  
 Fate is made mine forever ; he is my  
 son,  
 My bedfellow, my brother. You strong  
 gods,  
 Give place unto me ; I am as any of  
 you,  
 To give life and to take life. Thou,  
 old earth,  
 That hast made man and unmade ; thou  
 whose mouth  
 Looks red from the eaten fruits of  
 thine own womb ;  
 Behold me with what lips upon what  
 food  
 I feed and fill my body ; even with flesh  
 Made of my body. Lo, the fire I lit  
 I burn with fire to quench it ; yea, with  
 flame  
 I burn up even the dust and ash there-  
 of.

*Chorus.* Woman, what fire is this  
 thou burnest with ?

*Althæa.* Yea to the bone, yea to the  
 blood and all.

*Chorus.* For this thy face and hair  
 are as one fire.

*Althæa.* A tongue that licks and beats  
 upon the dust.

*Chorus.* And in thine eyes are hollow  
 light and heat.

*Althæa.* Of flame not fed with hand  
 or frankincense.

*Chorus.* I fear thee for the trembling  
 of thine eyes.

*Althæa.* Neither with love they trem-  
 ble, nor for fear.

*Chorus.* And thy mouth shuddering  
 like a shot bird.

*Althæa.* Not as the bride's mouth  
 when man kisses it.

- Chorus.* Nay, but what thing is this  
thing thou hast done?
- Althæa.* Look, I am silent, speak  
your eyes for me.
- Chorus.* I see a faint fire lightening  
from the hall.
- Althæa.* Gaze, stretch your eyes,  
strain till the lids drop off.
- Chorus.* Flushed pillars down the  
flickering vestibule.
- Althæa.* Stretch with your necks like  
birds: cry, chirp as they.
- Chorus.* And a long brand that black-  
ens: and white dust.
- Althæa.* O children, what is this ye  
see? your eyes  
Are blinder than night's face at fall of  
moon.  
That is my son, my flesh, my fruit of  
life,  
My travail, and the year's weight of my  
womb,  
Meleager, a fire enkindled of mine  
hands  
And of mine hands extinguished: this  
is he.
- Chorus.* O gods, what word has flown  
out at thy mouth?
- Althæa.* I did this, and I say this, and  
I die.
- Chorus.* Death stands upon the door-  
way of thy lips,  
And in thy mouth has death set up his  
house.
- Althæa.* O death, a little, a little while,  
sweet death,  
Until I see the brand burnt down and  
die.
- Chorus.* She reels as any reed under  
the wind,  
And cleaves unto the ground with stag-  
gering feet.
- Althæa.* Girls, one thing will I say and  
hold my peace.  
I that did this will weep not nor cry out,  
Cry ye and weep: I will not call on  
gods,  
Call ye on them; I will not pity man,  
Show ye your pity. I know not if I  
live;  
Save that I feel the fire upon my face,  
And on my cheek the burning of a  
brand.
- Yea, the smoke bites me; yea, I drink  
the steam  
With nostril and with eyelid and with  
lip  
Insatiate and intolerant; and mine  
hands  
Burn, and fire feeds upon mine eyes; I  
reel  
As one made drunk with living, whence  
he draws  
Drunken delight; yet I, though mad for  
joy,  
Loathe my long living, and am waxen  
red  
As with the shadow of shed blood;  
behold,  
I am kindled with the flames that fade  
in him,  
I am swollen with subsiding of his  
veins,  
I am flooded with his ebbing; my lit  
eyes  
Flame with the falling fire that leaves  
his lids  
Bloodless; my cheek is luminous with  
blood  
Because his face is ashen. Yet, O  
child,  
Son, first-born, fairest — O sweet mouth,  
sweet eyes,  
That drew my life out through my suck-  
ling breast,  
That shone and clove mine heart  
through — O soft knees  
Clinging, O tender treadings of soft  
feet,  
Cheeks warm with little kissings — O  
child, child,  
What have we made each other? Lo,  
I felt  
Thy weight cleave to me, a burden of  
beauty, O son,  
Thy cradled brows and loveliest loving  
lips,  
The floral hair, the little lightening eyes  
And all thy goodly glory; with mine  
hands  
Delicately I fed thee, with my tongue  
Tenderly spake, saying, Verily in God's  
time,  
For all the little likeness of thy limbs,  
Son, I shall make thee a kingly man to  
fight,

A lordly leader; and hear before I die,

"She bore the goodliest sword of all the world."

Oh! oh! For all my life turns round on me;

I am severed from myself, my name is gone,—

My name that was a healing, it is changed:

My name is a consuming. From this time,

Though mine eyes reach to the end of all these things,

My lips shall not unfasten till I die.

*Semichorus.* She has filled with sighing the city,

And the ways thereof with tears;

She arose, she girdled her sides,

She set her face as a bride's;

She wept, and she had no pity;

Trembled, and felt no fears.

*Semichorus.* Her eyes were clear as the sun,

Her brows were fresh as the day;

She girdled herself with gold,

Her robes were manifold;

But the days of her worship are done,

Her praise is taken away.

*Semichorus.* For she set her hand to the fire,

With her mouth she kindled the same;

As the mouth of a flute-player,

So was the mouth of her;

With the might of her strong desire

She blew the breath of the flame.

*Semichorus.* She set her hand to the wood,

She took the fire in her hand;

As one who is nigh to death,

She panted with strange breath

She opened her lips unto blood,

She breathed and kindled the brand.

*Semichorus.* As a wood-dove newly shot,

She sobbed and lifted her breast;

She sighed and covered her eyes,

Filling her lips with sighs;

She sighed, she withdrew herself not,

She refrained not, taking not rest.

*Semichorus.* But as the wind which is drouth,

And as the air which is death,

As storm that severeth ships,

Her breath severing her lips,

The breath came forth of her mouth,

And the fire came forth of her breath.

*Second Messenger.* Queen, and you maidens, there is come on us

A thing more deadly than the face of death:

Meleager the good lord is as one slain.

*Semichorus.* Without sword, without sword is he stricken;

Slain, and slain without hand.

*Second Messenger.* For as keen ice divided of the sun

His limbs divide, and as thawed snow the flesh

Thaws from off all his body to the hair.

*Semichorus.* He wastes as the embers quicken;

With the brand he fades as a brand.

*Second Messenger.* Even while they sang, and all drew hither, and he

Lifted both hands to crown the Arcadian's hair,

And fix the looser leaves, both hands fell down.

*Semichorus.* With rending of cheek and of hair

Lament ye, mourn for him, weep.

*Second Messenger.* Straightway the crown slid off, and smote on earth,

First fallen; and he, grasping his own hair, groaned,

And cast his raiment round his face, and fell.

*Semichorus.* Alas for visions that were,

And soothsayings spoken in sleep!

*Second Messenger.* But the king twitched his reins in, and leapt down,

And caught him, crying out twice "O child!" and thrice,

So that men's eyelids thickened with their tears.

*Semichorus.* Lament with a long lamentation,

Cry, for an end is at hand.



*Second Messenger.* "O son!" he said,  
"son, lift thine eyes, draw breath,  
Pity me!" But Meleager with sharp  
lips

Gasped, and his face waxed like as sun-  
burnt grass.

*Semichorus* Cry aloud, O thou king-  
dom, O nation,  
O stricken, a ruinous land!

*Second Messenger.* Whereat king  
Ceneus, straightening feeble  
knees,

With feeble hands heaved up a lessen-  
ing weight,  
And laid him sadly in strange hands,  
and wept.

*Semichorus.* Thou art smitten, her  
lord, her desire,  
Thy dear blood wasted as rain.

*Second Messenger.* And they with  
tears and rendings of the beard  
Bear hither a breathing body, wept  
upon  
And lightening at each footfall, sick to  
death.

*Semichorus.* Thou madest thy sword  
as a fire,  
With fire for a sword thou art slain.

*Second Messenger.* And lo, the feast  
turned funeral, and the crowns  
Fallen; and the huntress and the hunter  
trapped;  
And weeping and changed faces and  
veiled hair.

*Meleager.* Let your hands meet  
Round the weight of my head;  
Lift ye my feet

As the feet of the dead;  
For the flesh of my body is molten, the  
limbs of it molten as lead.

*Chorus.* O thy luminous face,  
Thine imperious eyes!  
O the grief, O the grace,  
As of day when it dies!

Who is this bending over thee, lord,  
with tears and suppression of  
sighs?

*Meleager.* Is a bride so fair?  
Is a maid so meek?

With unchapleted hair,  
With unfileted cheek,  
Atalanta, the pure among women, whose  
name is as blessing to speak.

*Atalanta.* I would that with feet  
Unsandalled, unshod,  
Overbold, overfleet,

I had swum not nor trod  
From Arcadia to Calydon northward,  
a blast of the envy of God.

*Meleager.* Unto each man his fate;  
Unto each as he saith

In whose fingers the weight  
Of the world is as breath;  
Yet I would that in clamor of battle  
mine hands had laid hoid upon  
death.

*Chorus.* Not with cleaving of shields  
And their clash in thine ear,  
When the lord of fought fields  
Breaketh spear-shaft from spear,  
Thou art broken, our lord, thou art  
broken, with travail and labor  
and fear.

*Meleager.* Would God he had found  
me

Beneath fresh boughs!  
Would God he had bound me  
Unawares in mine house,  
With light in mine eyes, and songs in my  
lips, and a crown on my brows!

*Chorus.* Whence art thou sent from  
us?  
Whither thy goal?

How art thou rent from us,  
Thou that wert whole,  
As with severing of eyelids and eyes, as  
with sundering of body and soul!

*Meleager.* My heart is within me  
As an ash in the fire;

Whosoever hath seen me,  
Without lute, without lyre,  
Shall sing of me grievous things, even  
things that were ill to desire.

*Chorus.* Who shall raise thee  
From the house of the dead?

Or what man praise thee  
That thy praise may be said?  
Alas thy beauty! alas thy body! alas  
thine head!

*Meleager.* But thou, O mother,  
The dreamer of dreams,

Wilt thou bring forth another  
To feel the sun's beams  
When I move among shadows a  
shadow, and wail by impassable  
streams?

*Eneus.* What thing wilt thou leave  
me  
Now this thing is done?  
A man wilt thou give me,  
A son for my son,  
For the light of mine eyes, the desire  
of my life, the desirable one?  
*Chorus.* Thou wert glad above others,  
Yea, fair beyond word;  
Thou wert glad among mothers;  
For each man that heard  
Of thee, praise there was added unto  
thee, as wings to the feet of a bird.  
*Eneus.* Who shall give back  
Thy face of old years,  
With travail made black,  
Grown gray among fears,  
Mother of sorrow, mother of cursing,  
mother of tears?  
*Meleager.* Though thou art as fire  
Fed with fuel in vain,  
My delight, my desire,  
Is more chaste than the rain,  
More pure than the dewfall, more holy  
than stars are that live without  
stain.  
*Atalanta.* I would that as water  
My life's blood had thawed,  
Or as winter's wan daughter  
Leaves lowland and lawn  
Spring-stricken, or ever mine eyes had  
beheld thee made dark in thy  
dawn.  
*Chorus.* When thou dravest the men  
Of the chosen of Thrace,  
None turned him again,  
Nor endured he thy face  
Clothed round with the blush of the  
battle, with light from a terrible  
place.  
*Eneus.* Thou shouldst die as he dies  
For whom none sheddeth tears;  
Filling thine eyes  
And fulfilling thine ears  
With the brilliance of battle, the bloom  
and the beauty, the splendor of  
spears.  
*Chorus.* In the cars of the world  
It is sung, it is told,  
And the light thereof hurled  
And the noise thereof rolled  
From the Acroceranion snow to the  
ford of the fleece of gold.

*Meleager.* Would God ye could carry  
me  
Forth of all these;  
Heap sand and bury me  
By the Chersonese  
Where the thundering Bosphorus an-  
swers the thunder of Pontic seas.  
*Eneus.* Dost thou mock at our  
praise  
And the singing begun  
And the men of strange days  
Praising my son  
In the folds of the hills of home, high  
places of Calydon?  
*Meleager.* For the dead man no home  
is;  
Ah, better to be  
What the flower of the foam is  
In fields of the sea,  
That the sea-waves might be as my rai-  
ment, the gulf-stream a garment  
for me.  
*Chorus.* Who shall seek thee and  
bring  
And restore thee thy day,  
When the dove dipt her wing,  
And the oars won their way  
Where the narrowing Symplegades  
whitened the straits of Propontis  
with spray?  
*Meleager.* Will ye crown me my  
tomb  
Or exalt me my name,  
Now my spirits consume,  
Now my flesh is a flame?  
Let the sea slake it once, and men  
speak of me sleeping to praise  
me or shame.  
*Chorus.* Turn back now, turn thee,  
As who turns him to wake;  
Though the life in thee burn thee,  
Couldst thou bathe it and slake  
Where the sea-ridge of Helle hangs  
heavier, and east upon west  
waters break?  
*Meleager.* Would the winds blow me  
back  
Or the waves hurl me home?  
Ah, to touch in the track  
Where the pine learnt to roam  
Cold girdles and crowns of the sea-  
gods, cool blossoms of water  
and foam!

*Chorus.* The gods may release  
 That they made fast;  
 Thy soul shall have ease  
 In thy limbs at the last;  
 But what shall they give thee for life,  
 sweet life that is overpast?  
*Meleager.* Not the life of men's veins,  
 Not of flesh that conveys;  
 But the grace that remains,  
 The fair beauty that cleaves  
 To the life of the rains in the grasses,  
 the life of the dew on the  
 leaves.  
*Chorus.* Thou wert helmsman and  
 chief;  
 Wilt thou turn in an hour,  
 Thy limbs to the leaf,  
 Thy face to the flower,  
 Thy blood to the water, thy soul to the  
 gods who divide and devour?  
*Meleager.* The years are hungry,  
 They wait all their days;  
 The gods wax angry  
 And weary of praise;  
 And who shall bridle their lips? and  
 who shall straiten their ways?  
*Chorus.* The gods guard over us  
 With sword and with rod;  
 Weaving shadow to cover us,  
 Heaping the sod,  
 That law may fulfil herself wholly, to  
 darken man's face before God.  
*Meleager.* O holy head of CENÆUS, lo  
 thy son  
 Guiltless, yet red from alien guilt, yet  
 foul  
 With kinship of contaminated lives,  
 Lo, for their blood I die; and mine  
 own blood  
 For blood-shedding of mine is mixed  
 therewith,  
 That death may not discern me from  
 my kin.  
 Yet with clean heart die and faultless  
 hand,  
 Not shamefully; thou herefore of thy  
 love  
 Salute me, and bid me among the  
 dead  
 Well, as the dead fare; for the best  
 man dead  
 Faces sadly; nathless I now faring  
 well

Pass without fear where nothing is to  
 fear,  
 Having thy love about me and thy  
 goodwill,  
 O father, among dark places and men  
 dead.  
*CENÆUS.* Child, I salute thee with sad  
 heart and tears,  
 And bid thee comfort, being a perfect  
 man  
 In fight, and honorable in the house  
 of peace.  
 The gods give thee fair wage and dues  
 of death,  
 And me brief days and ways to come  
 at thee.  
*Meleager.* Pray thou thy days be long  
 before thy death,  
 And full of ease and kingdom; seeing  
 in death  
 There is no comfort and none after-  
 growth,  
 Nor shall one thence look up and see  
 day's dawn  
 Nor light upon the land whither I go.  
 Live thou, and take thy fill of days, and  
 die  
 When thy day comes; and make not  
 much of death,  
 Lest ere thy day thou reap an evil  
 thing.  
 Thou too, the bitter mother and mother-  
 plague  
 Of this my weary body—thou too,  
 queen,  
 The source and end, the sower and the  
 scythe,  
 The rain that ripens and the drought  
 that slays,  
 The sand that swallows and the spring  
 that feeds,  
 To make me and unmake me,—thou, I  
 say,  
 Althæa, since my father's ploughshare,  
 drawn  
 Through fatal seedland of a female  
 field,  
 Furrowed thy body, whence a wheaten  
 ear  
 Strong from the sun and fragrant from  
 the rains  
 I sprang, and cleft the closure of thy  
 womb,

Mother, I dying with unforgetful tongue  
 Hail thee as holy, and worship thee as  
     just,  
 Who art unjust and unholy; and with  
     my knees  
 Would worship, but thy fire and subtlety,  
 Dissundering them, devour me; for  
     these limbs  
 Are as light dust and crumbings from  
     mine urn  
 Before the fire has touched them; and  
     my face  
 As a dead leaf or dead foot's mark on  
     snow,  
 And all this body a broken barren tree  
 That was so strong, and all this flower  
     of life  
 Disbranched and desecrated miserably,  
 And minished all that godlike muscle  
     and might,  
 And lesser than a man's: for all my  
     veins  
 Fail me, and all mine ashen life burns  
     down.  
 I would thou hadst let me live; but  
     gods averse,  
 But fortune, and the fiery feet of change,  
 And time, these would not, these tread  
     out my life,—  
 These and not thou; me too thou hast  
     loved, and I  
 Thee; but this death was mixed with  
     all my life,  
 Mine end with my beginning: and this  
     law,  
 This only, slays me, and not my mother  
     at all.  
 And let no brother or sister grieve too  
     sore,  
 Nor melt their hearts out on me with  
     their tears,  
 Since extreme love and sorrowing over-  
     much  
 Vex the great gods, and over-loving men  
 Slay and are slain for love's sake; and  
     this house  
 Shall bear much better children; why  
     should these  
 Weep? but in patience let them live  
     their lives  
 And mine pass by forgotten: thou alone,

Mother, thou sole and only, thou now  
     these,  
 Keep me in mind a little when I die  
 Because I was thy first-born; let thy  
     soul  
 Pity me, pity even me gone hence and  
     dead.  
 Though thou wert wroth, and though  
     thou bear again  
 Much happier sons, and all men later  
     born  
 Exceedingly excel me, yet do thou  
 Forget not, nor think shame; I was thy  
     son.  
 Time was, I did not shame thee; and  
     time was,  
 I thought to live, and make thee honor-  
     able  
 With deeds as great as these men's: but  
     they live,  
 These, and I die; and what thing should  
     have been,  
 Surely I know not; yet I charge thee,  
     seeing  
 I am dead already, love me not the less.  
 Me, O my mother! I charge thee by  
     these gods,  
 My father's, and that holier breast of  
     thine,  
 By these that see me dying, and that  
     which nursed,  
 Love me not less, thy first-born: though  
     grief come,  
 Grief only, of me, and of all these great  
     joy,  
 And shall come always to thee; for  
     thou knowest,  
 O mother, O breasts that bare me, for  
     ye know,  
 O sweet head of my mother, sacred eyes,  
 Ye know my soul albeit I sinned, ye  
     know  
 Albeit I kneeling, neither touch thy  
     knees,  
 But with my lips kneel, and with my  
     heart  
 I fall about thy feet and worship thee.  
 And ye farewell now, all my friends,  
     and ye,  
 Kinsmen, much younger and glorious  
     more than  
 Sons of my mother's sister; and al-  
     farewell

That were in Colchis with me, and bare  
 down  
 The waves and wars that met us: and  
 though times  
 Change, and though now I be not any  
 thing,  
 Forget not me among you, what I did  
 In my good time; for even by all those  
 days,  
 Those days and this, and your own liv-  
 ing souls,  
 And by the light and luck of you that  
 live,  
 And by this miserable spoil, and me  
 Dying, I beseech you, let my name not  
 die.  
 But thou, dear, touch me with thy rose-  
 like hands,  
 And fasten up mine eyelids with thy  
 mouth,  
 A bitter kiss; and grasp me with thine  
 arms,  
 Printing with heavy lips my light waste  
 flesh,  
 Made light and thin by heavy-handed  
 fate,  
 And with thine holy maiden eyes drop  
 dew,  
 Drop tears for dew upon me who am  
 dead,  
 Me who have loved thee; seeing with-  
 out sin done  
 I am gone down to the empty weary  
 house  
 Where no flesh is, nor beauty, nor swift  
 eyes,

Nor sound of mouth, nor might of hands  
 and feet.  
 But thou, dear, hide my body with thy  
 veil,  
 And with thy raiment cover foot and  
 head,  
 And stretch thyself upon me, and touch  
 hands  
 With hands and lips with lips: be pitiful  
 As thou art maiden perfect; let no man  
 Defile me to despise me, saying, This  
 man  
 Died woman-wise, a woman's offering,  
 slain  
 Through female fingers in his woof of  
 life,  
 Dishonorable; for thou hast honored  
 me.  
 And now for God's sake kiss me once  
 and twice,  
 And let me go; for the night gathers me,  
 And in the night shall no man gather  
 fruit.

*Atalanta.* Hail thou! but I with  
 heavy face and feet

Turn homeward, and am gone out of  
 thine eyes.

*Chorus.* Who shall contend with his  
 lords,

Or cross them, or do them wrong?

Who shall bind them as with cords?

Who shall tame them as with song?

Who shall smite them as with  
 swords?

For the hands of their kingdom are  
 strong.

# ERECHTHEUS: A TRAGEDY.

DEDICATED TO MY MOTHER.

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## PERSONS.

ERECHTHEUS.  
CHORUS OF ATHENIAN  
ELDERS.

PRAXITHEA.  
CHTHONIA.  
HERALD OF EUMOLPUS.

MESSENGER.  
ATHENIAN HERALD.  
ATHENA.

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|  |   |
|--|---|
| <i>Erechtheus.</i> Mother of life and death<br>and all men's days,<br>Earth, whom I chief of all men born<br>would bless,<br>And call thee with more loving lips<br>than theirs<br>Mother, for of this very body of thine<br>And living blood I have my breath and<br>live,<br>Behold me, even thy son, me crowned<br>of men,<br>Me made thy child by that strong, cunning<br>god<br>Who fashions fire and iron, who begat<br>Me for a sword and beacon-fire on thee,<br>Me fosterling of Pallas, in her shade<br>Reared, that I first might pay the nursing<br>debt,<br>Hallowing her fame with flower of<br>third-year feasts,<br>And first bow down the bridled strength<br>of steeds<br>To lose the wild wont of their birth,<br>and bear<br>Clasp of man's knees and steerage of<br>his hand,<br>Or fourfold service of his fire-swift<br>wheels<br>That whirl the four-yoked chariot; me<br>the king | Who stand before thee naked now, and<br>cry,<br>O holy and general mother of all men<br>born,<br>But mother most and motherliest of<br>mine,<br>Earth, for I ask thee rather of all the<br>gods,<br>What have we done? what word mis-<br>timed or work<br>Hath winged the wild feet of this time-<br>less curse<br>To fall as fire upon us? Lo, I stand<br>Here on this brow's crown of the city's<br>head<br>That crowns its lovely body, till death's<br>hour<br>Waste it; but now the dew of dawn<br>and birth<br>Is fresh upon it from thy womb, and<br>we<br>Behold it born how beauteous: one day<br>more<br>I see the world's wheel of the circling<br>sun<br>Roll up rejoicing to regard on earth<br>This one thing goodliest, fair as heaven<br>or he,<br>Worth a god's gaze or strife of gods:<br>but now |
|--|---|

Would this day's ebb of their spent  
 wave of strife  
 Sweep it to sea, wash it on wreck, and  
 leave  
 A costless thing contemned; and in our  
 stead,  
 Where these walls were, and sounding  
 streets of men,  
 Make wide a waste for tongueless  
 water-herds  
 And spoil of ravening fishes; that no  
 more  
 Should men say, Here was Athens.  
 This shalt thou  
 Sustain not, nor thy son endure to see,  
 Nor thou to live and look on; for the  
 womb  
 Bare me not base that bare me miser-  
 able,  
 To hear this loud brood of the Thra-  
 cian foam  
 Break its broad strength of billowy-  
 beating war  
 Here, and upon it as a blast of death  
 Blowing, the keen wrath of a fire-souled  
 king,  
 A strange growth grafted on our natu-  
 ral soil,  
 A root of Thrace in Eleusinian earth  
 Set for no comfort to the kindly land,  
 Son of the sea's lord and our first-born  
 foe,  
 Eumolpus; nothing sweet in ears of  
 thine  
 The music of his making, nor a song  
 Toward hopes of ours auspicious; for  
 the note  
 Rings as for death oracular to thy  
 sons  
 That goes before him on the sea-wind  
 blown  
 Full of this charge laid on me, to put  
 out  
 The brief light kindled of mine own  
 child's life,  
 Or with this helmsman hand that steers  
 the state  
 Run right on the under shoal and ridge  
 of death  
 The populous ship with all its fraught-  
 age gone,  
 And sails that were to take the wind of  
 time

Rent, and the tackling that should hold  
 out fast  
 In confluent surge of loud calamities  
 Broken, with spars of rudders and lost  
 oars  
 That were to row toward harbor, and  
 find rest  
 In some most glorious haven of all the  
 world,  
 And else may never near it: such a  
 song  
 The gods have set his lips on fire  
 withal  
 Who threatens now in all their names  
 to bring  
 Ruin; but none of these, thou knowest,  
 have I  
 Chid with my tongue, or cursed at heart  
 for grief,  
 Knowing how the soul runs reinless  
 on sheer death  
 Whose grief or joy takes part against  
 the gods.  
 And what they will is more than our  
 desire,  
 And their desire is more than what we  
 will.  
 For no man's will and no desire of  
 man's  
 Shall stand as doth a god's will. Yet,  
 O fair  
 Mother, that seest me how I cast no  
 word  
 Against them, plead no reason, crave  
 no cause,  
 Boast me not blameless, nor bewEEP  
 me wronged,  
 By this fair wreath of towers we have  
 decked thee with,  
 This chaplet that we give thee woven  
 of walls,  
 This girdle of gate and temple and cita-  
 del  
 Drawn round beneath thy bosom, and  
 fast linked  
 As to thine heart's root,—this dear  
 crown of thine,  
 This present light, this city,—be not  
 thou  
 Slow to take heed nor slack to strength-  
 en her,  
 Fare we so short-lived howsoe'er, and  
 pay

What price we may to ransom thee thy  
town,  
Not me my life; but thou that diest  
not, thou,  
Though all our house die for this peo-  
ple's sake,  
Keep thou for ours thy crown our city,  
guard  
And give it life the lovelier that we  
died.

*Chorus.* Sun, that hast lightened and  
loosed by thy might  
Ocean and Earth from the lordship of  
night,  
Quickening with vision his eye that was  
veiled,  
Freshening the force in her heart that  
had failed,  
That sister fettered and blinded brother  
Should have sight by thy grace and de-  
light of each other,  
Behold now and see

What profit is given them of thee;  
What wrath has enkindled with mad-  
ness of mind  
Her limbs that were bounden, his face  
that was blind,  
To be locked as in wrestle together,  
and lighten  
With fire that shall darken thy fire in  
the sky,  
Body to body and eye against eye  
In a war against kind,

Till the bloom of her fields and her  
high hills whiten  
With the foam of his waves more  
high.

For the sea-marks set to divide of  
old

The kingdoms to Ocean and Earth as-  
signed,

The hoar sea-fields from the cornfields'  
gold,

His wine-bright waves from her vine-  
yards' fold,

Frail forces we find  
To bridle the spirit of gods or bind  
Till the heat of their hearts wax  
cold.

But the peace that was stablished be-  
tween them to stand

Is rent now in twain by the strength of  
his hand

Who stirs up the storm of his sons over-  
bold

To pluck from fight what he lost of  
right,

By council and judgment of gods that  
spake

And gave great Pallas the strife's fair  
stake,

The lordship and love of the lovely  
land,

The grace of the town that hath on it  
for crown

But a headband to wear  
Of violets one-hued with her hair:

For the vales and the green high places  
of earth

Hold nothing so fair,  
And the depths of the sea bear no such  
birth

Of the manifold births they bear.  
Too well, too well was the great stake  
worth

A strife divine for the gods to judge,  
A crowned god's triumph, a foiled  
god's grudge,

Though the loser be strong and the  
victress wise

Who played long since for so large a  
prize,

The fruitful immortal anointed adored  
Dear city of men without master or  
lord,

Fair fortress and fostress of sons born  
free,

Who stand in her sight and in thine, O  
sun,

Slaves of no man, subjects of none;  
A wonder enthroned on the hills and  
sea,

A maiden crowned with a fourfold  
glory

That none from the pride of her head  
may rend,

Violet and olive-leaf purple and  
hoary,

Song-wreath and story the fairest of  
fame,

Flowers that the winter can blast not  
or bend;

A light upon earth as the sun's own  
flame,

A name as his name,  
Athens, a praise without end.



A noise is arisen against us of waters,  
 A sound as of battle come up from the sea.  
 Strange hunters are hard on us, hearts without pity;  
 They have staked their nets round the fair young city,  
 That the sons of her strength and her virgin daughters  
 Should find not whither alive to flee.  
 And we know not yet of the word unwritten,  
 The doom of the Pythian we have not heard;  
 From the navel of earth and the veiled mid altar  
 We wait for a token with hopes that falter,  
 With fears that hang on our hearts thought-smitten  
 Lest her tongue be kindled with no good word.  
 O thou not born of the womb, nor bred  
 In the bride-night's warmth of a changed god's bed,  
 But thy life as a lightning was flashed from the light of thy father's head,  
 O chief god's child by a motherless birth,  
 If aught in thy sight we indeed be worth,  
 Keep death from us thou, that art none of the gods of the dead under earth.  
 Thou that hast power on us, save, if thou wilt;  
 Let the blind wave breach not thy wall scarce built;  
 But bless us not so as by bloodshed, impute not for grace to us guilt,  
 Nor by price of pollution of blood set us free;  
 Let the hands be taintless that clasp thy knee,  
 Nor a maiden be slain to redeem for a maiden her shrine from the sea.  
 O earth, O sun, turn back  
 Full on his deadly track

Death, that would smite you black and mar your creatures,  
 And with one hand disroot  
 All tender flower and fruit,  
 With one strike blind and mute the heaven's fair features,  
 Pluck out the eyes of morn, and make  
 Silence in the east and blackness whence the bright songs break.  
 Help, earth, help, heaven, that hear  
 The song-notes of our fear,  
 Shrewd notes and shrill, not clear or joyful-sounding;  
 Hear, highest of gods, and stay  
 Death on his hunter's way,  
 Full on his forceless prey his beagles hounding;  
 Break thou his bow, make short his hand,  
 Maim his fleet foot whose passage kills the living land.  
 Let a third wave smite not us, father,  
 Long since sore smitten of twain,  
 Lest the house of thy son's son perish,  
 And his name be barren on earth.  
 Whose race wilt thou comfort rather  
 If none to thy son remain?  
 Whose seed wilt thou choose to cherish  
 If his be cut off in the birth?  
 For the first fair graft of his grafting  
 Was rent from its maiden root  
 By the strong swift hand of a lover  
 Who fills the night with his breath;  
 On the lip of the stream low-laughing  
 Her green soft virginal shoot  
 Was plucked from the stream-side cover  
 By the grasp of a love like death.  
 For a god's was the mouth that kissed her  
 Who speaks, and the leaves lie dead,  
 When winter awakes as at warning  
 To the sound of his foot from Thrace.  
 Nor happier the bed of her sister,  
 Though Love's self laid her abed  
 By a bridegroom beloved of the morning  
 And fair as the dawn's own face.

For Procris, ensnared and ensnaring  
 By the fraud of a twofold wile,  
 With the point of her own spear  
 stricken,  
 By the gift of her own hand fell.  
 Oversubtle in doubts, overdaring  
 In deeds and devices of guile,  
 And strong to quench as to quicken,  
 O Love, have we named thee  
 well?  
 By thee was the spear's edge whetted  
 That laid her dead in the dew,  
 In the moist green glens of the  
 midland,  
 By her dear lord slain and thee.  
 And him at the cliff's end fretted  
 By the gray keen waves, him too,  
 Thine hand from the white-browed  
 headland  
 Flung down for a spoil to the  
 sea.  
 But enough now of griefs gray-growing  
 Have darkened the house divine,  
 Have flowered on its boughs, and  
 faded,  
 And green is the brave stock  
 yet.  
 O father all-seeing and all-knowing,  
 Let the last fruit fall not of thine  
 From the tree with whose boughs  
 we are shaded,  
 From the stock that thy son's  
 hand set.  
*Erechtheus.* O daughter of Cephisus,  
 from all time  
 Wise have I found thee, wife and queen,  
 of heart  
 Perfect; nor in the days that knew not  
 wind  
 Nor days when storm blew death upon  
 our peace  
 Was thine heart swoln with seed of  
 pride, or bowed  
 With blasts of bitter fear that break  
 men's souls  
 Who lift too high their minds toward  
 heaven, in thought  
 Too godlike grown for worship; but of  
 mood  
 Equal, in good time reverent of time  
 bad,  
 And glad in ill days of the good that  
 were.

Nor now too would I fear thee, now  
 misdoubt  
 Lest fate should find thee lesser than thy  
 doom,  
 Chosen if thou be to bear and to be  
 great  
 Haply beyond all women; and the  
 word  
 Speaks thee divine, dear queen, that  
 speaks thee dead,  
 Dead being alive, or quick and dead in  
 one  
 Shall not men call thee living? yet I  
 fear  
 To slay thee timeless with my proper  
 tongue,  
 With lips, thou knowest, that love thee;  
 and such work  
 Was never laid of gods on men, such  
 word  
 No mouth of man learnt ever, as from  
 mine,  
 Most loath to speak, thine ear most  
 loath shall take,  
 And hold it hateful as the grave to hear.  
*Praxithea.* That word there is not in  
 all speech of man,  
 King, that being spoken of the gods  
 and thee  
 I have not heart to honor, or dare  
 hold  
 More than I hold thee or the gods in  
 hate  
 Hearing; but if my heart abhor it  
 heard  
 Being insubmissive, hold me not thy  
 wife,  
 But use me like a stranger, whom thine  
 hand  
 Hath fed by chance, and finding thence  
 no thanks  
 Flung off for shame's sake to forget-  
 fulness.  
*Erechtheus.* O, of what breath shall  
 such a word be made,  
 Or from what heart find utterance?  
 Would my tongue  
 Were rent forth rather from the quiver-  
 ing root  
 Than made as fire or poison thus for  
 thee.  
*Praxithea.* But if thou speak of blood,  
 and I that hear

Be chosen of all for this land's love to die,

And save to thee thy city, know this well,

Happiest I hold me of her seed alive.

*Erechtheus.* O sun that seest, what saying was this of thine, God, that thy power has breathed into my lips?

For from no sunlit shrine darkling it came.

*Praxithea.* What portent from the mid oracular place

Hath smitten thee so like a curse that flies

Wingless, to waste men with its plagues? Yet speak.

*Erechtheus.* Thy blood the gods require not; take this first.

*Praxithea.* To me than thee more grievous this should sound.

*Erechtheus.* That word rang truer and bitterer than it knew.

*Praxithea.* This is not then thy grief, to see me die?

*Erechtheus.* Die shalt thou not, yet give thy blood to death.

*Praxithea.* If this ring worse, I know not: strange it rang.

*Erechtheus.* Alas! thou knowest not; woe is me that know!

*Praxithea.* And woe shall mine be, knowing; yet halt not here.

*Erechtheus.* Guiltless of blood this state may stand no more.

*Praxithea.* Firm let it stand, whatever bleed or fall.

*Erechtheus.* O gods, that I should say it shall, and weep!

*Praxithea.* Weep, and say this? no tears should bathe such words.

*Erechtheus.* Woe's me that I must weep upon them! woe!

*Praxithea.* What stain is on them for thy tears to cleanse?

*Erechtheus.* A stain of blood un-purgeable with tears.

*Praxithea.* Whence? for thou sayest it is and is not mine.

*Erechtheus.* Hear then, and know why only of all men I

That bring such news as mine is, I alone

Must wash good words with weeping. I and thou,

Woman, must wail to hear men sing, must groan

To see their joy who love us; all our friends

Save only we, and all save we that love This holiness of Athens, in our sight

Shall lift their hearts up, in our hearing praise

Gods whom we may not; for to these they give

Life of their children, flower of all their seed,

For all their travail fruit, for all their hopes

Harvest; but we for all our good things, we

Have at their hands which fill all these folk full

Death, barrenness, child-slaughter, curses, cares,

Sea-leaguer and land-shipwreck; which of these,

Which wilt thou first give thanks for? all are thine.

*Praxithea.* What first they give who give this city good,

For that first given to save it I give thanks

First, and thanks heartier from a happier tongue,

More than for any my peculiar grace Shown me and not my country; next

for this, That none of all these, but for all these I,

Must bear my burden, and no eye but mine

Weep of all women's in this broad land born

Who see their land's deliverance; but much more,

But most for this I thank them most of all,

That this their edge of doom is chosen to pierce

My heart, and not my country's; for the sword

Drawn to smite there, and sharpened for such stroke

Should wound more deep than any turned on me.

*Chorus.* Well fares the land that  
bears such fruit, and well  
The spirit that breeds such thought  
and speech in man.

*Erechtheus.* O woman, thou hast  
shamed my heart with thine,  
To show so strong a patience: take  
then all;  
For all shall break not nor bring down  
thy soul.

The word that journeying to the bright  
god's shrine  
Who speaks askance and darkling, but  
his name

Hath in it slaying and ruin broad writ  
out,

I heard, hear thou: thus saith he:  
There shall die

One soul for all this people; from thy  
womb

Came forth the seed that here on dry  
bare ground

Death's hand must sow untimely, to  
bring forth

Nor blade nor shoot in season, being  
by name

To the under gods made holy, who re-  
quire

For this land's life her death and  
maiden blood

To save a maiden city. Thus I heard,  
And thus with all said leave thee; for  
save this

No word is left us, and no hope alive.

*Chorus.* He hath uttered too surely  
his wrath not obscurely, nor  
wrapt as in mists of his breath,  
The master that lightens not hearts he  
enlightens, but gives them fore-  
knowledge of death.

As a bolt from the cloud hath he  
sent it aloud, and proclaimed it  
afar,

From the darkness and height of the  
horror of night hath he shown  
us a star.

Star may I name it, and err not, or  
flame shall I say,

Born of the womb that was born  
for the tomb of the day?

O Night, whom other but thee for moth-  
er, and Death for the father,  
Night,

Shall we dream to discover, save thee  
and thy lover, to bring such a  
sorrow to sight?

From the slumberless bed for thy  
bedfellow spread, and his bride  
under earth,

Hast thou brought forth a wild and  
insatiable child, an unbearable  
birth.

Pierce are the fangs of his wrath  
and the pangs that they give;

None is there, none that may bear  
them, not one that would live.

*Chthonia.* Forth of the fine-spun folds  
of veils that hide

My virgin chamber toward the full-faced  
sun

I set my foot, not moved of mine own  
will,

Unmaidenlike, nor with unprompted  
speed

Turn eyes too broad or dog-like un-  
abashed

On reverend heads of men and thence  
on thine,

Mother, now covered from the light  
and bowed

As hers who mourns her brethren; but  
what grief

Bends thy blind head thus earthward,  
holds thus mute,

I know not till thy will be to lift up  
Toward mine thy sorrow-muffled eyes,

and speak;

And till thy will be, would I know this  
not.

*Praxithea.* Old men and childless, or  
if sons ye have seen

And daughters, elder-born were these  
than mine,

Look on this child, how young of years,  
how sweet,

How scant of time and green of age  
her life

Puts forth its flower of girlhood; and  
her gait

How virginal, how soft her speech, her  
eyes

How seemly smiling. Wise should all  
ye be,

All honorable and kindly men of age:  
Now give me counsel and one word to  
say

That I may bear to speak, and hold my  
peace  
Henceforth for all time even as all ye  
now.

Dumb are ye all, bowed eyes and  
tongueless mouths,

Unprofitable: if this were wind that  
speaks,

As much its breath might move you.  
Thou then, child,

Set thy sweet eyes on mine; look  
through them well;

Take note of all the writing of my  
face

As of a tablet or a tomb inscribed  
That bears me record; lifeless now, my  
life

Thereon that was, think written; brief  
to read,

Yet shall the scripture sear thine eyes  
as fire,

And leave them dark as dead men's.  
Nay, dear child,

Thou hast no skill, my maiden, and no  
sense

To take such knowledge; sweet is all  
thy lore,

And all this bitter: yet I charge thee,  
learn

And love and lay this up within thine  
heart,

Even this my word: less ill it were to  
die,

Than live and look upon thy mother  
dead,

Thy mother-land that bare thee; no  
man slain

But him who hath seen it shall men  
count unblest,

None blest as him who hath died and  
seen it not.

*Chthonia.* That sight some god keep  
from me though I die!

*Praxithea.* A god from thee shall  
keep it: fear not this.

*Chthonia.* Thanks all my life long  
shall he gain of mine.

*Praxithea.* Short gain of all yet shall  
he get of thee.

*Chthonia.* Brief be my life, yet so  
long live my thanks.

*Praxithea.* So long? so little; how  
long shall they live?

*Chthonia.* Even while I see the sun-  
light and thine eyes.

*Praxithea.* Would mine might shut  
ere thine upon the sun!

*Chthonia.* For me thou prayest un-  
kindly; change that prayer.

*Praxithea.* Not well for me thou say-  
est, and ill for thee.

*Chthonia.* Nay, for me well, if thou  
shalt live, not I.

*Praxithea.* How live, and lose these  
loving looks of thine?

*Chthonia.* It seems I too, thus pray-  
ing, then, love thee not.

*Praxithea.* Lov'st thou not life? what  
wouldst thou do to die?

*Chthonia.* Well, but not more than  
all things, love I life.

*Praxithea.* And fain wouldst keep it  
as thine age allows?

*Chthonia.* Fain would I live, and fain  
not fear to die.

*Praxithea.* That I might bid thee die  
not! Peace; no more.

*Chorus.* A godlike race of grief the  
gods have set

For these to run matched equal, heart  
with heart.

*Praxithea.* Child of the chief of  
gods, and maiden crowned,

Queen of these towers and fostress of  
their king,

Pallas, and thou my father's holiest  
head,

A living well of life nor stanch'd nor  
stained,

O God Cephisus, thee too charge I  
next,

Be to me judge and witness; nor thine  
ear

Shall now my tongue invoke not, thou  
to me

Most hateful of things holy, mourn-  
fullest

Of all old sacred streams that wash the  
world,

Ilissus, on whose marge at flowery play  
A whirlwind-footed bridegroom found

my child,  
And rapt her northward where mine  
elder-born

Keeps now the Thracian bride-bed of a  
god

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Intolerable to seamen, but this land<br>Finds him in hope for her sake favor-<br>able,          | The strong king of the tempest-rifted sea<br>Loosed reinless on the low Thriasian<br>plain |
| A gracious son by wedlock: hear me<br>then  | The thunders of his chariots, swallow-<br>ing stunned                                      |
| Thou likewise, if with no faint heart or<br>false   | Earth, beasts, and men, the whole blind<br>foundering world                                |
| The word I say be said, the gift be<br>given,   | That was the sun's at morning, and ere<br>noon   |
| Which, might I choose, I had rather<br>die than give  | Death's; nor this only prey fulfilled his<br>mind;   |
| Or speak and die not. Ere thy limbs<br>were made,   | For with strange crook-toothed prows<br>of Carian folk                                     |
| Or thine eyes lightened, strife, thou<br>knowest, my child,                                     | Who snatch a sanguine life out of the<br>sea,  |
| 'Twixt god and god had risen, which<br>heavenlier name  | Thieves keen to pluck their bloody<br>fruit of spoil                                       |
| Should here stand hallowed, whose<br>more liberal grace   | From the gray fruitless waters, has<br>their god   |
| Should win this city's worship, and our<br>land   | Furrowed our shores to waste them, as<br>the fields  |
| To which of these do reverence; first<br>the lord   | Were landward harried from the north<br>with swords  |
| Whose wheels make lightnings of the<br>foam-flowered sea  | Aonian, sickles of man-slaughtering<br>edge  |
| Here on this rock, whose height brow-<br>bound with dawn  | Ground for no hopeful harvest of live<br>grain   |
| Is head and heart of Athens, one sheer<br>blow  | Against us in Bœotia: these being<br>spent,  |
| Struck, and beneath the triple wound<br>that shook  | Now this third time his wind of wrath<br>has blown   |
| The stony sinews and stark roots of the<br>earth  | Right on this people a mightier wave<br>of war,  |
| Sprang toward the sun a sharp salt<br>fount, and sank   | Three times more huge a ruin; such its<br>ridge  |
| Where lying it lights the heart up of<br>the hill,  | Foam-rimmed and hollow like the<br>womb of heaven,   |
| A well of bright strange brine; but she<br>that reared  | But black for shining, and with death<br>for life  |
| Thy father with her same chaste foster-<br>ing hand   | Big now to birth and ripe with child,<br>full-blown  |
| Set for a sign against it in our guard<br>The holy bloom of the olive, whose<br>hoar leaf       | With fear and fruit of havoc, takes the<br>sun   |
| High in the shadowy shrine of Pandro-<br>sus  | Out of our eyes, darkening the day,<br>and blinds  |
| Hath honor of us all; and of this strife<br>The twelve most high gods judging<br>with one mouth | The fair sky's face unseasonably with<br>change,   |
| Acclaimed her victress: wroth whereat,<br>as wroged   | A cloud in one and billow of battle, a<br>surge  |
| That she should hold from him such<br>prize and place,  | High reared as heaven with monstrous<br>surf of spears                                     |
|   | That shake on us their shadow, till<br>men's heads   |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>Bend, and their hearts even with its<br/>forward wind<br/>Wither, so blasts all seed in them of<br/>hope<br/>Its breath and blight of presage; yea,<br/>even now<br/>The winter of this wind out of the<br/>deeps<br/>Makes cold our trust in comfort of the<br/>gods,<br/>And blinds our eye toward outlook;<br/>yet not here,<br/>Here never shall the Thracian plant on<br/>high<br/>For ours his father's symbol, nor with<br/>wreaths<br/>A strange folk wreath it, upright set<br/>and crowned<br/>Here where our natural people born<br/>behold<br/>The golden Gorgon of the shield's de-<br/>fence<br/>That screens their flowering olive, nor<br/>strange gods<br/>Be graced, and Pallas here have praise<br/>no more.<br/>And if this be not I must give my child,<br/>Thee, mine own very blood and spirit<br/>of mine,<br/>Thee to be slain. Turn from me, turn<br/>thine eyes<br/>A little from me: I can bear not yet<br/>To see if still they smile on mine or no,<br/>If fear make faint the light in them, or<br/>faith<br/>Fix them as stars of safety. Need have<br/>we,<br/>Sore need of stars that set not in mid<br/>storm,<br/>Lights that outlast the lightnings; yet<br/>my heart<br/>Endures not to make proof of thine or<br/>these,<br/>Not yet to know thee whom I made,<br/>and bare<br/>What manner of woman: had I borne<br/>thee man,<br/>I had made no question of thine eyes<br/>or heart,<br/>Nor spared to read the scriptures in<br/>them writ,<br/>Wert thou my son; yet couldst thou<br/>then but die,</p> | <p>Fallen in sheer fight by chance and<br/>charge of spears,<br/>And have no more of memory, fill no<br/>tomb<br/>More famous than thy fellows in fair<br/>field,<br/>Where many share the grave, many the<br/>praise;<br/>But one crown shall one only girl my<br/>child<br/>Wear, dead for this dear city, and give<br/>back life<br/>To him that gave her and to me that<br/>bare,<br/>And save two sisters living; and all<br/>this,<br/>Is this not all good? I shall give thee,<br/>child,<br/>Thee but by fleshly nature mine, to<br/>bleed<br/>For dear land's love; but if the city fall<br/>What part is left me in my children<br/>then?<br/>But if it stand, and thou for it lie dead,<br/>Then hast thou in it a better part than<br/>we,<br/>A holier portion than we all; for each<br/>Hath but the length of his own life to<br/>live,<br/>And this most glorious mother-land on<br/>earth<br/>To worship till that life have end: but<br/>thine<br/>Hath end no more than hers; thou,<br/>dead, shalt live<br/>Till Athens live not; for the days and<br/>nights<br/>Given of thy bare brief dark dividual<br/>life,<br/>Shall she give thee half all her age long<br/>own<br/>And all its glory; for thou givest her<br/>these;<br/>But with one hand she takes, and gives<br/>again<br/>More than I gave, or she requires of<br/>thee.<br/>Come therefore, I will make thee fit for<br/>death;<br/>I that could give thee, dear, no gift at<br/>birth<br/>Save of light life that breathes and<br/>bleeds, even I</p> |
|---|--|

Will help thee to this better gift than mine,  
 And lead thee by this little living hand,  
 That death shall make so strong, to that great end  
 Whence it shall lighten like a god's, and strike  
 Dead the strong heart of battle that would break  
 Athens; but ye, pray for this land, old men,  
 That it may bring forth never child on earth  
 To love it less, for none may more, than we.

*Chorus.* Out of the north wind grief came forth,

And the shining of a sword out of the sea.

Yea, of old the first-blown blast blew the prelude of this last,

The blast of his trumpet upon Rhodope.

Out of the north skies full of his cloud,  
 With the clamor of his storms as of a crowd

At the wheels of a great king crying aloud,

At the axle of a strong king's car  
 That has girded on the girdle of war, —  
 With hands that lightened the skies in sunder,

And feet whose fall was followed of thunder,

A god, a great god strange of name,  
 With horse-yoke fleeter-hoofed than flame,

To the mountain bed of a maiden came,  
 Oreithyia, the bride mismated,  
 Wofully wed in a snow-strewn bed  
 With a bridegroom that kisses the bride's mouth dead;

Without garland, without glory, without song,

As a fawn by night on the hills belated,  
 Given over for a spoil unto the strong.  
 From lips how pale so keen a wail

At the grasp of a god's hand on her she gave,

When his breath that darkens air made a havoc of her hair,

It rang from the mountain even to the wave, —

Rang with a cry, *Woe's me, woe is me!*  
 From the darkness upon Hæmus to the sea;

And with hands that clung to her new lord's knee,

As a virgin overborne with shame,  
 She besought him by her spouseless fame,

By the blameless breasts of a maid unmarried

And locks unmaidenly rent and harried,  
 And all her flower of body, born

To match the maidenhood of morn,  
 With the might of the wind's wrath wrenched and torn.

Vain, all vain as a dead man's vision  
 Falling by night in his old friend's sight,

To be scattered with slumber and slain ere light;

Such a breath of such a bridegroom in that hour

Of her prayers made mock, of her fears derision,

And a ravage of her youth as of a flower.

With a leap of his limbs as a lion's, a cry from his lips as of thunder,

In a storm of amorous godhead filled with fire,

From the height of the heaven that was rent with the roar of his coming in sunder,

Sprang the strong god on the spoil of his desire.

And the pines of the hills were as green reeds shattered,

And their branches as buds of the soft spring scattered,

And the west wind and east, and the sound of the south,

Fell dumb at the blast of the north wind's mouth,

At the cry of his coming out of heaven.

And the wild beasts quailed in the rifts and hollows

Where hound nor clarion of huntsman follows,

And the depths of the sea were aghast, and whitened,

And the crowns of their waves were as flame that lightened,



And the heart of the floods thereof  
 was riven.  
 But she knew not him coming for terror,  
 she felt not her wrong that he  
 wrought her,  
 When her locks as leaves were shed  
 before his breath,  
 And she heard not for terror his prayer,  
 though the cry was a god's that  
 besought her,  
 Blown from lips that strew the world-  
 wide seas with death.  
 For the heart was molten within her  
 to hear,  
 And her knees beneath her were  
 loosened for fear,  
 And her blood fast bound as a frost-  
 bound water,  
 And the soft new bloom of the green  
 earth's daughter  
 Wind-wasted as blossom of a tree ;  
 As the wild god rapt her from earth's  
 breast lifted,  
 On the strength of the stream of his  
 dark breath drifted,  
 From the bosom of earth as a bride  
 from the mother,  
 With storm for bridesman and wreck  
 for brother,  
 As a cloud that he sheds upon the  
 sea.

Of this hoary-headed woe  
 Song made memory long ago ;  
 Now a younger grief to mourn  
 Needs a new song younger born.  
 Who shall teach our tongues to  
 reach  
 What strange height of saddest  
 speech,  
 For the new bride's sake that is given  
 to be  
 A stay to fetter the foot of the sea,  
 Lest it quite spurn down and trample  
 the town,  
 Ere the violets be dead that were  
 plucked for its crown,  
 Or its olive-leaf whiten and with-  
 er ?  
 Who shall say of the wind's way  
 That he journeyed yesterday,  
 Or the track of the storm that shall  
 sound to-morrow,

If the new be more than the gray-  
 grown sorrow ?  
 For the wind of the green first season  
 was keen,  
 And the blast shall be sharper than  
 blew between  
 That the breath of the sea blows  
 hither.

*Herald of Eumolpus.* Old men, gray  
 borderers on the march of death,  
 Tongue-fighters, tough of talk and sin-  
 ewy speech,  
 Else nerveless, from no crew of such  
 faint folk  
 Whose tongues are stouter than their  
 hands come I  
 To bid not you to battle : let them strike  
 Whose swords are sharper than your  
 keen-tongued wail,  
 And ye, sit fast and sorrow ; but what  
 man  
 Of all this land-folk and earth-labor-  
 ing herd  
 For heart or hand seems foremost, him  
 I call,  
 If heart be his to hearken, him bid forth  
 To try if one be in the sun's sight born  
 Of all that grope and grovel on dry  
 ground  
 That may join hands in battle-grip for  
 death  
 With them whose seed and strength is  
 of the sea.

*Chorus.* Know thou this much for all  
 thy loud blast blown,  
 We lack not hands to speak with,  
 swords to plead,  
 For proof of peril, not of boisterous  
 breath,  
 Sea-wind and storm of barren mouths  
 that foam  
 And rough rock's edge of menace ; and  
 short space  
 May lessen thy large ignorance, and  
 inform  
 This insolence with knowledge if there  
 live  
 Men earth-begotten of no tenderer  
 thews  
 Than knit the great joints of the grim  
 sea's brood  
 With hasps of steel together ; heaven  
 to help,

One man shall break, even on their own  
 flood's ve,ge,  
 That iron bulk of battle; but thine eye  
 That sees it now swell higher than sand  
 or shore  
 Haply shall see not when thine host  
 shall shrink.  
*Herald of Eumolpus.* Not haply, nay,  
 but surely, shall not thine.  
*Chorus.* That lot shall no god give  
 who fights for thee.  
*Herald of Eumolpus.* Shall gods bear  
 bit and bridle, fool, of men?  
*Chorus.* Nor them forbid we, nor shalt  
 thou constrai.  
*Herald of Eumolpus.* Yet say'st thou  
 none shall make the good lot  
 mine?  
*Chorus.* Of thy sia none, nor moved  
 for fear of thee.  
*Herald of Eumolpus.* Gods hast thou  
 then to baffle gods of ours?  
*Chorus.* Nor thine nor mine, but  
 equal-souled are they.  
*Herald of Eumolpus.* Toward good  
 and ill, then, equal-eyed of soul?  
*Chorus.* Nay, but swift-eyed to note  
 where ill thoughts breed.  
*Herald of Eumolpus.* Thy shaft word-  
 feathered flies yet far of me.  
*Chorus.* Pride knows not, wounded,  
 till the heart be cleft.  
*Herald of Eumolpus.* No shaft wounds  
 deep whose wing is plumed with  
 words.  
*Chorus.* Lay that to heart, and bid  
 thy tongue learn grace.  
*Herald of Eumolpus.* Grace shall thine  
 own crave soon too late of mine.  
*Chorus.* Boast thou till then, but I  
 wage words no more.  
*Erechtheus.* Man, what shrill wind of  
 speech and wrangling air  
 Blows in our ears a summons from thy  
 lips  
 Winged with what message, or what  
 gift or grace  
 Requiring? none but what his hand  
 may take  
 Here may the foe think hence to reap,  
 nor this  
 Except some doom from Godward yield  
 it him.

*Herald of Eumolpus.* King of this  
 land-folk, by my mouth to thee  
 Thus saith the son of him that shakes  
 thine earth,  
 Eumolpus; now the stakes of war are  
 set,  
 For land or sea to win by throw and  
 wear;  
 Choose therefore or to quit thy side,  
 and give  
 The palm unfought for to his bloodless  
 hand,  
 Or by that father's sceptre, and the foot  
 Whose tramp far off makes tremble for  
 pure fear  
 Thy soul-struck mother, piercing like a  
 sword  
 The immortal womb that bare thee; by  
 the waves  
 That no man bridles, and that bound  
 thy world,  
 And by the winds and storms of all the  
 sea,  
 He swears to raze from eyeshot of the  
 sun  
 This city named not of his father's  
 name,  
 And wash to deathward down one flood  
 of doom  
 This whole fresh brood of earth yeaned  
 naturally,  
 Green yet and faint in its first blade,  
 unblown  
 With yellow hope of harvest: so do  
 thou,  
 Seeing whom thy time is come to meet,  
 for fear  
 Yield, or gird up thy force to fight and  
 die.  
*Erechtheus.* To fight then be it; for  
 if to die or live,  
 No man but only a god knows this  
 much yet,  
 Seeing us fare forth, who bear but in  
 our hands  
 The weapons not the fortunes of our  
 fight;  
 For these now rest as lots that yet  
 undrawn  
 Lie in the lap of the unknown hour;  
 but this  
 I know, not thou, whose hollow mouth  
 of storm

Is but a warlike wind, a sharp salt  
 breath  
 That bites and wounds not; death nor  
 life of mine  
 Shall give to death or lordship of  
 strange kings  
 The soul of this live city, nor their  
 heel  
 Bruise her dear brow discrowned, nor  
 snaffle or goad  
 Wound her free mouth or stain her  
 sanguine side  
 Yet masterless of man; so bid thy lord  
 Learn ere he weep to learn it, and too  
 late  
 Gnash teeth that could not fasten on  
 her flesh,  
 And foam his life out in dark froth of  
 blood  
 Vain as a wind's waif of the loud-  
 mouthed sea,  
 Torn from the wave's edge whitening.  
 Tell him this;  
 Though thrice his might were mustered  
 for our scathe  
 And thicker set with fence of thorn-  
 edged spears  
 Than sands are whirled about the win-  
 tering beach  
 When storms have swoln the rivers,  
 and their blasts  
 Have breached the broad sea-banks  
 with stress of sea,  
 That waves of inland and the main  
 make war  
 As men that mix and grapple; though  
 his ranks  
 Were more to number than all wild-  
 wood leaves  
 The wind waves on the hills of all the  
 world,  
 Yet should the heart not faint, the head  
 not fall,  
 The breath not fail, of Athens. Say,  
 the gods  
 From lips that have no more on earth  
 to say  
 Have told thee this the last good news  
 or ill  
 That I shall speak in sight of earth and  
 sun  
 Or he shall hear and see them: for the  
 next

That ear of his from tongue of mine  
 may take  
 Must be the first word spoken under-  
 ground  
 From dead to dead in darkness. Hence;  
 make haste,  
 Lest war's fleet foot be swifter than thy  
 tongue,  
 And I that part not to return again  
 On him that comes not to depart  
 away  
 Be fallen before thee; for the time is  
 full,  
 And with such mortal hope as knows  
 not fear  
 I go this high last way to the end of  
 all.  
*Chorus.* Who shall put a bridle in  
 the mourner's lips to chasten  
 them,  
 Or seal up the fountains of his tears  
 for shame?  
 Song nor prayer nor prophecy shall  
 slacken tears nor hasten them,  
 Till grief be within him as a burnt-  
 out flame;  
 Till the passion be broken in his  
 breast,  
 And the might thereof molten  
 into rest,  
 And the rain of eyes that weep be  
 dry,  
 And the breath be stilled of lips  
 that sigh.  
 Death at last for all men is a harbor;  
 yet they flee from it,  
 Set sails to the storm-wind, and again  
 to sea;  
 Yet for all their labor no whit further  
 shall they be from it,  
 Nor longer, but wearier, shall their  
 life's work be.  
 And with anguish of travail until  
 night  
 Shall they steer into shipwreck out  
 of sight,  
 And with oars that break and  
 shrouds that strain  
 Shall they drive whence no ship  
 steers again.  
 Bitter and strange is the word of the  
 god most high,  
 And steep the strait of his way.

Through a pass rock-rimmed and narrow  
 the light that gleams  
 On the faces of men falls faint as the  
 dawn of dreams,  
 The dayspring of death as a star in an  
 under sky  
 Where night is the dead men's day.  
 As darkness and storm is his will that  
 on earth is done,  
 As a cloud is the face of his strength.  
 King of kings, holiest of holies, and  
 mightiest of might,  
 Lord of the lords of thine heaven that  
 are humble in thy sight,  
 Hast thou set not an end for the path  
 of the fires of the sun,  
 To appoint him a rest at length?  
 Hast thou told not by measure the  
 waves of the waste wide sea,  
 And the ways of the wind their master  
 and thrall to thee?  
 Hast thou filled not the furrows  
 with fruit for the world's increase?  
 Has thine ear not heard from of old, or  
 thine eye not read  
 The thought and the deed of us living,  
 the doom of us dead?  
 Hast thou made not war upon  
 earth, and again made peace?  
 Therefore, O father, that seest us whose  
 lives are a breath,  
 Take off us thy burden, and give us  
 not wholly to death.  
 For lovely is life, and the law  
 wherein all things live,  
 And gracious the season of each, and  
 the hour of its kind,  
 And precious the seed of his life in a  
 wise man's mind;  
 But all save life for his life will a  
 base man give.  
 But a life that is given for the life of  
 the whole live land,  
 From a heart unspotted a gift of a  
 spotless hand,  
 Of pure will perfect and free, for the  
 land's life's sake,  
 What man shall fear not to put forth  
 his hand and take?  
 For the fruit of a sweet life plucked in  
 its pure green prime  
 On his hand who plucks is as blood, on  
 his soul as crime.

With cursing ye buy not blessing, not  
 peace with strife,  
 And the hand is hateful that chaffers  
 with death for life.  
 Hast thou heard, O my heart, and  
 endurest  
 The word that is said,  
 What a garland by sentence found  
 surest  
 Is wrought for what head?  
 With what blossomless flowerage of  
 sea-foam and blood-colored foli-  
 age inwound  
 It shall crown as a heifer's for slaughter  
 the forehead for marriage un-  
 crowned?  
 How the veils and the wreaths that  
 should cover  
 The brows of the bride  
 Shall be shed by the breath of  
 what lover,  
 And scattered aside?  
 With a blast of the mouth of what  
 bridegroom the crowns shall be  
 cast from her hair,  
 And her head by what altar made  
 humble be left of them naked  
 and bare?  
 At a shrine unbeloved of a god unbe-  
 holden a gift shall be given for  
 the land,  
 That its ramparts though shaken with  
 clamor and horror of manifold  
 waters may stand;  
 That the crests of its citadels crowned  
 and its turrets that thrust up their  
 heads to the sun  
 May behold him unblinded with dark-  
 ness of waves overmastering  
 their bulwarks begun.  
 As a bride shall they bring her,  
 a prey for the bridegroom, a  
 flower for the couch of her  
 lord;  
 They shall muffle her mouth that she  
 cry not or curse them, and cover  
 her eyes from the sword.  
 They shall fasten her lips as with bit  
 and with bridle, and darken the  
 light of her face,  
 That the soul of the slayer may not  
 falter, his heart be not molten,  
 his hand give not grace.

If she weep then, yet may none that  
hear take pity;

If she cry not, none should hearken  
though she cried.

Shal' a virgin shield thine head for  
love, O city,

With a virgin's blood anointed as  
for pride?

Yet we held thee dear and hallowed  
of her favor,

Dear of all men held thy people  
to her heart;

Nought she loves the breath of blood,  
the sanguine savor,

Who hath built with us her throne  
and chosen her part.

Bloodless are her works, and  
sweet

All the ways that feel her feet;

From the empire of her eyes

Light takes life, and darkness flies;

From the harvest of her hands

Wealth strikes root in prosperous  
lands;

Wisdom of her word is made;

At her strength is strength afraid;

From the beam of her bright spear

War's fleet foot goes back for fear;

In her shrine she reared the birth

Fire-begotten on live earth;

Glory from her helm was shed

On his olive-shadowed head;

By no hand but his shall she

Scourge the storms back of the sea,

To no fame but his shall give

Grace, being dead, with hers to

live,

And in double name divine

Half the godhead of their shrine.

But now with what word, with what  
woe may we meet

The timeless passage of piteous feet,

Hither that bend to the last way's end

They shall walk upon earth?

What song be rolled for a bride black-  
stoled

And the mother whose hand of her  
hand hath hold?

For anguish of heart is my soul's  
strength broken,

And the tongue sealed fast that would  
fain have spoken,

To behold thee, O child of so bitter a  
birth

That we counted so sweet,

What way thy steps to what bride-  
feast tend,

What gift he must give that shall wed  
thee for token

If the bridegroom be goodly to greet.

*Chthonia.* People, old men of my

city, lordly wise and hoar of head,  
I, a spouseless bride, and crownless but

with garlands of the dead,

From the fruitful light turn silent to  
my dark unchilded bed.

*Chorus.* Wise of word was he too  
surely, but with deadlier wisdom

wise,

First who gave thee name from under  
earth, no breath from upper skies,

When, foredoomed to this day's dark-  
ness, their first daylight filled

thine eyes.

*Praxithea.* Child, my child that wast,  
and art but death's and now no

more of mine,

Half my heart is cloven with anguish  
by the sword made sharp for

thine,

Half exalts its wing for triumph, that  
I bare thee thus divine.

*Chthonia.* Though for me the sword's  
edge thirst that sets no point

against thy breast,

Mother, O my mother, where I drank  
of life and fell on rest,

Thine, not mine, is all the grief that  
marks this hour accurst and

blest.

*Chorus.* Sweet thy sleep and sweet  
the bosom was that gave thee

sleep and birth;

Harder now the breast, and girded with  
no marriage-band for girth,

Where thine head shall sleep, the name-  
child of the lords of under earth.

*Praxithea.* Dark the name and dark  
the gifts they gave thee, child, in

childbirth were,

Sprung from him that rent the womb  
of earth, a bitter seed to bear,

Born with groanings of the ground that  
gave him way toward heaven's

dear air.

*Chthonia.* Day to day makes answer,  
 first to last, and life to death;  
 but I,  
 Born for death's sake, die for life's  
 sake, if indeed this be to die,  
 This my doom that seals me deathless  
 till the springs of time run dry.  
*Chorus.* Children shalt thou bear to  
 memory, that to man shalt bring  
 forth none;  
 Yea, the lordliest that lift eyes and  
 hearts and songs to meet the  
 sun,  
 Names to fire men's ears like music till  
 the round world's race be run.  
*Praxithea.* I thy mother, named of  
 gods that wreak revenge and  
 brand with blame,  
 Now for thy love shall be loved as thou,  
 and famous with thy fame,  
 While this city's name on earth shall  
 be for earth her mightiest name.  
*Chthonia.* That I may give this poor  
 girl's blood of mine  
 Scarce yet sun-warmed with summer,  
 this thin life  
 Still green with flowerless growth of  
 seedling days,  
 To build again my city; that no drop  
 Fallen of these innocent veins on the  
 cold ground  
 But shall help knit the joints of her  
 firm walls  
 To knead the stones together, and  
 make sure  
 The band about her maiden girdlestead  
 Once fastened, and of all men's violent  
 hands  
 Inviolable forever, — these to me  
 Were no such gifts as crave no thanks-  
 giving,  
 If with one blow dividing the sheer  
 life  
 I might make end, and one pang wind  
 up all,  
 And seal mine eyes from sorrow; for  
 such end  
 The gods give none they love not; but  
 my heart,  
 That leaps up lightened of all sloth or  
 fear  
 To take the sword's point, yet with one  
 thought's load

Flags, and falls back, broken of wing,  
 that halts  
 Maimed in mid flight for thy sake, and  
 borne down,  
 Mother, that in the places where I  
 played  
 An arm's-length from thy bosom and  
 no more  
 Shalt find me never, nor thine eye wax  
 glad  
 To mix with mine its eyesight, and for  
 love  
 Laugh without word, filled with sweet  
 light, and speak  
 Divine dumb things of the inward  
 spirit and heart,  
 Moved silently; nor hand or lip again  
 Touch hand or lip of either, but for  
 mine  
 Shall thine meet only shadows of swift  
 night,  
 Dreams and dead thoughts of dead  
 things; and the bed  
 Thou strewedst, a sterile place for all  
 time, strewn  
 For my sleep only, with its void sad  
 sheets  
 Shall vex thee, and the unfruitful cover-  
 lid  
 For empty days reproach me dead, that  
 leave  
 No profit of my body, but am gone  
 As not one worth being born to bear  
 no seed,  
 A sapless stock and branchless; yet  
 thy womb  
 Shall want not honor of me, that  
 brought forth  
 For all this people freedom, and for  
 earth  
 From the unborn city born out of my  
 blood  
 To light the face of all men ever-  
 more  
 Glory; but lay thou this to thy great  
 heart  
 Whereunder in the dark of birth con-  
 ceived  
 Mine unlit life lay girdled with the  
 zone  
 That bound thy bridal bosom; set this  
 thought  
 Against all edge of evil as a sword

To beat back sorrow, that for all the  
 world  
 Thou brought'st me forth a savior, who  
 shall save  
 Athens; for none but I, from none but  
 thee,  
 Shall take this death for garland; and  
 the men  
 Mine unknown children of unsounded  
 years,  
 My sons unrisen shall rise up at thine  
 hand,  
 Sown of thy seed to bring forth seed  
 to thee,  
 And call thee most of all most fruitful  
 found  
 Blessed; but me too for my barren  
 womb,  
 More than my sisters for their children  
 born,  
 Shall these give honor, yea in scorn's  
 own place  
 Shall men set love, and bring for mock-  
 ery praise,  
 And thanks for curses; for the dry  
 wild vine,  
 Scoffed at and cursed of all men, that  
 was I,  
 Shall shed them wine to make the  
 world's heart warm,  
 That all eyes seeing may lighten, and  
 all ears  
 Hear and be kindled; such a draught  
 to drink  
 Shall be the blood that bids this dust  
 bring forth,  
 The chalice life here spilt on this  
 mine earth,  
 Mine, my great father's mother; whom  
 I pray  
 Take me now gently, tenderly take  
 home,  
 And softly lay in his my cold chaste  
 hand  
 Who is called of men by my name,  
 being of gods  
 Charged only and chosen to bring men  
 under earth,  
 And now must lead and stay me with  
 his staff,  
 A silent soul led of a silent god,  
 Toward sightless things led sightless;  
 and on earth

I see now but the shadow of mine end,  
 And this last light of all for me in  
 heaven.

*Praxithea.* Farewell I bid thee; so  
 bid thou not me,  
 Lest the gods hear and mock us: yet  
 on these  
 I lay the weight not of this grief, nor  
 cast  
 Ill words for ill deeds back; for if one  
 say  
 They have done men wrong, what hurt  
 have they to hear,  
 Or he what help to have said it? surely,  
 child,  
 If one among men born might say it  
 and live  
 Blameless, none more than I may, who  
 being vexed  
 Hold yet my peace; for now through  
 tears enough  
 Mine eyes have seen the sun that from  
 this day  
 Thine shall see never more; and in the  
 night  
 Enough has blown of evil, and mine  
 ears  
 With wail enough the winds have filled,  
 and brought  
 Too much of cloud from over the sharp  
 sea  
 To mar for me the morning; such a  
 blast  
 Rent from these wide void arms and  
 helpless breast  
 Long since one graft of me disbranched,  
 and bore  
 Beyond the wild ways of the unwan-  
 dered world,  
 And loud wastes of the thunder  
 throated sea,  
 Springs of the night and openings of  
 the heaven,  
 The old garden of the Sun; whence  
 never more  
 From west or east shall winds bring  
 back that blow  
 From folds of opening heaven or founts  
 of night  
 The flower of mine once ravished, born  
 my child  
 To bear strange children; nor on wings  
 of theirs

|   |   |
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| <p>Shall comfort come back to me, nor<br/>their sire<br/>Breathe help upon my peril, nor his<br/>strength<br/>Raise up my weakness; but of gods<br/>and men<br/>I drift unsteered on ruin, and the wave<br/>Darkens my head with imminent height,<br/>and hangs<br/>Dumb, filled too full with thunder that<br/>shall leave<br/>These ears death-deafened when the<br/>tide finds tongue,<br/>And all its wrath bears on them; thee,<br/>O child,<br/>I help not, nor am holpen; fain, ah<br/>fain,<br/>More than was ever mother born of<br/>man,<br/>Were I to help thee; fain beyond all<br/>prayer,<br/>Beyond all thought fain to redeem thee,<br/>torn<br/>More timeless from me sorrowing than<br/>the dream<br/>That was thy sister; so shalt thou be<br/>too,<br/>Thou but a vision, shadow-shaped of<br/>sleep,<br/>By grief made out of nothing; now<br/>but once<br/>I touch, but once more hold thee, one<br/>more kiss<br/>This last time, and none other ever<br/>more,<br/>Leave on thy lips, and leave them. Go.<br/>Thou wast<br/>My heart, my heart's blood, life-blood<br/>of my life,<br/>My child, my nursling: now this breast<br/>once thine<br/>Shall rear again no children; never<br/>now<br/>Shall any mortal blossom born like<br/>thee<br/>Lie there, nor ever with small silent<br/>mouth<br/>Draw the sweet springs dry for an hour<br/>that feed<br/>The blind blithe life that knows not;<br/>never head<br/>Rest here to make these cold veins<br/>warm, nor eye</p> | <p>Laugh itself open with the lips that<br/>reach<br/>Lovingly toward a fount more loving;<br/>these<br/>Death makes as all good lesser things<br/>now dead,<br/>And all the latter hopes that flowered<br/>from these,<br/>And fall as these fell fruitless; no joy<br/>more<br/>Shall man take of thy maidenhood, no<br/>tongue<br/>Praise it; no good shall eyes get more<br/>of thee<br/>That lightened for thy love's sake.<br/>Now, take note,<br/>Give ear, O all ye people, that my<br/>word<br/>May pierce your hearts through, and<br/>the stroke that cleaves<br/>Be fruitful to them; so shall all that<br/>hear<br/>Grow great at heart with child of<br/>thought most high,<br/>And bring forth seed in season; this<br/>my child,<br/>This flower of this my body, this sweet<br/>life,<br/>This fair live youth I give you, to be<br/>slain,<br/>Spent, shed, poured out, and perish;<br/>take my gift,<br/>And give it death and the under gods<br/>who crave<br/>So much for that they give; for this is<br/>more,<br/>Much more is this than all we; for they<br/>give<br/>Freedom, and for a blast, an air of<br/>breath,<br/>A little soul that is not, they give back<br/>Light for all eyes, cheer for all hearts,<br/>and life<br/>That fills the world's width full of<br/>fame and praise<br/>And mightier love than children's.<br/>This they give,<br/>The grace to make thy country great,<br/>and wrest<br/>From time and death power to take<br/>hold on her,<br/>And strength to scathe forever; and<br/>this gift,</p> |
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Is this no more than man's love is or mine,  
 Mine and all mothers'? nay, where that seems more,  
 Where one loves life of child, wife, father, friend,  
 Son, husband, mother, more than this, even there  
 Are all these lives worth nothing, all loves else  
 With this love slain and buried, and their tomb  
 A thing for shame to spit on; for what love  
 Hath a slave left to love with? or the heart  
 Base-born and bound in bondage fast to fear,  
 What should it do to love thee? what hath he,  
 The man that hath no country? Gods nor men  
 Have such to friend, yoked beast-like to base life,  
 Vile, fruitless, grovelling at the foot of death,  
 Landless and kinless thralls of no man's blood,  
 Unchilded and unmothered, abject limbs  
 That breed things abject; but who loves on earth  
 Not friend, wife, husband, father, mother, child,  
 Nor loves his own life for his own land's sake,  
 But only this thing most, more this than all,  
 He loves all well, and well of all is loved,  
 And this love lives forever. See now, friends,  
 My countrymen, my brothers, with what heart  
 I give you this that of your hands again  
 The gods require for Athens: as I give,  
 So give ye to them what their hearts would have  
 Who shall give back things better; yea, and these  
 I take for me to witness, all these gods,  
 Were their great will more grievous than it is,

Not one but three, for this one thin-spun thread  
 A threefold band of children would I give  
 For this land's love's sake; for whose love to-day  
 I bid thee, child, fare deathward and farewell.  
*Chorus.* O wofullest of women, yet of all  
 Happiest, thy word be hallowed; in all time  
 Thy name shall blossom, and from strange new tongues  
 High things be spoken of thee; for such grace  
 The gods have dealt to no man, that on none  
 Have laid so heavy sorrow. From this day  
 Live thou assured of godhead in thy blood,  
 And in thy fate no lowlier than a god  
 In all good things and evil; such a name  
 Shall be thy child this city's, and thine own  
 Next hers that called it Athens. Go now forth  
 Blest, and grace with thee to the doors of death.  
*Chthonia.* O city, O glory of Athens, O crown of my father's land, farewell.  
*Chorus.* For welfare is given her of thee.  
*Chthonia.* O goddess, be good to thy people, that in them dominion and freedom may dwell.  
*Chorus.* Turn from us the strengths of the sea.  
*Chthonia.* Let glory's and theirs be one name in the mouths of all nations made glad with the sun.  
*Chorus.* For the cloud is blown back with thy breath.  
*Chthonia.* With the long last love of mine eyes I salute thee, O land where my days now are done.  
*Chorus.* But her life shall be born of thy death.  
*Chthonia.* I put on me the darkness thy shadow, my mother, and symbol, O Earth, of my name.

- Chorus.* For thine was her witness  
from birth.
- Chthonia.* In thy likeness I come to  
thee darkling, a daughter whose  
dawn and her even are the same.
- Chorus.* Be thine heart to her gra-  
cious, O Earth!
- Chthonia.* To thine own kind be kindly,  
for thy son's name's sake.
- Chorus.* That sons unborn may praise  
thee and thy first-born son.
- Chthonia.* Give me thy sleep, who give  
thee all my life awake.
- Chorus.* Too swift a sleep, ere half  
the web of day be spun.
- Chthonia.* Death brings the shears or  
ever life wind up the west.
- Chorus.* Their edge is ground and  
sharpened: who shall stay his  
hand?
- Chthonia.* The woof is thin, a small  
short life, with no thread left.
- Chorus.* Yet hath it strength,  
stretched out, to shelter all the  
land.
- Chthonia.* Too frail a tent for covering,  
and a screen too strait.
- Chorus.* Yet broad enough for buck-  
ler shall thy sweet life be.
- Chthonia.* A little bolt to bar off bat-  
tle from the gate.
- Chorus.* A wide sea-wall, that shat-  
ters the besieging sea.
- Chthonia.* I lift up mine eyes from  
the skirts of the shadow,  
From the border of death to the limits  
of light;  
O streams and rivers of mountain and  
meadow  
That hallow the last of my sight,  
O father that wast of my mother,  
Cephisus, O thou too his brother  
From the bloom of whose banks as  
a prey  
Winds harried my sister away,  
O crown on the world's head lying  
Too high for its waters to drown,  
Take yet this one word of me dying,  
O city, O crown!
- Though land-wind and sea-wind with  
mouths that blow slaughter  
Should gird them to battle against  
thee again,
- New-born of the blood of a maiden thy  
daughter,  
The rage of their breath shall be  
vain.  
For their strength shall be quenched  
and made idle,  
And the foam of their mouths find a  
bridle,  
And the height of their heads bow  
down  
At the foot of the towers of the  
town.  
Be blest and beloved as I love thee  
Of all that shall draw from thee  
breath;  
Be thy life as the sun's is above thee:  
I go to my death.
- Chorus.* Many loves of many a mood  
and many a kind  
Fill the life of man, and mould the  
secret mind;  
Many days bring many dooms, to loose  
and bind;  
Sweet is each in season, good the gift  
it brings,  
Sweet as change of night and day with  
altering wings,  
Night that lulls world-weary day, day  
that comforts night,  
Night that fills our eyes with sleep, day  
that fills with light.  
None of all is lovelier, loftier love is  
none,  
Less is bride's for bridegroom, moth-  
er's less for son,  
Child, than this that crowns and binds  
up all in one;  
Love of thy sweet light, thy fostering  
breast and hand,  
Mother Earth, and city chosen, and  
natural land;  
Hills that bring the strong streams forth,  
heights of heavenlier air,  
Fields aflower with winds and suns,  
woods with shadowing hair.  
But none of the nations of men shall  
they liken to thee,  
Whose children true-born and the fruit  
of thy body are we.  
The rest are thy sons but in figure, in  
word are thy seed;  
We only the flower of thy travail, thy  
children indeed.

Of thy soil hast thou fashioned our  
limbs, of thy waters their blood,  
And the life of thy springs everlasting  
is fount of our flood.

No wind oversea blew us hither adrift  
on thy shore,

None sowed us by land in thy womb  
that conceived us and bore.

But the stroke of the shaft of the sun-  
light that brought us to birth

Pierced only and quickened thy furrows  
to bear us, O Earth!

With the beams of his love wast thou  
cloven as with iron or fire,

And the life in thee yearned for his life,  
and grew great with desire.

And the hunger and thirst to be  
wounded and healed with his  
dart

Made fruitful the love in thy veins and  
the depth of thine heart.

And the showers out of heaven over-  
flowing and liquid with love

Fulfilled thee with child of his god-  
head as rain from above.

Such desire had ye twain of each other,  
till molten in one

Ye might bear and beget of your bodies  
the fruits of the sun.

And the trees in their season brought  
forth and were kindled anew

By the warmth of the moisture of mari-  
riage, the child-bearing dew.

And the firstlings were fair of the wed-  
lock of heaven and of earth;

All countries were bounteous with blos-  
som and bourgeon of birth,

Green pastures of grass for all cattle,  
and life-giving corn;

But here of thy bosom, here only, the  
man-child was born.

All races but one are as aliens ingrafted  
or sown,

Strange children and changelings; but  
we, O our mother, thine own.

Thy nurslings are others, and seedlings  
they know not of whom;

For these hast thou fostered, but us  
thou hast borne in thy womb.

Who is he of us all, O beloved, that  
owe thee for birth,

Who would give not his blood for his  
birth's sake, O mother, O Earth?

What landsman is he that was fos-  
tered and reared of thine hand

Who may vaunt him as we may in  
death though he die for the land?

Well doth she therefore who gives thee  
in guerdon

The bloom of the life of thy giving;  
And thy body was bowed by no fruitless  
burden,

That bore such fruit of thee living.  
For her face was not darkened for  
fear,

For her eyelids conceived not a tear,  
Nor a cry from her lips craved pity;

But her mouth was a fountain of song,  
And her heart as a citadel strong

That guards the heart of the city  
*Messenger.* High things of strong-  
souled men that loved their land

On brass and stone are written, and  
their deeds

On high days chanted; but none graven  
or sung

That ever set men's eyes or spirits on  
fire,

Athenians, has the sun's height seen, or  
earth

Heard in her depth reverberate as from  
heaven,

More worth men's praise and good re-  
port of gods

Than here I bring for record in your  
ears.

For now being come to the altar, where  
as priest

Death ministering should meet her, and  
his hand

Seal her sweet eyes asleep, the maiden  
stood,

With light in all her face as of a bride  
Smiling, or shine of festal flame by  
night

Far flung from towers of triumph; and  
her lips

Trembled with pride in pleasure, that  
no fear

Blanched them nor death before his  
time drank dry

The blood whose bloom fulfilled them;  
for her cheeks

Lightened, and brighter than a bridal  
veil

Her hair enrobed her bosom, and en-  
 rolled  
 From face to feet the body's whole soft  
 length  
 As with a cloud sun-saturate; then she  
 spake  
 With maiden tongue words manlike,  
 but her eyes  
 Lit mildly like a maiden's: *Country-*  
*men,*  
*With more good-will and height of hap-*  
*pier heart*  
*I give me to you than my mother bare,*  
*And go more gladly this great way to*  
*death*  
*Than young men bound to battle.* Then  
 with face  
 Turned to the shadowiest part of all  
 the shrine,  
 And eyes fast set upon the further  
 shade,  
*Take me, dear gods; and as some form*  
*had shone*  
 From the deep hollow shadow, some  
 god's tongue  
 Answered, *I bless you that your guardian*  
*grace*  
*Gives me to guard this country, takes my*  
*blood,*  
*Your child's by name, to heal it.* Then  
 the priest  
 Set to the flower-sweet snow of her  
 soft throat  
 The sheer knife's edge that severed it,  
 and loosed  
 From the fair bondage of so spotless  
 flesh  
 So strong a spirit; and all that girt  
 them round,  
 Gazing, with souls that hung on that  
 sad stroke,  
 Groaned, and kept silence after while a  
 man  
 Might count how far the fresh blood  
 crept, and bathed  
 How deep the dark robe and the bright  
 shrine's base  
 Red-rounded with a running ring that  
 grew  
 More large and duskier as the wells  
 that fed  
 Were drained of that pure effluence.  
 But the queen

Groaned not nor spake nor wept, but  
 as a dream  
 Floats out of eyes awakening, so passed  
 forth  
 Ghost-like, a shadow of sorrow, from  
 all sight,  
 To the inner court and chamber where  
 she sits  
 Dumb, till word reach her of this whole  
 day's end.  
*Chorus.* More hapless born by far  
 Beneath some wintrier star,  
 One sits in stone among high Lydian  
 snows,  
 The tomb of her own woes:  
 Yet happiest was once of the daughters  
 of gods, and divine by her sire  
 and her lord,  
 Ere her tongue was a shaft for the  
 hearts of her sons, for the heart  
 of her husband a sword.  
 For she, too great of mind,  
 Grown through her good things  
 blind,  
 With godless lips and fire of her own  
 breath  
 Spake all her house to death;  
 But thou, no mother unmothered, nor  
 kindled in spirit with pride of  
 thy seed,  
 Thou hast hallowed thy child for a  
 blameless blood-offering, and  
 ransomed thy race by thy deed.  
*Messenger.* As flower is grafted or  
 flower, so grief on grief  
 Engrafted brings forth new blossoms  
 of strange tears,  
 Fresh buds and green fruits of an alien  
 pain;  
 For now flies rumor on a dark wide  
 wing,  
 Murmuring of woes more than ye  
 knew, most like  
 Hers whom ye hailed most wretched;  
 for the twain  
 Last left of all this house that wore  
 last night  
 A threefold crown of maidens, and to-  
 day  
 Should let but one fall dead out of the  
 wreath,  
 If mad with grief we know not, and  
 sore love

For this their sister, or with shame  
 soul-stung  
 To outlive her dead, or doubt lest their  
 lives too  
 The gods require to seal their country  
 safe,  
 And bring the oracular doom to perfect  
 end,  
 Have slain themselves, and fallen at  
 the altar-foot  
 Lie by their own hands done to death;  
 and fear  
 Shakes all the city as winds a wintering  
 tree,  
 And as dead leaves are men's hearts  
 blown about  
 And shrunken with ill thoughts, and  
 flowerless hopes  
 Parched up with presage, lest the pit-  
 eous blood  
 Shed of these maidens guiltless fall and fix  
 On this land's forehead like a curse that  
 cleaves  
 To the unclean soul's inxpiate hunted  
 head  
 Whom his own crime tracks hotlier  
 than a hound  
 To life's veiled end unsleeping; and  
 this hour  
 Now blackens toward the battle that  
 must close  
 All gates of hope and fear on all their  
 hearts  
 Who tremble toward its issue, knowing  
 not yet  
 If blood may buy them surety, cleanse  
 or soil  
 The helpless hands men raise, and reach  
 no stay.  
*Chorus.* Ill thoughts breed fear, and  
 fear ill words; but these  
 The gods turn from us that have kept  
 their law.  
 Let us lift up the strength of our  
 hearts in song,  
 And our souls to the height of the  
 darkling day.  
 If the wind in our eyes blow blood  
 for spray,  
 Be the spirit that breathes in us life  
 more strong,  
 Though the prow reel round, and the  
 helm point wrong,

And sharp reefs whiten the shore-  
 ward way.  
 For the steersman Time sits hidden  
 astern,  
 With dark hand plying the rudder  
 of doom,  
 And the surf-smoke under it flies  
 like fume  
 As the blast shears off and the oar-  
 blades churn  
 The foam of our lives that to death  
 return,  
 Blown back as they break to the  
 gulping gloom.  
 What cloud upon heaven is arisen,  
 what shadow, what sound,  
 From the world beyond earth, from  
 the night underground,  
 That scatters from wings un beholden the  
 weight of its darkness around?  
 For the sense of my spirit is broken,  
 and blinded its eye,  
 As the soul of a sick man ready to  
 die,  
 With fear of the hour that is on me,  
 with dread if an end be not nigh.  
 O Earth, O gods of the land, have  
 ye heart now to see and to hear  
 What slays with terror mine eye-  
 sight, and seals mine ear?  
 O fountains of streams everlasting, are  
 all ye not shrunk up and withered  
 for fear?  
 Lo, night is arisen on the noon, and  
 her hounds are in quest by day,  
 And the world is fulfilled of the  
 noise of them crying for their  
 prey,  
 And the sun's self stricken in heaven-  
 and cast out of his course as a  
 blind man astray.  
 From east to west of the south sea-  
 line,  
 Glitters the lightning of spears that  
 shine;  
 As a storm-cloud swoln that comes up  
 from the skirts of the sea,  
 By the wind for helmsman to shore-  
 ward ferried,  
 So black behind them the live storm  
 serried  
 Shakes earth with the tramp of its foot,  
 and the terror to be.

Shall the sea give death whom the  
 land gave birth?  
 O Earth, fair mother, O sweet live  
 Earth,  
 Hide us again in thy womb from the  
 waves of it, help us or hide.  
 As a sword is the heart of the god  
 thy brother,  
 But thine as the heart of a new-made  
 mother,  
 To deliver thy sons from his ravin, and  
 rage of his tide.  
 O strong north wind, the pilot of  
 cloud and rain,  
 For the gift we gave thee what gift  
 hast thou given us again?  
 O god dark-winged, deep-throated, a ter-  
 ror to forth-faring ships by night,  
 What bride-song is this that is blown  
 on the blast of thy breath?  
 A gift but of grief to thy kinsmen, a  
 song but of death,  
 For the bride's folk weeping, and woe  
 for her father, who finds thee  
 against him in fight.  
 Turn back from us, turn thy battle,  
 take heed of our cry;  
 Let thy dread breath sound, and the  
 waters of war be dry;  
 Let thy strong wrath shatter the strength  
 of our foemen, the sword of their  
 strength and the shield;  
 As vapors in heaven, or as waves  
 or the wrecks of ships,  
 So break thou the ranks of their  
 spears with the breath of thy lips,  
 Till their corpses have covered and  
 clothed as with raiment the face  
 of the sword-ploughed field.  
 O son of the rose-red morning, O  
 god twin-born with the day,  
 O wind with the young sun waking,  
 and winged for the same wide  
 way,  
 Give up not the house of thy kin to  
 the host thou hast marshalled  
 from northward for prey.  
 From the cold of thy cradle in  
 Thrace, from the mists of the  
 fountains of night,  
 From the bride-bed of dawn whence  
 day leaps laughing, on fire for  
 his flight,  
 Come down with their doom in thine  
 hand on the ships thou hast  
 brought up against us to fight.  
 For now not in word but in deed is the  
 harvest of spears begun,  
 And its clamor outbellows the thunder,  
 its lightning outlightens the sun.  
 From the springs of the morning it  
 thunders and lightens across  
 and afar  
 To the wave where the moonset ends,  
 and the fall of the last low  
 star.  
 With a trampling of drenched red hoofs  
 and an earthquake of men that  
 meet,  
 Strong War sets hand to the scythe, and  
 the furrows take fire from his  
 feet.  
 Earth groans from her great rent heart,  
 and the hollows of rocks are  
 afraid,  
 And the mountains are moved, and the  
 valleys as waves in a storm-wind  
 swayed.  
 From the roots of the hills to the  
 plain's dim verge and the dark  
 loud shore,  
 Air shudders with shrill spears cross-  
 ing, and hurtling of wheels that  
 roar.  
 As the grinding of teeth in the jaws of  
 a lion that foam as they gnash,  
 Is the shriek of the axles that loosen,  
 the shock of the poles that  
 crash.  
 The dense manes darken and glitter,  
 the mouths of the mad steeds  
 champ,  
 Their heads flash blind through the  
 battle, and death's foot-rings in  
 their tramp.  
 For a fourfold host upon earth and in  
 heaven is arrayed for the fight,  
 Clouds ruining in thunder and armies  
 encountering as clouds in the  
 night.  
 Mine ears are amazed with the terror  
 of trumpets, with darkness mine  
 eyes,  
 At the sound of the sea's host charging  
 that deafens the roar of the  
 sky's.

White frontlet is dashed upon frontlet,  
 and horse against horse reels  
 hurled,  
 And the gorge of the gulfs of the bat-  
 tle is wide for the spoil of the  
 world.  
 And the meadows are cumbered with  
 shipwreck of chariots that found-  
 er on land,  
 And the horsemen are broken with  
 breach as of breakers, and scat-  
 tered as sand.  
 Through the roar and recoil of the  
 charges that mingle their cries  
 and confound,  
 Like fire are the notes of the trumpets  
 that flash through the darkness  
 of sound.  
 As the swing of the sea churned yellow  
 that sways with the wind as it  
 swells,  
 As the lift and relapse of the wave of  
 the chargers that clash with their  
 bells;  
 And the clang of the sharp shrill brass  
 through the burst of the wave as  
 it shocks  
 Rings clean as the clear winds cry  
 through the roar of the surge on  
 the rocks;  
 And the heads of the steeds in their  
 headgear of war, and their  
 corseleted breasts,  
 Gleam broad as the brows of the bil-  
 lows that brighten the storm  
 with their crests,  
 Gleam dread as their bosoms that heave  
 to the shipwrecking wind as they  
 rise,  
 Filled full of the terror and thunder of  
 water, that slays as it dies.  
 So dire is the glare of their fore-  
 heads, so fearful the fire of their  
 breath,  
 And the light of their eyeballs en-  
 kindled so bright with the light-  
 nings of death;  
 And the foam of their mouths as the  
 sea's when the jaws of its gulf  
 are as graves,  
 And the ridge of their necks as the  
 wind-shaken mane on the ridges  
 of waves;

And their fetlocks afire as they rear  
 drip thick with a dewfall of blood  
 As the lips of the rearing breaker with  
 froth of the man-slaying flood;  
 And the whole plain reels and resounds  
 as the fields of the sea by night  
 When the stroke of the wind falls dark-  
 ling, and death is the seafarer's  
 light.  
 But thou, fair beauty of heaven, dear  
 face of the day nigh dead,  
 What horror hath hidden thy glory, what  
 hand hath muffled thine head?  
 O sun, with what song shall we call  
 thee, or ward off thy wrath by  
 what name,  
 With what prayer shall we seek to thee,  
 soothe with what incense, as-  
 suage with what gift,  
 If thy light be such only as lightens to  
 deathward the seaman adrift  
 With the fire of his house for a  
 beacon, that foemen have wasted  
 with flame?  
 Arise now, lift up thy light; give ear  
 to us, put forth thine hand,  
 Reach toward us thy torch of deliver-  
 ance, a lamp for the night of the  
 land.  
 Thine eye is the light of the living,  
 no lamp for the dead;  
 Oh, lift up the light of thine eye on  
 the dark of our dread!  
 Who hath blinded thee? who hath  
 prevailed on thee? who hath en-  
 snared?  
 Who hath broken thy bow, and the  
 shafts for thy battle prepared?  
 Have they found out a fetter to bind  
 thee, a chain for thine arm that  
 was bared?  
 Be the name of thy conqueror set forth,  
 and the might of thy master de-  
 clared.  
 O god, fair god of the morning, O  
 glory of day,  
 What ails thee to cast from thy fore-  
 head its garland away?  
 To pluck from thy temples their chap-  
 let enwreathed of the light,  
 And bind on the brows of thy god  
 head a frontlet of night?

Thou hast loosened the necks of thine  
 horses, and goaded their flanks  
 with affright,  
 To the race of a course that we know  
 not, on ways that are hid from  
 our sight.  
 As a wind through the darkness the  
 wheels of their chariot are  
 whirled,  
 And the light of its passage is night  
 on the face of the world.  
 And there falls from the wings of thy  
 glory no help from on high,  
 But a shadow that smites us with fear  
 and desire of thine eye.  
 For our hearts are as reeds that a wind  
 on the water bows down and  
 goes by,  
 To behold not thy comfort in heaven  
 that hath left us untimely to die.  
 But what light is it now leaps forth  
 on the land  
 Enkindling the waters and ways of  
 the air  
 From thy forehead made bare,  
 From the gleam of thy bow-bearing  
 hand?  
 Hast thou set not thy right hand again  
 to the string,  
 With the back-bowed horns bent  
 sharp for a spring  
 And the barbed shaft drawn,  
 Till the shrill steel sing, and the tense  
 nerve ring,  
 That pierces the heart of the dark  
 with dawn,  
 O huntsman, O king,  
 When the flame of thy face hath twi-  
 light in chase  
 As a hound hath a blood-mottled fawn?  
 He has glanced into golden the gray  
 sea-strands,  
 And the clouds are shot through with  
 the fires of his hands,  
 And the height of the hollow of  
 heaven that he fills  
 As the heart of a strong man is quick-  
 ened and thrills;  
 High over the folds of the low-lying  
 lands,  
 On the shadowless hills  
 As a guard on his watch-tower he  
 stands.

All earth and all ocean, all depth and  
 all height,  
 At the flash of an eyebeam are filled  
 with his might:  
 The sea roars backward, the storm  
 drops dumb,  
 And silence as dew on the fire of the  
 fight  
 Falls kind in our ears as his face in  
 our sight  
 With presage of peace to come.  
 Fresh hope in my heart from the  
 ashes of dread  
 Leaps clear as a flame from the pyres  
 of the dead,  
 That joy out of woe  
 May arise as the spring out of tempest  
 and snow,  
 With the flower-feasted month in her  
 hands rose-red  
 Borne soft as a babe from the bear-  
 ing-bed.  
 Yet it knows not indeed if a god be  
 friend,  
 If rescue may be from the rage of the  
 sea,  
 Or the wrath of its lord have  
 end.  
 For the season is full now of death  
 or of birth,  
 To bring forth life, or an end of all;  
 And we know not if any thing stand  
 or fall  
 That is girdled about with the round  
 sea's girth  
 As a town with its wall;  
 But thou that art highest of the gods  
 most high,  
 That art lord if we live, that art lord  
 though we die,  
 Have heed of the tongues of our ter-  
 ror that cry  
 For a grace to the children of Earth.  
*Athenian Herald.* Sons of Athens,  
 heavy-laden with the holy weight  
 of years,  
 Be your hearts as young men's lightened  
 of their loathlier load of fears;  
 For the wave is sunk whose thunder  
 shoreward shook the shuddering  
 lands,  
 And unbreached of warring waters  
 Athens like a sea-rock stands.



*Chorus.* Well thy word has cheered us, well thy face and glittering eyes, that spake

Ere thy tongue spake words of comfort; yet no pause behoves it make Till the whole good hap find utterance that the gods have given at length.

*Athenian Herald.* All is this, that yet the city stands unforced by stranger strength.

*Chorus.* Sweeter sound might no mouth utter in man's ear than this thy word.

*Athenian Herald.* Feed thy soul then full of sweetness till some bitterer note be heard.

*Chorus.* None, if this ring sure, can mar the music fallen from heaven as rain.

*Athenian Herald.* If no fire of sun or star untimely sear the tender grain.

*Chorus.* Fresh the dewfall of thy tidings on our hopes reflowering lies.

*Athenian Herald.* Till a joyless shower and fruitless blight them, raining from thine eyes.

*Chorus.* Bitter springs have barren issues; these bedew grief's arid sands.

*Athenian Herald.* Such thank-offerings ask such altars as expect thy suppliant hands.

*Chorus.* Tears for triumph, wail for welfare, what strange godhead's shrine requires?

*Athenian Herald.* Death's or victory's be it, a funeral torch feeds all its festal fires.

*Chorus.* Like a star should burn the beacon flaming from our city's head.

*Athenian Herald.* Like a balefire should the flame go up that says the king is dead.

*Chorus.* Out of heaven, a wild-haired meteor, shoots this new sign, scattering fear.

*Athenian Herald.* Yea, the word has wings of fire that hovered, loath to burn thine ear.

*Chorus.* From thy lips it leapt forth loosened on a shrill and shadowy wing.

*Athenian Herald.* Long they faltered, fain to hide it deep as death that hides the king.

*Chorus.* Dead with him blind hope lies blasted by the lightning of one sword.

*Athenian Herald.* On thy tongue truth wars with error: no man's edge hath touched thy lord.

*Chorus.* False was thine then, jangling menace like a war-steed's brow-bound bell?

*Athenian Herald.* False it rang not joy nor sorrow; but by no man's hand he fell.

*Chorus.* Vainly then good news and evil through so faint a trumpet spake.

*Athenian Herald.* All too long thy soul yet labors, as who sleeping fain would wake,

Waking, fain would fall on sleep again; the woe thou knowest not yet, When thou knowest, shall make thy memory thirst and hunger to forget.

*Chorus.* Long my heart has hearkened, hanging on thy clamorous ominous cry,

Fain yet fearful of the knowledge whence it looks to live or die;

Now to take the perfect presage of thy dark and sidelong flight

Comes a surer soothsayer sorrowing, sable-stoled as birds of night.

*Praxithea.* Man, what thy mother bare thee born to say,

Speak; for no word yet wavering on thy lip

Can wound me worse than thought forestalls or fear.

*Athenian Herald.* I have no will to weave too fine or far,

O queen, the weft of sweet with bitter speech,

Bright words with darkling; but the brief truth shown

Shall plead my pardon for a lingering tongue,

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>Loath yet to strike hope through the heart, and slay.<br/>         The sun's light still was lordly housed in heaven<br/>         When the twain fronts of war encountering smote<br/>         First fire out of the battle; but not long<br/>         Had the fresh wave of windy fight begun<br/>         Heaving, and all the surge of swords to sway,<br/>         When timeless night laid hold of heaven, and took<br/>         With its great gorge the noon as in a gulf,<br/>         Strangled; and thicker than the shrill-winged shafts<br/>         Flew the fleet lightnings, held in chase through heaven<br/>         By headlong heat of thunders on their trail<br/>         Loosed as on quest of quarry; that our host,<br/>         Smit with sick presage of some wrathful god,<br/>         Quailed, but the foe as from one iron throat<br/>         With one great sheer sole thousand-throated cry<br/>         Shook earth, heart-staggered from their shout, and clove<br/>         The eyeless hollow of heaven; and breached therewith<br/>         As with an onset of strength-shattering sound,<br/>         The rent vault of the roaring noon of night<br/>         From her throned seat of usurpation rang<br/>         Reverberate answer; such response there pealed<br/>         As though the tide's charge of a storming sea<br/>         Had burst the sky's wall, and made broad a breach<br/>         In the ambient girth and bastion flanked with stars<br/>         Guarding the fortress of the gods, and all<br/>         Crashed now together on ruin; and through that cry,<br/>         And higher above it, ceasing, one man's note</p> | <p>Tore its way like a trumpet: <i>Charge, make end,</i><br/> <i>Charge, halt not, strike, rend up their strength by the roots,</i><br/> <i>Strike, break them, make your birth-right's promise sure,</i><br/> <i>Show your hearts hardier than the fenced land breeds,</i><br/> <i>And souls breathed in you from no spirit of earth,</i><br/> <i>Sons of the sea's waves!</i> And all ears that heard<br/>         Rang with that fiery cry, that the fine air<br/>         Thereat was fired, and kindling filled the plain<br/>         Full of that fierce and trumpet-quenching breath<br/>         That spake the clarions silent; no glad song<br/>         For folk to hear that wist how dire a god<br/>         Begat this peril to them, what strong race<br/>         Fathered the sea-born tongue that sang them death,<br/>         Threatening: so raged through the red foam of fight<br/>         Poseidon's son Eumolpus; and the war<br/>         Quailed round him coming, and our side bore back,<br/>         As a stream thwarted by the wind and sea<br/>         That meet it midway mouth to mouth, and beat<br/>         The flood back of its issue; but the king<br/>         Shouted against them, crying, <i>O Father-god,</i><br/> <i>Source of the god my father, from thine hand</i><br/> <i>Send me what end seems good now in thy sight,</i><br/> <i>But death from mine to this man;</i> and the word<br/>         Quick on his lips yet like a blast of fire<br/>         Blew them together; and round its lords that met<br/>         Paused all the reeling battle: two main waves<br/>         Meeting, one hurled sheer from the sea-wall back</p> |
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|---|--|
| That shocks it sideways, one right in<br>from sea           | Stand, and take breath from battle;<br>then too soon   |
| Charging, that full in face takes at one<br>blow            | Saw sink down as a sunset in sea-mist  |
| That whole recoil and ruin, with less fear                  | The high bright head that here in van<br>of the earth  |
| Startle men's eyes late shipwrecked;<br>for a breath        | Rose like a headland, and through<br>storm and night   |
| Crest fronting crest hung, wave to wave<br>rose poised,     | Took all the sea's wrath on it; and<br>now dead  |
| Then clashed, breaker to breaker;<br>cloud with cloud       | They bring thee back by war-forsaken<br>ways   |
| In heaven, chariot with chariot closed<br>on earth,         | The strength called once thy husband,<br>the great guard                                       |
| One fourfold flash and thunder; yet a<br>breath,            | That was of all men, stay of all men's<br>lives.   |
| And with the king's spear through his<br>red heart's root   | They bear him slain of no man, but a<br>god,   |
| Driven, like a rock split from its hill-<br>side, fell      | Godlike; and toward him dead the<br>city's gates   |
| Hurled under his own horsehoofs dead<br>on earth            | Fling their arms open mother-like,<br>through him  |
| The sea-beast that made war on earth<br>from sea,           | Saved; and the whole clear land is<br>purged of war.   |
| Dumb, with no shrill note left of storm-<br>ing song,       | What wilt thou say now of this weal<br>and woe?  |
| Eumolpus; and his whole host with<br>one stroke             | <i>Praxithea.</i> I praise the gods for<br>Athens. O sweet Earth,                              |
| Spear-stricken through its dense deep<br>iron heart         | Mother, what joy thy soul has of thy<br>son,   |
| Fell hurtling from us, and in fierce re-<br>coil            | Thy life of my dead lord, mine own<br>soul knows   |
| Drew seaward as with one wide wail of<br>waves,             | That knows thee godlike; and what<br>grief should mine,  |
| Resorbed with reluctance; such a<br>groan                   | What sorrow should my heart have,<br>who behold  |
| Rose from the fluctuant reflux of its<br>ranks,             | Thee made so heaven-like happy <sup>1</sup><br>This alone                                      |
| Sucked sullen back and strengthless;<br>but scarce yet      | I only of all these blessed, all thy kind,<br>Crave this for blessing to me, that in<br>theirs |
| The steeds had sprung, and wheels had<br>bruised their lord | Have but a part thus bitter; give me<br>too  |
| Fallen, when from highest height of<br>the sundering heaven | Death, and the sight of eyes that meet<br>not mine.  |
| The Father for his brother's son's sake<br>slain            | And thee too from no godless heart or<br>tongue  |
| Sent a sheer shaft of lightning writhen,<br>and smote       | Reproachful, thee too by thy living<br>name,   |
| Right on his son's son's forehead, that<br>unhelmed         | Father divine, merciful god, I call,<br>Spring of my life-springs, fountain of<br>my stream,   |
| Shone like the star that shines down<br>storm, and gave     | Pure and poured forth to one great end<br>with thine.  |
| Light to men's eyes that saw thy lord<br>their king         |  |

Sweet head sublime of triumph and  
 these tears,  
 Cephisus, if thou seest as gladly shed  
 Thy blood in mine as thine own waves  
 are given  
 To do this great land good, to give for  
 love  
 The same lips drink, and comfort the  
 same hearts,  
 Do thou then, O my father, white-  
 souled god,  
 To thy most pure earth-hallowing heart  
 eterne  
 Take what thou gavest to be given for  
 these,  
 Take thy child to thee; for her time is  
 full,  
 For all she hath borne she hath given,  
 seen all she had  
 Flow from her, from her eyes and  
 breasts and hands  
 Flow forth to feed this people; but be  
 thou,  
 Dear god and gracious to all souls  
 alive,  
 Good to thine own seed also; let me  
 sleep,  
 Father; my sleepless darkling day is  
 done,  
 My day of life like night, but slumber-  
 less:  
 For all my fresh fair springs, and his  
 that ran  
 In one stream's bed with mine, are all  
 run out  
 Into the deep of death. The gods  
 have saved  
 Athens; my blood has bought her at  
 their hand,  
 And ye sit safe; be glorious and be  
 glad  
 As now for all time always, country-  
 men,  
 And love my dead forever; but me,  
 me,  
 What shall man give for these so good  
 as death?

*Chorus.* From the cup of my heart I  
 pour through my lips along  
 The mingled wine of a joyful and sor-  
 rowful song;  
 Wine sweeter than honey and bitterer  
 than blood that is poured

From the chalice of gold, from the  
 point of the two-edged sword.  
 For the city redeemed should joy flow  
 forth as a flood,  
 And a dirge make moan for the city  
 polluted with blood.  
 Great praise should the gods have  
 surely, my country, of thee,  
 Were thy brow but as white as of old  
 for thy sons to see,  
 Were thy hands as bloodless, as blame-  
 less thy cheek divine;  
 But a stain on it stands of the life-blood  
 offered for thine.  
 What thanks shall we give that are  
 mixed not and marred with  
 dread  
 For the price that has ransomed thine  
 own with thine own child's head?  
 For a taint there cleaves to the peo-  
 ple redeemed with blood,  
 And a plague to the blood-red  
 hand.  
 The rain shall not cleanse it, the dew  
 nor the sacred flood  
 That blesses the glad live land.  
 In the darkness of earth beneath, in  
 the world without sun,  
 The shadows of past things reign;  
 And a cry goes up from the ghost of  
 an ill deed done,  
 And a curse for a virgin slain.  
*Athena.* Hear, men that mourn, and  
 woman without mate,  
 Harken; ye sick of soul with fear,  
 and thou  
 Dumb-stricken for thy children; hear  
 ye too,  
 Earth, and the glory of heaven, and  
 winds of the air,  
 And the most holy heart of the deep  
 sea,  
 Late wroth, now full of quiet; hear  
 thou, sun,  
 Rolled round with the upper fire of  
 rolling heaven,  
 And all the stars returning; hills and  
 streams,  
 Springs and fresh fountains, day that  
 seest these deeds,  
 Night that shalt hide not; and thou  
 child of mine,  
 Child of a maiden, by a maid redeemed,

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>Blood-guiltless, though bought back<br/>with innocent blood,<br/>City mine own: I Pallas bring thee<br/>word,<br/>I virgin daughter of the most high god<br/>Give all you charge, and lay command<br/>on all,<br/>The word I bring be wasted not; for<br/>this<br/>The gods have stablished, and his soul<br/>hath sworn,<br/>That time nor earth nor changing sons<br/>of man,<br/>Nor waves of generations, nor the<br/>winds<br/>Of ages risen and fallen that steer their<br/>tides<br/>Through light and dark of birth and<br/>lovelier death<br/>From storm toward haven inviolable,<br/>shall see<br/>So great a light alive beneath the sun<br/>As the aweless eye of Athens; all fame<br/>else<br/>Shall be to her fame as a shadow in<br/>sleep<br/>To this wide noon at waking; men<br/>most praised<br/>In lands most happy for their children<br/>found<br/>Shall hold as highest honors given of<br/>God<br/>To be but likened to the least of thine,<br/>Thy least of all, my city; thine shall<br/>be<br/>The crown of all songs sung, of all<br/>deeds done<br/>Thine the full flower for all time; in<br/>thine hand<br/>Shall time be like a sceptre, and thine<br/>head<br/>Wear worship for a garland; nor one<br/>leaf<br/>Shall change or winter cast out of thy<br/>crown<br/>Till all flowers wither in the world;<br/>thine eyes<br/>Shall first in man's flash lightning lib-<br/>erty,<br/>Thy tongue shall first say freedom;<br/>thy first hand<br/>Shall loose the thunder terror as a<br/>hound</p> | <p>To hunt from sunset to the springs of<br/>the sun<br/>Kings that rose up out of the populous<br/>east<br/>To make their quarry of thee, and shall<br/>strew<br/>With multitudinous limbs of myriad<br/>herds<br/>The foodless pastures of the sea, and<br/>make<br/>With wrecks immeasurable and un-<br/>summed defeat<br/>One ruin of all their many-folded flocks<br/>Ill shepherded from Asia; by thy side<br/>Shall fight thy son the north wind, and<br/>the sea<br/>That was thine enemy shall be sworn<br/>thy friend<br/>And hand be struck in hand of his and<br/>thine<br/>To hold faith fast for aye; with thee,<br/>though each<br/>Make war on other, wind and sea shall<br/>keep<br/>Peace, and take truce as brethren for<br/>thy sake<br/>Leagued with one spirit and single-<br/>hearted strength<br/>To break thy foes in pieces, who shall<br/>meet<br/>The wind's whole soul and might of the<br/>main sea<br/>Full in their face of battle, and become<br/>A laughter to thee; like a shower of<br/>leaves<br/>Shall their long galleys, rank by stagger-<br/>ing rank,<br/>Be dashed adrift on ruin, and in thy<br/>sight<br/>The sea deride them, and that lord of<br/>the air<br/>Who took by violent hand thy child to<br/>wife<br/>With his loud lips bemock them, by his<br/>breath<br/>Swept out of sight of being; so great<br/>a grace<br/>Shall this day give thee, that makes one<br/>in heart<br/>With mine the deep sea's godhead, and<br/>his son<br/>With him that was thine helmsman,<br/>king with king,</p> |
|--|---|

Dead man with dead; such only names  
 as these  
 Shalt thou call royal, take none else or  
 less  
 To hold of men in honor; but with me  
 Shall these be worshipped as one god,  
 and mix  
 With mine the might of their mysterious  
 names  
 In one same shrine served singly, thence  
 to keep  
 Perpetual guard on Athens; time and  
 change,  
 Masters and lords of all men, shall be  
 made  
 To thee that knowest no master and no  
 lord  
 Servants; the days that lighten heaven,  
 and nights  
 That darken, shall be ministers of thine  
 To attend upon thy glory, the great  
 years  
 As light-engraven letters of thy name  
 Writ by the sun's hand on the front of  
 the earth  
 For world-beholden witness; such a  
 gift  
 For one fair chaplet of three lives en-  
 wreathed  
 To hang forever from thy storied shrine,  
 And this thy steersman fallen with tiller  
 in hand  
 To stand forever at thy ship's helm seen,  
 Shall he that bade their threefold flower  
 be shorn  
 And laid him low that planted, give  
 thee back  
 In sign of sweet land reconciled with  
 sea  
 And heavenlike earth with heaven:  
 such promise-pledge  
 I daughter without mother born of God  
 To the most woful mother born of man  
 Plight for continual comfort. Hail, and  
 live

Beyond all human hap of mortal doom  
 Happy; for so my sire hath sworn and  
 I.

*Praxithea.* O queen Athena! from a  
 heart made whole

Take as thou givest us blessing; never  
 tear

Shall stain for shame, nor groan untune  
 the song

That as a bird shall spread and fold its  
 wings

Here in thy praise forever, and fulfil  
 The whole world's crowning city

crowned with thee  
 As the sun's eye fulfils and crowns with  
 sight

The circling crown of heaven. There  
 is no grief

Great as the joy to be made one in will  
 With him that is the heart and rule of  
 life,

And thee, god born of god; thy name  
 is ours,

And thy large grace more great than  
 our desire.

*Chorus.* From the depth of the  
 springs of my spirit a fountain

is poured of thanksgiving,

My country, my mother, for thee,  
 That thy dead for their death shall have

life in thy sight and a name ever-  
 living

At heart of thy people to be.

In the darkness of change ont he waters  
 of time they shall turn from afar

To the beam of this dawn for a beacon,  
 the light of these pyres for a star.

They shall see thee who love and take  
 comfort, who hate thee shall see

and take warning,  
 Our mother that makest us free;

And the sons of thine earth shall have  
 help of the waves that made war

on their morning,  
 And friendship and fame of the sea.

# CHASTELARD: A TRAGEDY.

DEDICATE THIS PLAY, AS A PARTIAL EXPRESSION OF REVERENCE AND GRATITUDE, TO THE CHIEF OF LIVING POETS; TO THE FIRST DRAMATIST OF HIS AGE; TO THE GREATEST EXILE, AND THEREFORE TO THE GREATEST MAN OF FRANCE; TO VICTOR HUGO.

## PERSONS.

|                  |                                   |               |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| MARY STUART.     | MARY HAMILTON.                    | RANDOLPH.     |
| MARY BEATON.     | PIERRE DE BOSCOSEL DE CHASTELARD. | MORTON.       |
| MARY SEYTON.     | DARNLEY.                          | LINDSAY.      |
| MARY CARMICHAEL. | MURRAY.                           | FATHER BLACK. |

*Guards, Burgesses, a Preacher, Citizens, etc.*

Another Ile is there toward the Northe, in the See Ocean, where that ben fulle cruele and ful vele Wommen of Nature: and thei han precious Stones in hire Eyen; and thei ben of that kynde, that zif they beholden ony man, thei slen him anon with the beheldyng, as dothe the Basilisk.

MAUNDEVILE'S *Voiage and Travaile*, Ch. xxviii.

## ACT I. MARY BEATON.

SCENE I.—*The Upper Chamber in Holyrood.*

*The four MARIES.*

*Mary Beaton (sings):—*

1.

*Le navire  
Est à l'eau ;  
Entends rire  
Ce gros flot  
Que fait luire  
Et bruire  
Le vieux sire  
Aquila.*

2.

*Dans l'espace  
Du grand air  
Le vent passe  
Comme un fer*

*Siffle et sonne,  
Tombe et tonne,  
Prend et donne  
À la mer.*

3.

*Vois, la brise  
Tourne au nord,  
Et la bise  
Souffle et mord  
Sur ta pure  
Chevelure  
Qui murmure  
Et se tord.*

*Mary Hamilton.* You never sing now  
but it makes you sad;  
Why do you sing?  
*Mary Beaton.* I hardly know well  
why;  
It makes me sad to sing, and very sad  
To hold my peace.

- Mary Carmichael.* I know what saddens you.
- Mary Beaton.* Prithee, what? what?
- Mary Carmichael.* Why, since we came from France.
- You have no lover to make stuff for songs.
- Mary Beaton.* You are wise; for there my pain begins indeed, Because I have no lovers out of France.
- Mary Seyton.* I mind me of one Olivier de Pesme,  
(You knew him, sweet) a pale man with short hair,  
Wore tied at sleeve the Beaton color.
- Mary Carmichael.* Blue —
- I know, blue scarfs. I never liked that knight.
- Mary Hamilton.* Me? I know him? I hardly knew his name.
- Black, was his hair? no, brown.
- Mary Seyton.* Light pleases you: I have seen the time brown served you well enough.
- Mary Carmichael.* Lord Darnley's is a mere maid's yellow.
- Mary Hamilton.* No;  
A man's, good color.
- Mary Seyton.* Ah, does that burn your blood?
- Why, what a bitter color is this red That fills your face! if you be not in love,  
I am no maiden.
- Mary Hamilton.* Nay, God help true hearts!
- I must be stabbed with love then, to the bone,  
Yea, to the spirit, past cure.
- Mary Seyton.* What were you saying? I see some jest run up and down your lips.
- Mary Carmichael.* Finish your song; I know you have more of it;  
Good sweet, I pray you do.
- Mary Beaton.* I am too sad.
- Mary Carmichael.* This will not sadden you to sing; your song Tastes sharp of sea and the sea's bitterness,  
But small pain sticks on it.
- Mary Beaton.* Nay, it is sad;  
For either sorrow with the beaten lips
- Sings not at all, or if it does get breath  
Sings quick and sharp like a hard sort of mirth:
- And so this song does; or I would it did,  
That it might please me better than it does.
- Mary Seyton.* Well, as you choose then. What a sort of men Crowd all about the squares!
- Mary Carmichael.* Ay, hateful men; For look how many talking mouths be there,  
So many angers show their teeth at us. Which one is that, stooped somewhat in the neck,  
That walks so with his chin against the wind,  
Lips sideways shut? a keen-faced man — lo there,  
He that walks midmost.
- Mary Seyton.* That is Master Knox. He carries all these folk within his skin, Bound up as 'twere between the brows of him  
Like a bad thought; their hearts beat inside his;  
They gather at his lips like flies in the sun,  
Thrust sides to catch his face.
- Mary Carmichael.* Look forth; so — push  
The window — further — see you any thing?
- Mary Hamilton.* They are well gone; but pull the lattice in,  
The wind is like a blade aslant. Would God  
I could get back one day I think upon;  
The day we four and some six after us Sat in that Louvre garden and plucked fruits  
To cast love-lots with in the gathered grapes;  
This way: you shut your eyes, and reach and pluck,  
And catch a lover for each grape you get.
- I got but one, a green one, and it broke  
Between my fingers, and it ran down through them.
- Mary Seyton.* Ay, and the queen fell in a little wrath  
Because she got so many, and tore off



Some of them she had plucked unwittingly —  
She said, against her will. What fell to you?

*Mary Beaton.* Me? nothing but the stalk of a stripped bunch  
With clammy grape-juice leavings at the tip.

*Mary Carmichael.* Ay, true, the queen came first, and she won all;  
It was her bunch we took to cheat you with.

What, will you weep for that now? for you seem  
As one that means to weep. God pardon me!

I think your throat is choking up with tears.

You are not well, sweet, for a lying jest  
To shake you thus much.

*Mary Beaton.* I am well enough:  
Give not your pity trouble for my sake.

*Mary Seyton.* If you be well, sing out your song and laugh,  
Though it were but to fret the fellows there. —

Now shall we catch her secret washed and wet

In the middle of her song; for she must weep

If she sing through.

*Mary Hamilton.* I told you it was love;  
I watched her eyes all through the masquing time

Feed on his face by morse's; she must weep.

*Mary Beaton (sings): —*

4.

*Le navire  
Passe et tuit,  
Puis chavire  
A grand bruit;  
Et sur l'onde  
La plus blonde  
Tête au monde  
Flotte et fuit.*

5.

*Moi, je rame,  
Et l'amour*

*C'est ma flamme,  
Mon grand jour,  
Ma chandelle  
Blanche et belle,  
Ma chapelle  
De séjour.*

6.

*Toi, mon âme  
Et ma foi,  
Sois ma dame  
Et ma loi;  
Sois ma mie,  
Sois Marie,  
Sois ma vie,  
Toute à moi!*

*Mary Seyton.* I know the song; a song of Chastelard's  
He made in coming over with the queen.  
How hard it rained! he played that over twice,

Sitting before her, singing each word soft,

As if he loved the least she listened to

*Mary Hamilton.* No marvel if he loved it for her sake;

She is the choice of women in the world,

Is she not, sweet?

*Mary Beaton.* I have seen no fairer one.

*Mary Seyton.* And the most loving: did you note last night

How long she held him with her hands and eyes,

Looking a little sadly, and at last  
Kissed him below the chin, and parted so

As the dance ended?

*Mary Hamilton.* This was courtesy;  
So might I kiss my singing-bird's red bill

After some song, till he bit short my lip.

*Mary Seyton.* But if a lady hold her bird anights

To sing to her between her fingers — ha? I have seen such birds.

*Mary Carmichael.* Oh, you talk emptily;

She is full of grace; and marriage in good time

Will wash the fool called scandal off men's lips.

*Mary Hamilton.* I know not that; I know how folk would gibe

If one of us pushed courtesy so far.  
 She has always loved love's fashions  
 well; you wot,  
 The marshal, head friend of this Chaste-  
 lard's,  
 She used to talk with ere he brought  
 her here,  
 And sow their talk with little kisses  
 thick  
 As roses in rose-harvest. For myself,  
 I cannot see which side of her that  
 lurks

Which snares in such wise all the sense  
 of men;

What special beauty, subtle as man's  
 eye

And tender as the inside of the eyelid is,  
 There grows about her.

*Mary Carmichael.* I think her cunning  
 speech —

The soft and rapid shudder of her  
 breath

In talking — the rare, tender little  
 laugh —

The pitiful sweet sound like a bird's  
 sigh

When her voice breaks; her talking  
 does it all.

*Mary Seyton.* I say, her eyes with  
 those clear perfect brows:

It is the playing of those eyelashes,  
 The lure of amorous looks as sad as  
 love,

Plucks all souls toward her like a net.

*Mary Hamilton.* What, what!  
 You praise her in too lover-like a wise

For women that praise women; such  
 report

Is like robes worn the rough side next  
 the skin,  
 Frets where it warms.

*Mary Seyton.* You think too much in  
 French.

*Enter DARNLEY.*  
 Here comes your thorn; what glove  
 against it now?

*Mary Hamilton.* Oh, God's good pity!  
 this a thorn of mine?

It has not run deep in yet.

*Mary Carmichael.* I am not sure:  
 The red runs over to your face's edge.

*Darnley.* Give me one word; nay,  
 lady, for love's sake;

Here, come this way; I will not keep  
 you; no.

— O my sweet soul, why do you wrong  
 me thus?

*Mary Hamilton.* Why will you give  
 me for men's eyes to burn?

*Darnley.* What, sweet, I love you as  
 mine own soul loves me;

They shall divide when we do.

*Mary Hamilton.* I cannot say.  
*Darnley.* Why, look you, I am broken  
 with the queen;

This is the rancor and the bitter heart  
 That grows in you, by God it is naught  
 else.

Why, this last night she held me for a  
 fool —

Ay, God wot, for a thing of stripe and  
 bell.

I bade her make me marshal in her  
 masque —

I had the dress here painted, gold and  
 gray

(That is, not gray, but a blue green like  
 this) —

She tells me she had chosen her mar-  
 shal, she,

The best o' the world for cunning and  
 sweet wit;

And what sweet fool but her sweet  
 knight, God help!

To serve her with that three-inch wit of  
 his?

She is all fool and fiddling now: for  
 me,

I am well pleased; God knows, if I  
 might choose

I would not be more troubled with her  
 love.

Her love is like a brier that rasps the  
 flesh,

And yours is soft like flowers. Come  
 this way, love;

So, further in this window: hark you  
 here.

*Enter CHASTELARD.*

*Mary Beaton.* Good morrow, sir.  
*Chastelard.* Good morrow, noble lady.

*Mary Carmichael.* You have heard  
 no news? what news?

*Chastelard.* Nay, I have none.  
 That maiden-tongued male-faced Eliza  
 beth

Hath eyes unlike our queen's, hair not  
so soft,  
And hands more sudden save for court-  
esy;  
And lips no kiss of love's could bring  
to flower  
In such red wise as our queen's; save  
this news,  
I know none English.

*Mary Seyton.* Come, no news of her;  
For God's love talk still rather of our  
queen.

*Mary Beaton.* God give us grace then  
to speak well of her.

You did right joyfully in our masque  
last night;

I saw you when the queen lost breath  
(her head

Bent back, her chin and lips catching  
the air —

A goodly thing to see her) how you  
smiled

Across her head, between your lips —  
no doubt

You had great joy, sir. Did not you  
take note

Once how one lock fell? that was good  
to see.

*Chastelard.* Yea, good enough to live  
for.

*Mary Beaton.* Nay, but sweet  
Enough to die. When she broke off  
the dance,

Turning round short and soft — I never  
saw

Such supple ways of walking as she has.

*Chastelard.* Why do you praise her  
gracious looks to me?

*Mary Beaton.* Sir, for mere sport;  
but tell me even for love

How much you love her.

*Chastelard.* I know not: it may be  
If I had set mine eyes to find that out,  
I should not know it. She hath fair

eyes: may be

I love her for sweet eyes or brows or  
hair,

For the smooth temples, where God  
touching her

Made blue with sweeter veins the flower-  
sweet white;

Or for the tender turning of her wrist,  
Or marriage of the eyelid with the cheek;

I cannot tell; or flush of lifting throat,  
I know not if the color get a name  
This side of heaven — no man knows;  
or her mouth,

A flower's lip with a snake's lip, sting-  
ing sweet,

And sweet to sting with: face that one  
would see

And then fall blind and die with sight  
of it

Held fast between the eyelids — oh, all  
these

And all her body and the soul to that,  
The speech and shape and hand and

foot and heart

That I would die of — yea, her name  
that turns

My face to fire being written — I know  
no whit

How much I love them.  
*Mary Beaton.* Nor how she loves you  
back?

*Chastelard.* I know her ways of lov-  
ing, all of them:

A sweet soft way the first is; afterward  
It burns and bites like fire; the end of

that,  
Charred dust, and eyelids bitten through

with smoke.

*Mary Beaton.* What has she done for  
you to gird at her?

*Chastelard.* Nothing. You do not  
greatly love her, you,

Who do not — gird, you call it. I am  
bound to France;

Shall I take word from you to any one?  
So it be harmless, not a gird, I will.

*Mary Beaton.* I doubt you will not  
go hence with your life.

*Chastelard.* Why, who should slay  
me? no man northwards born,

In my poor mind; my sword's lip is no  
maid's

To fear the iron biting of their own,  
Though they kiss hard for hate's sake.

*Mary Beaton.* Lo you, sir,  
How sharp he whispers, what close  
breath and eyes —

And hers are fast upon him, do you see?

*Chastelard.* Well, which of these must  
take my life in hand?

Pray God it be the better: nay, which  
hand?

*Mary Beaton.* I think, none such.  
The man is goodly made;  
She is tender-hearted toward his courtesies,  
And would not have them fall too low  
to find.

Look, they slip forth.

[*Exeunt* DARNLEY and MARY HAMILTON

*Mary Seyton.* For love's sake, after them,  
And soft as love can.

[*Exeunt* MARY CARMICHAEL and MARY SEYTON.

*Chastelard.* True, a goodly man.  
What shapeliness and state he hath,  
what eyes,  
Brave brow and lordly lip! were it not fit  
Great queens should love him?

*Mary Beaton.* See you now, fair lord,  
I have but scant breath's time to help  
myself,

And I must cast my heart out on a  
chance;

So bear with me. That we twain have  
loved well,

I have no heart nor wit to say; God wot  
We had never made good lovers, you  
and I.

Look you, I would not have you love  
me, sir,

For all the love's sake in the world. I  
say,

You love the queen, and loving burns  
you up,

And mars the grace and joyous wit you  
had,

Turning your speech to sad, your face  
to strange,

Your mirth to nothing: and I am piteous,  
I,

Even as the queen is, and such women  
are;

And if I helped you to your love-longing,

Meseems some grain of love might fall  
my way,

And love's god help me when I came  
to love:

I have read tales of men that won their  
loves

On some such wise.

*Chastelard.* If you mean mercifully,

I am bound to you past thought and  
thank; if worse,  
I will but thank your lips and not your  
heart.

*Mary Beaton.* Nay, let love wait, and  
praise me, in God's name,  
Some day when he shall find me; yet,  
God wot,

My lips are of one color with my heart.  
Withdraw now from me, and about mid-  
night

In some close chamber without light or  
noise

It may be I shall get you speech of her;  
She loves you well; it may be she will  
speak,

I wot not what; she loves you at her  
heart.

Let her not see that I have given you  
word,

Lest she take shame and hate her love.  
Till night.

Let her not see it.

*Chastelard.* I will not thank you now,  
And then I'll die what sort of death  
you will.

Farewell.

[*Exit.*

*Mary Beaton.* And by God's mercy  
and my love's

I will find ways to earn such thank of  
you. [*Exit.*

SCENE II. — *A Hall in the same.*

*The QUEEN, DARNLEY, MURRAY, RANDOLPH, the MARRIES, CHASTELARD, etc.*

*Queen.* Hath no man seen my lord of  
Chastelard?

Nay, no great matter. Keep you on  
that side:

Begin the purpose.

*Mary Carmichael.* Madam, he is here.

*Queen.* Begin a measure now that  
other side.

I will not dance; let them play soft a  
little.

Fair sir, we had a dance to tread to-  
night,

To teach our north folk all sweet ways  
of France;

But at this time we have no heart to it

Sit, sir, and talk. Look, this breast-clasp is new,

The French king sent it me.

*Chastelard.* A goodly thing:

But what device? the word is ill to catch.

*Queen.* A Venus crowned, that eats the hearts of men:

Below her flies a love with a bat's wings,  
And strings the hair of paramours to bind

Live birds' feet with. Lo what small subtle work:

The smith's name, Gian Crisostomo da — what?

Can you read that? The sea froths underfoot;

She stands upon the sea, and it curls up  
In soft loose curls that run to one in the wind.

But her hair is not shaken, there's a fault;

It lies straight down in close-cut points and tongues,

Not like blown hair. The legend is writ small:

Still one makes out this — *Cave* — if you look.

*Chastelard.* I see the Venus well enough, God wot,

But nothing of the legend.

*Queen.* Come, fair lord,  
Shall we dance now? my heart is good again. [*They dance a measure.*]

*Darnley.* I do not like this manner of a dance,

This game of two by two; it were much better

To meet between the changes and to mix

Than still to keep apart and whispering  
Each lady out of earshot with her friend.

*Mary Beaton.* That's as the lady serves her knight, I think:

We are broken up too much.

*Darnley.* Nay, no such thing;  
Be not wroth, lady, I wot it was the queen

Pricked each his friend out. Look you now — your ear —

If love had gone by choosing — how they laugh,

Lean lips together, and wring hands underhand!

What, you look white too, sick of heart, ashamed,

No marvel — for men call it — hark you though — [*They pass.*]

*Murray.* Was the Queen found no merrier in France?

*Mary Hamilton.* Why, have you seen her sorrowful to-night?

*Murray.* I say not so much; blithe she seems at whiles,

Gentle and goodly doubtless in all ways,  
But hardly with such lightness and quick heart

As it was said.

*Mary Hamilton.* 'Tis your great care of her

Makes you misdoubt; naught else.

*Murray.* Yea, may be so;

She has no cause I know to sadden her. [*They pass.*]

*Queen.* I am tired too soon; I could have danced down hours

Two years gone hence, and felt no wearier.

One grows much older northwards, my fair lord;

I wonder men die south; meseems all France

Smells sweet with living, and bright breath of days

That keep men far from dying. Peace; pray you now,

No dancing more. Sing, sweet, and make us mirth;

We have done with dancing measures: sing that song

You call the song of love at ebb.

*Mary Beaton* (*sings*).

## 1.

*Between the sunset and the sea  
My love laid hands and lips on me;  
Of sweet came sour, of day came night,  
Of long desire came brief delight:  
Ah, love, and what thing came of thee  
Between the sea-things and the sea?*

## 2.

*Between the sea-mark and the sea  
Joy grew to grief, grief grew to me;  
Love turned to tears, and tears to fire,  
And dead delight to new desire;*

*Love's talk, love's touch there seemed to be  
Between the sea-sand and the sea.*

## 3.

*Between the sundown and the sea  
Love watched one hour of love with me ;  
Then down the all-golden water-ways  
His feet flew after yesterdays ;  
I saw them come and saw them flee  
Between the sea-foam and the sea.*

## 4.

*Between the sea-strand and the sea  
Love fell on sleep, sleep fell on me ;  
The first star saw twain turn to one  
Between the moonrise and the sun ;  
The next, that saw not love, saw me  
Between the sea-banks and the sea.*

*Queen.* Lo, sirs,  
What mirth is here! Some song of  
yours, fair lord;  
You know glad ways of rhyming — no  
such tunes  
As go to tears.

*Chastelard.* I made this yesterday;  
For its love's sake I pray you let it  
live. [He sings.

## 1.

*Après tant de jours, après tant de pleurs,  
Soyez secourable à mon âme en peine.  
Voyez comme Avril fait l'amour aux  
fleurs;  
Dame d'amour, dame aux belles cou-  
leurs,  
Dieu vous a fait belle, Amour vous fait  
reine.*

## 2.

*Rions, je l'en prie ; aimons, je le veux.  
Le temps fuit et rit et ne revient guère.  
Pour baiser le bout de tes blonds cheveux,  
Pour baiser tes cils, ta bouche et tes yeux ;  
L'amour n'a qu'un jour auprès de sa  
mère.*

*Queen.* 'Tis a true song; love shall  
not pluck time back,  
Nor time lie down with love. For me,  
I am old;

Have you no hair changed since you  
changed to Scot?

I look each day to see my face drawn  
up

About the eyes, as if they sucked the  
cheeks.

I think this air and face of things here  
north

Puts snow at flower-time in the blood,  
and tears

Between the sad eyes and the merry  
mouth

In their youth-days.

*Chastelard.* It is a bitter air.

*Queen.* Faith, if I might be gone, sir,  
would I stay?

I think, for no man's love's sake.

*Chastelard.* I think not.

*Queen.* Do you not mind at landing  
how the quay

Looked like a blind wet face in waste  
of wind

And washing of wan waves? how the  
hard mist

Made the hills ache? Your songs lied  
loud, my knight:

They said my face would burn off cloud  
and rain

Seen once, and fill the crannied land  
with fire,

Kindle the capes in their blind black-  
gray hoods —

I know not what. You praise me past  
all loves;

And these men love me little; 'tis some  
fault,

I think, to love me: even a fool's sweet  
fault.

I have your verse still beating in my  
head,

Of how the swallow got a wing broken  
In the springtime, and lay upon his  
side

Watching the rest fly off i' the red leaf-  
time,

And broke his heart with grieving at  
himself

Before the snow came. Do you know  
that lord

With sharp-set eyes? and him with  
huge thewed throat?

Good friends to me; I had need love  
them well.

Why do you look one way? I will not  
have you

Keep your eyes here: 'tis no great wit  
in me

To care much now for old French  
friends of mine. —

Come, a fresh measure; come, play well  
for me,

Fair sirs, your playing puts life in foot  
and heart. —

*Darnley.* Lo you again, sirs, how she  
laughs and leans,

Holding him fast — the supple way she  
hath!

Your queen hath none such; better as  
she is

For all her measures, a grave English  
maid,

Than queen of snakes and Scots.

*Randolph.* She is over-fair

To be so sweet, and hurt not. A good  
knight;

Goodly to look on.

*Murray.* Yea, a good sword too,

And of good kin; too light of loving  
though;

These jangling song-smiths are keen  
love-mongers,

They snap at all meats.

*Darnley.* What! by God I think,

For all his soft French face and bright  
boy's sword,

There be folks fairer: and for knightli-  
ness,

These hot-lipped brawls of Paris breed  
sweet knights, —

Mere stabbers for a laugh across the  
wine. —

*Queen.* There, I have danced you  
down for once, fair lord;

You look pale now. Nay then for  
courtesy

I must needs help you; do not bow  
your head,

I am tall enough to reach close under  
it.

[*Kisses him.*

Now come, we'll sit and see this pas-  
sage through. —

*Darnley.* A courtesy, God help us!  
courtesy —

Pray God it wound not where it should  
heal wounds.

Why, there was here last year some  
lord of France

(Priest on the wrong side as some folk  
are prince)

Told tales of Paris ladies — nay, by  
God,

No jest for queen's lips to catch laugh-  
ter of

That would keep clean; I wot he made  
good mirth,

But she laughed over sweetly, and in  
such wise —

Nay, I laughed too, but lothly. —

*Queen.* How they look!

The least thing courteous galls them to  
the bone.

What would one say now I were think-  
ing of?

*Chastelard.* It seems, some sweet  
thing.

*Queen.* True, a sweet one, sir, —

That madrigal you made Alys de Saulx  
Of the three ways of love; the first kiss

honor,

The second pity, and the last kiss love.

Which think you now was that I kissed

you with?

*Chastelard.* It should be pity, if you

be pitiful:

For I am past all honoring that keep  
Outside the eye of battle, where my

kin

Fallen overseas have found this many  
a day

No helm of mine between them; and  
for love,

I think of that as dead men of good  
days

E're the wrong side of death was theirs,  
when God

Was friends with them.

*Queen.* Good; call it pity, then.

You have a subtle riddling skill at love  
Which is not like a lover. For my

part,

I am resolved to be well done with  
love,

Though I were fairer-faced than all the  
world;

As there be fairer. Think you, fair my  
knight,

Love shall live after life in any man?

I have given you stuff for riddles.

*Chastelard.* Most sweet queen,  
 They say men dying remember, with  
 sharp joy  
 And rapid reluctance of desire,  
 Some old thing, some swift breath of  
 wind, some word,  
 Some sword-stroke or dead lute-strain,  
 some lost sight,  
 Some sea-blossom stripped to the sun  
 and burned  
 At naked ebb—some river-flower that  
 breathes  
 Against the stream like a swooned  
 swimmer's mouth—  
 Some tear or laugh ere lip and eye were  
 man's—  
 Sweet stings that struck the blood in  
 riding—nay,  
 Some garment or sky-color or spice-  
 smell,  
 And die with heart and face shut fast  
 on it,  
 And know not why, and weep not: it  
 may be  
 Men shall hold love fast always in such  
 wise  
 In new fair lives where all are new  
 things else,  
 And know not why, and weep not.

*Queen.* A right rhyme;  
 And right a rhyme's worth: nay, a  
 sweet song, though.  
 What! shall my cousin hold fast that  
 love of his,  
 Her face and talk, when life ends? as  
 God grant  
 His life end late and sweet! I love him  
 well.  
 She is fair enough, his lover; a fair-  
 faced maid,  
 With gray sweet eyes and tender touch  
 of talk;  
 And that, God wot, I wist not. See  
 you, sir,  
 Men say I needs must get wed hasti-  
 ly;  
 Do none point lips at him?

*Chastelard.* Yea, guessingly.

*Queen.* God help such lips! and get  
 me leave to laugh!  
 What should I do but paint and put  
 him up.  
 Like a gilt god, a saintship in a shrine,

For all fools' feast? God's mercy on  
 men's wits!  
 Tall as a housetop and as bare of  
 brain—  
 I'll have no staffs with fool-faced carver  
 heads  
 To hang my life on. Nay, for love, no  
 more,  
 For fear I laugh and set their eyes on  
 edge  
 To find out why I laugh. Good night,  
 fair lords;  
 Bid them cease playing. Give me your  
 hand; good night.

SCENE III.—MARY BEATON'S *Cham-  
 ber: night.*

*Enter CHASTELARD.*

*Chastelard.* I am not certain yet she  
 will not come;  
 For I can feel her hand's heat still in  
 mine,  
 Past doubting of, and see her brows  
 half drawn,  
 And half a light in the eyes. If she  
 come not,  
 I am no worse than he that dies to-  
 night.  
 This two years' patience gets an end at  
 least,  
 Whichever way I am well done with it.  
 How hard the thin sweet moon is, split  
 and laced  
 And latticed over, just a stray of it  
 Catching and clinging at a strip of wall,  
 Hardly a hand's-breadth. Did she turn  
 indeed  
 In going out? not to catch up her gown  
 The page let slip, but to keep sight of  
 me?  
 There was a soft small stir beneath her  
 eyes  
 Hard to put on, a quivering of her  
 blood  
 That knew of the old nights watched  
 out wakefully.  
 Those measures of her dancing too  
 were changed—  
 More swift and with more eager stops  
 at whiles  
 And rapid pauses where breath failed  
 her lips.



*Enter MARY BEATON.*

Oh, she is come: if you be she indeed,  
Let me but hold your hand; what! no  
word yet?

You turn and kiss me without word; O  
sweet!

If you will slay me, be not over-quick,  
Kill me with some slow heavy kiss that  
plucks

The heart out at the lips. Alas! sweet  
love,

Give me some old sweet word to kiss  
away.

Is it a jest? for I can feel your hair  
Touch me—I may embrace your body  
too?

I know you well enough without sweet  
words.

How should one make you speak? This  
is not she.

Come in the light; nay, let me see your  
eyes.

Ah, you it is? what have I done to you?  
And do you look now to be slain for this  
That you twist back and shudder like  
one stabbed?

*Mary Beaton.* Yea, kill me now, and  
do not look at me:

God knows I meant to die. Sir, for  
God's love,

Kill me now quick ere I go mad with  
shame!

*Chastelard.* Cling not upon my wrists:  
let go the hilt:

Nay, you will bruise your hand with it.  
Stand up;

You shall not have my sword forth.

*Mary Beaton.* Kill me now,

I will not rise: there, I am patient, see.  
I will not strive, but kill me for God's  
sake.

*Chastelard.* Pray you, rise up, and be  
not shaken so:

Forgive me my rash words, my heart  
was gone

After the thing you were: be not  
ashamed;

Give me the shame, you have no part  
in it;

Can I not say a word shall do you good?  
Forgive that too.

*Mary Beaton.* I shall run crazed with  
shame:

But when I felt your lips catch hold on  
mine,

It stopped my breath: I would have  
told you all.

Let me go out; you see I lied to you,  
And I am shamed; I pray you, loose  
me, sir,

Let me go out.

*Chastelard.* Think no base things of  
me:

I were most base to let you go ashamed.  
Think my heart's love and honor go  
with you:

Yea, while I live, for your love's noble  
sake,

I am your servant in what wise may be,  
To love and serve you with right thank-  
ful heart.

*Mary Beaton.* I have given men leave  
to mock me, and must bear

What shame they please: you have  
good cause to mock.

Let me pass now.

*Chastelard.* You know I mock you  
not.

If ever I leave off to honor you,  
God give me shame! I were the worst  
churl born.

*Mary Beaton.* No marvel though the  
queen should love you too,

Being such a knight. I pray you for  
her love,

Lord Chastelard, of your great courtesy,  
Think now no scorn to give me my last  
kiss

That I shall have of man before I die.

Even the same lips you kissed and knew  
not of

Will you kiss now, knowing the shame  
of them,

And say no one word to me afterwards,  
That I may see I have loved the best  
lover

And man most courteous of all men  
alive?

*Mary Seyton (within).* Here, fetch  
the light: nay, this way; enter  
all.

*Mary Beaton.* I am twice undone  
Fly, get some hiding, sir;

They have spied upon me somehow.

*Chastelard.* Nay, fear not;  
Stand by my side.

Enter MARY SEYTON and MARY HAMILTON.

*Mary Hamilton.* Give me that light: this way.

*Chastelard.* What jest is here, fair ladies? it walks late, Something too late for laughing.

*Mary Seyton.* Nay, fair sir, What jest is this of yours? Look to your lady:

She is nigh swooned. The queen shall know all this.

*Mary Hamilton.* A grievous shame it is we are fallen upon; Hold forth the light. Is this your care of us?

Nay, come, look up: this is no game, God wot.

*Chastelard.* Shame shall befall them that speak shamefully:

I swear this lady is as pure and good

As any maiden, and who believes me not

Shall keep the shame for his part and the lie.

To them that come in honor and not in hate,

I will make answer. — Lady, have good heart.

Give me the light there: I will see you forth.

## ACT II.—DARNLEY.

### SCENE I.—*The great Chamber in Holyrood.*

*The QUEEN and MARY SEYTON.*

*Queen.* But will you swear it?

*Mary Seyton.* Swear it, madam?

*Queen.* Ay —

Swear it.

*Mary Seyton.* Madam, I am not friends with them.

*Queen.* Swear then against them if you are not friends.

*Mary Seyton.* Indeed I saw them kiss.

*Queen.* So lovers use —

What, their mouths close? a goodly way of love!

Or but the hands? or on her throat? Prithee —

You have sworn that.

*Mary Seyton.* I say what I saw done.

*Queen.* Ay, you did see her cheeks (God smite them red!)

Kissed either side? what, they must eat strange food,

Those singing lips of his?

*Mary Seyton.* Sweet meat enough — They started at my coming five yards off,

But there they were.

*Queen.* A maid may have kissed cheeks

And no shame in them — yet one would not swear.

You have sworn that. Pray God he be not mad:

A sickness in his eyes. The left side love

(I was told that) and the right courtesy.

'Tis good fools' fashion. What! no more but this?

For me, God knows I am no whit wroth, — not I;

But, for your fame's sake that her shame will sting,

I cannot see a way to pardon her, —

For your fame's sake, lest that be prated of.

*Mary Seyton.* Nay, if she were not chaste — I have not said

She was not chaste.

*Queen.* I know you are tender of her;

And your sweet word will hardly turn her sweet.

*Mary Seyton.* Indeed I would fain do her any good.

Shall I not take some gracious word to her?

*Queen.* Bid her not come or wait on me to-day.

*Mary Seyton.* Will you see him?

*Queen.* See — oh, this Chastelard? He doth not well to sing maids into shame;

And folk are sharp here; yet for sweet friends' sake

Assuredly I'll see him. I am not wroth.

A goodly man, and a good sword  
thereto —

It may be he shall wed her. I am not  
wroth.

*Mary Seyton.* Nay, though she bore  
with him, she hath no great love,  
I doubt me, that way.

*Queen.* God mend all, I pray —  
And keep us from all wrong-doing and  
wild words.

I think there is no fault men fall upon  
But I could pardon. Look you, I would  
swear

She were no paramour for any man,  
So well I love her.

*Mary Seyton.* Am I to bid him in?

*Queen.* As you will, sweet. But if  
you held me hard

You did me grievous wrong. Doth he  
wait there?

Men call me over-tender; I had rather  
so,

Than too ungracious. — Father, what  
with you?

*Enter FATHER BLACK.*

*Father Black.* God's peace and health  
of soul be with the queen!

And pardon be with me though I speak  
truth.

As I was going on peaceable men's  
wise

Through your good town, desiring no  
man harm,

A kind of shameful woman with thief's  
lips

Spake somewhat to me over a thrust-  
out chin,

Soliciting as I deemed an alms; which  
alms

(Remembering what was writ of Mag-  
dalen)

I gave not grudging but with pure good  
heart,

When lo! some scurril children that  
lurked near,

Set there by Satan for my stumbling-  
stone,

Fell hooting with necks thwart and  
eyes a-squint,

Screached and made horns and shot  
out tongues at me, —

As at my Lord the Jews shot out their  
tongues,

And made their heads wag; I consid-  
ering this

Took up my cross in patience, and  
passed forth:

Nevertheless one ran between my feet,  
And made me totter, using speech and  
signs

I smart with shame to think of: then  
my blood

Kindled, and I was moved to smite the  
knave,

And the knave howled; whereat the  
lewd whole herd

Brake forth upon me, and cast mire  
and stones,

So that I ran sore risk of bruise or  
gash

If they had touched; likewise I heard  
men say,

(Their foul speech missed not of mine  
ear) they cried,

“This devil's mass-priest hankers for  
new flesh

Like a dry hound; let him seek such  
at home,

Snuff and smoke out the queen's  
French” —

*Queen.* They said that?

*Father Black.* “— French paramours  
that breed more shames than  
sons

All her court through;” forgive me.

*Queen.* With my heart.

Father, you see the hatefulness of  
these —

They loathe us for our love. I am not  
moved:

What should I do being angry? By  
this hand

(Which is not big enough to bruise  
their lips),

I marvel what thing should be done  
with me

To make me wroth. We must have  
patience with us

When we seek thank of men.

*Father Black.* Madam, farewell;

I pray God keep you in such patient  
heart. [Exit.

*Queen.* Let him come now.

*Mary Seyton.* Madam, he is at hand.  
[Exit

*Enter CHASTELARD.*

*Queen.* Give me that broidery-frame;  
how, gone so soon?  
No maid about? Reach me some skein  
of silk.  
What! are you come, fair lord? Now  
by my life  
That lives here idle, I am right glad of  
you;  
I have slept so well and sweet since  
yesternight  
It seems our dancing put me in glad  
heart.

Did you sleep well?  
*Chastelard.* Yea, as a man may sleep.  
*Queen.* You smile as if I jested; do  
not men  
Sleep as we do? Had you fair dreams  
in the night?  
For me—but I should fret you with  
my dreams—  
I dreamed sweet things. You are good  
at soothsaying:

Make me a sonnet of my dream.  
*Chastelard.* I will,  
When I shall know it.

*Queen.* I thought I was asleep  
In Paris, lying by my lord, and knew  
In some wise he was well awake, and yet  
I could not wake too; and I seemed to  
know

He hated me, and the least breath I  
made

Would turn somehow to slay or stifle  
me.

Then in brief time he rose and went  
away,

Saying, *Let her dream, but when her  
dream is out*

*I will come back and kill her as she wakes.*  
And I lay sick and trembling with sore  
fear,

And still I knew that I was deep asleep;  
And thinking, *I must dream now, or I  
die,*

*God send me some good dream lest I be  
slain!*

Fell fancying one had bound my feet  
with cords,

And bade me dance, and the first meas-  
ure made

I fell upon my face, and wept for pain;  
And my cords broke, and I began the  
dance

To a bitter tune; and he that danced  
with me

Was clothed in black with long red  
lines and bars,

And masked down to the lips, but by  
the chin

I knew you though your lips were sewn  
up close

With scarlet thread all dabbled wet in  
blood.

And then I knew the dream was not for  
good.

And striving with sore travail to reach up  
And kiss you (you were taller in my  
dream)

I missed your lips, and woke.

*Chastelard.* Sweet dreams, you said?  
An evil dream I hold it for, sweet love.

*Queen.* You call love sweet; yea, what  
is bitter, then?

There's nothing broken sleep could hit  
upon

So bitter as the breaking down of love  
You call me sweet; I am not sweet to  
you,

Nor you—O, I would say not sweet to  
me,

And if I said so I should hardly lie.  
But there have been those things be-  
tween us, sir,

That men call sweet.

*Chastelard.* I know not how *There is*  
Turns to *There hath been*; 'tis a heavier  
change

Than change of flesh to dust. Yet,  
though years change,

And good things end, and evil things  
grow great,

The old love that was, or that was  
dreamed about,

That sang and kissed and wept upon  
itself,

Laughed and ran mad with love of its  
own face,

That was a sweet thing.

*Queen.* Nay, I know not well.  
'Tis when the man is held fast under-  
ground

They say for sooth what manner of  
heart he had.

We are alive, and cannot be well sure  
If we loved much or little: think you not  
It were convenient one of us should die?

*Chastelard.* Madam, your speech is harsh to understand.

*Queen.* Why, there could come no change then; one of us

Would never need to fear our love might turn

To the sad thing that it may grow to be. I would sometimes all things were dead asleep

That I have loved, all buried in soft beds

And sealed with dreams and visions, and each dawn

Sung to by sorrows, and all night assuaged

By short sweet kisses and by sweet long loves

For old life's sake, lest weeping over-much

Should wake them in a strange new time, and arm

Memory's blind hand to kill forgetfulness.

*Chastelard.* Look, you dream still, and sadly.

*Queen.* Sooth, a dream;

For such things died or lied in sweet love's face,

And I forget them not, God help my wit!

I would the whole world were made up of sleep

And life not fashioned out of lies and loves.

We foolish women have such times, you know,

When we are weary or afraid or sick For perfect nothing.

*Chastelard (aside).* Now would one be fair

To know what bitter or what dangerous thing

She thinks of, softly chafing her soft lip. She must mean evil.

*Queen.* Are you sad, too, sir, That you say nothing?

*Chastelard.* I? not sad a jot—

Though this your talk might make a blithe man sad.

*Queen.* O me! I must not let stray sorrows out;

They are ill to fledge, and if they feel blithe air

They wail and chirp untunefully. Would God

I had been a man! when I was born, men say,

My father turned his face and wept to think

I was no man.

*Chastelard.* Will you weep, too?

*Queen.* In sooth,

If I were man I should be no base man;

I could have fought; yea, I could fight now, too,

If men would show me; I would I were the king!

I should be all ways better than I am.

*Chastelard.* Nay, would you have more honor, having this—

Men's hearts and loves and the sweet spoil of souls

Given you like simple gold to bind your hair?

Say you were king of thews, not queen of souls,

An iron headpiece hammered to a head, You might fail, too.

*Queen.* No, then I would not fail,

Or God should make me woman back again.

To be King James—you hear men say *King James,*

The word sounds like a piece of gold thrown down,

Rings with a round and royal note in it— A name to write good record of; this

king Fought here and there, was beaten such a day,

And came at last to a good end, his life

Being all lived out, and for the main part well

And like a king's life; then to have men say

(As now they say of Flodden, here they broke

And there they held up to the end) years back

They saw you—*yea, I saw the king's face helmeted*

*Red in the hot lit foreground of some fight*

*Hold the whole war as it were by the bit, a horse*

*Fit for his knees' grip — the great rearing war*

*That frothed with lips flung up, and shook men's lives*

*Off either flank of it like snow; I saw (You could not hear as his sword rang), saw him*

*Shout, laugh, smite straight, and flaw the riven ranks,*

*Move as the wind moves, and his horse's feet*

*Stripe their long flags with dust. Why, if one died,*

To die so in the heart and heat of war  
Were a much goodlier thing than living soft

And speaking sweet for fear of men.  
Woe's me!

Is there no way to pluck this body off?  
Then I should never fear a man again,  
Even in my dreams I should not; no, by heaven.

*Chastelard.* I never thought you did fear any thing.

*Queen.* God knows I do; I could be sick with wrath

To think what grievous fear I have 'twixt whiles

Of mine own self and of base men.  
Last night

If certain lords were glancing where I was

Under the eyelid, with sharp lip and brow,

I tell you, for pure shame and fear of them,

I could have gone and slain them.

*Chastelard.* Verily,

You are changed since those good days that fell in France;

But yet I think you are not so changed at heart

As to fear man.

*Queen.* I would I had no need.

Lend me your sword a little: a fair sword,

I see the fingers that I hold it with  
Clear in the blade, bright pink, the shell-color,

Brighter than flesh is really, curved all round.

Now men would mock if I should wear it here,

Bound under bosom with a girdle, here,

And yet I have heart enough to wear it well.

Speak to me like a woman, let me see  
If I can play at man.

*Chastelard.* God save King James!

*Queen.* Would you could change now! Fie, this will not do:

Unclasp your sword; nay, the hilt hurts your side;

It sticks fast here. Unbind this knot for me:

Stoop, and you'll see it closer; thank you: there.

Now I can breathe, sir. Ah! it hurts me, though:

This was fool's play.

*Chastelard.* Yea, you are better so, Without the sword; your eyes are stronger things,

Whether to save or slay.

*Queen.* Alas, my side!

It hurts right sorely. Is it not pitiful  
Our souls should be so bound about with flesh

Even when they leap and smite with wings and feet,

The least pain plucks them back, puts out their eyes,

Turns them to tears and words? Ah, my sweet knight,

You have the better of us that weave and weep

While the blithe battle blows upon your eyes

Like rain and wind; yet I remember too

When this last year the fight at Corrichie

Reddened the rushes with stained fen-water,

I rode with my good men, and took delight,

Feeling the sweet clear wind upon my eyes,

And rainy soft smells blown upon my face

In riding: then the great fight jarred and joined,

And the sound stung me right through heart and all;

For I was here, see, gazing off the hills,

In the wet air; our housings were all  
 wet;  
 And not a plume stood stiffly past the  
 ear,  
 But flapped between the bridle and the  
 neck;  
 And under us we saw the battle go  
 Like running water; I could see by  
 firs  
 Some helm the rain fell shining off,  
 some flag  
 Snap from the staff, shorn through or  
 broken short  
 In the man's falling: yea, one seemed  
 to catch  
 The very grasp of tumbled men at  
 men,  
 Teeth clinched in throats, hands riveted  
 in hair,  
 Tearing the life out with no help of  
 swords.  
 And all the clamor seemed to shine,  
 the light  
 Seemed to shout as a man doth; twice  
 I laughed —  
 I tell you, twice my heart swelled out  
 with thirst  
 To be into the battle; see, fair lord,  
 I swear it seemed I might have made a  
 knight,  
 And yet the simple bracing of a belt  
 Makes me cry out; this is too pitiful,  
 This dusty half of us made up with  
 fears. —  
 Have you been ever quite so glad to  
 fight  
 As I have thought men must? pray  
 you, speak truth.  
*Chastelard.* Yea, when the time came,  
 there caught hold of me  
 Such pleasure in the head and hands  
 and blood  
 As may be kindled under loving lips:  
 Crossing the ferry once to the Clerk's  
 Field,  
 I mind me how the plashing noise of  
 Seine  
 Put fire into my face for joy, and how  
 My blood kept measure with the swing-  
 ing boat  
 Till we touched land, all for the sake  
 of that  
 Which should be soon.

*Queen.* Her name, for God's love,  
 sir;  
 You slew your friend for love's sake?  
 nay, the name.  
*Chastelard.* Faith, I forget.  
*Queen.* Now by the faith I have  
 You have no faith to swear by.  
*Chastelard.* A good sword:  
 We left him quiet after a thrust or  
 twain.  
*Queen.* I would I had been at hand,  
 and marked them off  
 As the maids did when we played sing-  
 ing games:  
 You outwent me at rhyming; but for  
 faith,  
 We fight best there. I would I had  
 seen you fight.  
*Chastelard.* I would you had; his  
 play was worth an eye;  
 He made some gallant way before that  
 pass  
 Which made me way through him.  
*Queen.* Would I saw that!  
 How did you slay him?  
*Chastelard.* A clean pass — this way;  
 Right in the side here, where the blood  
 has root.  
 His wrist went round in pushing, see  
 you, thus,  
 Or he had pierced me.  
*Queen.* Yea, I see, sweet knight.  
 I have a mind to love you for his sake;  
 Would I had seen!  
*Chastelard.* Hugues de Marsillac —  
 I have the name now; 'twas a goodly  
 one  
 Before he changed it for a dusty name.  
*Queen.* Talk not of death; I would  
 hear living talk  
 Of good live swords and good strokes  
 struck withal,  
 Brave battles and the mirth of mingling  
 men,  
 Not of cold names you greet a dead  
 man with.  
 You are yet young for fighting; but in  
 fight  
 Have you never caught a wound?  
*Chastelard.* Yea, twice or so:  
 The first time, in a little outlying field  
 (My first field) at the sleepy gray of  
 dawn,

They found us drowsy, fumbling at our girths,  
And rode us down by heaps; I took a hurt

Here in the shoulder.

*Queen.* Ah, I mind well now;  
Did you not ride a day's space afterward,

Having two wounds? yea, Dandelot it was,

That Dandelot took word of it. I know,

Sitting at meat when the news came to us

I had nigh swooned but for those Florence eyes

Slanting my way with sleek lids drawn up close —

Yea, and she said, the Italian brokeress,  
She said such men were good for great queens' love.

I would you might die, when you come to die,

Like a knight slain. Pray God we make good ends.

For love too, love dies hard or easily,  
But some way dies on some day, ere we die.

*Chastelard.* You made a song once of old flowers and loves,

Will you not sing that rather? 'tis long gone

Since you sang last.

*Queen.* I had rather sigh than sing,  
And sleep than sigh; 'tis long since verily,

But I will once more sing; ay, thus it was.

[Sings.

1.

*J'ai vu faner bien des choses,  
Mainte feuille aller au vent.  
En songeant aux vieilles roses,  
J'ai pleuré souvent.*

2.

*Vois-tu dans les roses mortes  
Amour qui sourit caché?  
O mon amant, à nos portes  
L'as-tu vu couché?*

3.

*As-tu vu jamais au monde  
Vénus chasser et courir  
Fille de l'onde, avec l'onde  
Doit-elle mourir?*

4.

*Aux jours de neige et de givre  
L'amour s'effeuille et s'endort;  
Avec mai doit-il revivre,  
Ou bien est-il mort?*

5.

*Qui sait où s'en vont les roses?  
Qui sait où s'en va le vent?  
En songeant à telle chose,  
J'ai pleuré souvent.*

I never heard yet but love made good knights,

But for pure faith, by Mary's holiness,  
I think she lies about men's lips asleep,  
And if one kiss or pluck her by the hand

To wake her, why God help your woman's wit,

Faith is but dead; dig her grave deep at heart,

And hide her face with cerecloths; farewell faith.

Would I could tell why I talk idly. Look,

Here come my riddle-readers. Welcome all!

*Enter MURRAY, DARNLEY, RANDOLPH, LINDSAY, MORTON, and other Lords.*

Sirs, be right welcome. Stand you by my side,

Fair cousin, I must lean on love or fall;  
You are a goodly staff, sir; tall enough,

And fair enough to serve. My gentle lords,

I am full glad of God that in great grace  
He hath given me such a lordly stay as this;

There is no better friended queen alive.  
For the repealing of those banished men

That stand in peril yet of last year's fault,

That stand in peril yet of last year's fault,



It is our will; you have our seal to that.  
Brother, we hear harsh bruits of bad  
report

Blown up and down about our almoner;  
See you to this: let him be sought into:  
They say lewd folk make ballads of  
their spleen,  
Strew miry ways of words with talk of  
him;

If they have cause let him be spoken  
with.

*Lindsay.* Madam, they charge him  
with so rank a life

Were it not well this fellow were  
plucked out—

Seeing this is not an eye that doth  
offend,

But a blurred glass it were no harm to  
break;

Yea rather it were gracious to be done?

*Queen.* Let him be weighed, and use  
him as he is;

I am of my nature pitiful, ye know,  
And cannot turn my love unto a thorn

In so brief space. Ye are all most  
virtuous;

Yea, there is goodness grafted on this  
land;

But yet compassion is some part of  
God.

There is much heavier business held on  
hand

Than one man's goodness: yea, as  
things fare here,

A matter worth more weighing. All  
you wot

I am to choose a help to my weak feet,  
A lamp before my face, a lord and  
friend

To walk with me in weary ways, high  
up

Between the wind and rain and the hot  
sun.

Now I have chosen a helper to myself,  
I wot the best a woman ever won;

A man that loves me, and a royal man,  
A goodly love and lord for any queen.

But for the peril and despite of men  
I have some time tarried and withheld  
myself,

Not fearful of his worthiness nor you,  
But with some lady's loathing to let  
out

My whole heart's love; for truly this is  
hard,

Not like a woman's fashion, shame-  
facedness

And noble grave reluctance of herself  
To be the tongue and cry of her own  
heart.

Nathless plain speech is better than  
much wit,

So ye shall bear with me; albeit I think  
Ye have caught the mark whereat my  
heart is bent.

I have kept close counsel and shut up  
men's lips,

But lightly shall a woman's will slip out,  
The foolish little wingèd will of her,

Through cheek or eye when tongue is  
charmed asleep.

For that good lord I have good will to  
wed,

I wot he knew long since which way it  
flew,

Even till it lit on his right wrist and  
sang.

Lo, here I take him by the hand: fair  
lords,

This is my kinsman, made of mine own  
blood,

I take to halve the state and services  
That bow down to me, and to be my  
head,

My chief, my master, my sweet lord  
and king.

Now shall I never say "sweet cousin"  
more

To my dear head and husband; here,  
fair sir,

I give you all the heart of love in me  
To gather off my lips. Did it like  
you,

The taste of it? sir, it was whole and  
true.

God save our king!

*Darnley.* Nay, nay, sweet love, no  
lord;

No king of yours though I were lord  
of these.

*Queen.* Let word be sent to all good  
friends of ours

To help us to be glad; England and  
France

Shall bear great part of our rejoicings  
up.

Give me your hand, dear lord; for from this time

I must not walk alone. Lords, have good cheer:

For you shall have a better face than mine

To set upon your kingly gold and show For Scotland's forehead in the van of things.

Go with us now, and see this news set out.

[*Exeunt* QUEEN, DARNLEY, and Lords. As CHASTELARD is going out, enter

MARY BEATON.

*Mary Beaton.* Have you yet heard? You knew of this?

*Chastelard.* I know.

I was just thinking how such things were made

And were so fair as this is. Do you know

She held me here and talked,—the most sweet talk

Men ever heard of?

*Mary Beaton.* You hate me to the heart.

What will you do?

*Chastelard.* I know not: die some day,

But live as long and lightly as I can.

Will you now love me? faith, but if you do,

It were much better you were dead and hearsed.

Will you do one thing for me?

*Mary Beaton.* Yea, all things.

*Chastelard.* Speak truth a little, for God's sake: indeed

It were no harm to do. Come, will you, sweet?

Though it be but to please God.

*Mary Beaton.* What will you do?

*Chastelard.* Ay, true, I must do somewhat. Let me see:

To get between and tread upon his face—

Catch both her hands and bid men look at them,

How pure they were—I would do none of these,

Though they got wedded all the days in the year.

We may do well yet when all's come and gone.

I pray you on this wedding night of theirs

Do but one thing that I shall ask of you, And Darnley will not hunger as I shall For that good time. Sweet, will you swear me this?

*Mary Beaton.* Yea; though to do it were mortal to my soul

As the chief sin.

*Chastelard.* I thank you: let us go.

### ACT III.—THE QUEEN.

SCENE I.—*The Queen's Chamber.*

*Night. Lights burning in front of the bed.*

*Enter* CHASTELARD and MARY BEATON.

*Mary Beaton.* Be tender of your feet

*Chastelard.* I shall not fail:

These ways have light enough to help a man

That walks with such stirred blood in him as mine.

*Mary Beaton.* I would yet plead with you to save your head:

Nay, let this be then: sir, I chide you not.

Nay, let all come. Do not abide he yet.

*Chastelard.* Have you read never in French books the song

Called the Duke's Song, some boy made ages back,

A song of drag-nets hauled across thwart seas

And plucked up with rent sides, and caught therein

A strange-haired woman with sad singing lips,

Cold in the cheek like any stray of sea,

And sweet to touch? so that men sewing her face,

And how she sighed out little Ahs of pain

And soft cries sobbing sideways from her mouth,

Fell in hot love, and having lain with her

Died soon? One time I could have told it through:

Now I have kissed the sea-witch on her eyes,  
And my lips ache with it: but I shall sleep

Full soon, and a good space of sleep.

*Mary Beaton.* Alas!

*Chastelard.* What makes you sigh though I be found a fool?

You have no blame: and for my death, sweet friend,

I never could have lived long either way.

Why, as I live, the joy I have of this  
Would make men mad that were not mad with love;

I hear my blood sing, and my lifted heart  
Is like a springing water blown of wind  
For pleasure of this deed. Now, in  
God's name,

I swear if there be danger in delight  
I must die now: if joys have deadly teeth,

I'll have them bite my soul to death,  
and end

In the old asp's way, Egyptian-wise; be killed

In a royal purple fashion. Look, my love

Would kill me if my body were past hurt

Of any man's hand; and to die thereof,  
I say, is sweeter than all sorts of life.

I would not have her love me now, for then

I should die meanlier some time. I am safe,

Sure of her face, my life's end in her sight,

My blood shed out about her feet — by God,

My heart feels drunken when I think of it.

See you, she will not rid herself of me,  
Not though she slay me: her sweet lips  
and life

Will smell of my spilt blood.

*Mary Beaton.* Give me good night.

*Chastelard.* Yea, and good thanks.

[Exit MARY BEATON.]

Here is the very place:

Here has her body bowed the pillows in,

And here her head thrust under made the sheet

Smell soft of her mixed hair and spice:  
even here

Her arms pushed back the coverlet,  
pulled here

The golden silken curtain halfway in,

It may be, and made room to lean out loose,

Fair tender fallen arms. Now, if God would,

Doubtless he might take pity on my soul

To give me three clear hours, and then red hell

Snare me forever: this were merciful:

If I were God now, I should do thus much.

I must die next, and this were not so hard

For him to let me eat sweet fruit, and die

With my lips sweet from it. For one shall have

This fare for common days'-bread, which to me

Should be a touch kept always on my sense

To make hell soft, yea, the keen pain of hell

Soft as the loosening of wound arms in sleep.

Ah, love is good, and the worst part of it  
More than all things but death. She will be here

In some small while, and see me face to face

That am to give up life for her, and go  
Where a man lies with all his loves

put out

And his lips full of earth. I think on her,

And the old pleasure stings and makes half-tears

Under mine eyelids. Prithee, love, come fast,

That I may die soon; yea, some kisses through,

I shall die joyfully enough, so God

Keep me alive till then. I feel her feet

Coming far off; now must I hold my heart,

Steadying my blood to see her patiently  
[Hides himself by the bed

*Enter the QUEEN and DARNLEY.*

*Queen.* Nay, now go back: I have sent off my folk, Maries and all. Pray you, let be my hair;  
I cannot twist the gold thread out of it That you wound in so close. Look, here it clings:  
Ah! now you mar my hair unwinding it. Do me no hurt, sir.

*Darnley.* I would do you ease;  
Let me stay here.

*Queen.* Nay, will you go, my lord?  
*Darnley.* Eh? would you use me as a girl does fruit,  
Touched with her mouth and pulled away for game  
To look thereon ere her lips feed? but see,  
By God, I fare the worse for you.

*Queen.* Fair sir,  
Give me this hour to watch with and say prayers:  
You have not faith—it needs me to say prayers,  
That with commending of this deed to God  
I may get grace for it.

*Darnley.* Why, lacks it grace?  
Is not all wedlock gracious of itself?

*Queen.* Nay, that I know not of.  
Come, sweet, be hence.

*Darnley.* You have a sort of jewel in your neck  
That's like mine here.

*Queen.* Keep off your hands and go:  
You have no courtesy to be a king.

*Darnley.* Well, I will go: nay, but I thwart you not.

Do as you will, and get you grace;  
farewell,

And for my part, grace keep this watch with me!

For I need grace to bear with you so much. *[Exit.*

*Queen.* So, he is forth. Let me behold myself;

I am too pale to be so hot; I marvel  
So little color should be bold in the face

When the blood is not quieted. I have  
But a brief space to cool my thoughts upon.

If one should wear the hair thus heaped  
and curled  
Would it look best? or this way in the neck?

Could one ungirdle in such wise one's heart,

*[Taking off her girdle.*  
And ease it inwards as the waist is eased

By slackening of the slid clasp on it!  
How soft the silk is—gracious color too;

Violet shadows like new veins thrown up

Each arm, and gold to fleck the faint sweet green

Where the wrist lies thus eased. I am right glad

I have no maids about to hasten me:  
So I will rest, and see my hair shed down

On either silk side of my woven sleeves,  
Get some new way to bind it back with—yea,

Fair mirror-glass, I am well ware of you,

Yea, I know that, I am quite beautiful.  
How my hair shines!—Fair face, be friends with me,

And I will sing to you: look in my face  
Now, and your mouth must help the song in mine.

*Alys la châtelaine  
Voit venir de par Seine  
Thiébault le capitaine  
Qui parle ainsi:*

Was that the wind in the casement?  
nay, no more

But the comb drawn through half my hissing hair

Laid on my arms—yet my flesh moved at it.

*Dans ma camaille  
Plus de clou qui vaille,  
Dans ma cotte-maille  
Plus de fer aussi.*

Ah, but I wrong the ballad-verse:  
what's good

In such frayed fringes of old rhymes,  
to make

Their broken burden lag with us? me-  
seems

I could be sad now if I fell to think  
The least sad thing; ay, that sweet  
lady's fool,

Fool sorrow, would make merry with  
mine eyes

For a small thing. Nay, but I will  
keep glad.

Nor shall old sorrow be false friends  
with me.

But my first wedding was not like to  
this —

Fair faces then and laughter and sweet  
game,

And a pale little mouth that clung on  
mine

When I had kissed him by the faded  
eyes

And either thin cheek beating with  
faint blood.

Well, he was sure to die soon; I do  
think

He would have given his body to be  
slain,

Having embraced my body. Now, God  
knows,

I have no man to do as much for me  
As give me but a little of his blood

To fill my beauty from, though I go  
down

Pale to my grave for want — I think  
not. Pale —

I am too pale surely — Ah!

[*Sees him in the glass, coming for-  
ward.*

*Chastelard.* Be not afraid.

*Queen.* Saint Mary! what a shaken  
wit have I!

Nay, is it you? who let you through  
the doors?

Where be my maidens? which way got  
you in?

Nay, but stand up, kiss not my hands  
so hard;

By God's fair body, if you but breathe  
on them

You are just dead and slain at once.  
What adder

Has bit you mirthful mad? for by this  
light

A man to have his head laughed off for  
mirth

Is no great jest. Lay not your eyes on  
me;

What! would you not be slain?

*Chastelard.* I pray you, madam,  
Bear with me a brief space, and let me  
speak.

I will not touch your garments even,  
nor speak

But in soft wise, and look some other  
way,

If that it like you; for I came not here  
For pleasure of the eyes; yet, if you  
will,

Let me look on you.

*Queen.* As you will, fair sir.

Give me that coif to gather in my  
hair —

I thank you — and my girdle — nay,  
that side.

Speak, if you will: yet if you will be  
gone,

Why, you shall go, because I hate you  
not.

You know that I might slay you with  
my lips,

With calling out? but I will hold my  
peace.

*Chastelard.* Yea, do some while. I  
had a thing to say;

I know not wholly what thing. O my  
sweet,

I am come here to take farewell of love  
That I have served, and life that I have  
lived

Made up of love, here in the sight of  
you

That all my life's time I loved more  
than God,

Who quits me thus with bitter death  
for it.

For you well know that I must shortly  
die,

My life being wound about you as it is,  
Who love me not; yet do not hate me,  
sweet,

But tell me wherein I came short of  
love;

For doubtless I came short of a just  
love,

And fell in some fool's fault that anger-  
ed you.

Now that I talk men dig my grave for  
me

Out in the rain, and in a little while  
I shall be thrust in some sad space of  
earth

Out of your eyes; and you, O you my  
love,

A newly wedded lady full of mirth  
And a queen girt with all good people's  
love,

You shall be fair and merry in all your  
days.

Is this so much for me to have of you?  
Do but speak, sweet: I know these are  
no words

A man should say though he were now  
to die,

But I am as a child for love, and have  
No strength at heart; yea, I am afraid  
to die,

For the harsh dust will lie upon my  
face

Too thick to see you pass. Look how  
I love you;

I did so love you always, that your  
face

Seen through my sleep has wrung mine  
eyes to tears

For pure delight in you. Why do you  
thus?

You answer not, but your lips curl in  
twain

And your face moves; there, I shall  
make you weep,

And be a coward too; it were much  
best

I should be slain.

*Queen.* Yea, best such folk were slain;  
Why should they live to cozen fools  
with lies?

You would swear now you have used  
me faithfully;

Shall I not make you swear? I am  
ware of you:

You will not do it, nay, for the fear of  
God

You will not swear. Come, I am mer-  
ciful;

God made a foolish woman, making me,  
And I have loved your mistress with  
whole heart;

Say you do love her, you shall marry  
her

And she give thanks: yet I could wish  
your love

Had not so lightly chosen forth a face;  
For your fair sake, because I hate you  
not.

*Chastelard.* What is to say? why, you  
do surely know

That since my days were counted for a  
man's

I have loved you; yea, how past help  
and sense,

Whatever thing was bitter to my love,  
I have loved you; how when I rode in  
war

Your face went floated in among men's  
helms,

Your voice went through the shriek of  
slipping swords;

Yea, and I never have loved women  
well,

Seeing always in my sight I had your  
lips

Curled over, red and sweet; and the  
soft space

Of carven brows, and splendor of great  
throat

Swayed lily-wise: what pleasure should  
one have

To wind his arms about a lesser love?  
I have seen you; why, this were joy

enough

For God's eyes up in heaven, only to see  
And to come never nearer than I am.

Why, it was in my flesh, my bone and  
blood,

Bound in my brain, to love you; yea,  
and writ

All my heart over: if I would lie to you,  
I doubt I could not lie. Ah, you see

now,

You know now well enough; yea, there,  
sweet love,

Let me kiss there.

*Queen.* I love you best of them.  
Clasp me quite round till your lips

cleave on mine, —  
False mine, that did you wrong. For-

give them dearly,  
As you are sweet to them; for by love's  
love

I am not that evil woman in my heart  
That laughs at a rent faith. O Chas-  
telard,

Since this was broken to me of your  
new love

I have not seen the face of a sweet hour.  
Nay, if there be no pardon in a man,  
What shall a woman have for loving  
him?

Pardon me, sweet.

*Chastelard.* Yea, so I pardon you,  
And this side now; the first way. Would  
God please

To slay me so! who knows how he  
might please?

Now I am thinking, if you know it not,  
How I might kill you, kiss your breath  
clean out,

And take your soul to bring mine  
through to God

That our two souls might close and be  
one twain

Or a twain one, and God himself want  
skill

To set us either severally apart.

Oh, you must overlive me many years,  
And many years my soul be in waste  
hell;

But when some time God can no more  
refrain

To lay death like a kiss across your  
lips,

And great lords bear you clothed with  
funeral things,

And your crown girded over deadly  
brows,

Then after all your happy reach of life  
For pity you shall touch me with your  
eyes,

Remembering love was fellow with my  
flesh

Here in sweet earth, and make me well  
of love,

And heal my many years with piteous-  
ness.

*Queen.* You talk too sadly and too  
feignedly.

*Chastelard.* Too sad, but not too  
feigned; I am sad

That I shall die here without feigning  
thus;

And without feigning I were fain to live.

*Queen.* Alas, you will be taken pres-  
ently,

And then you are but dead. Pray you,  
get hence.

*Chastelard.* I will not.

*Queen.* Nay, for God's love be away;

You will be slain, and I get shame.  
God's mercy!

You were stark mad to come here; kiss  
me, sweet.

Oh, I do love you more than all men!  
yea,

Take my lips to you, close mine eyes  
up fast,

So you leave hold a little: there, for  
pity,

Abide now, and to-morrow come to  
me.

Nay, lest one see red kisses in my  
throat—

Dear God! what shall I give you to be  
gone?

*Chastelard.* I will not go. Look,  
here's full night grown up;

Why should I seek to sleep away  
from here?

The place is soft, and the lights burn  
for sleep;

Be not you moved; I shall lie well  
enough.

*Queen.* You are utterly undone.  
Sweet, by my life,

You shall be saved with taking ship at  
once.

For if you stay this foolish love's hour  
out

There is not ten days' likely life in you.  
This is no choice.

*Chastelard.* Nay, for I will not go.

*Queen.* Oh, me! this is that Bayard's  
blood of yours

That makes you mad; yea, and you  
shall not stay.

I do not understand. Mind, you must  
die.

Alas, poor lord, you have no sense of  
me;

I shall be deadly to you.

*Chastelard.* Yea, I saw that;

But I saw not that when my death's  
day came

You could be quite so sweet to me.

*Queen.* My love!

If I could kiss my heart's root out on  
you,

You would taste love hid at the core of  
me.

*Chastelard.* Kiss me twice more  
This beautiful bowed head

That has such hair with kissing ripples  
in,

And shivering soft eyelashes and brows  
With fluttered blood; but laugh a little,  
sweetly,

That I may see your sad mouth's laugh-  
ing look

I have used sweet hours in seeing. Oh,  
will you weep?

I pray you, do not weep.

*Queen.* Nay, dear, I have  
No tears in me; I never shall weep  
much,

I think, in all my life: I have wept for  
wrath

Sometimes, and for mere pain, but for  
love's pity

I cannot weep at all. I would to God  
You loved me less; I give you all I can  
For all this love of yours, and yet I am  
sure

I shall live out the sorrow of your death  
And be glad afterwards. You know I  
am sorry.

I should weep now; forgive me for  
your part.

God made me hard, I think. Alas!  
you see

I had fain been other than I am.

*Chastelard.* Yea, love.  
Comfort your heart. What way am I  
to die?

*Queen.* Ah! will you go yet, sweet?

*Chastelard.* No, by God's body.  
You will not see? how shall I make  
you see?

Look, it may be love was a sort of curse  
Made for my plague, and mixed up with  
my days

Somewise in their beginning; or indeed  
A bitter birth begotten of sad stars

At mine own body's birth, that heaven  
might make

My life taste sharp where other men  
drank sweet;

But whether in heavy body or broken  
soul,

I know it must go on to be my death.  
There was the matter of my fate in me

When I was fashioned first, and given  
such life

As goes with a sad end; no fault but  
God's.

Yea, and for all this I am not penitent,  
You see I am perfect in these sins of  
mine,

I have my sins writ in a book to read;  
Now I shall die, and be well done with  
this.

But I am sure you cannot see such  
things,

God knows I blame you not.

*Queen.* What shall be said?

You know most well that I am sorrow-  
ful.

But you should chide me. Sweet, you  
have seen fair wars,

Have seen men slain and ridden red in  
them;

Why will you die a chamberer's death  
like this?

What! shall no praise be written of my  
knight,

For my fame's sake?

*Chastelard.* Nay, no great praise, I  
think;

I will no more; what should I do with  
death,

Though I died goodly out of sight of  
you?

I have gone once: here am I set now,  
sweet,

Till the end come. That is your hus-  
band, hark!

He knocks at the outer door. Kiss me  
just once.

You know now all you have to say.  
Nay, love,

Let him come quickly.

*Enter DARNLEY, and afterwards the  
MARIES.*

*Darnley.* Yea, what thing is here?

Ay, this was what the doors shut fast  
upon—

Ay, trust you to be fast at prayer, my  
sweet?

By God, I have a mind—

*Chastelard.* What mind then, sir?  
A liar's lewd mind, to coin sins for jest.  
Because you take me in such wise as  
this?

Look you, I have to die soon, and I  
swear,

That am no liar, but a free knight and  
lord,

I shall die clear of any sin to you,



Save that I came for no good will of mine;  
 I am no carle, I play fair games with faith,  
 And by mine honor for my sake I swear  
 I say but truth; for no man's sake save mine,  
 Lest I die shamed. Madam, I pray you say  
 I am no liar; you know me what I am,  
 A sinful man and shortly to be slain,  
 That in a simple insolence of love  
 Have stained with a fool's eyes your holy hours  
 And with a fool's words put your pity out;  
 Nathless you know if I be liar or no,  
 Wherefore for God's sake give me grace to swear  
 (Yea, for mine too) how past all praise you are,  
 And stainless of all shame; and how all men  
 Lie, saying you are not most good and innocent,  
 Yea, the one thing good as God.  
*Darnley.* O sir, we know  
 You can swear well, being taken; you fair French  
 Dare swallow God's name for a lewd love-sake  
 As it were water. Nay, we know, we know;  
 Save your sweet breath now, lest you lack it soon;  
 We are simple, we; we have not heard of you.  
 Madam, by God you are well shamed in him:  
 Ay, trust you to be fingering in one's face,  
 Play with one's neck-chain? ah, your maiden's man,  
 A relic of your people's?  
*Chastelard.* Hold your peace,  
 Or I will set an edge on your own lie  
 Shall scar yourself. Madam, have out your guard:  
 'Tis time I were got hence.  
*Queen.* Sweet Hamilton,  
 Hold you my hand, and help me to sit down.

O Henry, I am beaten from my wits!  
 Let me have time, and live; call out my people —  
 Bring forth some armed guard to lay hold on him;  
 But see no man be slain. Sirs, hide your swords;  
 I will not have men slain.  
*Darnley.* What! is this true?  
 Call the queen's people — help the queen there, you —  
 Ho, sirs! come in.

*Enter some with the Guard.*

*Queen.* Lay hold upon that man;  
 Bear him away, but see he have no hurt.

*Chastelard.* Into your hands I render up myself  
 With a free heart; deal with me how you list,  
 But courteously, I pray you. Take my sword.

Farewell, great queen; the sweetness in your look  
 Makes life look bitter on me. Farewell, sirs. [*He is taken out.*]

*Darnley.* Yea, pluck him forth, and have him hanged by dawn;  
 He shall find bed enow to sleep. God's love!  
 That such a knave should be a knight like this!

*Queen.* Sir, peace awhile; this shall be as I please;  
 Take patience to you. Lords, I pray you see  
 All be done goodly; look they wrong him not.  
 Carmichael, you shall sleep with me to-night;  
 I am sorely shaken, even to the heart.  
 Fair lords,  
 I thank you for your care. Sweet, stay by me.

ACT IV. — MURRAY.

SCENE I. — *The Queen's Lodging at St. Andrew's.*

*The QUEEN and the four MARIES.*

*Queen.* Why will you break my heart with praying to me?

You Seyton, you Carmichael, you have wits,  
 You are not all run to tears; you do not think  
 It is my wrath or will that whets this axe  
 Against his neck?  
*Mary Seyton.* Nay, these three weeks ago  
 I said the queen's wrath was not sharp enough  
 To shear a neck.  
*Queen.* Sweet, and you did me right,  
 And look you, what my mercy bears to fruit,  
 Danger and deadly speech and a fresh fault  
 Before the first was cool in people's lips;  
 A goodly mercy: and I wash hands of it. —  
 Speak you, there; have you ever found me sharp?  
 You weep and whisper with sloped necks and heads  
 Like two sick birds; do you think shame of me?  
 Nay, I thank God none can think shame of me;  
 But am I bitter, think you, to men's faults?  
 I think I am too merciful, too meek:  
 Why, if I could I would yet save this man;  
 'Tis just boy's madness; a soft stripe or two  
 Would do to scourge the fault in his French blood.  
 I would fain let him go. You, Hamilton,  
 You have a heart thewed harder than my heart;  
 When mine would threat it sighs, and wrath in it  
 Has a bird's flight and station, starves before  
 It can well feed or fly: my pulse of wrath  
 Sounds tender as the running down of tears.  
 You are the hardest woman I have known,  
 Your blood has frost and cruel gall in it,

You hold men off with bitter lips and eyes —  
 Such maidens should serve Engiand; now, perfoy,  
 I doubt you would have got him slain at once.  
 Come, would you not? come, would you let him live?  
*Mary Hamilton.* Yes — I think yes; I cannot tell; maybe  
 I would have seen him punished.  
*Queen.* Look you now,  
 There's maiden mercy; I would have him live —  
 For all my wifehood, maybe I weep too:  
 Here's a mere maiden falls to slaying at once,  
 Small shrift for her; God keep us from such hearts!  
 I am a queen too that would have him live,  
 But one that has no wrong and is no queen,  
 She would — What are you saying there, you twain?  
*Mary Carmichael.* I said a queen's face and so fair an one's  
 Would lose no grace for giving grace away;  
 That gift comes back upon the mouth it left,  
 And makes it sweeter, and sets fresh red on it.  
*Queen.* This comes of sonnets when the dance draws breath;  
 These talking times will make a dearth of grace.  
 But you — what ails you that your lips are shut?  
 Weep, if you will; here are four friends of yours  
 To weep as fast for pity of your tears.  
 Do you desire him dead? nay, but men say  
 He was your friend, he fought them on your side,  
 He made you songs — God knows what songs he made!  
 Speak you for him a little: will you not?  
*Mary Beaton.* Madam, I have no words.

*Queen.* No words? no pity —

Have you no mercies for such men?  
God help!

It seems I am the meekest heart on  
earth —

Yea, the one tender woman left alive,  
And knew it not. I will not let him  
live,

For all my pity of him.

*Mary Beaton.* Nay, but, madam,  
For God's love look a little to this  
thing.

If you do slay him you are but shamed  
to death;

All men will cry upon you, women  
weep,

Turning your sweet name bitter with  
their tears;

Red shame grow up out of your mem-  
ory

And burn his face that would speak  
well of you;

You shall have no good word nor pity,  
none,

Till some such end be fallen upon you:  
nay,

I am but cold, I knew I had no words.  
I will keep silence.

*Queen.* Yea, now, as I live,  
I wist not of it: troth, he shall not  
die.

See you, I am pitiful, compassionate,  
I would not have men slain for my  
love's sake,

But if he live to do me three times  
wrong,

Why then my shame would grow up  
green and red

Like any flower. I am not whole at  
heart;

In faith, I wot not what such things  
should be.

I doubt it is but dangerous; he must  
die.

*Mary Beaton.* Yea, but you will not  
slay him.

*Queen.* Swear me that,  
I'll say he shall not die for your oath's  
sake.

What will you do for grief when he is  
dead?

*Mary Beaton.* Nothing for grief, but  
hold my peace and die.

*Queen.* Why, for your sweet sake one  
might let him live;

But the first fault was a green seed of  
shame,

And now the flower, and deadly fruit  
will come

With apple-time in autumn. By my  
life,

I would they had slain him there in  
Edinburgh;

But I reprove him; lo the thank I get,  
To set the base folk muttering like

smoked bees

Of shame and love, and how love comes  
of shame,

And how the queen loves shame that  
comes of love;

Yet I say naught and go about my  
ways,

And this mad fellow that I respited  
Being forth and free, lo now the second  
time

Ye take him by my bed in wait. Now  
see

If I can get goodwill to pardon him;  
With what a face may I crave leave of  
men

To respite him, being young and a good  
knight

And mad for perfect love? shall I go  
say, —

*Dear lords, because ye took him shame-  
fully,*

*Let him not die; because his fault is  
foul,*

*Let him not die; because if he do live  
I shall be held a harlot of all men,*

*I pray you, sweet sirs, that he may not  
die?*

*Mary Beaton.* Madam, for me I would  
not have him live;

Mine own heart's life was ended with  
my fame,

And my life's breath will shortly follow  
them;

So that I care not much; for you wot  
well

I have lost love and shame and fame,  
and all

To no good end; nor while he had his  
life

Have I got good of him that was my  
love.

Save that for courtesy (which may God  
quit)

He kissed me once as one might kiss  
for love

Out of great pity for me ; saving this,  
He never did me grace in all his life.

And when you have slain him, madam,  
it may be

I shall get grace of him in some new  
way

In a new place, if God have care of us.

*Queen.* Bid you my brother to me  
presently. [*Exeunt Mariæ.*

And yet the thing is pitiful ; I would  
There were some way. To send him  
overseas,

Out past the long firths to the cold keen  
sea

Where the sharp sound is that one  
hears up here —

Or hold him in strong prison till he  
died —

He would die shortly — or to set him  
free

And use him softly till his brains were  
healed —

There is no way. Now never while I  
live

Shall we twain love together any more,  
Nor sit at rhyme as we were used to do,  
Nor each kiss other only with the eyes  
A great way off ere hand or lip could  
reach ;

There is no way.

*Enter Murray.* O, you are welcome,  
sir ;

You know what need I have ; but I  
praise heaven,

Having such need, I have such help of  
you.

I do believe no queen God ever made  
Was better holpen than I look to be.

What ! if two brethren love not heartily,  
Who shall be good to either one of  
them ?

*Murray.* Madam, I have great joy of  
your good will.

*Queen.* I pray you, brother, use no  
courtesies :

I have some fear you will not suffer me  
When I shall speak. Fear is a fool, I  
think,

Yet hath he wit enow to fool my wits,

Being but a woman's. Do not answer  
me

Till you shall know ; yet if you have a  
word

I shall be fain to hear it ; but I think  
There is no word to help me ; no man's  
word.

There be two things yet that should do  
me good, —

A speeding arm and a great heart. My  
lord,

I am soft-spirited as women are,  
And ye wot well I have no harder heart :

Yea, with my will I would not slay a  
thing,

But all should live right sweetly if I  
might ;

So that man's blood-spilling lies hard  
on me.

I have a work yet for mine honor's  
sake,

A thing to do, God wot I know not  
how,

Nor how to crave it of you : nay, by  
heaven,

I will not shame myself to show it you :  
I have not heart.

*Murray.* Why, if it may be done  
With any honor, or with good men's  
excuse,

I shall well do it.

*Queen.* I would I wist that well.

Sir, do you love me ?

*Murray.* Yea, you know I do.

*Queen.* In faith, you should well love  
me, for I love

The least man in your following for  
your sake

With a whole sister's heart.

*Murray.* Speak simply, madam ;  
I must obey you, being your bounden  
man.

*Queen.* Sir, so it is you know what  
things have been,

Even to the endangering of mine inno-  
cent name,

And by no fault, but by men's evil  
will.

If Chastelard have trial openly,  
I am but shamed.

*Murray.* This were a wound indeed,  
If your good name should lie upon his  
lip.

*Queen.* I will the judges put him not to plead,  
For my fame's sake; he shall not answer them.

*Murray.* What! think you he will speak against your fame?

*Queen.* I know not; men might feign belief of him

For hate of me; it may be he will speak;

In brief, I will not have him held to proof.

*Murray.* Well, if this be, what good is to be done?

*Queen.* Is there no way but he must speak to them,

Being had to trial plainly?

*Murray.* I think, none.

*Queen.* Now mark, my lord; I swear he will not speak.

*Murray.* It were the best if you could make that sure.

*Queen.* There is one way. Look, sir, he shall not do it:

Shall not, or will not, either is one way;

I speak as I would have you understand.

*Murray.* Let me not guess at you; speak certainly.

*Queen.* You will not mind me: let him be removed;

Take means to get me surety: there be means.

*Murray.* So, in your mind, I have to slay the man?

*Queen.* Is there a mean for me to save the man?

*Murray.* Truly I see no mean except your love.

*Queen.* What love is that, my lord? what think you of,

Talking of love and of love's mean in me

And of your guesses and of slaying him?

Why, I say naught, have naught to say: God help me!

I bid you but take surety of the man, Get him removed.

*Murray.* Come, come, be clear with me;

You bid me to despatch him privily.

*Queen.* God send me sufferance! I bid you, sir?

Nay, do not go: what matter if I did? Nathless I never bade you; no, by God.

Be not so wroth; you are my brother born;

Why do you dwell upon me with such eyes?

For love of God you should not bear me hard.

*Murray.* What! are you made of flesh?

*Queen.* Oh, now I see.

You had rather lose your wits to do me harm

Than keep sound wits to help me.

*Murray.* It is right strange; The worst man living hath some fear, some love,

Holds somewhat dear a little for life's sake,

Keeps fast to some compassion; you have none;

You know of nothing that remembrance knows

To make you tender. I must slay the man?

Nay, I will do it.

*Queen.* Do, if you be not mad.

I am sorry for him; and he must needs die.

I would I were assured you hate me not:

I have no heart to slay him by my will.

I pray you think not bitterly of me.

*Murray.* Is it your pleasure such a thing were done?

*Queen.* Yea, by God's body is it, certainly.

*Murray.* Nay, for your love then, and for honor's sake, This thing must be.

*Queen.* Yea, should I set you on?

Even for my love then, I beseech you, sir,

To seek him out, and lest he prate of me

To put your knife into him ere he come forth:

Meseems this were not such wild work to do.

*Murray.* I'll have him in the prison taken off.

*Queen.* I am bounden to you, even for my name's sake,  
When that is done.

*Murray.* I pray you fear me not  
Farewell. I would such things were not to do,

Or not for me; yea, not for any man.

[*Exit.*

*Queen.* Alas! what honor have I to give thanks?

I would he had denied me: I had held my peace

Thenceforth forever; but he wrung out the word,

Caught it before my lip was fain of it—

It was his fault to put it in my mind,  
Yea, and to feign a loathing of his fault.

Now is he about devising my love's death,

And nothing loath. Nay, since he must needs die,

Would he were dead and come alive again

And I might keep him safe! He doth live now,

And I may do what love I will to him;  
But by to-morrow he will be stark dead,  
Stark slain and dead; and for no sort of love

Will he so much as kiss me half a kiss.  
Were this to do I would not do it again.

*Re-enter MURRAY.*

What! have you taken order? is it done?

It were impossible to do so soon.

Nay, answer me.

*Murray.* Madam, I will not do it.

*Queen.* How did you say? I pray, sir, speak again:

I know not what you said.

*Murray.* I say I will not;

I have thought thereof, and have made up my heart

To have no part in this: look you to it.

*Queen.* O, for God's sake! you will not have me shamed?

*Murray.* I will not dip my hand into your sin.

*Queen.* It were a good deed to deliver me.

I am but woman, of one blood with you,  
A feeble woman; put me not to shame;  
I pray you of your pity do me right.

Yea, and no fleck of blood shall cleave to you

For a just deed.

*Murray.* I know not: I will none.

*Queen.* Oh, you will never let him speak to them

To put me in such shame? Why, I should die

Out of pure shame and mine own burning blood;

Yea, my face feels the shame lay hold on it,

I am half burnt already in my thought.  
Take pity of me. Think how shame

slays a man;

How shall I live, then? would you have me dead?

I pray you for our dead dear father's sake,

Let not men mock at me. Nay, if he speak,

I shall be sung in mine own towns.  
Have pity.

What! will you let men stone me in the ways?

*Murray.* Madam, I shall take pains the best I may

To save your honor, and what thing lieth in me

That will I do; but no close manslayings.

I will not have God's judgment grip my throat

When I am dead, to hale me into hell

For a man's sake slain on this wise.  
Take heed.

See you to that.

[*Exit.*

*Queen.* One of you maidens there bid my lord hither. Now, by Mary's soul,

He shall not die and bring me into shame.

There's treason in you like a fever, hot,  
My holy-natured brother, cheek and eye:

You look red through with it; sick, honor-sick,

pecked with the blain of treason,  
leper-like,—

scrupulous fair traitor with clean  
lips.

If one should sue to hell to do him  
good,

He were as brotherly holpen as I am.

This man must live, and say no harm  
of me;

may reprove and cast him forth;  
yea, so—

This were the best; or if he die mid-  
way—

Yea, any thing, so that he die not here.

[To the MARIES within.

Fetch hither Darnley. Nay, ye gape  
on me—

What! doth he sleep, or feeds, or plays  
at games?

Why, I would see him; I am weary for  
his sake;

Bid my lord in.—Nathless he will but  
chide;

Nay, flee and laugh: what should one  
say to him?

There were some word if one could hit  
on it;

Some way to close with him: I wot not.  
—Sir,

*Enter DARNLEY.*

Please it your love I have a suit to you.

*Darnley.* What sort of suit?

*Queen.* Nay, if you be not friends—  
have no suit towards mine enemies.

*Darnley.* Eh! do I look now like  
your enemy?

*Queen.* You have a way of peering  
under brow

I do not like. If you see any thing  
in me that irks you, I will painfully

Labor to lose it: do but show me favor,  
And as I am your faithful humble wife

This foolishness shall be removed  
in me.

*Darnley.* Why do you laugh and  
mock me with stretched hands?

Faith, I see no such thing.

*Queen.* That is well seen.

Come, I will take my heart between my  
lips,

Use it not hardly. Sir, my suit begins;  
That you would please to make me that

I am,

(In sooth I think I am) mistress and  
queen

Of mine own people.

*Darnley.* Why, this is no suit;

This is a simple matter, and your own.

*Queen.* It was, before God made you  
king of me.

*Darnley.* No king, by God's grace;  
were I such a king,

I'd sell my kingdom for six roods of rye.

*Queen.* You are too sharp upon my  
words; I would

Have leave of you to free a man con-  
demned.

*Darnley.* What man is that, sweet?

*Queen.* Such a mad poor man

As God desires us use not cruelly.

*Darnley.* Is there no name a man  
may call him by?

*Queen.* Nay, my fair master, what  
fair game is this?

Why, you do know him: it is Chaste-  
lard.

*Darnley.* Ay, is it soothly?

*Queen.* By my life, it is;

Swear, as you tender me, so pardon him.

*Darnley.* As he doth tender you, so  
pardon me;

For, if it were the mean to save my life,  
He should not live a day.

*Queen.* Nay, shall not he?

*Darnley.* Look what an evil wit old  
Fortune hath:

Why, I came here to get his time cut  
off.

This second fault is meat for lewd  
men's mouths;

You were best have him slain at once.  
'Tis hot.

*Queen.* Give me the warrant, and sit  
down, my lord.

Why, I will sign it; what, I understand  
How this must be. Should not my

name stand here?

*Darnley.* Yea, there, and here the  
seal.

*Queen.* Ay, so you say.

Shall I say too what I am thinking of?

*Darnley.* Do, if you will.

*Queen.* I do not like your suit.

*Darnley.* 'Tis of no Frenchman fash-  
ion.

*Queen.* No, God wot;

'Tis nowise great men's fashion in  
French land  
To clap a headsman's tabard on their  
backs.

*Darnley.* No, madam?

*Queen.* No; I never wist of that.

Is it a month gone I did call you lord?  
I chose you by no straying stroke of  
sight,

But with my heart to love you heartily.  
Did I wrong then? did mine eye draw  
my heart?

I know not; sir, it may be I did wrong:  
And yet to see you I should call it right  
Even yet to love you; and would choose  
again,

Again to choose you.

*Darnley.* There, I love you too,  
Take that for sooth, and let me take  
this hence.

*Queen.* O, do you think I hold you  
off with words?

Why, take it then; there is my hand-  
writing,

And here the hand that you shall slay  
him with.

'Tis a fair hand, a maiden-colored one:  
I doubt yet it has never slain a man.

You never fought yet save for game, I  
wis.

Nay, thank me not, but have it from  
my sight;

Go and make haste for fear he be got  
forth:

It may be such a man is dangerous;  
Who knows what friends he hath? and  
by my faith

I doubt he hath seen some fighting, I  
do fear

He hath fought and shed men's blood;  
ye are wise men

That will not leave such dangerous  
things alive;

'Twere well he died the sooner for your  
sakes.

Pray you make haste; it is not fit he  
live.

*Darnley.* What! will you let him die  
so easily?

*Queen.* Why, God have mercy! what  
way should one take

To please such people? there's some  
cunning way,

Something I miss, out of my simple soul  
What! must one say "Beseech you do  
no harm,"

Or "for my love, sweet cousins, be not  
hard,"

Or "let him live but till the vane come  
round" —

Will such things please you? well then,  
have your way;

Sir, I desire you, kneeling down with  
tears,

With sighs and tears, fair sir, require  
of you,

Considering of my love I bear this man,  
Just for my love's sake let him not be  
hanged

Before the sundown; do thus much for  
me,

To have a queen's prayers follow after  
you.

*Darnley.* I know no need for you to  
gibe at me.

*Queen.* Alack! what heart then shall  
I have to jest?

There is no woman jests in such a  
wise —

*For the shame's sake I pray you hang  
him not,*

*Seeing how I love him, save indeed in  
silk,*

*Sweet twisted silk of my sad handiwork.*  
Nay, and you will not do so much for  
me;

You vex your lip, biting the blood and  
all:

Were this so hard, and you compassion-  
ate?

I am in sore case then, and will weep  
indeed.

*Darnley.* What do you mean to cast  
such gibes at me?

*Queen.* Woe's me, and will you turn  
my tears to thorns?

Nay, set your eyes a little in my face:  
See, do I weep? what will you make of  
me?

Will you not swear I love this prisoner?  
Ye are wise, and ye will have it; yet  
for me

I wist not of it. We are but feeble  
fools,

And love may catch us when we lie  
asleep,



And yet God knows we know not this  
a whit.

Come, look on me, swear you believe  
it not :

It may be I will take your word for that.

*Darnley.* Do you not love him? nay,  
but verily?

*Queen.* Now then, make answer to me  
verily,

Which of us twain is wiser? for my  
part

I will not swear I love not, if you will ;  
Ye be wise men and many men, my

lords,

And ye will have me love him, ye will  
swear

That I do love him ; who shall say ye  
lie ?

Look on your paper ; maybe I have  
wept :

Doubtless I love your hanged man in  
my heart.

What ! is the writing smutched or gone  
awry ?

Or blurred — ay, surely so much — with  
one tear,

One little sharp tear strayed on it by  
chance ?

Come, come, the man is deadly danger-  
ous ;

Let him die presently.

*Darnley.* You do not love him ;

Well, yet he need not die ; it were right  
hard

To hang the fool because you love him  
not.

*Queen.* You have keen wits and there-  
to courtesy

To catch me with. No, let this man  
not die ;

It were no such perpetual praise to you  
To be his doomsman, and in doglike

wise

Bite his brief life in twain.

*Darnley.* Truly it were not.

*Queen.* Then for your honor and my  
love of you

(Oh, I do love you ! but you know not,  
sweet,

You shall see how much), think you for  
their sake

He may go free ?

*Darnley.* How, freely forth of us ?

But yet he loves you, and being mad  
with love

Makes matter for base mouths to chew  
upon :

'Twere best he live not yet.

*Queen.* Will you say that ?

*Darnley.* Why should he live to breed  
you bad reports ?

Let him die first.

*Queen.* Sweet, for your sake, not so.

*Darnley.* Fret not yourself to pity ;  
let him die.

*Queen.* Come, let him live a little ; it  
shall be

A grace to us.

*Darnley.* By God, he dies at once.

*Queen.* Now, by God's mother, if I  
respite him,

Though you were all the race of you in  
one,

And had more tongues than hairs to  
cry on me,

He should not lose a hair.

*Darnley.* This is mere mercy —

But you thank God you love him not a  
whit ?

*Queen.* It shall be what it please ;  
and if I please

It shall be any thing. Give me the war-  
rant.

*Darnley.* Nay, for your sake and love  
of you, not I,

To make it dangerous.

*Queen.* Oh, God's pity, sir !

You are tender of me ; will you serve  
me so,

Against mine own will, shew me so  
much love,

Do me good service that I loath being  
done,

Out of pure pity ?

*Darnley.* Nay, your word shall stand.

*Queen.* What makes you gape so  
beastlike after blood ?

Were you not bred up on some hang-  
man's hire,

And dieted with fleshmeats at his hand,  
And fed into a fool? Give me that

paper.

*Darnley.* Now for that word I will not.

*Queen.* Nay, sweet love,

For your own sake be just a little wise :  
Come, I beseech you.

*Darnley.* Pluck not at my hands.  
*Queen.* No, that I will not: I am  
 brain-broken, mad;  
 Pity my madness for sweet marriage-  
 sake  
 And my great love's; I love you to say  
 this;  
 I would not have you cross me, out of  
 love.  
 But for true love should I not chafe  
 indeed?  
 And now I do not.  
*Darnley.* Yea, and late you chid,  
 You chafed and jested and blew soft  
 and hard —  
 No, for that "fool" you shall not fool  
 me so.  
*Queen.* You are no churl, sweet, will  
 you see me weep?  
 Look, I weep now; be friends with my  
 poor tears.  
 Think each of them beseeches you of  
 love,  
 And hath some tongue to cry on you  
 for love,  
 And speak soft things; for that which  
 loves not you  
 Is none of mine, not though they grow  
 of grief  
 And grief of you; be not too hard with  
 them.  
 You would not of your own heart slay  
 a man;  
 Nay, if you will, in God's name make  
 me weep,  
 I will not hate you; but at heart, sweet  
 lord,  
 Be not at heart my sweet heart's enemy.  
 If I had many mighty men to friend,  
 I would not plead too lovingly with you  
 To have your love.  
*Darnley.* Why, yet you have my love.  
*Queen.* Alas! what shall mine ene-  
 mies do to me  
 If I be used so hardly of my friends?  
 Come, sir, you hate me; yet for all your  
 hate  
 You cannot have such heart.  
*Darnley.* What sort of heart?  
 I have no heart to be used shamefully,  
 If you mean that.  
*Queen.* Would God I loved you not!  
 You are too hard to be used lovingly.

*Darnley.* You are moved too much  
 for such a little love  
 As you bear me.  
*Queen.* God knows you do me wrong;  
 God knows the heart, sweet, that I love  
 you with.  
 Hark you, fair sir, I'd have all well  
 with you;  
 Do you not fear at sick men's time of  
 night  
 What end may come? are you so sure  
 of heart?  
 Is not your spirit surprisable in sleep?  
 Have you no evil dreams? Nay, look  
 you, love,  
 I will not be flung off your heart and  
 hand,  
 I am no snake: but tell me for your love,  
 Have you no fancies how these things  
 will end  
 In the pit's mouth? how all life-deeds  
 will look  
 At the grave's edge that lets men into  
 hell?  
 For my part, who am weak and woman-  
 eyed,  
 It turns my soul to tears: I doubt this  
 blood  
 Fallen on our faces when we twain are  
 dead  
 Will scar and burn them: yea, for  
 heaven is sweet,  
 And loves sweet deeds that smell not  
 of spilt blood.  
 Let us not kill: God that made mercy  
 first  
 Pities the pitiful for their deed's sake.  
*Darnley.* Get you some painting;  
 with a cheek like this  
 You'll find no faith in listeners.  
*Queen.* How, fair lord?  
*Darnley.* I say that looking with this  
 face of yours  
 None shall believe you holy. What!  
 you talk,  
 Take mercy in your mouth, eat holi-  
 ness,  
 Put God under your tongue, and feed  
 on heaven,  
 With fear and faith and — faith, I know  
 not what —  
 And look as though you stood and saw  
 men slain

To make you game and laughter : nay,  
 your eyes  
 Threaten as unto blood. What will  
 you do  
 To make men take your sweet word?  
 Pitiful —  
 You are pitiful as he that's hired for  
 death,  
 And loves the slaying yet better than  
 the hire.

*Queen.* You are wise that live to  
 threat and tell me so :

Do you love life too much?

*Darnley.* Oh, now you are sweet,  
 Right tender now : you love not blood  
 nor death,  
 You are too tender.

*Queen.* Yea, too weak, too soft :

Sweet, do not mock me, for my love's  
 sake ; see  
 How soft a thing I am. Will you be  
 hard?  
 The heart you have, has it no sort of  
 fear?

*Darnley.* Take off your hand, and let  
 me go my way,

And do my deed ; and when the doing  
 is past

I will come home, and teach you tender  
 things

Out of my love till you forget my  
 wrath.

I will be angry when I see good need,  
 And will grow gentle after, — fear not  
 that ;

You shall get no wrong of my wrong-  
 doing.

So I take leave.

*Queen.* Take what you will ; take all.  
 You have taken half my heart away  
 with words :

Take all I have, and take no leave ; I  
 have

No leave to give : yea, shortly shall  
 lack leave,

I think, to live ; but I crave none of  
 you ;

I would have none : yet for the love I  
 have,

If I get ever a mean to show it you,  
 I pray God put you some day in my  
 hand

That you may take that too.

*Darnley.* Well, as he please :

God keep you in such love ; and so  
 farewell. *[Exit.]*

*Queen.* So fare I as your lover, but  
 not well. —

Ah, sweet, if God be ever good to me  
 To put you in my hand ! I am come to  
 shame ;

Let me think now, and let my wits not  
 go ;

God, for dear mercy, let me not forget  
 Why I should be so angry : the dull  
 blood

Beats at my face, and blinds me ; I am  
 chafed to death,

And I am shamed ; I shall go mad and  
 die.

Truly I think I did kneel down, did  
 pray,

Yea, weep (who knows?) it may be —  
 all for that.

Yea, if I wept not, this was blood brake  
 forth

And burnt mine eyelids ; I will have  
 blood back,

And wash them cool in the hottest of  
 his heart,

Or I will slay myself : I cannot tell.

I have given gold for brass, and lo, the  
 pay

Cleaves to my fingers ; there's no way  
 to mend, —

Not while life stays : would God that  
 it were gone !

The fool will feed upon my fame, and  
 laugh ;

Till one seal up his tongue and lips  
 with blood,

He carries half my honor and good  
 name

Between his teeth. Lord God, mine  
 head will fail !

When have I done thus since I was  
 alive ?

And these ill times will deal but ill  
 with me —

My old love slain, and never a new to  
 help,

And my wits gone, and my blithe use  
 of life,

And all the grace was with me. Love  
 — perchance

If I save love I shall well save myself

I could find heart to bid him take such fellows,  
And kill them to my hand. I was the fool

To sue to these, and shame myself: God knows

I was a queen born, I will hold their heads

Here in my hands for this. Which of you waits?

*Enter MARY BEATON and MARY CARMICHAEL.*

No maiden of them?—what, no more than this?

*Mary Carmichael.* Madam, the lady Seyton is gone forth;  
She is ill at heart with watching.

*Queen.* Ay, at heart—  
All girls must have such tender sides to the heart

They break for one night's watching, ache to death

For an hour's pity, for a half-hour's love—

Wear out before the watches, die by dawn,

And ride at noon to burial. God's my pity!

Where's Hamilton? doth she ail too? at heart,

I warrant her at heart.

*Mary Beaton.* I know not, madam.

*Queen.* What! sick or dead? I am well holpen of you:

Come hither to me. What pale blood you have!

Is it for fear you turn such cheeks to me?

Why, if I were so loving, by my hand, I would have set my head upon the chance,

And loosed him though I died. What will you do?

Have you no way?

*Mary Beaton.* None but your mercy.

*Queen.* Ay?  
Why, then the thing is piteous. Think, for God's sake—

Is there no loving way to fetch him forth?

Nay, what a white thin-blooded thing is love,

To help no more than this doth! Were I in love,

I would unbar the ways to-night, and then

Laugh death to death to-morrow, mock him dead;

I think you love well with one half your heart,

And let fear keep the other. Hark you now:

You said there was some friend durst break my bars—

Some Scotch name—faith, as if I wist of it!

Ye have such heavy wits to help one with—

Some man that had some mean to save him by—

Tush, I must be at pains for you!

*Mary Beaton.* Nay, madam,  
It were no boot; he will not be let forth.

*Queen.* I say, the name. Oh, Robert Erskine—yea,

A fellow of some heart: what saith he?

*Mary Beaton.* Madam,  
The thing was sound all through, yea, all went well,

But for all prayers that we could make to him

He would not fly: we cannot get him forth.

*Queen.* Great God! that men should have such wits as this!

I have a mind to let him die for that; And yet I wot not. Said he, he loathed his life?

*Mary Beaton.* He says your grace given would scathe yourself,

And little grace for such a grace as that

Be with the little of the life he kept To cast off some time more unworthily.

*Queen.* God help me! what should wise folk do with him?

These men be weaker-witted than mere fools

When they fall mad once; yet by Mary's soul

I am sorrier for him than for men right wise.

God wot a fool that were more wise than he

Would love me something worse than  
Chastelard,

Ay, and his own soul better. Do you  
think

(There's no such other sort of fool  
alive)

That he may live?

*Mary Beaton.* Yea, by God's mercy,  
madam,

To your great praise and honor from  
all men

If you should keep him living.

*Queen.* By God's light,  
I have good will to do it. Are you  
sure,

If I would pack him with a pardon  
hence,

He would speak well of me — not hint  
and halt,

Smile and look back, sigh and say love  
runs out,

But times have been — with some loose  
laugh cut short,

Bit off at lip — eh?

*Mary Beaton.* No, by heaven he  
would not!

*Queen.* You know how quickly one  
may be belied —

Faith, you should know it; I never  
thought the worst;

One may touch love, and come with  
clean hands off —

But you should know it. What! he  
will not fly —

Not though I wink myself asleep, turn  
blind —

Which that I will I say not?

*Mary Beaton.* Nay, not he;

We had good hope to bring him well  
aboard,

Let him slip safe down by the firths to  
sea,

Out under Leith by night-setting, and  
thence

Take ship for France, and serve there  
out of sight

In the new wars.

*Queen.* Ay, in the new French wars —  
You wist thereof too, madam, with good  
leave —

A goodly bait to catch mine honor with  
And let me wake up with my name bit  
through.

I had been much bounden to you twain,  
methinks,

But for my knight's sake and his love's;  
by God,

He shall not die in God's despite nor  
mine.

Call in our chief lords; bid one see to  
it, —

Ay, and make haste.

[*Exeunt* MARY BEATON and MARY  
CARMICHAEL.

Now shall I try their teeth:

I have done with fear; now nothing  
but pure love

And power and pity shall have part in  
me;

I will not throw them such a spirit in  
flesh

To make their prey on. Though he be  
mad indeed,

It is the goodliest madness ever  
smote

Upon man's heart. A kingly knight —  
in faith,

Meseems my face can yet make faith  
in men,

And break their brains with beauty:  
for a word,

An eyelid's twitch, an eye's turn, tie  
them fast

And make their souls cleave to me.  
God be thanked,

This air has not yet curdled all the  
blood

That went to make me fair. An hour  
agone,

I thought I had been forgotten of men's  
love

More than dead women's faces are  
forgot

Of after lovers. All men are not of  
earth:

For all the frost of fools and this cold  
land,

There be some yet catch fever of my  
face

And burning for mine eyes' sake. I  
did think

My time was gone when men would  
dance to death

As to a music, and lie laughing down  
In the grave and take their funerals for  
their feasts,

To get one kiss of me. I have some strength yet,  
Though I lack power on men that lack men's blood.

Yea, and God wot I will be merciful;  
For all the foolish hardness round my heart

That tender women miss of to their praise,

They shall not say but I had grace to give

Even for love's sake. Why, let them take their way:

What ails it them though I be soft or hard?

Soft hearts would weep and weep, and let men die

For very mercy and sweet-heartedness; I that weep little for my pity's sake,

I have the grace to save men. Let fame go —

I care not much what shall become of fame,

So I save love, and do mine own soul right;

I'll have my mercy help me to revenge On all the crew of them. How will he look,

Having my pardon! I shall have sweet thanks

And love of good men for my mercy's love, —

Yea, and be quit of these I hate to death,

With one good deed.

*Enter the MARIES.*

*Mary Beaton.* Madam, the lords are here.

*Queen.* Stand you about me, I will speak to them.

I would the whole world stood up in my face,

And heard what I shall say. Bid them come in.

*Enter MURRAY, RANDOLPH, MORTON, LINDSAY, and other Lords.*

Hear you, fair lords, I have a word to you;

There is one thing I would fain understand, —

If I be queen, or no; for by my life Methinks I am growing unqueenly. No man speak?

Pray you take note, sweet lord ambassador,

I am no queen: I never was born queen. Alack, that one should fool us in this wise!

Take up my crown, sir, I will none of it Till it hath bells on as a fool's cap hath.

Nay, who will have it? no man take it up?

Was there none worthy to be shamed but I?

Here are enow good faces, good to crown;

Will you be king, fair brother? or you, my lord?

Give me a spinner's curch, a wisp of reed,

Any mean thing; but, God's love, no more gold,

And no more shame: let boys throw dice for it,

Or cast it to the grooms for tennis-play, For I will none.

*Murray.* What would your highness have?

*Queen.* Yea, yea, I said I was no majesty;

I shall be shortly fallen out of grace. What would I have? I would have leave to live;

Perchance I shall not shortly: nay, for me

That have no leave to respite other lives To keep mine own life were small praise enow.

*Murray.* Your majesty hath power to respite men,

As we well wot; no man saith otherwise.

*Queen.* What! is this true? 'tis a thing wonderful —

So great I cannot be well sure of it. Strange that a queen should find such grace as this

At such lords' hands as ye be, — such great lords:

I pray you let me get assured again, Lest I take jest for truth, and shame myself,

And make you mirth: to make your mirth of me,

God wot it were small pains to you, my lords,

But much less honor. I may send re-  
prieve —

With your sweet leaves I may?

*Murray.* Assuredly.

*Queen.* Lo, now, what grace is this I  
have of you!

I had a will to respite Chastelard,  
And would not do it for very fear of  
you:

Look you, I wist not ye were merciful.

*Morton.* Madam —

*Queen.* My lord, you have a word to  
me?

Doth it displease you such a man should  
live?

*Morton.* 'Twere a mad mercy in your  
majesty

To lay no hand upon his second fault  
And let him thrice offend you.

*Queen.* Ay, my lord?

*Morton.* It were well done to muffle  
lewd men's mouths

By casting of his head into their laps:  
It were much best.

*Queen.* Yea, truly were it so?

But if I will not, yet I will not, sir,  
For all the mouths in Scotland. Now,  
by heaven,

As I am pleased he shall not die, but  
live,

So shall ye be. There is no man shall  
die,

Except it please me; and no man shall  
say,

Except it please me, if I do ill or well.  
Which of you now will set his will to  
mine?

Not you, nor you I think, nor none of  
you,

Nor no man living that loves living well.  
Let one stand forth and smite me with  
his hand,

Wring my crown off and cast it under-  
foot,

And he shall get my respite back of me,  
And no man else: he shall bid live or  
die,

And no man else; and he shall be my  
lord,

And no man else. What! will not one  
be king?

Will not one here lay hold upon my  
state?

I am queen of you for all things come  
and gone.

Nay, my chief lady, and no meaner  
one,

The chiefest of my maidens, shall bear  
this,

And give it to my prisoner for a grace.  
Who shall deny me? who shall do me  
wrong?

Bear greeting to the lord of Chastelard,  
And this withal for respite of his life,  
For by my head he shall die no such  
way:

Nay, sweet, no words, but hence and  
back again.

[*Exit* MARY BEATON.

Farewell, dear lords; ye have shown  
grace to me,

And some time I will thank you as I  
may;

Till when, think well of me and what is  
done.

#### ACT V.—CHASTELARD.

SCENE I.—*Before Holyrood. A crowd  
of people; among them Soldiers, Bur-  
gesses, a Preacher, etc.*

*First Citizen.* They are not out yet.  
Have you seen the man?

What manner of man?

*Second Citizen.* Shall he be hanged,  
or no?

There was a fellow hanged some three  
days gone,

Wept the whole way: think you this  
man shall die

In better sort, now?

*First Citizen.* Eh, these shawm-players  
That walk before strange women, and  
make songs!

How should they die well?

*Third Citizen.* Is it sooth men say  
Our dame was wont to kiss him on the  
face

In lewd folk's sight?

*First Citizen.* Yea, saith one, all day  
long

He used to sit and jangle words in  
rhyme

To suit with shakes of faint adulterous  
sound

Some French lust in men's ears; she  
made songs too,  
Soft things to feed sin's anorous mouth  
upon, —

Delicate sounds for dancing at in hell.

*Fourth Citizen.* Is it priest Black that  
he shall have by him

When they do come?

*Third Citizen.* Ah! by God's leave,  
not so;

If the knave show us his peeled onion's  
head

And that damned flagging jowl of his —

*Second Citizen.* Nay, sirs,

Take heed of words; moreover, please  
it you,

This man hath no pope's part in him.

*Third Citizen.* I say

That if priest whore's-friend with the  
lewd thief's cheek

Show his foul blinking face to shame  
all ours,

It goes back fouler; well, one day hell's  
fire

Will burn him black indeed.

*A Woman.* What kind of man?

'Tis yet great pity of him if he be  
Goodly enow for this queen's paramour.

A French lord overseas? what doth he  
here,

With Scotch folk here?

*First Citizen.* Fair mistress, I think  
well,

He doth so at some times that I were  
fain

To do as well.

*The Woman.* Nay, then he will not  
die.

*First Citizen.* Why, see you, if one  
eat a piece of bread

Baked as it were a certain prophet's  
way,

Not upon coals, now — you shall appre-  
hend —

If defiled bread be given a man to eat,  
Being thrust into his mouth, why he

shall eat,

And with good hap shall eat; but if  
now, say,

One steal this, bread and beastliness  
and all,

When scarcely for pure hunger flesh  
and bone

Cleave one to other — why, if he steal  
to eat,

Be it even the filthiest feeding — though  
the man

Be famine-flayed of flesh and skin, I say  
He shall be hanged.

*Third Citizen.* Nay, stolen said you,  
sir?

See, God bade eat abominable bread,  
And freely was it eaten — for a sign

This, for a sign — and doubtless as did  
God,

So may the devil; bid one eat freely  
and live,

Not for a sign.

*Second Citizen.* Will you think thus  
of her?

But wherefore should they get this fel-  
low slain

If he be clear toward her?

*Third Citizen.* Sir, one must see

The day comes when a woman sheds  
her sin

As a bird moults; and she being shifted  
so,

The old mate of her old feather pecks  
at her

To get the right bird back; then she  
being stronger

Picks out his eyes — eh?

*Second Citizen.* Like enough to be;  
But if it be — Is not one preaching

there

With certain folk about him?

*First Citizen.* Yea, the same

Who preached a month since from Eze-  
kiel

Concerning these twain, — this our  
queen that is,

And her that was, and is not now so  
much

As queen over hell's worm.

*Third Citizen.* Ay, said he not,

This was Aholah, the first one of these,  
Called sisters only for a type — being

twain,

Twain Maries, no whit Nazarene? the  
first

Bred out of Egypt like the water-worm  
With sides in wet green places baked

with slime

And festered flesh that steams against  
the sun;



A plague among all people, and a type  
Set as a flake upon a leper's fell.

*First Citizen.* Yea, said he, and unto  
her the men went in,

The men of Pharaoh's, beautiful with  
red

And with red gold, fair foreign-footed  
men,

The bountiful fair men, the courteous  
men,

The delicate men with delicate feet, that  
went

Curling their small beards Agag-fashion,  
yea,

Pruning their mouths to nibble words  
behind

With pecking at God's skirts — small  
broken oaths

Fretted to shreds between most dainty  
lips,

And underbreath some praise of Ash-  
taroth

Sighed laughingly.

*Second Citizen.* Was he not under  
guard

For the good word?

*First Citizen.* Yea, but now forth  
again —

And of the latter said he — there being  
two,

The first Aholah, which interpreted —

*Third Citizen.* But, of this latter?

*First Citizen.* Well, of her he said  
How she made letters for Chaldæan  
folk

And men that came forth of the wilder-  
ness

And all her sister's chosen men; yea,  
she

Kept not her lip from any sin of  
hers,

But multiplied in whoredoms toward  
all these

That hate God mightily; for these, he  
saith,

These are the fair French people, and  
these her kin

Sought out of England with her love-  
letters

To bring them to her kiss of love; and  
thus

With a prayer made that God would  
break such love

Ended some while; then crying out for  
strong wrath

Spake with a great voice after: This is  
she,

Yea the lewd woman, yea the same  
woman

That gat bruised breasts in Egypt, when  
strange men

Swart from great suns, foot-burnt with  
angry soils,

And strewn with sand of gaunt Chal-  
dæan miles,

Poured all their love upon her: she  
shall drink

The Lord's cup of derision that is  
filled

With drunkenness and sorrow, great of  
sides

And deep to drink in till the dreg drips  
out:

Yea, and herself with the twain shards  
thereof

Pluck off her breasts; so said he.

*Fourth Citizen.* See that stir —

Are not they come?

*Third Citizen.* There wants an hour  
of them.

Draw near, and let us hearken; he will  
speak

Surely some word of this.

*Second Citizen.* What saith he now?

*The Preacher.* The mercy of a harlot  
is a sword,

And her mouth sharper than a flame of  
fire.

#### SCENE II. — *In Prison.*

*Chastelard.* So here my time shuts  
up; and the last light

Has made the last shade in the world  
for me.

The sunbeam that was narrow like a  
leaf

Has turned a hand, and the hand  
stretched to an arm,

And the arm has reached the dust on  
the floor, and made

A maze of motes with paddling fingers.

Well,

I knew not that a man so sure to die  
Could care so little; a bride-night's

lustiness

Leaps in my veins as light fire under a  
wind:

As if I felt a kindling beyond death  
Of some new joys far outside of me  
yet;

Sweet sound, sweet smell and touch of  
things far out

Sure to come soon. I wonder will  
death be

Even all it seems now? or the talk of  
hell

And wretched changes of the worn-out  
soul

Nailed to decaying flesh, shall that be  
true?

Or is this like the forethought of deep  
sleep

Felt by a tired man? Sleep were good  
enough—

Shall sleep be all? But I shall not for-  
get

For any sleep this love bound upon  
me—

For any sleep or quiet ways of death.  
Ah! in my weary dusty space of sight

Her face will float with heavy scents of  
hair

And fire of subtle amorous eyes, and  
lips

More hot than wine, full of sweet  
wicked words

Babbled against mine own lips, and  
long hands

Spread out, and pale bright throat and  
pale bright breasts,

Fit to make all men mad. I do believe  
This fire shall never quite burn out to

the ash,  
And leave no heat and flame upon my  
dust

For witness where a man's heart was  
burnt up.

For all Christ's work this Venus is not  
quelled,

But reddens at the mouth with blood of  
men,

Sucking between small teeth the sap o'  
the veins,

Dabbling with death her little tender  
lips—

A bitter beauty, poisonous-pearled  
mouth.

I am not fit to live but for love's sake,

So I were best die shortly. Ah! fair  
love,

Fair fearful Venus made of deadly  
foam,

I shall escape you somehow with my  
death,—

Your splendid supple body and mouth  
on fire,

And Paphian breath that bites the lips  
with heat.

I had best die.

*Enter MARY BEATON.*

What! is my death's time come,  
And you the friend to make death kind

to me?

'Tis sweetly done; for I was sick for  
this.

*Mary Beaton.* Nay, but see here;  
nay, for you shall not die:

She has reprieved you; look, her name  
to that,

A present respite; I was sure of her:  
You are quite safe: here, take it in your

hands:

I am faint with the end of pain. Read  
there.

*Chastelard.* Reprieve?  
Wherefore reprieve? Who has done  
this to me?

*Mary Beaton.* I never feared but God  
would have you live,

Or I knew well God must have punished  
me;

But I feared nothing, had no sort of fear.  
What makes you stare upon the seal so

hard?  
Will you not read now?

*Chastelard.* A reprieve of life—  
Reprieving me from living. Nay, by

God,  
I count one death a bitter thing enough.

*Mary Beaton.* See what she writes;  
your love; for love of you;

Out of her love; a word to save your  
life:

But I knew this too though you love me  
not:

She is your love; I knew that: yea, by  
heaven.

*Chastelard.* You knew I had to live  
and be reprieved:

Say I were bent to die now?  
*Mary Beaton.* Do not die,

For her sweet love's sake ; not for pity  
of me,  
You would not bear with life for me  
one hour ;  
But for hers only.

*Chastelard.* Nay, I love you well,  
I would not hurt you for more lives  
than one.

But for this fair-faced paper of reprieve,  
We'll have no riddling to make death  
shift sides :

Look, here ends one of us. [*Tearing it.*  
For her I love,  
She will not anger heaven with slaying  
me ;

For me, I am well quit of loving her ;  
For you, I pray you be well comforted,  
Seeing in my life no man gat good by  
me,

And by my death no hurt is any man's.

*Mary Beaton.* And I that loved you ?  
nay, I loved you ; nay,  
Why should your like be pitied when  
they love ?

Her hard heart is not yet so hard as  
yours,  
Nor God's hard heart. I care not if  
you die.

These bitter madmen are not fit to live.  
I will not have you touch me, speak to  
me,

Nor take farewell of you. See you die  
well,

Or death will play with shame for you,  
and win,

And laugh you out of life. I am right  
glad

I never am to see you any more,  
For I should come to hate you easily ;  
I would not have you live. [*Exit.*

*Chastelard.* She has cause enow.  
I would this wretched waiting had an  
end,

For I wax feebler than I was : God  
knows

I had a mind once to have saved this  
flesh,

And made life one with shame. It  
marvels me

This girl that loves me should desire so  
much

To have me sleep with shame for bed-  
fellow

A whole life's space ; she would be glad  
to die

To escape such life. It may be, too, her  
love

Is but an amorous quarrel with herself,  
Not love of me, but her own wilful soul ;  
Then she will live, and be more glad of  
this

Than girls of their own will and their  
heart's love

Before love mars them : so God go with  
her !

For mine own love — I wonder will she  
come

Sad at her mouth a little, with drawn  
cheeks

And eyelids wrinkled up ? or hot and  
quick

To lean her head on mine and leave her  
lips

Deep in my neck ? For surely she  
must come ;

And I should fare the better to be sure  
What she will do. But as it please  
my sweet ;

For some sweet thing she must do if  
she come,

Seeing how I have to die. Now three  
years since,

This had not seemed so good an end  
for me ;

But in some wise all things wear round  
betimes,

And wind up well. Yet doubtless she  
might take

A will to come my way, and hold my  
hands,

And kiss me some three kisses, throat,  
mouth, eyes,

And say some soft three words to soften  
death :

I do not see how this should break her  
ease.

Nay, she will come to get her warrant  
back :

By this no doubt she is sorely penitent,  
Her fit of angry mercy well blown out,

And her wits cool again. She must  
have chafed

A great while through for anger to be-  
come

So like pure pity ; they must have fret-  
ted her

Nigh mad for anger: or it may be mistrust,

She is so false; yea, to my death I think

She will not trust me; alas the hard sweet heart!

As if my lips could hurt her any way  
But by too keenly kissing of her own!

Ah! false poor sweet fair lips that keep no faith,

They shall not catch mine false or dangerous;

They must needs kiss me one good time, albeit

They love me not at all. Lo, here she comes,

For the blood leaps and catches at my face;

There go her feet, and tread upon my heart;

Now shall I see what way I am to die.

*Enter the QUEEN.*

*Queen.* What! is one here? Speak to me, for God's sake:

Where are you lain?

*Chastelard.* Here, madam, at your hand.

*Queen.* Sweet lord, what sore pain have I had for you,

And been most patient! — Nay, you are not bound.

If you be gentle to me, take my hand.  
Do you not hold me the worst heart in the world?

Nay, you must needs; but say not yet you do.

I am worn so weak, I know not how I live:

Reach me your hand.

*Chastelard.* Take comfort and good heart;

All will find end; this is some grief to you,

But you shall overlive it. Come, fair love;

Be of fair cheer: I say you have done no wrong.

*Queen.* I will not be of cheer: I have done a thing

That will turn fire and burn me. Tell me not;

If you will do me comfort, whet your sword.

But if you hate me, tell me of soft things,

For I hate these, and bitterly. Look up;

Am I not mortal to be gazed upon?  
*Chastelard.* Yea, mortal, and not hateful.

*Queen.* O lost heart!

Give me some mean to die by.

*Chastelard.* Sweet, enough.

You have made no fault; life is not worth a world,

That you should weep to take it: would mine were,

And I might give you a world-worthier gift

Than one poor head that love has made a spoil;

Take it for jest, and weep not: let me go,

And think I died of chance or malady.

Nay, I die well; one dies not best abed.

*Queen.* My warrant to reprieve you — that you saw?

That came between your hands?

*Chastelard.* Yea, not long since.

It seems you have no will to let me die.

*Queen.* Alas! you know I wrote it with my heart,

Out of pure love; and since you were in bonds,

I have had such grief for love's sake and my heart's, —

Yea, by my life I have, — I could not choose

But give love way a little. Take my hand;

You know it would have pricked my heart's blood out

To write reprieve with.

*Chastelard.* Sweet, your hands are kind;

Lay them about my neck, upon my face,  
And tell me not of writing.

*Queen.* Nay, by heaven,

I would have given you mine own blood to drink

If that could heal you of your soul-sickness.

Yea, they know that, they curse me for your sake,

Rail at my love — Would God their heads were lopped,

And we twain left together this side death!

But look you, sweet, if this my warrant hold

You are but dead and shamed; for you must die,

And they will slay you shamefully by force

Even in my sight.

*Chastelard.* Faith, I think so they will.

*Queen.* Nay, they would slay me too, cast stones at me,

Drag me alive; they have eaten poisonous words,

They are mad, and have no shame.

*Chastelard.* Ay, like enough.

*Queen.* Would God my heart were greater! but God wot

I have no heart to bear with fear, and die.

Yea, and I cannot help you: or I know

I should be nobler, bear a better heart: But as this stands — I pray you for good

love,

As you hold honor a costlier thing than life —

*Chastelard.* Well?

*Queen.* Nay, I would not be denied for shame;

In brief, I pray you give me that again.

*Chastelard.* What, my reprieve?

*Queen.* Even so; deny me not,

For your sake mainly: yea, by God you know

How fain I were to die in your death's stead.

For your name's sake. This were no need to swear.

Lest we be mocked to death with a reprieve,

And so both die, being shamed. What! shall I swear?

What, if I kiss you? must I pluck it out?

You do not love me: no, nor honor. Come,

I know you have it about you: give it me.

*Chastelard.* I cannot yield you such a thing again;

Not as I had it.

*Queen.* A coward? what shift now? Do such men make such cravens?

*Chastelard.* Chide me not:

Pity me that I cannot help my heart.

*Queen.* Heaven mend mine eyes that took you for a man!

What, is it sewn into your flesh? take heed —

Nay, but for shame — what have you done with it?

*Chastelard.* Why, there it lies, torn up.

*Queen.* God help me, sir!

Have you done this?

*Chastelard.* Yea, sweet; what should I do?

Did I not know you to the bone, my sweet?

God speed you well! you have a goodly lord.

*Queen.* My love, sweet love, you are more fair than he,

Yea, fairer many times: I love you much,

Sir, know you that?

*Chastelard.* I think I know that well. Sit here a little till I feel you through

In all my breath and blood for some sweet while.

O gracious body that mine arms have had,

And hair my face has felt on it! grave eyes,

And low thick lids that keep since years agoe

In the blue sweet of each particular vein

Some special print of me! I am right glad

That I must never feel a bitterer thing Than your soft curled-up shoulder and

amorous arms

From this time forth; nothing can hap to me

Less good than this for all my whole life through.

I would not have some new pain after this

Come spoil the savor. Oh, your round bird's throat,

More soft than sleep or singing; your calm cheeks,

Turned bright, turned wan with kisses hard and hot;

The beautiful color of your deep curved  
hands,  
Made of a red rose that had changed to  
white;  
That mouth mine own holds half the  
sweetness of,  
Yea, my heart holds the sweetness of  
it, whence  
My life began in me, — mine that ends  
here  
Because you have no mercy; nay, you  
know  
You never could have mercy. My fair  
love,  
Kiss me again, God loves you not the  
less;  
Why should one woman have all goodly  
things?  
You have all beauty; let mean women's  
lips  
Be pitiful, and speak truth: they will  
not be  
Such perfect things as yours. Be not  
ashamed  
That hands not made like these that  
snare men's souls  
Should do men good, give alms, relieve  
men's pain:  
You have the better, being more fair  
than they;  
They are half foul, being rather good  
than fair;  
You are quite fair: to be quite fair is  
best.  
Why, two nights hence I dreamed that  
I could see  
In through your bosom, under the left  
flower,  
And there was a round hollow, and at  
heart  
A little red snake sitting, without spot,  
That bit — like this, and sucked up  
sweet — like this,  
And curled its lithe light body right  
and left,  
And quivered like a woman in act to  
love.  
Then there was some low fluttered talk  
i' the lips,  
Faint sound of soft fierce words caress-  
ing them —  
Like a fair woman's when her love gets  
way.

Ah! your old kiss — I know the ways  
of it:  
Let the lips cling a little. Take them  
off.  
And speak some word, or I go mad  
with love.  
*Queen.* Will you not have my chap-  
lain come to you?  
*Chastelard.* Some better thing of  
yours, — some handkerchief,  
Some fringe of scarf to make confes-  
sion to.  
You had some book about you that fell  
out —  
*Queen.* A little written book of Ron-  
sard's rhymes,  
His gift, I wear in there for love of  
him —  
See, here between our feet.  
*Chastelard.* Ay, my old lord's, —  
The sweet chief poet, my dear friend  
long since?  
Give me the book. Lo you, this verse  
of his:  
*With coming lilies in late April came  
Her body, fashioned whiter for their  
shame;  
And roses, touched with blood since Adon  
bled,  
From her fair color filled their lips with  
red:*  
A goodly praise: I could not praise  
you so.  
I read that while your marriage-feast  
went on.  
Leave me this book, I pray you: I  
would read  
The hymn of death here over ere I  
die;  
I shall know soon how much he knew  
of death  
When that was written. One thing I  
know now:  
I shall not die with half a heart at  
least,  
Nor shift my face, nor weep my fault  
alive;  
Nor swear, if I might live, and do new  
deeds,  
I would do better. Let me keep the  
book.  
*Queen.* Yea, keep it: as would God  
you had kept your life

Out of mine eyes and hands! I am  
wrung to the heart.

This hour feels dry and bitter in my  
mouth,

As if its sorrow were my body's food  
More than my soul's. There are bad  
thoughts in me,—

Most bitter fancies biting me like birds  
That tear each other. Suppose you  
need not die?

*Chastelard.* You know I cannot live  
for two hours more.

Our fate was made thus ere our days  
were made:

Will you fight fortune for so small a  
grief?

But for one thing I were full fain of  
death.

*Queen.* What thing is that?

*Chastelard.* None need to name the  
thing.

Why, what can death do with me fit to  
fear?

For if I sleep I shall not weep awake;  
Or, if their saying be true of things to  
come,

Though hell be sharp, in the worst ache  
of it

I shall be eased, so God will give me  
back

Sometimes one golden gracious sight  
of you—

The aureole woven flower-like through  
your hair,

And in your lips the little laugh as red  
As when it came upon a kiss and ceased,  
Touching my mouth.

*Queen.* As I do now, this way;

With my heart after: would I could  
shed tears!

Tears should not fail when the heart  
shudders so.

But your bad thought?

*Chastelard.* Well, such a thought as  
this:

It may be, long time after I am dead,  
For all you are, you may see bitter  
days;

God may forget you, or be wroth with  
you:

Then shall you lack a little help of me,  
And I shall feel your sorrow touching  
you,

A happy sorrow, though I may not  
touch,—

I that would fain be turned to flesh  
again,

Fain get back life to give up life for  
you,

To shed my blood for help, that long  
ago

You shed and were not holpen; and  
your heart

Will ache for help and comfort, yea for  
love,

And find less love than mine—for I do  
think

You never will be loved thus in your  
life.

*Queen.* It may be man will never love  
me more;

For I am sure I shall not love man  
twice.

*Chastelard.* I know not: men must  
love you in life's spite;

For you will always kill them; man by  
man

Your lips will bite them dead; yea,  
though you would,

You shall not spare one; all will die of  
you;

I cannot tell what love shall do with  
these,

But I for all my love shall have no might  
To help you more, mine arms and hands

no power  
To fasten on you more. This cleaves

my heart,  
That they shall never touch your body

more.  
But for your grief—you will not have

to grieve;

For being in such poor eyes so beauti-  
ful

It must needs be as God is more than I  
So much more love he hath of you than

mine;  
Yea, God shall not be bitter with my  
love,

Seeing she is so sweet.

*Queen.* Ah! my sweet fool,

Think you, when God will ruin me for  
sin,

My face of color shall prevail so much  
With him, so soften the toothed iron's  
edge

To save my throat a scar? nay, I am  
sure

I shall die somehow sadly.

*Chastelard.* This is pure grief;  
The shadow of your pity for my death,  
Mere foolishness of pity: all sweet  
moods

Throw out such little shadows of them-  
selves,

Leave such light fears behind. You,  
die like me?

Stretch your throat out that I may kiss  
all round

Where mine shall be cut through: sup-  
pose my mouth

The axe-edge to bite so sweet a throat  
in twain

With bitter iron, should not it turn soft  
As lip is soft to lip?

*Queen.* I am quite sure  
I shall die sadly some day, Chastelard;  
I am quite certain.

*Chastelard.* Do not think such things;  
Lest all my next world's memories of  
you be

As heavy as this thought.

*Queen.* I will not grieve you;  
Forgive me that my thoughts were sick  
with grief.

What can I do to give you ease at  
heart?

Shall I kiss now? I pray you, have no  
fear

But that I love you.

*Chastelard.* Turn your face to me;  
I do not grudge your face this death of  
mine;

It is too fair—by God, you are too  
fair.

What noise is that?

*Queen.* Can the hour be through so  
soon?

I bade them give me but a little hour.

Ah! I do love you! such brief space  
for love!

I am yours all through, do all your will  
with me;

What if we lay and let them take us  
fast,

Lips grasping lips? I dare do any  
thing.

*Chastelard.* Show better cheer: let no  
man see you mazed;

Make haste and kiss me cover up  
your throat,  
Lest one see tumbled lace, and prate  
of it.

*Enter the Guard:* MURRAY, DARNLEY,  
MARY HAMILTON, MARY BEATON,  
and others with them,

*Darnley.* Sirs, do your charge; let  
him not have much time.

*Mary Hamilton.* Peace, lest you chafe  
the queen: look, her brows bend

*Chastelard.* Lords, and all you come  
hither for my sake,

If while my life was with me like a  
friend

That I must now forget the friendship  
of,

I have done a wrong to any man of you,  
As it may be by fault of mine I have;  
Of such an one I crave for courtesy

He will now cast it from his mind and  
heed

Like a dead thing; considering my dead  
fault

Worth no remembrance further than  
my death.

This for his gentle honor and good-will  
I do beseech him, doubting not to find  
Such kindness if he be nobly made

And of his birth a courteous race of  
man.

You, my lord James, if you have aught  
toward me—

Or you, Lord Darnley—I dare fear no  
jot,

Whate'er this be wherein you were  
aggrieved,

But you will pardon all for gentleness.

*Darnley.* For my part—yea, well, if  
the thing stand thus,

As you must die—one would not bear  
folk hard—

And if the rest shall hold it honorable,  
Why, I do pardon you.

*Murray.* Sir, in all things  
We find no cause to speak of you but  
well:

For all I see, save this your deadly  
fault,

I hold you for a noble perfect man.

*Chastelard.* I thank you, fair lord, for  
your nobleness.

You likewise, for the courtesy you have



I give you thanks, sir; and to all these lords

That have not heart to load me at my death.

Last, I beseech of the best queen of men,

And royallest fair lady in the world,  
To pardon me my grievous mortal sin  
Done in such great offence of her: for,  
sirs,

If ever since I came between her eyes  
She hath beheld me other than I am,  
Or shown her honor other than it is,  
Or, save in royal faultless courtesies,  
Used me with favor; if by speech or  
face,

By salutation or by tender eyes,  
She hath made a way for my desire to  
live,

Given ear to me or boldness to my  
breath;

I pray God cast me forth before day  
cease,

Even to the heaviest place there is in  
hell.

Yea, if she be not stainless toward all  
men,

I pray this axe that I shall die upon  
May cut me off body and soul from  
heaven.

Now for my soul's sake I dare pray to  
you:

Forgive me, madam.

*Queen.* Yea, I do, fair sir:

With all my heart, in all I pardon  
you.

*Chastelard.* God thank you for great  
mercies. — Lords, set hence;

I am right loath to hold your patience  
here;

I must not hold much longer any man's.  
Bring me my way, and bid me fare well  
forth.

[*As they pass out, the QUEEN stays*  
MARY BEATON.

*Queen.* Hark hither, sweet. Get back  
to Holyrood,

And take Carmichael with you: go  
both up

In some chief window whence the  
squares lie clear, —

Seem not to know what I shall do:  
mark that, —

And watch how things fare under.  
Have good cheer;

You do not think now I can let him  
die?

Nay, this were shameful madness if you  
did,

And I should hate you.

*Mary Beaton.* Pray you love me,  
madam,

And swear you love me, and will let  
me live,

That I may die the quicker.

*Queen.* Nay, sweet, see,

Nay, you shall see, this must not seem  
devised;

I will take any man with me, and go;  
Yea, for pure hate of them that hate  
him: yea,

Lay hold upon the headsman, and bid  
strike

Here on my neck; if they will have  
him die,

Why, I will die too: queens have died  
this way

For less things than his love is. Nay,  
I know

They want no blood; I will bring swords  
to boot

For dear love's rescue though half earth  
were slain;

What should men do with blood?  
Stand fast at watch;

For I will be his ransom if I die.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. — *The Upper Chamber in  
Holyrood.*

MARY BEATON seated: MARY CARMICHAEL at a window.

*Mary Beaton.* Do you see nothing?

*Mary Carmichael.* Nay, but swarms  
of men

And talking women gathered in small  
space,

Flapping their gowns and gaping with  
fools' eyes;

And a thin ring round one that seems  
to speak,

Holding his hands out eagerly: no  
more.

*Mary Beaton.* Why, I hear more: I  
hear men shout *The queen!*

*Mary Carmichael.* Nay, no cries yet.

*Mary Beaton.* Ah! they will cry out soon

When she comes forth; they should cry out on her:

I hear their crying in my heart. Nay, sweet,

Do not you hate her? All men, if God please,

Shall hate her one day; yea, one day, no doubt,

I shall worse hate her.

*Mary Carmichael.* Pray you, be at peace;

You hurt yourself: she will be merciful; What! could you see a true man slain for you?

I think I could not; it is not like our hearts

To have such hard sides to them.

*Mary Beaton.* Oh, not you,

And I could nowise: there's some blood in her

That does not run to mercy as ours doth;

That fair face and the cursed heart in her

Made keener than a knife for manslaying

Can bear strange things.

*Mary Carmichael.* Peace, for the people come.

Ah! Murray, hooded over half his face With plucked-down hat, few folk about him, eyes

Like a man angered; Darnley after him,

Holding our Hamilton above her wrist, His mouth put near her hair to whisper with —

And she laughs softly, looking at his feet.

*Mary Beaton.* She will not live long; God hath given her

Few days and evil, full of hate and love, I see well now.

*Mary Carmichael.* Hark, there's their cry — *The queen!*

*Fair life and long, and good days to the queen!*

*Mary Beaton.* Yea, but God knows. I feel such patience here

As I were sure in a brief while to die.

*Mary Carmichael.* She bends and laughs a little, graciously,

And turns half, talking to I know not whom —

A big man with great shoulders; ah! the face,

You get his face now, — wide and dusky, yea,

The youth burnt out of it. A goodly man,

Thewed mightily and sunburnt to the bone;

Doubtless he was away in banishment, Or kept some march far off.

*Mary Beaton.* Still you see nothing?

*Mary Carmichael.* Yea, now they bring him forth with a great noise,

The folk all shouting, and men thrust about

Each way from him.

*Mary Beaton.* Ah! Lord God, bear with me,

Help me to bear a little with my love For thine own love, or give me some quick death.

Do not come down; I shall get strength again,

Only my breath fails. Looks he sad or blithe?

Not sad I doubt yet.

*Mary Carmichael.* Nay, not sad a whit,

But like a man who losing gold or lands Should lose a heavy sorrow; his face set,

The eyes not curious to the right or left, And reading in a book, his hands unbound,

With short fleet smiles. The whole place catches breath,

Looking at him; she seems at point to speak:

Now she lies back, and laughs, with her brows drawn

And her lips drawn too. Now they read his crime.

I see the laughter tightening her chin:

Why do you bend your body, and draw breath?

They will not slay him in her sight; I am sure

She will not have him slain.

*Mary Beaton.* Forth, and fear not :  
I was just praying to myself — one word,  
A prayer I have to say for her to God  
If he will mind it.

*Mary Carmichael.* Now he looks her  
side ;  
Something he says, if one could hear  
thus far :

She leans out, lengthening her throat  
to hear,  
And her eyes shining.

*Mary Beaton.* Ah ! I had no hope ;  
Yea, thou God knowest that I had no  
hope.

Let it end quickly.

*Mary Carmichael.* Now his eyes are  
wide,  
And his smile great ; and like another  
smile

The blood fills all his face. Her cheek  
and neck

Work fast and hard ; she must have  
pardoned him,

He looks so merrily. Now he comes  
forth

Out of that ring of people, and kneels  
down ;

Ah ! how the helve and edge of the  
great axe

Turn in the sunlight as the man shifts  
hands !

It must be for a show : because she sits  
And hardly moves her head this way ;  
I see

Her chin and lifted lips. Now she  
stands up,

Puts out her hand, and they fall mutter-  
ing ;

Ah !

*Mary Beaton.* It is done now ?

*Mary Carmichael.* For God's love,  
stay there !

Do not look out. Nay, he is dead by  
this ;

But gather up yourself from off the floor.  
Will she die too ? I shut mine eyes,  
and heard —

Sweet, do not beat your face upon the  
ground.

Nay, he is dead and slain.

*Mary Beaton.* What ! slain indeed ?

I knew he would be slain. Ay, through  
the neck :

I knew one must be smitten through the  
neck,

To die so quick : if one were stabbed  
to the heart,

He would die slower.

*Mary Carmichael.* Will you behold  
him dead ?

*Mary Beaton.* Yea : must a dead man  
not be looked upon

That living one was fain of ? give me  
way.

Lo you, what sort of hair this fellow  
had ;

The doomsman gathers it into his hand  
To grasp the head by for all men to see :  
I never did that.

*Mary Carmichael.* For God's love, let  
me go !

*Mary Beaton.* I think sometimes she  
must have held it so,

Holding his head back, see you, by the  
hair,

To kiss his face, still lying in his arms.  
Ay, go and weep : it must be pitiful

If one could see it. What is this they  
say ?

*So perish the queen's traitors !* Yea,  
but so

Perish the queen ! — God, do thus much  
to her

For his sake only : yea, for pity's sake  
Do thus much with her.

*Mary Carmichael.* Prithee, come in  
with me :

Nay, come at once.

*Mary Beaton.* If I should meet with  
her,

And spit upon her at her coming in —  
But if I live then shall I see one day

When God will smite her lying harlot's  
mouth, —

Surely I shall. Come, I will go with  
you ;

We will sit down together face to face  
Now, and keep silence ; for this life is  
hard,

And the end of it is quietness at last.  
Come, let us go : here is no word to  
say.

*An usher.* Make way there for the  
lord of Bothwell ; room, —

Place for my lord of Bothwell next the  
queen.

# BOTHWELL: A TRAGEDY.

πολλα μὲν γὰ τρέφει  
δεινά δειμάτων ἄχη,  
πόντια τ' ἀγκάλαι κνωδάλων  
ἀνταίων βροτοῖσι  
πλαθουσι, βλαστοῦσι καὶ πεδαίχιμοι  
λαμπαδες πεδαοροί,  
πατὰ τε καὶ πεδοβάμονα, κἀνεμοέντων  
αἰγίδων φράσαι κότον.

ἄλλ' ὑπέρολμον ἀν-  
δρὸς φρόνημα τίς λέγοι,  
καὶ γυναικῶν φρεσὶν τλημόνων;  
καὶ παντόλμους  
ἔρωτας ἀταίσι συννόμους βροτῶν,  
ξυζύγους θ' ὀμαυλίας;  
θηλυκρατῆς ἀπέρωτος ἔρωσ παρανικῆ  
κνωδάλων τε καὶ βροτῶν.

AESCH. *Cho.* 585-601.

## A VICTOR HUGO.

COMME un fleuve qui donne à l'océan son âme,  
J'apporte au lieu sacré d'où le vers tonne et luit  
Mon drame érique et plein de tumulte et de  
flamme,  
Ou vibre un siècle éteint, où flotte un jour qui  
fuit.

Un peuple qui rugit sous les pieds d'une femme  
Passe, et son souffle emplit d'aube et d'ombre et  
de bruit

Un ciel âpre et guerrier qui luit comme une lame  
Sur l'avenir debout, sur le passé détruit.

Au fond des cieux hagards, par l'orage battue,  
Une figure d'ombre et d'étoiles vêtue  
Pleure et menace et brille en s'évanouissant;

Eclair d'amour qui blesse et de haine qui tue,  
Fleur éclosée au sommet du siècle éblouissant,  
Rose à tige épineuse et que roûgit le sang.

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MARY STUART.  
MARY BEATON.  
MARY SEYTON.  
MARY CARMICHAEL.  
JANE GORDON, *Countess of Bothwell.*  
JANET STUART, *Countess of Argyle.*  
MARGARET LADY DOUGLAS *of Lochleven.*  
LADY RERES.  
HENRY LORD DARNLEY, *King Consort.*  
JAMES HEPBURN, *Earl of Bothwell.*  
JAMES STUART, *Earl of Murray.*  
JAMES DOUGLAS, *Earl of Morton.*  
WILLIAM MAITLAND *of Lethington, Secretary of State.*  
JOHN KNOX.  
DAVID RIZZIO.  
*The Earls of HUNTLEY, ARGYLE, CAITHNESS, ROTHES, CASSILIS, ATHOL, and MAR.*  
*Lords HERRIES, LINDSAY, RUTHVEN, FLEMING, SEYTON, BOYD, OCHILTREE, HUME, ARBROATH, and MAXWELL.*

*The younger RUTHVEN.*  
THE MASTER OF OCHILTREE, *son to Lord Ochiltree.*  
THE MASTER OF MAXWELL, *son to Lord Herries.*  
SIR JAMES MELVILLE.  
SIR ROBERT MELVILLE.  
SIR GEORGE DOUGLAS, *uncle to Darnley.*  
SIR WILLIAM DOUGLAS *of Lochleven.*  
GEORGE DOUGLAS, *his brother.*  
SIR WILLIAM KIRKALDY *of Grange.*  
LORD ROBERT STUART, *Abbot of St. Cross.*  
DU CROC, *Ambassador from France.*  
SIR NICHOLAS THROGMORTON, *Ambassador from England.*  
JOHN HAMILTON, *Archbishop of St. Andrews.*  
JOHN LESLIE, *Bishop of Ross.*  
ARTHUR ERSKINE, *Captain of the Guard.*  
ANTHONY STANDEN *and STUART OF TRAQUAIR, Equerries.*

JOHN ERSKINE of Dun.  
 ANDREW KER of Fauldonside.  
 HENRY DRUMMOND of Ricarton.  
 ARCHIBALD BEATON.  
 JOHN HEPBURN of Bolton, ORMISTON, HAV of  
 Talla, Conspirators with Bothwell.  
 CRAWFORD, NELSON, TAYLOR, servants to  
 Darnley.

NICHOLAS HUBERT, surnamed PARIS, ser-  
 vant to Bothwell.  
 THE PROVOST OF EDINBURGH.  
 ROBERT CUNNINGHAM, steward to the Earl  
 of Lennox.  
 Page and Girl attending on Lady Lochleven.  
 Burgesses, Citizens, Soldiers, Attendants,  
 etc.

TIME, MARCH 9, 1566, TO MAY 16, 1568.

ACT I.—DAVID RIZZIO.

SCENE I.—HOLYROOD.

*Enter DARNLEY and MARY CARMICHAEL.*

*Darnley.* But you will not believe me  
 though you hear;  
 You have no faith: you steef by sight,  
 and see  
 This fellow gilt and garnished with her  
 grace  
 Sit covered by the queen where lords  
 stand bare,  
 And jet before them lordlier; and the  
 sight  
 Makes firm your faith that in his hand  
 and eye  
 This land is but a harp to play upon,  
 Whose strings may turn to serpents or  
 to swords,  
 To maim his hand or charm his eye to  
 death.  
 You have no faith to see this, or to  
 read  
 The sentence that ensuing shall write  
 me king,  
 And worth men's fears or faiths: lo!  
 now you laugh,  
 As though my hope were braggart, and  
 myself  
 A fool and mouthpiece of its foolish  
 vaunt:  
 You have no faith.

*Mary Carmichael.* I have no wit nor  
 will  
 To choose between St. David for my  
 lord  
 And sweet St. Henry.

*Darnley.* Nay, King David now,  
 King David psalmist; but for all his  
 song

I doubt he hath lost the old trick of  
 touch he had  
 Once in the sword-play.

*Mary Carmichael.* See you play not  
 Saul,  
 Who are something of his stature in  
 our eyes,  
 Much of his mighty presence; be it not  
 said  
 He hath snipt your skirts already.

*Darnley.* Who said that?  
 Who speaks of me so, lies to the blood  
 and bone,  
 To the heart and soul lies. I am no  
 king mayhap,—  
 I do not say yet I shall die no  
 king:

God knows that, and is wise,—but man  
 I am,  
 Look else, who love you—

*Mary Carmichael.* Sir, be king for  
 me,  
 It shall content my will to you-ward,  
 seeing

I take you to be royal, and myself  
 Honest.

*Darnley.* Why honest? what a gibe  
 is this?  
 What make you of me?

*Mary Carmichael.* Yea, what should  
 I make?

'Tis time I were on service.

*Darnley.* Oh, the queen's?  
 She gets good service, excellent service  
 done,

And worthy servants hath she,—a lib-  
 eral queen.

Well, if you will.

[*Exit MARY CARMICHAEL.*  
 I would the month were out.  
 If earth were easier by just one less  
 knave,

I might sleep well and laugh and walk  
at ease,  
With none to mate me.

*Enter* MORTON.

Ah! my good lord and friend,  
I had somewhat I would say—but let  
words be.

The man you know of, I would you  
had made him safe;

I would have told you this much.

*Morton.* Sir, the earl  
Murray being with us in the main thing  
here,

Though he keep hand from the red  
handiwork,  
Shall enough help us.

*Darnley.* Let him know it not, then:  
Let him stand by: he must not know  
it. Why, well,

It is the more our honor: yet would  
God

He, being not with us, were not any-  
where,

But dead, sir, dead! I say, who hath  
eyes to see

May see him dangerous to us, and mani-  
fest.

Ye have no eyes who see not: for my  
part,

I noted him at once. Sir, by this  
light,

When I first saw him—and I have eyes  
to see—

I knew what manner of meaning in his  
face

Lay privy and folded up and sealed and  
signed.

I would you lords had sight and heart  
like mine:

He should not long live dangerous;  
yet, God wot,

For my poor personal peril I would  
match

This body against his better.

*Morton.* There's no need  
Of iron words and matches here of  
men,

Save this we meet upon; which being  
played out

Leaves our hands full and henceforth  
peaceable.

For the earl, he makes no part of men's  
designs,

Nor would I have you keen to strive  
with him

Who lies yet still, and is well liked of  
men

That are well-willers to this common  
state

And the open peace of the people.  
Let him be;

Keep your heart here.

*Darnley.* Here is it fixed and set  
With roots of iron. 'Tis more hono-  
to us,

Being so more perilous, to have no help  
Of popular hands and common friendli-  
ness,

But our hearts helpful only. I am sure  
of her,

That she suspects not,—I do surely  
think:

But yet she is subtle and secret-souled  
and wise,

Wise woman-fashion; look you, be not  
caught

Through too much trust in what of her  
is weak,—

In her light mind and mutability;  
For subtlety lies close in her light wit,

And wisdom wantons in her wanton-  
ness:

I know her, I know her; I have seen  
her ere now, and am

Not all to learn in women.

*Morton.* I believe  
Your grace hath grace with women as  
with men,

And skill of sense alike in those and  
these,

I doubt not; which is well and profit-  
able.

For this, how shall she know it, except  
you slip

And let her wring the truth out from  
your hand,

Or kiss the truth out, hanging mouth  
on mouth?

But if no pressure press from hand or  
lip

The unripe truth, the fruit so soon so  
red,

What can she to us, though doubting  
help or harm,—

How, if she know not surely?

*Darnley.* So I say.

And we that do it, we do it for all men's  
good,

For the main people's love, thankwor-  
thily —

And this is matter of law we take in  
hand,

Is it not, lawful? for the man is judged,  
Doomed dead and damned by sentence,  
in good deed,

Though not by scruple and show of  
trial and test,

By clearer cause and purer policy —

We cannot stand toward any account-  
able,

As for a slaughter, a treasonable shame,  
To mark us red in the world's eyes?  
no man

Can say our fame is blotted with his  
blood,

No man, albeit he hate us, bring in  
doubt, —

Woman or man, — our right, our abso-  
lute law,

Giving us leave — nay, bidding us do  
so?

So that we stand after the deed as now,  
In no more danger or fear?

*Morton.* In less fear, you,

And much more honor; now it might  
please you fear,

Being overborne of woman and fast  
bound

With feminine shame and weakness;  
the man's strength,

The sinew and nerve and spirit of roy-  
alty,

Hers, and all power to use her power  
on you

Hers, and all honor and pleasure of  
high place

That should make sweet your lips and  
bright your brows

Hers, and the mockery of 'mismarried  
men

Yours.

*Darnley.* Nay, by God I said so;  
why, I knew it:

I told you thus aforetime, did I not?

*Morton.* Truly and wisely; if this  
content you thus,

He is even our king.

*Darnley.* Methinks he should be  
king,

And I, God wot, content. Here came  
a man

Some few days back, a goodly, a gentle-  
man,

An honorable, that for king knave's be-  
hoof

Was stript out of the better of all his  
lands

As I of what was best part of my wife,  
My place, and honor that grows up  
with hers —

For of her love small fruit was left to  
strip,

Few leaves for winter weather — but of  
these,

These good things, am I stript as bare  
as shame,

Even beggared as was this man. By  
God's light,

It seems this is but justice, doth it not,  
And I so gentle and temperate — as, by  
God,

I was not nor I will not.

*Morton.* There's more need

That you seem resolutely temperate then,  
And temperately be resolute, I say,

Till the hour to cast off temperance  
and put on

Plain passion for the habit of your heart,  
Which now it wears in darkness, and  
by day

The cloak and hood of temperance.  
But these fits

And gusts and starts of will and will  
not, these

Blow you this side and that side till  
men see

Too much, and trust too little.

*Darnley.* O sir, you are wise,

You are honorable, and a counsellor,  
and my friend,

And I too light, too light — yet by this  
light

I think I am worth more than your  
counsel is

If I be worth this work here to be  
done —

I think I am so much.

*Morton.* It may well be, sir,

And you much wis'er; yet forbear your  
wrath

If you would have it ready to your  
hand.

*Darnley.* I will forbear nothing —  
nor nothing bear —  
Nor live by no man's bidding. This  
year through  
I have even been surfeited with wise  
men's breath  
And winds of wordy weather round  
mine ears, —  
Do this, spare that, walk thus, look  
otherwise,  
Hold your head kingly, or wisely bow  
your neck :  
A man might come to doubt himself no  
man,

Being so long childlike handled. Now,  
look you,

Look she, look God to it if I be not  
man !

Now is my way swept, and my foot shod  
now,

My wallet full now for the travelling day  
That I fare forth and forward, arrow  
straight,

Girt for the goal, red battle-ripe at  
need —

As need there is — you are sure — and  
utter need ?

*Morton.* Is my lord not sure ?

*Darnley.* Ay, as sure as you, —

Surer, maybe: the need is more of  
mine, —

This grazes your bare hand that grates  
my heart .

Your queen it is wrongs you, and me  
my wife.

*Morton.* You see that sure, too ?  
sharp sight, have you not ?

*Darnley.* I saw it, I first — I knew  
her — who knew her but I,

That swore, — at least, I swore to mine  
own soul,

Would not for shame's sake swear out  
wide to the world,

But in myself swore with my heart to  
hear, —

There was more in it, in all their com-  
merce, more

Than the mere music: he is warped,  
worn through,

Bow-bent, uncomely in wholesome eyes  
that see

Straight, seeing him crooked; but she  
seeing awry

Sees the man straight enough for para-  
mour.

This I saw, this I swore too — silently,  
Not loud but sure, till time should be  
to speak

Sword's language, no fool's jargon like  
his tongue,

But plain broad steel speech and intel-  
ligible,

Though not to the ear, Italian's be it or  
Scot's,

But to the very life intelligible,  
To the loosed soul, to the shed blood —  
for blood

There must be — one must slay him —  
you are sure — as I am ?

For I was sure of it always: while  
you said,

All you, 'twas council-stuff, state-handi-  
craft,

Cunning of card-play between here and  
there,

I knew 'twas this and more, sir; I kept  
sight,

Kept heed of her, what thing she was,  
what wife,

What manner of stateswoman and gov-  
erness —

More than all you saw — did you see i-  
or I ?

*Morton.* You saw first surely, and  
some one spoke first out —

You had eyes, he tongue — and both  
bear witness now

If this must be or not be.

*Darnley.* Death, is that ?

I must kill — bid you kill him ?

*Morton.* Nowise, sir;

As little need of one as the other is  
here;

As little of either as no need at all.

*Darnley.* You doubt or hand or  
tongue, then, sir, of mine ?

I would not strike, if need were, or  
bid strike ?

*Morton.* Neither we doubt, nor nei-  
ther do we need —

Having you with us.

*Darnley.* 'Twas but so you meant ?

I had else been angry — nay, half  
wroth I was —

Not as I took it — I had else been  
wroth indeed.



*Morton.* That had been grievous to me and perilous,  
This time of all times.

*Darnley.* Ay, you need me, ay;  
I am somewhat now then, somewhat more than wont,  
Who thus long have been nothing — but will be?

Well, so, I am with you. Shall he die — how soon?

To-day I had said, but haply not to-day —

There might fall somewhat, something slip awry,

In such swift work, ha? Then, what day? Perchance

'Twere better he died abed — or were there charms,

Spells — if himself though be not witch, drug-proof

'Tis like, and devil-witted, being a knave  
Born poisonous and bred sorcerous like his kind —

We have heard what manner of plague his south land spawns,

What sort of kith and kin to hell and him,

How subtle in starry riddles and earth's roots

The dog-leeches that kill your soul in you,

Or only body, or both, as Catherine please,

Mother that was to our Mary — have we not?

We must look to it, and closely look.

*Morton.* My lord,  
Of so much being so sure, of this be too;  
That surely and soon in some wise very sure

We are quit of him with God's help or without.

*Darnley.* Why, that were well. I hold you resolute;

I pray you stay so, and all is well enough.

We have talked our time out — you had all to say —

All the thing's carriage — and my mind to take,

Which with plain heart I have made you understand.

My mind is, he must die then: keep you there.

[*Exit.*]

*Morton.* Had God but plagued Egypt with fools for flies,  
His Jews had sped the quicker.

*Enter MARY BEATON.*

Is the queen risen,  
Lady?

*Mary Beaton.* Not yet. Was not the king with you?

I heard him high and shrill.

*Morton.* Ay, he was here,  
If anywhere the king be. You are sad.

*Mary Beaton.* I am not blithe of bearing, I wot well,

But the word sad is sadder than I am.

Is he not vexed?

*Morton.* I have never seen him else,  
Save when light-heartedness and loose-hung brain

Have made him proud and drunken: as of late

He has been but seldom. There's one sad at least;

If it be sad to hang the head apart,  
Walk with brows drawn and eyes disquieted,

Speak sullen under breath, and shrug and swear,

If any move him, and then again fall dumb;

He has changed his fresher manner, and put off

What little grace made his ungracious youth

Fair in men's eyes a little; if this last,

He will not long last in men's lordship here,

Except by love and favor shown of the queen.

*Mary Beaton.* There he sits strong in surety; yet men say

He is discontent, disheartened, for distaste

Of the like love and favor shown of her

(Or not the like, yet too much near the like)

Toward Rizzio; but such men, seeing visionary,

Run wide in talk, and sleep with speech awake

And sight shut fast: are you not of my mind?

*Morton.* I am most of theirs whose  
mind is most toward hers,  
As whose should be most noble; but in  
truth  
Mine own is moved to hear her gra-  
cious heart  
Mismade of, her clear courtesies mis-  
read,  
Misliked her liking, her good will ma-  
ligned.  
Even of his mouth who owes life, breath,  
and place,  
Honor and title, even to that clear good  
will  
To that her grace, liking, and courtesy.

*Mary Beaton.* You mean our lord  
and hers and king of Scots?

*Morton.* As kindly a king as master-  
ful a lord,  
And no less hers than ours; as strong  
each way.

*Mary Beaton.* And he misreads so  
much the queen's pure heart  
As to mistake aloud her manner of  
life,  
And teach the world's broad open  
popular ear  
His graceless commentary on her mere  
grace  
And simple favor shown a simple  
knave,  
Her chamber-child, her varlet? a poor  
man,  
Stranger, skilled little in great men's  
policies  
— Which is strange too, seeing he  
hath had some chance  
To learn some tricks of courts and  
embassies,  
Being therein bred, and not so very a  
fool  
But one might teach him—yet no  
doubt a man,  
Save for such teaching, simple and in-  
nocent;  
Only what heart, what spirit and wit he  
has,  
Being hot and close as fire on the old  
faith's side  
And the French party's—if his wit  
were great,  
It might do more than simple service  
soon,

Having her heart as 'twere by the ear  
which leans  
Still toward his saying or singing; but  
ye know

There is no peril in him, and the king  
More fool than he a knave.

*Morton.* Well, I know not;  
My skill is small in tunes, yet I can tell  
Discord between kings' ear and peo-  
ple's tongue,

Which hearing as in spirit I forehear  
Harsh future music in a state mistuned,  
If such men lay but hand upon the  
keys,

Touch ne'er so slight a string of policy  
With ne'er so light a finger: I would  
the queen,

For the dear faith I bear her, saw but  
this,  
Or that the lords were heavier-eyed to  
see.

*Mary Beaton.* Are they so keen of  
soul as of their sight,—  
To slay wrong as to see wrong?

*Morton.* 'Faith, with us  
The hand is matched against the eye for  
speed;

And these no slower in stroke of sight  
and sword  
Than their sharp-sighted swift-souled  
forefathers.

I say not this that you should gather  
fear

Out of my saying to sow in the ear of  
the queen;

But for truth's sake; and truly I do not  
fear

That I have put fear in you, for you  
seem

Not lightly fearful to me.

*Mary Beaton.* I would not be,  
Where I might keep good heart and  
open eye,

Nor blind nor fevered with foolhardi-  
ness,

As here meseems I may keep; for I see  
No hurt yet nor hurt's danger steer in  
sight,

Save the mere daily danger of high-  
raised heads

To be mis-spoken and mis-seen of men,  
Which is not for high-seated hearts to  
fear.

*Morton.* Her heart is high enough,  
and yours as hers :  
You shall do well to hold your courage  
fast,  
Keeping your wits awake ; whereof  
myself  
I make no doubt, howbeit men fear the  
queen,  
Having our bitter folk and faith to fight,  
Out of sharp spirit and high-heartedness  
May do such things for love's sake or  
for wrath's  
As fools for fear's sake : which were no  
less harm  
(Turning her wit and heart against her-  
self)  
Than to be coward or witless. Fare  
you well :  
I will not doubt but she is well advised.

[Exit.

*Mary Beaton.* He is but dead by this,  
then. I did know it ;  
And yet it strikes upon me sudden and  
sharp,  
As a thing unforethought on. It is  
strange  
To have one's foot as mine is on the  
verge,  
The narrowing threshold of a thing so  
great,  
To have within one's eyeshot the whole  
way,  
The perfect reach of fate from end to  
end,  
From life to life replying and death to  
death  
This is the first hour of the night, and I  
The watcher of the first watch, by whose  
lamp  
The starless sky that grows toward birth  
of stars  
And the unlit earth and obscure air are  
seen  
Pale as the iamp's self yet not well  
alight.  
Yet by the light of my heart's fire, and  
mind  
Kindled, I see what fires of storm, what  
flaws,  
What windy meteors and cross-counter-  
ing stars,  
Shall be through all the watches to the  
dawn

And bloodlike sunrise of the fire-eyed  
day.

I am half content already ; and yet I  
would

This watch were through.

*Enter the QUEEN, RIZZIO, and MARY  
SEYTON.*

*Queen.* Nay, it is later, sure :

I am idle, I am idle, and flattered : you  
say wrong,

To find my sloth some pardonable plea,  
Which is not pardonable ; a perfect sin,  
One writ among the sorest seven of  
all ;

Enough to load the soul past penitence.  
Am I not late indeed ? speak truth and  
say.

*Rizzio.* To watchers the sun rises ever  
late,

Though he keep time with summer ;  
but your grace

Keeps earlier than the sun's time.

*Queen.* 'Tis but March,  
And a scant spring, a sharp and starve-  
ling year.

How bitter black the day grows ! one  
would swear

The weather and earth were of this  
people's faith,

And their heaven colored as their  
thoughts of heaven,

Their light made of their love.

*Rizzio.* If it might please you  
Look out, and lift up heart to summer-  
ward,

There might be sun enough for seeing  
and sense,

To light men's eyes at, and warm hands  
withal.

*Queen.* I doubt the winter's white is  
deeper dyed

And closer worn than I thought like to  
be ;

This land of mine hath folded itself  
round

With snow-cold, white, and leprous mis-  
belief,

Till even the spirit is bitten, the blood  
pinched,

And the heart winter-wounded ; these  
starved slaves

That feed on frost, and suck the snows  
for drink,

Hating the light for the heat's sake, love  
the cold.

We want some hotter fire than summer  
or sun

To burn their dead blood through, and  
change their veins.

*Rizzio.* Madam, those fires are all but  
ashen dust.

'Tis by the sun we have now to walk  
warm.

If I had leave to give good counsel  
tongue

And wisdom words to work with, I  
would say,

Rather by favor and seasonable grace  
Shall your sweet light of summer-speak-  
ing looks

Melt the hard mould of earthen hearts,  
and put

Spring into spirits of snow. Your hus-  
band here,

Who was my friend before your lord,  
being grown

Doubtful, and evil-eyed against him-  
self,

With a thwart wit crossing all counsel,  
turns

From us-ward to their close fierce inti-  
macy

Who are bitterest of the faction against  
faith,

And through their violent friendship has  
become

His own and very enemy, being moved  
Of mere loose heart to vex you. Now  
there stands

On the other hand, in no wise bound to  
him,

But as your rebel and his enemy  
Cast forth condemned, one that called  
home again

Might be a bond between the time and  
you,

Tying the wild world tamer to your  
hand,

And in your husband's hot and unreined  
mouth

As bit and bridle against his wandering  
will.

*Queen.* What name is his who shall  
so strengthen me?

*Rizzio.* Your father gave him half a  
brother's name.

*Queen.* I have no brother: a blood  
less traitor he is

Who was my father's bastard born. By  
heaven,

I had rather have his head loose at my  
foot

Than his tongue's counsel rounded in  
mine ear

*Rizzio.* I would you had called him  
out of banishment.

*Queen.* Thou art mad, thou art mad.  
prate me no more of him.

*Rizzio.* He is wise, and we need wis-  
dom; penitent,

And God, they say, loves most his peni-  
tents;

Stout-hearted and well-minded toward  
your grace,

As you shall work him, and beguicable  
Now at your need if you but will he be,

And God he knows if there be need of  
such.

*Queen.* No need, no need: I am  
crowned of mine own heart,

And of mine own will weaponed; am I  
queen

To have need of traitors' leave to live  
by, and reign

By the God's grace of these? I will not  
have it;

Toward God I swear there shall be no  
such need.

*Rizzio.* Yet if there were no need,  
less harm it were

To have him easily on your royal side  
While the time serves that he may serve

you in, —

Less harm than none, and profit more  
than less.

*Queen.* He is a misborn traitor and  
heretic;

And of his own side baffled, a flat fool,  
Who thought to have comfort of Eliza-  
beth,

Large furtherance of my sweet-souled  
sister's love,

Grace and sure aid of her good plighted  
word,

Her honorable and precious plighted  
word,

And secret seal to help him; as she  
durst not,

Yea, she would fain and durst not.

*Rizzio.* Please you note —

*Queen.* It shall not please me; I say  
she hath made him kneel,  
(And this does please me indeed) hath  
seen him down,  
Seen him and spurned him kneeling  
from her foot,  
As my born traitor and subject. David,  
nay,  
But hath thy careful love not made thee  
mad,  
Whose counsel was my sword against  
him once?  
Why, thou wast sworn his slayer; and  
all that while  
He held up head against us, thy one  
word  
Bade strike him dead of all men.  
What! hast thou  
Fairly forgot his purpose, were I taken,  
To speed thee out of life? his secret  
bond,  
Sealed with himself in spirit, thou  
shouldst die?  
Wast thou not trothplight with that  
souless boy,  
Ere he might thee, to rid him out of  
life?  
Nay, and thou knowest how dear a  
cause I have,  
And thou, to slay him when the good  
chance comes,  
Which God make speedy toward us!  
by my hand,  
Too little and light to hold up his dead  
head,  
It was my hope to dip it in his life  
Made me ride iron-mailed, a soldieress,  
All those days through we drove them  
here and there,  
Eastward from Fife, and hither and  
forth again,  
And broken to the border; yea, all day  
I thought how worth his life it were to  
ride  
Within the shot-length of my saddlebow  
And try my poor and maiden soldier-  
ship.  
And now I am bidden, and you it is  
bid me,  
Reach my hand forth forgivingly and  
meek  
To strike with his for love and policy?

He is beaten and broken, without help  
of hope,  
Who was mine enemy ever, and ever I  
knew  
How much he was mine enemy; and  
now maimed,  
Wounded, unseated from his power of  
place,  
Shall I raise up again and strengthen  
him,  
Warm and bind up his cold and o'er-  
bled wounds  
With piteous cordials? nay, but when I  
do,  
May he have strength to wreak his will  
on me,  
And I be flung under his feet! be-  
side,  
He was your mocking-stock this short  
while since:  
You swore, men tell me, Daniot told it  
me, —  
Your ghostly man of counsel, — why, to  
him,  
He says, you swore the bastard should  
not bide  
With you in Scotland; it made anger  
at you,  
Put passion in their mouths who bear  
you hard,  
That you should threaten kinglike.  
Hath he moved you  
To change your heart and face toward  
him at once,  
Or do you mock, or are struck mad  
indeed,  
That now you turn to bid me cry him  
home,  
Make much of him and sing him to my  
side?

*Rizzio.* For all this, madam, if I be  
not mad,  
It were well done to do it. He is a  
man  
Well-loved, well-counselled, and though  
fast in faith,  
Yet howsoever in strong opinion bound,  
Not so much over-ridden of his own  
mind  
As to love no man for faith's single  
sake;  
No fire-brained preacher nor wild-witted  
knave,

But skilled and reared in state and  
soldiership.

What doth it need you to misticke of  
me?

Say it is but this jewel he sends me  
here

That pleads his part before you; say I  
am his

And not your servant, or not only of  
you

Made and again unmakeable; 'tis truth,  
He hath given me gifts to be his coun-  
sel to you,

And I have taken, and here I plead his  
part,

Seeing my life hangs upon your life,  
and yours,

If it be full and even and fortunate  
In spite of foes and fears and friends,

must hang  
On his, unbound from these and bound  
to you.

We have done ill, having so mighty  
a match,

So large a wager on this turn of time,  
To leave the stakes in hand of a lewd

boy,  
A fool and thankless; and to save the  
game

We must play privily, and hold secret  
hands.

*Queen.* I will not have his hand upon  
my part,

Though it were safe to sweep up gold  
and all.

*Rizzio.* But till our side be strong;  
then cast him off,

When he hath served to strengthen you-  
so much

You have no need of any strength of  
his.

Bear with him but till time be, and we  
touch

The heart of the hour that brings our  
chance to catch

Hope by the flying hair, and to our  
wheel

Bind fortune and wind-wavering maj-  
esty,

To shift no more in the air of any  
change,

But hang a steady star; then, when the  
faith

Sits crowned in us that serve her, and  
you hold

The triple-treasured kingdom in your  
lap,

What shall forbid you set a sudden  
foot

Where it may please you, on their  
hearts or heads

That in their season were found service  
able,

And now are stones of stumbling?  
Time shapes all:

And service he may do you, or else  
offence,

Even as you handle this sharp point of  
time,

To turn its edge this wary way or that;  
And for the land and state, why, having

served,  
He may be seasonably stript out of  
these

When you would do some friend a  
courtesy

Who has still been found secret and  
Catholic,

A lantern's eye of counsel in close  
dark,

While he did blind man's service; but  
till then

Let him keep land and name, and all  
he will,

And blindly serve to the blind end in  
trust,

To wake a naked fool. That this may  
be,

I am firm in faith, may it be but with  
your will.

*Queen.* He will not help us beat his  
own faith down;

He is no hawk to seel and then to un-  
hood,

Fly at strange fowl, and pluck back  
blind again.

*Rizzio.* Bethink you, madam, he only  
of all his kind

Stood out against men hotter in heresy,  
Spake down their speeches, overbore

Pope Knox,  
Broke with his cardinal's college of  
shrewd saints,

In your free faith's defence, that would  
have barred you

From custom of religion; and I wot,

Save for his help, small help had found  
my queen

From Huntley or Hamilton, her faith-  
fellows,

Or any their co-worshippers with her.

*Queen.* Thou art ever saying them  
wrong; they are stout and sure,  
Even they that strove for honor's sake  
with us:

Their one least fault I am minded to  
forgive;

True friends in faith, my dear own  
blood and kin,

No birthless bastards nor mistitled men.

It pleased me bid him into banish-  
ment,

And shall not lightly please me bid him  
back.

*Rizzio.* Yet some men banished for  
no less a cause,

It has been known, you have loosed  
from banishment

I tell you for true heart.

*Queen.* Nay, I well know it.

You are good and faithful to us, God  
quit it you,

And well of us loved back; how much,  
you know,

But more than is our fear of men's mis-  
saying.

For me, I find no such foul faultiness  
In the lord Bothwell but might well be

purged

After long trial of English prison-bands

And proof of loyal lips and close true  
heart

Whereout no gaoler could pluck dan-  
gerous speech,

And then with overpassing to and fro  
The strait sea wide enough to wash

him white

'Twixt France and us: and all this jar-  
ring year

You have seen with what a service, in  
full field,

Oft in our need he hath served us; nor  
was it

Such matter of treason and nowise par-  
donable

To mix his wits with Arran's broken  
brain

In their device to entrap mine hand  
with his

For high state's sake and strong-winged  
policy,

When he was matched with me in most  
men's mouths,

And found not yet for changeling or  
for fool.

But howsoever, it pleased me pardon  
him;

And a stout spear for warden have I  
won.

I have help myself in help of him, who  
now

Hath with good works undone his dead  
misdeeds,

And left their memory drowned in the  
under sea

That swept them out and washed him  
in again,

A man remade; and fail me whoso fails,  
Him I hold fast my friend; but those

cast out  
That rose up right between my will and  
me

To make me thrall and bondslave to  
their own,

Giving me prison and them swift banish-  
ment

Whom I gave honor, and cast the crown  
away,

And break the old natural heart of  
royalty,

For foul faith's sake or craft of their  
miscreed;

That smote with sword or speech  
against all state,

Not through blind heat or stumbling  
hardihood,

But hate of holiness and height of mind,  
Hateful to kingly truth, haters of kings;

Them though I pardon I would not  
take to trust,

Nor bind up their loose faith with my  
belief,

For all assurances of all men born.  
Besides, I hate him, singly.

*Rizzio.* I have said, and say:  
Do you as time will turn it; time turns  
all.

*Queen.* I do believe there is no man's  
estate

So miserable, so very a helpless thing,  
So trodden under and overborne, as  
mine.

For first the man that I set up for lord,  
 For master of mine and mate of only  
 me,  
 Have I perforce put forth of my shamed  
 bed,  
 And broken on his brows the kingless  
 crown,  
 Finding nor head for gold nor hand for  
 steel  
 Worth name of king or husband, but  
 the throne  
 Lordless, the heart of marriage hus-  
 bandless,  
 Through his foul follies; then in the  
 utter world,  
 In the extreme range and race of my  
 whole life  
 Through all changed times and places  
 of its change,  
 Having one friend, I find a foe of him  
 To my true sense and soul and spirit of  
 thought  
 That keeps in peace the things of its  
 own peace,  
 Secret and surely: in faith, this frets  
 my faith,  
 Distunes me into discord with myself,  
 That you should counsel me against my  
 soul.  
 I pray you, do not.  
*Rizzio.* Nay, I will no more.  
 But if you take not Murray again to  
 trust  
 At least in short sweet seeming for  
 some while,  
 So to subdue him as with his own right  
 hand  
 And all chief with him of his creed and  
 crew,  
 Then, cleaving to the old counsel, sud-  
 denly  
 Have him attainted, and being so  
 brought in  
 By summons as your traitor, with good  
 speed  
 Have off his head; let him not live to  
 turn;  
 Choose you sure tongues to doom him,  
 hands to rid,  
 And be his slaying his sentence; for  
 the rest,  
 Make to you friends Argyle and Cha-  
 tcherault

And such more temperate of their fac-  
 tion found  
 As may be servants to your pardoning  
 hand  
 If they be separable; but anywise  
 In pardoning these, forgive not half his  
 fault  
 With half their pardon; cut no branch  
 of his,  
 But the root only; strike not but at  
 heart  
 When you strike him: he hath done  
 and borne too much  
 To live 'twixt that and this unrecon-  
 ciled,  
 Having on this hand his conspiracy,  
 On that your proclamation; his head  
 priced,  
 His life coursed after with hot hound  
 and horn,  
 His wife thrust forth hard on her trav-  
 ailing time,  
 With body soft from pangs and deli-  
 cate,  
 To roam in winter-bound and roofless  
 woods:  
 These things not wholly with your  
 grace wiped off,  
 And washed with favor and fair-faced  
 love away,  
 Must work within him deadly and des-  
 perate.  
*Queen.* Now  
 I find your counsel in you, no strange  
 tongue,  
 But the old stout speech and sure; and  
 this same day  
 Will I set hand to it. I have chosen  
 the lords  
 That shall attain in council these men  
 fled,  
 Of mortal treason; and some two hours  
 hence  
 My tongue through their strange lips  
 shall speak him dead  
 Who is only my heart's hated among  
 men.  
 I am gay of heart, light as a spring  
 south-wind,  
 To feed my soul with his foretasted  
 death.  
 You know the reason I have, you know  
 the right



And he the danger of it, being no fool,  
For fool he is not; I would he were  
but fool.

Oh, I feel dancing motions in my feet,  
And laughter moving merrily at my  
lips,

Only to think him dead and hearsed; or  
hanged—

That were the better. I could dance  
down his life,

Sing my steps through, treading on his  
dead neck,

For love of his dead body and cast-out  
soul.

He shall talk of me to the worm of  
hell,

Prate in death's ear, and with a speech-  
less tongue,

Of my dead doings in days gone out.  
Sweet lord,

David, my good friend and my chancel-  
lor,

I thank you for your counsel.

*Rizzio.* May it be  
Prosperously mine! but howsoever, I  
think

It were not well, when this man is put  
down,

Though Lethington be wily or Melville  
wise,

To make your stay of any other man.

*Queen.* I would I had no state to  
need no stay,

God witness me, I had rather be reborn,  
And born a poor mean woman, and live  
low

With harmless habit and poor purity  
Down to my dull death-day, a shep-  
herd's wife,

Than a queen clothed and crowned  
with force and fear.

*Rizzio.* Are you so weary of crowns,  
and would not be

Soon wearier waxen of sheepfolds?

*Queen.* 'Faith, who knows?

But I would not be weary, let that be  
Part of my wish. I could be glad and  
good,

Living so low, with little labors set,  
And little sleeps and watches, night  
and day

Falling and flowing as small waves in  
low sea

From shine to shadow and back, and  
out and in

Among the firths and reaches of low  
life:

I would I were away and well. No  
more,

For dear love talk no more of policy.  
Let France and faith and envy and

England be,  
And kingdom go, and people: I had  
rather rest

Quiet for all my simple space of life,  
With few friends' loves closing my life  
days in,

And few things known, and grace of  
humble ways,—

A loving little life of sweet small works.  
Good faith, I was not made for other  
life;

Nay, do you think it? I will not hear  
thereof;

Let me hear music rather, as simple a  
song,

If you have any, as these low thoughts  
of mine,

Some lowly and old-world song of quiet  
men.

*Rizzio.* Then is the time for love-  
songs when the lip

Has no more leave to counsel; even so  
be it;

I will sing simply, and no more counsel  
you.

*Queen.* Be not unfriends; I have  
made you wroth indeed,

Unknowing, and pray you even for my  
no fault

Forgive, and give me music; I am  
athirst

For sweet-tongued pardon only.

*Rizzio.* If this be harsh,  
The pardon be for fault enforced of  
mine.

*Love with shut wings, a little ungrown  
love,*

*A blind lost love, alit on my shut heart,*

*As on an unblown rose an unfledged dove:*

*Feeble the flight as yet, feeble the flower.*

*And I said, Show me if sleep or love thou  
art,*

*Or death or sorrow, or some obscure  
power;*

Show me thyself, if thou be some such  
power,  
If thou be god or spirit, sorrow or love,  
That I may praise thee for the thing thou  
art.

And saying, I felt my soul a sudden  
flower

Full-fledged of petals, and thereon a dove  
Sitting full-feathered, singing at my  
heart.

Yet the song's burden heavier on my  
heart

Than a man's burden laid on a child's  
power.

Surely most bitter of all sweet things thou  
art,

And sweetest thou of all things bitter,  
love;

And if a poppy or if a rose thy flower.  
We know not, nor if thou be kite or dove.

But nightingale is none, nor any dove,  
That sings so long nor is so hot of heart  
For love of sorrow or sorrow of any love;  
Nor all thy pain hath any or all thy  
power,

Nor any knows thee if bird or god thou  
art,

Or whether a thorn to think thee, or  
whether a flower.

But surely will I hold thee a glorious  
flower,

And thy tongue surely sweeter than the  
dove

Muttering in mid leaves from a fervent  
heart

Something divine of some exceeding love,  
If thou being god out of a great god's  
power

Will make me also the glad thing thou  
art.

Will no man's mercy show me where  
thou art,

That I may bring thee of all my fruit  
and flower,

That with loud lips and with a molten  
heart

I may sing all thy praises, till the dove  
That I desire to have within my power  
Fly in my bidding to my bosom, love?

Clothed as with power of pinions, O my  
heart,

Fly like a dove, and seek one sovereign  
flower,

Whose thrall thou art, and sing for love  
of love.

Queen. It sings too southerly for this  
harsh north;

This were a song for summer-sleeping  
ears,

One to move dancing measures in men's  
feet

Red-shod with reek o' the vintage.  
Who went there?

What! hear you not?

Mary Seyton. My lord of Bothwell's  
foot:

His tread rings iron, as to battle-ward.

Queen. Not his, it was not. See if  
it be indeed.

'Twas a good song — Something he had  
with me —

I thank you for your song — I know  
not what.

Let him come in. Sir, be with us to  
night —

I knew it was late indeed — at supper  
time.

Rizzio. Madam, till night I take my  
loyal leave.

God give you good of all things.

[Exit.

Queen. Doth he mock me?

I care not neither; I know not. Stay  
with us.

Enter BOTHWELL.

Good morrow, sir: we bade you, did  
we not?

Be with us after noon; 'tis not noon  
near,

And you are truer than your own word;  
and that,

'Tis a true man's and trusty.

Bothwell. True it should be;  
Madam, if truth be true, and I your  
thrall,

And truth's for your sake.

Queen. I would know of you —

I know not what — something there  
was to know.

I would you were not warden — as in  
truth

I think to unmake you — of the marches  
there.

'Tis a fierce office. You have a royal  
sword,

At least a knightly; I would not see it  
hacked rough

In brawling border dangers.

*Bothwell.* Anywhere

Hand, hilt, and edge are yours, to turn  
and take,

Use or throw by; you know it.

*Queen.* I know it indeed.

I have not many hearts with me, and  
hold

Precious the hearts I have and the  
good hands.

Ladies, we have somewhat with our  
servant here

That needs no counsel and no ear of  
yours,

So gives you leave. [*Exit* MARIES.

I know not why they are gone;

I have nothing with you secret.

*Bothwell.* Yea, one thing;

You cannot help it; your face and  
speech and look

Are secret with me in my secret heart.

*Queen.* I know not that; I would I  
did know that.

'Tis yet not twelve days since I saw  
you wed

To my dear friend, and with what eye  
you know

Who would not, for all love that I  
might make

And suit to you, give ear to me, and be  
In mine own chapel at the holy mass

Made one with her; for all the feast we  
kept,

No jewel of mine bequeathed your wife  
might buy

Consent of you to take her wedded  
hand

After the church-rite of her faith and  
mine;

And how much love went with your  
policy,

I cannot tell; yet was my will content  
That you should wed her name and

house, to bring

The race of Gordon on our side again,  
And have its ruin rebuilt and its

might

Restored to do us service; so you said,  
And so I thought I knew your mind to  
stand;

Being so fast bound to me, I need not  
doubt

She could but hold you by the hand,  
and I

That had you by the heart need grudge  
not that,

While time gave order, and expediency  
Required of us allowance; but in faith

I know not whether there be faith or no,  
Save in my heart, wherein I know too

sure

How little wisdom is to trust in man.

So comes it, as you see, for all my  
show,

I am ill at heart, and tired.

*Bothwell.* 'Tis your own blame.

*Queen.* Yea, now, what would you  
have me? I am yours to do it:

But you say nothing; yet you say too  
much.

My blame it is, my weary waste of  
breath,

My wretched hours and empty blood-  
less life,

My sleepy vigils and my starting sleeps,  
All by my fault — if it be fault to be

More than all men loving, all women  
true,

To hunger with the foodless heart of  
grief,

And wither with the tearless thirst of  
eyes,

To wander in weak thought through  
unsown fields,

Past unreaped sheaves of vision; to be  
blind,

Weak, sick and lame of spirit and poor  
of soul,

And to live loveless for love's bitter  
sake,

And have to food loathing, and shame  
for drink,

And see no cease or breach in my long  
life

Where these might end or die; my  
fault it is,

And I will kill my fault: for I that  
loved

Will live to love no living thing again.

*Bothwell.* As you will, then.

*Queen.* Nay, do not tread on me;  
I am lying a worm out of your way,  
and you  
Turn back to bruise me. I am stricken  
sore enough;  
Do not worse wound me; I am hurt to  
the heart.  
You change and shift quicker than all  
good things,  
That all change quickly: I am fast, and  
cannot change.  
If you do hold me so, fast in your  
heart,  
You should not surely mock me.

*Bothwell.* I mock you not.  
You are looser and lighter-tempered  
than the wind,  
And say I mock you: 'tis you mock  
yourself,  
And much more me that wot not of  
your mind;  
What would you have, and would not.

*Queen.* Nothing, I,  
Nothing but peace, and shall not. By  
my faith,  
I think no man ever loved woman well.  
You laugh, and thrust your lips up, but  
'tis truth, —  
This that I think, not your light lewd  
man's thought,  
But in my meaning it is bitter true.  
By heaven, I have no heart for any on  
earth,  
Any man else, nor any matter of  
man's,  
But love of one man; nay, and never  
had.

*Bothwell.* I do believe it, by myself I  
do,  
Who am even the self-same natured;  
so I know it.

*Queen.* What heart have you to hurt  
me? I am no fool  
To hate you for your heat of natural  
heart.  
I know you have loved and love not all  
alike,  
But somewhat all; I hate you not for  
that.  
When have I made words of it? sought  
out times  
To wrangle with you? crossed you with  
myself?

What have I said, what done, by saying  
or deed  
To vex you for my love's sake? and  
have been  
For my part faithful beyond reach of  
faith,  
Kingdomless queen, and wife unhus-  
banded,  
Till in you reigning I might reign and  
rest.  
I have kept my body, yea from wedded  
bed,  
And kept mine hand, yea from my  
sceptre's weight,  
That you might have me and my king-  
dom whole:  
What have these done to take you,  
what to keep,  
Worth one day's doing of mine yet?  
Ah! you know,  
For all the shape and show of things  
without,  
For all the marriage and the bodily  
bond  
And fleshly figure of community,  
I have loved no man, man never hath  
had me whole,  
I am virgin toward you: O my love,  
love, love,  
This that is not yours in me I abhor,  
I pray God for your sake it may be  
false,  
Foolish and foul: I would not have it  
man,  
Not manlike, and not mine, it shall not  
be,  
Being none of love's, and rootless in  
my soul,  
Not growing of my spirit but my blood;  
I hate myself till it be born.

*Bothwell.* Ay, sweet,  
You talk now loud of love; but ten  
days since  
Was I not bid love well your friend,  
and be  
True husband to her? what sweet-  
tongued preacher then  
Taught me how faith should best be  
kept by change  
Of passionate fear and pleasure and  
bright pain  
And all their strange sharp sweet so  
licitudes

For such good gifts as wisdom gives  
and takes

From hand to married hand of them  
that wed?

Whose counsel was this wisdom? whose  
command

This that set sorrow and silence as one  
seal

On the shut lips of foolishness and love?  
*Queen.* I bade you not be wise; or, if

I bade,

It was to be obeyed not.

*Bothwell.* Then indeed

I did obey not, who did foolishly

To do your bidding.

*Queen.* Mine? did I say, Go?

Did I say, Love her? did I say, Hate  
me?

As you must hate to love her. Yea,  
perchance

I said all this; I know not if I said;

But all this have you done; I know  
that well.

*Bothwell.* Indeed I have done all this  
if aught I have,

And loved at all or loathed, save what  
mine eye

Hath ever loathed or loved since first  
it saw

That face which taught it faith, and  
made it first

Think scorn to turn and look on change,  
or see

How hateful in my love's sight are their  
eyes

That give love's light to others.

*Queen.* Tell her so,

Not me; I care not though you love  
your wife

So well that all strange women's eyes  
and mine

Are hateful to you. Oh, what heart  
have I,

That jest and wrangle? but indeed I  
thought

You should do well to love her not, but  
wed,

And make you strong, and get us  
friends—but, nay,

God knows I know not what I thought,  
or why,

When you should wed her: now I  
think but this,

That if one love not, she does well to  
die;

And if one love, she does not well to  
live.

I pray you, go; not for my love who  
pray,

But that for love's sake we thought well  
to part,

And if we loved not it was well indeed.  
Go.

*Bothwell.* To what end? and whither?  
whencesoe'er,

I must come back.

*Queen.* Not to my feet, not mine;

Where should his end be for a married  
man

To lie down lightly, with all care cast  
off,

And sleep more sound than in love's  
lap? for sleep

Between the two fair fiery breasts of  
love

Will rest his head not oft, nor oft shut  
eyes,

They say, that love's have looked on.

*Bothwell.* By that law,  
Mine eyes must wake forever.

*Queen.* Nay, for shame,  
Let not the fire in them that feeds on

mine

Strike fire upon my cheeks: turn off  
their heat;

It takes my breath like flame, and  
smothers me.

What! when I bid?

*Bothwell.* You have bid me do be-  
fore

What you have chid me doing, but  
never yet

A thing so past all nature hard, now  
now

Shall chide me for obedience.

*Queen.* Well—ah me!—

I lack the heart to chide; I have borne  
too much,

And haply too much loved. Alas! and  
now

I am fain too much to show it; but he  
that made

Made me no liar, nor gave me craft  
with power

To choose what I might hide at will, or  
show.

I am simple-souled and sudden in my  
speech,  
Too swift and hot of heart to guard my  
lips  
Or else lie lightly: wherefore while I  
may,  
Till my time come to speak of hate or  
love,  
I will be dumb, patient as pity's self  
Gazing from Godward down on things  
of the earth,  
And dumb till the time be: would I  
were God!  
Time should be quicker to lend help  
and hand  
To men that wait on him. I will not  
wait,  
Lest I wait over-long, no more than  
need,—  
By my long love, I will not. Were I a  
man,  
I had been by this a free man.

*Bothwell.* Be content.

If I have any wit of soldiership,  
'Tis not far off from this to the iron  
day  
That sets on the edge of battle, the  
bare blow,  
All that we fight or fret for. 'Tis not  
like  
Men will bear long with their own lin-  
gering hopes  
And hearts immitigable, and fiery fears  
That burn above dead ashes of things  
quenched  
Hotter for danger, and light men forth  
to fight,  
And from between the breaking ranks  
of war  
The flower must grow of all their fears  
and hopes,—  
Hopes of high promise, fears made  
quick by faith,  
Angers, ambitions; which to gather and  
wear  
Must be our toil and garland.

*Queen.* My heart's lord,

I put my heart and hands into your  
hand  
To hold and help: do you what thing  
in the world  
Shall seem well to you with them, they  
content

Live with your love, or die. For my  
one part,  
I would I had done with need of for-  
ging words,  
That I might keep truth pure upon my  
lips.  
I am weary of lying, and would not  
speak word more  
To mock my heart with, and win faith  
from men,  
But for the truth's sake of my love,  
which lies  
To save the true life in me.  
*Bothwell.* It may be  
You shall not long need to dress love  
in lies:  
This plighted plague of yours hath few  
men friends  
To put their bodies between death and  
his.

*Queen.* Nay, I think not; and we  
shall shape us friends

Out of the stuff of their close enni-  
ties,  
Wherewith he walks inwoven and  
wound about  
To the edge and end of peril; yet God  
knows  
If I for all my cause would seek his  
death,  
Whose lips have stained me with report  
as foul  
As seem to mine their kisses, that like  
brands  
Sear my shamed face with fire to think  
on them;  
Yet would I rather let him live, would  
God,  
Without mine honor or my conscience  
hurt,  
Divide from mine his star, or bid it set,  
And on my life lift up that light in  
heaven  
That is my day of the heart, my sun of  
soul,  
To shine till night shut up those loving  
eyes,  
That death could turn not from it  
though the fire  
Were quenched at heart that fed them.  
Nay, no more:  
Let me go hence, and weep not.

[*Exit*

*Bothwell.* Fire, in faith,  
Enough to light him down the way of  
the worm,  
And leave me warmer. She went sud-  
denly:

Doth she doubt yet? I think, by God's  
light, no:

I hold her over-fast by body and soul,—  
Flesh holds not spirit closer. Now  
what way

To shift him over the edge and end of  
life,

She laughs and talks of, yet keep fast  
my foot

On the strait verge of smooth-worn  
stony things

That we stand still or slide on? 'Tis  
a shoal

Whereon the goodliest galleon of man's  
hope,

That had no burning beacon such as  
mine

Lit of her love to steer by, could not  
choose

But run to wreck.

*Re-enter MARY BEATON.*

*Mary Beaton.* Pray you, my lord, a  
word.

If you know aught of any new thing  
here,

You will not be about the court to-  
night:

If not, of my good will I counsel you,  
Make hence in speed and secret, and  
have hope

Till the next day lighten your days to  
come.

*Bothwell.* I had rather the close moon  
and stars a-night

Lit me to love-bed: what warm game  
is here,

That I must keep mine hand out?

*Mary Beaton.* Such a game  
As you shall win and play not, or my wit

Is fallen in sickness from me. Sir, you  
know

I am your friend, I have your hap at  
heart,

Glad of your good, and in your crosses  
crossed:

I pray you trust me, and be close and  
wise,

For love of your own luck.

*Bothwell.* Tell me one thing:  
What hand herein shall Master David  
hold?

*Mary Beaton.* I think he will not hold  
the like alive. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—THE HIGH STREET.

BURGESSES and PEOPLE.

*First Citizen.* Was it not shown long  
since when she came in,  
If God were glad of her? Two days  
and nights

Ere she brought strife among us, and  
again

Two nights and days when first we saw  
her face,

We saw not once by day the sun's in  
heaven,

The moon's by night, or any space of  
stars,

But thick sick mist corrupting the moist  
air

With drench of darkness, so that scarce  
at noon

Might man spy man a bow-shot's length  
away;

And in man's memory on that day of  
the year

Was never a more dolorous face of  
heaven

Seen so to scowl on summer, as to speak  
What comfort shall come with her to  
this land;

But then were most eyes blind.

*Second Citizen.* These five years since  
Has God filled full of signs that they  
might see,

And sent his plagues to open them; and  
most,

This year or twain what portents of his  
hand

Have writ us down in heaven and  
trembling earth

For fearful flatterers and for faithless  
friends

Whose fear and friendship have no part  
in him,

Who knows not or can read not?  
Famine, frost,

Storms of stars crossing, and strange  
fires in the air,—

Have these no tongues to chide with?

*Third Citizen.* Why, at first  
 A man that was no seer might see what  
 end  
 Should come on us that saw the mass  
 come in,  
 And held our hand when man by man  
 fell off,  
 And heart by heart was cooled of all  
 its heat  
 By sprinkled holy-water of the court  
 In five days' space, tempering the fer-  
 vent edge  
 That had been fieriest on God's side:  
 Lord James,  
 Whose heart should weep now for it,  
 or burn again  
 With shame to think how he made  
 strong their hands  
 Who have cast him out among the  
 banished lords  
 That lack their life in England, kept  
 himself  
 The chapel-door, that none who loved  
 God's law  
 Might slay the idolatrous and whorish  
 priest  
 In his mid sin; and after mass was said  
 Lord Robert and Lord John of Cold-  
 ingham,  
 Who then had put not off our cause,  
 but sat  
 With faithful men as fellows at God's  
 board,  
 Conveyed him to his chamber: there  
 began  
 The curse that yet constrains us, and  
 must fall  
 On more than these; of whom ye  
 know this John  
 Is now before the face o' the fire of  
 God,  
 And ere he died in desperate penitence,  
 Men say, sent warning to his sister  
 queen  
 To turn her feet from those unquiet  
 ways  
 Wherein they tread behind the Pope's  
 to hell.

*First Citizen.* His life was like his  
 brother's of St. Cross,  
 As foul as need or friar's or abbot's be  
 That had no shameful part in a king's  
 race,

And made such end as he that lives may  
 make,  
 Whose bastard blood is proud yet, and  
 insults  
 As might a prince's or a priest's indeed,  
 Being truly neither, yet with either name  
 Signed as in scorn; these are our lords,  
 whose lust  
 Breaks down men's doors to fetch their  
 daughters forth,  
 Even as his townsmen vexed the doors  
 of Lot  
 Till God sent on them fire, who spares  
 but these  
 For our shame's sake, because we spare,  
 being men,  
 And let our hands hang swordless, and  
 the wrath  
 Faint in our hearts, that though God  
 send none down  
 Should be made fire to make a fire of  
 them.

*Third Citizen.* These fools and foul  
 that with them draw the king  
 To shame and riotous insolence which  
 turns  
 Past hope and love to loathing, — these,  
 though vile,  
 Have in them less of poison than men's  
 tongues  
 Who for the queen's love boast in what  
 brief while  
 They will pluck down God, and plant  
 Antichrist,  
 And pull out Knox by the ears: thus  
 Bothwell did,  
 And yet stands higher than any head  
 save his  
 Who in disdain of danger fills his hands  
 As full of gold as are his faithless lips  
 Of lies and bloody counsels, and  
 requires  
 No less than part in all their forfeit  
 lands  
 That live in exile, so to turn his name  
 From loon to lord, from stranger into  
 Scot,  
 And next the Pope's exalt it: while  
 this king  
 Sets all his heart to fleshly foolishness,  
 The beastlike body that eats up the  
 soul  
 As a bird snared and eaten; and in fear



Of God and Rimmon, with a supple  
soul,  
Crooks his lithe knee for craft, and bows  
his back  
In either's house, yet seeks no prophet's  
leave,  
Nor hears his saying that God shall  
spew the like  
Out of his mouth.

*Second Citizen.* Yet this good grows in  
him,

That he has fallen in anger with the  
queen

For her knave's sake that was his  
closest friend,

Chief craftsman and main builder of  
the match;

Yea, half his heart, brother and bed-  
fellow,

Sworn secret on his side.

*Third Citizen.* There are who think  
They have changed beds in very and  
shameful deed,  
And halved more than their own hearts.

*First Citizen.* He came here  
On the Pope's party, against our kingly  
lords,

Against the duke, our first more natu-  
ral head,

Against the good-will of all godliness;  
And hath he now cast their cords from  
him? nay,

This is the stormy sickness of ill blood  
Swelling the veins of sin in violent  
youth

That makes them wrangle, but at home  
and heart,

Whatever strife there seem of hands  
abroad,

They are single-minded in the hate of  
God.

Did he not break forth into bitterness,  
Being warned by Knox of youth and  
empty heart,

Yea, rail aloud as one made mad with  
wine?

Did he not lay devices with this knave  
That now ye say defiles him in his  
wife,

To rid the noble Murray from their  
way,

That they might ride with hotter spurs  
for hell?

*Second Citizen.* God hath set strife  
betwixt them, that their feet  
Should not be long time out of their  
own snares.

Here be the men we look for comfort  
from,

Men that have God's mark sharp upon  
the soul;

Stout Ochiltree, and our main stay  
John Knox.

*Enter JOHN KNOX and OCHILTREE.*

*Ochiltree.* Have you yet hope that  
for his people's sake

God will leave off to harden her hard  
heart,

That you will yet plead with her?

*John Knox.* Nay, I know not;

But what I may by word or witness  
borne,

That will I do, being bidden: yet indeed  
I think not to bring down her height of  
mind

By counsel or admonishment. Her  
soul

Is as a flame of fire, insatiable,  
And subtle as thin water; with her  
craft

Is passion mingled so inseparably  
That each gets strength from other, her  
swift wit

By passion being enkindled and made  
hot,

And by her wit her keen and passionate  
heart

So tempered that it burn itself not out,  
Consuming to no end. Never, I think,  
Hath God brought up against the peo-  
ple of God,

To try their force or feebleness of faith,  
A foe than this more dangerous, nor of  
mood

More resolute against him.

*Ochiltree.* So long since  
You prophesied of her when new come  
in:

What then avails it that you counsel  
her

To be not this born danger that she is,  
But friends with God she hates, and  
with his folk

She would root out and ruin?

*John Knox.* Yet this time

I am not bidden of him to cast her off

I will speak once; for here even in our  
eyes

His enemies grow great, and cast off  
shame.

We are haled up out of hell to heaven,  
and now

They would fain pluck us backward by  
the skirt.

And these men call me bitter-tongued  
and hard,

Who am not bitter; but their work and  
they

Who gather garlands from the red pit-  
side

To make foul fragrance in adulterous  
hair,

And lift white hands to hide the fires  
of God, —

Their sweetness and their whiteness  
shall he turn

Bitter and black. I have no hate of  
her,

That I should spare; I will not spare  
to strive

That the strong God may spare her,  
and not man.

*Ochiltree.* Yea, both, so be we have  
our lost lords home,

And the Pope's back-bowed changeling  
clean cast out

And of a knave made carrion.

*John Knox.* For your first,

It grows as fruit out of your second  
wish:

Come but the day that looks in his dead  
face,

And these that hate him as he hates all  
good

Shall have their friends home, and  
their honor high

Which the continuance of his life keeps  
low.

*Ochiltree.* Surely, for that, my hand  
or any's else

Were hot enough to help him to his end.  
Yet when this thing is through, and this

plague purged,  
There stands a thorn yet in our way to  
prick, —

The loose, weak-witted, half-souled boy  
called king.

*John Knox.* It is of him I am bidden  
speak with her,

Having but now rebuked him back  
sliding

In God's sight and his name. It may  
be yet,

Whether by foolishness and envious  
heart,

Or by some nobler touch left in his  
blood, —

Some pulse of spirit that beats to a  
tune more high

Than base men set their hearts by, —  
he will turn

Helpful to Godward, serviceable in soul  
To good men's ends in hate of that they  
hate.

I cannot say: howbeit, I fear not much  
Her love of him will keep him fast to  
her;

If he be drawn in bonds after her  
wheels,

It will be but of subtle soul and craft  
The cords are woven that hold him.

But, for me,  
Love they or hate, my way is clear with  
them:

Not for her sake nor his sake shall our  
Lord

Change counsel and turn backward;  
and save his

What will or wit I have to speak or  
live,

He knows who made it little for myself,  
But for him great; and be you well  
assured,

Love of their love nor doubt of their  
dislike

Hath upon me more power than upon  
God.

For now I have seen him strive these  
divers years

With spirits of men and minds exorbi-  
tant,

Souls made as iron and their face as  
flame

Full hard and hot against him, and  
their wits

Most serpent-strong and swift, sudden  
of thought

And overflowing of counsel, and their  
hands

Full of their fortune, and their hearts  
made large

To hold increase of all prosperities;

And all these are not, and I poor man  
am,  
Because he hath taken and set me on  
his side,  
And not where these were; I am con-  
tent alone  
To keep mine own heart in his secret  
sight  
Naked and clean, well knowing that no  
man born  
Shall do me scathe but he hath bidden  
him do,  
Nor I speak word but as he hath set it  
me.

*First Citizen.* Goes he to Holyrood ?

*Second Citizen.* Ay, sir, by noon.

*First Citizen.* There is a kindling  
trouble in the air;

The sun is halting toward the top of  
day;

It will be shine or rain before he  
come.

*Ochiltree.* What ails this folk to  
hover at our heel,

And hang their eyes on you so heed-  
fully?

*John Knox.* They should be natu-  
rally disquieted,

Seeing what new wind makes white the  
wave o' the time

We ride on out of harbor. — Sirs, ye  
have heard

News of your scathe and of shame done  
to God,

And the displeasure bites you by the  
heart,

I doubt not, if your hearts be godly  
given:

Make your souls strong in patience;  
let your wrath

Be rather as iron than as fuel in fire,  
Tempered and not consumed; heat

that burns out,  
Leaves the hearth chillier for the flame-  
less ash

Than ere the wood was kindled.

*First Citizen.* Master Knox,

You know us, whereto we would, and  
by what way:

This too much patience burns our  
checks with shame

That our hands are not redder than our  
face

With slaying of manslaughterers who spill  
blood of faith,

And pierce the heart of naked holiness.  
It is far gone in rumor, how the queen

Will set on high and feed on gold that  
man

Who was a scourge laid long since on  
the saints, —

The archbishop of St. Andrew's; and  
perforce,

Dyed as he stands in grain with inno-  
cent blood,

Will make him mightier for our scathe  
and shame

Than ere the kindly people of the word  
Has made him bare of bad authority.

*Second Citizen.* Likewise she hath  
given her seal imperial

To a lewd man and a stranger, her own  
knave,

Vile, and a papist; that with harp and  
song

Makes her way smoother toward the pit  
of hell.

*John Knox.* What needs us count  
and cast offences up

That all we know of, how all these  
have one head, —

The hateful head of unstanched mis-  
belief?

For sins are sin-begotten, and their seed  
Bred of itself and singly procreative;

Nor is God served with setting this to  
this

For evil evidence of several shame,  
That one may say, Lo now! so many

are they;

But if one, seeing with God-illumined  
eyes

In his full face the encountering face of  
sin,

Smite once the one high-fronted head,  
and slay,

His will we call good service. For  
myself,

If ye will make a counsellor of me,  
I bid you set your hearts against one

thing  
To burn it up, and keep your hearts on  
fire,

Not seeking here a sign and there a  
sign,

Nor curious of all casual sufferances,

But steadfast to the undoing of that  
thing done  
Whereof ye know the being, however  
it be,  
And all the doing abominable of God.  
Who questions with a snake if the  
snake sting?  
Who reasons of the lightning if it burn?  
While these things are, deadly will  
these things be;  
And so the curse that comes of cursed  
faith.

*First Citizen.* It is well said.

*Second Citizen.* Ay, and well done  
were well.

*Third Citizen.* We have borne too  
long for God, we that are men,  
Who hath time to bear with evil if he  
would,

Having for life's length even eternity;  
But we that have but half our life to live,  
Whose half of days is swallowed of  
their nights,—

We take on us this lame long-suffering,  
To sit more still and patienter than  
God,

As though we had space to doubt in,  
and long time

For temperate, quiet, and questionable  
pause.

*First Citizen.* Let the time come—

*Second Citizen.* Nay, we must make  
the time,

Bid the day bring forth to us the fruit  
we would,

Or else fare fruitless forth.

*Third Citizen.* It is nigh noon;

There will be shine and rain and shine  
ere night.

### SCENE III.—HOLYROOD.

*The QUEEN and RIZZIO; MARY SEY-  
TON and MARY CARMICHAEL in at-  
tendance.*

*Queen.* Is he so tender-tongued? it is  
his fear

That plucks the fang out from his hate,  
and makes

A stingless snake of his malignant  
heart;

He hath a mind—or, had he a mind at  
all.

Would have a mind—to mischief; but  
his will

Is a dumb devil.

*Rizzio.* Why, fear then and no love  
Will make faith in him out of false-  
hood's self,

And keep him constant through un-  
stableness.

*Queen.* Fear that makes faith may  
break faith; and a fool

Is but in folly stable. I cannot tell  
If he indeed fear these men more than  
me;

Or if he slip their collar, whether or no  
He will be firm on my side, as you  
say,

Through very lightness; but I think  
not of him,

Steadfast or slippery. Would I had  
been that day

Handless, when I made one his hand  
with mine!

Yet it seemed best. I am spirit-sick  
and faint

With shame of his foul follies and  
loathed life,

Which hath no part but lewdness of a  
man,

Nor style of soul nor several quality,  
Dividing men from men, and man from  
beast,

By working heart or complement of  
brain,—

None, very none. I will not see him  
to-night.

I have given command to insure our  
privacy.

Is it past noon?

*Enter DARNLEY and MARY BEATON.*

*Darnley.* You say she hath asked for  
me?

*Mary Beaton.* Ay, and complainingly,  
as though her love

Were struck at by your absence.

*Darnley.* Love! her love!

It were a cunning stroke should print a  
wound

In that which hath no substance, and  
no spirit

To feel the hurt. Well, I will speak to  
her.

*Queen.* How like a chidden bondman  
of his lord

Looks my lord now! Come you from  
penance, sir?

Has the kirk put you to no private  
shame

Besides the public tongue of broad re-  
buke?

We are blessed in your penitence; it is  
A gracious promise for you.

*Darnley.* Penitence?

*Queen.* You have a tender faith and  
quick remorse

That will bear buffets easily; pray God  
It pluck you absolution from their  
hands

Who are godly sparing of it. We have  
heard

A priest of theirs cast for incontinence  
Hardly with thrice purgation of his  
shame

Redeemed himself to kirkward.

*Darnley.* I hear naught.

*Queen.* Nay, but you hear when these  
rebuke you of sin

In the full face and popular ear of men;  
You hear them surely, and patiently  
you hear,

And it shows in you godliness and  
grace

Praiseworthy from them; for myself,  
my lord,

I have some foolish petulances in me  
And stings of pride that shut me out  
from grace

So sought and bought of such men;  
but your course

May teach me timelier humble-minded-  
ness

And patience to get favor: which till  
now

I have never needed beg, and now  
should prove

A very witless beggar. Teach me  
words,

Pray you, to move men's minds with;  
such great men's

As your submission purchases to be  
Good friends and patrons to you; for I  
fear

Your Knox is not my friend yet.

*Darnley.* So I think.

Madam, I know not what you make of  
me,

Nor if your jest be seasonable or no;

I am no fool nor implement of theirs,  
Nor patienter of their irreverences  
Than the queen's self; if you endure  
such tongues,

Why, I may bear them.

*Queen.* Well and patiently;

I praise your manhood's temper for it  
and am

The happier for your royalty of spirit  
That will not feel wrong done of baser  
men

To be at all wrong done you.

*Darnley.* Will you think it?

Well then, I am so, I am just your  
thought;

You read me right, and this our friend  
reads too,

For I am plain and easy to read right.

*Queen.* Have you made time to say  
so?

*Darnley.* Ay, and this,

That it mislikes me — it gives me dis-  
content

That men should —

*Queen.* Ay? that men should — any  
thing —

Bear themselves manlike, or that men  
should be, —

It is offence done openly to you?

*Darnley.* Nay, not offence, nor open;  
naught it is,

Or to me naught.

*Queen.* Naught as I think, indeed.

You were about to chide us? well it is  
You have so humble a wife of us and  
true,

To make your chidings fruitful, that  
your words

Bear and bring forth good seed of bet-  
tering change.

I pray you, when you chide me, that  
you make

Your stripes the gentler for my humble-  
ness.

*Darnley.* I have no mind to jest and  
jape, and will —

And will not wrangle with you.

*Queen.* Will, and will not?

They say a woman's will is made like  
that,

But your will yet is wilfuller than ours

*Darnley.* Not as I think.

*Queen.* God better the king's thought

And mind more tyrannous than is his place!

*Darnley.* If I be king —

*Queen.* And I be kingdomless,  
And place be no place, and distinction die

Between the crown and curch — Well,  
on, our lord.

*Darnley.* Why am I out of counsel  
with you? Whence

Am I made show of for a titular fool,  
And have no hand in enterprise of  
yours,

Nor tongue, nor presence? Not alone  
my name

That is rubbed out and grated off your  
gold,

But myself plucked out of your register,  
Made light account of, held as nothing-  
ness,

Might move me —

*Queen.* Whither?

*Darnley.* To some show of wrath  
More than complaint, if I were minded  
ill.

Here is a breach made with the English  
queen,

Our cousin of England, a wide-open  
breach,

A great-grown quarrel, and I no part  
of it,

Not named or known of.

*Queen.* You are the happier man  
Heavenward, if blessed be the peace-  
able.

*Darnley.* The happier heavenward,  
being the worldlier shamed;

The less I like it. You have suddenly  
cast forth

A man her servant and ambassador,  
With graceless haste and instance, from  
the realm,

On barren charge of bare complicity  
With men now banished and in English  
bounds,

But not attain of treason toward us  
yet

Nor deadly doomed of justice.

*Queen.* Not attain?

Give not your spirit trouble for that;  
the act

Is drawn by this against them, and the  
estates

Need but give warrant to their forfeit-  
ure,

Now it has passed the lords of the  
articles.

Take no care for it; though it be sweet  
in you,

And gracious, to show care of your  
worst foes

You have on earth; that would have  
driven you forth

A shameful rebel to your cousin queen,  
And naked of our foreign favor here

That clothed you with unnatural royalty  
And not your proper purple. Forth;  
you say

I have done this wrong?

*Darnley.* I do not say you have done  
Wise work nor unwise; but howbeit, I  
say

I had no part in aught of it, nor knew  
With what a spur's prick you provoked  
her spleen

Who is not stingless to requite it you,  
Nor with what scant of reason.

*Queen.* 'Tis sad truth,  
She shows no less disquiet mind than  
yours,

Nor a less loud displeasure: she was  
kind,

She says, well-willed to me-ward, but  
my sins,

Unkindliness, and soul's obduracy,  
Have made her soft heart hard; and  
for this fault

She will not ever counsel me again,  
Nor cease to comfort my dear brother's  
need

With gold and good compassion; and  
I have

Even such a sister as brother of her as  
him,

And love alike and am like loved of  
them.

He wills me well, she swears, as she  
herself,

And, I'll re-swear it, she wills as well  
as he.

*Darnley.* Ay, we know whence this  
wellspring of your will

Takes head and current; who must  
have brave wars

We know, fair field, broad booty to  
sweep up,

Space to win spurs in ; and what English gold  
 Must after battle gild his heels with them,  
 When he shall stand up in my father's stead,  
 Lieutenant-general for you of the realm ;  
 And who must have your brother's lands we know,  
 Investiture must have, and chancellorship,  
 And masterdom in council. Here he stands,  
 A worthy witness to it : do you look on me ?  
 Is it not you must be the golden sir,  
 The counsel-keeper, the sole tongue of the head,  
 The general man, the goodly ? Did you send  
 Lord Bothwell hard at heel of him cast forth  
 To make his wrong sweet with sweet-spoken words,  
 And temper the sharp taste of outrage done  
 And heat in him of anger, with false breath ?  
 Why made you not your own tongue tunable  
 Who are native to soft speaking, and who hate  
 With as good heart as any Scot that hates  
 England ? or is her messenger your fool  
 To take blows from you and good words alike  
 As it shall chance him cross your morning mood  
 Angry or kindly ?  
*Queen.* Sir, our chancellor,  
 We charge you that you answer not the duke.  
*Darnley.* Duke ?  
*Queen.* Ay, the duke of Rothsay ; whom we pray  
 Seek elsewhere some seemlier talking-stock  
 To flush his hot and feverish wit upon.  
*Darnley.* Your chancellor ? why went not such a man  
 With you before the lords of the articles

Now, an hour back, and yet but half day through,  
 To help you speak the banished lords to death ?  
 Is't not the heart of the office, to see law  
 Punish law's traitors, as you bid them be  
 In the proof's teeth, who are honester than some  
 You bid be law's justiciaries of them ?  
 Why went he not ? 'twere no more shame nor praise  
 Than here to swell in state beside your own.  
*Queen.* Must we crave leave to bid you twice take leave,  
 Or twice to ask what would you ?  
*Darnley.* Truly this,  
 A mere mean thing, an insignificance,  
 If you will once more hear — oh, no-wise me,  
 But just the man whose name you take in mouth  
 To smite me on my face with — Master Knox.  
*Queen.* Are you his usher going before his grace  
 No less than servant to his master-word ?  
 Or is it penitence and submission makes you  
 In the holy way of honor and recompense  
 So high in office with him ? Say, this time  
 For the usher's sake I'll speak with the usher's lord :  
 Yet if I mind 'twas I bade send for him  
 To speak of you his servant : for I hear  
 You did not at first stripe submit yourself,  
 Nor take all penance with all patience, being  
 Brought hardly in time to harsh humility  
 Such as we see now ; which thing craves excuse  
 To make you gracious in your master's eyes,  
 If it be true — I would not think it were —

You brake in anger forth from the  
High Kirk,  
Being there rebuked, and would not sit  
at meat,

But past away to hawking in pure rage  
After an hour or twain of high dis-  
course

Heard with plain show of sharp un-  
thankfulness;

Which that you now repent, and would  
redeem,

I will bear witness for you to your  
lord

To make your penitential peace with  
him.

Let him come in.

*Darnley.* I am no messenger.

*Queen.* Where is my chamberlain?  
bid Marnock here —

Let the man in, and one man only more,  
Whoever it be; we'll see him privily.

Our chancellor, and our no messenger,  
We have no need of to dispute with  
him.

*Darnley.* If I go hence —

*Queen.* Why, then you stay not here.

*Darnley.* But if I go at bidding —

*Queen.* Why, you go:

With the more speed, the less of tar-  
riance made.

Let me not hold you half-way back:  
farewell.

[*Exeunt DARNLEY and RIZZIO.*

I have not begun so luckily, nor set  
So good a face on the first half of day,  
Now to keep terms with mere tongue-  
traitors more.

*Enter JOHN KNOX and JOHN ERSKINE  
OF DUN.*

So once we are met again, sir, you and I.  
Set him before us.

*John Knox.* I am before your grace  
Without man's haling or compulsive  
word:

Nor at these divers times you have sent  
for me

Have you found need to use me force-  
fully.

*Queen.* Well, let that be; as verily  
meseems

'Tis I find forceful usage at your hands,  
And handling such as never prince has  
borne

Since first kings were; yet have I  
borne with it,

Who am your natural princess, and sat  
by

To hear your rigorous manner of  
speaking through

As loud against my kinsfolk as myself;

Yea, I have sought your favor dili-  
gently,

And friendship of my natural subject  
born,

And reconcilement by all possible  
means;

I have offered you at your own choice  
and time

Whenso it pleased you ever admonish  
me

Presence and audience; yea, have  
shamed myself

With reasonless submission; have en-  
dured

The naked edge of your sharp speech,  
and yet

Cannot be quit of you: but here to  
God

I make my vow I will be once revenged.  
Give me my handkerchief. I should  
take shame

That he can shame me with these tears,  
to make

Mine eyes his vassals.

*John Knox.* Madam, true it is  
There have been divers seasons of dis-  
pute

Between your grace and me, wherein I  
have never

Found you offended: neither now  
would find

The offence I sought not; yea, I knew  
this well,

If it shall please God break your  
prison-house,

And lighten on your disimprisoned  
soul,

That my tongue's freedom shall offend  
you not.

For surely being outside the preaching-  
place

I think myself no breeder of offence,  
Nor one that gives man cause of wrath  
and wrong;

And being therein, I speak not of my  
self



But as God bids who bids me, speaking  
 plain,  
 Flatter no flesh on earth. Lo, here I  
 stand,  
 A single soul and naked in his eye,  
 Constrained of him, to do what thing  
 he will,  
 And dare and can none other. Hath  
 he sent me  
 To speak soft words of acceptable  
 things  
 In ladies' chambers or kings' courts, to  
 make  
 Their ways seem gracious to them? I  
 wot, no.  
 I am to bring God's gospel in men's  
 ears,  
 And faith therein, and penitence, which  
 are  
 The twain parts of it; but the chief o'  
 the land  
 And all the main of your nobility  
 Give God no heed, nor them that speak  
 for God,  
 Through flattering fear and ill respect  
 of you;  
 And seeing, if one preach penitence to  
 men,  
 He must needs note the sin he bids  
 repent,  
 How should not I note these men's sin  
 who choose  
 To serve affections in you, and wild  
 will,  
 Rather than truth in God? This were  
 lost breath,  
 To chide the general wrong-doing of  
 the world,  
 And not the very present sin that  
 burns  
 Here in our eyes offensive, — bid serve  
 God,  
 And say not with what service.

*Queen.* Nay, but so

What is it to you, or any saving me,  
 How this man married to me bears  
 himself?  
 With what sign-manual has God war-  
 ranted  
 Your inquisition of us? What am I,  
 That my most secret sanctuaries of life  
 And private passages of hours should  
 be

Food for men's eyes, or pavement for  
 men's feet  
 To peer and pasture, track and tread  
 upon,  
 Insult with instance? Am I only  
 bound  
 To let the common mouth communi-  
 cate  
 In my life's sweet or bitter sacrament,  
 The wine poured, the bread broken  
 every day?  
 To walk before men bare, that they may  
 judge  
 If I were born with any spot or no,  
 And praise my naked nature? to sub-  
 ject  
 Mine unsubmitted soul subordinate  
 To popular sight and sentence? What  
 am I,  
 That I should be alone debarred, de-  
 posed,  
 From the poor right of poor men, who  
 may live  
 Some hour or twain unchallenged of  
 the day,  
 And make to no man answer what  
 they do  
 As I to mine must render? who is this  
 That takes in hand such hard things  
 and such high?  
 Sir, what man are you, that I need  
 account  
 For this word said, or that, or such  
 things done,  
 Only to you or mainly, of myself?  
 Yea, what are you within this common-  
 wealth?  
*John Knox.* A man within it, and a  
 subject born,  
 Madam; and howsoever no great man,  
 Earl, lord, nor baron to bear rule  
 therein,  
 Yet has God made me a profitable man,  
 How abject I seem ever in your eye,  
 No member of the same unmeritable.  
 Yea, madam, this pertains not less to  
 me  
 Than any of all your noble-nurtured  
 men,  
 To warn men of what things may hurt  
 the same,  
 So as I see them dangerous; and here  
 in

My conscience and mine office with one  
tongue

Crave plainness of me: wherefore to  
yourself

I say the thing I speak in public place,  
That what great men soever at any  
time

Shall be consenting to your lord's un-  
faith

Or flattering furtherance of unfaith in  
you,

They do what in them lieth to cast out  
Christ,

Banish his truth, betray his liberty  
And free right of this realm, and in the  
end

Shall haply do small comfort to your-  
self.

And for him too, your husband, it may  
be

That as he spares not to dishonor God  
For your delight, by service of the  
mass,

God will not spare to smite him by  
your hand

That faithlessly he fawns on to his loss.

*Queen.* When was there queen so  
handled in the world?

I would I could not weep; for being  
thus used

I needs must never or now. Is this  
light day?

Am I asleep, or mad, or in a trance,  
That have such words to beat about  
mine ears,

And in mine eyes his present face who  
speaks?

*Erskine of Dun.* Madam, I pray your  
grace contain your mood,

And keep your noble temperance of  
yourself,

For your high sake and honor, who are  
held

For excellence of spirit and natural  
soul

As sovereign born as for your face and  
place,

Kingdom, and kingly beauty; to whose  
might

The worthiest of the world, all Europe's  
chief,

Her choice of crowns, might gladly  
bow themselves

To find your favor. I beseech you  
think

That here is no disloyalty designed,  
Nor thing dishonorable; for were men  
mad

Whose wits are whole, and false whose  
faiths are sound,

The very mouth of madness would  
speak sense,

The very tongue of treason would  
speak truth,

For love and service of your royalty;  
Blind curses bless, and red rebellion  
bow,

That came to burn and threaten. Do  
not dream

That a man faithful Godward and well  
loved

Can be to you-ward evil-willed, who  
have

Power on your natural and your born  
unfriends

To bind their good-will to you.

*Queen.* Words, all words;

I am weary of words: I have heard  
words enough

To build and break, if breath could  
break or build,

Centuries of men. What would they  
with me, sir?

These my liege folk that love me to  
the death,—

Their death or mine, no matter,—my  
fast friends

Whose comfortable balms so bruise  
my head

It cannot hold the crown up; these  
good hands

That wring my wrist round to wrench  
out the staff

God set into mine own; these loving,  
lips

That take my name upon them as to  
kiss,

And leave it rank with foam of hateful  
speech?

Must I be dead deposed, or must I live  
Stript shameless, naked to the very  
name,

A crestless creature and displumed,  
that feeds

On charities and chances? will they  
give

Me, their queen born, me, bread or dust  
 to eat,  
 With a mouth water-moistened or a  
 dry,  
 Beggared or buried? shall I hold my  
 head  
 In shameful fief and tenantry of these  
 For their least wind of any wrath that  
 blows  
 To storm it off my shoulders? What  
 were I  
 That being so born should be born  
 such a thing  
 As bondsmen might bemock the bond-  
 age of  
 And slaves contemn for slavery? Nay,  
 no words:  
 A word may wound, and no word heal  
 again,  
 As none can me — whom all men's  
 words may wound —  
 Who am liable to all buffets of men's  
 tongues,  
 All stripes of all their scandals — and  
 was born  
 To no such fear — and have nor tongue  
 nor wit  
 To plead and gather favor — no such  
 grace  
 As may get grace, no piteous skilful-  
 ness —  
 Only my truth and tears; and would  
 to God  
 My tears and truth for you were wind  
 and fire  
 To burn and blow corruption from the  
 world,  
 And leave pure peace to breed where  
 you plant war,  
 And make the furrows fat with pesti-  
 lence  
 And the grain swell with treason! but,  
 too sure,  
 They too can hurt, and heal not. I am  
 soul-sick  
 With shame and bitter weakness; yet,  
 God's will,  
 I may take strength about me to put  
 off  
 Some part of shame. Sir, you that  
 make me weep,  
 By these my tears and my sharp shame  
 of them

I swear you will not laugh to see me  
 laugh,  
 When my time comes: you shall not;  
 I will have  
 Time to my friend yet; I shall see  
 you, sir,  
 If you can weep or no, that with dry eyes  
 Have seen mine wet; I will try that:  
 look to't.  
*John Knox.* Madam, — I speak in  
 very eye of God, —  
 I never took delight in any tears  
 Shed of God's creatures; yea, for my  
 self-sake,  
 I can but very hardly abide the tears  
 Of mine own boys whom mine own  
 hand and love  
 Chastens, and much less can take any  
 joy  
 In this the weeping of your majesty.  
 But, seeing I have given you no offen-  
 sive cause  
 Nor just occasion, but have spoken  
 truth  
 After mine office as mine own place  
 craves  
 Lest I, God's man, be man-sworn to  
 God's truth,  
 I must sustain, howbeit unwillingly,  
 Rather these tears drawn of your  
 majesty  
 Than blood of mine own conscience  
 stabbed to death  
 Or through my silence of my common-  
 wealth  
 By my dumb treason wounded.  
*Queen.* A fair word:  
 I thought it was forgotten of men's  
 mouths,  
 And only lived in the inner heat of the  
 heart,  
 Too sure to want the spelling of their  
 speech.  
 Sir, you shall find it in my very tears, —  
 This blood you fear for of your com-  
 monwealth,  
 And in the hurts of mine authority  
 The wounds it lies abed with; what,  
 God help,  
 Can the head bleed, and not the body  
 faint?  
 Or wherein should the kingdom feel  
 such maim

As in the kingship stricken? there are  
you,

If you be true man, and each true man  
born

Subject, and circled with the bound of  
rule,

Hurt to the heart. But heartless things  
are words:

Henceforth I will not mix my speech  
with yours

In the way of disputation ever more,  
Nor set against your tongue the plea of  
mine

To reason as its equal. Wait you here,  
Here in the chamber: you, sir, come  
with me

To counsel in my cabinet somewhere:  
We will return his answer.

[*Exeunt* QUEEN and ERSKINE OF DUN.  
*Mary Carmichael.* She wept sore;

I never saw her spirit, so chafed, so  
melt

And thaw to such mere passion; this  
one time

He is sure attained.

*Mary Beaton.* Ay, she fain would  
dare

Upon the spur of the hour attain him;  
yet

What none dare else, she durst not:  
they will put

Force of fair words as bridle in the  
mouth

Of her wild will and reinless.

*Mary Seyton.* She is wise,  
And fights not wisdom, but being coun-  
selled well

Takes truce with time and tongueless  
policy.

What! will the man speak to us? he  
looks so hard

With such fast eyes and sad; I had  
not thought

His face so great, nor presence.

*John Knox.* Ah! fair ladies,  
How fair were this your life and pleas-  
urable

If this might ever abide, and so in the  
end

With all this gay gear we might pass  
to heaven!

But fie upon that knave, Death, that  
will come,

Whether we will or will not: and being  
come,

When he has laid on his assured arrest,  
The foul worms will be busy with this  
flesh,

Be it never so fair and tender; and the  
soul,

The silly soul shall be so feeble, I fear,  
It can bear with it neither gold nor  
pearl,

Painting of face, garnish, nor precious  
stones.

*Mary Beaton.* Sir, for myself, small  
joy this were to me,

That this life should live ever; nor  
would I

Care much by praying to stretch my  
days of life

Into more length, nor much to take  
with me

Garnish or gold: but one thing I would  
fain

Have to go grave-wards with me, and  
keep it safe,

That you have cast no word or warning  
on,

And yet women, whose hearts are  
worldly worn

And by no creed of yours consolable,  
Nor gladness of your gospel, love its  
name

As dear as God's; and its name is but  
rest.

*John Knox.* Rest has no other name  
but only God's.

*Mary Beaton.* But God has many an-  
other name than rest:

His name is life, and life's is weariness.

*John Knox.* Ay, but not his: that  
life has lost his name;

Peace is his name, and justice.

*Mary Beaton.* Ah, sir! see,  
Can these two names be one name  
on earth

Can two keep house together that have  
name

Justice and peace? where is that man  
i' the world

Who have found peace in the arms of  
justice lain,

Or justice at the breast of peace asleep?  
Is not God's justice painted like as  
ours,

A strong man armed, a swordsman red  
as fire,  
Whose hands are hard, and his feet  
washed in blood?  
It were an iron peace should sleep with  
him,  
And rest were unrest that should kiss  
his lips.  
What man would look on justice here,  
and live,  
Peace has no more part in him.

*John Knox.* Lady, nay,  
That only peace indeed which is of God  
Hath in the just man not a part, but  
all,  
But the whole righteous life and heart  
in him  
Still peacefully possesses; who hath  
not  
Or loves not justice, he can love not  
peace,  
For peace is just; and that thing is not  
peace  
That such men love, but full of strife  
and lies,  
A thing of thorns and treasons. This  
were even  
As if a man loving a harlot should  
Praise her for maiden and himself for  
pure  
To love such maidenhood, when any  
says  
That he loves peace who loves not  
holiness;  
For peace is holy. Yea, and if one  
seek  
He shall find peace where bitterest  
justice is,  
In the full fire and middle might of  
wrath,  
Rather than where sloth sucks the lips  
of shame  
Or fear with her foul brother unbelief  
Lives in adultery; strife is that which  
springs,  
As a winged worm and poisonous, of  
their sheets;  
And in the slumberless and storm-  
strewn bed  
That very war's self spreads for right-  
eousness  
Peace as a babe is born.

*Mary Beaton.* Would God it were!

For 'tis a bitter childbed: these long  
years  
We look for fruit, and none comes forth  
of it,  
But yet more iron travail; and our-  
selves,  
Desiring justice, quite lose hold of  
peace,  
And are distracted with our own fierce  
want  
And hungry need of right unreachable.  
Yet it may come, and then shall peace  
indeed.

*John Knox.* You talk against your  
habit.

*Re-enter* ERSKINE OF DUN.

*Erskine of Dun.* Master Knox,  
The queen will no more hear you at  
this time,  
But with good-will and gracious mind  
will weigh  
Your worth and worthy meaning in  
your words.

*John Knox.* It may be she will never  
hear me more.

Farewell, fair ladies; may God look  
on you,  
And give you chiefly comfort, which is  
grace.

[*Exeunt* JOHN KNOX and ERSKINE OF  
DUN.]

*Mary Seyton.* Why did you prate so  
preacher-like with him?

*Mary Beaton.* I cannot tell by asking  
of myself,

Nor answer for your asking. Which  
of you  
Shall wait at supper on the queen to-  
night?

*Mary Carmichael.* None but her coun-  
sel of close hours, Argyle.

*Mary Beaton.* She sups with them;  
and in attendance there  
Some two or three I heard of, - - one of  
these

No man of arms.

*Mary Seyton.* What should they da  
with arms?

More need of lips to sing with.

*Mary Beaton.* Ay, to sing:

It is no matter of state they meet upon!

*Mary Seyton.* Are your wits lost in  
deed, or do you jest?

*Mary Beaton.* True, it should be for  
no affairs of state

They sup at nightfall in the lesser  
room,—  
They three, and three to make the  
music up.

*Mary Seyton.* What ails you at it?

*Mary Beaton.* Nothing; I ail naught.  
I did but think what music he should  
make  
After this preacher! Let us to the  
queen.

SCENE IV. — DARNLEY'S LODGING.

DARNLEY and SIR GEORGE DOUGLAS.

*Darnley.* I think our friend of Mor-  
ton had grown slack  
But for my spurring, uncle.

*Sir George Douglas.* Nay, he is firm:  
You do him less right than you do  
yourself

To think he should need quickening.

*Darnley.* Oh, I know not:  
What should I know? what wit have I  
to know?

I am a fool, and have no forethought!  
Why,

But for my resolute instance at this  
need,—

I said to him, Be resolute,—and since  
then,

Some six or eight hours gone, I have  
heard such things

As would put sense and passion in  
dead bones,—

By God I have; it shall be seen I have.  
But are you sure it should be done to-  
night?

*Sir George Douglas.* Ay, surely.

*Darnley.* Well, I see no surety in it.  
Methinks now, every day we let him  
live

Blows hot the popular wrath of all the  
land,

And makes us surer, when we strike  
indeed,

That all men's hearts will stab him  
with our hands.

*Sir George Douglas.* By which ac-  
count he might live long, and die  
An old white death and woundless. Is  
not this

The man whereof you told me some  
while since

How at close midnight, your wife's  
doors being locked,  
You burst them open, and gat hold of  
him

Hid in a closet of her bedchamber,  
Save for furred gown and shirt about  
the knave

Naked? and must you take him so  
again,

And he so twice get clear of you, and  
laugh?

You swore me that: what need to tell  
or swear,

If he must live still? weeping, with  
clenched hands,

You swore it, praying me for our  
shame's sake send

Word to your uncle Ruthven; but  
what need,

If there were no shame in the thing at  
all,

Or but so little, as now so little it  
seems,

There is no haste to slay him?

*Darnley.* Nay, you carp:

'Tis thus men ever catch at my good  
words,

To turn them on their tongues, and spit  
them out

Changed and discolored. He shall  
die to-night.

*Sir George Douglas.* Assuredly.

*Darnley.* I say so,—mark, I say it,  
I that have cause: how else could it be  
sure?

But sure it is,—I say he shall not live.  
Let us go seek Lord Morton out again,

And tell him it is sworn we strike to-  
night.

How many of us have hands in it with  
me,

Who cannot with mine own hand as I  
would

Strike—it were shameful to me—  
were it not?

For mine own hand's sake.

*Sir George Douglas.* There are hands  
enough

Without the shame done to your high-  
ness' hand:

Sufficeth us we have it set to the bond

That signs him dead; nor need we  
sum their names  
Whose hands will strike, not spare, for  
their own sakes.

*Darnley.* Well, let us go to make my  
lord's faith sure  
That it shall be no later than to-night.

## SCENE V.—THE QUEEN'S CABINET.

*The QUEEN, RIZZIO, COUNTESS OF  
ARGYLE, LORD ROBERT STUART,  
ARTHUR ERSKINE, in attendance.*

*Queen.* Have I not done a queenlike  
work to-day?

I have made attain't my traitors of my-  
self;

With no man at my hand to strengthen  
me,

Have gone before, the lords of the  
articles,

And set my will upon them like a seal,  
And they for their part set on their old  
friends

The bloody seal of treason signed of  
death

And countersigned of burning igno-  
miny.

You are half fearful, you, lord chancel-  
lor,

You my good servant; but I knew their  
necks

Were made to take the impression of  
my foot,

Their wills and souls the likeness of  
mine own,

And I have used them for the things  
they are.

*Countess of Argyle.* You have been  
right royal, madam, and your  
lovers

Have joyful cause to praise you.

*Queen.* Will you say it,  
Who bear as much part in his blood  
as I

Of our dead father's giving? then I  
think

No other tongue for love of Murray  
slain

Shall sting me though mine own speak  
off his head,

Once caught up out of England; nay,  
I think

We shall get vantage of your lord's  
friend Knox

Ere many days be.

*Countess of Argyle.* Speed your maj-  
esty!

The cord were hallowed that should  
silence him.

*Queen.* Ay, though mine own hands  
twist it. To spin hemp

For such a throat, so loud and eloquent,  
Should better please me, and seem a  
queenlier thing,

Than to weave silk, and flower it with  
fine gold.

He hath a tongue to tame a tiger with,  
Fright into fierce and violent reverence  
The fearfulest earth's monsters. I do  
think

I like him better than his creed-fellows  
Whose lips are softer toward me; 'tis  
some sport

To set my wit to his, and match with  
mine

The shrewd and fiery temper of his  
spirit

For trial of true mastery: yet to-day  
He made me weep, weep mightily — by  
faith,

If there be faith in any lips of earth,  
I think to live, and laugh at his tears  
yet.

*Robert Stuart.* I would the hand were  
on him that might make

His eyes weep red, and drop out of  
their rings,

Looking on death. What reason gives  
him leave,

What right makes room for him to take  
his way

So past men's patience grown so mas-  
terful?

Had I one half word's warrant of your  
grace,

His tongue should not be long inside  
his lips.

*Queen.* I am no wife of Antony, to  
try

My needle's point against his tongue's  
edge; yet

I have cause as good as Fulvia's, though  
his speech

Ring somewhat short of Roman. Here  
is one

That has that southern honey on his lips  
Frozen as it seems up with this galling  
air,

And not a note left golden, but his  
tongue

Nipt with the chill to death as with a  
knife

That cuts us short of music.

*Countess of Argyle.* Yea, my lord,  
Why will you so discomfort the good  
hour

With tongueless sadness? We have  
cause to chide,

That, having cause to sing, find song to  
seek

And thought to find it ready.

*Rizzio.* I have been sad  
These two hours back; I know not  
what it was

So struck me out of mirth, for I was  
merry,

And knew not why.

*Queen.* Nay, if you love me, sir,  
You had reason to be merry with my  
mirth

Who am blithe to be found queen over  
my foes.

I have been glad all this good day  
thereof

Save some few minutes that my subject-  
saint

Vexed even to mere intemperance; but  
few tears

Wept out that little bitter part of day,  
And left it sweet. Have you not heard  
men say

This heaviness without a root of fear  
Goes off before some good? now should  
there be

Some new thing hard upon us that will  
make

All good hearts glad. Have you no  
song to mock

The doubt away that mocks you?

*Rizzio.* At your will.

I am something yet in tune for such a  
song

As joy makes out of sorrow, when the  
thought

Plays with false grief for joy's sake.  
Please you hear it

With such light audience as its worth  
is light?

*Queen.* Ay, such a note should fit me  
for this time;

After the tuneless toil of talking day,  
A light song lightly brings ill thoughts  
asleep.

RIZZIO (*sings*).<sup>c</sup>

*Lord Love went Maying  
Where Time was playing,*

*In light hands weighing*

*Light hearts with sad;*

*Crowned king with peasant,*

*Pale past with present,*

*Harsh hours with pleasant,*

*Good hopes with bad;*

*Nor dreamed how fleet*

*Than Time's swift metre,*

*O'er all things sweeter*

*How clothed with power,*

*The murderess maiden*

*Mistrust walks laden*

*With red fruit ruined and*

*dead white flower.*

*How close behind him*

*Ere man's faith find him,*

*How strong to bind him*

*With fears for hands,*

*Lest once beholden*

*Of man the golden*

*God's face embolden*

*All hearts and hands;*

*For if doubt were not,*

*Whose sore shafts spare not,*

*Large life would care not*

*For death's poor hour,*

*Seeing all life's season*

*By love's sweet reason*

*Made wise would seem in his  
eyes a flower.*

*Countess of Argyle.* Did you hear  
that?

*Robert Stuart.* What?

*Queen.* Nothing but sweet words.

*Countess of Argyle.* I heard a cry i'  
the wind as of one hurt.

*Arthur Erskine.* There is no wind  
up, madam.

*Queen.* Peace, I pray;

It was your own sense mocked you  
Hear it through;

There should be more, and sadder.



Countess of Argyle. Nay, I heard.

RIZZIO (*sings*).

*By Love's side flying  
As Time went crying  
Glad news and lying  
In all men's ears,  
With blind feet gliding  
She came deriding  
Their joyous tiding  
That ends in tears ;  
From Time's side sailing  
As Love sank quailing,  
Her strong wings sailing  
Made all heads cover,  
Her wings untethered,  
With fleet thoughts feathered,  
Made weak the summer and bleak  
the flower.*

*Hope found no cover  
Wherein to hover,  
And Love no lover,  
And Joy no place ;  
Till when Time creeping  
Had left him sleeping,  
Love knell down weeping  
Before her face,  
And prayed, soul-stricken,  
One flower might quicken,  
Though spring should sicken  
And storm devour ;  
She from her bosom  
Flung one sere blossom,  
Then passed him dead on the last  
dead flower.*

Robert Stuart. Hark! some one laughed there.

Queen. What does death i' the song? Can they not let love live, but must needs make His grave with singing? 'Tis the trick of song That finds no way to end else.

Rizzio. An old trick; Your merrier songs are mournfuller sometimes Than very tears are.

Queen. Do you hear noises still?

Enter DARNLEY.

Who sent you to us?

Darnley. My love to my sweet lady.

[*Kisses her.*

Queen. What feet are theirs behind you? Who stands there?

Darnley. Nay, nothing, nay, sweet, nothing.

Queen. I should know —

Judas! [*Seeing RUTHVEN in the door way.*

Darnley. I tell you —

Ruthven. Let that man come forth; He hath been here too long.

Queen. What hath he done?

Ruthven. So please your highness, how he hath done you wrong To offend the honor of your majesty, I dare not boldly say; but this I dare,

He hath done the king your husband's honor wrong

In this past all the rest, to hinder him Of the crown matrimonial, which your grace

Made his by promise. Other wrongs than this

Are more than I need speak of: for the lords,

He hath caused you banish a great part of them,

And the most chief, and at this parliament

Forefault them as for treason, that himself

Who jets here in his cap and damask gown

Might of your grace be made a lord, and tread

On men more noble: wherefore with good cause

For very love I pray your majesty Make not yourself his buckler who lacks heart

Save to pluck forth his hanger, and not strike,

But cower behind, and clasp your gown for shield.

Stand from before the window, lest perforce

I hale him hence by the hair.

Queen. Help us, our friends! Thrust out this death-faced traitor.

Arthur Erskine. Sir, give way.

Robert Stuart. Out of this presence'

*Ruthven.* Lay no hands on me ;  
Stand ; I will not be handled.

[*Draws.*

*Enter FAULDONSIDE and SIR  
GEORGE DOUGLAS.*

*Queen.* Out with him !

*Rizzio.* Save, save me, madam !

*Queen.* You are within my ward.

Stand from him, sirs ; what ! treason !

*Fauldonside.* Nay, then, thus.

[*Putting a pistol to her breast.*

*Queen.* Do him no wrong ; ye dare  
not murder me :

If he have sinned, let justice pass on him.

*Fauldonside.* This cord shall justify  
him.

*Rizzio.* Help me ! help !

*Sir George Douglas.* Let go the queen.

*Rizzio.* Help me, my mistress !

*Fauldonside.* Out !

*Queen.* Have mercy !

*Rizzio.* Mercy ! nay, I am innocent !

Save me, sweet lady !

*Queen.* Will ye slay me too ?

*Fauldonside.* Drag him away ; pluck  
his hands off her.

*Rizzio.* Help !

[*They force him out.*

*Queen.* Why does that sheath sit  
empty on your side ?

Where is the dagger ?

*Darnley.* Why, I know not where.

*Queen.* It will be known hereafter ; it  
shall be

Dear blood to some of you if David's  
here

Be spilt, my faithful servant's ; but may  
God,

My poor true friend, have mercy on  
your soul !

*Ruthven.* Here, take your wife into  
your arms, my lord,

And bid her fear not. — Madam, have  
no fear ;

We had sooner spend the blood of our  
own hearts

Than you should suffer harm ; and  
what we do

Is but your husband's bidding. Let  
them pass :

He shall be kept for this time safe  
enough

In my lord's chamber here.

*Darnley.* Ay shall he, safe —

In that same chamber where you used  
of old,

Before this fellow grew so in your grace,  
To come and seek me ; but since he so  
fell

In credit with you and familiar use,  
Even if I come to yours I find of late  
Small entertainment of you, save so  
far

As David may sit third with us, and  
set

To cards with you even till an hour or  
twain

Be gone past midnight.

*Queen.* I have heard not said

It was a duteous gentlewoman's part  
To seek her husband's chamber, but the  
man's

To seek the wife when he would aught  
with her.

*Darnley.* Why came you to my cham-  
ber, then, at first,

And ever till these few months back  
that he

Became familiar with you ? or am I  
In any part now of my body failed,  
To fall out of your grace ? or what dis-  
dain

Have you of me ? or what offence of  
mine

Makes you not use me at all times  
alike,

Seeing I am willing to do all good  
things

That may become a husband to his  
wife ?

*Queen.* My lord, of all the shame  
here done to me,

You have the fault : for which sake I  
henceforth

Shall never be your wife, nor lie with  
you,

Nor ever shall have liking of my life  
Till I may make you bear as sore a

heart

As I bear now.

*Ruthven.* Madam, for honor's sake,

Be reasonably and timely reconciled  
To your wed lord ; and with him take  
advice

Of such good friends as love you. Give  
me leave :

I am faint, and cannot stand to plead  
with you. [Sits.]

Bring me to drink, for God's sake.

*Darnley.* Give my lord

A cup of wine.

*Queen.* Is this your malady?

If ye shall slay me or my six-months'  
child

By this night's force and fear, my  
friends yet live

To wreak me of Lord Ruthven.

*Ruthven.* Be content.

*Queen.* When word goes forth how I  
am handled here —

What, am I kinless, think you, without  
help?

Mine uncles, and my brother king of  
France,

All lords of all lands living, all heads  
crowned,

Shall be one storm to shake you from  
the world;

And the Pope with me, and the Catho-  
lic king,

And all that live or of my faith or  
blood,

Shall all make way upon you.

*Ruthven.* I am too mean

That these so many and mighty should  
take aim

At one such poor man here as I am.  
See,

If you will weigh it worthily yourself,  
This is no treason; never till this night

Was so good service done you. For  
myself,

I will make answer to God's charge  
and man's

How I have served you in it.

*Queen.* What have I done?

What thing am I, that ye should use me  
thus?

O miserable and desertless that I am,  
Unkingdomed of mine honor! I that  
had

Lordship of land and natural rule of  
men

Am poorer here than any landless man,  
And weaker than all women. Pray

you, sir,

By what law's sentence am I made  
man's thrall?

What lord have I offended that can bid

My face for shame be covered in your  
sight?

Whom have I wronged? or who hath  
power on me,

What thing soever I be, to do me  
wrong?

Who hath given forth judgment on me?  
what man's right

Calls me his servant? Nay, there is no  
slave

Men strike without a sentence; and ye  
strike

Your own right in me and your name  
to death

With one self-ruinous violence.

*Ruthven.* Be at peace;

We strike but your own sickness off  
yourself,

Who cut off him to save you: the dis-  
ease

That dies of the physician leaves no  
cause

That you should curse, but thank him.

*Queen.* Thank? ay, thank —

God give me grace to give you thanks!  
be sure

Ye shall not lack my memory to it, nor  
will

To made me worthy of you. What!  
no more?

[Exit RUTHVEN.]

I thought his wrath was large enough  
for me

To find a murderous part in where to  
die,

And share it with my servant. Must I  
live?

Sir, you that make death warm between  
your lips,

And, silent, let fall murder from your  
mouth,

Have you no kiss to kill me? no love  
left

To give me poison? Why is he gone  
forth?

Hath the hot falsehood eaten through  
your tongue?

Speak.

*Darnley.* Why, I bade him look to  
those your friends

That might have risen upon us; hear  
you that?

[Noise outside]

There is a clamor of them in the courts,  
 But naught to help or hurt now. He is gone  
 To read our will out in the general ear,  
 And by proclaiming of my share with them  
 In this their new-born justice to make sure  
 Men's hearts that hearken; and lest fear shake our friends,  
 Or ill-will toward us and good-will toward you  
 Make our foes strong in malice of design,  
 To warn them of your brother's present speed,  
 Who must be here with morning: my device,  
 My trick to win all faiths that hang on him  
 And tie them to my service with his hand.  
 So have we all souls instant on our side,  
 And you no way to wound us: for by this,  
 Even with the hearing of my name given forth  
 As parcel of the bond that writes him dead,  
 Which is now cancelled with his blood-shedding,  
 This your good town is with us, and your lords  
 That stood for you with this man fled or dead,  
 If they dare strike or stand yet. What shift now?  
 What wit? what craft?  
*Queen.* My friends driven forth the court?  
 No help upon my side? The town raised too?  
*Darnley.* We had no heart nor wit to work with, ha?  
 We were your fools, and heartless?  
*Queen (at the window).* Help, all friends!  
 All good men help your queen here!  
 Ho, my lord,  
 My lord the Provost!  
*Darnley.* He is raised indeed.

*Queen.* Help for the queen! help, Provost!  
*Darnley.* Peace, I say;  
 You may fare worse: these are wild hours.  
*Voice without.* Sit down;  
 You shall be hewn in pieces if you stir,  
 And flung into the Nor'-Loch.  
*Darnley.* Nay, be wise;  
 Pluck not their madness on you.  
*Queen.* Oh, your love!  
 It shows now kindly in you.  
*Re-enter RUTHVEN.*  
*Ruthven.* All is sped;  
 The lords of the adverse party being roused up  
 And hearing with what large applause of men  
 The reading of our sentence in the bond  
 And names subscribed, and proclamation made  
 Of Murray even at heel of the act returned,  
 Was of all mouths made welcome, in fierce haste  
 Forth of their lodging fled confusedly  
 With no more tarriance than to bring their lives  
 Clear of the press and cry of peril at hand,  
 And their folk round them in a beaten rank  
 Hurled all together; so no man being left,—  
 The earls of Huntley and of Bothwell gone,—  
 To lift a hand against the general peace,  
 The townsmen; of their surety satisfied,  
 Brake up with acclamation of content  
 For the good comfort done them in this deed.  
*Queen.* What have ye made my servant?  
*Ruthven.* A dead dog.  
 His turn is done of service.  
*Darnley.* Yea, stark dead?  
*Ruthven.* They stabbed him through and through with edge on edge  
 Till all their points met in him; there he lies,

Cast forth in the outer lodge, a piteous  
knave

And poor enough to look on.

*Queen.* I am content.

Now must I study how to be revenged.

*Darnley.* Nay, think not that way:  
make it not so much;

Be warned, and wiser.

*Queen.* Must I not, my lord?

You have taught me worthier wisdom  
than of words;

And I will lay it up against my heart.

## ACT II.—BOTHWELL.

*Time, from March 10, 1566, to February  
9, 1567.*

### SCENE I.—THE QUEEN'S CHAMBER.

*Enter DARNLEY and ARTHUR ERSKINE,  
severally.*

*Darnley.* Is the queen risen?

*Arthur Erskine.* She has not slept,  
my lord.

They say she is in some peril of mis-  
hap

Through the sore handling of this vio-  
lent night,—

Mortal mishap it may be.

*Darnley.* Ay! who say it?

What should be mortal to her? she  
was not sick,

Nor near enough her danger.

*Arthur Erskine.* I am no leech:

Haply the fright of murderous menaces  
And noise of swords is held medicinal;

The savor of a slain friend comforta-  
ble,

And his blood balm: if these be health-  
ful things,

You have given her weakness physic.

*Enter the QUEEN.*

*Queen.* Ah, our lord!

Comes he with death about him? I  
could take it

As readily as condemned men take re-  
prieve,

For of a life much deadlier than itself  
Death would reprieve me.

*Darnley.* I am come to bring you  
help.

*Queen.* You are ever helpful, even at  
all needs good,

For stroke or speech, good always. I  
am weak;

Let me have execution swift or soft;

Here is no strength to suffer.

*Darnley.* Sit, and rest.

*Queen.* Nay, I can stand; or should  
I kneel, my plight

Were one with my new fortune. You  
may go:

I have but private penitence to do,  
And privy grace to get me; for indeed  
I were stark mad to hope by any  
mean

For public pardon; I am condemned,  
and have

No hope but of such pity as dead men  
gain

Who living found no grace in the great  
world.

[*Exit ARTHUR ERSKINE.*

Now, what death, sir?

*Darnley.* You think not as you speak;  
Your thought has other business than  
your tongue,

And death has no part in it.

*Queen.* I am assured

I must not live.

*Darnley.* Whose doom has passed on  
you?

Not mine; I would not have you go in  
fear:

You may be safe as I am.

*Queen.* As you, my lord?

I think I may, and yet may chance but  
find

A little day of surety.

*Darnley.* By mine honor,

My word and place of sovereignty is  
pledged

For your fair usage; they that unseat  
you

Shall find no king in me.

*Queen.* Nay, I think not.

*Darnley.* As they would have me  
friend and firm to them,

I told them, they should use you roy-  
ally,

No state or privilege plucked off you;  
nay,

I have no thought by stolen strength of  
yours

To increase myself out of your weak-  
ness; only

I would have royalty remade in you,  
And in your honor an honorable part;  
See the state in you and the name shine  
fair,

And in your praise mine own praise  
perfected

As parcel of it, and in your good fame  
Mine own fame stablished; as from  
your repute

Shaken or sullied, my name too takes  
soil,

And in your insufficiency I wax weak,  
So would I have the grace I gain and  
strength

Redound to you-ward; who being queen  
indeed,

I cannot seem unkingly.

*Queen.* 'Tis well thought.

It was my curse to know not in good  
time

How high a sense and royal of itself  
I had in you so near me.

*Darnley.* That your thought,

Misdeeming me worth no more weight  
with you,

Hath brought us to this breach. Now  
lies it in you

To make all whole; these lords that in  
my name

And for mine ends and with my leave  
rose up

To rid out peril and scandal from us all,  
And make red-handed witness of them-  
selves

Against the shame and scathe of roy-  
alty,

Are not the traitors of your thought,  
but keep

Faith flawless toward the personal em-  
pire here

And spirit of rule, dishonoring not the  
law

By forceful chastisement of secret  
breach

That did it bloodless violence; this  
blood shed

Must heal indeed the privy hurt of law  
And all but death of kingship, in such  
pass

Wasted and wounded; but no hand of  
theirs

Would stab through you your holy  
majesty,

Cut off all life of law, with yours, and  
make

Authority die with you one visible  
death;

No thought put out your office, though  
yourself

Were found come short thereof, to leave  
this land

A kingless kingdom; wherefore with  
good-will

I counsel you make peace with their  
designs

And friends with mine intent, which for  
us both

Is but all power and honor.

*Queen.* So you see it;

But were your eyes no flatterers of  
themselves,

The sight were other: yet for my poor  
part

I cannot care though power be out of  
sight,

Save that mine honor visibly is marred  
By wreck in you of either; for in-  
deed

Nor power nor honor shall hang on to  
you

If you must wear them but at will of  
men,

And by strange leave of chance au-  
thority

Reign or not reign. But all concerns  
me not:

Rule as you may, be lord of that you  
can,

I can contend not with your lords, or  
you,

Their master-servant. Pardon me, I  
am weak,

A feeble simple woman, without stay,  
And witless of your worth; yet I might  
fear

Their policies were no good friends of  
yours,

Could we see all. Men's hearts are  
manifold,

Not made of glass like women's such  
as mine,

At once transpicious and perceptible  
To eyes like yours that look their faults  
through; yet

Perchance you see more faults than lie  
 there, spots  
 That are not natural to us; or make  
 too much  
 Of our light thoughts and weakness;  
 yet, your pardon:  
 You have reason in it, being more wise  
 than we,  
 And stronger in your regency of soul;  
 It may be you do well to bear me hard,  
 And I do ill who think to counsel you;  
 'Tis no great matter; for in no great  
 while  
 My weakness will be medicine to itself,  
 And end as I do: no default of mine  
 But must by dying be curable; and  
 God knows  
 I little think to live.  
*Darnley.* Why, have no fear;  
 You see I stand 'twixt you and all such  
 threat.  
*Queen.* Nay, I see not; but though  
 you be my friend,  
 How far soever you stand out for me,  
 There is one threat that no man's help  
 in the world  
 Can bring to nothing: here it speaks  
 in me  
 Mortal; I know the word inevitable  
 That without breath or sound has called  
 me dead;  
 I would not plead against it.  
*Darnley.* Nay, you dream;  
 You jest or dream.  
*Queen.* I do not: I am dead.  
 What! have you slain in jest, or in a  
 dream  
 Have I seen death, and felt him in my  
 flesh,  
 Felt my blood turn, and my veins fill  
 with death,  
 And the pang pass and leave me as I  
 am,  
 Dead? for my state is pangless, and my  
 pain  
 Perished: I have no life to bring forth  
 pain,  
 Or painful fruit of life; I think in pity  
 God willed one stroke of sheer mortal-  
 ity  
 Should kill all possible pain and fear  
 in me,  
 All after-chance of ill; I cannot die

Twice, and can live not with my dead  
 self here  
 Violently slain. I am sure I have no  
 child.  
 I would but pray, if I had breath to pray,  
 For mere shame's sake and pity's, I  
 might have  
 My women with me; and was not born  
 to want  
 What our most poor bare natural  
 womanhood  
 Seeks not in vain of meanest people:  
 more  
 I seek of no man's mercy.  
*Darnley.* You shall have it;  
 But this is fear and shaken heart in  
 you—  
 I trust not very danger.  
*Queen.* I tnat know  
 Must bear the peril and the sense alike,  
 And patiently can bear, so but I have  
 Hope of your heart made soft towards  
 me; sir,  
 Howe'er I have been untoward and  
 confident  
 In my blind state and sovereign folly,  
 now  
 God knows me if I have not need of  
 love  
 Who have so much of pardon.  
*Darnley.* Is this sure,  
 Such instant and such perilous press of  
 time,—  
 Or but your thought it may be?  
*Queen.* Nay, my thought!  
 Is it my thought I am stricken to my  
 death?  
 Is it my thought you have no pity of  
 me?  
 Is it my thought I had looked at other  
 time  
 For other joy of childbed, and such  
 pangs  
 As bring glad women honor? not this  
 death  
 That sunders me from fruit of mine own  
 years  
 And youth and comfort, and mere natu-  
 ral hope,  
 And love that looks on many a worse  
 than me?  
 Is it my thought that for small fault  
 of mine,

And little lack of love and duteousness,  
I am brought to shame and mortal  
chastisement?

Is it my thought love is not dead in me  
For all this chastening? and my peni-  
tence

Wherewith I weep on my least wrong-  
doings past,

And faith wherewith I look for pardon  
yet,

For grace of you—is all this but my  
thought?

*Darnley.* By heaven, I will not have  
you wronged of them.

You shall live safe and honorably.

*Queen.* My lord,

Who lives in such times honorably or  
safe,

When change of will and violence  
mutable

Makes all state loose and rootless?  
Think you, men

Who have dipped their hands in this  
red act with you

Will, as they wash them, so wash off  
their hearts

The burning spot of raw malignity

And fire and hunger of ambition made  
So proud and full of meat, so rank in  
strength,

So grossly fed and fattened with fresh  
blood?

Is it for love of your name more than  
mine

These men that fought against my love  
of you,

And made rebellious wars on my free  
choice,

Smite now my very head and crown of  
state

Is this night's hot and present stroke?  
Be sure

It is the throne, the name, the power in  
us,

That here is stabbed and bleeds from  
such a wound

As draws out life of you no less than  
me

If you be part of majesty indeed.

Yea, howsoe'er you be now borne in  
hand,

They will but use you as an axe to  
smite,

A brand to set on fire the house of  
state

And in the doing be burnt up of itself.

Why, do but think with now more  
temperate blood

What are they that have helped you to  
this deed?

What friends to you? what faith toward  
royalty,

And what good-will and surety of sound  
mind,

Have you found in them? or how put  
in proof?

What bond have their loves given you  
to confirm

Their hearts toward you stable? Nay,  
if this

Be all my pledge for honor and safe  
life,

They slide upon a slippery ground in-  
deed.

*Darnley.* The pledge is mine, not  
theirs: you have my word;

No warrant of their giving, but of me.

What ails you to go yet in fear of them?  
*Queen.* Alas! I know not whom I  
need yet fear.

What men were they who helped you  
to this deed?

Yet it avails not me to know. I think  
The fierce first root of violence was  
not set

Of you nor of your uncles, though I  
know

They of your mother's kinship love me  
not;

But though their hearts, albeit one  
blood with yours,

Be bitter toward me, yet being of your  
blood

I would fain think them not so hard;  
and yet

It was no gentle sight I had of them,  
Nor usage; I can see their eyes burn  
still,

And their brows meet against me.  
Such a sight

Again might wind all suffering up in  
me,

And give it full release.

*Darnley.* It was their plot;  
That is, for love of me they felt the  
offence



Eat at their hearts. I did not set them  
 on;  
 But wrath and shame's suspicion for  
 my sake  
 Edged and envenomed; then your poli-  
 cies too,  
 And injuries done the popular weal, the  
 state  
 So far mishandled, — this was all men's  
 talk,  
 Mine uncle's chiefly, Ruthven's, and his  
 word  
 Was hot in the ear of Maitland and  
 Argyle,  
 Showing the wrong done and the further  
 fear,  
 More wide in issue and large in likeli-  
 hood  
 Than all wrong done already; nay, and  
 plain;  
 You would have given the state up to  
 strange hands,  
 And for strange ends; no dreaming  
 doubt of mine,  
 But very vision, proof: they held it so;  
 And, by my faith, I with them.  
*Queen.* Morton too?  
 Was not his wit part of your wisdom?  
*Darnley.* Ay;  
 Why, all heads highest, all subtlest,  
 could not choose  
 But be one judgment and one counsel  
 here,  
 In such a biting need; yea, common  
 fools,  
 Poor senseless knaves might see it.  
*Queen.* Yea, visibly.  
 The sharpest wits and hands put armor  
 on  
 To go forth strong against me; little  
 doubt  
 But fools and ignorance and the com-  
 mon mouth,  
 The very dust o' the street, the dross  
 of man,  
 Must needs take fire with blowing of  
 such wind,  
 And stir at such men's passage: their  
 mere feet  
 Moving would raise me up such ene-  
 mies  
 From the bare ground. Ruthven —  
 you said his breath

Was first to heat men's hearing with  
 strange words  
 And set their hearts on edge; and at  
 his touch  
 The quick-eyed Maitland and loose-  
 souled Argyle,  
 Keen to catch fire or fear from other  
 men's;  
 And the full-counselled Morton — by  
 my life  
 (That's but a little oath now) I think  
 strange  
 To be at all alive, and have such men  
 So sore unfriends and secret, and their  
 wits  
 So sharp to set upon so slight a thing.  
 How grew this up amongst you?  
*Darnley.* Why, you see it;  
 No need to set men on; their swords  
 were made  
 Of your own follies; yet have comfort;  
 I,  
 That was so little made of, so less  
 worth,  
 In your late judgment, will alone be  
 guard  
 And buckler of you; come what coun-  
 sel may,  
 It shall not hold against you with my  
 will,  
 And cannot work without.  
*Queen.* Nay, that were hard.  
 I thank you; but what counsel will they  
 take,  
 Think you, which way to deal with me?  
 My soul  
 Is womanly distempered and distract  
 With doubts of them: no fear of your  
 good mind,  
 Of your firm love and fruitful; but,  
 alas!  
 I am no strong man as you my guard,  
 and ache  
 With new faint fear of their fresh  
 angers: then,  
 This watch on me, my ways and rooms  
 barred up,  
 No help nor issue, shakes and sickens  
 me  
 With pangs for every stroke in the  
 hour, that says  
 I am so much more time prisoner.  
*Darnley.* For your guard,

It must be later taken off; the rest  
 I will find mean of help for. They are  
 now  
 In council with your brother, new  
 brought home  
 With seal from me of pardon to reverse  
 Your fresh and rash attainder, in my  
 name  
 Now cancelled and made strengthless;  
 and I think  
 There must three judgments be debated  
 of, —  
 Whether, for hurt done to the common  
 state  
 And treason to succession, you must  
 bear  
 Penance of death, or life's imprison-  
 ment,  
 Which fear not I will have them put in  
 form,  
 Nor see it pass upon you; the third  
 mean  
 Is for some season that you be in ward  
 In Stirling Castle, till your warrant  
 given  
 And free consent to this late justice  
 done,  
 And to the new faith stablished in the  
 realm  
 By right and rule of law, religiously,  
 And to mine own investiture as king.  
 Now for no fear at all or doubt of them,  
 But very love and good desire toward  
 you,  
 I will go plead your part, and take them  
 sign  
 Of seasonable submission; with which  
 word  
 I doubt not but to reconcile their  
 thoughts,  
 And bring their loves back bounden to  
 your feet.  
*Queen.* Neither do I doubt. Let  
 them draw this bond,  
 I will set hand to what they will of me.  
 To seal you king needs now no grace  
 of mine,  
 Hardly my leave; and for their faith,  
 it has  
 Too firm a foot for my poor power to  
 shake,  
 Had I the will now molten in me strong  
 As ere the fire of fierce necessity

Had made it soft and edgeless; for  
 their deed,  
 Say, if they hold my word of pardon  
 worth  
 More than mere scorn, I am bound to  
 thank them, being  
 Masters of me and of my wrath or will,  
 And needing show me no such courtesy;  
 And if it please them take mine oath  
 and hand  
 To sign them safe, and mark them from  
 all charge  
 Sackless and scatheless, let them take  
 it; alas!  
 I thought well they might rather take  
 my life,  
 And yet I think well they would take  
 indeed  
 But for your safeguard of me; would  
 they not  
 Slay me? nay, by your honor tell me —  
 nay,  
 I know they would, had I no guard in  
 you,  
 Slay me defenceless.  
*Darnley.* Have no fear: I have  
 sworn  
 They shall not touch you roughly.  
*Queen.* Swear again,  
 That I may quite rest confident; and  
 yet  
 Swear not; I would not seem to hold  
 you fast  
 To your own peril; better were I dead  
 Than you fell in their danger for my  
 sake.  
 Ah! and I know not, I may hardly think  
 I have you surely on my side.  
*Darnley.* By heaven,  
 You shall want nothing of my help or  
 love.  
*Queen.* How had you heart to go so  
 near my death?  
*Darnley.* I had no mind to hurt you.  
*Queen.* None? well, none —  
 I will not think it; yet I was nigh dead.  
 You saw my very death here at my  
 breast  
 Where your child is not yet — I did  
 not think  
 To feel instead there murder's iron lips  
 For his soft suckling mouth.  
*Darnley.* Come, think not of it

*Queen.* I had not time to think of it indeed.  
 But I think now you will have hardly power  
 To match your will to save me, if their will  
 Shall yet be mortal to me: then I saw  
 You had not power, or had not will; and now  
 I know not which you have yet.  
*Darnley.* They shall find  
 I have power enough and will to turn them.  
*Queen.* Well —  
 I lean, then, on your hand. If you were mine,  
 Though they were subtler and more strong in hate,  
 They should not hold me here in peril.  
*Darnley.* How?  
*Queen.* No matter, so their guard were less on me.  
*Darnley.* You would take flight, then?  
*Queen.* Ay, with you for wing  
 To lift me out of prison.  
*Darnley.* Whither?  
*Queen.* Nay,  
 I am but the fool of your keen flattering wit,  
 Who let you see my little hope that lives  
 To see my some day sunnier: yet God knows  
 Without light of you it were lustreless.  
 I can look forth not, or heave up my hand,  
 But with your help to stay me.  
*Darnley.* Surely no,  
 As you stand now, you cannot; and I were  
 A faithless fool to mine own fortune, if I loosed you out of sight for wantonness,  
 Who have you now in hand: but for all this  
 It may be flight were no such unwise mean  
 To assure our free and mutual power on them,  
 And show them simply subject; as it is,

They have some show of hold on us which makes  
 Our reign and freedom questionable and slight:  
 I see some reason in it.  
*Queen.* Why, do you think  
 That you being here their gaoler in their eye  
 Can be their king too, or not rather they  
 Lords both of gaol and warder? they will hold you  
 But as the minister of their power on me,  
 Of no more office than a doorkeeper  
 Nor honor than their headsman; but fled hence  
 You are very king indeed, by your own hand,  
 Lord of the life you give and majesty,  
 By no man's furtherance and no grant of theirs  
 Made pensioner and proxy for their reign  
 Who should bear rule and you the semblance, worn  
 As mask of all their faces, glove of hands,  
 And hollow trumpet blown of all their mouths,  
 But mine and all their free and sovereign king.  
*Darnley.* Why, so I say; they must be borne in hand.  
 Look you, we must not set their fears on edge;  
 They shall suspect not: I will take them word,  
 And bring them to you for your bond.  
*Queen.* Meantime,  
 I will but walk an hour here hand in hand  
 With my good brother; let me speak to him  
 While they shall draw the schedule.  
*Darnley.* I will bid him  
 Attend you, and your women; but be sure  
 You take him not to counsel: he is wise,  
 And full of malice; let him not be part  
 Of our new mind.

*Queen.* He shall not.

*Darnley.* But you smile :  
What should he do to know it ?

*Queen.* He shall not know.

*Darnley.* Well, you shall see him,  
and they take off your guard ;  
I will make sure : but when and by  
what means

Think you to fly ?

*Queen.* To-night.

*Darnley.* God help your wit !  
To-night ?

*Queen.* Before the change of watch ;  
I have said :  
Weak as I stand, and burdened, and  
soul-spent,  
I will be hence. Mistrust me not for  
strength ;

My soul shall make my body like itself,  
A servant armed to wait upon my  
thought

And page my purpose as its minister  
Till the end be held in hand. This  
guard removed,

I will find ways out to win forth to-  
night,  
Fear not, and servants. Go now to  
the lords

With all submissive mild report of me,  
And bring them to receive my word  
and hand

To confirmation of what bond they  
please

For pardon and possession of their  
will ;

And for your kingship — sir, assure  
yourself

That in few hours it shall be seen and  
sure

You shall need never seek their loves  
again,

Or hands to help you to it, or tongues  
to cry,

Nor be called king by will of any man,  
Nor lord by choice of any friend on  
earth.

*Darnley.* Nay, I would heed no  
voices.

*Queen.* And be sure  
You shall not build your power on  
loves of theirs,

Nor live by their election. Go, and  
thrive :

Think how my faith and hope and love  
in you  
Find all their rest and stronghold, and  
on them  
Set up your trust and standard of your  
strength.

[*Exit DARNLEY.*

So much is done ; go thou, then, first to  
death ;

For from this hour I have thee. — Heart,  
lie still,

Till I may make those mightier traitors  
mine

That shall be swords for me to smite  
him with,

And then be free as fire.

*Enter MARY BEATON.*

Hast thou no news ?

*Mary Beaton.* The lord of Bothwell  
lies at secret ward

To bear you forth of peril here by  
force ;

He has gathered up his men beyond  
the walls

To break this guard upon you when  
you will,

If at your suit it shall not be with-  
drawn ;

Here is his token brought me privily  
For your own hand.

*Queen.* No, in my heart it is,  
My love and lord, thy token ; this poor  
heart,

That, ere mine ear is smitten with thy  
name,

Hears it, and turns to springing fire.  
What thanks

Would I not rather pay than these of  
words

For this thy loving speed ? Yet send  
him these,

And bid him, I would fain say come  
but wait

Till I have tried my traitors ; if my  
tongue

Win them to slack their hold on me  
to-night,

We may speed surelier ; if their hands  
hold fast,

Then let him smite and slay and set me  
free.

I would have all their heads here in  
my lap,

tell him, not one or two slain suddenly,  
 That their blood shed may seem not spilt by chance,  
 Nor lost and won in hazard of affray,  
 But sacrificed by judgment, and their names  
 Who would have made of royalty in me  
 Ruin, and marred the general name of king,  
 Shall with their lives be perfectly put out,  
 Royally ruined; wherefore if I may  
 I will steal forth with subtle help of words,  
 Not break their bonds with violence; in which hope  
 Bid him watch close.

[Exit MARY BEATON.

And when his watch is done  
 It will be morning, and the sun shall break  
 As fire for them that had their hour by night  
 And light for wrath to see them and to slay.

Re-enter ARTHUR ERSKINE, introducing MURRAY.

*Arthur Erskine.* Madam, my lord of Murray.

*Queen.* Ah! my brother,  
 Had you been here, they had not used me thus.

*Murray.* I am sorry, madam, such things should be done  
 As even the strain of sharp necessity  
 Can make but fierce and bitter.

*Queen.* Is this all?  
 Nay, it was necessary then and just,  
 Or I must seem and strive to think it was,

If you say so. But in my present sight,  
 Now when a feather's or a flower's weight borne  
 Might make life stoop within me, sense  
 break down,

All strong capacities of nature fail;  
 Now when the hardest heart with iron bound

Might turn to very mercy for my sake,  
 Here in mine eye to do my friend to death—

For howsoe'er ye hold him, yet being dead

I will not say but he was friend of mine

Who lies now dead and slaughtered,— nay, by heaven,

I will not cast that name of friend away  
 Because the man my friend is slain for me, —

I say, to kill him at my knee, to stain  
 An unborn child's brow with his murdered blood,

To affray with sanguine hands, shake with sheer blows,

The weak and holy warders of the womb,

The reverence and remembrance of us all

For that which bare us hidden before birth

And after was called mother, — oh, this deed,

This, though all law were cast out of the world,

All grace forgotten, — this, you will not say

But they did ill who did it. What! you weep?

These tears are made of our dear father's blood,

Who left in each of us such part of him  
 As must yearn each toward other, and divide

At need their mutual suffering: I knew well

I need not fear to find not in your heart  
 Some natural seed of comfort.

*Murray.* That I weep  
 I take no shame, to see you; but mine eyes

Receive more comfort than their tears can give

To see, for all this rash and ruthless night,

Yet you stand up unwounded, and your heart

Is left you to put spirit in your speech  
 Not like a sick man's. If you have no hurt,

No hurt is done, though they did violently;

For this man's life was as a present death

To the well-being and peace of all your state,

Which, by the force of justice done on him,

Stands now in surety. I would pray you make

Your profit of your pain herein, being wise,

As you well may; for this was not the man

That you saw slain, but the man's policy,

Stabbed through with all their daggers; and you see

How it lies dead and outcast. I beseech you,

For your own love and honor of high rule,

Set not your heart toward it to raise it up

That men would bury, lest the graveyard reek

Of dead men's craft and strange men's creeds brought back

Prove poison to you.

*Queen.* I will do what men will.

I must not die, then?

*Murray.* There are those would have it

For scandal and offence cast on the realm

By shame done to the popular commonwealth

In majesty made shameful; as they say

Through you it hath been, and your dealings known

With this dead friend: some that would leave you life

Spake of life spent in sharp imprisonment

Unto your death's day: but by mine award

You are quit of either danger; you must live

But under guard till you by word approve

This man's despatch for necessary and just,

Submit yourself to call your husband king,

And own the true faith rooted in this realm

For lawful and for sovereign here of rule.

So much you shall.

*Queen.* Nay, I will more than this.

I will seal now what you will have me seal,

What bond soever: let them come to me,

Who wrought this murderous matter but last night,

That I may sign their pardon with my tongue

Ere they can crave or threaten. Let them come:

So shall my perfect purpose be more plain

Freely in all things to submit myself—I have your word already—to their will:

Ay, even with all my new submissive heart,

As else I cannot choose; for what am I, That I should think much to submit myself?

*Murray.* You shall do wisely to keep faith with them,

And make your word your action's measure: so

Shall hearts now loosened from you be made fast,

And love reclaimed wait on you loyally Through all your land's length. See, the lords are come.

*Enter DARNLEY, MORTON, and RUTHVEN.*

*Queen.* Good morrow, sirs; ye gave me no good night,

Yet are you welcome even as life or death

Were welcome to me, coming with your will:

For without love of my good lords my life

Were scarce worth holding out against their will;

But, if it please them I should die not yet,

For their love's sake I give it welcome. Sirs,

I have heard what terms ye lay upon mine head,

And bow beneath them willingly, being sure

It is but meet I should submit myself,  
 It is but fit mere majesty bow down  
 To take the burden by good men and  
     wise  
 Imposed upon it; nor shall this be  
     hard:  
 For what ye did so suddenly and swift,  
 If there be power of pardon in me, here  
 With as good heart even as ye did the  
     deed  
 Do I forgive it; nay, I should give you  
     thanks  
 That ye vouchsafe of me to be forgiven;  
 For what am I among you? Let the  
     bond  
 Be drawn between us presently to sign,  
 While for an hour's space I will walk  
     and wait  
 Here with my noble brother, hand in  
     hand,  
 And heart reposed on heart, eyes an-  
     swering eyes,  
 With pure plain faith: for what now in  
     the world  
 Should lies or dumb dissembling profit  
     me,  
 Though I were natural liar? as I do  
     trust  
 Ye shall not find me, but most faithful;  
     yet,  
 If I were falser than the foam of the  
     sea,  
 And wilfuller than wind, what should I  
     do,  
 Being yours, to mock you and myself,  
     and lie  
 Against mine own life? for ye see me,  
     sirs,  
 How I stand bare between you, without  
     strength,  
 At your mere mercy, with no friend on  
     earth  
 If ye will be mine unfriends; and I  
     think  
 To live but by your grace and leave,  
     who might,  
 If ye were minded, speak me out of life  
 Or sign me dead with smiling; I were  
     mad  
 To play with lies, who feel your hands  
     on me  
 So heavy as they are, and have no hope  
 Save to be pitied and believed of you.

I pray you, then, have faith in me, who  
     live  
 In your faith only, and, if it fail me here,  
 Must die the lowliest death in all the  
     world,  
 And no man's hand to help me.  
*Darnley.* She says truth:  
 There is no hand.  
*Morton.* Madam, though faith stand  
     fast,  
 Yet fear hath something here to say of  
     you,  
 And wisdom to remember. We must  
     think  
 That what is done in service of yourself  
 You cannot hold good service when it  
     comes  
 So masked in blood, so vizarded like  
     death,  
 As this of ours doth; and that yet in  
     time  
 You may find mean to wreak your  
     wrath on us  
 For having strangely served you, and  
     perforce  
 Given desperation and the dangerous  
     time  
 So desperate a deliverance from de-  
     spair.  
 We have saved you in this service done  
     the state,  
 Who must have else been broken in the  
     breach  
 Of the state's order and the popular  
     law,  
 By this man living violently misused;  
 But cannot hope yet for such thanks of  
     you  
 As even the deed deserves whose fierce  
     despatch  
 Has shaken you with thunder, and its  
     flame  
 Still makes your eyes blind to the good  
     work done,  
 And sharp need felt of it: so must this  
     be,  
 And so must we take heed lest, being  
     yet blind,  
 We give you scope and mean to hurt  
     yourself.  
*Queen.* I did not think the thing was  
     yet alive  
 That could fear me.

*Darnley.* Nay, look you, she says  
right:

We have no room to fear her.

*Queen.* Lo, my lords,

How dangerous and how strong a thing  
it is

That threatens here your state and  
safety! see,

It is no less than woman, and unarmed,  
Half dead, unfriended, hard on child-  
bearing,

Naked of arms or means: it were not  
wise

To leave unguarded, without spies or  
swords

About her path, so great a danger; yea,  
Wise men would rather fear her force  
too much,

Than good men show compassion. Do  
your wills:

I am well content to know you wise,  
and so

To bear what hard or lighter weight ye  
please:

How sore soever, God knows, I believe  
It shall not long afflict me.

*Murray.* In my mind,

It now shall less distract the general  
eye

With apprehension of strange times  
and strife,

To see the ways again made clear, and  
gates

Not crowded up with guard.

*Darnley.* Why, so I said.

*Ruthven.* So I say not. Bear with  
me though I seem

Less confident or free of heart than  
men,

Whose minds are gentle as their names,  
should be

In things of common care: what hurt  
may come

By fault of us, we know not, but we  
know

It is no private peril; if we err,  
Not we nor ours must only ache for  
it,

But the whole popular heart of this  
great land

Must bleed and break for our false  
friendship shown,

And confident remission of our cause

And very duty toward her, through  
mere wish

To be called gentle toward her ene-  
mies.

*Queen.* I am her enemy, then: where  
lies my strength?

What field? what weapon? how shall  
we make war,

Take truce and break it, with what  
equal face

Stand brow to brow for battle? By  
this hand,

I knew not yet how strong it was, nor  
worth

How many hands of swordsmen; were  
this true,

I might wax proud to be so terrible,  
Seeing in such great men's eyes so great

a fear,  
And only mine own fearful face therein

As in a mirror shadowed.

*Darnley.* 'Tis mere truth:

We should be shamed to seem in fear  
of her.

Yea, made a mockery in men's eyes and  
mouths

For base and blind misgiving.

*Ruthven.* You, my lords

And equals with me in the proof of  
years,

In the age of counsel and experience  
borne

Of common service done our natural  
state,

Shall best pass judgment, if in hate or  
fear

I speak for mine own ends or enmities  
To turn your hearts from honor. For

the queen,  
As she shall be toward God, so I toward  
her

Would be fast friend and servant; but  
wherein

She is not friend with heaven nor with  
the state,

I were no friend to serve her, nor to say  
There were no danger and no sin to

serve.  
Ye must all think I think not to live

long;  
And being so signed of sickness for my  
grave

With such a mortal seal, I speak alive



As one being dead that speaketh : if ye  
lose

The grace of God here won by your  
own hands,

The power ye have to serve him, and  
the effect

Of his good hour, through negligence  
of will,

Or pride or pity, ye shall see the state  
Break from your hands, and, for one

devil cast out,  
Seven entered in its body. Sirs, take  
heed :

The least thing lightly overlooked or  
done

May undo all things wrought. Keep  
fast your guards ;

By the king's counsel if they be with-  
drawn,

Upon his head that bade them go shall  
rest

What bloodshed ever follows : yet in  
time

Think nothing weak that is not with us ;  
each

May have some sting or weapon of it-  
self

That till sloth feel it sees not.

*Queen.* A wise rule :

So should the wary wolf pen up the  
lambs,

The falcon set good guard upon the  
wren,

For fear of teeth or talons.

*Murray.* We will give

To the king's hand the bond for yours  
to sign :

Meantime all ease and reverence shall  
you have,

And freedom for your household folk to  
serve

As best your need may bid them.

*Queen.* Sirs, farewell.

I will not pray you do but what ye will,  
Which shall seem wisely to me. — Let  
me have

Word of their instant sentence. [*Aside*  
to DARNLEY.]

*Darnley (aside).* With all speed.

[*Exeunt* DARNLEY, MURRAY, MORTON,  
and RUTHVEN.]

*Queen.* Where are my servants  
Standen and Traquair ?

*Arthur Erskine.* At hand to serve  
your highness.

*Queen.* Ah, to serve !

My highness is brought low, too low to  
claim

Service of men ; if I may find but love  
Or only pity of any, this shall be

All utmost service I desire of them.  
I have but my sorrows to my subjects

left,  
And these rebellious ; yet I keep what  
state

And rule I may upon them. Tell those  
twain

I pray their patience lend me but the  
time

To hear what I would have them, and  
to choose

If they will do it for pity.

*Arthur Erskine.* Think them here,  
And your will done already. [*Exit.*

*Queen.* Yea, my will !  
What knowest thou may my will be ?

By this light,  
I feel a heat and hurry of the heart

That burns like joy ; my blood is light  
and quick,

And my breath comes triumphantly as  
his

That has long labored for a moun-  
tainous goal,

And sets fast foot on the utmost cliff  
of all.

If ere the race be run my spirit be glad,  
What when it puts the palm of peril

on,  
And breathes clear air, and conquers ?

Nay, I think  
The doubt itself and danger are as food

To strengthen and bright wine to  
quicken me,

And lift my heart up higher than my  
need,

Though that be high upon me.

*Re-enter* ERSKINE with TRAQUAIR  
and STANDEN.

Now, my friends,  
Ye come unlike to courtiers, come to  
serve

Me most unlike a queen : shall I think  
yet

I have some poor part in your memories  
safe,

And you some care of what I was, and  
 thought  
 How I fare now? Shall I take up my  
 hope,  
 That was cast down into the pit of  
 death,  
 To keep the name God gave me, and  
 the seal  
 That signs me royal, by your loves and  
 faiths  
 Recrowned and reinstated? Say but no,  
 Or say but naught, this hope of mine  
 and heart  
 Are things as dead as yesterday: my  
 cause  
 Lies in your lips, to comfort or con-  
 found,  
 As ye see reason. Yet, as power is  
 yours,  
 So let remembrance in you be for light  
 To see the face of the time by; so let  
 faith,  
 Let noble pity and love be part of you,  
 To make you mindful what a cause it is  
 That ye must put in judgment, and  
 what life  
 For fame or shame to you through all  
 time born  
 Ensues upon your sentence; for ye  
 choose  
 If ye will match my dangers with your  
 faiths,  
 And help me helpless with your hearts,  
 who lie  
 By grief and fear made heartless; or  
 lend hand  
 To make my weakness weaker, and  
 break down  
 My broken wall of sovereignty; which  
 now  
 We wot were no sore labor.  
*Standen.* Let him die  
 As heartless toward the grace of God,  
 who hath  
 No heart in him to give its blood for  
 yours!  
*Traquair.* So say we all your ser-  
 vants.  
*Queen.* Did I know it?  
 Methinks I knew, when I bade send for  
 you,  
 Ye should so say. Ah, friends! I had  
 no fear

But I should find me friends in this  
 fierce world,  
 Or I had died unfriended. Shall I  
 thank you  
 For being the true men and the kind  
 ye are,  
 Or take your service thankless, since I  
 thought  
 Ye could not else, being young and of  
 your kinds,  
 But needs must be my help? ye have  
 not hearts  
 To strike, but at men weaponed; ye  
 would not  
 Lay hard hand on a woman weak with  
 child,  
 A sick sad woman that was no man's  
 queen  
 Of all that stood against her; yet her son,  
 The unborn thing that pleads again  
 with you  
 As it could plead not with them, this  
 dumb voice,  
 This sightless life and sinless, was their  
 king's,  
 If ever they would let it come to life.  
 Lo, here their aim was; here the weap-  
 ons went,  
 That should have stabbed to death the  
 race of kings,  
 And cut their stem down to the root;  
 here, here  
 The pistol's mouth that bruised my  
 breast, the hand  
 That struck athwart my shoulder, found  
 their mark,  
 Made here their point to shoot at: in  
 my womb  
 By them the bud of empire should have  
 died,  
 That yet by you may live, and yet give  
 thanks  
 For flower and fruit to them that saved  
 the seed.  
*Standen.* They shall die first.  
*Traquair.* Command us what next  
 way  
 There is to serve you: though the way  
 were fire,  
 We would be through it.  
*Queen.* To-night, then, at first watch  
 I purpose with the man's help — nay,  
 what name

Shall his be now? king, husband, or,  
 God help,  
 King's father? — with the man that you  
 called king  
 As I called husband, to win forth of  
 bonds  
 By the close covered passage under-  
 ground  
 That by strange turns and strait blind  
 working ways  
 Winds up into the sovereign cemetery  
 Whose dust is of my fathers; there-  
 without  
 Wait you with horse; and when you see  
 us rise  
 Out of the hollow earth among the  
 dead,  
 Be ready to receive and bear us thence.  
 Some two hours' haste will speed us to  
 Dunbar,  
 Where friends lie close, and whence  
 with sudden strength  
 I trust to turn on these good lords  
 again.  
 Do this for such poor love's sake as  
 your queen's,  
 And if there be thanks worthy in the  
 world,  
 Them shall she give; not silver, sirs,  
 nor gold,  
 Nor the coined guerdon that is cast on  
 churls  
 To coin them into service; but a heart,  
 If not worth love, yet loving, and a  
 faith  
 That will die last of all that dies in me,  
 And last of all remembrances foregone  
 Let your names go. God speed you,  
 and farewell.

SCENE II. — RUINS OF THE ABBEY OF  
 HOLYROOD.

*Enter* ARTHUR ERSKINE, TRAQUAIR,  
 and STANDEN.

*Standen.* It must be time; the moon  
 is sick and slow  
 That should by this be higher.  
*Arthur Erskine.* It is your eye  
 Whose sight is slow as sickness; for  
 the moon  
 Is seasonable and full: see where it  
 burns

Between the bare boughs and the  
 broken tombs  
 Like a white flower whose leaves were  
 fire: the night  
 Is deep and sharp wherein it hangs,  
 and heaven  
 Gives not the wind a cloud to carry,  
 nor  
 Fails one faint star of all that fill their  
 count  
 To lend our flight its comfort; we shall  
 have  
 Good time of heaven and earth.  
*Traquair.* How shall the steeds  
 Be shared among us?  
*Arthur Erskine.* If she keep her  
 mind,  
 My English gelding best shall bear the  
 queen,  
 And him the Naples courser. Hark!  
 they come.  
*Standen.* It was a word said of the  
 wind to hear  
 What earth or death would answer.  
 These dead stones  
 Are full of hollow noises, though the  
 vault  
 Give tongue to no man's footfall: when  
 they come,  
 It will speak louder. Lo, how straight  
 that star  
 Stands over where her face must break  
 from earth  
 As it hath broken! it was not there  
 before,  
 But ere she rise is risen. I would not  
 give  
 The third part of this night between us  
 shared  
 For all the days that happiest men  
 may live,  
 Though I should die by morning.  
*Traquair.* Till she come,  
 I cannot choose but with my fears take  
 thought,  
 Though all be after her sweet manner  
 done  
 And by her wise direction, what strange  
 ways  
 And what foul peril with so faint a  
 guard  
 Must of so tender feet be overpast  
 Ere she win to us.

*Arthur Erskine.* All these with laughing lips  
Shall she pass through; the strength and spring of soul  
That set her on this danger will sustain  
Those feet till all her will and way be won.

Her spirit is to her body as a staff,  
And her bright fiery heart the traveller's lamp  
That makes all shadow clear as its own light.

*Enter from the vaults the QUEEN and DARNLEY.*

*Queen.* Here come the wind and stars at once on us;  
How good is this good air of that full heaven  
That drives the fume back of the sepulchres,  
And blows the grave away! Have no more fear;  
These are no dead men.

*Darnley.* Nay, I fear no dead;  
Nothing I fear, of quick or dead, but God.

Shall I not go before you?

*Queen.* Not a foot.  
See you, my friends, what valiant hearts are here,  
My lord's and mine, who hardly have crept forth,  
In God's fear only, through the charnel-house,  
Among the bones and skulls of ancient kings  
That thought not shame to stand for stumbling-stones  
In their poor daughter's way, whose heart had failed,  
But that his hardier heart held up her feet,  
Who even if winds blew did not shrink nor shake  
For fear of aught but God. The night is kind,  
And these March blasts make merry with the moon  
That laughs on our free flight. Where stand your steeds?

*Arthur Erskine.* Madam, hard by in shadow of the stones;  
Please you, this way.

*Queen.* I will to horse with you.

*Darnley.* No, but with me.

*Queen.* It is not my good will.  
Ride you alone, and safer.— Friend, your arm.

SCENE III.—MURRAY'S LODGING IN HOLYROOD.

*Enter MURRAY, MORTON, and RUTHVEN.*

*Morton.* There is no present help: the violent speed  
Of these fierce days has run our chances down.

It is found certain she comes back to-day;

Soon as their flight drew bridle at Dunbar,

Yet hot from horse, she sends for Bothwell in,

With all his border thievery, red-foot knives,

The hardest hinds of Liddesdale; next him

His new bride's brother, Huntley, more in care

To win the land back than revenge the blood

His father lost for treason; after these Caithness with Athol, and the queen's chief strengths,

The earl marshal and the archbishop; in few days

Eight thousand swords to wait on that sweet hand

Was worth so little manhood; then Argyle,

Who should have been a sea-wall on our side

Against the foam of all their faction, he,

Struck to the heart with spite and sharp despair

Through proof late made of English faith,—as you,

My lord of Murray, felt it when ye twain

Sought help, and found false heart there,—casts himself

Over upon her side; with him two more Her last year's rebels, Rothes and Glencairn,

And pardon sealed for all that rose with  
 them  
 Who were not of our counsel in this  
 death.  
 Thus fare we without help or hope of  
 these,  
 And from the castle here of Edinburgh  
 The hot Lord Erskine arms in our  
 offence  
 His mounted guns, making the queen  
 more strong  
 Than had her flight won first its dark-  
 ling walls,  
 And for a free camp in the general  
 field  
 Set up her strength within the fortress  
 here —  
 Which serves her now for outwork,  
 while behind  
 The whole force raised comes trooping  
 to her hand.  
 In this deep strait that our own hands  
 have dug  
 And our own follies channelled, to let  
 in  
 Storm on our sails and shipwreck on  
 our hopes,  
 My counsel is that whoso may stand  
 fast  
 Should here in harbor bide his better  
 day,  
 And we make land who may not : you,  
 my lord,  
 As by James Melville she solicits you,  
 May honorably assure your peace with  
 her,  
 Being speckless in her sight of this  
 man's blood ;  
 We that dipped open hand in it must  
 hence,  
 And watch the way of the wind and set  
 of storm  
 Till the sea sink again.  
*Ruthven.* Sir, so say I ;  
 You serve not us a whit nor change our  
 chance  
 By tarrying on our side. Let no man  
 fly  
 For our deed's sake, but we that made  
 our deed  
 The witness for us not to be gainsaid  
 By foe of ours or friend we have on  
 earth.

It was well done ; what else was done,  
 and ill,  
 We must now bear the stroke of, and  
 devise  
 Some healing mean in season. This is  
 sure,  
 That faith or friendship shall have no  
 long life  
 Where friendship is ingrafted on breach  
 of faith ;  
 But shame, despite, division, and dis-  
 trust  
 Shall eat the heart out of their amity,  
 And hate unreconcile their heartless  
 hands  
 Whom envious hope made fast, or cun-  
 ning fear.  
 This cannot be but nigh ; and ye that  
 live  
 Shall see more sure for this blind hour's  
 default,  
 And hold more fast, and watch more  
 heedfully,  
 The new chance given, for this chance  
 cast away.  
 I shall not see it, how near soe'er ; and  
 yet  
 The day that I shall die in banishment  
 Is not much nigher than must their  
 doom's day be  
 Whose trust is in the triumph of their  
 hour.  
 Mine is now hard on end ; but yours  
 shall last,  
 I doubt not, till its service be all done,  
 And comfort given our people. Take  
 the Lairds  
 Grange and Pittarrow with you to the  
 queen.  
 Ye shall find peace and opportunity  
 With present welcome as for proffered  
 love ;  
 Make swift agreement with her ; this  
 shall be  
 The surest staff that hope may take in  
 hand.  
 Farewell.  
*Murray.* I would not say it, if ye  
 not knew  
 My faith departs not with me from  
 your side,  
 Nor leaves the heart's bond broken of  
 our loves ;

But in this trust, though loath, I take  
farewell,

To give you welcome ere the year be  
dead.

*Ruthven.* Me shall you not, nor see  
my face again,

Who ere the year die must be dead;  
mine eyes

Shall see the land no more that gave  
them light,

But fade among strange faces; yet, if  
aught

I have served her, I should less be loath  
to leave

This earth God made my mother.

*Murray.* Then farewell,  
As should his heart who fares in such  
wise forth

To take death's hand in exile. I must  
fare,

Ill now or well I know not; but I deem  
I have as much as you of banishment,  
Who bear about me but the thought of  
yours.

#### SCENE IV.— HOLYROOD.

*The QUEEN and SIR JAMES MELVILLE.*

*Queen.* Am I come back to be con-  
trolled again,

And of men meaner? must I hold my  
peace

Or set my face to please him? Nay,  
you see

How much miscounselled is he, strayed  
how far

From all men's hope and honor, and to  
me

How strange and thankless, whom in  
self-despite

You will me yet to foster: I would live  
Rather the thrall of any hind on earth.

*Melville.* I would but have your wis-  
dom hide somewhere

The sharpness of your spirit, whose  
edge of wrath

There is no man but now sees mani-  
fest;

As there is none who knows him that  
hath cause

To love or honor; yet great pity it is

To see what nobler natural mind he  
had,

And the first goodness in him so put  
out

By cursed counsel of his mother's kin,  
The bastard Douglas, and such ill  
friends else

As most are unfriends: but this fire in  
you

Who chose him, being so young, of  
your own will,

Against the mind of many, for your  
lord,

Shall rather burn yourself than purge  
his mood,

And the open passion of your heart and  
hate

Hearten in him the hate he bears not  
you,

But them that part you from him.  
Twice, you know,—

Or now my tongue were less for love's  
sake bold,—

Twice hath it pleased your highness  
charge me speak

When time or need might seem for  
counsel: then

That thus you charged me, now such  
need is come,

Forgive that I forget not.

*Queen.* I might well,  
Did you forget, forgive not; but I know

Your love forgot yet never any charge  
That faith to me laid on it; though I

think

I never bade you counsel me to bear  
More than a queen might worthily, nor

sought

To be advised against all natural will,  
That with mine honor now is joined to

speak

And bid me bear no more with him,  
since both

Take part against my patience. For  
his hate,

Henceforth shall men more covet it  
than fear;

My foot is on its head, that even to-  
day

Shall yield its last poor power of poison  
up,

And live to no man's danger till it die.

*Enter DARNLEY and MURRAY.*

Welcome, dear brother and my worthy  
lord,

Who shall this day by your own word  
be clear

In all men's eyes that had ill thoughts  
of you.

Brother, to-day my lord shall purge  
himself,

By present oath before our councillors,  
Of any part in David's murdered blood,  
And stand as honorable in sight of all  
Whose thought so wronged him as in  
mine he doth

Who ever held him such as they shall  
now

*Murray.* Must he swear this?

*Darnley.* Who says I shall not swear?

*Queen.* He has given his faith to  
swear so much to-day,

And who so shameless or so bold alive  
As dare doubt that?

*Murray.* Not I: in God's name, no;  
No more than any other.

*Darnley.* Nay then, well:

I am not angry.

*Queen.* 'Tis the noblest mood

That takes least hold on anger those  
faint hearts

That hold least fire are fain to show it  
first;

The man that knows himself most hon-  
orable

Fears least or doubts if others hold  
him so;

But he that has small honor in himself  
Is quick to doubt what men may deem

of him,

And thence most swift in anger as in  
fear

Of men's imagined judgments; praised  
be God,

Our lord is none such. Is the deed not  
drawn

That gives into our servant Bothwell's  
hand

The forfeit lands of Maitland for his  
own

That by his former fault stand for-  
feited?

*Murray.* Is it your purpose he shall  
have those lands?

*Queen.* It is my very purpose.

*Murray.* I grieve at it.

*Queen.* Grieve or be glad, it stands  
my purpose yet.

We should be gone to meet our coun-  
cillors;

My heart thinks long till it shall know  
my lord

Held of the world as noble as of me.

*Darnley.* It is not time.

*Queen.* No, but much more than time  
Come with me, brother

[*Exeunt* QUEEN and MURRAY

*Melville.* I am sorry for your grace.

*Darnley.* You must not think I know  
not all this while

That she doth mock me.

*Melville.* Nay, her mood may change.

*Darnley.* Never for me. I had been  
much better dead

Than cast off thus, who cast mine own  
friends off

And knew not for whose sake. She  
hath slain the men

Who kept that night the gates while he  
was slain;

I would she had rather taken too my  
blood

Than put my life to shame: yet I may  
live

To put that off upon her; had I friends,  
Shame should go back from me to her,

who thinks

To lay it on her wedded lord, and  
laugh;

As I may one day laugh yet. Hear  
you news

Of Morton and mine uncle?

*Melville.* They are fled;

I hear but this, not whither.

*Darnley.* As they brewed,

So let them drink; the hands were  
none of mine

That mixed that cup to them; so much  
I swear,

And may so much with honor. Yet  
would God

I had not chosen to lose their loves for  
hers,

And found so cold her favor! Scarce  
escaped,

Scarce out of bonds, half breathless  
yet with flight,

No mind was in her of my help, my  
love,

My hand that brake her prison: for all  
this,

My kin forsaken, mine own wrongs  
and griefs  
Forgotten, mine own head imperilled,  
mine  
For hers that I delivered, and perchance  
To leave within their danger had done  
well,  
No thought or thanks I get of her; and  
these  
That, had I stood by them, might stand  
by me  
When I shall need, may mock me for  
her fool,  
And curse me for their traitor. Yet I  
think,  
Were I once clear of her as now of  
these,  
Please God, to make mine own strength  
by myself,  
Being both ways free; I know not well  
yet how,  
But I will take mine own part yet, or  
die. [Exeunt.]

## SCENE V.—A STREET.

*Enter TWO BURGESSES.*

*First Burgess.* What is this news  
that flies so in the dark  
Like a night-bird whereof we know it  
is,  
But of what wing we know not?  
*Second Burgess.* This that comes  
From the exiled lords in England, to  
make bare  
The face of Darnley's falsehood, with  
what lips  
He swore his deed away, and damned  
himself?  
They had no sooner knowledge of such  
shame,  
Than word was sent of him through all  
the land,  
Large witness of his full complicity  
And conscience with them of the work  
to be  
For which they groan in barren banish-  
ment,  
While he crawls here before the scorn-  
ful queen,  
And has betrayed the blood of his  
allies  
To the axe's edge of unjust judgment.

*First Burgess.* One  
By treason of his tongue already slain  
Now speaks of him with breathless  
mouth to God;  
And Maitland and two more lie under  
doom  
Through but his witness: yet for all  
this shame  
It seems he has won small guerdon  
save the shame,  
But hath his treason for his treason's fee;  
And this more comfort, to behold the  
man  
That by his lips, and nobler hands than  
his,  
Was done to righteous death, and  
thrust in earth  
Before the main door of this Abbey  
church,  
Unearthed again, and nobly re-interred  
Hard by the grave's edge of Queen  
Magdalen,  
That men may judge how near he grew  
alive  
To the queen's side yet living; where  
instead  
A worthier stay now in her brother  
stands  
For her false lord to look upon and  
loathe  
No less than David, and much more  
to fear,  
Whom with that David he laid trains  
to slay  
Aforetime, and again made vaunt but  
now  
In the queen's sight to slay him; or so  
herself  
Gave word to the earl, and willed him  
make demand  
Of the king's own false fearful mouth;  
but he,  
Whom thus perchance she sought to  
make the sword  
To pierce her husband, modestly be-  
spoke  
Before her face this caitiff like a friend,  
And was put off with faint excuse; and  
yet,  
Heart-wrung to see him stand, or any  
man,  
Fast in her favor, like one sick with  
grief



The king flies forth to Glasgow, where  
 apart  
 His father's head is hidden; and there  
 as here  
 He sits not in men's sight now royally,  
 But with some six or eight goes up and  
 down  
 Even where he lists, and none takes  
 note of him;  
 While the miscounselled queen, grown  
 high in mind,  
 Holds privy commerce with the brood  
 o' the Pope  
 Whose plots corrupt the northward  
 English air,  
 And with the murderous Irish, to put  
 out  
 The live light of our God from sea  
 to sea  
 With insurrection of the fires of hell  
 And smoke of slaughter; meantime she  
 reclaims  
 Of the English queen, for prisoners to  
 her hand,  
 The death-doomed lords in exile; and  
 men say  
 They find scant countenance of the  
 southern court;  
 Yet they think not she will deliver them.  
*Second Burgess.* One is there hath  
 found sure deliverance;  
 No chain of man's can mark him pris-  
 oner more,  
 Nor whence he rests can any banish  
 him;  
 Ruthven is dead.  
*First Burgess.* God hath his friend,  
 then, safe;  
 For God's friend he was ever; and hath  
 died  
 Most fortunately, seeing not what we  
 live  
 Too soon to see.  
*Second Burgess.* He was a nobler man  
 Than his own name was noble: no  
 Scot born  
 More true to the old love of his natural  
 land,  
 Nor stouter-hearted on the gospel side  
 Of all that stood to serve it. Yet have  
 these  
 As valiant servants; Morton, though  
 cast out,

Lives secret yet in England, whence the  
 queen  
 Dares not, I think, for shame's sake,  
 yield him up  
 To this queen's bloody judgment, or  
 for fear  
 And hostile heart she will not. We  
 shall know  
 Shortly what upshot God will bring of  
 all;  
 Whate'er this be, there will be none  
 again  
 That shall do Darnley good.  
*First Burgess.* I saw him swear  
 That day before the council; he was pale  
 As one half drunken, stammering as in  
 wrath,  
 With insolent forehead and irresolute  
 eyes,  
 Between false fear and shameful hardi-  
 hood,  
 With frontless face that lied against it-  
 self,  
 And trembling lips that were not yet  
 abashed  
 For all their trembling.  
*Second Burgess.* Ay, good cause was  
 there  
 To shake him to the soul, having cast  
 off  
 Friendship and faith of good men, yet  
 being still  
 Signed with their enemies' blood too  
 plain and broad  
 To gain the good-will of unrighteous-  
 ness.  
 When his day comes that men are  
 weary of him,  
 God shall strike home.  
*First Burgess.* Then should that stroke  
 be swift;  
 For evil and good alike are weary of  
 him.

## SCENE VI. — CASTLE OF ALLOA.

MURRAY and DARNLEY.

*Darnley.* Shall I not see her? but if  
 I see her not  
 I will be wroken of you that shut me  
 out,  
 By God I will. What! are ye not com-  
 bined,

You, my false-blooded brother, demi-prince,  
 And Bothwell, and the trustless fool  
 Argyle,  
 With her to unmake me? I shall foil  
 you though,  
 Yea, were all three made each a triple  
 man  
 With thrice your heart and wit.

*Murray.* You strike too high,  
 And shear but air in sunder: there's  
 none yet  
 That wills you so much evil as yourself,  
 Would you but think it. Turn your  
 wrath on me,  
 It cannot wound or fright out of its  
 peace

A soul that answers not your hate, nor  
 works  
 By night or light against you.

*Darnley.* Swear me that,  
 And if a devil there be, I am rid of you  
 Whom he will gripe at once, and hale to  
 hell.

You took not word to Melville from  
 my wife,  
 Of warning with rebuke for his past  
 pains

To reconcile us, and with charge to be  
 No more familiar with me for her  
 sake;

You were not of her counsel to lie in  
 At Stirling, whence she fled from sight  
 of me,

Who following hither was again cast  
 off,

And till our child was born in Edin-  
 burgh

Might scarce have sight of her, and  
 may not now

When, scarce a month delivered, she  
 comes back

To take by sea and land her pleasure  
 here

Of hunt or sail among the firths and  
 hills

In such fair fellowship as casts out  
 mine.

It was not you that knew this, and  
 approved:

I pray you, swear it.

*Murray.* You are lesser than a child,  
 That, being as simple, yet by innocence

Exceeds you naturally. What cause  
 have I

Or power to wrong you? what good  
 thing of yours

Should I desire to strip from you, and  
 wear,

What gold or grace to gird myself  
 withal,

And stand up clad in thievish orna-  
 ment

To take your place thrust out? Con-  
 spiracy

Should have some gain for warrant of  
 itself,

With vantage of some purpose; none  
 lays wait

To slay or steal save what may profit  
 him;

So sit you safe enough.

*Darnley.* I shall not see her?

*Murray.* If you will be well coun-  
 selled, no: her mood

Is hard and keener since your child  
 was born,

And she, new-risen from childbed,  
 hither came

To taste the savor and sweetness of the  
 sea,

I think, with no mind you should follow  
 her;

Nor am myself, howbeit you hold me  
 hers,

And of one counsel to put down your  
 hopes,

More near her favor; one man's eye  
 alone

Sees her face favorable, one only ear  
 Hears her speak soft; if he be friend

of mine,  
 You know as I know.

*Darnley.* Why, ye are reconciled;  
 I have heard what care she had to

appease both parts,  
 When you before her face had braved

him, saying,  
 Ere he reft Maitland's forfeit land and

state  
 Some score as honorable as he should

die,  
 And she had cast herself across your

wrath  
 With reconciling passion; ay, my

lord,

Take note we are not so dull of ear or  
 brain  
 But we hear word of you, and under-  
 stand  
 The traitors that ye all are, all, to  
 me,  
 The false heart and the lying lips that  
 serve  
 The murderous meaning of your will,  
 and hers  
 The first and worst. What! will ye  
 have my life?  
 Is it my helpless blood that she would  
 take  
 To serve for christening-water to her  
 child,  
 And for the font no gift of English  
 gold  
 Though bright and hollow and void as  
 English love,  
 But the strait coffin, the vile shell of  
 death,  
 That hides and bears me graveward?  
 but I live,  
 To save myself and to revenge I live,  
 And will not die for all you.

*Enter the QUEEN and BOTHWELL.*

*Queen.* What is this  
 That makes such wrathful or such wo-  
 ful war  
 Even on our ears, and here? We bade  
 you not  
 Come brawl before us like a groom,  
 and break  
 Our breath of peace with cries of con-  
 tumely.  
 Here is not room enough for rioters'  
 threats  
 To ring through and return; in Edin-  
 burgh  
 You have leave to brawl and wail and  
 swear and cry,  
 Feed where you list, and love; here I  
 would rest,  
 With thus much leave yet by your  
 gracious grant,  
 That I may somehow sit apart, and  
 think  
 What man I have to husband.  
*Darnley.* I will go:  
 I would I had not come between your  
 eyes  
 Nor now nor ever.

*Queen.* Then they had never learnt  
 What makes or makes not man worth  
 looking on.

*Darnley.* Am I not worth your eye?

*Queen.* I pray, go back:  
 I would not say what you are worth or  
 no.

*Darnley.* I am yet worth two bas-  
 tards; and this man,  
 If he shall do me less than right, by  
 heaven,

Shall wear the proof upon him.

*Murray.* Sir, your words  
 Are as swords drawn of drunkards'  
 hands, which first  
 Feel their edge bite; me can they make  
 not shrink,

You they may pierce, and slay your  
 own good name,

If any man be that gives ear to you.

*Darnley.* You will not fight with me?

*Queen.* What! in our face?

Hath fear gone after shame?

*Murray.* Let him pass hence:

He hath said truth once; we shall not  
 fight.

*Queen.* I charge you  
 Make straight atonement; else, though  
 shame be dead,

I will find means to raise up fear alive.

*Darnley.* Nay, I spake hot and  
 hastily: my lord,

You know I bear no bitter heart toward  
 you:

I am more of quick tongue than of evil  
 will.

*Murray.* Sir, so I hold you.

*Darnley.* So you do but right.

Nor will I stay to chafe your majesty,  
 That has all power to bid me to and  
 fro

Who yet was called your lord once of  
 the priest,

And am no lord, but servant. [*Exit.*]

*Queen.* Said you, once?

Not once, but twice, he hath spoken  
 truth to-day.

Yet sits it strange upon his lips.

*Murray.* I would

He had come not hither, or you not  
 bidden him back.

*Queen.* What! should he stay? Fair  
 brother, wot you well,

I had rather touch in the dark a serpent's flesh,  
 And with its body and breath confound mine own,  
 Than with his breath and body. Never more,  
 By Mary Virgin, while these limbs are mine  
 And these my living lips, never will I  
 Pollute myself with him; by kiss nor touch  
 Shall ever he defile me. Nay, too, see,  
 (You have not seen) what privacies he hath  
 With what strange friends; here have I to my hand  
 Letters of his to Philip and the Pope,  
 That they should know I am slacker toward the faith  
 Than Rome would have me, or Spain; he swears I am cold,  
 I have cast off care (God wot) to serve the Church,  
 And he it is, my lord, being strong in faith,  
 Expounds mine unfaith to them.

*Bothwell.* Hath he sworn  
 To sleep for their sakes in a naked grave?  
 If this were blown among the popular folk,  
 Scant time there were to sew his shroud,  
 I ween,  
 Ere earth were shed upon him.

*Murray.* Ay, but, sir,  
 They must not know it; it were not well they knew;  
 Nor shall it be put forth among them.

*Bothwell.* No!  
 It shall not?

*Murray.* By my will it shall not be.  
*Bothwell.* His will! and shall not! Is it queen, or king,  
 That holds the rod of rule in Scotland here?

Madam, what says your sometime majesty  
 Of such a kingly will? since, for your own,  
 It has no power, it shall not fight with his,  
 Shall not have way, nor shall not be at all,  
 Except it swim with his will.

*Murray.* This is naught.

*Bothwell.* Yea truly, naught shall be this will of yours, —  
 This potent will that shall not tread us down;  
 Yea, what you will or will not, all is naught,  
 Naught as your name, or title to bear rule  
 Within the realm possessed more royally.

*Murray.* 'Tis not a score as big-voiced men as this  
 Shall make me weak with wagging of their tongues,  
 That I should loose what lies into my hand.

Madam, what faith I bear you and goodwill,  
 If that you know not, let the time and proof,  
 Not mine own lips, be witness: in this realm  
 I have some power to serve you, by no craft

Unjustly purchased nor by force of hand  
 Won masterfully; and for God's love and yours

That which I may I will do to keep fair  
 In the open eye of all men your good name

And power, which if that name be blown against

With windy whispers of ill-minded folk,  
 Or such as see your marriage-bed lie cold,

And know not wherefore, dies out of your hand,

And is no more forever. Therefore is it

I would not the worst cause of strife you have

Were opened to the people: for himself,  
 You know if ever love between us were  
 Since first I fell under your stroke of wrath

For his sole sake, whose match then made with you

I would betimes have broken, but being made

Would not now see rent shamefully in twain

That men should speak you wrong.

*Queen.* You are honorable;  
 But yet the whole worst cause you know  
 not of, —  
 That even his father Lennox writes me  
 here  
 Letters to put the charge thereof away,  
 And clear himself of fellowship there-  
 in,  
 Assuring his own honesty, albeit  
 His word is worthless with his son my  
 lord,  
 And his name held not as a father's  
 name.  
 This letter will I lay before the lords,  
 That they may see what manner of  
 cause he hath  
 To plead against us with what likeli-  
 hood,  
 When his own father shall forswear  
 his cause.  
 I am assured he hath set his lewd light  
 mind, —  
 Out of what fear I know not, or what  
 shame, —  
 To flee forth of the kingdom, and take  
 ship  
 For the islands westward of that south-  
 ern cape  
 Where the out-thrust heel of England  
 cleaves the sea;  
 But God knows how to live there, if by  
 spoil  
 Or what base mean of life: only thus  
 much  
 In parley with the French ambassador  
 He hath avowed, and wept to tell of  
 wrongs  
 That, as he swears, have driven him  
 down to this.

*Murray.* He is a fool, and vile: yet  
 let not him  
 Be the more dangerous to you even for  
 this,  
 That he is vile and foolish; there  
 should be  
 Wise means to curb and chain the fool  
 in him  
 Without the scandal of the full-mouthed  
 world.

*Queen.* Such have I sought; and pres-  
 ently I think  
 To have him brought again in Edin-  
 burgh

Before the lords in council, even those  
 men  
 Who stood in arms against him with  
 yourself  
 When first there grew debate upon our  
 match  
 (Which I could pray now with too tardy  
 tongue  
 That God had given you force to break  
 indeed),  
 And were of counsel with him afterward  
 In David's bloodshed, and betrayed of  
 him  
 Into mine hand again for perfect fear,  
 Fear and false heart; even before these,  
 I say,  
 Whose threefold memory of him so  
 must knit  
 Their hearts to his, there shall he plead,  
 and say  
 If he have aught against me blame-  
 worthy,  
 Or what he would: so shall he be dis-  
 played,  
 And we in the eyes of all men justified  
 That simply deal with him and honor-  
 ably,  
 Not as by cunning or imperious hand,  
 But plain as with an equal.

*Bothwell.* By my head,  
 Your counsel, madam, is more than  
 man's poor wit.

*Murray.* It may do well: would all  
 were well indeed!

I see no clearer way than this of yours  
 Nor of more peaceful promise. I will  
 go  
 To bid my friends together of the lords  
 Who will be counselled of me, and to  
 show  
 Your purpose righteous: so I take my  
 leave.

[*Exit*  
*Queen.* Is not that light red oversea?  
*Bothwell.* Blood-red.  
*Queen.* The wind has fallen: but  
 there the clouds come up.  
 We shall not sail to-day.  
*Bothwell.* No: here will be  
 No woman's weather.  
*Queen.* Yet I had in mind  
 Either to sail or drive the deer to-day.  
 I fear not so much rainfall or sea-drift

That I should care to house and hide  
my head.

I never loved the windless weather, nor  
The dead face of the water in the sun:  
I had rather the live wave leapt under me,  
And fits of foam struck light on the  
dark air,

And the sea's kiss were keen upon my  
lip

And bold as love's and bitter; then my  
soul

Is a wave too that springs against the  
light,

And beats and bursts with one great  
strain of joy

As the sea breaking. You said well;  
this light

Is like shed blood spilt here by drops  
and there,

That overflows the red brims of the  
cloud,

And stains the moving water: yet the  
waves

Pass, and the spilt light of the broken  
sun

Rests not upon them but a minute's  
space;

No longer should a deed, methinks,  
once done,

Endure upon the life of memory  
To stain the days thereafter with re-  
morse,

And mar the better seasons.

*Bothwell.* So think I.

*Queen.* If I were man, I would be  
man like you.

*Bothwell.* What then?

*Queen.* And, being so loved as you of  
me,

I would make use of love, and in good  
time

Put the scythe to it, and reap; it should  
not rot

As corn ungarnered, it should bring  
forth bread

And fruit of life to strengthen me: but,  
mark,

Who would eat bread must earn bread:  
would you be king?

*Bothwell.* Nay, but servant ever to  
my queen.

*Queen.* Let us go forth; the evening  
will be fair.

SCENE VII.—EDINBURGH: THE PARLIAMENT-HOUSE.

*The QUEEN seated in state; near her DU CROC and MURRAY; DARNLEY in front, as at his arraignment; on the one side the Lords of the Congregation; on the other those of the Queen's party, BOTHWELL, HUNTLEY, CAITHNESS, ATHOL, and the ARCHBISHOP of ST. ANDREW'S.*

*Queen.* My lords, ye hear by his own  
word of hand

How fair and loyally our father writes,  
To purge his name that had indeed no

soil  
Of any blame to us-ward; though he

have  
No power upon our wedded lord his

son  
To heal his heart's disease of discon-  
tent:

Which, for myself, before God's face  
and yours

I do protest I know not what thing  
done

Hath in my lord begotten or brought  
forth,

Nor of what ill he should complain in  
me.

Nay, here in very faith and humble-  
ness

I turn me to him, and with clasped  
hands beseech

That he would speak even all his mind  
of me,

In what thing ever I have given my  
lord offence,

And if before him I stand blameworthy  
Would lay my blame for burden on my

head  
In this high presence; which to bear

shall be  
At once for penance and instruction to

me,  
Who know not yet my lightest fault by

name.

*Ochiltree.* So would we all be certi-  
fied of you,

Sir, that your cause may stand forth  
visibly,

And men take cognizance of it who  
see

Nor root nor fruit now of your discontent;

We pray you, then, make answer to the queen.

*Du Croc.* My lord, you have held me for a friend, and laid

A friend's trust on me; for that honor's sake

For which I am bounden to you, give me now

But leave to entreat you in all faith of heart

Dishonor not yourself nor this great queen

By speech or silence with a show of shame;

Let it be seen shame hath no portion here,

But honor only and reconciled remorse That pours its bitter balm into the wound

Of love somewhile divided from itself, And makes it whole: I pray you, be it so now.

*Queen.* An honorable petition, my good lord,

And one that comes reverberate from my heart.

*Darnley.* I will not stand the question. Are ye set

To bait me like a bonds slave? Sirs, I think

There is no worthier man of you than I, Whom ye would chide and bait and mock: howbeit,

Ye shall not wring out of my smitten lips,

As from a child's ye scourge till he speak truth,

One word I would not; rather being thus used

I will go forth the free man that I came, No nobler, but as noble. For your grace,

I have stood too near you now to fall behind,

And stand far back with vassal hat plucked off

To bow at bidding; therefore with free soul

For a long time I take farewell and go, Commending you to God; and if, as seems,

I was or naught or grievous in your eye,

It shall not take offence this many a day

At this that here offends it. So I have done:

Enough said is said well.

*Bothwell (aside to the Queen).* I never saw

Such heart yet in the fool. Madam, speak now;

I wot he hath made a beard or two of them

Nod favorably.

*Queen.* What should I say? not I.

*Bothwell.* Speak to the ambassador; bid him take heed

This feather fly not shipward, and be blown

Out of our hand; speak to him.

*Queen.* Have no such fear.

He will not fly past arm's length; the French lord

Will hold him safe unbidden. Look, they talk.

*Bothwell.* And yet I would he had spoken not so high.

I did not think but he would bend, and mourn

Like a boy beaten.

*Queen.* With what sorrow of heart, My lords, we have heard such strange and harsh reply

To our good words and meaning, none of you

But must be as ourself to know it well But since nor kindness nor humble speech

Nor honest heart of love can so prevail Against the soul of such inveteracy,

But wilful mind will make itself more hard

Than modesty and womanhood are soft Or gentleness can speak it fair, we have not

One other tear to weep thereon for shame.

So without answer, yea, no word vouchsafed,

As all ye witness, no complaint, no cause,

No reason shown, but all put off in wrath, —

I would not say, ourself in you, my lords,  
 Mocked with defiance, — it were but a scorn  
 To hold our session further. Thus in grief  
 Will we fare hence, and take of you farewell,  
 Being southward bounden, as ye know, to hear  
 At Jedburgh what complaint of wrong there is  
 Between our own folk and the bordering men,  
 Whose wardens of the English side have wrought us  
 Fresh wrong but late; and our good warden here  
 Shall go before us to prepare our way.

SCENE VIII. — HERMITAGE CASTLE.

*The QUEEN and BOTHWELL.*

*Bothwell.* I did not think you could have rid so fast.

*Queen.* There is no love in you to lift your heart,

Nor heart to lift the fleshly weight, and bear

Forward: I struck my love even as a spur

Into the tired side of my horse, and made it

Leap like a flame that eats up all its way  
 Till I were here.

*Bothwell.* Why came you not before?

*Queen.* What I am I now too slow?

*Bothwell.* Ay, though you rode

Beyond the sun's speed, yea, the race of time

That runs down all men born. Forgive it me

That I was wroth and weary for your love,

Here lying alone, out of your eyes; I could not

But chafe and curse, sending my spirit forth

From this maimed flesh yet halting with its wound

To move about you like a thought, and bring me

Word of your works and ways.

*Queen.* I could not come.

*Bothwell.* Was there so much work worthier to be done

Than this, to give love and to take again

Thus? but for my part, of all things in the world

I hold this best, to love you; and I think

God never made your like for man to love.

*Queen.* You are my soldier; but these silk-soft words

Become your lips as well as mine, when love

Rekindles them; how good it is to have A man to love you! here is man indeed,

Not fool or boy, to make love's face ashamed,

To abash love's heart, and turn to bitterness

The sweet blood-current in it. O my fair lord!

How fairer is this warrior face, and eyes

With the iron light of battle in them left

As the after-fire of sunset left in heaven  
 When the sun sinks, than any fool's face made

Of smiles and courtly color! Now I feel

As I were man too, and had part myself  
 In your great strength; being one with you as I,

How should not I be strong? It is your deed,

By grace of you and influence, sir, it is  
 That I fear nothing; how should I lift up

Mine eyes to your eyes, O my light o' the war,

And dare be fearful? yours but looked upon,

Though mine were timorous as a dove's affrayed,

For very shame would give them heart, and fire

To meet the eyes of danger. What were I

To have your love, and love you, and yet be



No more than women are whose name  
is fear

And their hearts bloodless, — I, who  
am part of you,

That have your love for heart's blood?  
Shall I think

The blood you gave me fighting for  
my sake

Has entered in my veins, and grown in  
me

To fill me with you? O my lord, my  
king,

Love me! I think you cannot love me  
yet,

That have done naught nor borne for  
love of you;

But by the eye's light of all-judging  
God,

That if I lie shall burn my soul in hell,  
There is not in this fierce world any

thing,  
Scorn, agony, stripes, bonds, fears, woes,

deep shame,  
Kingdomless ruin, but with open hands,

With joyous bosom open as to love,  
Yea, with soul thankful for its great

delight  
And life on fire with joy, for this love's

sake  
I would embrace and take it to my

heart.  
*Bothwell.* Why, there should need

not this to love you well;  
What should you have to bear for me,

my queen,  
Or how should I more love you? Nay,

sweet, peace,  
Let not your passion break you; your

breast burns,  
Your very lips taste bitter with your

tears.  
*Queen.* It is because — O God that

pities us! —  
I may not always lie thus, may not

kneel,  
Cling round your hands and feet, or

with shut eyes  
Wait tili your lips be fast upon my face,

And laugh with very love intolerable  
As I laugh now. Look, now I do not

weep,  
I am not sad nor angered against heaven

That ever he divides us; I am glad

That yet I have mine hour. Sweet, do  
not speak,

Nor do not kiss me; let mine eyes but  
rest

In the love's light of yours, and for a  
space

My heart lie still, late drunken with  
love's wine,

And feel the fierce fumes lessen and go  
out

And leave it healed. Oh! I have bled  
for you

The nearest inward blood that is my  
life

Drop by drop inly, till my swooning  
heart

Made my face pale. I should look  
green and wan

If by heart's sickness and blood-wast-  
ing pain

The face be changed indeed; for all  
these days

Your wound bled in me, and your face  
far off

Was as a moving fire before mine  
eyes

That might not come to see you; I was  
dead,

And yet had breath enough, speech,  
hearing, sight,

To feel them strange and insupport-  
able.

I know now how men live without a  
heart.

Does your wound pain you?  
*Bothwell.* What! I have a wound?

*Queen.* How should one love enough,  
though she gave all,

Who had your like to love? I pray  
you tell me,

How did you fight?  
*Bothwell.* Why, what were this to

tell?  
I caught this reiver, by some chance of

God,  
That put his death into mine hand,

alone,  
And charged him; foot to foot we

fought some space,  
And he fought well; a gallant knave,

God wot,  
And worth a sword for better soldier's

work

Than these thieves' brawls. I would  
have given him life  
To ride among mine own men here and  
serve,

But he would not: so being sore hurt i'  
the thigh

I pushed upon him suddenly, and clove  
His crown through to the chin.

*Queen.* I will not have you  
Henceforth for warden of these borders,  
sir;

We have hands enow for that and heads  
to cleave

That but their wives will weep for.

*Bothwell.* Have no fear.  
This hour had healed me of more  
grievous wounds:

When it shall please you sign me to  
your side,

Think I am with you.

*Queen.* I must ride — woe's me!  
The hour is out. Be not long from  
me, love;

And till you come, I swear by your own  
head

I will not see the thing that was my  
lord,

Though he came in to Jedburgh. I had  
thought

To have spoken of him, but my lips  
were loath

To mar with harsh intrusion of his  
name

The least of all our kisses. Let him  
be:

We shall have time. How fair this  
castle stands!

These hills are greener, and that sing-  
ing stream

Sings sweeter, and the fields are bright-  
er faced,

Than I have seen or heard; and these  
good walls

That keep the line of kingdom, all my  
life

I shall have mind of them to love them  
well.

Nay, yet I must to horse.

*Bothwell.* Ay must you, sweet;  
If you will ride thus fifty mile a day,  
But for your face you should be man  
indeed.

*Queen.* But for my face?

*Bothwell.* If you will make me mad —  
*Queen.* I dare not dwell with mad-  
men; sir, farewell.

*Bothwell.* But for your love, and for  
its cruelty,

I would have said, you should be man.

*Queen.* Alas!

But for my love? nay, now you speak  
but truth;

For I well knew there was no love in  
man.

But we grow idle in this our laboring  
time.

When we have wrought through all  
the heat o' the day,

We may play then unblamed, and fear  
no hand

To push us each from other: now fare  
well.

SCENE IX. — THE QUEEN'S LODGING  
AT JEDBURGH.

*The three MARIES.*

*Mary Carmichael.* What, will she  
die? how says this doctor now?

*Mary Seyton.* He thinks by chafing  
of her bloodless limbs

To quicken the numbed life to sense  
again

That is as death now in her veins; bu'  
surely

I think the very spirit and sustenance  
That keeps the life up current in the  
blood

Hath left her as an empty house, for  
death,

Entering, to take and hold it.

*Mary Beaton.* I say, no;  
She will not die of chance or weariness:

This fever caught of riding and hot  
haste

Being once burnt out, as else naught  
ails her, will not

Leave her strength tainted: she is  
manly made,

And good of heart; and even by this  
her brain,

We see, begins to settle; she will live.

*Mary Carmichael.* Pray God she  
may, and no time worse than this

Come through her death on us and all  
her land

Left lordless for men's swords to carve  
and share, —

Pray God she die not.

*Mary Beaton.* From my heart, amen!  
God knows and you if I would have her  
die.

*Mary Seyton.* Would you give up  
your loving life for hers?

*Mary Beaton.* I shall not die before  
her; nor, I think,  
Live long when she shall live not.

*Mary Seyton.* A strange faith:  
Who put this confidence in you? or is it  
But love that so assures you to keep  
life

While she shall keep, and lose when  
she shall lose

For very love's sake?

*Mary Beaton.* This I cannot tell,  
Whence I do know it; but that I know  
it I know,

And by no casual or conjectural proof  
Not yet by test of reason; but I know it  
Even as I know I breathe, see, hear,  
feed, speak,

And am not dead and senseless of the  
sun

That yet I look on: so assuredly  
I know I shall not die till she be dead.  
Look, she is risen.

*Enter the QUEEN, supported by attend-  
ants.*

*Queen.* What word was in your lips?  
That I must die?

*Mary Seyton.* Heaven hath not such  
hard heart.

*Queen.* I think I shall not, surely, by  
God's grace;

Yet no man knows of God when he will  
bring

His hour upon him. I am sick and  
weak,

And yet unsure if I be whole of mind.  
I think I have been estranged from my  
right wits

These some days back; I know not.  
Prithee tell me,

Have I not slept? I know you, who  
you are;

You were about me thus in our first  
days,

When days and nights were rose-leaves  
that fell off

Without a wind or taint of chafing air,  
But passed with perfume from us, and  
their death

Had on it still the tender dew of birth.  
We were so near the sweet warm wells  
of life,

We lay and laughed in bosom of the  
dawn,

And knew not if the noon had heat to  
burn

Or the evening rain to smite us; being  
grown tall,

Our heads were raised more near the  
fires of heaven

And bitter strength of storms; then we  
were glad,

Ay, glad and good. Is there yet one of  
you

Keeps in her mind what hovers now in  
mine, —

That sweet strait span of islanded green  
ground

Where we played once, and set us  
flowers that died

Before even our delight in them was  
dead?

Now we are old, delights are first to die  
Before the things that breed them.

*Mary Seyton (aside).* She roams yet.

*Mary Beaton.* I do remember.

*Queen.* Yea, I knew it; one day  
We wrangled for a rose' sake, and fell  
out

With tears and words protesting each  
'twas she,

She 'twas that set it; and for very wrath  
I plucked up my French lilies, and set  
foot

On their gold heads, because you had  
chafed me, saying

Those were her flowers who should be  
queen in France,

And leave you, being no queen, your  
Scottish rose

With simpler leaves unguilt and inno-  
cent

That smelt of homelier air; and I ming-  
well

I rent the rose out of your hand, and  
cast

Upon the river's running; and a thorn  
Pierced through mine own hand, and  
wept not then,

But laughed for anger at you, and glad  
heart

To have made you weep, being worsted.  
What light things

Come back to the light brain that sick-  
ness shakes,

And makes the heaviest thought that it  
can hold

No heavier than a leaf, or gossamer  
That seems to link two leaves a minute,  
then

A breath unlinks them; so my thoughts  
are, — nay,

And should not so: it may be I shall  
die,

And as a fool I would not pass away  
With babbling lips unpurged and grace-  
less heart

Unreconciled to mercy. Let me see  
That holy lord I bade be not far  
off

While I lay sick — I have not here his  
name.

My head is tired, yet have I strength at  
heart

To say one word shall make me friends  
with God,

Commending to him in the hour of un-  
ripe death

The spirit so rent untimely from its  
house,

And, ere the natural night lay hold  
on it,

Darkly divided from the light of life.

Pray him come to me.

*Mary Beaton.* Is it my lord of Ross,  
The queen would see? my lord is at  
her hand.

*Enter the BISHOP OF ROSS.*

*Queen.* Most reverend father, my  
soul's friend, you see

How little queenlike I sit here at wait  
Till God lay hand on me for life or  
death,

With pain for that gold garland of my  
head

Men call a crown, and for my body's  
robe

Am girt with mortal sickness: I would  
fain,

Before I set my face to look on death,  
Mine eyes against his eyes, make  
straight the way

My soul must travel with this flesh put  
off

At the dark door; I pray you for God's  
grace

Give me that holy help that is in you  
To lighten my last passage out of sight.

For this world's works, I have done  
with them this day,

With mine own lips while yet their  
breath was warm

Commending to my lords the natural  
charge

Of their born king, and by my brother's  
mouth

To the English queen the wardship of  
her heir,

And by the ambassador's of France  
again

To his good mistress and my brother  
king

The care of mine unmothered child,  
who has

No better friends bequeathable than  
these;

And for this land have I besought them  
all, —

Who may beseech of no man aught  
again, —

That here may no man for his faith be  
wronged

Whose faith is one with mine that all  
my life

I have kept, and fear not in it now  
to die.

*Bishop of Ross.* Madam, what com-  
fort God hath given his priests

To give again, what stay of spirit and  
strength

May through their mean stablish the  
souls of men

To live or die unvexed of life or death,  
Unwounded of the fear and fang of  
hell,

Doubt not to have; seeing though no  
man be good,

But one is good, even God, yet in his  
eye

The man that keeps faith sealed upon  
his soul

Shall through the blood-shedding of  
Christ be clean.

And in this time of cursing and flawed  
faith

Have you kept faith unflawed, and on  
your head  
The immediate blessing of the spouse  
of God.

Have no fear therefore but your sins  
of life,  
Or stains and shadows such as all men  
take,

In this world's passage, from the touch  
of time,  
Shall fall from off you as a vesture  
changed,

And leave your soul for whiteness as  
a child's.

*Queen.* I would have absolution ere I  
die,

But of what sins I have not strength to  
say

Nor hardly to remember. I do think  
I have done God some service, holding  
fast

Faith, and his Church's fear; and have  
loved well

His name and burden set on me to  
serve,

To bear his part in the eye of this  
thwart world,

And witness of his cross; yet know  
myself

To be but as a servant without grace  
Save of his lord's love's gift; I have  
sinned in pride,

Perchance, to be his servant first, and  
fight,

In face of all men's hate and might,  
alone,

Here sitting single-sceptred, and com-  
pel

For all its many-mouthed inveteracy  
The world with bit and bridle like a  
beast

Brought back to serve him, and bowed  
down to me,

Whose hand should take and hale it by  
the mane,

And bend its head to worship as I bade,  
I, first among his faithful; so I said,

And foolishly; for I was high of heart;  
And now, behold, I am in God's sight  
and man's

Nothing; but though I have not so  
much grace

To bind again this people fast to God,

I have held mine own faith fast, and  
with my lips

Have borne him witness if my heart  
were whole.

*Bishop of Ross.* Therefore shall he  
forget not in your hour,

Nor for his child reject you; and shall  
make

The weight and color of your sins on  
earth

More white and light than wool may be  
or snow.

*Queen.* Yea, so my trust is of him;  
though as now

Scarce having in me breath or spirit of  
speech

I make not long confession, and my  
words

Through faintness of my flesh lack  
form; yet, pray you,

Think it but sickness and my body's  
fault

That comes between me and my will,  
who fain

Would have your eye look on my naked  
soul,

And read what writing there should be  
washed out

With mine own heart's tears, and with  
God's dear blood,

Who sees me for his penitent; for  
surely

My sins of wrath and of light-minded-  
ness,

And waste of wanton will and wander-  
ing eyes,

Call on me with dumb tongues for  
penitence;

Which I beseech you let not God reject  
For lack of words that I lack strength  
to say.

For here, as I repent and put from me,  
In perfect hope of pardon, all ill  
thoughts,

So I remit all faults against me done,  
Forgive all evil toward me of all men,

Deed or device to hurt me; yea, I  
would not

There were one heart unreconciled with  
mine

When mine is cold; I will not take  
death's hand

With any soil of hate or wrath or wrong

About me, but being friends with this  
past world  
Pass from it in the general peace of  
love.

*Mary Beaton.* Here is some message  
from the world of friends,  
Brought to your brother: shall my lord  
come in?

*Queen.* What lord? ye have no lord  
of any man  
While I am lady of all you. Who is  
this?

Message? what message? whence?

*Enter MURRAY.*

*Murray.* From Edinburgh  
Your husband new alighted in sharp  
speed

Craves leave of access to your majesty.

*Queen.* By heaven, I had rather death  
had leave than he.

What comes he for? to vex me quick  
or dead

With his lewd eyes and sodden sidelong  
face

That I may die again with loathing of  
him?

By God, as God shall look upon my  
soul,

I will not see him. Bid him away, and  
keep

Far off as Edinburgh may hold him  
hence

Among his fellows of the herded swine  
That not for need but love he wallows  
with

To expend his patrimony of breath and  
blood

In the dear service of dishonoring  
days.

*Murray.* Let him but bide the night  
here.

*Queen.* Not an hour;  
Not while his horse may breathe. I  
will not see him.

*Murray.* Nay, for the world's sake,  
and lest worse be said;

Let him sleep here, and come not in  
your sight.

*Queen.* Unless by some mean I be  
freed of him,

I have no pleasure upon earth to live.  
I will put hand to it first myself. My

lord,

See how this ill man's coming shakes  
my soul,

And stains its thoughts with passionate  
earth again

That were as holy water, white and  
sweet,

For my rechristening; I could weep  
with wrath

To find between my very prayer and  
God

His face thrust like a shameful thought  
in sleep.

I cannot pray nor fix myself on heaven  
But he must loose my hold, break up

my trust,  
Unbind my settled senses, and pluck  
down

My builded house of hope. Would he  
were dead

That puts my soul out of its peace with  
God!

Comfort me, father; let him not have  
way;

Keep my soul for me safe, and full of  
heaven

As it was late. — See that you rid him  
hence,

I charge you, sir, with morning.

*Murray.* Yea, I shall;  
'Twere best he saw you not.

*Queen.* I think so. Hark!  
Who is there lighted after him? I

heard —  
Nay, he is sick yet, wounded; yet I

heard —  
Pray God he be not risen too soon,  
to ride

With his wound's danger for r y sick-  
ness' sake.

*Mary Beaton.* It is my lord the war-  
den.

*Queen.* What! I knew it, —  
So soon so far, and with such speed!

ay, never

Had queen so ill befriended of her own  
So fast a friend and loving. I will see

him;  
I am stronger than I was. Give me

your hands;  
I can stand upright surely. Come you

in,  
And help to attire me like a living  
queen;

These are as grave-clothes. One go  
bring me word  
How he looks now, — if weak or well  
indeed,  
If stout of cheer or tired. Say, for his  
coming  
And care unbidden of me, I thank him  
not  
If he have done his own wound hurt  
thereby.  
I will but rest, and see him: bring me  
in. [Exeunt.]

## SCENE X. — CRAIGMILLAR.

The QUEEN, MURRAY, BOTHWELL,  
MAITLAND, HUNTLEY, and ARGYLE.

*Queen.* If it must be, or all without  
it break,  
I am content to have Lord Morton  
home;  
Nay, all of them ye will, save two I  
keep  
To be the food of justice and my  
wrath,  
Now hunger-starven; his red hand who  
set  
To my child-burdened breast the iron  
death,  
And the uncle of my caitiff; they shall  
bleed,  
As Ruthven should, but for death's  
hastier hand  
That plucked him up before me: for  
his son,  
Let him come back too.

*Maitland.* It is nobly judged,  
And shall content the lords and land  
alike  
With such good counsel and such fair  
consent  
To see your highness moved to rid  
yourself  
Of their disease and yours, with all  
men's will  
Purged from you by the readiest mean  
we may.

*Queen.* Ay, by divorce: I have then  
your tongues to that, —  
Yours, both my friends now that were  
ill friends once,  
But handfast here in common faith to  
me

And equal-hearted; and my brother's  
voice,  
Joined with these good lords present:  
but you said,  
Was it not you said, sir, that by divorce,  
Though leave were given of them that  
might withhold,  
And the priest's word that bound un-  
bound us, yet  
Some soil might fall from lips of evil  
will

On our son's birth-name?

*Maitland.* Yea, from ill men's mouths  
And all that hate you such rebuke might  
fall,

Which were foul shame to suffer and  
be dumb,  
Though made by your divorce unan-  
swerable.

*Queen.* In sooth, I thought so; and  
howbeit yourself,  
My lord of Bothwell, by the judgment  
given

That loosed your mother's from your  
father's hand  
Stood undespoiled in fair inheritance,  
It may be where the cast is of a  
crown,  
And such a crown as in contention  
shakes

Two several-storied kingdoms, even the  
chance  
Should stand not questionable, and  
friend nor foe

Have word to throw against it.

*Maitland.* So I said.

*Bothwell.* Yet must the queen be  
freed; and for the fear  
Lest England for his sake be moved, I  
know not

What hold it has upon us, who but  
now  
Saw what good heart and loyal will  
they bear

To the right heirship of your majesty  
Who bide on our south border, when  
their guns

From Berwick hailed you passing  
hither, and made  
The loud-mouthed crags cry to their  
batteries back,

And tell the sundering Tweed and all  
green hills,

And all the clamorous concourse of the  
 sea,  
 The name that had the lordship of both  
 lands  
 In heritage to bind them fast in one.  
 There heart and tongue outspake of  
 the true north  
 That for his caitiff sake should not be  
 moved  
 Nor alter from its faith though he were  
 cast,

With haltered throat or millstone round  
 his neck,  
 From a queen's bed into the naked sea.

*Maitland.* Madam, we are here for  
 service of your grace,  
 Chief of your council and nobility:  
 We shall find mean whereby without  
 wrong done  
 To your son's title, you shall well be  
 quit

Of your ill-minded husband; and albeit  
 My lord of Murray present here be one  
 As scrupulous of his faith a Protestant  
 As is your grace a Papist, he will look  
 As through his fingers on the work we  
 do,

And say no word, I am well assured,  
 of all

His eye may wink on.

*Queen.* Nay, I cannot tell;  
 I would not have mine honor touched,  
 nor buy

My peace with hurt of conscience;  
 being so wise

As silence proves you or as speech  
 proclaims,

Ye shall do well to let this be; perchance  
 The good ye mean me being untimely  
 done

Might turn to my displeasure, and your  
 hands

Leave me more hurt than holpen.

*Murray.* You say well;  
 For none but honorable and lawful ends  
 Have I desired this council, to procure  
 Your just and honest freedom, and re-  
 peal

The banished Morton, whose advice  
 thereto

Shall not be fruitless; for no further aim  
 To no strange mean have I put hand.

Farewell.

*Argyle.* He will not know of us  
 enough to thwart;  
 And so not least may serve us; but if  
 here

These hands whose help would hurt  
 you not be set

To such a bond as may put forth our  
 cause,

And bind us to sustain it with one soul,  
 Shall they more hurt than help you?

*Queen.* Nay, ye are wise;  
 I know not; but I think your helpful  
 hands

Could not be set but to my service.

*Huntley.* Then  
 Should we set down what reason or  
 resolve

We have to make it manifest and sure  
 That this young fool and tyrant by our  
 will

Shall bear no rule among us, and  
 thereto

For divers causes shall he be put forth  
 One way or other, and what man soe'er  
 Shall take this deed in hand, or do it,  
 all we

Shall as our own and general act of all  
 Defend and fortify it.

*Queen.* Must all set hands  
 To one same bond for warrant?

*Bothwell.* Who should fail?  
 Not we that shall devise it, nor Balfour,  
 My kinsman here and friend.

*Queen.* Must you sign too?

*Bothwell.* How must I not? am I not  
 fit to serve

As being or coward or faithless or a  
 fool,

Or all or any? or what misdoubt of  
 yours

Should wash my writing out or blur my  
 name?

What faith a faithful servant of his  
 hands

May freely challenge of the king they  
 serve,

So much I challenge of your majesty.

*Queen.* Nay, my fair lord, but for your  
 known faith's sake

And constant service the less need it  
 were

To have your hand here on our side  
 lest men

[*Exit.*



Should lay the deed but on mine ancient  
friends,

Whose names not all men love yet for  
my sake,

And call it but our privy plot and hate,  
Which is the judgment of all wisest  
lords

And equal sentence of the general land.

*Maitland.* So we that were not count-  
ed with your friends

Should bear the whole deed and its  
danger up,—

We whom you have loved not, madam,  
for the stand

We made against the perilous loves  
and hates

That loosened half your people's love  
from you.

Yet must we have his hand too.

*Bothwell.* Ay, and shall.

I wear no gloves when hands are bared  
to strike.

*Queen.* Be it as you will; I am noth-  
ing in your count;

So be it; my counsel shall not cumber  
you.

Do all ye list.

*Maitland.* And all that shall be done  
Will be the more strength to your  
majesty,

And comfort to your cause: which now  
we go

With all our help to hearten.

*Queen.* Go, and thrive.

[*Exeunt* MAITLAND, HUNTLEY, and  
ARGYLE

I would we had no need of such men's  
tongues.

*Bothwell.* He has the wisest name on  
all their side;

And by the tether that holds fast his  
faith

We lead their lesser wits what way we  
will.

Sharp-spirited is he surely, deep of soul,  
Cunning and fearless; one that gives,  
men say,

Small heed or honor to their faiths or  
fears

And breath of holy custom; undis-  
traught

By doubt of God's hand paddling in our  
clay

Or dream of God's eye slanted on our  
sin;

As one that holds more worthily of  
God,

— Or would not hold at all — whate'er  
he be,

Than of a sidelong scrupulous overseer  
That pries askance upon our piteous  
lives

To judge of this and this, how ill or  
well,

And mark souls white or black with  
coal or chalk

For crowning or for burning, palms or  
fires;

One therefore that through all shut  
ways of life

Lets his soul range, even like the all-  
winnowing wind,

And ply her craft in all life's businesses  
Not like a blind man burdened; sure  
of hand

And great of counsel, like an under fire  
That works in the earth and makes its  
breach by night,

And leaps a league's length at the first  
stride forth

Of its free foot, blackening the face of  
men;

So strong and keen and secret is his  
soul.

*Queen.* So he keep trust, I care not  
if his creed

Be faced or lined with craft and  
atheism,

His soul be close or open; but what  
bond

Shall bind him ours so sure that fraud  
nor force

May serve against us more?

*Bothwell.* Doubt me not that;

By hilt, not edge, we hold him as a  
sword

That in our hand shall bend not till we  
break,

If we would break it when our work is  
done.

*Queen.* Have we the strength? I  
doubt not of this hand,

That holds my heart, if it be strong  
or no,

More than I doubt of the eyes that  
light mine eyes,

The lips that my lips breathe by, — O  
 my life,  
 More than I doubt of mine own bitter  
 love,  
 More than of death's no power to sun-  
 der us,  
 Of his no force to quench me who am  
 fire, —  
 Fire for your sake, that would put all  
 these out  
 To shine and lighten in your sight alone  
 For warmth and comfort, being to all  
 eyes beside  
 Or fear or ruin more fleet of foot than  
 fear.  
 I would I had on breast or hand or  
 brow  
 In crown or clasp the whole gold  
 wrought of the earth,  
 In one keen jewel the store of all the  
 sea,  
 That I might throw down at your hand  
 or foot  
 Sea, land, and all that in them is of  
 price,  
 Or in the strong wine of my piercing  
 love  
 Melt the sole pearl of the earth, and  
 drink dissolved  
 The cost of all the world's worth.

*Bothwell.* Yea, my queen?

I have then no fear what man shall deem  
 or do;  
 For by this fire and light of you I  
 swear, —  
 That is my sunlight and my fire of  
 day, —  
 We shall not walk as they that walk by  
 night  
 Toward our great goal uncertainly, nor  
 swerve  
 Till we strike foot against it. Kiss me  
 now,  
 And bid me too speed on my way with  
 them  
 To bring back all their hands here to  
 the bond  
 Set fast as mine, or as your heart is fast  
 Set on his death whose life lies nigh  
 burnt out,  
 Half brand, half ash already, in the heat  
 Of that bright wrath which makes as  
 red as flame

Your fearful and sweet splendor; nay,  
 by heaven,  
 It flushes all the light about your face  
 With seven-times-kindled color of pure  
 fire,  
 And burns mine eyes beholding, as  
 your lips  
 And quick breath burn me kissing. My  
 sweet fear,  
 Had you not been the sweetest, even  
 to me  
 You must have been the fearfullest  
 thing alive.

*Queen.* For love is so, and I am very  
 love,

And no more queen or woman; have  
 no heart,  
 No head, no spirit or sense at all of life,  
 Save as of love that lives and that is I,  
 I that was woman, and bore rule alone  
 Upon myself; who am all dis-king-  
 domed now,  
 Made twice a slave, — mine own soul's  
 thrall, and yours  
 Who wield the heart that wields me at  
 your will.

I can but do as wills the spirit in me  
 Which is your spirit's servant. Ah,  
 my lord, —

My one lord every way, my poor heart's  
 blood,

Breath of my lips and eyesight of mine  
 eyes, —

How did I live the life that loved you  
 not?

What were those days wherein I walked  
 apart,

And went my way, and did my will  
 alone,

And thought and wrought without you  
 in the world?

Then I did evil and folly: the more  
 need

I purge me now, and perfect my desire,  
 Which is to be no more your lover, no,  
 But even yourself, yea more than body  
 and soul,

One and not twain, one utter life, one  
 fire,

One will, one doom, one deed, one  
 spirit, one God;

For we twain grown and molten each  
 in each

Surely shall be as God is and no man.

*Bothwell.* God speed us, then, till we  
grow up to God!

Me first, who first shall clear our way to  
climb

By carving one weed's earthly coil away  
That cumberers our straight growing:  
prayer for me!

I will have all their hands to it in an  
hour.

SCENE XI. — COURTYARD OF A HOST-  
ELRY AT WHITTINGHAM.

BOTHWELL and MORTON.

*Morton.* Fled in pure fear of me?  
well, he knows best.

Towards Glasgow, said you?

*Bothwell.* Soon as came the word  
You were brought home with welcome  
of the queen,

He spurs from Stirling with all heat of  
speed,—

Even from her arms new-reconciled and  
face

That favorably had received him;  
leaves the feast

Half made, and his unchristened year-  
ling there

Not yet signed God's, and dewy from  
the font

Long waited for, till the English golden  
gift

Was grown too strait to hold and hal-  
low him,—

Flies from all sight and cheer of festal  
folk,

And on the way being smitten sick with  
fear

Cries out of poison working in his flesh  
Blue-spotted as with ulcerous pesti-  
lence,

Weeps himself dead, and wails himself  
alive,

As now he lies, but bedrid; and has  
lain

This Christmas through, while the  
queen held her feast

At Drummond Castle.

*Morton.* Yea, I heard so; and you  
At Tullibardine likewise, or men lie,  
Kept the feast high beside her. Well,  
my lord,

Now have you time and room to say  
for each

What ye would have of me, the queen  
and you,

Who are hand and tongue at once of  
her design.

Here am I newly lighted, hot from  
horse,

But fresh come forth of exile and ill  
days

To do you service: let me have her  
hand

For warrant of what dangerous work  
she will,

And mine is armed to do it; but till I  
have,

Expect of me, who have seen times  
strange as this,

Nothing.

*Bothwell.* I have her warrant in my  
lips;

By me she speaks you safe in serving  
her.

*Morton.* Let that secure yourself: I  
must have proofs.

*Bothwell.* You shall have all, and  
written; but your hand

Must be in this with ours.

*Morton.* I have cause enough,  
Good reason and good will to see it  
performed,

But will not strike through mine own  
side at him:

Make your mind sure of that.

*Bothwell.* Well, you shall have it;  
Myself will fetch your warrant from her  
hand

That from my mouth assures you not;  
and then —

*Morton.* Then shall my hand make  
answer to her own. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE XII. — CALLANDER.

*The QUEEN and LADY RERES.*

*Queen.* I do not feel as at past part-  
ings: then

My heart was sick and bitter, and mine  
eye

Saw not beyond the grievous hour at  
hand;

Now when of all time I should be most  
sad,

Being parted at love's highest of height  
 from love,  
 And bound to meet love's poison and  
 my plague,  
 My life's live curse yet married to my  
 life,  
 Yet am I light and fuller of sweet hope  
 Than even sweet memory fills me.

*Lady Reres.* It is well  
 When dawn discomforts not the whole  
 sweet night.

*Queen.* There be stars sure that die  
 not of the day,  
 Or in this hoariest hour of dusk and dew  
 How should my heart be warm with  
 last night's fire?

*Enter BOTHWELL.*

What! risen so soon, my lord?

*Bothwell.* What! not yet forth?  
 That was the question laughing on your  
 lips,  
 And this my plea to kill the question  
 with. [*Aissing her.*

I must ride now. There waits a mes-  
 senger  
 From our wed lord in Glasgow.

*Queen.* Ay? would God  
 He had slipt his saddle and borne his  
 charge to hell!

Must we part here? I ask but what I  
 know,

Only to have a breath more of your  
 mouth,

A smile more of your eye, turn of your  
 head,

Before you kiss and leave me. Why  
 should love,

That can change life, seat and disseat  
 the soul

In heaven or hurl it hellward, break and  
 build,

Root and unroot the very springs o'  
 the heart,

Have not the force to pluck but twelve  
 hours back,

And twice consume and twice consum-  
 mate life,

Twice crowned and twice confounded?  
 I would give

All but love's self, all hope and heat of  
 life,

But to have over this scant space again,  
 Since yesterday saw sunset.

*Bothwell.* You shall win  
 A better prayer than this; for one poor  
 hour

Caught from the gripe of all good-  
 grudging time,

An hundred-fold in long-lived happi-  
 ness,

Secure and scatheless of all change or  
 fear.

*Queen.* Yet this joy waited on by fear  
 and doubt,

Plucked casually, a flower of accident,  
 On the rough lip and edge of danger's  
 breach,

How sweeter is it than the rose to  
 smell

We gather from our garden with gloved  
 hand,

And find nor thorn nor perfume! You  
 must go,

And I part hence; yet all through life  
 and death

I shall have mind of this most gracious  
 place,

Poor palace of all pleasure, where I  
 found

Brief harborage in long travel of my  
 life.

Now take farewell of me.

*Bothwell.* Fair lips, farewell,  
 And love me till we kiss again and  
 sleep. [*Exit.*

*Queen.* So may my last sleep kiss me  
 at your lips,

And find me full of you as heaven of  
 light

When my time comes of slumber. —  
 Bid this man

Come in that waits: he shall bear word  
 of me

Before I stand in his lord's sight again.  
*Enter CRAWFORD.*

What message from our lord your  
 master, sir?

*Crawford.* Madam, with all his heart  
 my lord commends

His heart's excuses to your majesty  
 For the great grief and doubt wherein

it stands

Of your unstanched displeasure; of  
 which fear

He lies soul-sick, and sends that heart  
 by me

To crave its pardon of you, and for  
grace

From your dread lips some comfortable  
word

That may assure him who now lives in  
pain

Through the evil news he hears from  
all winds blown,

In all mouths open; whence as one  
distraught,

And knowing not how to bear himself  
secure

Or dare put forth to meet you, for the  
words

He hears you have said, though fain, I  
know, to come

And clear himself of aught that you  
suspect

By present inquisition, — this I know,  
Though now he laid no charge on me

to say, —  
He hath writ you word already of his

grief,  
And finds no answer but of bitter sound,

Nor any light of pity from your face,  
Nor breath of healing; wherefore on

my knees  
He kneels before you to require his

doom.  
*Queen.* I have no remedy for fear;  
there grows

No herb of help to heal a coward  
heart.

Fears were not rank were faults not  
rank in him.

*Crawford.* It is no caitiff doubt that  
pleads with you,

No rootless dread sprung of a craven  
mood

That bows him down before your high-  
ness' foot

To take the sovereign sentence of your  
eye

And bide and bear its judgment given  
as God's:

He knows, he says, by proof and speech  
of men

What cause he has what friends of  
yours to fear.

*Queen.* What! must I ride alone to  
comfort him?

Tell him he may sleep sure, then, though  
I come:

Lord Bothwell is bound back to Edin-  
burgh;

There is no man to affright him in my  
train

But grooms and lackeys; and, for all  
I hear,

He never feared my women.

*Crawford.* Please it you,  
My master doth but wish all hearts of

men  
Were on their faces written with their  
faith.

*Queen.* Hath he no more than this,  
our lord, to say?

Then let him hold his peace; and bear  
him word

That of our grace we come to cherish  
him

With not a man's face to procure his  
dread.

Tell him so much, and bid him keep  
good heart,

If heart he have, even for my sake,  
who swear

He shall not long live in this fear of  
me.

SCENE XIII. — DARNLEY'S LODGING  
IN GLASGOW.

DARNLEY *on a couch, as sick*; CRAW-  
FORD *in attendance.*

*Darnley.* She is come in, then?

*Crawford.* Presently she comes.

*Darnley.* You found her yet more  
sharp of eye than tongue?

*Crawford.* Ay.

*Darnley.* Would I had but strength  
to bring myself

Forth of this land where none will pity  
me, —

No, not the least of all you, though I  
die.

Who comes with her? what house-  
hold? I would speak

With Joachim her French fellow there,  
to know

Why she should come, — you cannot  
show me, — ay,

And if for good; and if they come with  
her, —

Her outland folk and Bothwell's, — or,  
at least,

If she have mind yet to send off or  
 no  
 Joseph, her dead knave's brother. Are  
 you sure  
 Himself shall come not? wherefore, be-  
 ing come in,  
 Should she not lodge beside me? Nay,  
 I hear  
 More than she wots of, and have spies  
 that see  
 What counsels breed among the crew  
 of them.  
 What talk was that of marriage that  
 should be  
 Between her fiddler and no maid of  
 hers,  
 To what fair end? Would God I  
 might take ship!  
 I would make speed for England; there  
 at least  
 They durst not lay their nets about my  
 life:  
 Here every wind that blows hath smells  
 of blood.  
 I am lost and doomed; lost, lost!  
*Crawford.* Have better thoughts.  
 Take hope to you, and cheer.  
*Darnley.* Ay, ay, much cheer!  
 Ye are all in one to abuse me, snare  
 and slay,—  
 Ye are all one heart to hate, one hand  
 to smite;  
 I have none to love nor do me good,  
 not one,  
 One in the world's width, of all souls  
 alive.  
 I am dead and slain already in your  
 hearts.  
 By God, if ever I stand up strong again,  
 I will be even with all you. Doth she  
 think  
 I fear her? there is none that lives I  
 fear.  
 What said she to you?  
*Crawford.* With her last breath she  
 said  
 You should no longer live in fear of  
 her.  
*Darnley.* Why, so I do not: nay, nor  
 ever did.  
 Let her come now, and find I fear her  
 not.  
 What shall she say?

(*Without.*) Make way there for the  
 queen!

*Enter the QUEEN, attended.*

*Queen.* How is it with our lord?

*Darnley.* Ill is it, — ill,

Madam, and no lord but your servant  
 here.

Will you not kiss me?

*Queen.* Nay, you are sick indeed.

Let me sit here, and give me but your  
 hand.

I have a word with you to speak for  
 love,

And not for chiding.

*Darnley.* I beseech you, no:

I have no force to bear man's chiding  
 now,

Being sick, and all my sickness is of  
 you,

That look so strange and heavily on  
 me;

Howbeit I could now die, I am made so  
 glad,

For very joy to see you. If I die,

Look, I leave all things to your only  
 will,

And of my pure love make no testa-  
 ment,

Nor lay no charge on any else for  
 love.

*Queen.* I will rebuke you not but  
 tenderly,

As a right wife and faithful woman.  
 Sir,

What word was that you wrote me, and  
 wherein

And wherefore taxing some for cruelty,  
 Of what suspicion misconceived and

born,  
 That came forth of your hand to strike  
 my heart?

You that have found no cause, and will  
 not say

You have found or shall find ever cause  
 of fear,

So to misdoubt me, — what could sting  
 you so,

What adder-headed thought or venom-  
 ous dream,

To make you shoot at this bared breast  
 to you

Suspicion winged and whetted with ill  
 thoughts?

What words were these to write, what  
 doubts to breed,  
 Of mere mistrust and stark unfriendli-  
 ness?  
 Nay, and I know not, God can witness  
 me,  
 So much as what you doubt or what  
 misdeem,  
 Or wherein hold me dangerous or my  
 friends,  
 More than I know what source your  
 sickness hath,  
 Whereof I would fain think all this  
 is bred  
 And all ill fears grown but of feverish  
 nights.  
 What cause most ails you? or what  
 think you on?  
*Darnley.* I think how I am punished,  
 —ay, God knows  
 I am punished that I made my God of  
 you.  
 What should I mean of cruelty but  
 yours,  
 That will not look on my sore peni-  
 tence  
 For my least sin, as God would look on  
 all?  
 Though I confess wherein I have failed  
 indeed,  
 Yet never in worse kind than was  
 avowed;  
 And many a man for such revolt as  
 mine  
 Hath had your pardon: in this kind I  
 have sinned,  
 Not in such wise as ever I denied,  
 And am yet young; and though you  
 should cast up  
 How often being forgiven I have gone  
 back,  
 And fallen in fresh offence of you that  
 late  
 Forgave me, may not any twice or  
 thrice  
 So slip that is none older than I am,  
 Or slack his promise plighted, yet in  
 the end,  
 Repenting, by experience be chastised?  
 If my weak years and grief may get but  
 grace,  
 I swear I never shall make fault again;  
 And this is all, and honest, that I crave,

To have again my wife to bed and  
 board,  
 Which if I may not by consent of you  
 Out of this bed I never will rise more.  
 I pray you tell me whereof you re-  
 solve,  
 That I may die or live, who have no  
 thought  
 But only of you; and at such luckless  
 time  
 As ever I offend you, even the offence  
 Grows of yourself; for when I am  
 wronged or wroth  
 If I for refuge might complain to  
 you  
 Of any that offends me, I would speak  
 Into no ear but yours; but being  
 estranged,  
 What now soe'er I hear, necessity  
 Binds me to keep it in my breast, and  
 hence  
 I am moved to try my wit on mine own  
 part  
 For very anger. Now, being at your  
 foot,  
 Will you forgive me? that for love in-  
 deed  
 And fear of you have trespassed, being  
 so young,  
 And had no good man's counsel, and  
 no guard,  
 No light, no help, no stay, — was yet  
 scarce man,  
 And have so loved you whom I sinned  
 against.  
*Queen.* Why would you pass in the  
 English ship away?  
*Darnley.* I swear by God I never  
 thought thereon;  
 I spake but with the men: but though I  
 had,  
 I might have well ta'en hold on such a  
 thought,  
 To hear much less things than the least  
 I heard.  
*Queen.* What inquisition was it that  
 you made  
 To hear such things as fright you?  
*Darnley.* Nay, by heaven,  
 I have made none; I never sought man  
 out  
 To speak with any; I swear I see no  
 spies.

*Queen.* Must I return to your own  
ear again  
The very words were spoken?  
*Darnley.* I did hear  
There was a letter brought you to sub-  
scribe  
By certain of the council, to the intent  
I should be cast in prison, and with  
power  
To slay me by your warrant, should  
I make  
Resistance: Highgate said so; I con-  
fess  
I spake with him; my father that first  
heard  
Brought him to speech of me.  
*Queen.* Spake he so much?  
But Walcar, that at Stirling brought  
me word  
Of this man's speeches here, had heard  
of him  
That you with certain of our lords had  
laid  
A plot to take our son, and having  
crowned  
Reign for him king of Scots; whereon  
the man,  
Being had before our council with good  
speed,  
Swore he knew no such tale, and had  
but heard  
Some rumour blown of your imprison-  
ment,  
But nothing of your slaying; to which  
again  
His witness summoned gave him  
straight the lie.  
Yet would I not conceive the tale for  
true,  
That, being incensed with some our  
loyal lords  
Who were not of the faction that should  
lay  
Such regency upon you for your son,  
You had threatened them aloud with  
wrath to come.  
What say you to it?  
*Darnley.* I say you do me wrong  
To speak to me of him that as you say  
Belied me to you: who saith so of me  
lies,  
And I will pluck his ears from off his  
head,

The knave whose tongue so misdelivers  
me.  
And, I beseech you, think he lies that  
saith  
I would be wroth with any man your  
friend,  
Or would not rather give away my life  
Than by despite toward such displeas-  
you: yet  
I have heard strange things here of a  
trustier tongue.  
The Laird — you know him — of Minto,  
my fast friend,  
If any friend be fast on earth to me,  
He told me to what bond what hands  
were set;  
Yea, and more hands than those that  
signed me dead,  
He swore, were set to slay me; but  
God knows  
I gave no faith to it, — would not dream  
or doubt  
You could devise, that were my proper  
flesh,  
To do me any evil; nay, I said  
It was well seen you would not, by their  
writ  
Against my life that you subscribed  
not; else,  
Could I think once you hungered for  
my death,  
God knows I would not hold you  
hungering long,  
But make mine own throat naked for  
your knife  
As readily as your hand could pluck it  
forth:  
Howbeit the best man of mine enemies  
else  
Should buy me dear — ay, any of all  
but you,  
Except he took me sleeping; as in-  
deed  
Were now not hard to take me: had I  
but  
A hand to help my heart, and health to  
go,  
A foot to stand against them, God and  
you,  
Madam, should oversee us and judge;  
but now  
You see what power I have, what hope  
of help,



What strength to serve my will and my  
best heart

Lies in my broken body; ay, these  
know that,

What force is left to second my good-  
will

They know who durst not else devise  
or do,

Had I the natural might yet of my  
limbs,

What now — But you, if you have pity  
of me,

Seeing me how faint I am and how sore  
sick

And cannot eat for weakness, though I  
faint,

That makes me loathe my meat, — but  
will you not

Feed me and kiss me? surely I could  
live,

Being quickened of your hands and  
piteous lips,

So sweet you are, and strong, and large  
of life.

Nay, do but kiss me once though I  
must die,

Be it but lest all men say you loved me  
not.

*Queen.* I have a pain here takes me  
in my side —

I pray you — where my sickness left it  
sore

And liable to swift pains yet: pardon  
me.

*Darnley.* 'Tis I you cannot pardon, —  
I, woe's me,

You cannot love or pardon; but I  
swear,

So be it you will not leave me, I will go,  
So but I may not lose you out of sight,

Borne in a litter, such as here I lie,  
So weak, so full of sickness, where you  
will,

Be it to Craigmillar, though death went  
with me,

Or to the world's end, going in sight of  
you.

*Queen.* Have here my hand, then, and  
my faith to it, sir,

When there the healing springs have  
washed you whole

As they shall surely, with cold cleans-  
ing streams

Whose medicinal might shall bathe  
your veins,

And kill the fire that feeds upon their  
blood,

I will once more dwell with you as your  
wife,

In all the lovely works and ways of  
love

And dues of duteous life and unity  
That man may claim of woman. Tell  
me now, —

Ere we go thither, where the leech and  
I

May help you, nor be far off from my  
son, —

What are those lords you are wroth at?  
since I hear

Some are there that you threaten, as in  
doubt

Their minds are bitter toward you:  
shall I say

You stand in fear of Maitland?  
*Darnley.* Him? not I, —

I pray you, speak not of him for my  
sake, —

I stand in fear of no man: I beseech  
you,

Speak me not of him; I will see no  
man,

To be our makebate and your tale-  
bearer;

I have heard too of your brother, how  
he says

I spake with him at Stirling, where I  
swear

I came not in his chamber, spake not  
half

Of all whereof he has rounded in your  
ear

That I made plaint to him concerning  
you;

For all my faults are published in your  
eye,

And I deny not one, and naught put  
off:

What should it boot me to deny my  
speech?

But there are they that think the faults  
they make

Shall to all time lie still unspoken of,  
Yet will they speak aloud of small and  
great,

And tax alike all faults of other folk,

The least fault as the worst, in men  
 like me  
 That have not craft to hide or most or  
 least.  
 God save you from such friendship: it  
 is thought,  
 Through power upon you of such evil  
 tongues,  
 Yourself have not your power upon  
 yourself,  
 As by your slight still of my proffered  
 love  
 I would believe you have not; such a  
 friend  
 Rode with you hither, — or unfriend as  
 I doubt:  
 I like her not, — the Lady Reres, your  
 friend;  
 I pray God she may serve you, if she  
 be,  
 To your own honor; it runs through all  
 men's mouths,  
 She was Lord Bothwell's harlot, who  
 stands marked  
 For a lewd liver above all men alive:  
 She and her sister both lie side by side  
 Under the like report of his rank  
 love, —  
 Foul concord and consent unsisterlike  
 In such communion as beasts shun for  
 shame.  
 Nay, for you know it, it lives on com-  
 mon lips,  
 Cries from all tongues, — you know it;  
 but for my part  
 I will love all that love you, though  
 they were  
 But for that love's sake shameful in  
 men's eyes.  
 Why will you wake not with me this  
 one night,  
 But so soon leave me, and I sleep so  
 ill?  
*Queen.* Nay, though this night I may  
 not watch with you,  
 I leave you not till you turn back with  
 me;  
 But for the lords' sake must it not be  
 known,  
 That, if you change not purpose ere  
 that time,  
 When you are whole, we shall be one  
 again;

Lest when they know it, remembering  
 your loud threat  
 To make them find, if ever we agreed,  
 What small account they had made of  
 you, and how  
 You had counselled me to take not  
 some of them  
 To grace again without assent of yours,  
 They fall in fear and jealousy, to see  
 The scene so broken and the play so  
 changed  
 Without their knowledge, that contrari-  
 wise  
 Was first set up before them.  
*Darnley.* Think you then  
 They will for that the more esteem of  
 you?  
 But I am glad at heart you speak of  
 them,  
 And do believe now you desire indeed  
 That we should live together in quiet-  
 ness;  
 For, were it otherwise, to both of us  
 Might worse fall than we wot of; but I  
 now  
 Will do whatever you will do, and love  
 All that you love; and I have trust in  
 you  
 To draw them in like manner to my  
 love;  
 Whom since I know they aim not at my  
 life  
 I will love all alike, and there shall be  
 No more dissension of your friends and  
 mine.  
*Queen.* It was by fault of you all  
 this fell out  
 That I must heal. For this time, fare  
 you well;  
 When I get rest, I will return again.  
 [Exit with attendants.]  
*Darnley.* What say you now? she is  
 gentler in mine eyes  
 Than was your word of her.  
*Crawford.* Ay, sweet to sight,  
 Exceeding gentle. Wherefore, could  
 one tell,  
 Should she desire to lead you so in  
 hand  
 Just to Craigmillar? whence report  
 came late  
 Of no good counsel toward you or good  
 hope,

Except the hope be good, there to be  
 healed  
 Of all life's ill forever, once being  
 bathed  
 In the cold springs of death ; and hence  
 meseems  
 More like a prisoner than her wedded  
 lord  
 Are you borne off as in her bonds.

*Darnley.* By heaven,  
 I think but little less, and fear myself,  
 Save for the trust indeed I have in her  
 And in her promise only ; howsoe'er,  
 I will go with her, and put me in her  
 hands,  
 Though she should cut my throat ; and  
 so may God  
 Between us both be judge. I have  
 been men's fool  
 That were but tongues and faces of my  
 friends :  
 I see by mine own sight now, and will  
 stand  
 On no man's feet but mine. Give me  
 to drink ;  
 I will sleep now ; my heart is healed  
 of fear.

SCENE XIV. — THE QUEEN'S APART-  
 MENT IN THE SAME.  
*The QUEEN and PARIS.*

*Queen.* Here is the letter for your  
 lord to know  
 I bring the man on Monday, as is writ,  
 Hence to Craigmillar. Say too this by  
 mouth, —  
 The Lady Reres can witness with mine  
 oath  
 I would not let him kiss me. Bid our  
 lord,  
 Mine and your lord, inquire of Mait-  
 land first  
 If our past purpose for Craigmillar  
 hold,  
 Or if the place be shifted, and send  
 word  
 To me that here await his will by you.  
 Be of good speed ; I say not of good  
 trust,  
 Who know you perfect in his trust and  
 mine.  
 Farewell.

*Paris.* I am gone with all good haste  
 I may,

And here come back to serve your maj-  
 esty.

Hath it no further counsel or command  
 To be my message ?

*Queen.* Tell him, night and day  
 And fear and hope are grown one thing  
 to me

Save for his sake : and say mine hours  
 and thoughts

Are as one fire devouring grain by  
 grain

This pile of tares and drift of crum-  
 bling brands

That shrivels up in the slow breath of  
 time

The part of life that keeps me far from  
 him,

The heap of dusty days that sunder  
 us.

I would I could burn all at once away,  
 And our lips meet across the mid red  
 flame,

Thence unconsumed, being made of  
 keener fire

Than any burns on earth. Say that  
 mine eyes

Ache with mine heart, and thirst with  
 all my veins,

Requiring him they have not. Say my  
 life

Is but as sleep, and my sleep very life,  
 That dreams upon him. Say I am  
 passing now

To do that office he would have me do,  
 Which almost is a traitor's ; say, his  
 love

Makes me so far dissemble, that myself  
 Have horror at it ; bid him keep in  
 mind

How, were it not to obey him, I had  
 rather

Be dead before I did it ; let him not  
 Have ill opinion of me for this cause,  
 Seeing he is alone the occasion of it  
 himself,

Since for mine own particular revenge  
 I would not do it to him that I most  
 hate ;

My heart bleeds at it. Say, he will  
 not come

But on condition I shall cleave to him  
 Hereafter, and on that word given of  
 mine

Will go where I would have him go :  
 alas !  
 I never have deceived yet any man,  
 But I remit me to my master's will  
 In all things wholly; bid him send me  
 word  
 What I shall do, and come what may  
 thereof  
 I shall obey him; if some new subtler  
 way  
 By medicine may be thought on when I  
 bring  
 The man here to Craigmillar, that as  
 yet  
 May not this long time of himself go  
 forth  
 Out of the house, let him advise him-  
 self  
 How to put this in hand: for all I find,  
 This man I here endure to play upon  
 Lives now in great suspicion; yet my  
 word  
 Hath credit with him, but not far  
 enough  
 For him to show me any thing; but yet  
 I shall draw forth of him what thing I  
 will  
 If my lord bid me be more plain with  
 him;  
 But I will never take delight to wrong  
 The trust of any that puts trust in me;  
 Yet may my lord command me in all  
 things.  
 And though by checks and hints of that  
 I feared  
 This man sometimes even touch me to  
 the quick  
 With words dropt of mine honor and  
 my power  
 On mine own self, whereby I surely  
 know  
 That he suspects him of the thing we  
 wot  
 And of his life, yet as to that last fear  
 I need but say some three good words  
 to him,  
 And he rejoices, and is out of doubt.  
 He was seen never as gay of mood as  
 now  
 When I make show of grace and gentle  
 heart,  
 And puts me in remembrance of all  
 things

That may assure my faith he loves me  
 well.  
 Let not my love suspect me for his  
 sake,  
 Who take such great joy of his love-  
 making  
 That I come never where he is but  
 straight  
 I take the sickness of my sore side here,  
 I am vexed so with it; wearied might  
 he be,  
 This poisonous man that gives me all  
 this pain,  
 When I would speak of things far  
 sweeter; yet  
 He is marred not overmuch of form or  
 face,  
 Though he have borne much, and his  
 venom'd breath  
 Hath almost slain me though I sit far  
 off.  
 He would have had me watch with him,  
 but I  
 Put off the night; he says he sleeps not  
 sound.  
 He never spake more humbly nor more  
 well;  
 And if I had not proven his heart of  
 wax,  
 And were not mine cut of a diamond  
 Whereinto no shot ever can make  
 breach  
 But that which flies forth of mine own  
 love's hand,  
 I had almost had pity of him; but  
 say  
 I bid the captain of my fortified heart  
 Fear not; the place shall hold unto the  
 death.  
 And bid my love in recompense thereof  
 Let not his own be won by that false  
 kind  
 That will no less strive with him for the  
 same.  
 I think the twain were trained up in  
 one school,  
 For he hath ever tear in eye, and makes  
 Most piteous moan to arouse men's  
 pity, yea,  
 Humbly salutes them all, even to the  
 least,  
 To make their hearts soft toward him;  
 and desires

That with mine own hands I would give  
 him meat;  
 But let my lord, where he is, give no  
 more trust  
 Than I shall here. Tell him all this;  
 and say  
 I am in the doing here of a work I  
 hate  
 Past measure; and should make him  
 fain to laugh  
 To see me lie so well, or at the least  
 So well dissemble, and tell him truth  
 'twixt hands.  
 Say, by the flatteries I perforce must  
 make  
 And prayers to him to assure himself  
 of me,  
 And by complaint made of the men de-  
 signed,  
 I have drawn out of him all we list to  
 know,  
 Yet never touched one word of that  
 your lord  
 Showed me, but only wrought by wiles;  
 and say  
 With two false kinds we are coupled, I  
 and he,  
 My love; the Devil dissever us, and  
 God  
 Knit us together for the faithfullest pair  
 That ever he made one: this is my  
 faith,  
 I will die in it. Excuse me to my lord,  
 That I writ ill last night, being ill at  
 ease,  
 And when the rest were sleeping was  
 most glad  
 To write unto him, who might no more,  
 nor could  
 Sleep as they did and as I would de-  
 sire,  
 Even in my dear love's arms; whom I  
 pray God  
 Keep from all evil, and send him all  
 repose.  
 And being so long my letter hindered  
 me  
 To write what tidings of myself I would,  
 Who had wrought before for two hours  
 of the day  
 Upon this bracelet I would send to him,  
 Though it be evil made, for fault of  
 time,

I have had so little, and I can get no  
 lock,  
 Though, that mine hands might end it  
 yester-eve,  
 I would not see the man; but this mean  
 time  
 I think to make one fairer: let him not  
 Bring it in sight of any that was here,  
 For all would know it, seeing it was  
 wrought for haste  
 In sight of them; yet might it bring  
 some harm,  
 And may be seen if he should chance  
 be hurt;  
 Let him send word if he will have  
 it, and say  
 If he will have more gold by you, and  
 when  
 I shall return, and how far I may speak;  
 For this man waxes mad to hear of him  
 Or of my brother; and when I visit  
 him  
 His friends come all to be my convoy,  
 say,  
 And he desires me come the morn  
 betimes  
 And see him rise. This letter that I  
 send,  
 Bid my lord burn it, being so dangerous,  
 With naught in it well said,—for all  
 my mind  
 Was on this craft I loathe to think  
 upon,—  
 And if it find his hand in Edinburgh,  
 Let him soon send me word, and that I  
 doubt  
 Be not offended, since to doubts of him  
 I give not o'er-great credit; but say  
 this,  
 That seeing to obey him, who is my  
 dear heart's love,  
 I spare nor honor, conscience, hazard,  
 state,  
 Nor greatness whatsoever, I beseech  
 him  
 But that he take it in good part, and  
 not  
 As his false brother-in-law interprets,  
 whom  
 I pray him give not ear to nor believe  
 Against the faithfullest lover he ever  
 had  
 Or ever shall have; nor cast eye on her

Whose feigned tears should not be  
esteemed so much  
Nor prized so as the true and faithful  
toils  
Which I sustain but to deserve her  
place:  
Whereto that I despite all bonds may  
climb,  
Against my nature I betray them here  
That may prevent me from it; God for-  
give me,  
And God give him, my only love, the  
hap  
And welfare which his humble and  
faithful love  
Desires of him; who hopes to be to  
him  
Ere long a thing new-named for recom-  
pense  
Of all her irksome travails. Tell him  
this;  
Say I could never stint of hand or  
tongue  
To send love to him, and that I kiss his  
hands,  
Ending; and let him think upon his  
love,  
And write to her, and that oft; and  
read twice through  
Mine evil-written letter, and keep in  
mind  
All several sayings writ of the man  
therein.  
Say for delight I have to send to him  
I run twice over all the words I send,  
And that each word may fasten in his  
ear  
As in his eye, and you may witness me  
That hand and tongue and heart were  
one to send,  
Put all my message in your lips again  
That here was written. Say—I know  
not what;  
I can say naught but with my silent  
hands,  
Speak with the lips of deeds I do for  
him.  
*Puris.* Shall I say nothing of Lord  
Darnley more?  
*Queen.* Say, when I did but speak of  
Maitland once,  
His caitiff flesh quaked in each joint of  
him,

Each limb and bone shivered; even to  
the feet  
He shook, and his shrunk eyes were  
stark with fright,  
That like a live thing shuddered in his  
hair,  
And raised it ruffling from the roots for  
dread.  
Let him mark that: though coward the  
man be, and fool,  
He has wit and heart enough to know  
the worst  
Of his wrong-doing, and to what man-  
ner of man,  
Being fool, he did it, and discerning  
him  
Think whether his cause of dread be  
small or no  
For less or more of peril. So to horse,  
And lose no word sent of my heart to  
him.

## SCENE XV.—KIRK OF FIELD.

*Enter BOTHWELL.*

*Bothwell.* This is the time and here  
the point of earth  
That is to try what fate will make of  
me.  
I hold here in my hand my hand's  
desire,  
The fruit my life has climbed for; day  
on day  
Have I strid over, stretching toward  
this prize  
With all my thews and spirits. I must  
be glad,  
If I could think; yet even my cause of  
joy  
Doth somewhat shake me, that my  
sense and soul  
Seem in their springs confused, even as  
two streams  
Violently mingling: what is here to do  
Is less now than the least I yet have  
done,  
Being but the putting once of the mere  
hand  
To the thing done already in device,  
Wrought many times out in the work-  
ing soul.  
Yet my heart revels not, nor feel I now  
The blood again leap in me for delight

That in the thought grew riotous and  
beat high

With foretaste of possession unpos-  
sessed.

Is it that in all alike fruition slacks  
The shrunk imagination? in all deeds  
The doing undoes the spirit to do, the  
joy

Sickens, the lust is swallowed as of  
sand?

Why, yet the stream should run of my  
desire

Unshrunken, and no deserts drink it up,  
Being unfulfilled; no satiate sluggish-  
ness

Gape with dry lips at the edge of the  
dry cup

For the poor lees of longing. I am  
here

Not royal yet, nor redder in the hand  
Than war has dyed me fighting; the  
thing done

Is but for me done, since I hold it so,  
Not yet for him that in the doing must  
bleed;

I that stand up to do it, and in my  
mind

Behold across it mightier days for  
deeds,

Should not be way-sick yet nor travel-  
tired,

Before I drink fulfilment as a wine;  
And here must it restore me.

*Enter PARIS.*

Ha! so soon?

What news of her?

*Paris.* The queen commends to you  
Her best heart in this letter, and would  
know

How yet your purpose toward Craig-  
millar bears,

Whether to train him thither by her  
hand

Or what choice else.

*Bothwell.* Say, the device is changed  
By counsel and consent of whom she  
wots;

Here must they come; James Balfour  
and myself

Have waked all night to see things well  
begun,

For that bond's sake whereto his hand  
was set

With mine here at Craigmillar; all  
things now

Stand apt and fit in this his brother's  
house

To entertain the kingship of its guest;  
We have seen to it, Maitland with us.

*Paris.* I was sent

From the town hither, finding you set  
forth,

But why, folk wist not.

*Bothwell.* Carry to my queen

This diamond; say too I would send  
my heart,

But that she hath already, and no need  
To pluck it forth and feel it in her  
hand.

Bid her be swift as we have been for  
love,

And the more surety quickens our de-  
sign:

The rest unsaid shall tarry till she  
come.

SCENE XVI.—THE QUEEN'S LODGING  
IN GLASGOW.

*The QUEEN in bed; LADY RERES and  
PARIS attending.*

*Queen.* What was his word at part-  
ing? let it kiss

Mine ear again.

*Paris.* Being horsed, he bade me say,  
Madam, he would be fain for love of  
you

To train a pike all his life-days.

*Queen.* Please God,

It shall not come to that. Ere this  
month die

That has not half a week to live, we  
stand

In Edinburgh together. He will go  
Without more word or fear; and being  
well hence—

How looked my love?

*Paris.* Madam, as one uplift

To the height of heart and hope, though  
full of cares,

And keen in resolution.

*Queen.* I grow strong

To hear of him. Hath he not heart  
enough

To fill with blood a hundred of our  
hearts,

Put force and daring, for the fear cast  
 out,  
 In all our veins made manlike? Prithee,  
 Reres,  
 Was he thus ever? had he so great  
 heart  
 In those dead days, such lordliness of  
 eye  
 To see and smite and burn in master-  
 dom,  
 Such fire and iron of design and deed  
 To serve his purpose and sustain his  
 will?  
 Hath he not grown, since years that  
 knew me not,  
 In light and might and speed of spirit  
 and stroke  
 To lay swift hand upon his thought,  
 and turn  
 Its cloud to flame, its shadow to true  
 shape,  
 Its emptiness to fulness? If in sooth  
 He was thus always, he should be by  
 now  
 Hailed the first head of the earth.  
*Lady Reres.* It cannot be  
 But in your light he hath waxed, and  
 from your love,  
 Madam, drawn life and increase; but  
 indeed  
 His heart seemed ever high and mas-  
 terful  
 As of a king unkingdomed, and his eye  
 As set against the sunrise; such a brow  
 As craves a crown to do it right, and  
 hand  
 Made to hold empire swordlike, and a  
 foot  
 To tread the topless and unfooted hill  
 Whose light is from the morn of  
 majesty.  
*Queen.* When mine eye first took  
 judgment of his face,  
 It read him for a king born; and his  
 lips  
 Touching my hand for homage had as  
 'twere  
 Speech without sound in them that  
 bowed my heart  
 In much more homage to his own.  
 Would God  
 I could so read now, in that heart I  
 serve,

What thought of me moves in it, hear  
 what word  
 Now hangs upon those lips; if now his  
 eye  
 Darken or lighten toward mine unseen  
 face,  
 Or his ear hearken for my speech un-  
 heard.  
 Why art thou now not with him, and  
 again  
 Here the same hour to tell me? I  
 would have  
 More messengers than minutes that  
 divide  
 Mine eyes from their desire, to bring  
 me word,  
 With every breath, of every change in  
 him,  
 If he but rest or rise; nay, might it be,  
 Of every thought or heart-beat that  
 makes up  
 His inner hours of life: yet, by mine  
 own,  
 If he so loved me, should I know them  
 not.  
 I will rise now, and pass to see how  
 soon  
 We may set forth to-morrow.  
*Lady Reres.* Can it be  
 He shall have strength? but let your  
 highness heed  
 That pretext be not given for knaves to  
 say  
 You had no care to wait on his good  
 time,  
 But vexed and harried him, being sick,  
 with haste  
 And timeless heat of travel.  
*Queen.* Fear not you:  
 I will make means to bring him in my  
 hand  
 As a tame hound, and have his thanks  
 and love  
 For bringing him so wifelike on his way.  
 It is the last pain I shall take for him,  
 The last work I shall do for marriage-  
 sake  
 And wifehood well nigh done with duty  
 now.  
 I have not much more time to serve  
 my lord,  
 And strife shall fall between us twain  
 no more.



SCENE XVII.—DARNLEY'S CHAMBER  
IN KIRK OF FIELD.

DARNLEY and NELSON.

*Darnley.* Thou hast the keys? This house is strange and chill, — As chill as earth: I have slept no better here.

Those two days that we halted on the way

There at Linlithgow, I could see the haste

That burnt in her to be in Edinburgh, And here being come she sets me in this grange,

And till her chamber be made ready sleeps

In Holyrood apart, and here by day Hath still by her that face I warned her from,

That woman's that I spake of, plays and sings

There in the garden with none else; by God,

I like not aught of it. I am sick again, Sick-hearted, or my will should be a sword

To sunder them. I would I were away. I have ill dreams, man.

*Nelson.* Please your highness —

*Darnley.* Ay!

Is majesty gone out of all men's mouths?

Is my state dead before me, even the name

Dead of my place, then?

*Nelson.* There is come from court Lord Robert Stuart to see your majesty.

*Darnley.* Let him come in. Robert? he was my friend;

I think he held me dear till David died:

He supped with them that night. I found him once

A quick-souled fellow that would quaff and kiss

The glow of woman's or a wine-cup's mouth,

And laugh as mine own lips that loved the like

Can now no more this long time. Let him come.

*Enter* ROBERT STUART.

My holy lord of Holyrood-house, good day;

You find a fit man for a ghostly rede.

*Robert Stuart.* I am glad you have a jest yet; but I come

On graver foot than jesters run, my lord.

*Darnley.* How, graver than your ghostly name? nay, then

'Tis matter for a grave-side.

*Robert Stuart.* Sir, it may;

I would be secret with you.

*Darnley.* What, alone?

Why should we talk alone? what secret? why?

*Robert Stuart.* I will put off my sword, and give it your man,

If that will ease you.

*Darnley.* Ease me? what! by God,

You think I fear you come to kill me? Tush,

I am not the fool — and were that all, being thus,

'Faith, you might end me with your naked hands.

Leave us. [*Exit* NELSON.]

What is it? you make me not afraid — Sir, I fear no man: what, — for God's sake speak,

I am not moved, — in God's name, let me have it.

*Robert Stuart.* I came to do you such good service, sir,

As none has done you better, nor can do.

There is an old phrase in men's mouths of one

That stands between the devil and the deep sea;

So now stand you; the man that toward a reef

Drives naked on a thunderstricken wreck

And helmless, hath not half your cause of fear;

The wretch that drops plague-eaten limb from limb

Crumbles to death not half so fast as you:

The grave expects not the new-shrouded man

More surely than your corpse now coffinless.

*Darnley.* Who put this in your mouth? what enemy?

How have you heart, or whosoe'er he be,

Albeit ye hate me as the worm of hell  
Who never harmed you in my hapless days,

To use me so? I am sick —

*Robert Stuart.* Ay, sick to death,  
If you give ear not to me that am come  
In very mercy, seeing I called you friend,

For pity's sake to save you, or at least  
To stretch your days out for some brief span more

Of life now death-devoted.

*Darnley.* What, so soon?  
God would not have it done, so young I am, —

What have I done that he should give me up?

So comfortless, — who hath no help of man,

They say, hath God's; God help me!  
for God knows

There is none living hath less help of man.

Nay, and he must, as I have faith in God,

Hang all my hope upon him. For God's sake,

Whence got you this?

*Robert Stuart.* No matter.

*Darnley.* At whose hand —  
O me, what hand! who is it shall touch me?

*Robert Stuart.* Hark!  
From beneath is heard the QUEEN'S voice, singing.

*Qui se fie  
À la vie*

*A vau-l'eau va vers la mort ;*

*Et que l'onde*

*Rie ou gronde,*

*Elle entraîne loin du port.*

*Darnley.* She sings I know not what,  
— a jesting song,

A French court rhyme no graver than a flower,

Fruitless of sense: this is no threat — a toy —

QUEEN (*from beneath, sings*).

*Sur l'opale*

*Du flot pâle*

*Tremble un peu de jour encor ;*

*Sur la plage*

*Au naufrage*

*Le haut vent sonne du cor.*

*Darnley.* What is it she sings now?  
nay, what boots to hear?  
I will not hear; speak to me, — pray you, speak.

QUEEN (*from beneath*).

*La mort passe*

*Comme en chasse,*

*Et la foudre aboie aux cieux ;*

*L'air frissonne,*

*La mer tonne,*

*Le port se dérobe aux yeux.*

*Plus d'étoile*

*Que ne voile*

*L'orage âpre au souffle noir ;*

*Pas de brise*

*Qui ne brise*

*Quelque vaisseau sans espoir.*

*Noire et nue*

*Sous la nue,*

*La nef brisée à moitié*

*Tourne et vire*

*Où l'attire*

*La sombre mer sans pitié.*

*La nuit passe,*

*Et la chasse*

*S'est éteinte au fond des cieux ;*

*Mais l'aurore*

*Pleure encore*

*Sur les morts qu'ont vus ses yeux*

*Ce qui tombe*

*Dans la tombe*

*Coule et s'en va sans retour ;*

*Quand sous l'ombre*

*Plonge et combre*

*Ou la vie ou bien l'amour.*

*Robert Stuart.* Why do you shake,  
and hide your eyes? take heart;  
Let fear not be more swift to slay than hate.

*Darnley.* I said, what hand? you  
bade me hearken: well,  
What say you now she sings not?

*Robert Stuart.* I have said.

*Darnley.* I will not be your baiting-  
stock; speak plain:  
Whence had you word of any plot on  
me?

*Robert Stuart.* If you will heed me,  
well; if not, for me  
I will take heed yet that it be not ill.  
Weigh how you will my counsel, I am  
sure

If my word now lie lightly in your ear  
It would not lie the heavier for my oath  
Or any proof's assurance. Whence I  
had

This word you have of me, I am not  
bound

To put the knowledge into trust of you  
Who trust not me in asking.

*Darnley.* What! I knew  
There was no plot but yours to scare  
me, none, —

Your plot to get my favor, stay your-  
self

On me as on a staff, — affright me sick  
With blood-red masks of words and  
painted plots,

And so take hold upon me afterward  
Having my strength again and state  
and power;

A worthy friend and timely. — Nay,  
but, nay,

I meant not so — I am half distraught  
— I meant,

I know you for my friend indeed and  
true:

For one thwart word in sickness cast  
not off

Your friend that puts his trust in you,  
your friend

That was nigh mad a minute, being  
sore sick

And weak, and full of pain and fear,  
and hath

No friend to help and bear with him if  
you

Will help nor bear not. By my faith  
and life,

I do believe you love me, and in love  
Came, and in faith to me: if I believe  
not,

God give me death at once and hell to  
boot.

I pray you pardon.

*Robert Stuart.* Sir, your faith and life  
Have neither weight enough to poise  
an oath

As now they hang in balance. If you  
will,

Take to your heart my words; if not,  
be sure

It shall not grieve me though you trust  
me not,

Who never think to give you counsel  
more. [Exit.

*Darnley.* Nay, but one word — how  
would you have me fly?

He goes, and mocks me. Would my  
hands had strength

To dig his heart out for my dogs to  
feed!

He flies, and leaves me weaponless  
alone

In the eye of peril, coward and false  
heart —

Should not the tongue be false too?  
If he came

To affright me only with a fearful face,  
Blow but a blast of danger in mine ear,  
And make my faith as wax that in his  
breath

Might melt and be re-shapen of his  
hands —

Nay, I will see the queen, and in her  
eye

Read if his tongue spake truth, and  
from her lips

Draw forth his witness; if she mean  
me ill,

I cannot now but see it. Nelson! —  
She hath

No trick to keep her from mine instant  
sight,

Knows not his errand to me; and at  
once

I take her unawares and catch her soul  
Naked, her mind plain to me, good or  
ill.

QUEEN (*sings from below*).

*Lord Love went maying  
Where Time was playing,  
In light hands weighing  
Light hearts with sad;*

*Crowned king with peasant,  
Pale past with present,  
Harsh hours with pleasant,  
Good hopes with bad ;  
Nor dreamed how fleet  
Than Time's swift metre,  
O'er all things sweeter  
How clothed with power,  
The murderess maiden  
Mistrust walks laden  
With red fruit ruined and dead  
white flower.*

*Darnley.* What sting is in that song  
to smite my heart,  
And make the blood and breath come  
short in me ?

O God ! I know it — his last year's song  
of death :

They struck it on his lips who struck  
him through.

Nelson ! I will not see her — I will  
not die —

*Enter the QUEEN.*

*Queen.* I heard your call from under,  
and came in —

What ails you, sir ? why stare you thus  
askance ?

*Darnley.* I had a pang of sickness  
that passed by

While you were singing.

*Queen.* Is my brother gone ?

*Darnley.* There was none here —  
Your brother ? what, the earl ?

Doth not his wife lie at St. Andrew's  
sick,

Where he is gone to visit her ?

*Queen.* For love,

Why will you lie to me in jest ? you  
know

Here was my brother Robert.

*Darnley.* Ay, but now —

I did not say he was not here but now.

*Queen.* Has he not moved you ?

*Darnley.* Why should I be moved ?

I am not lightly shaken of men's breath ;  
What think you that he came to move  
me for ?

*Queen.* In faith, I guess not.

*Darnley.* Nay, though I be weak,

I am no need yet for him to blow and  
make

What music of me shall best please his  
mouth.

*Queen.* I think you are not, but for  
all winds blown  
Of fears and threats fixed and un-  
shakable.

What said he to you that has moved  
you not ?

*Darnley.* Nothing.

*Queen.* What ! you were moved then  
of his words ?

*Darnley.* I say I was not.

*Queen.* He said nothing, then ?

You held discourse but of days foul or  
fair,

Skies wet or dry, seasons and acci-  
dents,

All things and nothing ?

*Darnley.* Would you not know that ?

*Queen.* Even as you list or list not,  
so would I.

*Darnley.* What if it please me you  
should know this not ?

*Queen.* Why, you do wisely, seeing I  
love you not.

*Darnley.* I did not say so ; I may  
hold my peace,

Yet not for doubt that irks me of your  
love.

*Queen.* Surely you may ; good rea-  
sons may stand thick

As buds in April, in your judgment's  
sight,

To cover both your counsels from mine  
eye

That has no lust to invade your secre-  
cies.

*Darnley.* And if it please me show  
it, as now it shall,

You will not dread I doubt your love  
of me.

*Queen.* I have not heart to dread  
the doubt I know

You have not heart to harbor of my  
love.

*Darnley.* Why, he came here to warn  
me of my life.

*Queen.* Your life ?

*Darnley.* Ay, mine ; and what now  
say you to him ?

*Queen.* I say he spake as your good  
friend and mine.

*Darnley.* Ay ?

*Queen.* What more kindness could  
be shown of man

Than in your ear to warn me of your  
life

If it so stand in peril ?

*Darnley.* What ! you think

He told it me to have me tell it you ?

*Queen.* It was done gently, brother-  
like, for fear

The word of danger being first heard  
by me

Should strike too sharp upon my slight-  
er soul,

And pierce my woman's sense with  
such quick pangs

As might dethrone my judgment, shake  
my wits

To feminine confusion, and by force  
Disable my swift thoughts, now maimed

with dread,  
From their defence and office: he did

well,  
And my heart thanks him, showing you

first his fear,  
Who are manlike of your mood and

mould of mind,  
And have but for your own life to take

thought,  
Not for one dearer; as, I know you

well,  
By mine own heart I know, to have

heard of me  
Endangered would have killed your

heart with fear,  
That in your personal peril beats at

ease  
With blood as perfect as I see you now,

With pulse thus changeless, and with  
cheek thus calm.

Indeed I thank him for it, and twice I  
thank,

That he would serve you, and would  
scare not me.

Where said he was this danger ?  
*Darnley.* Nay, by God,

That would he not say; that I nothing  
know;

Save by some hint of shoulder or  
writhed lip

That seemed to shoot at you; and when  
you sang

He bade me hearken, and would speak  
no more.

*Queen.* At me ! but if such fire be on  
his tongue.

It should be forked, and set on fire of  
hell.

At me ! but if he be not mad, to you  
He shall approve it, instant face to

face,  
Eye to confronted eye, word against

word,  
He shall maintain or mark himself for

liar,—  
With his own fire and iron brand the

brow  
That burned not to belie me.

*Darnley.* Sweet, not here :  
Would I could fight with him ! but be-

ing o'erthrown  
Of my disease already, to what end

Should he come back now, save to in-  
sult on me

Who have no hand to strike at him  
again

In championship of you ?  
*Queen.* He shall come back,

And twice shall oversay the word he  
said

In your own ear, or else unswear it.  
What !

Shall I be put to shame of mine own  
blood,

To mine own lord in mine own love  
maligned,

Stricken with slanderous fangs of  
speech, and stabbed

In my heart's core of honor, yet lie  
still

And bleed to death dumb and dishon-  
orable ?

Rather let come the deadliest of my  
kin,

Mine enemies born, and bind and burr  
me quick,

Or ever I die thus; rather let all  
The false blood of my father in strange

veins  
Be set on fire against me, and its heat

Consume my fame with my frail flesh,  
and make

My scaffold of my kingdom; rather  
fall

My naked head beneath the mortal  
axe,

And with my blood my name be spilt  
and shed,

Than this charge come upon me.

*Darnley.* You are stirred  
Beyond all right of reason; be not  
moved:

You see how I believed him.

*Queen.* And to see  
Is my soul's comfort; but this wound  
that bleeds

Here in my heart's heart cannot well  
be stanch'd

Till by the tongue that smote me, as  
men say

That by the anointing of the sword  
that hurt

The wound it made finds comfort, I be  
healed.

*Darnley.* Nay, let him come; I will  
maintain it to him:

Here, to his face, he warn'd me of my  
death

Or present danger in you.

*Queen.* He shall come.

But lie now down, and sleep; I have  
weari'd you.

*Darnley.* I pray you sing me some-  
thing then; indeed

I am weary and would forget; but now  
you sang—

Doth that French song break where  
you broke it off?

*Queen.* No, there is more. Sleep, I  
will sing it you. [Sings.]

*Sur la grève  
Rien ne rêve  
Aux naufragés de la nuit;  
À la trombe,  
Gouffre et tombe,  
Au flot qui frappe et qui fuit.*

*Apaisée  
Et baisée  
Par les brises sans souci,  
Brille et vibre  
Au jour libre  
La belle mer sans merci.*

*Tant que dure  
La nuit dure  
Sur la grève où rit la mort,  
Sous l'orage  
Flotte et nage  
Le jour qui lutte et qui sort.*

*Pas de brume  
Que n'allume  
L'astre ou l'éclair des amours;  
Pas de flamme  
Qui dans l'âme  
Brûle ou luise tous les jours.*

*À l'aurore  
Tout se dore,  
Tout se fane avant la nuit;  
Et que l'heure  
Chante ou pleure,  
Dans une heure tout s'enfuit.*

*Cœur sans crainte,  
Œil sans feinte,  
Quand l'amour met voile au ven,  
Sur la plage  
Sans naufrage  
Est-il revenu souvent?*

*L'ombre emporte  
La nef morte,  
Et la joie, et le beau jour;  
Trop profonde  
Était l'onde.  
Et trop faible était l'amour.*

[The scene closes.]

SCENE XVIII.—BEHIND KIRK OF  
FIELD.

BOTHWELL, ORMISTON, HEPBURN of  
BOLTON, and HAY of TALLA.

*Bothwell.* If it be done to-morrow,  
we shall stand

The surer that the queen slept here to-  
night.

Cousin, bring you my knaves from  
Holyrood

At nightfall to that hinder gate where-  
through

We three shall give you passage with  
your charge

To the strait garden-plot beyond the  
walls

Whereto the door that opens from be-  
neath

Shall stand unbolted, and you entering  
spread

Along the blind floor of the nether vault

The train that shall set all these walls  
on wing.

*Ormiston.* How said you, that his groom here had the keys?

*Bothwell.* That under door which lets us down lacks none:

There is no lock to palter with: it needs

But leave the bolt undrawn; and yesterday

By the queen's order was the door removed

At bottom of the stair, to be instead  
A cover for his bath-vat; so there stands

But the main door now.

*Hepburn.* That was well devised:

She sleeps beneath his chamber here to-night?

*Bothwell.* Ay, to the west.

*Hay.* She has the stouter heart.

I have trod as deep in the red wash  
o' the wars

As who walks reddest, yet I could not sleep,

I doubt, with next night's dead man overhead.

*Bothwell.* We are past the season of divided wills;

Where but one thought is, nothing to be done

Has power to hurt the heart that holds it fast,

Or leave the purpose weaker by a wound

Given it of doubt or after-thought: we have

One thing to do, one eye to see it, one hand

To pluck it from the occasion; what he wills

None but a fool would mix his will to achieve

With pain and fear; the mind once shaped and set

That works, and yet looks back and weeps to do,

Is but half man's; and all a man's bath she.

*Hepburn.* Yet woman moulded outward, clothed upon

As 'twere with feminine raiment, touched with thoughts

Of female-colored fashion, woman's craft:

She sees and thinks on what could touch not us,

Nor graze in passing even our skirts of sense:

Takes order for the hangings of his bed

Whom we must kill to her hand, lest water soil

The sable velvet from his bath, and bids

Pluck down and save them; such slight things and strange

As take the thought and hold the eye of girls,

Her soul, as full of great things as it is,  
As large and fiery, bright and passionate,

Takes no less thought for, and hath heed of these

No less than of high deed and deep desire

Beyond where sight can scale or thought can dive

Of narrower eye and shallower spirit than hers.

*Bothwell.* Most royal is she, but of soul not all

Uncurbable, nor of all shafts that fly  
Scathless, nor of all shots invulnerable;

She had no part else and no power in us,

No part in all that mingling makes up man,

No power upon our earth who are earthlier made;

She has the more might on men's ways of soul

Not being almighty, nor from all man's moods

Divided, but as passion-touched and mixed

With all such moods as men are; nay, not these,

But such as bear the rule of these, and lead

Which way they will — women's; and being so mixed

She is even the more entire, more whole and strong,

Herself and no self other. She nor I

Live now on thoughts and words; the deed it is,

Our deed alone we live by, till being done

It leave us time for life that deals with these.

I will be with you ere night fall again  
Within the town-wall; thither get you now,

And doubt not of us.

*Ormiston.* Doubt not you to find  
All ready by the night and need: farewell.

[*Exeunt all but BOTHWELL.*

*Bothwell.* The time is breathless;  
earth sees heaven as chill  
In the after air declining from high day.

I would the winds would muster, or the sun

Show half an eye-blink of his face that hangs

Now downward to the sea, curbed in with cloud,

And with a brief breath fire the rack that flies.

Why should not flame break over Arthur's Seat

This hour, and all the heaven with burning tongues

Cry from the world's height to the under line

That ends it for us gazing? If the sky  
Had speech as it hath fire, or night or day

Voice to declare God's pleasure or his wrath

With their dumb lips of light, from moon or sun

Or the mute mouths of stars, would earth that heard

Take thought and counsel of the cause, to stir

Men's hearts up for our deed's sake here? I am wrought

Out of myself even by this pause and peace

In heaven and earth, that will not know of us

Nor what we compass; in this face of things,

Here in this eye of ever-during life  
That changes not in changing, fear and hope,

The life we live, the life we take, alike

Decline and dwindle from the shape they held,

Their import and significance: all seem  
Less good and evil, worth less hate and love,

Than we would have them for our high heart's sake.

How shall this day, when all these days are done,

Seem to me standing where it sets my feet?

Nay, whence shall I behold it? or who knows

What crest or chasm, what pit or pinnacle,

Shall feel my foot or gulf my body down,

Bear up or break me falling? Fall or stand,

At least I live not as the beasts that serve,

But with a king's life or man's death at last

Make all my travails perfect; and a queen,

The fairest face I have loved and fieriest heart,

Shines with my star or sets.

*Enter PARIS.*

What sends she now?

*Paris.* I came to know if you stand fixed indeed,

Sir, for to-morrow.

*Bothwell.* For to-morrow, man;

What ails him at to-morrow?

*Paris.* My dread lord,

Naught ails me but as part of your design;

But I beseech you by your trust of me,  
What says this while my lord of Murray?

*Bothwell.* He!

He will nor help nor hinder — but a!!!s one.

*Paris.* He is wise.

*Bothwell.* But is it to tell me he is wise

That you bestow your own wise tongue on me?

Came you to advise me or to show my trust

How cracked a casket I have closed it in



Who trusted in so white a heart as yours?

*Paris.* I have a message —

*Bothwell.* Well, the message, then:  
And as you are wise, make me not  
wroth to-day,  
Who am but foolish.

*Paris.* Sir, the queen by me  
Wills you to know that from her hus-  
band's mouth  
She is assured there came here yester-  
day

To him her brother, Abbot of St. Cross,  
To warn him of some danger.

*Bothwell.* From his mouth!  
Had ever mouth such hunger to eat  
dust?

Well, it shall soon be filled and shut.  
What else?

*Paris.* She has taxed hereof her  
brother —

*Bothwell.* What, by word?

*Paris.* No, but by note she let him  
wist she knew it.  
Now he denies again his word aloud —

*Bothwell.* He does the wiselier; there  
your tongue struck right;  
She has wise men to brethren.

*Paris.* And desires  
To prove it on the accuser's body, being  
Once whole again to meet him.

*Bothwell.* A fair proof:  
Doth either sword seek mine for sec-  
ond?

*Paris.* Nay;  
But the queen bade me tell you he  
should go

To her lord's chamber for his challenge'  
sake,

And do that thing ye wot of.

*Bothwell.* Tell the queen  
I will speak to him. We must not mar  
our hand;

Say will I see him before the morrow  
morn.

Howbeit, it shall be well but for a  
night

To put our present purpose back, and  
see

If chance or craft will mend our hand  
again.

Who strikes most sure strikes deepest.  
Say I go

To try this brother's edge; if he be  
sure,

He shall well serve us as a glove to  
wear

And strike, and have the whiter hands  
to show.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE XIX. — DARNLEY'S CHAMBER.

DARNLEY and NELSON.

*Darnley.* I never had such evil  
dreams as now.

Save for the terror of them and after  
pain,

I durst well swear I had not slept to-  
night.

*Nelson.* You have slept seven hours.

*Darnley.* I have been seven years in  
hell:

Mine eyes are full yet of the flames, my  
flesh

Feels creep the fire upon it; even my  
heart

Is as a sere leaf shrunken.

*Nelson.* Being awake,

Let not it move you.

*Darnley.* Nay, it shall not move.  
Yet were they dreams to shake with  
waking fear

A sounder state than mine is.

*Nelson.* Sir, what dreams?

*Darnley.* No matter what: I'll tell  
thee yet some part,

That thou may'st know I shrink not for  
no cause.

I dreamed this bed here was a boat  
adrift

Wherein one sat with me who played  
and sang,

Yet of his cittern I could hear no note  
Nor in what speech he sang inaudibly,

But watched his working fingers and  
quick lips

As with a passionate and loathing fear,  
And could not speak nor smite him,  
and methought

That this was David; and he knew my  
heart,

How fain I would have smitten him,  
and laughed

As 'twere to mock my helpless hands  
and hate.

So drove we toward a rock whereon  
 one sat  
 Singing, that all the highest air of  
 heaven  
 Was kindled into light therewith, and  
 shone  
 As with a double dawn; stars east and  
 west  
 Lightened with love to hear her, and  
 the sky  
 Brake in red bloom as leaf-buds break  
 in spring,  
 But these bore fires for blossoms: then  
 a while  
 My heart too kindled, and sprang up  
 and sang,  
 And made sweet music in me, to keep  
 time  
 With that swift singing; then as fire  
 drops down  
 Dropped, and was quenched, and in  
 joy's stead I felt  
 Fear ache in me like hunger; and I  
 saw  
 These were not stars, nor overhead was  
 heaven,  
 But a blind vault more thick and gross  
 than earth,  
 The nether firmament that roofs in  
 hell;  
 And those hot lights were of lost souls,  
 and this  
 The sea of tears and fire below the  
 world  
 That still must wash and cleanse not  
 of one curse  
 The fair foul strands with all its wander-  
 ing brine:  
 And as we drove I felt the shallop's  
 sides,  
 Sapped by the burning water, plank  
 from plank  
 Severing; and fain I would have cried  
 on God,  
 But that the rank air took me by the  
 throat;  
 And ever she that sat on the sea-rock  
 Sang, and about her all the reefs were  
 white  
 With bones of men whose souls were  
 turned to fire;  
 And if she were or were not what I  
 thought,

Meseemed we drew not near enough to  
 know;  
 For ere we came to split upon that reef  
 The Sundering planks opened, and  
 through their breach  
 Swarmed in the dense surf of the dolor-  
 ous sea  
 With hands that plucked and tongues  
 thrust out at us,  
 And fastened on me flame-like, that my  
 flesh  
 Was molten as with earthly fire, and  
 dropped  
 From naked bone and sinew; but mine  
 eyes  
 The hot surf seared not, nor put out my  
 sense;  
 For I beheld and heard out of the  
 surge  
 Voices that shrieked and heads that  
 rose, and knew  
 Whose all they were, and whence their  
 wrath at me;  
 For all these cried upon me that mine  
 ears  
 Rang, and my brain was like as beaten  
 brass,  
 Vibrating; and the froth of that foul  
 tide  
 Was as their spittle shot in my full  
 face  
 That burnt it; and with breast and  
 flanks distent  
 I strained myself to curse them back,  
 and lacked  
 Breath; the sore surge throttled my  
 tongueless speech,  
 Though its weight buoyed my dipping  
 chin, that sank  
 No lower than where my lips were  
 burnt with brine  
 And my throat clenched fast of the  
 strangling sea,  
 Till I swam short with sick strokes, as  
 one might  
 Whose hands were maimed. Then mine  
 ill spirit of sleep  
 Shifted, and showed me as a garden  
 walled,  
 Wherein I stood naked, a shipwrecked  
 man,  
 Stunned yet and staggered from the  
 sea, and soiled

With all the weed and scurf of the  
 gross wave  
 Whose breach had cast me broken on  
 that shore ;  
 And one came like a god in woman's  
 flesh,  
 And took mine eyes with hers, and gave  
 me fruit  
 As red as fire, but full of worms within  
 That crawled and gendered; and she  
 gave me wine,  
 But in the cup a toad was; and she  
 said,  
*Eat*, and I ate, and *Drink*, and I did  
 drink,  
 And sickened; then came one with spur  
 on heel  
 Red from his horse o'erridden, smeared  
 with dust,  
 And took my hand to lead me as to rest,  
 Being bruised yet from the sea-breach;  
 and his hand  
 Was as of molten iron wherein mine  
 Was as a brand in fire; and at his feet  
 The earth split, and I saw within the  
 gulf  
 As in clear water mine own writen  
 face,  
 Eaten of worms and living; then I  
 woke.

*Nelson.* It was a foul and formless  
 dream, my lord,

With no soul in it.

*Darnley.* Nay, I think it had not.

And I did mind me, waking, how the  
 queen  
 Sang me a song of shipwreck, and  
 strange seas,  
 And love adrift by night, and fires burnt  
 out  
 That shine but for a song's length: I  
 did think  
 It was this singing made up half my  
 dream.  
 For there was talk of storms in it, and  
 stars,  
 And broken ships, and death that rode  
 in the air:  
 So was there in my dream. What step  
 comes here?

*Enter ROBERT STUART.*

*Robert Stuart.* I come to change less  
 than a word with you,

And take my leave for all your rest of  
 life.

*Darnley.* I will not speak alone with  
 you again:

Stay by me there.

*Robert Stuart.* Have you not armor  
 on?

You should not sleep with sword ungirt  
 on thigh,

Lest one should fall upon you. For  
 this time

I come indeed to see if you be man,  
 Or ever knew beyond the naked name  
 What grace and office should belong to  
 man

Or purpose to his sword. Reply not  
 yet:

I know you are sick, weak, pitiful, half  
 dead,

And with the ingrained infection of  
 your soul

Its bodily house grown rotten; all you  
 will;

You cannot swear yourself that piteous  
 thing

That I will not believe you wretcheder;  
 No flesh could harbor such a worm  
 alive

As this thing in you taken for a soul,  
 And 'scape corruption; but if you shall  
 live

To stand again afoot and strike one  
 stroke

For your own hand and head, you shall  
 fight with me

Or wear the lie writ red upon your face  
 With my hand's buffet, that you spake  
 who said

I had given you note of danger from  
 the queen.

*Darnley.* Is it a plot, her plot upon  
 me? Sir,

By God, I never said so: what I said  
 I have heart and sword to uphold  
 against all swords,

And kill you if I might as many times  
 As you shall iterate on me this for true  
 Which is most false. When I may  
 stand and go—

*Robert Stuart.* Yea, then shall we see  
 fighting. But as now

You can but swear you said not this of  
 me?

*Darnley.* I am not bound to swear it  
or unswear

At any bidding; but so much I will —  
That you may see no hot foul words of  
yours

Have quenched in me the old thought  
of fellowship —

As swear again I said but what I might  
With honor and clear heart: I spake  
no word

To bring you in suspicion, or to turn  
Thwart eyes upon you of men's jeal-  
ousies,

Or cast you out of favor with the queen;  
I said but you did warn me of my life,  
As being my fast friend still, I thanked  
you for it.

I know not what she says I said, but  
this

I know: I spake no treason of you.  
See,

This is a foolish wind of wrath that  
shakes

And wrecks your faith in me, mine own  
in you

Being firm and flawless; what you have  
said, you have said;

And what I have spoken of you was no  
more

Than I had right to speak, and rest  
your friend.

*Robert Stuart.* Will you fight with  
me to maintain so much?

*Darnley.* If I might rise, I would put  
off my state

To stand against you equal; you did  
say it,

That I was even as one the law damns  
dead,

And she was parcel of my peril.

*Robert Stuart.* Ay!

You said so to her?

*Darnley.* She will not say I did.

*Robert Stuart.* Plight not your faith  
to that: I am assured

You said so, and so lied; and this last  
time

I bind you yet to meet me on this cause,  
Or bear the lie about you as a badge.

*Darnley.* By God, I will grow strong  
to fight with you.

*Robert Stuart.* If I shall see your  
living face again,

It shall be as mine enemy's; foot to  
foot

And hand to mortal hand we twain will  
meet,

Or ere the day dawn I shall see you  
dead.

*Darnley.* I am like to die, then? and  
your warlike words

Have so much iron in them, and your  
heart

Such daring to provoke one well-nigh  
dead?

I wist your tongue would move more  
tenderly

If I had now my strength of natural  
hand

And body to bear arms: but these shall  
come,

And you change face, and lower your  
look to see.

*Robert Stuart.* I will abide my peril:  
do you the like,

You shall do wisely; should I say fare-  
well,

It were to bid you fare not as they do  
Who are of your kind or of your for-  
tune; yet

I bid you, sir, fare better than I think.

[*Exit.*

*Darnley.* Ay, you think venomously.

What hour to-day

Should the queen come?

*Nelson.* To-night your highness knows

Her man Sebastian weds a maid of  
hers,

And she makes feast for them in Hoiy-  
rood

With masque and music; having early  
supped,

She will be here somewhere with certain  
lords

To visit you, and so pass back ere night.

*Darnley.* She shall not make so  
much, when I am revived,

Of outland folk and fiddlers, who  
should have

Too much of them by this. I would  
she had come

To see me turn the lie back on his lips.  
I did not answer as I might, being  
whole,

But yet not like a sick man, ha? like  
one

Whose wit and heart lie sick too with  
his flesh?

*Nelson.* Nay, with your natural spirit  
of speech you spoke,

With the same heart and tongue you  
have in health.

*Darnley.* I think I did; I would she  
had come betimes.

SCENE XX.—THE GARDEN BEHIND  
KIRK OF FIELD.

BOTHWELL, ORMISTON, HAY.

*Bothwell.* Did I not bid them spare  
no speed? the devil

I think has maimed their feet in my  
despite,

To keep a knave so piteous out of hell.  
By God, it will be moonrise ere they  
come.

*Ormiston.* Tush, man! the night is  
close.

*Bothwell.* Ay, close and safe  
As is the lock of a girl's maidenhood  
When the gold key turns in it. They  
halt like jades;

God plague their laggard limbs with  
goads of fire!

Must they fall spavined now?

*Hay.* Here come they three,  
And with charged hands; be not so  
outward hot,  
But as their charge is ere we give it  
fire.

*Bothwell.* Teach your own tongue to  
take your tune, not mine.

*Enter HEPBURN with Servants.*

Have you some devil's cramp in your  
bones, to crawl

At this worm's race? Set down your  
load, and go.

[*Exeunt Servants.*]

What lamed these knaves' feet or be-  
lated you,

To hold us here thus till the moon  
were up?

*Hepburn.* 'Tis not yet risen; and  
your own word it was

Withheld us till the west should cast  
off red.

*Bothwell.* Well, we have time. Ye  
three are hands enough

To bear this down, and strew it within  
the vault,

While I go help the queen here bide  
her hour

Till you send Paris to me for a sign.  
Take heed there be no noise. Let but

two stay  
To fire the train; you, cousin, for my love

Shall be one hand thereto. Pass in,  
and see

Ye go down sure and softly. From  
this gate

Ye know the passage under; go, and  
speed.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE XXI.—DARNLEY'S CHAMBER.

*The QUEEN, DARNLEY, Earls of CASSI-  
LIS, HUNTLEY, and ARGYLE.*

*Queen.* But I must chide you for one  
thing, my lord,

That you would hold your servant  
Duram here

Though it be for love you bear him;  
he is sick,

And should not sleep nor watch with  
you to-night.

You do not well to keep him from the  
town

Against his health, who should take  
physic there,

And come back whole to serve you.

*Darnley.* Let him go.  
I did but bid him leave me not alone;

I will have one for service at my hand.

*Queen.* Have you no more but just  
this young man gone

Whom I bade go even where was best  
for him?

Let your page lie at hand here.

*Darnley.* Nay, I will.

You sent off Alexander?  
*Queen.* He was sick;

We should show care of them we take  
to grace

More friendlike than by cherishing our-  
selves

With their forced company; the grace  
is more

To take thought for them whom we  
hold in trust

Than still to exact their service, tax  
their faith,  
Whose faith and service we that lean  
thereon  
Should put to no more toil and pain  
than needs,  
Requiring love with labor.

*Darnley.* You say well:  
But what should ail him? save that  
yesterday  
He found his bed-straw here by chance  
afire,

And flung it out at window; on which  
plea

He would not lie to-night here, till I  
bade him

Sleep with me as aforetime, being of  
all

The man bound closest to my love and  
trust;

Then first he spake of sickness, as you  
heard

Who sat between us. Nay, but let  
him go;

The boy shall serve to sleep here.

*Queen.* Sickness makes  
All wills to serve it like necessity:  
Witness my will to keep my brother  
here

Whom his wife's sickness at St. An-  
drew's now

Parts from our feasts and counsels,  
caught up hence

As if a wind had rapt him.

*Darnley.* She is sick too, —  
The lady Murray?

*Queen.* Nigh to death, he says;  
I know not: who knows how near  
death he walks

Who treads as now most upright in the  
sun?

*Argyle.* Why have we death and  
sickness in our mouths,  
Who come forth of a feast not ended  
yet

That in good time recalls us?

*Queen.* Presently.  
I would you were in health to dance  
me down

To-night but for the bride's sake; for  
the groom,

He may live easier that you grace him  
not,

Nor gall with favor or with jealousy.

*Darnley.* We twain shall see this  
night out otherwise.

*Queen.* I am sure you shall see more  
of rest than I.

*Darnley.* Except I watch for sick-  
ness' sake all night.

*Queen.* That shall you not; I charge  
you on my love

Sleep sound for my sake.

*Enter BOTHWELL.*

Are not you the bell  
That strikes the hour to sunder us, my  
lord?

*Bothwell.* Madam, I strike not yet.

*Queen.* The better: sit,  
And make no sound of parting till your  
hour,

No timeless note of severance. My  
fair lord,

Have you no fair word for your noble  
guests?

*Darnley.* I pray you, sirs, of your  
own gentleness.

Lay it not to my discourtesy for shame  
That I can but thus sickly entertain  
The grace ye do me; that I meet it so,  
Impute not to my will that is myself,  
But to my weakness that is none of me  
Save as our enemy may be part of us,  
And so forgive it.

*Huntley.* Sir, we are fain to see,  
Even in your gracious words that speak  
you ill,

Some spirit of health already.

*Cassilis.* I would pledge  
My name and word you shall not long  
lie sick,

Who bear yourself thus lordlike.

*Queen.* Ah! my heart — *[Noise heard.]*

It wrings me here in passing; pardon  
me.

*Bothwell.* God's lightning burn them!  
will they mar me now?

*[Aside, and exit.]*

*Darnley.* Heard you no noise?

*Argyle.* Where?

*Queen.* Some one stirred below;  
A chair thrown down or such-like.

*Darnley.* Nay, I caught

A rush and rattle as —

*Cassilis.* Of pebble-stones?

*Darnley.* Where is my lord gone forth?  
*Queen.* Why are you moved?  
*Darnley.* I am not moved: I am no fearful fool  
 To shake and whiten as a winter tree  
 With no more wind than this is.  
*Queen.* Do you think  
 It is your counsellor come back in wrath  
 To warn again and threaten?  
*Darnley.* Nay, for him  
 I think he hath learnt a lesson of my rede  
 To vex his soul and trouble me no more.  
*Re-enter BOTHWELL.*  
*Queen.* What deadly news now of what danger, sir?  
*Bothwell.* Some fellow bearing fagots for the fire  
 Slipt at the threshold: I have admonished him  
 What din his knaveship made even in our ears  
 As if he had the devil there in his hands.  
*Queen (aside).* It was of them?  
*Bothwell (aside).* Ay, hell take hold on them!  
 It was their din, God thank them for it with fire,  
 Our careful helpers; but I have made them safe:  
 The train is well-nigh laid now: what remains  
 To strew, I have charged them shed without more sound  
 Than where the snow strikes.  
*Darnley.* Must you part indeed?  
*Queen.* They look for us ere long.  
*Darnley.* Now know I not  
 What I would give to hold you here a night:  
 Even half my life, I think, and know not why.  
*Queen.* That were too much. I slept here yesterday;  
 Were you the better for me?  
*Darnley.* Ay, and no;  
 I deemed I was the better till I slept,  
 And then —  
*Queen.* Why, did my being here break your sleep?

It shall not break to-night then.  
*Enter PARIS, and stands at the door.*  
*Bothwell (aside to ARGYLE).* Time is come;  
 Touch him, and give the sign.  
*Darnley.* The air turns sharp;  
 There came a wind as chill as from the pit.  
 Why do you fix your eyes so fast on me?  
*Queen.* Not out of mind to mar your sleep again.  
*Darnley.* I will not sleep alone.  
*Queen.* Ay, will you not?  
 The town looks like a smoke whose flame is out,  
 Deformed of night, defaced and featureless,  
 Dull as the dead fume of a fallen fire.  
 There starts out of the cloud a climbing star,  
 And there is caught and slain.  
*Darnley.* Why gaze you so?  
*Queen.* I looked to see if there should rise again  
 Out of its timeless grave the mounting light  
 That so was overtaken. We must part;  
 Keep with this kiss this ring again for me  
 Till I shall ask it of you; and good night.  
*Darnley.* A good night it may be to folk that feast;  
 I see not how it shall be good to me.  
*Queen.* It may be better. I must be some hour  
 Again among the masquers: you that sleep  
 Shall hear no noise and see no company.  
*Enter NELSON.*  
 For this one night here comes your chamberlain:  
 Good rest with you. 'Twas just this time last year  
 David was slain.  
*Darnley.* Why tell you me of that?  
*Queen.* This very time as now. Good night, my lord.  
 [Exit all but DARNLEY and NELSON]  
*Darnley.* What folk remain by me?  
*Nelson.* Sir, four of us:

Myself and Seymour, Taylor and his boy.

*Darnley.* Let Taylor sleep here in my room to-night,

You three in the south gallery.

*Nelson.* Well, my lord.

*Darnley.* I am left here very lonely.

She was kind,

Most kind she was; but what should make her speak

Of David's slaying?

*Nelson.* A word that shot by chance; A shaft of thought that grazed her and flew by.

*Darnley.* Why should she tell me of it? My heart runs low;

As if my blood beat out of tune with life,

I feel the veins shuddering shrink in, and all

My body seems a burden to my soul.

Come, I will think not that way.

*Re-enter PARIS.*

*Paris.* Sir, the queen,

Having forgot for haste in parting hence Her outer cloak of fur, hath sent me for it,

Lest this night's weather strike her blood a-cold.

*Darnley.* Take it, and go.

*[Exit PARIS.]*

I do not like their eyes,

These foreign folk's that serve her. Is it cold?

I feel cold here.

*Nelson.* A fair sharp night, my lord; And the air less cumbered than it was with cloud.

*Darnley.* I find no night of all nights fair to me:

I am sick here at my heart all the dark hours.

Give me the book there. Ay, my book of psalms?

What day is this?

*Nelson.* The ninth of February.

*Darnley.* How says it of God's foes, they were afraid

Where no fear was? That am not I: my fear

Dies without food. I am not as were these.

I prithee tell me, of thine honest heart,

Think'st thou I have no cause to feed my fear,

Or keep the bitter life in it alive?

*Nelson.* I know not, sir; but what you give it of food

Is so much taken from your health of heart

That goes to starve your spirit of like-ly life.

*Darnley.* Why, then I will not feed it with false thoughts.

Call here my chamber-fellow. If the heart

*Enter TAYLOR.*

Be but the servant of chance cold and heat,

And the brain bear not rule upon the blood,

We are beasts who call us men. Thomas, good night.

*[Exit NELSON.]*

What, shall we watch a while?

*Taylor.* So please your grace.

*Darnley.* I have more mind to sleep than power to sleep:

Some unrest in me fights against my rest.

Come hither, Will. Of all thy fellows here,

I think thou lov'st me; fain am I to think.

I would not live unloved of all men born;

I hope I shall not. Dost thou feel to-night

Thy living blood and spirit at ease in thee?

*Taylor.* Surely, my lord.

*Darnley.* I would thy lord did too.

This is a bitter writing where he saith How in his prayer he mourns, and hath

his heart Disquieted within him; and again,

The fear of death is fallen upon him, see,

And fearfulness and trembling, as is writ,

Are come upon him, and an horrible dread

Hath him o'erwhelmed: Oh that I had, saith he,

Wings like a dove! then would I flee away,



And be at rest; would get me then far  
 off,  
 And bide within the wilderness, it  
 saith;  
 I would make haste to escape. Lo, here  
 am I,  
 That bide as in a wilderness indeed,  
 And have not wings to bear me forth  
 of fear.  
 Nor is it an open enemy, he saith,  
 Hath done me this dishonor (what hath  
 put  
 This deadly scripture to mine eye to-  
 night?)  
 For then I could have borne it; but it  
 was  
 Even thou, mine own familiar friend,  
 with whom  
 I took sweet counsel; in the house of  
 God  
 We walked as friends. Ay, in God's  
 house it was  
 That we joined hands, even she my wife  
 and I,  
 Who took but now sweet counsel mouth  
 to mouth,  
 And kissed as friends together.  
 Wouldst thou think,  
 She set this ring at parting on my  
 hand  
 And to my lips her lips? and then she  
 spake  
 Words of that last year's slaughter. O  
 God, God!  
 I know not if it be not of thy will  
 My heart begins to pass into her  
 heart,  
 Mine eye to read within her eye, and  
 find  
 Therein a deadlier scripture. Must it  
 be  
 That I so late should waken, and so  
 young  
 Die? for I wake as out of sleep to  
 death.  
 Is there no hand or heart on earth to  
 help?  
 Mother! my mother! hast thou heart  
 nor hand  
 To save thy son, to take me hence  
 away  
 Far off, and hide me? But I was thy  
 son,

That lay between thy breasts and drank  
 of thee,  
 And I thy son it is they seek to slay.  
 My God, my God! how shall they mur-  
 der me?  
*Taylor.* I pray you, comfort your own  
 heart, my lord:  
 Your passion drives your manhood out  
 of you.  
*Darnley.* I know it doth: I am hare-  
 hearted, for  
 The hunters are upon me. There —  
 and there —  
 I hear them questing. I shall die, man,  
 — die,  
 And never see the sun more; ay, this  
 hour  
 Will they come in and slay me. O  
 great God,  
 Sweet Jesus! will you have me die this  
 death,  
 Such death as never man before has  
 died?  
 See how they will not let me pray to  
 you,  
 To take my soul out of their fangs and  
 hell!  
 Will you not make the sun rise for my  
 sake,  
 That I may see you in the dawn, and  
 live,  
 And know the grace that God hath ere  
 I die?  
*Taylor.* Sir, for God's love —  
*Darnley.* I say I hear their feet.  
 Thou hast no ears — God hath no ears  
 for me,  
 Nor eyes to look upon me; hands he  
 hath, —  
 Their bloody hands to smite with, and  
 her heart  
 Is his toward me to slay me. Let them  
 come.  
 How do men die? but I so trapped  
 alive, —  
 Oh, I shall die a dog's death and no  
 man's.  
 Mary, by Christ whose mother's was  
 your name,  
 Slay me not! God, turn off from me  
 that heart, —  
 Out of her hands, God, God, deliver  
 me!

## ACT III.—JANE GORDON.

*Time: from February 10 to June 11,  
1567.*

SCENE I.—BOTHWELL'S APARTMENT  
IN HOLYROOD.

BOTHWELL, ORMISTON, HEPBURN OF  
BOLTON, and other Gentlemen.

*Bothwell.* Is my knave sent for to me  
from the queen?

*Hepburn.* Ay, my good lord.

*Bothwell.* I had happier thoughts of  
him,

Who served us but unhappily last night:  
This Paris had been faithful, and his  
tongue,

That might have struck a sting into my  
fame,

Had done me loyal service, and let fly  
No word to bring me in disgrace of men  
When I stood friendless; for which  
cause ye know

I gave him place with the queen's  
chamberlains

And promise of more furtherance; but  
this thing

Has turned his six years' service into  
dust,

And made his faith as running water  
slip

Between my hands that held it for a  
staff;

For, since I first brake with him of the  
deed,

He hath been for fear besotted like  
a beast.

*Ormiston.* 'Faith, he was heavy  
enough of cheer last night

When you came forth, and the queen  
parted thence

And nither to the bridal.

*Bothwell.* By this hand,  
I came upon him glooming and with-  
drawn

Up in a nook with face as of one  
hanged,

And asked what ailed him to put on  
that gloom

Or make such countenance there before  
the queen?

And I would handle him in such sort, I  
said,

As he was never in his life,—by God,  
I had the mind to do it,—and he, *My  
lord,*

*I care not what thing now ye do to me,*  
And craved he might get thence to bed,  
as sick,

But that I would not: then, as ye twain  
saw,

When came the wind and thunder of  
the blast

That blew the fool forth who took wing  
for death,

Down my knave drops me flatlong, with  
his hair

Aghast as hedgehogs' prickles, and,  
*Alas,*

*My lord! what thing is this?* and *He  
had seen*

*Great enterprises, marry, and many of  
them,*

*But never one that scared him so at  
this;*

*And such a thing would never have good  
end,*

*And I should see it.* By God, I had a  
will

To have set my dagger here into him,  
but yet

I drew it not forth.

*Ormiston.* I doubt you did not well:  
'Tis of such stuff that time makes tale-  
bearers.

*Bothwell.* I would not strike him for  
old service' sake,

Were he more dangerous to me; but,  
God help,

What hurt here can he do us? I tell  
you, sirs,

I think my star that was not swift to  
rise,

But hung this long time strangled in  
dead cloud,

Is even by this a fire in heaven, and  
hath

The heat and light in it of this dead  
man's

That it hath drunk up as a dewdrop  
drawn

Into the red mid-heat of its own heart  
And ye that walk by light of it shall  
stand

With morning on the footless mountain-tops  
Crowned.

*Hepburn.* There are crags yet slippery to be clomb,  
And scaurs to rend their knees and feet  
who rise.

*Bothwell.* I have my hand here on  
the throat of time,  
And hold mine hour of fortune by the  
hair.

Had I let slip this season, I had fallen  
Naked and sheer to break myself on  
death,

A cragsman crushed at the cliff's foot;  
but now

Chance cannot trip me, if I look not  
down

And let mine eye swim back among  
slain fears

To reckon up dead dangers; but I  
look

High up as is the light, higher than  
your eyes,

Beyond all eagles' aeries, to the sun.

*Ormiston.* You will be king?

*Bothwell.* Was I not crowned last  
night?

The hand that gave those dead stones  
wings to fly

Gave wings too to my fortune, and the  
fire

That sprang then in our faces, on my  
head

Was as the gold forefigured on a king's.

*Enter PARIS.*

What says the queen? why shak'st thou  
like a cur?

Speak, beast, or beastlike shalt thou  
fare with me:

Has thou not seen her?

*Paris.* Ay, my lord.

*Bothwell.* Ay, dog?

What said she to those gaping eyes of  
thine?

*Paris.* My lord, I found her in her  
mourning bed

New-hung with black; her looks were  
fresh and staid:

Her fast being broken only with an  
egg,

Ere she addressed herself again to  
sleep

She spake but three words with me of  
yourself,

How might you fare, and when she rose  
by noon

You should come to her: no more.

*Bothwell.* So let her sleep;

There are that watch for her. For  
thine own part,

I charge thee, tell me one thing: in thy  
life

Didst thou pledge ever promise, or  
plight faith,

To that dead mask of kingship?

*Paris.* Nay, my lord.

*Bothwell.* Seest thou not now these  
gentlemen my friends?

Not one of them but for troth's sake to  
me

And loving service hath cast all things  
off

To do as I shall and to fare as I;

And if thou think'st, whom no faith  
bound nor love

To serve that fool, or come 'twixt hell  
and him

To buckler him from burning, — if thou  
think'st,

That art my servant, thou hast sinned  
toward God

In our offence, this lies not to thy  
charge,

But mine who caused thee do it, and  
all the lords'

Who with me took this work in all  
their hands.

And if now thou have will to go thy  
way,

Thou shalt depart right soon with re-  
compense;

But for all pains that can be put to thee  
Thou must not take this on thy tongue  
again.

*Paris.* My lord, I will not.

*Bothwell.* Sirs, with me it rests

To take some order for the burial soon.  
When the queen's eye hath dwelt upon  
him dead, —

As shall be, lest men say for shame or  
fear

She would not see him, — then with all  
privy speed

He shall by night be given here to the  
worms.

His raiment and his horses will I take  
 By the queen's gift; for, being now  
 highest in place,  
 I will present me kinglike to the time,  
 And come before men royal, who shall  
 know  
 I stand here where he stood in all their  
 sight;  
 So, seeing at once if I be lord or no,  
 He that shall hate me risen shall need  
 take heart  
 To strike betimes, or strike not. At  
 this hour  
 Bold heart, swift hand, are wiser than  
 wise brain.  
 I must be seen of all men's fear or hate,  
 And as I am seen must see them, and  
 smite down,  
 Or lie forever naked underfoot  
 Down in the dark for them to triumph  
 on.  
 That will I not; but who shall over-  
 throw  
 Must kill me kingly, sworded hand to  
 hand,  
 Not snared with gin or lime-twigg as a  
 fool,  
 Nor hurled by night up howling into  
 heaven,  
 But in the sun's eye weaponed. Some  
 of you  
 Go forth, and find what noise is in the  
 streets,  
 What rumors, and how tempered, on  
 men's tongues:  
 When I pass out among them, I will  
 take  
 Some fifty with me to my guard, and  
 ride  
 As might their king ride. Be it pro-  
 claimed abroad,  
 In mine own name and Maitland's and  
 Argyle's,  
 Two thousand pounds shall pay that  
 good man's pains  
 Who shall produce the murderers of  
 our king  
 For just and sudden judgment. In few  
 days,  
 If Mar be not mine unfriend and his  
 own,  
 Who holds the keys of Stirling, we  
 shall pass

With some of counsel thither, and  
 there bide  
 Till the first reek of rumor have blown  
 by,  
 Then call in spring our parliament  
 again.

*Hetharn.* Your heart of hope is  
 great: with God to friend,  
 A man could speed no better than your  
 hope.

*Bothwell.* I tell thee, God is in that  
 man's right hand  
 Whose heart knows when to strike and  
 when to stay.

I swear I would not ask more hope  
 of heaven  
 Than of mine own heart which puts fire  
 to me,  
 And of mine own eye which discerns  
 my day.

And, seeing the hope wherein I go now  
 forth

Is of their giving, if I live or die,  
 With God to friend or unfriend, quick  
 or dead

I shall not wake nor sleep with them  
 that fear,

Whose lives are as leaves wavering in  
 a wind,

But as a man foiled or a man en-  
 throned

That was not fooled of fortune nor of  
 fear. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE II. — ANOTHER ROOM IN THE  
 SAME.

*The body of DARNLEY lying on a bier.  
 Two men in attendance.*

*First Attendant.* There is no wound.

*Second Attendant.* Nor hath the fire  
 caught here;

This gown about him is not singed; his  
 face

Is clinched together, but on hair nor  
 cheek

Has flame laid even a finger; each limb  
 whole,

And nothing of him shattered but the  
 life.

How comes he dead?

*First Attendant.* Tush, tush! he died  
 by chance.

Take thou no pain to know it. For  
mine own mind,  
I think it was his sickness which being  
full  
Broke as a plague-spot breaks, and  
shattered him,  
And, with his fleshly house, the house  
of stone  
Which held him dying: his malady it  
was  
That burst the walls in sunder, and sent  
up

A ruin of flaming roofs and floors afire.  
*Second Attendant.* Was not his cham-  
ber-fellow's corpse as his?

*First Attendant.* Ay, woundless as  
they say, and unconsumed;  
I know not surely. But the blast that  
made

The good town ring and rock here  
through her streets  
Shook not all sleepers in the house to  
death:

Three souls have crept forth of the  
wreck alive  
That slept without his chamber.

*Second Attendant.* What say these?

*First Attendant.* What should they  
say, with thanks for their own  
hap,  
But that this chance is dire, and this  
man dead?

There is no more yet for sage lips to  
say,  
That would not timeless be stopped up  
with earth.

*Enter the QUEEN and BOTHWELL.*

*Queen.* Leave us, and after take your  
charge again.

*First Attendant.* We must forbear her  
till her moan be made. (*Aside.*)

[*Exeunt Attendants.*]

*Queen.* Let me look on him. It is  
marred not much;  
This was a fair face of a boy's alive.

*Bothwell.* It had been better had he  
died ere man.

*Queen.* That hardly was he yester-  
day. A man!

What heart, what brain of manhood  
had God sown

In this poor fair fool's flesh to bear him  
fruit?

What seed of spirit or counsel? what  
good hope

That might have put forth flower in  
any sun?

We have plucked none up who cut him  
off at root,

But a tare only or a thorn. His cheek  
Is not much changed, though since I  
wedded him

His eyes had shrunken and his lips  
grown wan

With sickness and ill living. Yester-  
day,

Man or no man, this was a living soul;  
What is this now? This tongue that  
mourned to me,

These lips that mine were mixed with,  
these blind eyes

That fastened on me following, these  
void hands

That never plighted faith with man and  
kept,

Poor hands that paddled in the sloughs  
of shame,

Poor lips athirst for women's lips and  
wine,

Poor tongue that lied, poor eyes that  
looked askant

And had no heart to face men's wrath  
or love

As who could answer either,— what  
work now

Doth that poor spirit which moved  
them? To what use

Of evil or good should hell put this or  
heaven,

Or with what fire of purgatory annealed  
Shall it be clean and strong, yet keep  
in it

One grain for witness of what seed it  
was,

One thread, one shred inwoven with it  
alive,

To show what stuff time spun it of,  
and rent?

I have more pity such things should be  
born

Than of his death; yea, more than I  
had hate,

Living, of him.

*Bothwell.* Since hate nor pity now  
Or helps or hurts him, were we not  
as wise

To take but counsel for the day's work  
here,  
And put thought of him with him  
underground?

*Queen.* I do but cast once more away  
on him

The last thought he will ever have of  
mine.

You should now love me well.

*Bothwell.* Ay should I, sweet.

*Queen.* I think you shall: it were  
more hard than death,

You should not love me.

*Bothwell.* Nay, not possible.

*Queen.* I think God never set in flesh  
of man

Such heart as yours would be, to love  
me not,

*Bothwell.* Will you give order for his  
funeral?

*Queen.* Ay.

But if you loved not — I would know  
that now,

That I might die even this day, and my  
hands

Shed no more blood nor strive more  
for your sake;

For if I live, whose life is of your  
love,

I shall take on them more of toil and  
blood,

To stain and tire them laboring all  
their life.

I would not die bloodguiltier than is  
need,

With redder hands than these and  
wearer heart,

And have no love to cleanse and com-  
fort them.

For this man, I forgive him.

*Bothwell.* For which fault?

*Queen.* That he touched ever and de-  
filed my life

With life of his and death. I am fain  
to know

You do not love me for his sake the  
less

Who so have soiled me with him.

*Bothwell.* Shall I not

Swear it, with him for sponsor to mine  
oath?

*Queen.* Kiss me before his face here  
for a sign.

*Bothwell.* You have strange doubts  
and dreams.

*Queen.* I will not have.

When part we hence, and whither?

*Bothwell.* I have word

Your careful warden, the grave lord of  
Mar,

Will hardly give my followers at your  
prayer

Place to come in to Stirling at our back.  
Here now the streets begin to sound  
and swarm

So that my guard is now for more than  
pride;

Wherefore I hold it well we take with us  
Some friends of our own counsel, as

Argyle,

Huntley, my brother-in-law that shall  
be none,

With Maitland and the archbishop,  
and set forth

To the lord Seyton's, who shall give us  
house

Till this loud world fall stiller than it is.

*Queen.* Be it where you will, and  
how: do you but lead,

Would I not follow naked through the  
world?

For him of whose dead face mine eyes  
take leave

As my free soul of shameful thought  
on him,

Let him have private burial some fit  
night

By David whom he slew. I mind me now  
'Tis not a year since I fled forth with him

Even through the graves where he shall  
lie alone,

And passing through their dusty deadly  
ways

For some few minutes of the rustling  
night

I felt his hand quake: he will quake  
not now

To sleep there all night long. See you  
to that. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. — SEYTON CASTLE.

LORD HERRIES and SIR JAMES MEL-  
VILLE.

*Heries.* So stands it, sir: she hath  
put into his hands,

Besides the lordship of the port of  
 Leith,  
 The castle's government of Edinburgh,  
 Of Inchkeith and Blackness, three  
 master keys  
 That keep the doors o' the kingdom.  
 In Dunbar  
 He sits now lord, and gathers men to  
 hold  
 By her next gift Dumbarton: while she  
 sends  
 A privy message for a priest to plead  
 With the French king,—that by his  
 mother's mouth  
 And his own hand hath warned her, if  
 her lord  
 Sleep unrevenged, she being so shamed  
 henceforth  
 Must hold them for her enemies, and  
 put off  
 All thought to flee for fear into their  
 guard  
 From peril of her subjects,—even to  
 him  
 She sends for payment of her dower  
 foregone  
 Wherewith to levy hireling bands in  
 France  
 With but her babe for captain called,  
 and be  
 Fenced round at least with all of these  
 she may,  
 Of whose despatch none here must  
 know before,  
 Nor, if these fail her, of her frustrate  
 aim;  
 Then, ere her mourning month be here  
 played out  
 With hound and horn and soldierlike  
 delights  
 To recreate her natural heart and life,  
 She must repossess to Holyrood, and meet  
 The ambassador from England, Killigrew,  
 Who comes to find folk sorrowing and  
 in fear  
 With counsel for our peril and our  
 grief,  
 And falls upon us feasting; and to him  
 She plights her faith that by this parli-  
 ament  
 Shall Bothwell have his trial, and the  
 cause

Be sifted clear in the eyes of all good  
 men;  
 Wherewith content he parts, or discon-  
 tent,  
 I know not, but is gone; and she come  
 back  
 Takes heed no more than of a harp  
 unstrung  
 What plaint or plea, what charge or  
 menace, comes  
 From her lord's father, but to his de-  
 mand  
 For convocation of the nobles made  
 Returns her word their house shall  
 meet in spring,  
 And puts his charge by lightly as she  
 may.  
 Of all this, nothing, in my mind, goes  
 well.  
*Melville.* Nor aught in mine. Your  
 fellows of her faith  
 Who stand as yet in England on her  
 side  
 Will fall off from her, hearing what  
 I doubt  
 All ears will hear too soon: I have  
 shown it her  
 By letter sent me from a faithful Scot  
 That long hath wrought among them  
 on her part,  
 And freely thence wrote all his fear for  
 me  
 To lay before her, and his grief to  
 hear  
 Such bruit of her intent as could but  
 slay  
 The opinion of her judgment, who must  
 lose,  
 By such design, God's favor and her  
 fame,  
 And in each kingdom that should kiss  
 her hand  
 Each man's heart born her heritage,  
 and miss  
 The noble mark she shot at. I, adjured  
 Of him that wrote to bring this in her  
 eye,  
 Gave her to read it, which she gave  
 again,  
 Silent; then came the secretary to me  
 A short while thence, and took me by  
 the hand,  
 Desiring me as by the queen's desire

To let him see it, who had given him  
 late to know  
 I had shown her a strange letter, and  
 devised  
 By mine own counsel for Lord Both-  
 well's wreck;  
 And having read, What thing was in  
 my mind,  
 He said, to do this, which being known  
 to the earl,  
 As shortly there was need to fear it  
 should,  
 Would cause him surely seek my life?  
 And I,  
 It was a sore thing for true men to  
 see  
 So good a princess run on utter wreck,  
 And no man be so far concerned in her  
 As to forewarn of peril. He replied,  
 As one who had newly left her wroth,  
 I had done  
 More honestly than wisely; bade me  
 fly  
 Ere the earl came up from dining; and  
 being flown  
 I know he sought to slay me, who lay  
 hid  
 Till his main rage was slackened; and  
 the queen,  
 Who had made him swear to seek no  
 scathe of mine,  
 When at their meeting next she showed  
 it him,  
 Chid him as who would cause her to be  
 left  
 Of all her servants: then he swore  
 anew  
 I should receive no harm; whereof  
 again  
 Being advertised I spake with her, and  
 showed  
 She had never done me so much wrong  
 as this,  
 To make the letter a device of mine  
 Which came even whence I had given  
 her word; and yet  
 Had it not come, I had held me bound  
 to speak  
 Freely, with reverence and humility,  
 My thought as did that letter, being  
 of mind  
 At one therewith. But she would give  
 no ear:

Nor is there force in counsel or man's  
 wit  
 To avert this ill she binds upon herself,  
 Who breaks the bonds in twain that  
 hold her friends,  
 And fetters her own feet with gyves of  
 steel,  
 When she hath need of them to stand  
 or flee  
 Before the face of peril multiform  
 That lightens on us flame-like: you, my  
 lord,  
 Whose love she hath proven, are not  
 of me to learn  
 The immediate feature of it.  
*Herries.* Alas! not I:  
 I have taken too much note thereof,  
 and stand  
 Too near its fangs to live of them un-  
 scathed,  
 Except I make haste hence.  
*Melville.* What haste, my lord?  
*Herries.* I have spoken with her of  
 their purpose blown  
 From lip to lip already on men's breath,  
 To loose the bonds that bind her lover  
 yet  
 By witness of the lady of Buccleuch,  
 Who shall proclaim herself his para-  
 mour  
 And pre-contracted to him by promise-  
 plight  
 To prove his wife no lawful wife, but  
 bound,  
 Will she or no, and love him not or  
 love,  
 To sue divorce from him; if all this fail,  
 Then by remonstrance of their kindred  
 blood  
 Found some four cousinships away, this  
 bond  
 Shall melt or break that parts him from  
 the queen.  
*Melville.* Why, ere his marriage with  
 the Lady Jane,  
 She had her dispensation from the  
 Pope,  
 For the blood mixed between them, of  
 all bars  
 Which might have maimed it with im-  
 pediment.  
*Herries.* So had she, but they think  
 to cover it



As with a veil of invalidity  
 Pretexted for pretence, or with dumb  
 show  
 Darkly disclaimed: this shall not cum-  
 ber them;  
 And they will buy compliance and  
 good-will  
 Of Huntley to his sister's putting off  
 By restoration of his forfeit lands.

*Melville.* All tongues i' the land will  
 as one mouth of fire  
 Cry death and shame against it.

*Herries.* So said I.

*Melville.* So said you to her?

*Herries.* I said so; whereat she,  
 As 'twere half smiling in a wondering  
 shame,  
 Half mourning to be guiltlessly mis-  
 judged,  
 With fervent eyes' fall and with scorn-  
 ful lips  
 Protests me, never had she thought of it.  
 Wherefore I hold it ill to tarry here.

*Melville.* Your wisdom shall do well  
 to spare no speed,  
 But get it gone from eyeshot of them  
 both.

*Herries.* I know it; yet would I plead  
 again with her,  
 For pity and honor of the imperilled  
 state,  
 That should be shaken with her fall to  
 death,  
 And the crown shattered into shards of  
 gold.

For as a wolf anhungered and awaked,  
 That long hath slept and starved, with  
 foodless dreams  
 Assuaging its blunt fangs through blood-  
 less hours,  
 The common people, that in dumb dim  
 rest,  
 With heartless hopes assuaging its blind  
 heart,  
 Hath fed for ages on itself asleep,  
 Shows now the keen teeth and the  
 kindled eyes  
 Of ravening heads innumerable, that  
 gape  
 And glare about the wide ways of the  
 world,  
 Seeking their meat of God; and if he  
 fail,

Then of the devil that burns in minds  
 of men  
 Rebellious, whom their heat of heart  
 eats up

Till the fire fasten on authority  
 To lay red hands of ruin on all state,  
 And leave in ashes empire; as of late  
 This Ket in England, and his like that  
 swarm

At heel of the new creeds in Lutheran  
 lands

To pluck the sun out of the heaven  
 of rule,

And leave men dark and kingless.  
 Hath not Knox

Struck with his fangs of speech on  
 monarchy

No less than on the Church that first  
 was stung,

Preaching for all men knowledge  
 equally

And prostitute and perilous freedom  
 shared

With all bear eyes, brute mouths, and  
 unwashed hands,

That lust for change, and take all fires  
 for light,

Except the sun's wherein their fathers  
 walked?

And shall not these at any breach break  
 in

That flaws the sea-wall which forbade  
 their sea

To drown all banks that bound it?  
 She will make

Of all that lived in Scotland hers and  
 ours

A ruin and republic of strewn wrecks,  
 Ranks rent, bonds broken, all things  
 orderless,

A commonwealth of dead men's bones  
 and dung,

Dust, mire, and blood, and one red  
 rank of beasts

That rage and revel in equality.

*Melville.* 'Tis true, the commons are  
 as waters chafed

Since this wind blew amongst them:  
 wave by wave

It lifts their heads up, and the murmuring  
 air

Breathes hard and blackens with the  
 blast of change.

*Herries.* And were none touched  
with danger but herself,  
This yet were pity enough for tears of  
blood,

So fair she is, and less by place than  
kind

Royal, so high and so assured of spirit,  
So full of all things all men love or  
fear,

Heart's light and fire, a soul born  
winged, with eyes

That mate the sun's eye and the light-  
ning's; yea,

It were past count of pity, past men's  
thought,

That she should fall for love's light  
sake self-slain.

*Melville.* There were one way to  
serve her that would be  
Most thankless, being thankworthiest;  
but none else.

*Herries.* That were no way for feet  
that would not walk

Red as her enemies' did, whose passage  
shook

With its near sound her life and fame;  
such ways

Let Morton take, or Maitland's weap-  
oned wit,

Whose words are swords.

*Melville.* It may be so they will.

*Herries.* Death?

*Melville.* Nay, who knows when death  
may come?

*Herries.* Why, they

Who strike the spur into his fleshless  
side,

Who prick him forward with their craft  
for goad,

Or put for sword their hatred in his  
hand.

They have done deeds of deadlier  
policy

Than make submissive show toward  
Bothwell here,

Then snare and slay him, or put the  
queen in ward:

Would they do this, they might be ser-  
viceable

But perilous must be, putting hand to  
work

That treads nigh treason though for  
loyalty.

*Melville.* Whose may know their  
mind, it is not I.

*Herries.* She hath sent for Murray  
hither; in his eye

We may take note which way their fac-  
tion looks.

If yet toward violence and red-handed  
craft,

This mood of hers will strip her for  
their strokes

Naked, and leave us handless that  
would fight

On her just side against them. God  
mend all!

*Enter the QUEEN, BOTHWELL, SEYTON,  
the MARIES, and Attendants.*

*Queen.* The wind has moved my blood  
like wine; I am full

Even to the heart's root of its spirit of  
life.

Flew not my hawk the last flight well,  
that sent

The tumbling hern down from her high-  
est? I think

You have none better. Is our brother  
come?

*Seyton.* He is now alighting, madam.

*Queen.* By this hand,  
I would when we must light from horse  
we might

Take wing instead, and so what time  
we live

Live ever at glad speed save when we  
sleep!

It points and edges the dull steel of life,  
To feel the blood and brain in us renew

By help of that life lifting us, and speed  
That being not ours is mixed with us

and serves.

I would hold council, and wage war, and  
reign,

Not in walled chambers nor close pens  
of state,

But or in saddle or at sea, my steed  
As a sea-wave beneath the wind and me,

Or the sea serving as a bitted steed  
That springs like air and fire. Time

comes, they say,  
When we love rest, house-keeping sloth,  
and calms:

To me I think it will not come alive.

*Herries.* Madam, I would change yet  
one word with you

Ere I go hence, or others take your ear.

*Queen.* So shall you, sir; yet is my heart too light,  
And its live blood too merry from the chase,

And all my life too full of the air of joy  
Whereon it mounts up falcon-like for prey,

And hovers at its wings' width ere it strike,

To give wise words wise welcome: yet what grace

I may to your grave counsels will I show  
And modesty of audience. — Tell my brother

I shortly will receive him. [*Exeunt all but the QUEEN and HERRIES.*]

My good lord,

It is for that old honor and true love  
I bear your high name and your flawless faith

That yet mine ear makes way now for your words,

In trust they will not wound it for its pains

With any tuneless or intemperate breath.

*Heries.* Had I no heart, or in the heart I have

No love to serve you, madam, and no faith,

I had parted hence without more toil of tongue

Or strife of speech unpalatable and harsh

In ears made wide for music; but in me  
Is heart enough to burn with fire of pain,

If not to lighten with that fire their eyes  
For whose sake it consumes me, when I see

Danger and death masked as true men  
and bold

Attend about them with sheathed knives  
in hand

And shut mouths as of serpents. Let me not

Incense again your flame of spirit and scorn

With faint and void reiterance of dead words

That spend in vain their spirit before:  
I speak

Not now so much to move you as would God

I had the might to move, but of myself  
Rather to save my soul of faith alive,  
And my deep heart of duty toward your grace,

By speech though fruitless, and by love though lost,

That will not pass forth silent, and give way

To loud-tongued ruin that shall speak too high

For ears to close against it. Queen of Scots,

Lady that have the loftiest life in hand  
Even yet that ever was of queen on earth, —

Last hope of men that hope through you in God,

Last comfort of his Church, light of his lamp

That men have nigh blown out with blasts of night, —

O you to whose fair face and hand uplift  
The treble-kingdom islands should turn back

Out of the shadow of storm to follow them,

And in the shadow of faith instead lie down

Beneath the wings that covered your crowned head,

Even hers that brood above her fold and yours,

The Church your mother's, that by no hand else

Looks yet to gather three lands in and save, —

Who have the heart and the eye and the hour for this

Which to none other God may give again

So as you have them, — you that should be writ

In all the royal records of the world  
Savior, the light and the right hand of God

Shown in a woman, to bring back and build

What was blown down or shed as dust on the air, —

You that have spirit and mind to apprehend,

And to that apprehension put swift  
hand,  
Nor slow of soul nor fearful, — you, our  
queen,  
And England's heir, that should make  
higher on earth  
The name of Scot than any star in  
heaven,  
And on the cleft growth of two thorny  
stems  
Bid one rose flower of Catholic royalty  
Not to be plucked or trampled, — Oh,  
will you,  
So great, so fair and fearless as you are,  
That were you no queen, or such other  
one  
As no such high cause calls on, you  
would seem  
Not less a thing made to heroic end,  
A creature crowned and armed by God  
to bear  
His witness to his work, and in man's  
eye  
Stand signal-wise lighting the beaconed  
sea, —  
Will you put all this as a garment off,  
And change it like a vesture? By your  
life  
Which is the life of this land's majesty,  
And your high soul which is our spirit  
of hope,  
Slay not all these: help them that trust  
in you;  
Help God, lest we believe him for your  
sake  
Ill-minded toward us for our sin, to  
turn  
This empire to a populous wilderness,  
A riotous desert where things vile are  
crowned,  
And high made low, and low things set  
on high,  
And rule trod under with foul feet and  
bare,  
And kingdom parcelled by hard hands  
and red.  
Pity this people: give not up your realm  
To its own madness that takes fire at  
yours,  
And lights its ruin at your own ruin, to  
run  
By that blind light darkling to death  
and hell;

Cast not your name down under foot of  
men  
For such ill cause as loveless love that  
is  
Light lord of foolish women, or such  
will  
As wherewith men self-slaughtered gird  
themselves.  
For shame and pity and peril shall be  
they  
Who shall attend and wed you to your  
will,  
And the ring broken of the kingdom's  
peace  
That is yet whole and circular as a crown  
Shall be the new ring on your wedded  
hand,  
*Queen.* Have I not said I never  
thought of it?  
*Herries.* I but beseech you, keep from  
thought of it,  
Or from such show as puts it in men's  
minds,  
*Queen.* If this be all your counsel or  
your care,  
You crave but what you have: I have  
given no cause,  
By favor shown to faith and loyal hearts,  
For the evil-witted world to tax me of  
love.  
Twice have you had mine ear now to  
this tale,  
And thrice I pray you that you seek it  
not.  
*Herries.* I shall no more. God keep  
your grace in joy!  
*Enter BOTHWELL and MURRAY.*  
*Queen.* Good morrow, brother; and  
you, my lord, good day,  
Since you go hence.  
*Bothwell.* Goes my lord from us yet?  
*Herries.* Even now I take my leave.  
Farewell, my lords,  
And God be with your counsels. [*Exit.*  
*Bothwell.* Fay, he shall.  
The queen was fain to have your voice,  
my lord,  
Ere she go back to the distempered  
town.  
*Murray.* That shall she have, sir.  
*Queen.* Brother, we hear word  
How the good town is troubled of lewd  
men

With libels writ and hung about the  
streets,  
That in our servants' name deface our  
own  
With fierce invention: wherefore I de-  
sired  
Your counsel with my lord here and  
good help  
For satisfaction of well-willing men.

*Murray.* Even such will tell you it  
mislikes the town

That Lennox, as they say, should be  
debarred  
From entrance save with six men and  
no more

To hold his cause up on the trial day,  
And the main witness on his part refused  
As under charge of treason for his  
words

Set forth in writing on the Tolbooth  
gates;

This makes them doubt of justice to be  
done,

And brood or babble of devised delay,  
With tongues and minds diverse and  
dangerous.

*Queen.* What!

Shall one proclaimed our traitor pass  
unscathed

To bear again false witness, for whose  
sake

The ports are guarded, and the skipper  
marked

For death who helps him from this  
kingdom forth

To mock the judgment whence he  
stands attain

Of foregone treason; and must now  
stand free,

And the law loose him, and receive his  
word

As a true man's and taintless? What  
are they

Whom by such witness Lennox would  
impeach

Besides my lord here who shall answer  
him?

*Murray.* James Balfour, and your  
outland serving-folk,

Sebastian, Joseph Rizzio, with two  
French,

John of Bordeaux, and Francis, of your  
train.

*Queen.* They shall have trial, and  
answer it.

*Murray.* 'Twere best

They did so soonest: time grows full  
of tongues.

There was one late went through the  
streets by night,

With four or five accompanied for guard  
That would let none take knowledge of

him, crying  
Of his own guilt most lamentably on

God,  
*Lord, open heaven, and pour down of thy  
wrath*

*Vengeance on me and them that have  
cut off*

*The innocent blood!* whom the chief  
magistrates

Have seized, and cast into the four  
thieves' pit;

But still his cry hangs in the common  
ear.

*Queen.* Some traitor hired, or mad-  
man; but I sent

To seek the comfort of your hand and  
help

For weightier cause than of such  
tongues.

*Murray.* What cause?

*Queen.* That shall he show who bears  
most part therein;

Yet are you parcel of it, and I myself  
For love of both and honor toward you.

Speak. [To BOTHWELL.]

*Bothwell.* My lord, I doubt not but  
your heart conceived

Never that thing whereto being done  
you feared

To set your hand in sign: I therefore  
pray you

To look upon the charge for which I  
stand

In the land's eye accountable, as one  
That was consenting with the rest our  
friends

To what for my poor profit was not  
done,

Nor only plotted for no end but mine;  
And, for the part your honor has herein,

To underwrite the bond that writes me  
safe,

And set your name for seal upon my  
side.

*Queen.* So much would I beseech you  
to: the bond

By you subscribed here in my lord's  
defence

Shall be the signet of your faith and  
love

Set on my heart and his that honor you.

*Murray.* I would my duty might in  
all things serve

No less your honor than maintain mine  
own;

But I will set no hand to any bond

Shall bind me to defence or fellowship  
Of deeds whereof I know myself no  
part.

I gave consent to no more than divorce  
Between two hands mismated, king's  
and queen's,

Whereby the kingdom's heart was rent  
in twain,

And reconciliation found not where to  
stand;

But of no red and secret bond of blood  
Heard I the bruit before the deed took  
fire.

*Bothwell.* Will you so swear? what!  
none?

*Murray.* I have said; and you,  
That reft your kinsman Balfour by de-  
vice

Out of my hand and thwarted judg-  
ment, see

Your heart be set not now to climb too  
high

A stair whereon the foot that slips  
grows red,

And, stumbling once in blood, falls  
whence nor wing

Nor hand can lift it from the pit again.

*Queen.* Vex not yourself lest he  
should fall or stand

With whom you stand or fall not.

*Bothwell.* My desire  
Was toward no help of riddling coun-  
sellors,

But of such friends as speak with hand  
for tongue

And acts for parables: your wit, my  
lord,

Is nothing of the queen's need nor of  
mine.

*Murray.* It may be, no; but to make  
trial of that,

Ere I take ship for France, the way  
being barred

By force and strife through Flanders to  
the south

And those fair towns that with her high-  
ness' leave

Shall call me guest a while in Italy,  
I am bound for London, where I fear  
and hope

My tongue may serve her more than  
here your hands

If it make fair her cause in English eyes.

*Bothwell.* What hath her cause to do  
with their bleared sight,

Or with her name their judgment? Who  
need care

What color we that breathe with our  
own lips

Wear in the mist made of their breath  
far off?

*Murray.* The ambassador that bore  
her last word back

Hath but made way for one at point to  
come

Whose message, carrying weight as in  
wise ears

It needs must carry, will take form and  
force

From present witness of his eye that  
reads

What mind is borne here and what  
word is done,

What judgment or what counsel most  
bears weight;

Which it imports us for this land's  
great sake

That the English queen misknow not  
nor misread

For fault or fraud of darkling evidence

*Bothwell.* And you it is must give  
those blind eyes sight,

Shape to the shadows of that ignorance,  
form

To their loose judgment of us? What  
have we,

What hath our Scotland here or queen  
of Scots,

To do with English tongues? can we  
not strike

Nor stand nor walk alone, but for our  
need

Must use their hands and feet, their wits  
and eyes,

To help us live, or live not? By my  
 life,  
 Which is not held in pawn yet of their  
 leave,  
 I had rather be an English horse or ass  
 Than on these terms a Scot, to square  
 my will  
 By their inscribed conditions.

*Murray.* At your will  
 Lies your own way of life; nor yet this  
 land's,  
 Nor theirs that living should be lords  
 of it.

Madam, to God's care I commend your  
 grace  
 Who take with careful heart my leave  
 of you,  
 Lest you too much should lack the care  
 of men.

*Queen.* Be not too careful for my  
 sake: your leave  
 Was given ere you could take it. Sir,  
 farewell.

*Murray.* Farewell, as you shall will  
 it.

[*Exit.*

*Bothwell.* God be with you!  
 Your wisdom shall not be so hot of  
 foot

But it may be outspeeded. If it lay  
 Plots with the stranger, our prevention  
 here

Must pluck the fangs out of its craft.  
 And first

With his own hand shall Huntley draw  
 the bond

Whereto will we set ours in pledge ere  
 long

To make them fast by contract: I being  
 free

To plight mine own, as by consent un-  
 bound

From hers that was my wife pretended;  
 you,

Being by this troublous time bent and  
 inclined

To seek some stay in wedlock, and put  
 off

The weak estate of widowhood, yet  
 loath,

For worthy reasons of grave strength,  
 to choose

Again a stranger subject, have made  
 choice

Of me desertless for my fair deserts,  
 And purpose even on heel of my di-  
 vorce

For their good cause to wed me: this  
 subscribed

Shall in my keeping 'be laid up, and  
 straight

Hence must we back to that loud town  
 of yours,

And take our danger by the throat;  
 proclaim

At once my trial; if it be possible,  
 Before word come from England; let  
 the post

That brings you counsel of Elizabeth's  
 Find the cause judged, and the cry fallen  
 again,

And no link hanging of the gyves of  
 law

Round our free feet and steadfast.

*Queen.* Ah! not mine,  
 That are fast bound, and yet can stand  
 not fast

Except my love's strength hold them  
 up, and strike

These iron toils in sunder. If the bond  
 Could bind and loose indeed, knit and  
 unknit

Hands that must part from hands that  
 are to meet,

With force of more than writing, all  
 my heart

Should bleed glad drops to sign and  
 seal it. Sir,

Here was again our enemy in mine ears  
 Forewarning me of marriage; the same  
 tongue

That was before a serpent at your heel  
 Shot out anew to sting it; but you know  
 The craft of this state horseleech, that  
 by fraud

Takes pleasure to bear all the world in  
 hand

That no one can be sure of him, and  
 we

May least of all be by such lips allured  
 To trust and find them dangerous.

*Bothwell.* Nay, by God,  
 I mind me how he left his neighbor  
 friends

In his faith's name to hang for hostages  
 Whose necks paid forfeit of his broken  
 bond,

And made his oath a halter for the  
Lairds

Of Lochinvar and Garlies. By my life  
That this keen tongue would strike at,  
in my mind

It were the best work worth a good  
man's hand

To quit them on Lord Herries.

*Queen.* No, let be:

You will unpeople me this land of  
friends.

Mine he must live, or lose his name,  
and yours

For my name's sake he shall be.

*Bothwell.* So might I

Find at his hands such friendship as  
they twain

Whose throats for him were writen;  
and such a friend

Is he that stands behind our deed, and  
says

He never heard of manslaying, fie! not  
he, —

Our darkling brother with close lips  
and clean.

The blood was no part of his bond, he  
says,

That his eyes winked on while his hand  
was dry;

He will not bear us witness, nor take  
part

With me that have done more than  
blink at blood.

He will to London, but to speak for  
you,

That will he, being a kindly man of  
kind,

Whole-blooded in his love and faith to  
you,

God wot, no bastard in his brotherhood.  
I would give God a year out of my life

That I have kinglike hope to live with  
you,

For one sweet breath of time to strike  
at him,

And let my sword's lip drink his body  
dry,

And with one deep kiss drain his flesh  
of blood.

Who smells not by the savor of his  
faith

On what close nest of foul and fledg-  
ling hopes

His trust sits brooding to build up him-  
self

By overthrowing of that crowned head  
which keeps

His misbegotten forehead bare of  
gold —

And with my hand shall keep it?

*Queen.* Ay, though all

That breathe on earth mine enemies at  
his beck

Rose by the light of his ambiguous  
eyes

With his sheathed hand to strike, and  
leave ungirt

This forfeit head with empire: but I  
know

A stronger hand bared for my help and  
stay, —

This that I touch, this that I love; the  
star —

That points my feet on pilgrimage, the  
staff

That stays my steps back to that trou-  
bulous town

Whereof they are weary, yet would halt  
not now,

But tread more fleet than fire their fiery  
way

To that fair end where they were fain  
to be.

He will set forth to-morrow.

*Bothwell.* Ere we go,

I will take order that men's tongues be  
clipt

Who show too broad their conscience  
of remorse.

There was a knave of Balfour's in our  
trust

That hath by this, being found unsure  
of mouth,

Resigned it to the counsel-keeping  
worm.

If more there be that live not stingless  
yet,

The same dumb mouth that has nor  
lips nor tongue

Must open for them privily: the grave  
Hath gorge enough for all such secret  
food,

And will not babble of the hands that  
feed.

For them that being in blood of our  
own kind



Will stand elsewhere against me than  
in court,

I will make present proffer of myself  
To answer them in arms.

*Queen.* You shall not fight.

*Bothwell.* Not if no need be.

*Queen.* There shall be no need.

Not in this cause, you shall not need to  
fight.

We will set on the trial presently,  
And after we may sleep with no blood  
more.

SCENE IV. — THE UPPER CHAMBER  
IN HOLYROOD.

*The QUEEN and MARY BEATON.*

*Queen.* Is it not hard on ten?

*Mary Beaton.* At point to strike.

*Queen.* This forenoon will outlast the  
night for length.

How looks the morning?

*Mary Beaton.* Like the time of year:  
The heaven is red, and full of wind;  
the clouds

Are rent and routed of the striving sun  
Like a lost army.

*Queen.* Is there no noise abroad?

*Mary Beaton.* The throngs grow thick  
in rumor; faces scowl,  
Eyes burn, brows bend, and all the cry  
o' the crowd

Waits to break forth but till a fire-  
flaught fall

To make the dumb brands speak, and  
shoot out flame,

When he shall pass for whom it waits  
to burn.

Yet have I seen as great a throng from  
hence

As frets there now.

*Queen.* I would he had thought to-  
day

To ride with doubled guard! What  
brawl is there?

*Mary Beaton.* The messenger from  
Berwick, as I think,  
That would have entrance to you, and  
is thrust back

By the lord Bothwell's kin that keep  
the gates.

*Queen.* What! here so soon? I will  
not see him till night.

I am asleep; if there be brawls i' the  
court,

Call out the troopers, bid my French  
guard forth

To quell all rioters.

*Mary Beaton.* They are of your own  
part

That make the brawl, my lord's men  
and your guard

That press about the gateway.

*Queen.* The cry sinks:

Is he not come, that so their noise is  
fallen?

*Mary Beaton.* And Maitland with  
him: he signs them silent, takes  
From the English messenger a letter  
sealed,

And leaves all still.

*Queen.* I prayed him see me first  
Before he rode to trial. All will be well,  
If he have stayed their storm, and keep  
his heart

High as his fortune.

*Enter BOTHWELL.*

Is that brawl at end?

*Bothwell.* Here is a letter by a hot-  
foot post

Brought from Sir William Drury, that  
his queen

Through him commends her counsel in  
to you,

And bids you, or my thought belies it,  
show

All favor and furtherance to your  
enemy's plea,

Lennox, whose cause she finds most  
fair, and would not

For your own sake see slighted or put  
by,

Lest your fame bleed: look if she say  
not so;

Else I know nothing of her maiden  
mind,

Who sometime lived her prisoner.

*Queen.* Let that rest;

But tell me what the spring was of this  
noise

That shook our hearing: would he  
speak perforce —

This English post, though bidden back  
— with me?

*Bothwell.* But that our fellows thrust  
him from the gate:

My captain of the castle, a stalwart  
 guard,  
 The Laird of Skirling, that I put in  
 charge,  
 Called to the guide aloud, he should be  
 hanged  
 For bringing English villains through  
 to us here,  
 And hands were there to reive the  
 rope to him;  
 Then drew your guard together and  
 our troops,  
 Whose musters line the straitened  
 streets with steel  
 That holds embanked their muttering  
 multitudes  
 Till I ride through; and those within  
 the gates  
 Hurtled together with blind cries and  
 thrusts,  
 But at my sight fell silent as a sea  
 Settling, that growls yet with the sunken  
 wind,  
 And holds its peace with unslaked  
 wrath. Then I  
 Took from the pressed and laboring  
 messenger  
 His letter for your hand, who were not  
 risen,  
 And should ere night receive him: so I  
 said,  
 And thus it shall suffice you do, so  
 be it  
 We bear the bell to-day in parliament,  
 Where I should be by this at bar, to  
 stand  
 And make mine answer.

*Queen.* I am not sick of fear,  
 Yet my heart loathes its burden of this  
 hour,  
 And beats and drops like a bird wound-  
 ed. Nay,  
 I do not hold you: go; 'tis but my hand  
 Fastens on yours; my heart would have  
 you gone,  
 And here again to assure me of good  
 speed.  
 Whom have we of the judges on our  
 side,  
 Tell me once more, whom doubtful-  
 colored, whom  
 Our enemies certain? let me know it  
 again,

That I may read the bede-roll of their  
 names  
 Here over in my heart while you are  
 gone  
 To make it sure and strong, come evil  
 or good,  
 That neither find me heartless.  
*Bothwell.* Of our part  
 The lord of Arbroath for the Hamil-  
 tons  
 Is as his father's person, Chatelherault,  
 And Cassilis a mainstay safe as steel;  
 Caithness and Herries are such friends  
 of yours  
 As love me less for your sake, yet I  
 think  
 Must strike to-day beside us; one man  
 most  
 I would we might have razed out of the  
 roll,  
 Which is the assessor Lindsay; who  
 shall be  
 As poison to us; and evil is our chance  
 That Morton being of kin to your dead  
 man  
 Should not sit here to help, as but for  
 this  
 I would perforce have bound him to  
 our side:  
 But let this be; we shall bear bravely  
 through  
 For all their factions and fierce policies  
 As knives ensheathed against us, or  
 being foiled  
 Find surer issue than they wot of. So,  
 With such good hope as grows of a  
 good heart,  
 Give me God-speed.  
*Queen.* God-speed you as I pray  
 You may speed ever: all my prayer is  
 spent,  
 I can no more of wishing; what I  
 would,  
 That must you will, having my heart in  
 you,  
 That beats but with your blood, thrills  
 with your sense,  
 Thinks with your thought, desires with  
 your desire,  
 And lives upon your living. Where  
 you go,  
 You bear me with you; where your  
 face is set

Mine eye takes outlook, and where falls  
your foot

I tread beside you silent. Oh! this day  
Shall be to us as the crown o' the wave  
that turns,

And bears inshore the lading of our  
lives,

With all the might of its great heart  
that breaks

And brings us into harbor; we shall  
stand

High on the beach where it was spent,  
and praise

The faithful hour that served us; yea,  
even this

Shall be a dear one to us, not fast at  
heart

When all the pain and doubt of it is  
dead,

And lovingly remembered: you shall  
look

From your high place beside your hum-  
ble love

With kingly eye on this dead day, and  
think

How she that set her crown about your  
head,

And put her own beneath your foot, as  
now

Bade you fare forth, and kissed you.

*Bothwell.* I am returned,  
Ere I pass forth, already in my heart,

With my cause crowned: I cannot  
doubt of speed,

Who have your face before mine eyes  
as fire

And keep your words' heat in mine ear  
to burn

If I should shrink, and sting my spirit  
alive

For love's and shame's sake. When  
we meet at night,

A king's kiss will I set upon these lips  
That seal me royal ere I part. Fare-

well. *[Exit.]*

*Queen.* I would mine eye were in my  
heart to go

With that beside him; but the heart it  
is

Sits now in the eye and follows where  
it may,

But a street's length; then part they,  
and the sight

Turns back, but not the thought; such  
wings it hath

As the sight hath not, and is subtler  
nerved

Than the swift spirit of the eye. O my  
life's light!

This is not I that looks forth after you  
To feed her eyesight, but who leaves

you not,  
Who rides beside you, breathes out of  
your lips,

Looks through your eyes, and triumphs  
in your heart,—

That unscen and inseparate thing is I.  
Look, he is up: how royally he rides,

As no king else on earth! and waves to  
me,

As who should say, Be glad; and glad  
I am,

Who have the lordliest lover in the  
world,

And the most heart to love him. Ay,  
that steed

Should be the higher of heart that  
feels him stride,

And moves the merrier-mettled: by  
none such

Was it before bestriden.

*Mary Beaton.* Was not this  
Lord Darnley's horse?

*Queen.* Ay, when Lord Darnley was.

*Mary Beaton.* The horse he loved of  
all the rest, and fed

Ere he bestrode it ever?

*Queen.* Like enough:  
What ails it yet to have eaten of his  
hand?

It bears not now the worse a better  
man.

*Mary Beaton.* Nay, so it seems: it  
bounds not as in wrath,

For aught I see, beneath him, but  
heaves up

A sidelong head toward his new hand,  
and turns

The light back on him of a joyful  
eye.

So is it with only beasts that are be-  
loved:

They have not hearts like ours.

*Queen.* What need they have?  
I would have nothing love him as I  
love,

And had it heart it would; yet I do think

Ali-beasts and men are mad that love him not

As I should surely were I beast or man.

He can no longer see my handkerchief; Let us go in: I will not sit and wait With the street's hustling faces in my sight. [Exeunt.]

SCENE V.—THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE IN THE TOLBOOTH.

BOTHWELL, with ORMISTON and others attending, at the bar; ARGYLE, presiding as Lord Justice; LINDSAY as assessor; CAITHNESS, CASSILIS, ROTHES, ARBROATH, MAXWELL, HERRIES, and others, as jury; ROBERT CUNNINGHAM as spokesman for Lennox.

*Ormiston (aside to BOTHWELL).* Fie! look not down so at your feet, my lord:

What devil is this that irks you? in your face

A fool might read you what you are: why, so

Might a man look that were now going to death.

Hold up your face, for God's sake, and look blithe;

Alas and aye woe worth them that devised

The thing that shall make all us mourn, I trow,

For you that now look sadly.

*Bothwell.* Hold your peace:

I would not yet it were to do; I have An outgate any way whereby to pass, As ye shall know, and soon. Trouble me not.

*Argyle.* My lords, ye have heard how to the indictment read

The accused who stands at his own instance here

Returns his plea of guiltless; and thereon

The accuser next invoked to approve his charge,

Nor answering nor appearing, leaves no cause

For us to judge; but here in his default Is risen his servant to sustain his part And unawares among us unrequired Take up this charge here fallen, or stretch at least

Some form across of pretext wide enough

To cover with excuse this lack of charge,

Which else might seem with emptiness of cause

To mock your judgments; wherefore, if ye will,

He stands to plead before us.

*Caithness.* We are content.

*Robert Cunningham.* My lords, I am here but in my master's name, The earl of Lennox, to declare what cause

This day constrains his absence; which in brief

Is first the brief time given for so great work,

Next that he stands now naked of his friends

And fellowship of servants to maintain His honor with the surety of his life;

And, having help of no friend but himself,

He hath laid on me commandment to desire

A day sufficient for that weight of cause Which he shall have to keep it; and if

hence Your lordships at this present shall proceed,

Here I protest that if the assize to-day,

By their twelve persons that upon this charge

Shall enter now on panel, speak him clear

Who stands accused for murder of the king,

It shall be wilful error in men's eyes, And not abuse of ignorance, by this

cause That all men know him for murderer; and hereto

Upon this protestation I require Of your high court a document to stand

And set my lord's right here on register,

And those men's wrong who put it by  
to-day.

*Argyle.* This is some reason if the  
ground be good

Whereon his protest is built up, to excuse

Default of witness by defect of time ;  
But here that ground is shaken, that  
we find,

By letters of his own writ to the  
queen,

My lord of Lennox earnest to bring on,  
With forward expedition as of fire,  
This cause for trial, and by all pleas  
intent

To enforce this court make haste, and  
being convoked

Despatch with breathless justice and  
short stay

The work wherein he seems to accuse  
us now

For too much heat to move too fast,  
and mar

The perfect end of trial with force of  
speed,

Preventing him of witness. Where-  
fore then

Was his own will so keen, his plaint so  
loud,

So strong his protestation, to procure  
The speed too late reproached, too soon  
required?

Here are we met for judgment, whom  
himself

Bade the queen summon, with insistent  
heat

And sharp solicitation urged of wrong,  
Nay, with the stroke of an imperative  
tongue,

As though to impel some loath or lag-  
gard heart,

And found instead a free and forward  
will

In her to meet his own; here sits the  
court,

There stands the man of him or his  
impeached

To give them loyal answer; where sits  
he?

Where speaks his proof? where stand  
his witnesses?

What sentence of what judges shall be  
given

Where none stands forth to accuse:  
Here are but words,

Surmises, light and loud and loose, that  
blow

In the air of nameless lips and bab-  
blers' breath

From ear to ear about the wide-mouthed  
world:

These are not for our judgment.

*Caithness.* We sit here  
To find if there be proof or likelihood  
More than of common tongues that  
mark a man

Guilty, and know not why this man or  
that,

But some name they must have to feed  
upon;

And in my mind, where witness there is  
none

Nor prosecution of a personal cause,  
Even should we err to find the accused  
man free,

It were no wilful error, nor this court  
In any just man's sight accountable  
As for unrighteous judgment, being cut  
off

From evidence that it was met to hear;  
Which we reject not, but require in-  
deed,

Yet can by no solicitous mean procure.  
Moreover, sirs, one flaw there is to note,  
More evident than these proofs in-  
visible, —

Even in the letter of the charge, which  
bears,

Ye see, the ninth day's date of Febru-  
ary,

When all we know that on the tenth it  
was

This violence, by what hand soe'er, was  
done:

So that I see not, for my simple part,  
How any man, for that which no man  
did,

Should stand condemned; for at this  
date assigned

Was no such deed as this done in the  
world.

*Maxwell.* Why, let the charge be  
drawn again, and straight:

The court is mocked in this.

*Caithness.* How mocked, my lord?  
It is necessity of law, to keep

Pure hands by perfect heed of flawless words;

And that you stood the dead man's friend alive

Gives you not right nor reason to rise up And tax the reason or the right of law.

*Maxwell.* Right! where is right in all this circumstance,

Or aught but wrong and broken judgment? where

Justice or shame or loyalty, to try

The truth whereon red fraud and violence tread,

And smother up the tongueless cry of blood?

Are we not here to judge of murder done,

And either from an innocent brow take off

The spot of its suspicion, or convince The branded forehead of bloodguiltiness?

Is there no counsel on the part accused, Nor answer of defensive argument

But of close-lipped evasion? and the court

In this forsooth is mocked not! We shall stand

The shameful signs of laughter to the world,

And loathing to men loyal, if this pass With no more trial but mockery, and the land

Sit silent, and attain of innocent blood Before the face of all men that expect

For our own sake what justice we shall show

Or be defamed forever.

*Arbroath.* Sirs, meseems

Where no charge is, that no response can be;

Where none impeaches, none can stand accused:

And of what mouth what challenge is put forth,

And on what witness what impeachment hangs,

To implead of guilt the man we sit to try?

Herein I say it is the court is mocked, Even all of us, and all the baffled land,

And most this noble man that unaccused

Stands at our bar, and finds not to confront

One witness, nor one enemy to beat back,

But only as 'twere a wind that sounds, a breath

That shifts and falters in the face of proof,

A blast that envy blows, and fear breaks off,

Disabled of its nature, by itself

Frustrate and maimed of its own evil will.

*Lindsay.* Who talks of envious or of fearful heart?

We hear the general judgment of the land

Cry out for trial, and from foreign tongues

Reproach cast on us that we cast off heed:

What should we do for shame if in this cause,

For doubt of one man's friends or of what power

Might stand behind to buckler him at need,

We durst not move, nor, though the world looked on,

Show but a face of justice?

*Cassilis.* Must we set

Our judgments by the common tongue that strikes,

And knows not what the hour is? or become

Thralls to the praise and bondmen to the blame

Of men by no tie blood-bound to our love,

To make our lives look in their foreign sight

Fair, lest they speak us evil? By my head,

No Scot I hold him, but a strange man's knave,

Whose spirit is shrunk or swollen by their breaths.

*Argyle.* Well, let the votes be given, and each man's doom

Affirm if in his true and equal mind The charge be proven upon my lord, or no.

How go the voices?

*Lindsay.* By one-half their dooms  
The lords here of the jury speak him  
free

With clear acquittal of bloodguilti-  
ness:

One-half is voiceless.

*Argyle.* He then is proclaimed  
Of this high court not guilty, and the  
charge

On trial stands not good against him.  
Sir,

The court upon this plea declares for  
you,

You are found free of blood.

*Bothwell.* My noble lords,  
Being proved thus in your judgments  
clear of crime,

Here on this door will I to-day set up  
My personal challenge in mine honor's  
right

To meet in arms, before what judge he  
will,

What gentleman soever undefamed  
Shall take upon him to confront my  
cause.

For their lewd mouths who threat, and  
wear no sword,

Your judgment given to acquit me shall  
abash

The malice it puts power into mine  
arm

With might of right to baffle. Sirs,  
good day.

[*Exit with ORMISTON and his follow-  
ers.*

*Argyle.* Break up the court: the  
cause is judged.

*Maxwell (to LINDSAY).* Is judged?

I know not of such seed what stem  
will spring,

But that fruit sour as gall and red as  
blood.

For men's false mouths must of this  
judgment grow.

I would I saw less surely than I see.

#### SCENE VI. — THE HIGH STREET.

BURGESSES and PEOPLE.

*First Citizen.* What more of shame  
is laid up for us? when

Will Heaven put forth a hand to touch  
with fire

These naked sins, and shrivel? Have  
you heard

What last lies bare for judgment?

*Second Citizen.* Why, the last

Is not this half-hour's shame: each  
stroke each day

Strikes out a fresh one, that five minutes  
old

Dies of the next forgotten. Yesterday  
Some talk was of the challenge yet,  
which now

No man casts thought on, though by  
two good swords

Was battle proffered: by the stout  
Laird first

Of Tullibardine, in that brother's name  
Whom they for fear have taxed of

treason, so

To eschew his proof and peril; he  
defies

The challenger to combat, and requires  
England and France for judges of the

field

In person of their sovereigns; this re-  
fused,

On such new plea as craven craft may  
find,

With his queen's leave the ambassador  
himself

Of England gladly with his own heart's  
will

Would take the personal cause upon  
him.

*First Citizen.* What!

Is it for fault of Scots to match and  
mate

The pride in Bothwell swoln with inno-  
cent blood

None but Sir William Drury may be  
held

Worth his sword's wrath that walks by  
night?

*Third Citizen.* Perchance

As for his queen he stands here deputy,  
And for our own her champion opposite,  
Afield with swords' play or abed with

lips',  
They hold the match more equal.

*Fourth Citizen.* Nay, this news

Is gray of beard already; hear you not  
How by this priestly parliament of

ours,  
That to beguile us and for no good-will

Hath in the queen's name passed its  
 act to affirm  
 God's present gospel stablished in this  
 realm,  
 The murderer lives now twice absolved  
 of blood,  
 And has by voice of prelates and of  
 earls  
 The assize allowed for good that purged  
 him first,  
 And shall be loosened of his marriage-  
 bond  
 That twelve months since was tied?  
 his brother-in-law  
 Shall have again his forfeit lands, and  
 see  
 His sister from her married bed thrust  
 out,  
 And stir no finger; then without more  
 stay  
 Who sees not where the adulterer's  
 foot shall climb,  
 And by what head his own be pillowed?  
 Nay,  
 These papers hung against our walls by  
 night  
 Are tongues that prophesy but truth;  
 ye saw  
 That likeness of a hare enringed with  
 swords,  
 And of a mermaid crowned with burn-  
 ing eyes  
 Who drove the hounds off with a two-  
 tonged scourge  
 That coursed him trembling; and her  
 hand indeed  
 Is found not slow to smite; a law now  
 lives  
 Denouncing on his head no less than  
 death  
 Who shall set up, or seeing shall pluck  
 not down,  
 Such placards writ: the first soe'er who  
 finds  
 And leaves the writing that defames  
 her friend  
 To pass among the people, at her will  
 Shall lie in bonds; but if this brand  
 herself,  
 Then must the man that spared it or  
 that set  
 Die; so the fire-eyed queen of ship-  
 wreck sings

Death in their ears who sail this  
 dangerous sea  
 Whereon the ship reels of our stagger-  
 ing state,  
 And with the flame shot from her eyes  
 puts out  
 The light of theirs that were as light-  
 nings turned  
 On her hare-hearted lover.  
*Third Citizen.* Yet they lack  
 The power with boast or menace to  
 seal up  
 The lips of poor men; but three days  
 ago  
 As she rode through the Grassmarket I  
 heard  
 How from their stalls the women cried  
 on her,  
*God save your grace!* but with this  
 added word  
 That smote the smile upon her lips to  
 death,  
*If ye be spotless of the dead king's blood.*  
*Second Citizen.* Such words and souls  
 mount nigher God's ear and eye  
 Than theirs who lent this man their  
 hands to slay  
 And tongues to purge him of their gen-  
 eral sin, —  
 He of St. Andrew's, and his under  
 priest,  
 Bishop of Ross, Leslie and Hamiltons,  
 Whose lips are bloody, and that double  
 soul  
 Argyle, that steers their faction; and  
 this crew  
 Masked here as mouthpiece of the  
 loathing land  
 Must hide the people's heart and true  
 men's truth  
 With craft of prattling prelates; yet  
 such mouths  
 As are unlocked and locked again with  
 gold  
 But gape till God shall pluck their  
 tongues out.  
*Fifth Citizen.* Yea,  
 Ye hear but this, and have to burn your  
 ears  
 No hotter news of these men, or what  
 bond  
 Bears written broad and brave such  
 names as these



Of earls and bishops? this is strange  
yet, sirs,

That fires my cheek to tell you?

*Second Citizen.* Why, men said

There was a knot that met of these to  
sup,

Shut in with Bothwell's hackbutters for  
guard,

That drew round Ainslie's Tavern,  
where they sat

Like a strait hoop of steel to bind them  
safe

And hold them fast from starting; and  
some bond

Of these his guests at Bothwell's prayer  
subscribed

There was that bound them to him,  
against all foes

That might impeach him of the crime  
discharged

By the open court's acquittal, from this  
day

To take his part upon them, and stand  
fast

As to their own cause, being made sub-  
ject all

To slander and suspicion that but grows  
Of honor and high credit held with kings:

So much we heard, and found not  
strange.

*Fifth Citizen.* Nay, this

Was but the grace that served their  
banquet in

Of meats as strong as poison; there  
ensued

A pledge more mortal of a bond more  
base;

Considering this time present, how the  
queen

Stood husbandless, and how the gen-  
eral weal

Might let her not long live so, should  
her mind

By thought of his true services be  
moved

To take the earl Bothwell to her loving  
lord,

They and each man there met of them  
should plight

His honor, truth, and heart's fidelity

To advance this marriage with all  
furtherance given

Of counsel, satisfaction, and good help,

As soon as law might give it leave to  
be,

And as their common enemy should  
esteem

What man soever of evil will to them  
Might seek its hinderance; and to this  
were set

More than those names ye spake of;  
be it for fear,

For craft or vantage, none of these fell  
off

Save Eglington that slipped for shame  
away,

And Morton with the secretary, that  
gave

Their voice yet for this marriage, but  
would seal

No general bond of service on his side  
Save these, no priest or peer of them  
but lives

His servant pledged; their hands,  
tongues, counsels, hearts,

His or not theirs, and all they man  
sworn men.

*Third Citizen.* I have assurance of a  
true man's faith,

That word was writ of this confederacy  
To the English council from the Laird  
of Grange,

Desiring knowledge with what ear their  
queen

Shall take these tidings; and albeit of  
late,

In all our trouble being found slow to  
help

She hath lost the love here borne her,  
if her grace

For this late murder will pursue re-  
venge,

She shall win all the hearts of all the  
best

Again, he says, in Scotland; who should  
be,

With her good help and favor, swift to  
take

This vengeance on them, and redeem  
from fear

Their prince's life now trembling in the  
reach

Of hands that slew his father; for our  
queen

Hath sworn she cares not for her lover's  
sake

To lose France, England, and her natural land,  
 And would go with him to the wild world's end,  
 Stript to her smock, ere leave him.

*Second Citizen.* Has he writ  
 So much to the English court of her?  
 being ours,  
 He should let shame keep silence of her shame.

*First Citizen.* What shame or silence  
 can shut up for shame  
 That which at noon walks clamorous  
 of itself  
 And boastful to be naked? They will  
 wed,  
 Though thunder sound forth sin, and  
 while God speaks  
 Will kiss in sight of lightning.

*Fourth Citizen.* Was there not  
 Some noise of strife arisen for fault of  
 pay  
 Among their crew of Bothwell's villains  
 here  
 That hold by force of hand the palace  
 gates?

*Second Citizen.* Such rumor was, for  
 certain; and himself  
 Strode in among the middle mutiny  
 Like a thieves' captain, and being  
 braved of them  
 Caught by the throat one that was lord  
 o' the brawl,  
 And would have slain but for the throng  
 that cried  
 And drove upon him shouting, till for  
 fear  
 He was even fain to stop with promises  
 Their mouths who clamored; which to  
 see fulfilled  
 Needs must he sit no lower than doth  
 a king.

*Third Citizen.* So then the gates are  
 open, and the queen  
 By leave of these her guards, and him  
 their chief,  
 May part in peace for Stirling now to  
 see  
 Her son in ward there of the castellan?  
 Where we, God knows, may give him  
 thanks that one  
 So wise as the earl of Mar and stout of  
 heart

Hath our born king in covert, who  
 might sleep  
 On that sweet breast that bore him not  
 so safe

As in a hand so honest.

*First Citizen.* Ay, God help,  
 There is no surety in such housekeep-  
 ing  
 As thunder comes forth of the sky by  
 night

To fall upon and burn it, yet no storm  
 Save of men's making seen, nor fire in  
 heaven

Save what rose up from under. Verily,  
 Our good lord Bothwell spake but  
 truth, who said

To good James Melville, how so strange  
 a thing

On earth was never known of: pity 'tis  
 He could not come to look upon the  
 corpse,

Though Bothwell bade him, seeing it  
 was removed;

It was his hapless chance to find it  
 gone

And in safe keeping of some secret  
 hand

That waited on it living; such things  
 are:

The worse hap his. They say it had  
 no wound;

So if by some mischance, as God for-  
 bid,

The prince were reft unluckily of life,  
 I think he should have none for eye to  
 see

That might read evil.

*Third Citizen.* Who shall ride with  
 her?

*Second Citizen.* Why, no great train,  
 lest being within the walls  
 She take the child into her hand, and  
 give

For better care to Bothwell's, with the  
 keys

That keep this castle too; but yet I  
 think

His hand nor hers shall put God's  
 judgment back

That waits to take them triumphing,  
 and turn

To tears their laughter and our grief to  
 joy.

## SCENE VII. — STIRLING CASTLE.

*The QUEEN and HUNTLEY.**Queen.* Will you go back from us?*Huntley.* I like it not;

I do not see how this may be made good.

*Queen.* There is no flaw but in your fainter heart;

The way is fair and even; I cannot think

What seed is in men's hearts that brings forth fear

Out of all season. Why are you so sad?

The thing is no more dangerous than it was

When our first plot was laid; nay, so much less

By how much these are ours whose names and bonds

Speak on our side inscribed.

*Huntley.* Madam, not so;

The earl of Sutherland, whose forfeiture

Your grace but now remitted with mine now,

When we shall meet my brother's men in arms,

Will die before he yield you to their hands.

*Queen.* My lord, you have no brother of him now

That was your sister's husband. I will write

To bid him bring up men enough to out-match

All that ride with us homeward, and so far

That none the hardi'est shall but think on fight.

Three hundred hath your earl? then in his rank

There shall be more than of our company,

That I to spare men's blood may yield myself.

*Huntley.* It is too gross and foolishly devised;

When I spake last with him, he laid on you

The charge to say where we should meet and when.

And what should by contrivance plead for me,

To save my name though you be yielded up

Who ride with me for escort; all this charge

He lays on you, and bids me write again

What you shall say by letter; of himself

He moves not yet; and I beseech you think,

Before you move him, in what enterprise

You put to pledge your honor, that can never

With honor wed him who being wedded man

By force and violent hand hath borne you off;

Nor will my folk endure it, I wot well,

But it must come to trial by hap of fight

With doubt and accident of answering arms:

Where, if we fail on our part, then on his

Shall be the blame and bloody note of war

Made on your personal guard; but if we win

That ride with you as followers, then is he

The most forlorn of men revolted; else,

I shall be called of all that sin on earth

The most unthankful traitor, who being now

But newly of your grace remade your man

Shall yield you up by treason without blows

Into a rebel's handling; and the lord's, I doubt, when they shall see you in his hold,

Will think not much to unswear their oaths, deny

Their words and hands as given through force or fear,

And signed not of their hearts; I pray, think of it,

And take some other counsel to your mind.

*Queen.* My lord, if you bear back my word to him,  
It shall be this: that, seeing I am come so far,  
If of his own will he withdraw him not,  
For no persuasion nor for death itself Will I be brought to break my faith with him.  
For this you say of them that follow you,  
And of your fear to bear a thankless name  
For my supposed betraying, you should by now  
With him have taken counsel of the chance,  
And not have thrown it here across my way,  
Who have no choice to pass not over it,  
Seeing I may turn not back for life or death,  
For fear or shame or love of any man.  
As for the place, he doth not well to cast  
On me too even the election: let him choose,  
And send me word, with pardon that herein  
I tax my lord of too much negligence.  
For those your followers whom you most misdoubt,  
You shall be wise to weed our train of them  
If any wise mean be to draw them forth.  
This is my counsel, of a simple wit  
And womanish, but not so vile at heart  
As to go back for danger from its faith.  
I pray you so report of me, and say,  
When he shall ask you of my mind again,  
No more but this word only: and farewell. [Exit HUNTLEY.  
This faint-heart honesty with half a hand  
Is falsèr found at need than falsehood's self,  
And ever was of me more hated. Oh,  
That I might take these hours as in my hand  
And men that yet divide us, with one grasp

To gripe them dead and pluck his fang from time  
That waits to fasten on us unawares  
And make love mortal with the kiss that kills!  
A day and night are as a long life's length  
That part the hungering from the perfect hour,  
The void from the fulfilling.—Nay, come in.  
*Enter MARY BEATON and PARIS.*  
*Mary Beaton.* Here waits my lord of Bothwell's messenger  
To bear your word back of Lord Huntley's mind.  
*Queen.* Ay, that I found it trustless.  
Tell my lord  
He makes me mad to put his faith in him  
And to mistrust that which is wholly his,  
Even her true heart to whom he should have sent  
Word every day what she should do for him,  
And hath done nothing of it. I did say  
He should take heed of that false brother-in-law,  
Of whom his negligence and heedless faith  
Have put us in the danger; on my part  
There has lacked nothing toward the work in hand,  
And had he not more changed his mind than I  
Since I went from him, he should need not now  
By stranger's lips inquire of my resolve.  
Say how you see me, and till he send me word  
That I will here lie sick, as God he knows  
What health I have at heart. Would I were dead,  
For all I see goes ill; but tell your lord  
This was not in his promise that I find,  
Nor no such matter; but he lets me see  
What power has absence on him, to whose bow

His hand has yet another string than  
 mine.  
 And look you warn him of this brother-  
 in-law  
 That he hath babbled of our enterprise  
 Wherein he puts but forth a heartless  
 hand,  
 And in what great men's ears he well  
 may guess  
 Who knows which most are dangerous ;  
 yet methinks  
 If still we have need to flatter them, so  
 much  
 Might naturally be pleaded on his part,  
 That his good service and long amity  
 Might well deserve his pardon and  
 their love  
 If past a subject's duty he put forth,  
 Not to constrain me, but assure himself  
 Of such place nigh me that no foreign  
 tongue  
 May by strange counsel hinder my consent  
 To that whereto he trusts his service  
 shall  
 Make him one day to attain ; with such  
 excuse  
 Shall he persuade them that he stands  
 compelled  
 To make pursuit against his enemies :  
 And he may find fair words at will to  
 say  
 To Maitland most of all, through whose  
 keen tongue  
 We hold the rest by the ear ; but if at  
 last  
 The deed of our device mislike him  
 now,  
 Let him send word, and leave not on my  
 head  
 The blame of all ; and if it like him  
 yet,  
 Say I beseech him for the honor of  
 God  
 To come with no less force accom-  
 panied  
 Than of three hundred men ; rather  
 with more,  
 For that is all the main part of my  
 care ;  
 Seeing as for Huntley, I assure myself  
 He in our play shall henceforth bear no  
 part

But of an honest and a fearful man  
 Whose thought and all his toil of heart  
 it is  
 To keep the load of treason from his  
 name.  
 Therefore I would not have my lord in  
 all  
 Trust or mistrust him, but be circum-  
 spect  
 And take more power unto him.  
*Paris.* So shall I say ;  
 Your highness hath no message more  
 for me ?  
*Queen.* God wot no time it is for us  
 to change  
 Tokens and toys of love ; yet I would  
 send,  
 For very sorrow, something but in sign  
 That of my heart's grief I accuse not  
 him  
 For his cold writing or forgetfulness,  
 His little memory of me and little care,  
 And least of all his promise-breach,  
 being now  
 So far made his that what thing pleases  
 him  
 Is acceptable to me, and all my thoughts  
 To his so willingly subdued, that all  
 That comes of him proceeds of no  
 such root,  
 In mine esteem, as loveless negligence  
 Nor any love's lack, but such only  
 cause  
 As I desire, being just and reasonable,  
 Which is the final order he should  
 take  
 For his own surety and honor, who  
 alone  
 Is my life's stay for which I only will  
 Preserve it, and without which in this  
 world  
 My soul desires not but a sudden death.  
 Bear therefore to him, for testimony of  
 me,  
 How lowly I submit me to his law  
 In sign of homage this that I take off  
 Of my head's ornament, which is the  
 chief  
 And guide of other members, as to say  
 How being possessed of that as of a  
 spoil  
 Which is the principal, he needs must  
 have

The remnant subject to him with heart's  
 consent.  
 And for that heart, that seeing I have  
 left it him  
 Long since I have not now in hand to  
 give,  
 This stone instead I send him, painted  
 black  
 And sown with tears and bones, a  
 sepulchre  
 Where to my heart is likened, being  
 as it  
 Carved like a tomb or certain recep-  
 tacle  
 To harbor his commandments in, and  
 hold  
 More fast than all his memory and his  
 name  
 Therein enclosed as in the ring my  
 hair,  
 To come forth never till the grant of  
 death  
 Shall let him rear a trophy of my  
 bones,  
 As is the ring full of them, set therein  
 For sign he has made full conquest of  
 my heart,  
 That even the bones must be to him  
 bequeathed  
 For memory of his victory and my loss  
 That was so sweet to me: tell him but  
 this,  
 And say that by the enamelling of black  
 He shall discern her steadfastness who  
 sends  
 And by the tears my fears innumerable  
 Lest I displease him, and those tears I  
 shed  
 For his dear absence and for heart's  
 disdain  
 That I may not in outward shape be  
 his  
 As with full strength and heart and  
 spirit I am,  
 And with good cause; for were my  
 merit more  
 Than hers of all born ever for men's  
 love  
 Found worthiest and most perfect, and  
 as much  
 As I desire it might be in his eye,  
 Well might I so rest ever, and shall  
 strive

Still to maintain me in his government  
 As worthily as I may. Say, I beseech  
 him  
 That is mine only good, in as good part  
 To take it at my hand as I at his  
 With extreme joy received our marriage  
 bond,  
 That till the marriage of our bodies be  
 Made publicly shall part not from my  
 breast,  
 Which keeps it now in sign of all the  
 bliss  
 I can or hope for or desire on earth:  
 And that my letter here brake off for  
 dread  
 Lest this as much should weary him to  
 read  
 As I took joy to write it; therefore,  
 say,  
 Here did I set a kiss as on his hand  
 With such devotion as I pray to God  
 To give him long and blessed life, and  
 me  
 That only good of all which I desire  
 And only may pretend to in the world,  
 His love and his good favor who doth  
 hold  
 Alone my life up; and this trust I  
 showed  
 To you in whom I know the trust he  
 hath  
 As I shall for his sake whose wife I  
 am,  
 His humble and obedient lawful wife,  
 To whom my heart and body are dedi-  
 cate  
 And shall in no wise unto death be  
 changed  
 Nor good nor evil make me go from it.  
 So tell him, and despatch.  
 [Exit PARIS.  
 What said Lord Mar  
 Touching the child's charge to you?  
 Mary Beaton. But thus much:  
 That he would never let it from his  
 hand  
 Save with assent of the three several  
 states,  
 And on condition there shall be pro-  
 claimed  
 Some honest lord and worthy such a  
 charge  
 As captain of the castle of Edinburgh,

Where only may the prince, he says, lie  
safe

From them that slew his father.

*Queen.* Ay, so brave?

There speaks a man of trust, found  
honorable.

I had as lief be dead as see such men  
Stand so at point to thwart me: by my  
life,

I hold it not a straw's worth in the scale  
If I must live so shackled. What! and  
now,

When my life trembles on the top of fate,  
And all my days hang from this edge  
of time

'Twixt night and light suspended,  
whence one hour

May hurl all hopes down breathless to  
the pit,

And cast me broken at the mountain's  
foot,

Or set me sure and steadfast in the sun,  
To be so crossed of cozening honesties,  
And honors made of craft, and fraudu-  
lent faith,

Would spur a blood more sluggish than  
my sleep

And prick a drowsier passion. Well,  
let be:

Our time will come to take all these in  
hand.

What may doubt deem, then, I would  
do with him,

That am his mother? Nay, I know  
their thought:

It is their fear and hatred of my lord  
That glares askant on me; and the  
child's self,

I think, as little loves me as he need,  
Knowing in what love I held his father.

Come,

I will yet see, before I take my leave,  
If there be such a nature in our blood  
As can command and change the spirit-  
ual springs

And motions of our thought, advance  
or check

The pulse of purpose in the soul that  
moves

Our longings and our loathings to their  
end

By mere control and force unreasonable  
Of motiveless compulsion; if such blind

And sensual chances of the stirring  
veins

That feed the heart of child or mother  
may

Divert and dull the mind's design, or  
turn

The conscience and the current of the  
will

From its full course and action. I  
believe,

Albeit I would not hurt the life I bare,  
Nor shed its blood, it is not possible

Such love should live between my child  
and me,

Who know what source he came of  
more than mine,

And how that part of me once mixed  
therewith

Was sullied thence and shamed in  
mine own sight,

That loathes to look upon it, yet must  
see

In flesh and blood the record writ and  
sealed

As oft as I behold him: and you saw  
He would not lie within mine arm, nor  
kiss,

But like a fox-cub scratched and strove,  
to be

Free of my hands again.

*Mary Beaton.* I see no need  
In heaven or earth why you should love  
him.

*Queen.* No?

They say such law there is to enforce  
such love

On either part: I know not; but I  
think

Love should but flower from seed of  
love, and this

Was but a tare sown timeless and in  
hate;

Yet so much am I mother in my mind,  
That, be it for love or loathing, from  
my heart,

When I perforce commend him to that  
care

Which will not yield him naturally to  
mine,

Fain would I parting know if soon or  
late

Mine eyes shall turn upon that face  
again

Which out of me was moulded, and  
 take note,  
 When each on each looks equal-eyed,  
 and sees  
 His crown a shadow that makes mine  
 a shade,  
 What king must this be, and what  
 queen shall I.

SCENE VIII.—DUNBAR. A ROOM  
 IN THE CASTLE.

MAITLAND and SIR JAMES MELVILLE.

*Melville.* What, have you seen them  
 since we came from horse?

How looks she now?

*Maitland.* Disquieted and strange;  
 And he so hot and high of mood, I  
 think

We have no safeguard from him but in  
 her;

And Huntley that at Stirling spake with  
 me

Of this their counsel, and must now  
 suspect

It was by me discovered to the lords,  
 Will turn perforce his fear of Both-  
 well's wrath

Into a sword to strike as straight as he  
 Even at my life, it may be; which her  
 grace

Shall easilier from fear of them redeem  
 Than her own fame from evidence of  
 men,

That seeing her prisoner see too if she  
 came

By force or no, and led by heart or  
 hand,

To bonds indeed or freedom.

*Melville.* Nay, myself  
 Was warned of him that rode in charge  
 of me,—

The laird here of Blackadder,—how  
 lord

Was of our lady's counsel; and but now  
 As they rode in I heard him swear, and  
 laugh,

Who would soe'er or would not, in  
 their spite,

Yea, though herself she would not with  
 her will,

Yet should the queen perforce now wed  
 with him.

*Maitland.* The deed has flushed his  
 brain and blood like wine:  
 He is wroth and merry at once, as a  
 man mad.

There will no good come of it.

*Melville.* Surely, sir,  
 Of such loose crafts there cannot: all  
 this land

Will cry more loud upon her than on  
 him

If she be known consenting.

*Maitland.* If she be!  
 How shall not all ears know it on earth  
 that hear?

But two miles out of Edinburgh, at  
 noon,

Accompanied of all her guard and us,  
 She, meeting in mid-road at Almond  
 Bridge,

The unthought-on Bothwell at his horse-  
 troop's head,

Who with twelve men lays hand upon  
 her rein,

Yields herself to him for fear our blood  
 be spilt,

Or theirs or ours, for tenderness of  
 heart

Submits her to his violent masterdom,  
 Forbids our swords, ties up all hands  
 with words,

And doglike follows hither at his hand  
 For pure surprise and suddenness of  
 fear

That plucks the heart out of resistance;  
 then,

Riding beneath the south wall of the  
 town,

On show of summons to the castle sent  
 For help of us enforced thus of our  
 foes,

We get but fire of guns charged full of  
 sound

With hay stuffed in for powder; and  
 God knows

Balfour knew naught of this, the gov-  
 ernor,

Who was forewarned not first of their  
 design,

How by no means to cross but further  
 it

With forecast of his office; nay, all this  
 Was undevised, and on the sudden  
 wrought



To take her by swift stroke of simple hand;

And so astonied were we all, and so  
The castellan, and most of all the queen.

Why, though the world be drunk with faith in lies,

Shall God make this too gospel? From this day

Shall she begin her ruin; with rent heart

I see the ways wherethrough her life shall lie,

And to what end; for never henceforth more

Shall she get good or comfort of men's love,

Nor power nor honor that a queen should have,

Nor hap nor hope renewed in all her days.

She has killed herself to take her kingdom off,

And give into strange keeping.

*Enter the QUEEN, BOTHWELL, and HUNTLEY.*

*Bothwell.* Here he stands, —

This was the knave that was to baffle me:

He shall die here.

*Huntley.* I will not lose the part  
My sword should have in him: this hour and hand

Shall cut off craft and danger. Stand, and die.

*Maitland.* Is it the queen's will that pursues my life?

Then let it strike, and end.

*Queen.* I charge you, hold!  
I will not foully twice be forced of men  
To stand and stain mine eyes with sight of blood

Shed of a friend, and guiltless. Hold, I say!

*Bothwell.* Stand by, for I will slay him.

*Queen.* Slay me, then,  
For I will fling my body on their points  
Before your swords shall find him.

Hark you, sir, [*To HUNTLEY.*]  
Whose father died my traitor in my sight:

If one hair perish of my servant's head,

You that had back your lands and goods but now

Again shall lose them with your forfeit life

For boot of this man's blood.

*Bothwell.* Woman, give way!

*Queen.* Give all your swords way toward me; let me bleed

Ere this my friend that has been true to me:

I swear he shall not.

*Maitland.* Madam, for God's love,  
Come you not in their peril; I am armed,

If both not run upon me.

*Bothwell.* Fool, I say,  
Give place, or I shall know not what I do;

Make me not mad.

*Queen.* I cannot fear you yet.

Will you strike now?

*Bothwell.* I should but do you right.  
Why thrust you in between me and this man

Whom your heart knows for traitor,  
and whose tongue

Crossed and betrayed our counsel to the lords?

Had he his will, we should not stand to-day

Here heart to heart, but you in ward of them,

And I divided from you.

*Queen.* My sweet lord,  
Let not your wrath confound my happiness;

Stain not my fair and fortunate hour with blood

Shed of a good man who shall serve us yet.

It shall more help to have him live our friend

Than fifty-fold slain of our enemies.

*Bothwell.* Have your will's way: he cannot cross us now;

I care not if he live.

*Maitland.* I am bounden to you  
For so much grace.

*Queen.* Vex not his mood again.  
To-morrow shall all friends be reconciled;

To-night rest here in surety.

*Bothwell.* Be it so. [*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE IX. — THE SAME.

*The QUEEN, BOTHWELL, and the ARCHBISHOP of ST. ANDREW'S.*

*Queen.* What counsel, father? if their league be made  
So soon and strong at Stirling, we had need

Surely by this be fast in Edinburgh.  
We have sent thither freely as our friends

Lord Huntley and James Melville, who were here

As in our ward, not prisoners; every day

Here lingering makes our enemies bitterer-tongued

And our strange state more hazardous; myself

More taxed for willing bondage, or my lord

For violence done upon me.

*Archbishop.* In my mind,  
There is no mean of policy now but speed,

Nor surety but short counsel and stout heart.

The lords at Stirling, while you put off time,

Athol and Mar, and Morton with Argyle,

Are sworn to crown the prince, and of his name

Make to their cause a standard, if you cleave

Still to my lord here, from whose violent hand

With your own leave they fain would pluck you forth,

And keep your honor hurtless; but they see

You will have no deliverance at their hands

From him who, as they say, doth boast himself,

If he may get your child once in his ward,

To warrant him forever in good time  
From all revenging of his father's death.

Nay, it is bruited of them all about  
How you at parting would have given the boy

An apple poisoned, which he put away,  
And dogs that ate it after swelled and died.

*Bothwell.* The devil is in their lips  
had I free way,  
Fire should seal up and sear them.

*Archbishop.* So they talk;  
The very children's tongues are hot on you,

And in their plays your shadowy action staged

And phantoms raised of your presented deed:

Boys that in Stirling streets had made their game

To act again the slaying of Darnley, so  
Were rapt with passion of the pastime feigned

They well-nigh slew the player that took on him

Your part, my lord, as murderer, and came off

Half hanged indeed and breathless;  
this I hear,

And more much weightier daily from that part

Pointing the same way on you; sure it is,

From France and England messengers desire

To have the prince delivered to their charge

As to be fostered for his surety's sake  
Of one or other, safer so bestowed

In foreign harborage of a stranger court

Than at the rough breast of his natural land;

Such offer comes there of Elizabeth  
To those unquiet lords, but other aid

They must of her not look for to their part

Who stand against their sovereign.  
Now, since these

Are dangers evident, and every day  
Puts more in them of dangerous, best it were,

I think, to meet them warlike point to point,

Your hands and powers made one, and multiplied

By mutual force and faith; or you must part,

And each lose other, and yet be neither  
 saved,  
 Or presently with one sole face confront  
 The many-mouthed new menace of the  
 time,  
 With divers heads deformed of enmi-  
 ties  
 That roar and ravin in the night of  
 state  
 Made dim with factions; only majesty,  
 With light of bared and kindled brows  
 and eyes,  
 Can face them to consume; do you but  
 show  
 Your soul as high as is your crown,  
 and power  
 As plain as is your cause, you shall en-  
 force,  
 By resolution and a forthright will,  
 The obedience and the allowance of  
 these men  
 That would constrain you by the fear  
 of them  
 Within the limit of their leave. I say,  
 Proclaim at once the fore-ordained di-  
 vorce  
 Between his sometime lady and my  
 lord,  
 And hard thereon your marriage, as  
 compelled  
 By perilous instance of necessity  
 At once to assure you of a husband's  
 help  
 And present strength in this your need,  
 who stand  
 Fenceless and forceless with no man  
 for stay,  
 And could desire none truer and wor-  
 thier trust  
 Than him whose service done and val-  
 iant name  
 May warrant your remission of such  
 fault  
 As men lay on him for the seeming  
 force  
 With which unwillingly he stood con-  
 strained  
 To save you even for love's sake from  
 their hands,  
 Whence, had not he redeemed you as  
 by might,  
 They had done you worse wrong than  
 he seemed to do.

This shall excuse the speed that you  
 put on,  
 And leave their hands no time to rise  
 that would  
 Prevent you, being unmarried; and  
 your own,  
 Forestalling them, shall take again and  
 steer  
 The helm of this land's general weal,  
 else left  
 To their cross guidance and false pilot-  
 age.  
*Bothwell.* By God, well said and  
 counselled.  
*Queen.* All is well,  
 Or shall, if but one thing be; and in  
 you  
 That lies alone of all men. Nay, you  
 know it:  
 Wrong me not now to ask.  
*Bothwell.* Wrong you not me,  
 To cross my wit with riddles, which you  
 know  
 From no man's lips I love.  
*Queen.* I know not yet  
 If there be naught on any lips that live  
 Save mine that you love better: I can  
 tell  
 Too little of your likings.  
*Bothwell.* Be not wroth  
 That thus much of them I desire you  
 learn,  
 And set your heart to it, once being  
 schooled. Fair queen,  
 These are no chambering times, nor sit  
 we here  
 To sing love's catches counter-changed  
 with words  
 That cross and break in kisses: what  
 you will,  
 Be swift to speak, or silent.  
*Queen.* What I will?  
 I will be sure there hangs about your  
 heart  
 No thought that bound it once to one  
 cut off  
 And yet may feed it with desire to share  
 What is my treasure and my right to  
 have  
 With her most undeserving; which in  
 you  
 Were more than Jason's falsehood was,  
 that gave

To his new wife such vantage of his old  
 As you give her of me, whose narrower  
 heart  
 Holds not a third part of the faith and  
 love  
 That my obedience bears you, though  
 she wear  
 Against my will such vantage in your  
 sight,  
 By my hard hap; yet would I think  
 not so,  
 Nor liken you to such a trustless man  
 And miserable as he was, nor myself  
 To one so wronged a woman, and being  
 wronged  
 In suffering so unpitiful as she.  
 Yet you put in me somewhat of her  
 kind  
 That makes me like unto her in any  
 thing  
 That touches you or may preserve you  
 mine  
 To whom alone you appertain, if that  
 May be called mine by right appropri-  
 ated  
 Which should be won through faithful  
 travail, yea,  
 'Through only loving of you as God  
 knows  
 I do and shall do all my days of life  
 For pain or evil that can come thereof:  
 In recompense of which, and all those  
 ills  
 You have been cause of to me, and  
 must think  
 That I esteem no evils for your sake,  
 Let not this woman with her heartless  
 tears  
 Nor piteous passion thrust me out of  
 door,  
 Who should sit sole and secret in your  
 heart.  
 What hath she borne, or I not borne,  
 for you,  
 And would not bear again? or by what  
 gift  
 Have I set store or spared it that might  
 go  
 To buy your heart's love to me? Have  
 I found  
 Empire, or love of friends, or pride, or  
 peace,  
 Or honor, or safe life, or innocence,

Too good things to put from me; or  
 men's wrath,  
 Terror or shame or hatred of mine  
 own,  
 Or breach of friends, or kingdom's  
 wreck, or sin,  
 Too fearful things to embrace and make  
 them mine  
 With as good will and joyous height of  
 heart  
 As hers who takes love in her prosper-  
 ous arms  
 And has delight to bridegroom? Have  
 I not  
 Loved all these for your sake? and  
 those good things,  
 Have I not all abhorred them? Would  
 I keep  
 One comfort or one harbor or one hope,  
 One ransom, one resource, one resting-  
 place,  
 That might divide me from your dan-  
 ger, save  
 This head whose crown is humbled at  
 your foot  
 From storm that smote on yours?  
 Would I sleep warm  
 Out of the wind's way when your sail  
 was set  
 By night against the sea-breach!  
 Would I wait  
 As might your wife to hear of you, how  
 went  
 The day that saw your battle, and hold  
 off  
 Till the cry came of fallen or conquer-  
 ing men  
 To bid me mourn or triumph? Hath  
 my heart  
 Place for one good thought bred not of  
 your good,  
 Or ill thought not depending on your  
 ill?  
 What hath she done, that yours hath  
 place for her,  
 Or time or thought or pity?  
*Bothwell.* What have I,  
 That yours should fix on her untimely?  
 Nay,  
 Last year she was my wife, and moved  
 you not;  
 And now she is turned forth naked of  
 that name,

And stripped as 'twere to clothe you,  
comes this heat,  
And fear takes fire lest she turn back,  
or I  
To thrust you forth instead: you are  
fair and fool  
Beyond all queens and women.  
*Queen.* There spake truth,  
For then you said, most loving. But  
indeed  
This irks me yet, this galls with doubt  
and fear,  
That even her plea to be divorced from  
you  
On some forepast adulterous charge, —  
which proved  
She wins her asking, — leaves your hand  
not loose  
By law to wed again, but your same  
deed  
Frees her from you, and fetters you  
from me.  
Then stand we shamed and profitless:  
meseems  
God's very hand can loose not us and  
join,  
Who binds and looses; though Buc-  
cleuch make oath  
She was contracted to you first, and  
this  
No righteous marriage; though she  
plight her soul  
As she made proffer for our hope's  
sake; yea,  
Though you should bring a hundred  
loves to swear  
They had the firstlings of your faith,  
who kept  
No faith with any, nor will keep with  
me,  
God knows, and I, that have no war-  
rant yet  
In my lord's word here which unweds  
you, being  
Matched with your cousin in the fourth  
degree,  
And no proof published if the Church's  
grace  
Were granted for it, or sought; no help  
of this,  
If your love give not warrant; and  
therein  
If she hath half or I have less than all,

Then have I nothing of you. — Speak  
to him:  
Bid him not break his faith, not this  
now mine;  
Plead for me with him, father, lest he  
lie,  
And I too lose him: God shall pardon,  
say,  
What sin we do for love, or what for  
wrath,  
Or to defend us from the danger of  
men,  
But to me, — me, say, if he be forsworn,  
That God shall forgive it him, nor I.  
*Archbishop.* Be not too careful to  
confound yourself.  
Those bonds are broken by God's leave  
and law:  
Make no fresh bonds of your own  
fears, to do  
What harm these do no more; he hath  
put her off:  
Rest there content.  
*Queen.* Nay, why should I then trust  
He shall not put off me in heart for  
her?  
*Bothwell.* Why, have your choice  
then, and mistrust: God's death!  
I had deemed I had learnt of women's  
witlessness  
Some little learning, yet I thought no  
more  
Than that it was but light as air, snow,  
foam,  
And all things light, not lighter. I  
would know  
What men hold foolish yet that hold  
you wise,  
If not your fear.  
*Queen.* Doth she not love you?  
*Bothwell.* Ay.  
*Queen.* Hath she not cause to hate,  
and doth not hate,  
Who sues to be put from you, for your  
fault  
Craves leave to be cut off, as I crave  
leave  
To take you from her hands, her gift?  
*Bothwell.* God knows:  
She may love, hate, or hate not neither  
love,  
Or both alike: I know not.  
*Queen.* But I know

That you can love not. Nay, then help  
me, God!  
If I did know this, I would kill myself.  
Yet to more proof I would I had put  
your heart,  
Ere I gave up to it all the might of  
mine —  
Which is but feebleness. Well, we  
will go;  
There is no better counsel. Pardon me  
If my fear seem to wrangle with my  
faith:  
They are parts but of my love, that  
with itself  
Strives to be master of its grief and  
joy  
Lest either overbear it, and therewith  
Put out my life. Come: all things shall  
be well.

## SCENE X. — HOLYROOD.

*Enter HERRIES and SIR JAMES MELVILLE.*

*Herries.* Is the work done?

*Melville.* They are wedded fast; and  
now

I think would one of them to free her-  
self

Give the right hand she hath given him.

*Herries.* What, so soon?

Came she as loath into the council-hall,  
Or were her answers as compelled and  
strange?

*Melville.* I have not seen for any  
chance till now

So changed a woman in the face as she,  
Saving with extreme sickness. She  
was wed

In her old mourning habits, and her  
face

As deadly as were they; the soft warm  
joy

That laughed in its fair feature, and  
put heart

In the eyes and gracious lips as to  
salute

All others' eyes with sweet regardful-  
ness,

Looked as when winds have worn the  
white-rose leaf;

No fire between her eyelids, and no  
flower

In the April of her cheeks; their spring  
a-cold,

And but for want of very heart to weep  
They had been rainier than they were  
forlorn.

*Herries.* And his new grace of Ork-  
ney?

*Melville.* The good duke

Was dumb while Adam Bothwell with  
grave lips

Set forth the scandal of his lewd life  
past

And fair faith of his present penitence.  
Whose days to come being higher than

his past place  
Should expiate those gone by, and their  
good works

Atone those evil: hardly twitched his  
eye,

Or twinkled half his thick lip's curve  
of hair,

Listening; but when the bishop made  
indeed

His large hard hand with hers so flower-  
like fast,

He seemed as 'twere for pride and  
mighty heart

To swell and shine with passion, and  
his eye

To take into the fire of its red look  
All dangers and all adverse things that  
might

Rise out of days unrisen, to burn them  
up

With its great heat of triumph; and  
the hand

Fastening on hers so griped it that her  
lips

Trembled, and turned to catch the  
smile from his,

As though her spirit had put its own  
life off,

And sense of joy or property of pain,  
To close with his alone; but this twin  
smile

Was briefer than a flash or gust that  
strikes

And is not; for the next word was not  
said

Ere her face waned again to winter  
ward

As a moon smitten, and her answer  
came

As words from dead men wickedly  
wrung forth

By craft of wizards, forged and forceful  
breath

Which hangs on lips that loathe it.

*Herries.* Will you think

This was not haply but for show, to  
wear

The likeness as of one not all con-  
strained

Nor all consenting, willingly enforced

To do her will as of necessity?

That she might seem no part yet of his  
plot,

But as compelled by counsel of those  
lords

Who since her coming have subscribed  
by name

The paper of advice that in his cause  
Declares what force of friends has

Bothwell here

In Lothian and on all the border's  
march

To keep good order, and how well it  
were

She should for surety wed him whom  
she needs

Must wed for honor, or perforce live  
shamed

By violence done upon her.

*Melville.* No: there hung

Too much of fear and passion on her  
face

To be put off when time shall be to  
unmask.

The fire that moved her, and the mount-  
ing will,

While danger was and battle was to be,  
Now she hath leapt into the pit alive

To win and wear the diamond, are no  
more:

Hope feels the wounds upon its hands  
and feet

That clomb and clung, now halting  
since the hour

That should have crowned has bruised  
it. No, 'tis truth:

She is heart-struck now, and labors  
with herself,

As one that loves, and trusts not but  
the man

Who makes so little of men's hate may  
make

Of women's love as little; with this  
doubt

New-born within her, fears that slept  
awake,

And shame's eyes open that were shut  
for love,

To see on earth all pity hurt to death

By her own hand, and no man's face  
her friend

If his be none for whom she casts them  
off,

And finds no strength against him in  
their hands.

*Herries.* Small strength indeed, or  
help of craft or force,

Must she now look for of them; and  
shall find,

I fear, no stay against men's spirits and  
tongues,

Nor shelter in the observance of their  
will

That she puts on, submitting her own  
faith

To the outward face of theirs, as in  
this act

Of marriage, and the judgment now  
enforced

Against the allowance of the mass, albeit  
With a bruised heart and loathing did  
she bow

That royal head and hand imperious  
once

To give so much of her soul's trust  
away;

And little shall it stead her.

*Melville.* So fear I:

'Tis not the warrant of an act affirmed  
Against the remnants of her faith, nor  
form

Of this strange wedlock, shall renew to  
her

Men's outworn love and service; nay,  
and strife

Lies closer to her than fears from out-  
ward: these

Whose swords and souls attend on her  
new lord,

Both now for fault of pay grown  
mutinous,

From flat revolt they hardly have re-  
deemed

With the queen's jewels and that Eng-  
lish gift

Of the gold font sent hither for the prince,  
 That served him not for christening,  
 melted now  
 To feed base hands with gold, and stop  
 loud throats,  
 Whose strength alone and clamor put  
 such heart  
 In Bothwell, that he swore to hang the  
 man  
 Who would not speak their banns at  
 first, and now  
 But utters them with lips that yet pro-  
 test  
 Of innocent blood and of adulterous  
 bonds  
 By force proclaimed, and fraudulent; and  
 this Craig  
 The townsmen love, and heed not that  
 for craft  
 Each day will Bothwell hear men  
 preach, and show  
 To them that speak all favor, and will  
 sit  
 A guest at burghers' boards unsum-  
 moned; yet  
 Men's hate more swells against him, to  
 behold  
 How by the queen he rides unbonneted,  
 And she rebukes his too much courtesy;  
 So that their world within doors and  
 without  
 Swells round them doubtfully toward  
 storm, and sees  
 This hot-brained helmsman in his own  
 conceit  
 Even here in port, who drifts indeed at  
 sea.  
*Herries.* Short time will wind this  
 up: the secretary,  
 Whose blood the queen would see not  
 shed of him,  
 Is slipped away for Stirling, there to join  
 With Lindsay and the lords ere this  
 combined,  
 From whom I may not now divide my-  
 self,  
 On the child's party. Not a hand will  
 stay  
 Nor heart upon this side; the Hamil-  
 tons,  
 For their own ends that set this mar-  
 riage on,

Will for those ends with no sad hearts  
 behold  
 At others' hands her imminent over-  
 throw.  
*Melville.* This was the archbishop's  
 counsel, that annulled  
 Last year's true marriage to procure the  
 queen's,  
 And even therein betray her. God  
 mend all!  
 But I misdoubt me lest the sun be set  
 That looked upon the last of her good  
 days.

## SCENE XI. — THE SAME.

*The QUEEN and BOTHWELL; MARY  
 BEATON and ARTHUR ERSKINE in  
 attendance.*

*Queen.* Are you yet wroth?

*Bothwell.* Are you yet wise? to know  
 If I be wroth, should less import than  
 this

Which I would fain find of you.

*Queen.* By my life,

I think I am but wise enough to know  
 That witless I was ever.

*Bothwell.* Ay, but most,

You mean, to wed me, that am graceless  
 more

Than witless you that wedded, in men's  
 eyes

Who justliest judge of either; yet, by  
 God,

Had I not grace enough to match with  
 you,

I must have less than in their minds  
 I have

And tongues of them that curse me.  
 But what grief

Wrings now your heart or whets your  
 tongue, that strikes

When the heart stirs not?

*Queen.* Nay, no grief it is

To be cut off from all men's company,  
 Watched like a thief lest he break  
 ward by night,

My chamber-door set round with men  
 at-arms,

My steps and looks espied on, hands  
 and feet

Fettered as 'twere with glances of  
 strange eyes



That guard me lest I stray; my ways,  
my words,

My very sleep, their subject.

*Bothwell.* You were wont  
To walk more free; I wot you have  
seen fair days

When you lived large i' the sun, and  
had sweet tongues

To sing with yours, and haply lips and  
eyes

To make song sweeter than the lute  
may: now

'Tis hard that you sit here my woful  
wife,

Who use you thus despitefully, that  
yet

Was never queen so mated with a  
groom

And so mishandled: have you said so?

*Queen.* I?

*Bothwell.* Who hath put these words  
else in men's mouths, that prate

How you lie fast in prison? I did know  
A woman's tongue keen as her faith

was light,  
But faith so like the wind spake never  
yet

With tongue so like a sword's point.

*Queen.* No, my lord?

'Tis well that I should hear so first of  
you,

Who best may know the truth of your  
worst word.

*Bothwell.* Is it no truth that men so  
speak, and you,

By speech or silence or by change of  
face,

By piteous eyes or angry, give them  
cause

To babble of your bonds? What  
grace you show

Toward others is as doubt and hate of  
me

In these our enemies' sight, who see it,  
and swear

You are kept in ward here of my will,  
and made,

Out of no trust or love but force and  
fear,

Thrall to my hand. Why, being but  
two days wed,

Must there be cause between us of dis-  
pute

For such a thing as this man, in whose  
name

I am crossed and slighted of your wan-  
ton will?

*Queen.* If he be worth no more than  
you conceive,

What grace I do him can hurt you?

*Bothwell.* I conceive!

Why, what worth is he with you, that I  
should

Conceive the least thought of him?  
Were I hurt,

Assure yourself it would be to his  
death:

Lay that much to your heart.

*Queen.* My heart is killed.  
I have not where to lay it.

*Bothwell.* Pray you, no tears.  
I have seen you weep when dead men  
were alive,

That for your eye-drops wept their  
hearts' blood out:

So will not I. You have done me fool-  
ish wrong,

And haply cast your fame for food to  
hounds

Whose teeth will strip it hour by hour  
more bare

Whereon they have gnawed before.

*Queen.* What have I done?  
Speak.

*Bothwell.* Nay, I will, because you  
know not. Hark:

You are even too simple and harmless;  
being man's wife,

Not now the first time, you should buy  
more wit

Though with less innocence; you have  
given a gift,

Out of your maiden singleness of soul  
And eye most witless of misconstruing  
eyes,

Where you should not: this is strange  
truth to you,

But truth, God help us! that man's  
horse who was

Your husband, and whose chattels,  
place, and name

Lie in my hold I think now lawfully,  
Whence none is like to wring them,  
have you given

Out of my hand to one of whom fame  
saith

That by the witness of a north-land  
 witch  
 He when I die must wed you, and my  
 life  
 Shall last not half a year; for in your  
 bed  
 Must lie two husbands after me, and  
 you  
 Shall in your fifth lord's lifetime die by  
 fire.  
 Now, being but third and least in worth  
 of these,  
 I would not have you die so red a death,  
 But keep you from all fresh or fiercer  
 heat  
 Than of my lips and arms; for which  
 things' sake  
 I am not blithe, so please you, to behold  
 How straight this lay lord abbot of  
 Arbroath  
 Sits in your husband's saddle. Pardon  
 me  
 That with my jealous knowledge I con-  
 found  
 Your virginal sweet ignorance of men's  
 minds,  
 Ill thoughts and tongues unmannerly,  
 that strike  
 At the pure heart which dreams not on  
 such harm:  
 It is my love and care of your life's  
 peace  
 Makes me thus venturous to wage  
 words with you,  
 And put such troublous things in your  
 fair mind,  
 Whereof God wot you knew not; and  
 to end,  
 Take this much of me: live what life  
 you may,  
 Or die what death, while I have part  
 in you,  
 None shall have part with me; nor  
 touch nor word,  
 Nor eye nor hand, nor writing, nor one  
 thought,  
 The lightest that may hang upon a look,  
 Shall man get of you that I know not  
 of,  
 And answer not upon him. Be you  
 sure  
 I am not of such fool's mould cast in  
 flesh

As royal-blooded husbands; being no  
 king,  
 Nor kin of kings, but one that keep  
 unarmed  
 My head but with my hand, and have  
 no wit  
 To twitch you strings, and match you  
 rhyme for rhyme,  
 And turn and twitter on a tripping  
 tongue,  
 But so much wit to make my word and  
 sword  
 Keep time and rhyme together, say and  
 slay.  
 Set this down in such record as you list,  
 But keep it surer than you keep your  
 mind  
 If that be changing; for by heaven and  
 hell  
 I swear to keep the word I give you  
 fast  
 As faith can hold it, that who thwarts  
 me here,  
 Or comes across my will's way in my  
 wife's,  
 Dies as a dog dies, doomless. Now,  
 your pleasure:  
 I prate no more.  
*Queen.* Shall I be handled thus?  
*Bothwell.* You have too much been  
 handled otherwise:  
 Now will I keep you from men's hands  
 in mine,  
 Or lack the use of these.  
*Queen.* What, to strike me?  
 You shall not need: give me a knife to  
 strike,  
 That I may let my life out in his eye,  
 Or I will drown myself.  
*Bothwell.* Why, choose again:  
 I cross you not.  
*Queen.* Give me a knife, I say.  
*Arthur Erskine.* Make not our hearts  
 bleed, madam, as they burn  
 To hear what we hear silent.  
*Bothwell.* Comfort her:  
 You were her chamber-knight on  
 David's day.  
*Arthur Erskine.* My lord, the re-  
 verence that the queen's sight  
 bears,  
 And awe toward her, make me thus  
 slow to set

My hand to do what work my heart  
bids; else

I would not doubt to stand before your  
grace,

And make such answer as her servant  
may.

*Queen.* Forbear him, Arthur: nay,  
and me; 'tis I

On whom all strokes first fall and sorest  
smite,

Who most of all am shieldless, without  
stay,

And look for no man's comfort. — Pray  
you, sir,

If it be in your will that I cast off  
This heavy life to lighten your life's

load  
That now with mine is laden, let me  
die

More queenlike than this dog's death  
you denounce

Against the man that falls into your  
hate;

Though not for love, yet shame, be-  
cause I was

A queen that loved you: else you  
should not seem

So royal in her sight whose eyes you  
serve,

Nor she when I am dead with such  
high heart

Behold you, nor with such glad lips  
commend

As conqueror of me slain for her love's  
sake

And servant of her living in your love.  
Let me die therefore queenlike, and  
your sword

Strike where your tongue hath struck;  
though not so deep,

It shall suffice to cleave my heart and  
end.

*Bothwell.* Hear you, my queen: if we  
twain be one flesh,

I will not have this daintier part of it  
Turn any timeless hand against itself

To hurt me, nor this fire which is your  
tongue

Shoot any flame on me: no fuel am I  
To burn and feed you; not a spark you  
shed

Shall kindle me to ruin, but with my  
foot

Rather will I tread out the light that  
was

A firebrand for the death of many a  
man

To light the pile whereon they burnt  
alive.

What! have I taken it in my hand to  
scorch

And not to light me? or hath it set  
fire

To so few lives already, that who bears  
Needs not to watch it warily and wake

When the night falls about him? Nay,  
the man

Were twice the fool that these your  
dead men were,

Who seeing as I have seen and in his  
hand

Holding the fire I carry through the  
dark

To be the beacon of my travelling days,  
And shine upon them ended, should  
not walk

With feet and eyes both heedful at  
what hour,

By what light's leading, on what ground  
he goes,

And toward what end. Be therefore  
you content

To keep your flame's heat for your ene-  
mies' bale,

And for your friend that large and lib-  
eral light

That gave itself too freely, shot too  
far,

Till it was closed as in a lantern up  
To make my path plain to me; which  
once lost,

The light goes out forever.

*Queen.* Yea, I know;  
My life can be but light now to your  
life,

And of no service else; or, if none  
there,

Even as you say, must needs be  
quenched; and would

The wind that now beats on it and the  
sea

Had quenched it ere your breath, and  
I gone out

With no man's blood behind me!

*Bothwell.* Come, be wise:  
Our sun is not yet sunken.

*Queen.* No, not yet:  
The sky must even wax redder than it  
is  
When that shall sink; darkness and  
smoke of hell,  
Clouds that rain blood, and blast of  
winds that wreck,  
Shall be about it setting.

*Bothwell.* What! your heart  
Fails you now first that shrank not  
when a man's  
might well at need have failed him?

*Queen.* Ay, and no;  
It is the heart that fired me, fails my  
heart;  
And as that bows beneath it, so doth  
mine

Bend, and will break so surely.

*Bothwell.* Nay, not mine:  
There is not weight yet on our adverse  
part,

Fear not, to bend it.

*Queen.* Yet it fails me now.  
I have leant too much my whole life's  
weight on it

With all my soul's strength, and be-  
neath the fraught

I hear it split and sunder. Let me  
rest:

I would fain sleep a space now. Who  
goes there?

*Mary Beaton.* A suitor to behold  
your majesty.

*Queen.* I will not see him. Who  
should make suit to me?

Who moves yet in this world so miser-  
able

That I can comfort? or what hand so  
weak

It should be now my suppliant, or up-  
lift

In prayer for help's sake to lay hold on  
mine?

What am I to give aid or alms, who  
have

Nor alms nor aid at hand of them to  
whom

I gave not some but all part of myself?  
I will not see him.

*Mary Beaton.* It is a woman.

*Queen.* Ay?

But yet I think no queen; and cannot  
be

But therefore happier and more strong  
than I.

Yet I will see what woman's face for  
grief

Comes to seek help at mine; if she be  
mad,

Me may she teach to lose my wits and  
woes,

And live more enviable than ye that yet  
Have wit to know me wretched.

*Enter JANE GORDON.*

Who is this?

Are you my suitor?

*Jane Gordon.* I am she that was  
Countess of Bothwell: now my name  
again

Is that my father gave me.

*Queen.* Ay, no more;

You are daughter yet and sister to  
great earls,

And bear that honor blameless; be it  
enough;

And tell me wherefore by that name  
you come,

And with what suit, before me.

*Jane Gordon.* Even but this:

To look once on you, and to bid fare-  
well,

Ere I fare forth from sight.

*Queen.* Farewell; and yet

I know not who should in this world  
fare well.

Is the word said?

*Jane Gordon.* A little leave at last

I pray you give me: that I seek it  
not

For love or envy toward my sometime  
lord,

Or heart toward you disloyal now my  
queen,

Let me not plead uncredited. I came  
Surely with no good hope to no glad

end,

But with no thought so vile of will as  
this,

To thrust between your hearts the care  
of me,

Claim right or challenge pity, melt or  
fret

Your eyes with forced compassion: I  
did think

To have kissed your hand, and some  
thing said for sign

I had come not of weak heart or evil  
will,  
But in good faith, to see how strong in  
love  
They stand whose joy makes joyless all  
my life,  
Whose loving leaves it loveless, and  
their wealth  
Feeds full upon my famine. Be not  
wroth:  
I speak not to rebuke you of my want,  
Or of my loss reprove you, that you  
take  
My crown of love to gild your crown  
of gold;  
I know what right you have, and take  
no shame  
To sit for your sake humbled, who  
being born  
A poor mean woman would not less  
have been  
By God's grace royal, and by visible  
seal  
A natural queen of women; but being  
crowned  
You make the throne imperial, and  
your hand  
Puts power into the sceptre; yea, this  
head  
Of its gold circlet takes not majesty,  
But gives it of its own; this may men  
see,  
And I deny not; nor is this but just,  
That I, who have no such honor born  
or given,  
Should have not either, if it please you  
not,  
That which I thought I had; the name  
I wore,  
The hand scarce yet a year since laid  
in mine,  
The eye that burned on mine as on a  
wife's,  
The lip that swore me faith, the heart  
that held  
No thought or throb wherein I had no  
part,  
Or heaved but with a traitor's breath,  
and beat  
With pulse but of a liar.  
*Bothwell.* Ay, swore I so?  
Why, this was truth last year then.  
*Queen.* Truth, my lord?

What does the fire of such a word as  
this  
Between such lips but burn them, as  
mine ears  
Burn that must hear by your device and  
hers  
With what strange flatteries on her  
prompted lips  
This dame unwedded lifts her hand  
unringed  
To abash me with its show of faith,  
and make  
Your wife ashamed at sight of such a  
love  
As yet she bears you that is not your  
wife?  
*Bothwell.* What devil should prick  
me to such empty proof  
And pride unprofitable? I pray you  
think  
I am no such boy to boast of such a  
spoil  
As chamberers make their brag of.  
Let her speak,  
And part not as unfriends.  
*Queen.* Madam, and you  
That thus renumber and resound his  
vows,  
To what good end I know not, in our  
ear, —  
What would you have of him whom  
your own will  
Rose up to plead against as false, to  
break  
His bonds that irked you, and unspeak  
the word  
That held you hand in hand? Did you  
not pray  
To be set free from bondage, and now  
turn  
To question with the hand that you  
put off  
If it did well to loose you?  
*Jane Gordon.* Truly, no;  
Nor will I question with your grace in  
this,  
Whether by mine own will and uncom-  
pelled  
I only would have put that hand away  
That I will say would yet have held  
mine fast  
But for my forwardness and rancorous  
mind;

Let all 'his even be so; as he shall  
 say  
 Who will say naught but with your  
 queenly will,  
 Why, so will I. Yet ere I am gone,  
 my lord, —  
 Oh, not my lord, but hers whose thrall  
 am I, —  
 My sometime friend and yet not enemy,  
 If this thing not offend you, that I  
 crave  
 So much breath of you as may do me  
 right,  
 I pray you witness for me how far forth  
 And for what love's sake I took part  
 with you,  
 Or gave consent to our devised divorce,  
 And if this were for hate; for you  
 should know  
 How much of old time I have hated  
 you,  
 How bitter made my heart, what jeal-  
 ous edge  
 Set on mine envy toward you: spare  
 not then  
 To say if out of cold or cankered heart  
 I sought, or yielded shamefully for  
 spite,  
 To be divided from you. Nay, forbear;  
 Speak not, nor frown on me; you can-  
 not say  
 I was your loveless or disloyal wife,  
 Or in my void bed on disconsolate  
 nights  
 Sought comfort but of tears: nor that  
 I held  
 Mine honor hurt of that which bruised  
 my heart,  
 And grudged to help you to mine own  
 most wrong,  
 And lend you mine own hand to smite  
 myself,  
 And make you by mine own mouth  
 quit of me.  
 This that I did, and wherefore I did  
 this,  
 And if for love's or hate's sake, verily  
 You shall not say you know not, and  
 the queen  
 Shall blame me not to put you yet in  
 mind,  
 Nor think it much that I make record  
 here

Of this that was between us: wherefore  
 now  
 I take no shame at this my leave-taking  
 To part as one that has not erred  
 herein,  
 To love too little; this shall not be said  
 When one bethinks him such a woman  
 was,  
 That with poor spirit or with contracted  
 heart  
 I gave myself to love you, or was found  
 Too mean of mind or sparing of my  
 soul  
 To cast for love the crown of love  
 away,  
 And when you bade refuse you for my  
 lord,  
 Whom, had you bidden, with my  
 whole heart's blood  
 I had thought not much to purchase  
 for my love:  
 But seeing nor blood nor all my body's  
 tears  
 Might buy you back to love me, I was  
 fain  
 That you should take them and my very  
 life  
 To buy new love and life with. Sir,  
 and now  
 Ere we twain part —  
*Queen.* What! are ye parted not?  
 Between his lover and my lord I stand,  
 And see them weep and wrangle ere  
 they part,  
 And hold my peace for pity!  
*Jane Gordon.* God shall judge  
 If with pure heart and patience, or  
 with soul  
 That burns and pines, I would have  
 said farewell:  
 I crave but this much of your grace  
 and God's, —  
 Make me at last not angry.  
*Queen.* Have you held  
 No counsel or communion with my lord  
 Since — I am shamed that take upon  
 my lips  
 Such inquisition. If you have aught  
 yet, speak;  
 I bid not nor forbid you.  
*Jane Gordon.* Naught but this, —  
 To unpledge my faith, unplight my  
 love, and so

Set on his hand the seal by touch of  
mine  
That sunders us.

*Queen.* You shall not take his hand.

*Jane Gordon.* I think not ever then  
to touch it more,

Nor now desire, who have seen with  
eyes more sad

More than I thought with sorrowing  
eyes to see

When I came hither: so this long last  
time

Farewell, my lord; and you, his queen,  
farewell. [Exit.

*Queen.* Hath she made end? *While*  
*I have part in you,*

*None shall have part with me; was this*  
my lord,

Was this not you that said so?

*Bothwell.* Come, enough:

I am bound not to be baited of your  
tongues.

*Queen.* Bid her come back.

*Bothwell.* What! are you foolish?  
think

You twain shall look in either's eyes  
no more.

*Queen.* Why should I look in yours  
to find her there?

For there she sits as in a mirror shown  
By the love's light enkindled from your  
heart,

That flashed but on me like a fen-fire lit  
To lure me to my grave's edge, whence  
I fall

Deep as the pit of hell; but yet for  
shame

Deny not her to me as me to her,  
Me that have known this ever, but  
lacked heart

To put the thing to use I knew; and  
now

For both our sakes who have loved  
you, play not false

But with one love at once; take up  
your love

And wear it as a garland in men's  
sight,

For it becomes you: if you love me  
not,

You have lied by this enough; speak  
truth, shake hands,

Loose hearts, and leave me.

*Bothwell.* Vex not me too long,  
Vexing your own heart thus with  
vanity;

Take up your wisdom that you have at  
will,

And wear it as a sword in danger's  
sight

That now looks hard upon us. Mine  
you are,

Love me or love not, trust me not or  
trust,

As yours am I; and even as I in you,  
Have faith in me, no less nor further:  
then

We shall have trust enough on either  
part

To build a wall about us at whose  
foot

That sea of iron swayed by winds of  
war

Shall break in foam like blood; and  
hurled once back,

The hearts and swords of all our  
enemies fallen

Lie where they fell forever. Know  
but this,

And care not what is unknown else:  
we twain

Have wrought not out this fortune that  
we have,

Nor made us way to such an hour and  
power,

To let men take and break it, while as  
fools

We kiss and brawl and cry and kiss  
again,

And wot not when they smite. For  
these next days,

We will behold the triumph held at  
Leith

And pageant of a sea-fight as set forth  
With open face and spirit of joyous-

ness,  
To fix this faith in all men's eyes and

minds,  
That while life lives we stand indis-

soluble:  
Then shall you send out for your child

again  
Forth of Lord Mar's good keeping,

that your heart  
May here have comfort in his present

sight;

So shall all these who make his name  
 their sword  
 Lie weaponless within our hand and  
 hold,  
 Who are drawn in one against us, or  
 prepare,  
 While we delay, for Stirling; where by  
 this,  
 I am certified on faith of trusty men,  
 Argyle is met with Morton, our good  
 friends  
 That served us for their turn, with some  
 that helped  
 To make our match and some that  
 would have marred,  
 Once several-souled, now in their envies  
 one,  
 As Lindsay, Athol, Herries; and to  
 these  
 Maitland is fled, your friend that must  
 not bleed,  
 Your counsellor is stolen away and  
 lives  
 To whet his wit against you; but my-  
 self,  
 When we have shown us to the people,  
 and seen  
 What eye they turn upon our marriage  
 feast,  
 Will ride to Melrose, and raise up from  
 sleep  
 Their hardy hearts whom now mine  
 unfriends there  
 Hold in subjection; Herries nor Lord  
 Hume  
 Nor Maxwell shall have power to tie  
 them up  
 When I shall bid them forth, and all  
 the march  
 Shall rise beneath us as with swell  
 o' the sea  
 And wash of thickening waters when  
 the wind  
 Makes the sea's heart leap with such  
 might of joy  
 As hurls its waves together; there shall  
 we  
 Ride on their backs as warriors, and  
 our ship  
 Dance high toward harbor. Put but  
 on the spirit  
 You had in all times that beset your  
 peace,

Since you came home, with danger; in  
 those wars  
 That made the first years clamorous of  
 your reign,  
 And in this past and perilous year of  
 ours  
 Where you lacked never heart. Be  
 seen again  
 The royal thing men saw you; these  
 your friends  
 Shall look more friendly on our wedded  
 faith  
 Seeing no more discord of our days  
 to be,  
 And our bold borderers with one heart  
 on fire  
 Burn in your warlike safeguard, once to  
 strike  
 And end all enemies' quarrel. When  
 we part,  
 At Borthwick Castle shall you look for  
 me,  
 Where I will gather friends more fain  
 of fight  
 Than all our foes may muster.  
*Queen.* Sir, so be it;  
 But now my heart is lower than once it  
 was,  
 And will not sit, I think, again so high,  
 Though my days turn more prosperous  
 than I deem.  
 But let that be. — Come, friends, and  
 look not sad  
 Though I look sadder; make what  
 cheer we may,  
 For festival or fight, or shine or shower,  
 I will not fail you yet. God give me  
 heart,  
 That never so much lacked it! yea, he  
 shall,  
 Or I will make it out of mine own  
 fears,  
 And with my feebleness increase my  
 force,  
 And build my hope the higher that joy  
 lies low  
 Till all be lost and won. — Lead you,  
 my lord,  
 And fear not but I follow: I have wept  
 When I should laugh, and laughed  
 when I should weep,  
 And now live humbler than I thought  
 to be;



I ask not of your love, but of mine own  
I have yet left to give. Come, we will  
see

These pageants or these enemies; my  
heart

Shall look alike on either. Be not  
wroth;

I will be merry while I live, and die  
When I have leave. My spirit is sick:  
would God

We were now met at Borthwick, with  
men's spears

And noise of friends about us; friend  
or foe,

I care not whether; here I am sore at  
heart,

As one that cannot wholly wake nor  
sleep

Till death receive or life reprieve me.  
Come;

We should be glad now: let the world  
take note

We are glad in spite and sight of enmi-  
ties

That are but worth the hour they take  
to quell.

SCENE XII. — STIRLING CASTLE.

MAITLAND and LINDSAY.

*Lindsay.* Is there such breach be-  
tween them? why, men said,

When they would ride through Edin-  
burgh, and he

Bareheaded at her bridle, she would  
take

By force and thrust his cap upon his  
head

With loving might and laughing; and  
at Leith

They saw the false fight on the waters  
join,

And mid-May pageants that shone down  
the sun,

As with glad eyes of lovers newly wed  
Whose hearts were of the revel; and  
so soon

Are hearts and eyes divided?

*Maitland.* Not an hour

May she draw breath but in his eye,  
nor see

But whom he shall give entrance; in  
her sight

He thought to have slain me, but she  
came between,

And set for shield her bosom to his  
sword

In her own chamber: so each day and  
night

By violent act or viler word than deed  
He turns her eyes to water-springs of  
tears,

Who leaves not yet to love him; such  
strong hold

By flesh or spirit or either made one fire  
Hath such men's love on women made  
as she.

For no foul speech, I think, nor strokes  
nor shame

Would she go from him, but to keep  
him fast

Would burn the world with fire; and  
no force less

Shall burn their bonds in sunder.

*Lindsay.* We will bring  
And kindle it in their sight. They are  
southward fled

To meet at Borthwick: thither we de-  
sign,

To raise the Merse with Hume, and  
with Lord Mar

And with the Douglas' following bind  
them round,

And take them in one snare, whence  
one of these

Shall creep not forth with life or limb  
that feels

No hound's fang fasten on it; and his  
mate

Shall see their feet smoke with his  
slaughtered blood.

SCENE XIII. — BORTHWICK CASTLE.

*The QUEEN and BOTHWELL; MARY  
BEATON in attendance.*

*Queen.* You should be hence again:  
since you came in  
From Melrose with no levies at your  
back,

We have heard no news of friends, and  
hear but now

That we are ringed with Morton's folk  
about;

How shall he not have laid unhappy  
hand

Upon your messenger that bare our  
word  
Of summons to the archbishop and  
your friend  
Balfour to be with Huntley at our side?  
*Bothwell.* Ay, he is trapped that bore  
my letters hence,  
I doubt not; none have feet to run  
aright,  
Eyes to see true, hands to bring help,  
but they  
That move them to our ruin. This  
Balfour,  
Whom I laid trust on since our fiery  
night  
As on a true man bound of force to me,  
Has fallen in conference and device of  
plots,  
I hear, with that lean limb of policy  
That loves me not, James Melville, by  
whose mouth  
Being warned I meant to take out of  
his hand  
The castle-keys of Edinburgh, and give  
To one my closer kinsman for more  
trust.  
He has made him friends of ancient  
foes, and seeks,  
By no less service than pursuit of them  
Who slew the king your husband, to  
deserve  
Their favor who are risen of honest  
heart  
But to chastise these slayers, of whom  
God wot  
Themselves were none, nor he that  
hunts with them  
Upon the trail of treason. Oh, your  
lords  
Are worthy friends and enemies, and  
their tongues  
As trusty as their hands are innocent,  
When they see time to turn.  
*Queen.* I would their lives  
Lay all between my lips, and with one  
breath  
I might cut all theirs off! nor tongue  
nor hand  
Should rise of them against us, to deny  
Their work disclaimed when done.  
What slaves are these  
That make their hands red with men's  
secret blood,

And with their tongues would lick them  
white, and wash  
The sanguine grain out with false froth  
of words  
From lying lips that kissed the dead to  
death,  
And now cry vengeance for him? But,  
my lord,  
Make you haste hence to-night ere they  
be here  
That if we tarry will beset us; I  
Should hang but as a fetter on your  
foot,  
Which should pass free forth to Dun-  
bar, and raise  
With sound even of its tread and for-  
ward speed  
The force of all the border.  
*Bothwell.* Where I go,  
There shall you not be far to find: to-  
night  
I will sleep here.  
*Queen.* God give you rest and  
strength,  
To make that heart which is the lord  
of mine  
Fresh as the spirit of sunrise! for last  
night  
You slept not well.  
*Bothwell.* No; I had dreams, that  
am  
No natural dreamer; I will sleep apart,  
With Cranston's son to lie at hand, or  
wait  
If I lack service.  
*Queen.* Nay, let me be there:  
I will not weary you with speech, nor  
break  
Your sleep with servile and officious  
watch,  
But sit and keep it as a jewel is kept  
That is more dear than eyesight to its  
lord,  
Or as mine eyes can keep not now their  
own,  
Now slumber sits far from them. Let  
me wake.  
*Bothwell.* No, not with me.  
*Queen.* What, lest I trouble you?  
Should my being there put dreams in  
you again,  
To cross your sleep with me?  
*Bothwell.* Belike it might.

*Queen.* Nay, I was no part of your  
dreams, I think;  
You dream not on me waking nor  
asleep,  
But if you dream on no face else nor  
mine,  
I will be yet content.  
*Bothwell.* Well, so it was,  
I dreamt at once of either; yet I know  
not  
Why I should tell my dream. Your  
lord that was,  
They say, would prattle of his fears by  
night  
And faces of false peril: I was never  
So loath by day to face what fear I  
might  
As to be sick in darkness; but this  
dream  
I would not see again. Yet was it  
naught;  
I seemed to stand between two gulfs of  
sea  
On a dark strait of rock, and at my foot  
The ship that bore me broken; and  
there came  
Out of the waves' breach crying of  
broken men  
And sound of splintering planks, and  
all the hull  
Shattered and strewn in pieces; and  
my head  
Was as my feet and hands, bare, and  
the storm  
Blew hard with all its heart upon me;  
then  
Came you, a face with weeping eyes,  
and hair  
Half glimmering with a broken crown  
that shone  
Red as of molten iron; but your limbs  
Were swathed about and shrouded out  
of sight,  
Or shown but as things shapeless that  
the bier  
Shows ready for the grave; only the  
head  
Floated, with eyes fast on me, and be-  
neath  
A bloodlike thread dividing the bare  
throat  
As with a needle's breadth, but all be-  
low

Was muffled as with cerecloths; and  
the eyes  
Wept; then came one we wot of, clad  
in black,  
And smiling, and laid hands on me  
more cold  
Than is a snake's kiss or the grave's,  
and thrust  
Between that severed head, weeping  
and crowned,  
That mourned upon me, and mine eyes  
that watched,  
Her own strange head wrapped widow-  
like and wan  
In habit of one sorrowing, but with lips  
That laughed to kiss me; and there-  
with at once  
Your face as water flowed out of my  
sight,  
And on mine own I felt as drops of  
blood  
Falling, but if your tears they were, or  
hers,  
Or either's blood, I knew not; on mine  
eyes  
The great dead night shut doorwise  
like a wall,  
And in mine ears there sprang a noise  
of chains,  
And teeth ground hard of prison-grates  
that jarred  
And split as 'twere with sound my  
heart, which was  
As ice that cleaves in sunder: for there  
came  
Through that black breathless air an  
iron note  
Of locks that shut and sounded, and  
being dumb  
There left me quick entombed in stone,  
and hid  
Too deep for the day's eyeshot; then  
I woke  
With the sea's roaring and the wind's  
by night  
Fresh in my sense, and on my travail-  
ing heart  
A weight of walls and floors and upper  
earth  
That held me down below the breach  
o' the sea  
Where its tide's wash kept witness  
overhead

How went the scornful days and nights  
above,

Where men forgot me, and the living  
sun

As a dead dog passed over.

*Queen.* What, alone?

She went not with you living under-  
ground

To sit in chains and hear the sea break?

Nay,

She would not cast you off. This was  
your love, —

Your love of her and need of her sweet  
sight,

That brought her so upon your sleep,  
and made

Your sense so fearful of all things but  
this,

And all else heard and seen so terrible  
But her face only: she should comfort

you,

Whom I should bring to wreck; why,  
so she said,

Saying how she had loved you whom I  
loved not; yea,

Her eyes were sad, she said, that saw  
forsooth

So little love between us: this sweet  
word,

This word of hers at parting, this it  
was

Of which your dream was fashioned, to  
give sign

How firm she sits and fast yet in your  
heart,

Where I was never.

*Bothwell.* Well, how be it soe'er,

I would not dream again this dead  
dream out

For less than kingly waking: so good  
night,

For I will sleep alone.

*Queen.* No, with my heart,

That lies down with you though it  
sleeps not. Go,

And dream of no less loving prayer  
than mine

That calls on God for sleep to comfort  
you,

And keep your heart from sense of  
aught more hard

Than her great love who made it.

[Exit BOTHWELL.]

'Tis a night

That puts our France into my mind:  
even here

By those warm stars a man might call  
it June,

Were such nights many; their same  
flower-bright eyes

Look not more fair on Paris, that mine  
own

Again shall hardly look on. Is it not  
strange

That in this gray land and these griev-  
ous hours

I should so find my spirit and soul  
transformed

And fallen in love with pain, my heart  
that was

Changed and made humble to his love-  
less words

And force as of a master? By my  
faith,

That was till now fixed never, and made  
as fire

To stand a sunlike star in love's live  
heaven, —

A heaven found one in hue and heat  
with hell, —

I had rather be mis-handled as I am

Of this first man that ever bound me  
fast,

Than worshipped through the world  
with breaking hearts

That gave their blood for worship. I  
am glad

He sometime should misuse me; else I  
think

I had not known if I could love or  
no.

If you could love man with my heart  
as now,

You would not mock nor marvel.

*Mary Beaton.* No, not then.

*Queen.* It is not in your heart: there  
lies not power

In you to be for evil end or good

The strange thing that is I.

*Mary Beaton.* There does not, no,

Nor can lie ever: could I love at all,

It were but as mean women, meanly  
so

I do the best to love not.

*Queen.* Hark! what noise?

Look forth and see.

*Mary Beaton.* A sound of men and  
steeds;

The ring is round us; hark, the cry of  
Hume,

There Lindsay, and there Mar!

*Queen.* Call up my lord:

I will not go to vex him; but do you  
Haste and awake them.

[*Exit* MARY BEATON.

Be it not in mine eyes

That he first sees death risen upon his  
sleep,

If we must die; being started out of  
rest,

If he should curse me, were my heart  
not slain

With the opening of his eyes in wrath  
on mine?

*Re-enter* MARY BEATON.

*Mary Beaton.* My lord is raised and  
fled; but in the press

The lord of Cranston's son that slept  
with him

Is fallen by flight into the enemy's  
hands,

Who cry out for him yet as hounds  
that quest,

And roar as on their quarry.

*Queen.* Fled, and safe?

*Mary Beaton.* Ay, past their hands'  
reach that had rent him else;

Be sure he is forth, and free, or you  
should hear

More triumph in these cries.

*Queen.* God, thou art good!

Fling wide the window: I will know of  
them

If they be come to slay me. — What,  
my lords!

Are all these men of mine that throng  
by night

To make such show of service, and  
present

Strange offices of duty? Where are ye  
That are chief ushers to their turbulent

love

Who come thus riotously to proffer it?  
Which is first here? a bold man should

he be

That takes unbidden on him such  
desert —

Let me not say, a traitor.

*Lindsay (without).* Where is he,

The traitor that we seek? for here is  
none

But in your bosom.

*Queen.* Here then ends your search,  
For here am I; and traitors near  
enough

I see to pierce the bosom that they  
seek,

Where never shall be treason till its  
blood

Be spilt by hands of traitors that till  
now

Durst never rise so near it.

*Lindsay.* Give him forth,  
Or we will have these walls down.

*Queen.* What, with words?

Is there such blast of trumpets in your  
breath

As shook the towers down of the foes  
of God

At the seventh sounding? yet we stand  
and laugh

That hear such brave breath blown and  
stormlike speech

Fly round our ears: is it because your  
war,

My lords, is waged with women, that  
ye make

Such woman's war on us?

*Mar (without).* Madam, we come  
To take you from his hand that is your  
shame,

And on his shameful head revenge that  
blood

Which was shed guiltless; hither was  
he fled,

We know, into your shelter: yield him  
up,

Ere yet worse come than what hath  
worst come yet

*Queen.* There is none here to die by  
you but I,

And none to mock you dying. Take  
all your swords;

It is a woman that they came to slay,  
And that contemns them: go not back

for fear;

Pluck up your hearts; one valiant  
stroke or twain,

And ye are perfect of your work, and I  
Forever quit of treason; and I swear,

By God's and by his mother's name and  
mine,

Except ye slay me presently, to have  
Such vengeance of you and my traitors  
all

As the loud world shall ring with; so  
to-night

Be counselled, and prevent me, that am  
here

Yet in your hands; if ye dare slay me  
not,

Ye are dead now here already in my  
doom:

Take heart, and live to mock it.

*Mar.* He is fled.

Here boots us not to tarry, nor change  
words

With her that hath such vantage as to  
know

We have missed our prize and purpose  
here, which was

To take the traitor that is fled, and  
bring

Whither we now ride foiled, to Edin-  
burgh,

Thence to return upon them.

*Lindsay.* Hear yet once:

You, madam, till our day be set of doom,  
Look to the adulterer's head that hence  
is flown,

Whose shame should now stand redder  
in your face

Than blushes on his hand your hus-  
band's blood,

And cleave more fast; for that dead  
lord's revenge

Will we make proclamation, and raise  
up

The streets and stones for vengeance  
of your town

That sits yet sullied with bloodguilti-  
ness

Till judgment make it clean; whose  
walls to-night

Myself, for fault of better, ere I sleep  
Will scale though gates be fastened,  
and therein

Bring back and stablish justice that  
shall be

A memory to the world and unborn  
men

Of murder and adultery.

*Queen.* Good my lord,

We thank you for the care you have  
and pains

To speak before you smite; and tha-  
so long

The deed can follow not on the swift  
word

For lack of spirit and breath to mate  
with it;

So that they know who hear your threat  
betimes

What fear it bears and danger, and for  
fear

Take counsel to forestall it. Make  
good speed;

For if your steed be shod but with fleet  
speech,

Ere you shall stride the wall of our  
good town

Its foot may trip upon a traitor's grave.

*Mary Beaton.* They ride fast yet:  
hear you their starting cry?

*Queen.* For each vile word and ven-  
omous breath of theirs,

I will desire at my lord's hand a head  
When he shall bring them bound before  
my foot.

If thou hast counsel in thee, serve me  
now:

I must be forth, and masked in such  
close wise

As may convey me secret to his side  
Whence till our wars be done I will  
not part

Nor then in peace forever: in this  
shape

I should ride liable to all eyes and  
hands

That might waylay me flying; but I  
will play

As in a masque for pastime, and put  
on

A horseboy's habit, or some meaner  
man's

That wears but servant's steel upon his  
thigh

And on his sleeve the badge but of a  
groom,

And so pass noteless through toward  
Haddington,

Whither my lord had mind to flee at  
need,

And there expect me. Come: the  
night wears out;

The shifting wind is sharper than it  
was,

And the stars falter. Help me to put off  
 This outward coil of woman; my heart  
     beats  
 Fast as for fear a coward's might beat,  
     for joy  
 That spurs it forth by night on warriors'  
     ways,  
 And stings it with sharp hope to find  
     his face  
 That shall look loving on me, and with  
     smiles  
 Mock the false form and cheer the con-  
     stant heart  
 That for his love's sake would be man's  
     indeed.

## ACT IV.—JOHN KNOX.

*Time: June 15 and 16, 1567.*

## SCENE I.—CARBERRY HILL.

*The QUEEN, BOTHWELL, and SOLDIERS.*

*Queen.* I would this field where fate  
 and we must cross  
 Were other than it is; but for this  
 thought,  
 On what ill night some score of years  
 ago  
 Here lay our enemy's force before that  
 fight  
 Which made next day the face of Scot-  
 land red,  
 And trod her strength down under  
     English feet,  
 I would not shrink in this wide eye of  
 dawn,  
 In the far front of such a summer's  
 day,  
 To meet the mailed face of my traitors'  
 host  
 And with bared brows outbrave it.

*Bothwell.* Keep that heart,  
 For fear we need it. Look beyond the  
 bridge  
 There at this hill's foot on the western  
 bank,  
 How strong they stand under the gather-  
 ing light:  
 I have not seen a battle fairer set  
 Or in French fields, or these our thirst-  
 ier lands  
 That feed unslaked on blood.

*Queen.* They grow now green,—  
 These hills and meadows that with  
     slain men's lives  
 Have fed the flocks of war; come ten  
 years yet,  
 And, though this day should drench  
 them with more death  
 Than that day's battle, not a stain shall  
 stand  
 On their fresh face for witness. Had  
     God pleased  
 To set a strong man armed with hands  
     to fight,  
 And on his head his heritage to keep,  
 Sworded and crowned a king, in my sad  
     stead,  
 To fill the place I had not might to  
     hold;  
 And for the child then bitterly brought  
 forth,  
 Unseasonable, that being but woman  
 born  
 Broke with the news her father's heart,  
 who died  
 Desperate in her of comfort, had he  
 sent  
 The warrior that I would be, and in  
 time  
 To look with aweless eye on that day's  
 fight  
 That reddened with the ruin of our  
 hopes  
 The hour that rocked my cradle,— who  
 shall say  
 The scathe of Pinkie Cleugh and all  
 that blood  
 Had made the memory so unfortunate  
 Of that which was my birth-time? Be-  
 ing a man,  
 And timelier born to better hap than  
 mine,  
 I might have set upon that iron day  
 Another mark than signs it in our sight  
 Red with reproach forever.

*Bothwell.* Ay, my queen?  
 These four nights gone, you met me  
     soldier-like  
 Escaped from Borthwick, whence I  
 brought you in,  
 Three darkling hours past midnight, to  
 Dunbar,  
 Where you put off that sheath of fight  
     ing man

For this poor woman's likeness yet you  
wear,  
Wherein you rode with your six hundred men  
To meet at Haddington but two days  
since  
These sixteen hundred border folk I  
led,  
And pass with me to Seyton: did you  
find  
Your life more light in you, or higher  
your heart,  
Inside that habit than this woman's  
coat  
That sits so short upon you?

*Queen.* By my life,  
I had forgot by this to be ashamed  
Of the strange shape I ride in, but  
your tongue  
Smites my cheek red as is this scanted  
weed  
Wherein I mask my queenship; yet  
God knows  
I had liefer ride thus forth toward such  
a day  
Than hide my sick heart and its fears  
at home  
In kinglier garments than this mask of  
mine,  
Thus with my kirtle kilted to the knee  
Like girls that ride in poor folks' bal-  
lads forth  
For love's sake and for danger's less  
than mine.

Yet had I rather as your henchman ride  
At your right hand, and hear your brid-  
dle ring,  
Than sit thus womanly to watch men  
strike.

*Bothwell.* There will be parleying  
first: I have word of this,  
That they set forth at heaviest of the  
night  
From Edinburgh to cross our march  
betimes,  
And by the French ambassador your  
friend  
At Musselburgh were overtaken,  
whence  
We look for news by him what hearts  
they bear,  
What power, and what intent; he hath  
ta'en on him

To stand between our parts as mediator  
And bear the burden of our doubtful  
peace;

We must fight mouth to mouth ere  
hand to hand,  
But the clean steel must end it.

*Queen.* Now would God  
I had but one day's manhood, and  
might stand

As king in arms against this battle's  
breach

A twelve-hours' soldier, and my life to  
come

Be bounded as a woman's! all those  
days

That must die darkling should not yet  
put out

The fiery memory and the light of joy  
That out of this had lightened, and its  
heat

Should burn in them for witness left  
behind

On those piled ashes of my latter life.  
O God, for one good hour of man, and  
then

Sleep or a crown forever!

*Bothwell.* By God's light,  
The man that had no joy to strike for  
you

Were such a worm as God yet never  
made

For men to tread on. Kiss me: by  
your eyes

And fiery lips that make my heart's  
blood hot,

I swear to take this signet of your kiss  
As far into the fight as man may bear,

And strike as two men in mine arm  
and stroke

Struck with one sense and spirit.

*Queen.* If I might change  
But this day with you in your stead to  
strike,

And you look on me fighting, as for  
me

You have fought ere this last heat so  
many a prize,

Or for your own hand ere your own  
was mine,

I would pray God for naught again  
alive.

But since my heart can strike not in my  
hand,



Fight you for me; put on my heart to  
yours,  
And let the might of both enforce your  
arm

With more than its own manhood and  
that strength

Which is your natural glory.

*Bothwell.* Sweet, I think,

When we have rid through this day's  
wrath, if God

Shall give us peace and kingdom and  
long life,

And make them fruitful to us, we shall  
bring forth

A brood of kings as lions. Now in  
brief

If this shall be, or shall not, may we  
know;

For look where yonder, facing to the  
sun

Comes up to us-ward from the under  
field

One with a flag of message; in mine  
eye

It is the Frenchman.

*Queen.* I will meet him here;

Here will I sit upon this rock for  
throne,

And give such audience as my fortune  
may,—

Either the last that shall salute me  
queen,

Or first of my new reign, that from this  
day

Shall fearfully begin for them whose  
fear

Till now has held me shackled, and my  
will

Confined of theirs unqueenly.

*Bothwell.* I meantime

Will see our line in order; for this  
truce

Must hold not long; I would our hosts  
should meet

Before the heat strikes of the middle  
day,

And this June sun drop on our soldiers'  
heads

Or shoot their eyes out.

[*Exit.*

*Queen.* If God give us peace!  
Yet, though he give and we twain see  
good days,

I would not lose for many fortunate  
years,

And empire ringed with smooth secu-  
rity,

The sharp and dangerous draught of  
this delight

That out of chance and peril and keen  
fear

Springs as the wine out of the trampled  
grape

To make this hour sweet to my lips,  
and bid

My dancing heart be like a wave in the  
sun

When the sea sways between the sun  
and wind

As my sense now between the fears  
and hopes

That die to-day forever. Oh! this doubt  
That is not helpless, but has armor on

And hands to fight with, has more joy  
withal,

And puts more spirit into the flesh of  
life,

More heart into the blood, and light in  
the eyes,

Than the utter hour of triumph, and  
the fight

More than the prize is worth man's  
prizing; yea,

For when all's won, all's done, and  
naught to do

Is as a chain on him that with void  
hands

Sits pleasureless and painless. I had  
rather

Have looked on Actium with Mark  
Antony

Than bound him fast on Cydnus. O  
my hour!

Be good to me, as even for the doubt's  
sake

More than safe life I love thee; yet  
would choose

Not now to know, though I might see  
the end,

If thou wilt be good to me; do thy  
work,

Have thine own end; and, be thou bad  
or good,

Thou shalt nor smite nor crown a  
queen in heart

Found lesser than her fortune.

*Enter DU CROC.*

Now, my lord,  
What is their will who by such sove-  
reign show  
Should be my lords indeed? if you  
that came  
'Twixt crown and crown ambassador  
pass now  
Between our camps on message: but  
this day  
Shall leave in Scotland but one sove-  
reignty  
To see that sun sink.

*Du Croc.* Madam, from the lords  
I come on errand but for love and fear  
That move me toward your highness;  
on whose part  
I reasoning with them of their faith to  
you,  
And bond wherein their loyalties should  
live,  
By counsel of the Laird of Lethington,  
Was charged to bear you from them  
present word  
For what they stand against your sight  
in arms,  
And will not but by force of yours  
dissolve  
Till it be granted.

*Queen.* Speak, my lord: I know  
Your heart is whole and noble as their  
faith  
Is flawed and rotten; no disloyal word  
Shall make your tongue disloyal in  
mine ear,  
Speaking for them.

*Du Croc.* This is their whole de-  
mand:  
That from the bloody hand which holds  
your own  
You pluck it forth, and cast him from  
your sight  
To judgment, who now stands through  
you secure,  
And makes his weapon of your  
wounded name,  
And of your shame his armor; and to  
him  
They offer fight with equal hand to  
hand,  
Of noble seconds in what sum he will  
To match in blood and number with  
his own,

If so he list to meet their chosen of  
men  
In personal battle, backed with less or  
more  
Or singly sworded; but this much they  
swear, —  
They had rather make their beds in the  
earth alive  
Than yet sit still and let this evil be.  
And on your own part I beseech your  
grace,  
Set not your heart against the hearts of  
these,  
Lest it be broken of them, but betimes  
Call yet to mind what grief and shame  
will be  
Among your friends in France and all  
our part  
To see you so with this man's hap in-  
wound  
That in his fall you cast yourself away,  
And hand in hand run on with him to  
death.

*Queen.* They are all forsworn that  
seek his death: all they  
With these blown tongues now quest-  
ing for his blood  
By judgment set him free as inno-  
cence,  
And now take back the doom they  
gave, and turn  
On their own heads the lie: devise  
such shame  
As lewd folk loathe, to gird themselves  
withal,  
And wear it for a jewel; seek and set  
The name of liar upon them like a  
crown,  
And bind about them as a coat and  
cloak  
Plain treason and ungilded infamy,  
Bare as a beggar; let them sue for  
grace,  
Kneel here and ask me favor; save as  
thus  
I treat not with them. Say how I sit  
here,  
In this mean raiment, on this naked  
stone,  
Their queen to judge them, and with  
heart to weigh  
Their fault against my mercy; which  
yet once,

Though hardly their submission may  
deserve,  
Say, haply they may find.

*Re-enter BOTHWELL.*

*Bothwell.* Good day, my lord.  
You look far off upon me; by your  
brow

And strange-eyed salutation I may read  
The burden of your this day's embassy.  
Is it but I whom all these ranked in  
arms

Are come against to battle?

*Du Croc.* Ay, my lord:  
No hand is raised there dangerous to  
the queen,

Nor thought of heart not loyal.

*Bothwell.* Why to me?  
What hurt have I done to them? none  
of these

But would be gladly in my place, who  
had

The heart to seek it; 'tis the braver  
man

That ever fortune follows: what I hold  
I have won not basely, but from forth  
her hand

Have ta'en it manlike, and with spirit  
as good

Have girt me to maintain it. For my  
part,

I seek no bloodshed, but in single field  
Will meet with whom their lot shall  
fall upon

That shall be found fair champion on  
their part

To bear the general quarrel; and to  
this

My state and present name shall be no  
bar,

But the queen's consort as her man  
shall fight

In any good cause simply with God's  
help

With any sword that shames not mine  
to meet.

*Queen.* It is my cause: me must they  
strike, or none;

Myself am all the quarrel; let them  
yield,

Or give me battle.

*Bothwell.* Then, no need of words:  
Let but your excellency stand here  
by,

And see the show as once that envoy  
bound

'Twixt Hannibal and Scipio; by God's  
grace

This too shall be worth sight and good  
report

If he not fail us.

*Du Croc.* Madam, with rent heart  
Must I take leave, then, of you.

*Queen.* Sir, farewell.

I pray you, say not that you saw me  
weep:

These tears are not to turn the sword's  
edge soft,

Nor made of fear nor pity; but my  
heart

Holds no more rule on my rebellious  
eyes

Than truth on those my traitors; yet I  
trust

Again to bring both under.

[*Exit DU CROC.*]

*Bothwell.* We must fight;  
Yet had I rather take it on mine hand  
Than dare the general field.

*Queen.* No, for God's love.

*Bothwell.* God hath not so much  
love of us to serve;

Nor would I wager on his head to-  
day

That he shall fight upon our side  
Look there!

They are at point to cross; even now  
you see

The first glint on them stirring of the  
sun

As they set forth to make by the eastern  
bank

Along the meadows edgeways toward  
Dalkeith

Before they turn in wheel, and take the  
hills;

I see their bent of battle; yet we keep  
The slopes and crest here with our  
covering lines

If they stand fast.

*Queen.* What, have you fear of that?

*Bothwell.* I cannot tell. The day  
grows fiery hot:

I would we might close in at once, and  
strike

Before the noon burn; all the pause we  
make.

Who stand here idle watchers till they  
 join,  
 Takes off some heart from us for weariness,  
 And gives us doubt; I would the field  
 were set.

*Queen.* Why should not we that wait  
 for them and chafe  
 Break rather on them coming, and  
 brush off  
 Their gathering muster from the hill-  
 skirts there  
 With one sheer stroke of battle as from  
 heaven,  
 Right on them hurling down with all  
 our host  
 Out of these heights ere they made  
 head below?

*Bothwell.* No, my sweet captain: we  
 must hold this fast,  
 This height of vantage, and keep close  
 our ranks  
 As I have ranged in order: see again,  
 How they sweep round, and settle fast  
 in file  
 There on the ridge of Cowsland, with  
 their backs  
 Turned on the sun that climbs toward  
 noon too fast,  
 And in their front that hollow gap of  
 hill  
 Three crossbow-shots across; so far  
 apart  
 We look upon each other for a  
 breath,  
 And hold our hands from battle; but  
 you see  
 How soon both sides must lash to-  
 gether: yea,  
 I would we might not hold off yet an  
 hour,  
 But close at once, and end.

*Queen.* That burgh below,  
 Is it not Preston Pans? These hills  
 are set  
 As stages for the show of such high  
 game  
 As is played out for God's content  
 on earth  
 Between men's kings and kingdoms;  
 yet I think  
 He that beholds hath no such joy o' the  
 game

As he that plays, nor can the joy be  
 known  
 Save of man only, that man has to  
 play  
 When the die's throw rings death for  
 him or life.  
 How clear the wind strikes from the  
 mounting sun!  
 I am glad at heart the day we have  
 of fight  
 Should look thus lively on both sides  
 that meet  
 Beneath so large an open eye of heaven.  
 The wind and sun are in my blood;  
 I feel  
 Their fire and motion in me like a  
 breath  
 That makes the heart leap. Dear, I  
 too have read  
 The tale of Rome whence lightly you  
 chose out  
 A likeness for us; but the parts we  
 bear,  
 We are to play them with a difference,  
 take  
 A fairer end upon us though we fall  
 Than they that in their hazard were  
 most like  
 To this our imminent fortune: had I  
 been  
 She for whose lips love let the round  
 world fall,  
 And all man's empire founder, on that  
 day  
 When earth's whole strengths met on  
 the warring sea,  
 And side with side clashed of the king-  
 domed world,  
 I had not given my galleys wings for  
 fear  
 To bear me out of the eye of battle,  
 nor  
 Put space of flight between me and my  
 love,  
 More than I think on this wave's edge  
 that foams  
 To leave our chance unshipwrecked, or  
 forsake  
 My more imperial Antony.  
*Bothwell.* Would that now  
 We stood less near their hazard! on  
 our part  
 I fear to see the lines already melt

If we hold longer off, and this firm  
front  
Unfix itself and with no stroke dis-  
solve  
As snows in summer: half my folk by  
this  
For thirst are fallen upon the wine-  
casks there  
We brought from Seyton; and for those  
that stand,  
We have not half their hearts upon our  
side  
Whose hands are armed to uphold it.  
I must fight  
With whom they choose, and take upon  
my hand  
The day with all its issue: if our cause  
Be set upon the general cast of fight,  
It is but lost. Let messengers be sent  
To know of the enemy if his challenge  
hold  
Which I stand armed to answer; but  
no Scot  
Shall bear the message and betray our  
need:  
Two Frenchmen of your guard shall  
cross, and bring  
Their fighter's name back that my sword  
must know,  
And we twain meet, and end it in fair  
field  
Between these ranks; and for my single  
part,  
I am glad the chance should hang but  
on my hand,  
And my sole stroke determine the dim  
war  
That flags yet in the dark and doubt of  
fate  
Till mine arm fix it fast, and in God's  
sight  
Confirm and close the chapter of it.  
Come,  
Choose you your envoys.  
*Queen.* Nay, choose you the man  
That you will fight with; let him be  
not one  
Who had no part with us in Darnley's  
blood,  
So God shall strike not on his unjust  
side  
Who fights against you.  
*Bothwell.* Faith, if God were judge,

He should not do us right to approve  
their cause  
Who helped us to that slaying, and in  
its name  
Take on them now to accuse us, and  
appeal  
As guiltless to him against their proper  
deed  
And this right hand that wrought but  
with their will;  
Wherefore, so far forth as it hangs on  
God,  
From such a champion I should bear  
the bell,  
If he be righteous; which to assure you  
of,  
That even for God's sake you may feel  
no fear,  
Let Morton meet me.  
*Queen.* Oh, that two-tongued knave!  
The worst of all my traitors, whom I  
spared  
And should have slain when you had  
brought him home  
To help despatch his friend that had  
been! Nay,  
Him shall you meet not: he shall die  
no death  
So brave as by your sword; the axe  
thinks long  
To clasp his cursed neck; your hand,  
dear lord,  
Shall not redeem it.  
*Bothwell.* Come, content you, sweet;  
Him I must meet, or other; and my-  
self  
Care not if one that struck with us it be  
Or one that struck not; only for your  
ease,  
To make you trustful for God's judg-  
ment's sake  
And confident of justice, I thought well  
To choose a man of counsel with us  
then,  
And on this challenge fight with him,  
that God  
Might witness with us of his treacherous  
cause  
If I should win the field; but, by this  
hand,  
I put more trust in it and in my sword  
Than in God's hand or judgment. Have  
no fear.

The just and unjust that he looks upon,  
With blameless hand dividing their just  
doom

To one and other. Yea, as thou art  
Lord,

With eye to read between our hearts,  
and hand

To part between us punishment and  
grace,

Hear, God, and judge; and as thy sen-  
tence is,

So shall man's tongue speak ever of  
this day

And of his cause that conquers.

*Morton.* Laird of Grange,

While these that twice brought mes-  
sage from the queen

Bear now this last news back of what  
they hear,

Lest, when the traitor knows whom he  
shall meet,

His foul heart fail him, and his false  
foot flee

By what way forth is left him toward  
Dunbar,

Take you two hundred horse, and with  
good speed

Cross to the right beyond this hollow  
ground,

And cut him off: so, though he fain  
would fly

And she stand fast or follow, yet we  
hold

As in one toil the lioness and the wolf  
That clomb by night into the lion's bed,

Who stand now staked about with nets,  
and, ringed

With pikes and hounds of hunters,  
glare at bay

With eyes and teeth that shine against  
us yet;

But the fierce feet are trammelled in  
our toils,

Nor shall the tongues lap life again of  
man.

*Du Croc.* Ay, lion-like, my lord, she  
bears herself,

As who should shake all spears or  
shafts away

Like leaves that fell upon her, and all  
fears

As grains of dust brushed off; but he  
too makes

Such gallant show at need of such good  
heart

As in this utter peril where he stands  
Might win, for one that had no unjust  
cause,

Pity and praise of enemies, and for him  
At least such mingled and discolored  
fame

As falls not on a coward; nor can men  
Report him in his end and sore extreme  
But as a soldier tried of hand and  
brain,

Skilful and swift, with heart to match  
his eye

And wit to serve them; could these yet  
avail

To ransom him by spirit of soldiership  
And craft with courage tempered as  
with fire

To wield with fiery cunning the wide  
war,

He should not fall but mightily, nor  
cease

But with a strife as earthquake.

*Morton.* Well, my lord,

With no such strife we think to win  
him. — Go,

And if they send again to treat with us,  
Speak you with her, and bring us once  
more word.

### SCENE III. — THE QUEEN'S CAMP.

*The QUEEN and BOTHWELL.*

*Queen.* Are we quite lost?

*Bothwell.* Ay, if I fight not; but  
I will not die and fight not.

*Queen.* What, no help?

Is there not left a score of manlike men  
To stand and strike round us that in  
their ring

May fight enclosed, and fall where none  
shall fly?

Are all our strengths slid from us? not  
one troop

That has not piecemeal droppèd with  
shame away?

Not some twelve friends to back us yet,  
and die

As never men died nobler?

*Bothwell.* No, not three:

My levies there of Lothian and the  
Merse

Are slipped away like water; of your  
 men  
 Not yet four hundred lie along the  
 heights,  
 Nor half will stay of these a half-hour  
 hence.  
 Look too where yonder rides about the  
 hill  
 The Laird of Grange, between us and  
 Dunbar,  
 As to make onset with two hundred  
 horse  
 Thence where the way is smooth, while  
 those in front  
 Charge up the hill right on our unfenced  
 camp,  
 And their trap's teeth shut on us. This  
 remains  
 Of all our chance, this one way to make  
 end,  
 That, while they yet refuse me not a  
 man  
 To bear the day's weight on his sword  
 and mine,  
 I go to meet whom they soever choose,  
 With no more question made; and this  
 I will,  
 If yet they grant me but their meanest  
 man  
 For opposite as equal.  
*Queen.* Have they hearts,  
 That have you for their fiery star of  
 fight  
 To see and not to follow? That I  
 could  
 But give mine own among all these  
 away,  
 And with the parcels of it portioned  
 out  
 Divide myself into a hundred hearts  
 Of manlier-spirited blood, to raise us  
 up  
 For these a tribe of soldiers! Speak  
 to them,  
 And they will hear, and hunger to go  
 on  
 Full of your words to death; yea, all  
 as I  
 Will thirst to die around you. O my  
 God!  
 What is their blood, that it can kindle  
 not  
 To be so called of such a chief to die,

To hear his words, and leap not? Hast  
 thou made  
 Such stuff of man's flesh as we take  
 for man,  
 And mixed not soul enough to serve  
 the hound  
 Who gives for love his life up? These  
 go back,  
 These that might die, they start aside  
 from death,  
 They have no joy to close with it, but  
 fear,—  
 These that I deemed, come what might  
 worst on us,  
 Should fall with face and heart one fire  
 of joy  
 To ride on death, and grapple him and  
 die.  
 Have I not heard of men once in the  
 world?  
 I see none only but mine only love,  
 Who finds not one to follow. You  
 shall fight,  
 And, if we thrive not, shame them with  
 your end  
 As I with mine ensuing. That I might  
 stand  
 Your second, and my sword be page to  
 yours,  
 As on your death my death should wait  
 at need,  
 And halt not after! No, you shall not  
 die.  
 O miserable white hanging hands, that  
 rest  
 Baffled and bloodless! let your king-  
 dom go,  
 Let all things pass together: what of  
 price  
 Should ye keep back that could not  
 fight for him  
 Who falls for lack of seconds? Nay  
 the fault  
 Comes all of me that fail him, I 't  
 is  
 Bring down that high head to the earth  
 with mine,  
 That helmless head, for my sake; oh,  
 for love's,  
 Kiss me, and kill me! be not wroth,  
 but strike;  
 For if I live I shall but deal more  
 death,

The just and unjust that he looks upon,  
With blameless hand dividing their just  
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hence.  
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As to make onset with two hundred  
horse  
Thence where the way is smooth, while  
those in front  
Charge up the hill right on our unfenced  
camp,  
And their trap's teeth shut on us. This  
remains  
Of all our chance, this one way to make  
end,  
That, while they yet refuse me not a  
man  
To bear the day's weight on his sword  
and mine,  
I go to meet whom they soever choose,  
With no more question made; and this  
I will,  
If yet they grant me but their meanest  
man  
For opposite as equal.  
*Queen.* Have they hearts,  
That have you for their fiery star of  
fight  
To see and not to follow? That I  
could  
But give mine own among all these  
away,  
And with the parcels of it portioned  
out  
Divide myself into a hundred hearts  
Of manlier-spirited blood, to raise us  
up  
For these a tribe of soldiers! Speak  
to them,  
And they will hear, and hunger to go  
on  
Full of your words to death; yea, all  
as I  
Will thirst to die around you. O my  
God!  
What is their blood, that it can kindle  
not  
To be so called of such a chief to die,

To hear his words, and leap not? Hast  
thou made  
Such stuff of man's flesh as we take  
for man,  
And mixed not soul enough to serve  
the hound  
Who gives for love his life up? These  
go back,  
These that might die, they start aside  
from death,  
They have no joy to close with it, but  
fear,—  
These that I deemed, come what might  
worst on us,  
Should fall with face and heart one fire  
of joy  
To ride on death, and grapple him and  
die.  
Have I not heard of men once in the  
world?  
I see none only but mine only love,  
Who finds not one to follow. You  
shall fight,  
And, if we thrive not, shame them with  
your end  
As I with mine ensuing. That I might  
stand  
Your second, and my sword be page to  
yours,  
As on your death my death should wait  
at need,  
And halt not after! No, you shall not  
die.  
O miserable white hanging hands, that  
rest  
Baffled and bloodless! let your king-  
dom go,  
Let all things pass together: what of  
price  
Should ye keep back that could not  
fight for him  
Who falls for lack of seconds? Nay  
the fault  
Comes all of me that fail him, I  
is  
Bring down that high head to the earth  
with mine,  
That helpless head, for my sake; oh,  
for love's,  
Kiss me, and kill me! be not wroth,  
but strike;  
For if I live I shall but deal more  
death,

And where I would not shall the more  
 destroy,  
 Living and loving; yea, whom I would  
 save,  
 Him shall I slay the surelier: save  
 then me,  
 Lest I do this, and dying abhor myself,  
 Save me and slay; let not my love  
 again  
 Kill more than me, that would have  
 shed my blood  
 To spare the blood I shed; make me  
 now sure;  
 Let me cease here.

*Bothwell.* Peace, and give heed: you  
 see  
 Whither the day has brought us, and  
 what hope  
 Holds anywhere of rescue; this one  
 lot  
 Lies in my hand by fortune to be  
 drawn, —  
 That yet by God's and by our enemies'  
 grace  
 I may fight singly though my whole  
 world fail,  
 And end no less than soldier. Now,  
 my queen,  
 As you are highest of women's hearts  
 that live,  
 And nobler than your station stands  
 your soul, —  
 As you had never fear, and in this  
 past  
 As ever you have loved me, — by such  
 sign  
 And in such name I charge you, put  
 me not  
 In this great need to shame: let me go  
 forth  
 As should yourself being king, had you  
 the cause  
 That our linked loves put on me. By  
 that heart  
 That is so fain within you to be man's,  
 Make me not meaner than the man I  
 am,  
 Nor worthless of the name; think with  
 what soul  
 Would you stand up to battle in my  
 stead,  
 And wrong me not to pluck that prize  
 away,

Which, were you I, you would not yield  
 to me,  
 Nor I would ask of you; desire not  
 this,  
 To have me for your sake so vile a  
 thing,  
 When I should rise up worthiest, that  
 no man  
 Could bear such name, and live; bid me  
 not be —  
 Because you love me that are first on  
 earth  
 And crowned of queens most royal —  
 such a slave  
 As might not seek and be not spit  
 upon  
 The foulest favor that is given for  
 gold  
 From lips more vile than all things else  
 but I  
 Who durst not fight for you: make me  
 not this;  
 Let me die rather such a man as might,  
 Having your love, had fortune loved  
 him too,  
 Have lived beside you kinglike, and  
 not left  
 Less memory than a king's.  
*Queen.* Oh, you shall go!  
 Look how I hold you not: yes, you  
 shall fight,  
 And I sit strengthless here. — You shall  
 not yet:  
 If I did know that God were with my  
 heart,  
 Then should you go indeed; could I  
 sit sure  
 My prayer had power upon him, and  
 my cause  
 Had made him mine to fight for me,  
 and take  
 My charge and this field's issue in his  
 hand,  
 I would not doubt to send you. Nay,  
 myself  
 Will speak to those my soldiers; they  
 will fight;  
 They shall not choose for shame who  
 hear me speak,  
 But fear to fight not. Oh, for all this  
 yet,  
 If they were men about me, they would  
 sweep

Those traitors from the hillside as a  
wind,  
And make me way to live. What! if I  
speak,  
If I kneel to them, each man by his  
name,  
Bid him fight for me though I be not  
king,  
His king to lead him, — as, had I been  
born  
My father's son, they should have  
fought, and found  
A king to fight for and a sword to lead  
Worth many a good sword's following,  
— nay, but these  
That will not fight for you whose sword  
they see  
Worth all their swords to follow, for  
no king's  
Would they take heart to strike.  
Love, you shall go:

Send out a flag to bid one come and  
say  
Who dares of all fight with you. Why,  
methought  
This march-folk loved you and your  
sword's bright name  
That burned along their borders: is  
there left  
No such fierce love of theirs and faith  
at need  
To do us soldier's service?

*Bothwell.* Look, and see:  
Their ranks unknit themselves, and  
slide more fast  
From the bare slopes away whereon  
they stand  
Than the last leaves or the last snows  
that fade  
From off the fields or branches: and  
this thaw  
Speaks not our spring, but winter.  
Let them pass;  
If I may stand but in mine enemy's  
face,  
One foot of ours shall slip not, and one  
hand  
Be reddened on our side. I will go  
send  
Word with your flag of truce by Ormis-  
ton,

To bid their spokesman to us. [*Exit.*  
*Queen.* What am I worth,

That can nor fight nor pray? my heart  
is shut  
As a sealed spring of fire, and in mine  
ears  
This air that holds no thunder, but fair  
day,  
Sounds louder than a stricken brazen  
bell  
That rings in a great wind, or the blown  
sea  
That roars by night for shipwreck.

*Re-enter BOTHWELL with KIRKALDY.*  
*Bothwell.* Here is he  
That brings our lords' will with him,  
and shall show  
But in your private ear; I while you  
please

Will wait apart upon you. [*Retires.*  
*Queen.* Is it you,  
Is it my friend of France, my knight  
and friend,

Comes on such errand in mine extreme  
need  
To me that honored him? Sir, time  
has been  
That, had one asked me what man most  
on earth

I would for trust have sought the ser-  
vice of  
In such sore straits as this, I had found  
no name  
But yours to leap the first upon my  
lips,

On whom I have seen my father, the  
French king,  
Point with his hand, saying, *Yonder*  
*goes there one*

*Of the most valiant men in all our*  
*age,*  
And ever would he choose you on his  
side

In all his pastimes for your manhood's  
sake  
And might in jousts of men and gal-  
lant games,  
And when they shot for mastery at the  
butts

Would make you shoot two arrows still  
for one,  
And took delight beyond all shots of  
theirs

To see how far forth would your great  
shaft fly,

Sped for his pleasure; and my heart  
grew great  
For my land's sake whereof your  
strength was made,  
That bore such men for honor; and the  
best  
Who served my father Henry in his  
wars  
Looked reverently upon you horsed at  
head  
Of your brave hundred men that rode  
with you,  
And never the great constable of France  
Would speak to you uncovered as to  
one  
Less than his own place worthy; and  
your hand  
Here on these marches hath not lost  
its praise  
For many as fair a stroke as overthrew  
Between our ranks and the English in  
mid-field  
Lord Rivers' brother, fighting for this  
land  
That with a tongue as true and service-  
able  
You strove in speech to save the free-  
dom of,  
That by no policy it should be subdued  
To a French province. So for faith  
and love,  
For valor, wisdom, and for gentleness,  
I wist no Scot had worthier name alive:  
Shall I say now I have no deadlier  
foe? [KIRKALDY *kneels*.  
I do not bid you kneel: speak, and  
stand up;  
I have no help or comfort of men's  
knees,  
Nor pleasure of false worship; well I  
know,  
For all knees bowed, how hearts and  
hands are bent  
Of mine own men against me. Speak,  
I pray:  
I am as their servant bound who speak  
in you  
And open-eared to hear them.  
*Kirkaldy*. From the lords,  
Madam, no word I have to bring but  
one,  
That from this field they will not part  
alive

Without the man in bonds they came  
to seek;  
Him will they take, or die: but on your  
part  
They have no thought that is not set to  
serve  
And do you honor, would but you for-  
sake  
The murderer of your husband, who to  
you  
Can be no husband, being but lately  
wed  
To the earl of Huntley's sister, and  
your friend  
By your own mean and favor.  
*Queen* (to BOTHWELL). Hold, my  
lord:  
Let not your man give fire. — Sir, guard  
yourself:  
See you not where one stands to shoot  
at you? —  
You will not do me this dishonor, see-  
ing  
I have given my faith he should come  
safely through,  
And go back safe?  
*Bothwell*. Why let him, then, and say  
That I will yet maintain my proffered  
cause  
To fight with any that shall challenge  
me  
Of the king's murder.  
*Kirkaldy*. Sir, the first was I  
To let you wit myself would fight with  
you  
Upon that quarrel; and the first re-  
fused,  
As being nor earl nor lord nor mate of  
yours,  
But a poor baron only; the like word  
You sent to Tullibardine; in whose  
place  
Stands now my lord of Lindsay, if your  
heart  
Yet fail you not to meet him, as it  
seems  
Now to grow cold in shadow of his  
sword  
That hangs against you in the air ad-  
vanced,  
Darkening your sight and spirit.  
*Bothwell* (to the QUEEN). Shall this  
be said,

This shame go forth forever through  
 the world  
 Of one that held you by the wedded  
 hand  
 And loosed it even for fear? Now let  
 me go:  
 There is no way now but the best, and  
 this  
 You shall no more forbid me: one last  
 time  
 I do implore you, make not of your  
 love  
 The branding-iron that should sign me  
 slave  
 In sight of all men always, and on you  
 Stamp the vile name of wife to no true  
 man,  
 Bnt harlot of a coward: who shall  
 spare  
 To throw that name and shame on  
 such a love  
 As came to such an end as ours shall  
 come  
 If here its sun set bloodless, but more  
 red  
 With shame than blood could brand it?  
*Queen.* I have thought,  
 And set my heart against all chance to  
 come  
 Of blame or blood that ever shall mark  
 me;  
 Alone I take it on mine only hand,  
 And will not yield this one thing up to  
 yours,  
 Who have yielded all things else, and  
 this I would,  
 But that I may not with my soul  
 alive.—  
 Sir, if my lords within whose hand I  
 am  
 Shall stand content to let my husband  
 go,  
 Into their ward will I give up myself  
 On what good terms shall please them  
 to call good,  
 So he may pass forth freely with such  
 friends  
 Of these that have not hands enough  
 to fight  
 As shall cleave to him; I pray you  
 make good speed,  
 And let this day have end.

*Kirkaldy.* Madam, I go.

[*Exit.*]

*Queen.* Do not speak yet: a word  
 should burst my heart;  
 It is a hollow crystal full of tears  
 That even a breath might break, and  
 they be spilt  
 And life run out with them; no dia-  
 mond now,  
 But weaker than of wax. Life of that  
 heart,  
 There is but one thing hath no reme-  
 dy,—  
 Death. All ills else have end or hope  
 of end,  
 And time to work their worst before  
 time change:  
 This death hath none; there is all hope  
 shut fast,  
 All chance bound up forever: change  
 nor time  
 Can help nor comfort this. You shall  
 not die;  
 I can hold fast no sense of thought but  
 this,—  
 You shall not.  
*Bothwell.* Well, being sundered, we  
 may live,  
 And living meet; and here to hold the  
 field  
 Were but a deadly victory, and my hand  
 The mockery of a conqueror's; we  
 should pass  
 No less their prisoners from the field  
 thus won  
 Than from these lists defeated. You  
 do well;  
 They dare not urge or strain the power  
 they have  
 To bring me prisoner where my witness  
 borne  
 Might show them parcel of the deed  
 and guilt  
 For which they rise up to lay hold on  
 me  
 As upright men of doom, and with pure  
 hands  
 To hale me to their judgment. I will  
 go,  
 Till good time bring me back; and you  
 that stay,  
 Keep faith with me.  
*Queen.* Oh, how does one break faith?  
 What are they that are faithless? by  
 my love,

I cannot tell or think how I should lie,  
Should live and lie to you that are my  
faith,  
My soul, my spirit, my very and only  
God,  
My truth and trust that makes me true  
of heart,  
My life that feeds and light that lightens  
me,  
My breath and blood of living. Doth  
God think  
How I shall be without you? what  
strange breath  
Shall my days draw, what strange blood  
feed my life,  
When this life that is love is gone from  
them  
And this light lost? Where shall my  
true life go,  
And by what far ways follow to find  
love,  
Fly where love will? Where will you  
turn from me?

*Bothwell.* Hence will I to Dunbar,  
and thence again  
There is no way but northward and to  
ship

From the north islands; thence be-  
times abroad  
By land or sea to lurk, and find my life  
Till the wheel turn.

*Queen.* Ah God! that we were set  
Far out at sea alone by storm and  
night

To drive together on one end, and  
know  
If life or death would give us good or  
ill

And night or day receive, and heaven  
or earth

Forget us or remember!—He comes  
back:

Here is the end.

*Bothwell.* But till time change his  
tune;

No more nor further. We shall find  
our day.

*Queen.* Have we not found? I know  
not what we shall,  
But what hath been and is, and whence  
they are,  
God knows if now I know not. He is  
here.

*Re-enter KIRKALDY.*

*Kirkaldy.* Madam, the lords return  
by me this word:

With them must you go back to Edin-  
burgh,

And there be well entreated as o  
friends;

And for the duke, they are with on  
mind content

He should part hence for safe and  
present flight;

But here may tarry not, or pass not  
free.

This is the last word from them by my  
mouth.

*Queen.* Ay is it, sir,—the last word  
I shall hear,—

Last in mine ear forever: no com-  
mand

Nor threat of man shall I give ear to  
more,

That have heard this.—Will you not  
go, my lord?

Is it not I would hold you.

*Bothwell.* Then, farewell,  
And keep your word to me. What, no  
breath more?

Keep then this kiss too with the word  
you gave,

And with them both my heart and its  
good hope

To find time yet for you and me. Fare-  
well.

[*Exit.*

*Queen.* O God! God! God!  
Cover my face for me:

I cannot heave my hand up to my  
head;

Mine arms are broken.

Is he got to horse?

I do not think one can die more than  
this.

I did not say farewell.

*Kirkaldy.* My lord is gone.

*Queen.* Whom spake I to? I have  
no woman here.

All these men's eyes have seen my  
naked face

Wrung without tears for anguish, and  
no hand

Hide my blind eyes if haply they might  
weep

Great drops of blood and fiery.—Laird  
of Grange,

! yield myself upon such terms to you  
As in these lords' name you rehearsed  
to me :

Have here my hand for sign.

*Kirkaldy.* Upon this hand  
I lay the loyal witness of my lips  
For duteous heart and service, and  
crave leave

That I may lead your highness through  
these ranks,

Where at the hill's foot we may find  
your friends

Who shall come forth to meet you as  
their queen

With all fair reverence.

*Queen.* Lead me to my lords :

For one so poor a servant as I am,  
Here are too many masters. I could  
pray,

But that they lack my service and should  
chafe

If I dwelt long upon my prayer, and let  
My duty sleep or slacken toward them ;  
else

I could pray God to shut up from these  
lands

His hand and eye of favor, that no dew  
Might breed herefrom and no bloom  
break again

Nor grass be glad forever ; rain nor sun  
Comfort their cankered face and harden-  
ing heart,

Nor hand that tilled or foot that trod of  
man

Pass and not curse them. Let me look  
but once

Upon this hill whereon till this ninth  
hour

Mine enemies' hands have crucified my  
heart.

The sun burns yet, and the stream runs ;  
nor eye

Nor ear have these nor pity. Come, I  
talk,

Who had no mind ; God will not heed  
me : come. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—THE CAMP OF THE  
LORDS.

MORTON, HUME, LINDSAY, *etc.*

*Morton.* What, is the Frenchman  
gone ?

*Lindsay.* With heavy cheer,  
By this to set sad foot in Edinburgh.

*Morton.* There should we be by night  
fall ; and you see

How the day reddens downward, and  
this hill

Hath all its west side fiery ; he hath  
done

The queen and us small service, to put  
off

Her hour of yielding. Look ! the last  
spears left

Begin to move in sunder ; there he  
flies,

The traitor, with his heartless handful  
backed

That yet for fear cling to him ; and on  
this side

Grange leads her down the hill between  
our horse,

Who comes not like one captive.

*Enter the QUEEN and KIRKALDY.*

*Queen.* Tell me, sirs,  
Are they my doomsmen whom I come  
to find,

And those your headsmen who stand  
sworded there

And visored soldier-like, that cry on  
me

To burn and slay me ? Let me have  
quick doom,

And be beyond their crying.

*Morton.* Madam, I think  
You cannot fear of us a deadly doom,  
Nor shall you find.—Silence those  
throats, I say !

*Queen.* I have not said I feared ; nor  
shall there come

For you that lying breath upon my lips.  
What will ye do with what of me ye  
have

If not what these tongues cry for ?

*Morton.* Some man ride, —  
You, Laird of Grange, with two or  
three at back, —

And with the flatlong stroke of your  
good swords

Smite their mouths dumb. — Madam,  
take you no heed :

They shall not hurt you.

*Queen.* Sir, no heed have I ;  
I think these common haters shall not  
hurt

Indeed, nor smite me but with tongues ;  
 'tis you,  
 My good lords only, from whose noble  
 hands  
 I look to take my death, who would not  
 lose  
 Nor lack this royal office. For my  
 sake  
 Do them no hurt, I pray, who are but  
 your mouths  
 As you their hands; I see no choice of  
 you,  
 Or them the lesser traitors.

*Hume.* I will go:

Ride you that way, sir, by their ranks  
 who shout,  
 As I this side; for every way men hear  
 How the field rings that all the hills  
 roar back  
 With noise of names and cries to burn  
 the whore  
 And murderess of her husband: spare  
 no strokes  
 To shame or smite them silent.

*Queen.* You, my friends,

Good servants that have care of my  
 good name,  
 And loyal lovers—of your love and  
 grace,  
 May it please you show me whither I  
 must go  
 To find what face of death? or if yet  
 none,  
 And yet ye have not the hardy hearts  
 to slay,  
 To uncrown and slay me, I require you  
 then  
 Deliver me into my kinsmen's hands  
 Of the house of Hamilton, in whose  
 good ward  
 I am content to abide men's evil will  
 With honorable surety; which refused,  
 Of life nor honor shall I hold me sure  
 For all your vows and voices, but  
 esteem  
 My life to be as all your honors, dead.

*Morton.* Madam, with mocks you  
 cannot make us mad,

To bring you to their trustless hands  
 whose ward  
 Should be to you but dangerous, and  
 to us,  
 And all this kingdom's hope in heritage,

And all men's good, most mortal. You  
 must go  
 With us to Edinburgh, and being made  
 safe  
 Abide the judgment there that shall not  
 fall  
 By fierce election of men's clamorous  
 mouths  
 Whose rage would damn you to the  
 fire-clad death,  
 But by their sentence who shall do no  
 wrong,  
 If justice may with honor make them  
 sure,  
 And faith defend from error.

*Queen.* Ay, my lord?

I shall be doomed, then, ere I die, and  
 stand  
 Before their face for judgment who  
 should kneel  
 To take my sentence as a scourge, and  
 bear  
 What brand my tongue set on them?  
 Nay, ye are mad.  
 Kings have been slain with violence  
 and red craft,  
 Or fallen by secret or by popular hands;  
 But what man heard yet ever of a king  
 Set to the bar of his own men, to plead  
 For life with rebels' reasons, and wage  
 words  
 With whoso dare of all these baser  
 born  
 Rise up to judge him? Surely I shall  
 die,—  
 Be rent perchance in pieces of men's  
 fangs,  
 But of their mouths not sentenced. In  
 fair field  
 That only steel that bids a king's neck  
 stoop  
 Is the good sword that in a warlike  
 hand  
 Makes his head bow, and cuts not off  
 his crown  
 But with the stroke of battle: who hath  
 seen  
 By doom of man a king's head king-  
 domless  
 Bow down to the axe and block? so  
 base an edge  
 Can bite not on such necks. Let me  
 bleed here,



By their swift hands who ravin for my  
 blood;  
 Or be assured how if ye let me live  
 I live to see you die for me as  
 dogs:  
 Ye shall be hanged on crosses, nailed  
 on rows,  
 For birds to rend alive; ye shall have  
 doom,  
 A dog's doom and a traitor's, and the  
 cord  
 Strangle the sentence in your laboring  
 lips,  
 And break the plea that heaves your  
 throat, and leaves  
 Your tongue thrust forth to blacken:  
 ye shall wage  
 Words and try causes with the worms  
 and flies  
 'Till they leave bare your bones to sun  
 and wind  
 As shame shall leave your titles. Was  
 it you [To LINDSAY.  
 'That were to fight before me with my  
 lord?  
 Give me your hand, sir: by this hand  
 of yours  
 I swear for this thing yet to have your  
 head,  
 And so thereof assure you.  
*Morton.* Bid the camp  
 Strike, and set forth behind us. Sirs, to  
 horse;  
 And, madam, be not yet so great of  
 speech  
 As utterly to outwear your spirit of  
 strength  
 With pain and passion that can bear  
 no fruit  
 But wind and wrath and barren bitter-  
 ness.  
 Vex not yourself more than your foes  
 would vex,  
 Of whom we would be none that ride  
 with you  
 From them to guard you that would lay  
 red hands  
 On you yet faint and weak from this  
 fierce day.  
*Queen.* My body and head wax faint,  
 but not my heart;  
 I have yet there fire enough for all of  
 you,

To burn your strengths up that my fee-  
 bler limbs  
 Can make my heart not yield to nor  
 bow down,  
 Nor fear put out its fires. Come,  
 worthy lords,  
 And lead me to my loving town again,  
 That bears your heads not yet above  
 its gates  
 Where I shall see them festering if I  
 live. [Exeunt.

SCENE V. — EDINBURGH: A ROOM IN  
 THE PROVOST'S HOUSE.

*Enter MAITLAND and PROVOST.*

*Maitland.* Are the gates fast?

*Provost.* Ay; but the street yet  
 seethes

With ebb and flow of fighting faces  
 thronged,

And crush of onset following on her  
 heel

Where she came in, and whence at her  
 own call

You drove them off her; and above  
 the ranks

Flaps the flag borne before her as she  
 came,

Wrought with the dead king's likeness;  
 and their cry

Is yet to burn or drown her. It were  
 but

A manlike mercy now for men to show,  
 That she should have some woman's  
 hand of hers

To tend her fainting who should be  
 nigh dead

With fear and lack of food and wear-  
 iness.

*Maitland.* Nay, if she die not till she  
 die for fear,

She must outlive man's memory: twice  
 or thrice

As she rode hither with that sable flag  
 Blown overhead whereon the dead man

lay  
 Painted, and by him beneath a garden  
 tree

His young child kneeling, with soft  
 hands held up,

And the word underwritten of his  
 prayer, —

*Judge and avenge my cause, O Lord,—*  
she seemed

At point to swoon, being sick with two  
days' fast,

And with faint fingers clung upon the  
rein,

And gaped as one athirst with foodless  
lips

And fair head fainting; but for very  
scorn

Was straightway quickened and uplift  
of heart,

And smote us with her eyes again, and  
spoke

No weaker word but of her constant  
mind

To hang and crucify, when time should  
be,

These now her lords and keepers; so  
at last

Beneath these walls she came in with  
the night,

So pressed about with foes that man by  
man

We could but bring her at a foot's pace  
through

Past Kirk of Field between the roaring  
streets,

Faint with no fear, but hunger and  
great rage,

With all men's wrath as thunder at her  
heel,

And all her fair face foul with dust and  
tears,

But as one fire of eye and cheek that  
shone

With heat of fiery heart and unslaked  
will

That took no soil of fear.

*Provost.* What shall be done  
When sentence shall pass on her?

*Maitland.* By my will,  
She shall not die, nor lose her royal  
name,

Wherein the council only shall bear  
rule,

And take to its own hand the care to  
wreak

On her false lord now fled our general  
wrong,

Who being but overtaken of its sword  
Shall be divorced at once from her and  
life.

*Provost.* But this shall not content  
the common will,  
Nor theirs who bind and loose it with  
their tongues

And cry now for her blood; the town  
is loud

With women's voices keener than of men  
To call for judgment on her and swift  
death

Sharp as their anger.

*Maitland.* Ay, the time is mad  
With noise of preachers and the femi-  
nine spleen

That of mere rage and blind mobility  
Barks in brute heat for blood; but on  
these tongues

The state yet hangs not, nor the general  
weal

Is swayed but by the violent breath of  
these.

Here sits she safe.

*Provost.* I would I knew it; her  
mood

Is as a wind that blows upon a fire,  
And drives her to and fro: she will not  
eat,

But rages here and there, and cries  
again

On us for traitors, on her friends for  
help,

On God for comfort of her cause and  
crown

That of his foes and hers is violated,  
And will not stint her clamors, nor  
take rest,

For prayer nor bidding.

*Maitland.* I will speak with her  
Ere I go hence; though she were mild  
of mood,

The task were hard with Knox for  
opposite

To bend the council to such policy  
As might assure her but of life, which  
thus

She whets the weapon in his tongue to  
take. [Exeunt.

SCENE VI.—ANOTHER ROOM IN THE  
SAME.

*The QUEEN and an ATTENDANT.*

*Queen.* Wilt thou be true? but if  
thou have not heart,

Yet do not, being too young to sell  
man's blood,

Betray my letter to mine enemies' hands  
Where it should be a sword to smite  
me with;

If thou lack heart, I say, being but a  
boy,

Swear not and break thine oath: but if  
thou have,

Thou shalt not ask, for this mine errand  
done,

The thing I will not give thee. At  
Dunbar

Bring but this letter to my husband's  
hand;

Spare for no speed; if it were possible,  
I would it might be with him ere day  
dawn

On me condemned of men. I have no  
hope,

Thou seest, but in thee only: thou art  
young,

And mean of place, but be thou good  
to me

And thou shalt sit above thy masters  
born

And nobles gray in honor. Wilt thou go?  
Have here mine only jewel, and my  
faith

That I plight to thee, when my hand  
may choose,

To give thee better gifts. Haste, and  
so thrive

As I by thee shall. [*Exit Attendant.*

Though thou play me false,  
Thou dost no more than God has done  
with me,

And all men else before thee: yet I  
could not

But write this worthless one word of  
my love,

Though I should die for writing it in  
vain,

And he should never read it.

*Enter MAITLAND.*

Come you not  
To tell me of my commons and your  
friends,

That by their will despite you I must  
die?

It were no stranger now than all things  
are

That fall as on me dreaming.

*Maitland.* Madam, no:  
I come to plead with you for your own  
life,

Which wrath and violent mood would  
cast away.

*Queen.* What is my life to any man  
or me

As ye have made it? If ye seek not  
that,

Why have ye torn me from my hus-  
band's hand,

With whom ye know that I would live  
and die

With all content that may be in the  
world?

*Maitland.* For your own honor have  
we sundered you.

You know not him, who late writ word  
—myself

Can show this letter—to the Lady  
Jane,

She was his wife and you his concubine,  
No more but sport and scandal in his  
sheets,

And loved for use but as a paramour,  
And for his ends to rise and by your

lips  
Be kissed into a kingdom; and each  
week

Since they were first but as in show  
divorced

And but of craft divided, on some days  
Have they held secret commerce to

your shame  
As wedded man and wife.

*Queen.* There is one thing  
That I would ask of even such friends

as you,—  
To turn me with my lord adrift at sea,

And make us quit of all men.

*Maitland.* For yourself,  
You drive on no less danger here of  
wreck,

Seeing for your life if England take no  
care

France will nor strike nor speak; and  
had you not

In your own kindly kingdom yet some  
friends

Whose hearts are better toward you,  
these wot well

You have none left you helpful in the  
world.

Yet what we may will I and all these  
do  
To serve you in this strait; so for this  
night  
Let not your peril, which can breed  
not fear,  
For that breed anger in you; and fare-  
well. [Exit.]

*Queen.* None but such friends? O  
yet my living lord,  
O still my comfort, hadst thou none  
but me  
As I save thee have no man, we would  
go  
Hand fast in hand to dreadless death,  
and see  
With such clear eyes as once our mar-  
riage-bed  
Fire, or the sword's light lifted to make  
end

Of that one life on both our lips that  
laughed  
To think he could not sunder them who  
smote,  
Nor change our hearts who chilled  
them; we would kiss,  
Laugh, and lie down, and sleep: but  
here in bonds  
I will not tamely like a dumb thing die  
That gives its blood and speaks not.

If I find  
No faith in all this people, yet my  
curse  
Shall through this casement cry in all  
their ears  
That are made hard against me. — Ho  
there! you,  
All that pass by, your queen am I that  
call:

Have I no friend of all you to turn  
back  
The swords that point on this bare  
breast, the hands  
That grasp and hale me by the hair to  
death,  
By this disowned rent hair that wore  
too soon  
The kingdom's weight of all this land  
in gold?

Have I no friend? no friend?  
*Voice without.* Ay, here was one;  
Know you yet him? — Raise up the ban-  
ner there,

That she may look upon her lord, and  
take  
Comfort.

*A Woman.* What! was not this that  
kneels the child  
Which hung once at that harlot's breast  
now bare,  
And should have drunk death from its  
deadly milk?

Hide it for shame; bind up the wanton  
hair,  
Cover the poisonous bosom: here is  
none  
To kiss the print of that adulterer's  
head

Which last lay on it.  
*Another Voice.* Whither is he flown,  
Whose amorous lips were bloody, and  
left red

The shameless cheek they fed on as  
with shame?

Where is your swordsman at your back  
to guard

And make your sin strut kinglike?  
where his hand

That made this dead man's child kneel  
fatherless,

And plead with God against you for  
his blood?

Where is your king-killer?

*Queen.* The day shall be  
That I will make this town a fire, and  
slake

The flame with blood of all you: there  
shall stand

No mark of man, no stone of these its  
walls,

To witness what my wrath made ruin  
of

That turned it first to smoke, and then  
put out

With all your blood its ashes.

*Enter PROVOST.*

Hear you, sir,  
How we are handled of our townfolk  
there,

Being yet in ward of you? but by my  
head,

If now by force it fall not, you as these  
Shall buy this of me bloodily, and  
first

Shall bleed of all whose lives will pay  
not me.

*Provost.* Madam, as you desire to see that day,  
Contain yourself: this flame whereon you blow  
Will fasten else untimely on your hand,  
And leave it harmless toward us. I beseech you,  
Though but for hate of us and hope to hurt,  
Eat, and take rest.

*Queen.* I will not: what are ye,  
That I should care for hate of you to live  
Who care not for the love's sake of my life?  
If I shall die here in your hateful hands,  
In God's I put my cause, as into them  
I yield the spirit that dares all enemies yet  
By force to take it from me. Die or live  
I needs must at their bidding; but to sleep,  
Eat, drink, weep, laugh, speak or keep silence, these  
They shall not yet command me till I die. [Exeunt.]

## SCENE VII. — THE HIGH STREET.

*A Crowd of* CITIZENS.

*First Citizen.* Who says she shall not die?

*Second Citizen.* Even he that stands first in this city, Morton: by his doom, Death shall not pass upon her.

*First Citizen.* Will he say it?  
Yet is this man not all the tongue or hand  
That Scotland has to speak or smite with.

*Third Citizen.* Nay,  
When he so spake against their honest voice  
Who called for judgment, one arose that said —  
I know not who, but one that spake for God —  
That he who came between God's sword and her  
Should as a stayer of justice by the sword  
Be stricken of God's justice.

*First Citizen.* What said he?

*Third Citizen.* No word, but frowned;  
and in his eye and cheek  
There sprang a fire, and sank again,  
as 'twere  
For scorn that anger should have leave to speak,  
Though silently; but Maitland writhed his lip,  
And let his teeth grin doglike, and between  
There shot some snarling word that mocked at God,  
And at the servants of his wrath, who wait  
To see his will done on her, and men's hands  
Made ministers to set it forth so broad  
That none might pass and read not.

*Second Citizen.* Why, by this Part hangs of it already in men's sight:  
I have word here from Dunbar, of one that was  
An officer of Bothwell's, and alive  
Laird of Blackadder, whom they seized at sea  
Flying from death to deathward, and brought back

To be nigh rent in pieces of their hands  
Who haled him through the streets to hang, and left  
Not half a man unbroken or unbruised  
To feel the grip o' the gallows.

*First Citizen.* They did well:  
Shall we do worse, that have within our hand  
The heart and head of all this evil, her  
By whom all guilt looks guiltless till she die  
A whore's death or a murderer's, burn or drown,  
And leave more free the common doom of man

To pass on lesser sins? While she doth live,  
How should it speak for shame to bid men die  
For what sin done soever, who might say  
She lives and laughs yet in God's face and eye,  
And finds on earth no judgment as do these

Whose bloodiest hands are whiter than  
her soul?

Let her die first.

*Third Citizen.* Ay shall she, if God  
put

Upon those lips that never lacked it yet  
His fire to burn men's hearts, and make  
that tongue

His sword that hath been ever. Yes-  
ternight

Came Knox to Edinburgh, and here  
should speak

By this among us of the doom to fall  
On us or her, that if it bruise her not  
Must glance aside against us.

*Second Citizen.* He is here.

Draw nigh, but make no noise.

*Enter JOHN KNOX.*

*First Citizen.* Nay, all the press  
Heaves round about him silent.

*Others.* Sirs, give place;

Make way for Master Knox to stand  
and speak

Here in your midst; here is it higher;  
give way.

Make room to hear him. Peace there,  
and stand still.

*John Knox.* What word is this that  
ye require of man?

Ye that would hear me, what speech  
heard of mine

Should lift your hearts up if they sit  
not high,—

If they lack life, should quicken? for  
this day

Ye know not less than I know that the  
Lord

Hath given his enemy to you for a  
prey,

His judgment for a fire: what need  
have ye,

Or he what need of other tongues to  
speak

Than this which burns all ears that  
hear on earth

The blast of this day's justice blown  
in heaven—

As where is he that hears not? In your  
hand

Lies now the doom of God to deal, and  
she

Before your face to abide it, in whose  
mouth

His name was as a hissing; and had I  
The tongues in mine of angels, and  
their might,

What other word or mightier should I  
seek

Than this to move you? or, should ye  
wax cold,

What fuel should I find out to kindle  
you?

If God ye hear not, how shall ye hear  
me?

Or if your eyes be sealed to know not  
her,

If she be fit to live or no, can I  
With words unseal them? None so

young of you

But hath long life enough to understand  
And reason to record what he hath seen

Of hers and of God's dealings mutually  
Since she came in. Then was her

spirit made soft,  
Her words as oil, and with her amorous  
face

She caught men's eyes to turn them  
where she would,

And with the strong sound of her name  
of queen

Made their necks bend; that even of  
God's own men

There were that bade refuse her not  
her will,

Deny not her, fair woman and great  
queen,

Her natural freedom born, to give God  
praise

What way she would, and pray what  
prayers; though these

Be as they were, to God abominable  
And venomous to men's souls. So

came there back

The cursed thing cast forth of us,  
and so

Out of her fair face and imperious eyes  
Lightened the light whereby men walk  
in hell.

And I that sole stood out, and bade not  
let

The lightning of this curse come down  
on us

And fly with feet as fire on all winds  
blown

To burn men's eyes out that beheld  
God's face,

That being long blind but now gat  
 sight, and saw,  
 And praised him seeing; I that then  
 spake and said,  
 Ten thousand men here landed of our  
 foes  
 Were not so fearful to me on her side  
 As one mass said in Scotland; that  
 withstood  
 The man to his face I loved, her father's  
 son,  
 Then mastered by the pity of her, and  
 made  
 Through that good mind not good,—  
 who then but I  
 Was taxed of wrongful will, and for  
 hard heart  
 Miscalled of men? And now, sirs, if  
 her prayer  
 Were just and reasonable, and unjust I  
 That bade shut ears against it; if the  
 mass  
 Hath brought forth innocent fruit, and  
 in this land  
 Wherein she came to stablish it again  
 Hath stablished peace with honor; if  
 in her  
 It hath been found no seed of shame,  
 and she  
 That loved and served it seem now in  
 men's sight  
 No hateful thing nor fearful; if she  
 stand  
 Such a queen proven as should prove  
 honorable  
 The rule of women, and in her that  
 thing  
 Be shown forth good that was called  
 evil of me,  
 Blest and not curst,—then have I  
 sinned, and they  
 That would have crossed me would  
 have crossed not God:  
 Whereof now judge ye. Hath she  
 brought with her  
 Peace, or a sword? and since her in-  
 coming  
 Hath the land sat in quiet, and the  
 men  
 Seen rest but for one year? or came  
 not in  
 Behind her feet, right at her back, and  
 shone

Above her crowned head as a fierier  
 crown,  
 Death, and about her as a raiment  
 wrapt  
 Ruin? and where her foot was ever  
 turned  
 Or her right hand was pointed, hath  
 there fallen  
 No fire, no cry burst forth of war, no  
 sound  
 As of a blast blown of an host of men  
 For summons of destruction? Hath  
 God shown  
 For sign she had found grace in his  
 sight, and we  
 For her sake favor, while she hath  
 reigned on us,  
 One hour of good, one week of rest,  
 one day?  
 Or hath he sent not for an opposite  
 sign  
 Dissensions, wars, rumors of wars,  
 and change,  
 Flight and return of men, terror with  
 power,  
 Triumph with trembling? Hath one  
 foot stood fast,  
 One head not bowed, one face not  
 veiled itself,  
 One hand not hidden? Was this once  
 or twice  
 That ye beheld, this brief while of her  
 reign,  
 Strong men one day make mouths at  
 God, the next  
 Lie where his foes lie fallen? or since  
 she came  
 Have ye seen raised up of them and  
 cast down  
 But one or two that served her?  
 Which of these,  
 Which of them all that looked on her  
 and loved,  
 And men spake well of them, and pride  
 and hope  
 Were as their servants,—which of all  
 them now  
 Shall men speak well of? How fared  
 he the first  
 Hailed of his own friends and elect her  
 lord,  
 Who gave her kinsmen heart and god-  
 less hope

|  |  |
|--|--|
| By him to reign in her and wield this<br>land,   | With suchlike psalms go suchlike soul:<br>to God   |
| Yet once with me took counsel and<br>sought grace,   | Naked, — and in his blood she washed<br>her feet   |
| And suddenly God left him, and he<br>stood   | Who sat and saw men spill it; and this<br>reward   |
| Brain-smitten, with no bride-bed now<br>nor throne   | Had this man of his dancing. For the<br>next,  |
| To conquer, but go senseless to his<br>grave,  | On him ye know what hand was last<br>year laid, —  |
| The broken-witted Hamilton, — what<br>end,   | David, the close tongue of the Pope,<br>the hand   |
| Think ye, had this man? Or what<br>hope and hap  | That held the key of subtle and secret<br>craft  |
| The next whose name met on men's lips<br>with hers,  | As of his viol, and tuned all strings of<br>state  |
| And ballads mourned him in his love's<br>sight slain, —  | With cunning finger; not the foot o'<br>the king   |
| Gordon, that in the dawn of her dark<br>day  | Before God's ark when Michal mocked<br>at him  |
| Rose northward as a young star fiery<br>red,   | Danced higher than this man's heart<br>for confidence  |
| Flashed in her face, and fell, for her<br>own breath   | To bring from Babylon that ark again<br>Which he that touches, he shall surely<br>die, —                                       |
| Quenched him? What good thing gat<br>they for her sake,  | But not the death of Uzzah; for<br>thereon   |
| These that desired her, yet were mighty<br>lords,  | God's glory rests not, but the shadow<br>of death,   |
| Great in account of great men? So<br>they twain  | And dead men's bones within it: yet<br>his trust   |
| Perished; and on men meaner far than<br>these  | Was to lift up again and to relume<br>The tabernacle of Moloch, and the star<br>Of Remphan, figures which our fathers<br>made, |
| When this queen looked, how fared<br>they? folk that came                                      | That such as he might go before, and<br>play   |
| With wiles and songs and sins from<br>oversea,   | On timbrels and on psalteries and on<br>harps,   |
| With harping hands and dancing feet,<br>and made   | On cornets and on cymbals; and the<br>Lord   |
| Music and change of phrases in her<br>ear, —   | Brake him; and she being wroth at<br>God took thought  |
| White rose out of the south, star out of<br>France,  | How they that saw might call his place<br>of death   |
| Light of men's eyes and love! yea,<br>verily,  | The breach of David, and her heart<br>waxed hot  |
| Red rose out of the pit, star out of hell,<br>Fire of men's eyes and burning! for<br>the first | Till she should make a breach upon his<br>foes   |
| Was caught as in a chamber snare, and<br>fell  | As God on him, and with a dire new<br>name   |
| Smiling, and died with <i>Farewell, the<br/>most fair</i>                                      | And a new memory quite put out that<br>name  |
| <i>And the most cruel princess in the<br/>world. —</i>   |  |



And memory of his slaying; yea, all  
 this land,  
 That hath seen evil of many men before  
 And sins of many years, hath seen till  
 now  
 No sin as hers, nor on her forefathers  
 Whose hands were red and their hearts  
 hard hath seen  
 The note of such an evil as in her  
 heart  
 Became a fire conceiving, and brought  
 forth  
 The deed that in her hand was as a  
 sword  
 New tempered in that fire. For no  
 such deed  
 Was this as all theirs who play false  
 or slay,  
 Take gifts for whoredom, or lay snares  
 to kill;  
 But she gave gifts to hire her lover's  
 knife  
 That it might pierce her husband: even  
 this land—  
 This earth whereof our living limbs are  
 made,  
 This land renewed of God, this earth  
 redeemed,  
 With all souls born therein to worship  
 him  
 That call it mother—was the hire she  
 gave  
 To see the adulterer's hand when it  
 should rise  
 Against her lord to slay him; yea, all  
 of you,  
 And each part of this kingdom, and  
 each man  
 That but draws breath within her range  
 of reign,  
 Were parcel of this hire, as counted  
 coins  
 To make the sum up of her goodly gift.  
 And he that of their hands was bought  
 and sold,  
 Her wedded husband, that had bowed  
 his head  
 Before her worshipped idol,—think ye  
 not  
 That by her hand God gave him all his  
 wage  
 Who was a less thing in his eyes than  
 she,

And viler than her service? for the fire  
 Fell not from heaven that smote him,  
 yet not less  
 Was kindled of God's wrath than of  
 man's hate,  
 And in a woman's craft his will put  
 forth  
 To make her sin his judgment. But of  
 these,  
 The slain and slayer, the spoiler and  
 the spoiled,  
 That each have lain down by her wed-  
 ded side,  
 Which will ye say hath slept within her  
 bed  
 A sleep more cursed, and from more  
 evil dreams  
 Found a worse waking? he that with a  
 blast  
 Which rent the loud night as a cry  
 from hell  
 Was blown forth darkling from her  
 sheets, or he  
 That shared and soiled them till this  
 day whereon  
 God casts him out upon the track of  
 Cain  
 To flee forever with uncleansed red  
 hands,  
 And seek and find not where in the  
 waste world  
 To hide the wicked writing on his brow  
 Till God rain death upon him? for his  
 foot,  
 Be sure, shall find no rest, his eye no  
 sleep,  
 His head no covert and his heart no  
 hope,  
 His soul no harbor and his face no  
 light;  
 But as a hound the wolf that bleeds to  
 death  
 God's wrath shall hunt him through  
 the dark, and fear  
 Shall go before him as a cloud by day,  
 By night a fire, but comfort not his  
 head  
 By day with shadow, nor with shine by  
 night  
 Guide lest his foot be dashed against a  
 stone,  
 But in fair heaven before the morning's  
 face

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Make his air thick with thunder, and<br>put out   | Who was the spring of each man's deed<br>or doom   |
| All lamplike eyes of stars that look on<br>him,   | And root for each of death, and in his<br>hand   |
| Till he lie down blind in the dust, and<br>die.   | The sword to die by and the sword to<br>slay.  |
| Or if God haply give his lightnings<br>charge   | Shall this be left, then, naked in the<br>world  |
| They hurt him not, and bid his wind<br>pass by  | For him that will to stab our peace to<br>death?   |
| And the stroke spare him of the bolted<br>cloud,  | What blood is this drips from the<br>point, what sign,   |
| Then seeing himself cast out of all that<br>live,   | What scripture is enamelled on the<br>blade?   |
| But not of death accepted, everywhere<br>An alien soul and shelterless from God,<br>He shall go mad with hate of his own<br>soul, | Lo, this fair steel forged only to divide<br>This land from truth, and cut her soul<br>in twain, |
| Of God and man and life and death,<br>and live  | To cleave the cords in sunder that hold<br>fast  |
| A loathlier life and deadlier than the<br>worm's  | Our hope to heaven and tie our trust to<br>God,—   |
| That feeds on death, and when it rots<br>from him   | Here by the hilt we hold it, and well<br>know  |
| Curse God and die. Such end have<br>these that loved;   | That if we break not, this now blunted<br>edge,  |
| And she that was beloved, what end<br>shall she?  | Being newly ground and sharpened of<br>men's hands   |
| What think ye yet would God have<br>done with her,  | That watch if ours will yet loose hold<br>of it,   |
| Who puts her in our hand to smite or<br>spare   | Shall pierce our own hearts through.<br>Ay, be ye sure,  |
| That hath done all this wickedness?<br>For these,   | If ye bid murder and adultery live,<br>They live not stingless; not a Scot that<br>breathes,     |
| What were they but as shadows in the<br>sun   | No man of you nor woman, but hath<br>part  |
| Cast by her passing, or as thoughts that<br>fled  | In each her several sin and punishment<br>That ye take off from her. But what<br>are these       |
| Across her mind of evil, types and<br>signs   | That with their oaths or arms would<br>fence her round,  |
| Whereby to spell the secret of her soul<br>Writ by her hand in blood? What<br>power had they,                                     | And hide her from God's lightnings?<br>Know they not   |
| What sense, what spirit, that was not<br>given of her,  | — Or if they know not, will ye too be<br>blind?—   |
| Or what significance or shape of life<br>Their act or purpose, formless else and<br>void,   | What end that Lord who hath bowed<br>so many a head,   |
| Save as her will and present force of<br>her  | So many and mighty, of those her<br>former friends,  |
| Gave breath to them and likeness?<br>None of these  | Hath power to make of these men?<br>Shall they stand,  |
| Hath done or suffered evil save for her,  | Because they have done God service<br>while they would,  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>And cease to serve him? or their good<br/>deeds past<br/>Who served not God as Job forsooth<br/>for naught<br/>Sustain their feet from falling?<br/>Strength nor craft,<br/>Nor praise nor fear nor faith nor love<br/>of men,<br/>Shall be for buckler to them, nor his<br/>name<br/>A helm of vantage for the Douglas'<br/>head<br/>If he make stiff against the yoke of<br/>God<br/>Too proud a neck, that for the curb<br/>cast off<br/>May feel the weight and edge that iron<br/>hath,<br/>To check high minds and chasten; nor<br/>his wit<br/>Nor subtle tongue shall be for Leth-<br/>ington<br/>But as a pointless and unfeathered shaft<br/>Shot heavenward without hurt, that<br/>falls again<br/>In the archer's eye to pierce it; and<br/>his lips<br/>That were so large of mockery when<br/>God spake,<br/>By present organ of his works and<br/>wrath<br/>And tongueless sound of justice audi-<br/>ble,<br/>Shall drink the poison of their words<br/>again,<br/>And their own mocks consume them;<br/>and the mouth<br/>That spat on Christ, now pleading for<br/>his foes,<br/>Be stricken dumb as dust. Then shall<br/>one say,<br/>Seeing these men also smitten, as ye<br/>now<br/>Seeing them that bled before to do her<br/>good,<br/>God is not mocked; and ye shall surely<br/>know<br/>What men were these and what man he<br/>that spake<br/>The things I speak now prophesying,<br/>and said<br/>That if he spare to shed her blood for<br/>shame,</p> | <p>For fear or pity of her great name or<br/>face,<br/>God shall require of you the innocent<br/>blood<br/>Shed for her fair face' sake, and from<br/>your hands<br/>Wring the price forth of her blood-<br/>guiltiness.<br/>Nay, for ye know it, nor have I need<br/>again<br/>To bring it in your mind if God ere<br/>now<br/>Have borne me witness: in that dreary<br/>day<br/>When men's hearts failed them for pure<br/>grief and fear<br/>To see the tyranny that was, and rule<br/>Of this queen's mother, where was no<br/>light left<br/>But of the fires wherein his servants<br/>died,<br/>I bade those lords that clave in heart<br/>to God,<br/>And were perplexed with trembling<br/>and with tears,<br/>Lift up their hearts, and fear not; and<br/>they heard<br/>What some now hear no more, the<br/>word I spake<br/>Who have been with them, as their<br/>own souls know,<br/>In their most extreme danger: Cowper<br/>Moor,<br/>Saint Johnston, and the Craggs of Edin-<br/>burgh,<br/>Are recent in my heart; yea, let these<br/>know,<br/>That dark and dolorous night wherein<br/>all they<br/>With shame and fear were driven forth<br/>of this town<br/>Is yet within my mind; and God for-<br/>bid<br/>That ever I forget it. What, I say,<br/>Was then my exhortation, and what<br/>word<br/>Of all God ever promised by my<br/>mouth<br/>Is fallen in vain, they live to testify<br/>Of whom not one that then was doomed<br/>to death<br/>Is perished in that danger; and their<br/>foes,</p> |
|---|--|

How many of these hath God before  
 their eyes  
 Plague-stricken with destruction! lo the  
 thanks  
 They render him, now to betray his  
 cause  
 Put in their hands to stablish; even  
 that God's  
 That kept them all the darkness through  
 to see  
 Light, and the way that some now see  
 no more,  
 But are gone after light of the fen's  
 fire,  
 And walk askant in slippery ways; but  
 ye  
 Know if God's hand have ever when I  
 spake  
 Writ liar upon me, or with adverse  
 proof  
 Turned my free speech to shame; for  
 in my lips  
 He put a word, and knowledge in my  
 heart,  
 When I was fast bound of his enemies'  
 hands  
 An oarsman on their galleys, and be-  
 held  
 From off the sea whereon I sat in  
 chains  
 The walls wherein I knew that I there  
 bound  
 Should one day witness of him; and  
 this pledge  
 Hath God redeemed not? Nay then,  
 in God's name,  
 If that false word fell unfulfilled of  
 mine,  
 Heed ye not now nor hear me when  
 I say  
 That for this woman's sake shall God  
 cut off  
 The hand that spares her as the hand  
 that shields,  
 And make their memory who take part  
 with her  
 As theirs who stood for Baal against  
 the Lord  
 With Ahab's daughter; for her reign  
 and end  
 Shall be like Athaliah's, as her birth  
 Was from the womb of Jezebel, that  
 slew

The prophets, and made foul with blood  
 and fire  
 The same land's face that now her seed  
 makes foul  
 With whoredoms and with witchcrafts;  
 yet they say  
 Peace, where is no peace, while the  
 adulterous blood  
 Feeds yet with life and sin the murder-  
 ous heart  
 That hath brought forth a wonder to  
 the world  
 And to all time a terror; and this blood  
 The hands are clean that shed, and  
 they that spare  
 In God's just sight spotted as foul as  
 Cain's.  
 If then this guilt shall cleave to you  
 or no,  
 And to your children's children, for her  
 sake,  
 Choose ye; for God needs no man that  
 is loath  
 To serve him, and no word but his own  
 work  
 To bind and loose their hearts who  
 hear and see  
 Such things as speak what I lack words  
 to say.  
*First Citizen.* She shall not live.  
*Second Citizen.* If by their mouths to-  
 day  
 She be set free from death, then by  
 our hands  
 She dies to-morrow.  
*Voices in the crowd.* Nay, to fire with  
 her!  
 Fire for the murderess! cast her bones  
 in the lake!  
 Burn, burn and drown! She shall not  
 live to-night.

SCENE VIII. — A ROOM IN THE PRO-  
 VOST'S HOUSE.

*The QUEEN, ATHOL, and MORTON.*

*Queen.* I will not part from hence:  
 here will I see

What man dare do upon me.

*Athol.* Hear you not

How the cry thickens for your blood'  
 This night

Scarce has time left to save you.

*Queen.* I will die.

*Morton.* Madam, your will is no more  
now the sword  
That cuts all knots in sunder : you must  
live,  
And thank the force that would not  
give you leave  
To give your foes the blood they seek  
to spill.

Here every hour's is as an arrow's  
flight  
Winged for your heart; if in these  
clamorous walls  
You see this darkness by the sun cast  
out,  
You will not see his light go down  
alive.

*Queen.* What men are ye then, that  
have made my life  
Safe with your oaths, that walled it  
round with words,  
Fenced it with faith, and fortified it  
with air  
Made of your breaths and honors?  
When ye swore,  
I knew the lie's weight on your lips,  
and took  
My life into mine hand; I had no  
thought

To live or ride among you but to death,  
And whither ye have led me, to what  
end,  
Nor I nor God knows better than I  
knew  
Then when ye swore me safe; for then  
as now  
I knew your faith was lighter than my  
life,  
And my life's weight a straw's weight  
in the wind  
Of your blown vows. Pledge me your  
faith to this,  
That I shall die to-night if I go forth,  
And if I stay live safe, and I will  
go  
In trust to live, being here assured to  
die.

*Morton.* We swore to save you as  
you swore again  
To cast the traitor from you, and  
divorce  
Your hand forever from the blood on  
his;

And with that hand you wrote to him  
last night  
Vows of your love and constant heart  
till death  
As his true wife to serve and cleave to  
him.

The boy that should have borne your  
letter lacked  
Faith to be trusty to your faithless  
trust,  
And put it in our hand.

*Queen.* Why, so I thought :  
I knew there was no soul between these  
walls,  
Of child or man, that had more faith  
than ye  
Who stand their noblest; nor shall one  
soul breathe,  
If here ye put not out my present life,  
When I come back, that shall not burn  
on earth  
Ere hell take hold of it.

*Morton.* It is well seen,  
Madam, that fear nor danger can pluck  
forth  
Your tongue that strikes men mad with  
love or scorn,  
Taunted or tempted; yet it shall not  
wrest

Death from men's hands untimely:  
what was sworn,  
That you should live, shall stand; and  
that it may,

To-night must you part hence; this  
lord and I  
Will bring you through to Holyrood  
afoot,

And be your warders from the multi-  
tude  
As you pass forth between us; thence  
to Leith,  
And there shall you take water, and ere  
dawn

Touch at Burntisland, whence some  
twenty miles  
Shall bear you to Lochleven and safe  
guard

On the Fife border. He that has your  
charge  
Is one not trusted more than tried  
of us,—  
Sir William Douglas; in whose moth-  
er's ward

At Kinross there shall you abide what  
 end  
 God shall ordain of troubles. At this  
 need  
 No kindlier guard or trustier could  
 secure  
 The life we pluck out of the popular  
 mouth  
 That roars agape to rend it. You must  
 go.

*Queen.* Must I not too go barefoot?  
 Being your queen,  
 Ye do me too much grace: I should be  
 led  
 In bonds between you, with my written  
 sins  
 Pinned to my forehead, and my naked  
 shame  
 Wrapt in a shameful sheet: so might I  
 pass,  
 If haply I might pass at all alive  
 Forth of my people's justice, to salute  
 With seemly show of penance her  
 chaste eyes  
 Whom ye have chosen for guard upon  
 her queen  
 And daughter of the king her para-  
 mour,  
 Whose son being called my brother I  
 must call,  
 Haply, to win her favor and her son's,  
 And her good word with him as media-  
 tress,  
 My father's harlot mother. Verily,  
 Ye are worthy guardians of fair fame,  
 and friends  
 Fit to have care of reputation, men  
 That take good heed of honor; and the  
 state  
 That hath such counsellors to comfort it  
 Need fear no shame nor stain of such  
 reproach  
 As makes it shrink when with her  
 lords' good will,  
 Advised of all tongues near her and  
 approved,  
 A queen may wed the worthiest born  
 of men  
 Her subjects, and a warrior take to wife  
 One that being widowed of his hand  
 and help  
 Were such a thing as I am. From my  
 lord

I held my kingdom: now my hand  
 lacks his,  
 What queen am I, and what slaves ye,  
 that throng  
 And threat my life with vassals, to  
 make vile  
 Its majesty foregone with abject fear  
 Of my most abject? Yet though I lack  
 might  
 Save of a woman friendless and in  
 bonds,  
 My name and place yet lack not, nor  
 the state  
 And holy magic that God clothes withal  
 The naked word of king or queen, and  
 keeps  
 In his own shadow, hallowed in his  
 hand,  
 Such heads unarmed as mine, that men  
 may smite  
 But no man can dis-hallow. In this  
 faith,  
 Not to your faith I yield myself for  
 fear,  
 But gladly to that God's who made of  
 me  
 What ye nor no man mightier shall  
 unmake, —  
 Your queen and mistress. Lead me  
 through my streets,  
 Whose stones are tongues now crying  
 for my blood,  
 To my dead fathers' palace, that hath  
 oped  
 On many kings and traitors. It may be  
 I shall not see these walls and gates  
 again  
 That cast me out; but if alive or dead  
 I come back ever to require my part  
 And place among my fathers, on my  
 tomb  
 Or on my throne shall there stand  
 graved for aye  
 The living word of this day's work and  
 that  
 Which is to wreak me on it; and this  
 town  
 Whence I go naked in mine enemies'  
 hands  
 Shall be the flame to light men's eyes  
 that read  
 What was endured and what revenged  
 of me.

## ACT V. — THE QUEEN.

*Time: From July 20, 1567, to May 16, 1568.*

## SCENE I. — HOLYROOD.

MORTON and MAITLAND.

*Morton.* I know not yet if we did well to lay  
No public note of murder on the queen  
In this our proclamation that sets forth  
But the bare justice of our cause, and right  
We had to move against her; while her act  
Stands yet unproven, and seen but by surmise,—  
Though all but they that will not seem to know  
May know the form and very life of it,—  
She hath a sword against us and a stay  
In the English hearts and envious hands that wait  
To strike at us, and take her name to gild  
And edge the weapon of their evil will  
Who only are our enemies, and stand  
Sole friends of hers on earth; for France, we see,  
Will be no screen nor buckler for her, though  
Fire were now lit to burn her body, or steel  
Ground sharp to shear her neck: from Catherine's mouth  
Had Murray not assurance, and from him  
Have we not word that France will stir no foot  
To save or spill her blood? England alone  
By her new-lighted envoy sends rebuke  
Made soft and mixed with promise and with pledge  
Of help and comfort to her against our part  
Who by this messenger imperiously  
Are taxed and threatened as her traitors: this  
Must we now answer with a brow as free

And tongue as keen, seeing how his queen in him  
Desires the charge and wardship of our prince  
Which we must nowise grant.  
*Maitland.* For fear's sake, no,  
Nor for her threats, which rather may pluck on  
More present peril, of more fiery foot,  
To the queen's life; yet surer might we stand  
Having the crown's heir safe and girt about  
With foreign guard in a strange land, than here  
Rocked in the roar of factions, his frail head  
Pillowed on death and danger; which once crushed,  
And that thin life cut off, what hand puts forth  
To take the crown up by successive right  
But theirs that would even now dip violent hand  
In the dear heart's blood of their kinswoman,  
That it might take this kingdom by the throat  
When she were slain? and rather by our mean  
Would they procure her slaying than by their own  
Make swift the death which they desire for her,  
And from our hands with craft would draw it down  
By show of friendship to her and threat of arms  
That menace us with mockery and false fear  
Of her deliverance by their swords, whose light  
Being drawn and shining in our eyes should scare  
Our hearts with doubt of what might fall if she  
Stood by their help rekingdomed, and impel  
Even in that fear our hands to spill her blood  
That lag too long behind their wish, who wait

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Till seeing her slain of us they may rise<br>up   | Her menace that makes cold no vein<br>of ours  |
| Heirs of her cause and lineage, and<br>reclaim  | May heat instead the centre and the<br>core  |
| By right of blood and justice and re-<br>venge  | Of this land's pulse with fire, and in<br>that flame                                       |
| The crown that drops from Stuart to<br>Hamilton   | The life we seek not and the crown it<br>wears   |
| With no more let or thwart than a<br>child's life   | Consume together. France will rest<br>our friend,  |
| Whose length should be their pleas-<br>ure's and with these                               | Whether the queen find grace to live in<br>bonds,  |
| Against our cause will England league<br>herself  | Or bleed beneath our judgment; he<br>that comes  |
| If yet the queen live prisoner of our<br>hands,   | On errand thence to reconcile with<br>us   |
| And these her kin draw swords for her;<br>but they,                                       | Her kin that stand yet on the adverse<br>part  |
| Though England know not of it, nor<br>have eye  | Hath but in charge to do her so much<br>good   |
| To find their drift, would mix their<br>cause with ours,                                  | As with our leave he may, and break<br>no bond   |
| If from the queen's head living we<br>should pluck  | That holds us firm in friendship; if we<br>will,   |
| The royal office, and as next in blood  | She may be held in ward of France,<br>and live   |
| Instate them regents; who would reign<br>indeed   | Within the bound there of a convent<br>wall  |
| Rather by death's help, if they might,<br>and build                                       | Till death redeem her; but howe'er he<br>speed   |
| On her child's grave and hers their<br>regency,   | Who hath commission with what power<br>he may  |
| Than rule by deputation; yet at need  | To make of our twain factions one such<br>league   |
| Will be content by choice or leave of us  | As may stand fast and perfect friend<br>with France,                                       |
| To take the delegated kingdom up  | And in what wise by grace of us he<br>may  |
| And lack but name of king; which<br>being installed                                       | To do our prisoner service and entreat<br>That grace to drop upon her, this main<br>charge |
| I doubt they think not long to lack, or<br>live   | He needs must keep, to hold allied in<br>one   |
| Its patient proxies ever. So the land,<br>Shaken and Sundered, looks from us to<br>these, | Scotland and France, and let our hand<br>not plight  |
| From these again to us-ward, and hears<br>blown   | Fresh faith instead with England; so<br>for us   |
| Upon the light breath of the doubtful<br>hour   | From France looks forth no danger<br>though she die,                                       |
| Rumors of fear which swell men's<br>hearts with wrath                                     | For her no help; and these void Eng-<br>lish threats,                                      |
| To hear of southern wars and counsels<br>hatched  | That bring no force to back them but<br>their own  |
| That think with fright to shrink them<br>up, and bind                                     |  |
| Their blood's course fast with threats.<br>Let England know,                              |  |



And find not us unfriended, do but  
 blow  
 The embers that her life still treads  
 upon  
 Which being enkindled shall devour it.  
*Morton.* Ay,  
 And each day leaves them redder from  
 the breath  
 That through the land flies clamorous  
 for her blood  
 From lips which boast to bear upon  
 them laid  
 The live coal burning of the word that  
 God  
 Gives them to speak against her; the  
 south towns  
 Are full of tongues that cry on our  
 delay  
 To purge the land plague-stricken with  
 her life;  
 He first who never feared the face of  
 man,  
 John Knox, and Craig his second, fill  
 men's ears  
 With words as arrows edged and winged  
 to slay;  
 And all the wide-mouthed commons,  
 and more loud  
 The women than their men, stretch  
 their shrill throats  
 With cries for judgment on her: and  
 herself,  
 As parcel of the faction for her death,  
 Takes part with them against her  
 friends, and swears  
 To the English envoy who was charged  
 by stealth  
 To plead with her for mercy on her life  
 And privily persuade her, as we find,  
 To cast out Bothwell from her secret  
 thought,  
 She would die first ere so divorce her  
 soul  
 From faith and hope that hangs on him,  
 and feeds  
 Her constant spirit with comfort which  
 sustains  
 His child alive within her; for she  
 thinks  
 Haply to move men's hearts even by  
 the plea  
 That hardens them against her, being  
 believed,

For the false fruit's sake of her fatal  
 womb,  
 The seed of Bothwell, that with her  
 should burn  
 Rather than bring forth shame, and in  
 this land  
 Become a root of wars unborn and fire  
 Kindled among our children.  
*Maitland.* Nay, this plea  
 Can be but somewhile to defend her  
 life,  
 And put back judgment: never could  
 she think,  
 Though love made witless whom the  
 world found wise,  
 His seed might reign in Scotland.  
*Morton.* We are not  
 So barren of our natural brood of kings  
 As to be grafted from so vile a stock,  
 Though he were now cut off who grows  
 yet green  
 Upon the stem so shaken and pierced  
 through  
 With cankers now that gnaw the grain  
 away.  
 Nor if the child whom, whatsoe'er  
 he be,  
 We for the kingdom's comfort needs  
 must seem  
 To take for true-begotten, and receive  
 As issued of her husband's kingly blood,  
 Should live not to take up with timely  
 hand  
 The inheritance whereto we hold him  
 born;  
 Should the crown therefore by his death  
 derive  
 To the queen's kin, or hand of Hamil-  
 ton  
 Assume the state and sway that slides  
 from his,—  
 His father hath a brother left alive,  
 The younger son of Lennox, who might  
 put  
 More hopefully his nephew's title on  
 Than leave it for the spoil of hungry  
 hands  
 That would make war upon our present  
 state,  
 Unseat the rule of stablished things,  
 unmake  
 The counsel and the creed whereby we  
 stand,

And Scotland with us, firm of foot and free

Against the whole face of the weaponed world :

But this boy's crown shall be a golden ring

To hoop and hold our state and strength in one,

And with the seemly name of king make sure

The rent bulk of our laboring commonwealth,

And solder its flawed sides; his right of reign

Is half our gift who reign in him, and half

His heritage of blood, whose lineal name

Shall not by note of usurpation strike  
With strangeness or offence the world's wide ear

That hears a Stuart our prince's uncle crowned

In the dead child's succession, and this state

Made safe in him and stable to sustain  
What chance abroad may range or breed at home

Of force to shake it.

*Maitland.* While the child lives yet,  
A nearer hope than of his father's kin

Looks fairer on us; yet in that life's wreck

This rope might hold at need.

*Morton.* Ay, or we fall,  
Who stand against the house of Hamilton

In this man's name, — his kinsman  
Ruthven, Mar,

Myself and Athol, who sustain his cause  
Against their part alone.

*Maitland.* So do you well;  
Yet had I rather on the queen's appeal,  
In her dead father's and her young child's name

Pleading for life, with proffer to resign  
Her kingdom to the council's hands or his

Whom it may mark for regent, she  
might live

Even yet our titular queen, and in her name

The council govern of our trustiest heads;

While in safe ward of England or of France,

Far from his kindred, might her son grow safe,

And under strange and kindlier suns his strength

Wax ripe to bear a kingdom. To this end,

Save Bothwell's life I see no present let,

Who lives her shame and danger, but being slain

Takes off from her the peril of men's tongues,

And her more perilous love that while he lives

It seems will never slacken till her life  
Be made a prey for his, but in his death  
Dies, or lives stingless after: wherefore most

It now imports us to lay hand on him,  
And on that capture to proclaim divorce

Between them ere he die, as presently  
His death should seal it and his blood subscribe.

So might she live, and bring against our cause

No blame of men or danger.

*Morton.* In my mind,  
Better it were to crown her son for king,

And send her for safe keeping hence in guard

To live in England prisoner, while we stand

As safe from her as blameless of her blood,

Who reigning but in name on us should reign

Indeed on all our enemies' hopes, and turn

From us the hopeless hearts of half our friends

For the bare name's sake of her seeming reign

And mask of false-faced empire.

*Maitland.* As I think,  
The main mind of the council will not bend

To any reason on our parts proposed

|   |   |
|---|---|
| For her removal hence or titular<br>reign,  | To seal some part yet of this secret<br>up —  |
| Nor with the breath of our advice be<br>blown   | How dearly Bothwell held those privy<br>scrolls   |
| Beside their purpose. If the queen<br>consent   | Preserved as witness to confound at<br>need   |
| That her son's head be hallowed with<br>her crown,  | The main part of his judges, and abash<br>Their sentence with their clear com-<br>plicity |
| And hers he bare before him, she shall<br>live,   | In the crime sentenced? yea, so dear a<br>price   |
| And that close record of her secret<br>hand,  | He set on these, that flying for life he<br>sends   |
| The proofs and scriptures in her casket<br>locked   | Dalgleish his trustiest servant from<br>Dunbar  |
| That seal her part in Darnley's blood-<br>shedding,   | To bring again from Balfour's hands to<br>his   |
| Shall yet lie dumb in darkness; else, I<br>dread,   | The enamell'd casket in whose silver<br>hold  |
| She shall be tried by witness in them<br>writ,  | Lay the queen's letters and the bond<br>subscribed  |
| And each word there be clamorous on<br>men's tongues  | Which at Craigmillar writ a live man<br>dead.   |
| As the doom uttered of her present<br>death.  | This was a smooth and seasonable<br>hour  |
| And not more instant should her judg-<br>ment be  | For one of so soft spirit and tender<br>heart   |
| Than her swift execution; for they<br>think,  | To send and seek, for love of good days<br>gone,  |
| I know, to find no safety while she<br>lives;   | A love-gift that his lady brought from<br>France  |
| So that in no case shall she pass alive<br>Out of this realm while power is in<br>their lips  | To hold sweet scents or jewels; and<br>the man  |
| To speed or stay her.   | That to his envoy so delivered it,<br>And sent our council warning to way-<br>lay         |
| <i>Morton.</i> They shall never think<br>To set before all eyes the whole tale<br>forth       | And where to intercept it, — this was<br>one  |
| In popular proof and naked evidence<br>To plead against her: Balfour, that be-<br>trayed      | Meet for such trust and amorous offices,<br>Balfour, that, yielding us the castle<br>up,  |
| Her counsels to us, should then have<br>done more scathe                                      | Yields likewise for a sword into our<br>hands   |
| Than ever he did service. They must<br>know   | To take by stroke of justice the queen's<br>life  |
| It were not possible to let this proof<br>Stand in the sun's sight, and such<br>names be read | His witness with what words she<br>tempted him  |
| For partners of her deed and not her<br>doom  | From her own lips, how lovingly and<br>long,  |
| As Huntley's and Argyle's. Have they<br>not heard —   | To kill her husband; yet he durst not;<br>then  |
| What should suffice to show if there be<br>cause  | How at her bidding he might well take<br>heart,   |

She said, to do it; yet he stood fearful  
off;

Whereat she brake into a glimmering  
wrath

That called him coward, and bade him  
live assured,

If his tongue ever let this counsel forth,  
By her sure mean and suddenly to  
die.

*Maitland.* This were a sword to drink  
her life indeed,

But that my hope is better of the lords  
Than that their heart is fixed upon her  
death;

And for the commons and their fiery  
tongue,

The loud-lipped pilot of their windy  
will,

This famine of their anger shall feed  
full,

And slake its present need but with the  
spoil

Made of the piteous remnants of her  
faith

By the stout hand here of their friend  
Glencairn,

Who from this chapel of her palace  
rends

All holy ornament, grinds down with  
steel

The images whereon Christ dies in  
gold,

Unsanctifies her sovereign sanctuary,  
Unmoulds her God, and mints and  
marks him new,

And makes his molten chalices run  
down

Into strange shape and service: this  
should ease,

Meseems, the hunger of the hate they  
bear

That creed for which they held her  
first in hate.

And, for the secular justice to be done  
For his death's sake whom all these  
loathed alive,

It should content them that the trial  
has passed

On those we held in hand, and by this  
test

The man whose marriage masque on  
that loud night

Was pretext for the queen to lie apart

From the near danger of her husband's  
bed,

Sebastian, stands approved as innocent  
And no part of her purpose; while the  
twain

Who bore the charge that was to load  
with death

The secret house, and to their master's  
hands

Consigned the mean of murder, have  
endured

The perfect proof of torture, and con-  
fessed

In the extreme pang of evidence en-  
forced

The utmost of their knowledge.

*Morton.* These may serve  
To allay men's instant angers; but  
much more

His face should profit us whom France  
detains

With suit and proffer from the queen-  
mother

With all their force and flower of war  
or craft

To help him to the crown of his own  
land,

Or throne at least of regency therein,  
If he will take but France for constant  
friend,

And turn our hearts with his from  
England: this

Would Catherine give him for his  
friendship's sake

Who gives her none for all this, but  
his hope

Cleaves yet to England, though for  
fraud or fear

Again it fail him. So being foiled and  
wroth,

He hath, she tells him, a right English  
heart,

And in that faith withholds him craftily  
From his desired departure and re-  
turn,

Which should be more of all this land  
desired

Than of himself. This Elphinstone  
that comes

For him from Paris, in his master's  
name

To plead as in her brother's for the  
queen.

Bears but the name of Murray in his  
mouth,  
Whose present eye and tongue, whose  
spirit and mind,  
Our need of him requires. When  
their intent  
Shall by the lords in council be made  
known  
To him that stands here for Elizabeth,  
How in her name will he receive the  
word  
That but from Murray's lip she thinks  
to hear,  
And then determine with what large  
response  
For peace or war she may resolve  
herself?

*Maitland.* If she shall find our coun-  
cil one in will  
To shed by doom of judgment the  
queen's blood,  
Even by Throgmorton's mouth I am  
certified  
That she will call on France to strike  
with her  
For this their sister's sake, and join in  
one  
Their common war to tread our treason  
down;  
Or, if she find not aid of France, from  
Spain  
Will she seek help to hold our French  
allies  
With curb and snaffle fast of Spanish  
steel,  
For fear their powers against her lend  
us might  
That would not lend against us; she  
meantime,  
While Philip's hand hath France as by  
the hair,  
shall loosen on us England, to redeem  
That forfeit life which till the day of  
fight  
Her trust is but in Murray to preserve,  
Seeing he spake never word in English  
ear  
Against this queen his sister.

*Morton.* Being returned,  
He shall bear witness if his heart be  
bent  
Rather to this queen's love or that  
queen's fear

Than to the sole weal of his natura-  
land,  
That hath more need he should take  
thought for her  
Than one of these or the other. If the  
lords  
Be purposed, as I guess, to bid the  
queen,  
Ere this month end, make choice of  
death or life,—  
To live uncrowned, and call her young  
son king,  
Or die by doom attained,—none but  
he  
By her submission or her death must  
rise  
Regent of Scotland; and each hour  
that flits  
With louder tongue requires him, and  
rebukes  
His tardiness of spirit or foot to flee  
By swift and private passage forth of  
France  
To where our hearts wait that have  
need of him.

## SCENE II. — LOCHLEVEN CASTLE.

*The QUEEN and MARY BEATON.*

*Queen.* I would I knew, before this  
day be dead,  
If I must live or die. Why art thou  
pale?  
It seems thou art not sad, though I sit  
here,  
And thou divide my prison; for I  
see  
Thine eye more kindled, and thy lip  
more calm,  
And hear thy voice more steadfast, than  
it was  
When we were free of body: then the  
soul  
Seemed to sit heavy in thee, and thy  
face  
Was as a water's wearied with the  
wind,  
Dim eye and fitful lip, whereon thy  
speech  
Would break and die untimely. Do  
these walls,  
And that wan wrinkling water at their  
foot,

For my sake please thee? Thou  
shouldst love me well,  
Or hate, I know not whether, if to  
share

The cup wherein I drink delight the lip  
That pledges in it mine.

*Mary Beaton.* If I be pale,  
For fear it is not, nor for discontent,  
Here to sit bounded: I could well be  
pleas'd

To shoot my thoughts no farther than  
this wall

That is my body's limit, and to lead  
My whole life's length as quiet as we  
sit

Till death fulfilled all quiet, did I  
know

There were no wars without, nor days  
for you

Of change and many a turbulent chance  
to be

Whence I must not live absent.

*Queen.* Hast thou part,  
Think'st thou, as in time past, predes-  
tinate

In all my days and chances?

*Mary Beaton.* Yea, I know it.

*Queen.* If thou have grace to proph-  
esy, perchance  
Canst thou tell too how I shall fare  
forth hence, —

If quick or dead? I had rather so  
much know

Than if thou love or hate me.

*Mary Beaton.* Truly, then,  
My mind forecasts with no great ques-  
tioning

You shall pass forth alive.

*Queen.* What, to my death?

*Mary Beaton.* To life, and death that  
comes of life at last:  
I know not when it shall.

*Queen.* I would be sure  
If our good guardian know no more  
than thou:

I think she should; yet if she knew I  
think

I should not long desire to know as  
much,

But the utmost thing that were of her  
foreknown

Should in mine eye stand open.

*Mary Beaton.* She is kind.

*Queen.* I would she were a man that  
had such heart:

So might it do me service.

*Mary Beaton.* So it may.

*Queen.* How? in her son? Ay,  
haply, could I bring  
Mine own heart down to feed their  
hearts with hope,

They might grow great enough to do  
me good.

I tell thee yet, I thought indeed to die  
When I came hither. 'Tis but five  
weeks gone, —

Five, and two days: I keep the count  
of days

Here; I can mind the smell of the  
moist air

As we took land, and when we got to  
horse

I thought I never haply might ride  
more,

Nor hear a hoof's beat on the glad  
green ground,

Nor feel the free steed stretch him to  
the way,

Nor his flank bound to bear me: then  
meseemed

Men could not make me live in prison  
long;

It were unlike my being, out of my  
doom;

Free should I live, or die. Then came  
these walls,

And this blind water shuddering at  
the sun,

That rose ere we had ten miles ridden;  
and here

The black boat rocked that took my  
feet off shore,

And set them in this prison; and as I  
came

The honey-heavy heather touched my  
sense

Well-nigh to weeping: I did think to  
die,

And smell naught sweeter than the  
naked grave.

Yet sit we not among the worms and  
roots,

But can see this much, — from the round  
tower here,

The square walls of the main tower  
opposite,

And the bare court between; a gracious  
sight.

Yet did they not so well to let me  
live,

If they love life too; I will find those  
friends

That found these walls and fears to  
fence me with

A narrower lodging than this seven  
feet's space

That yet I move in, where nor lip nor  
limb

Shall breathe or move forever.

*Mary Beaton.* Do you think  
You shall not long live bound?

*Queen.* Impossible.

I would have violent death, or life at  
large;

And either speedy. Were it in their  
mind

To slay me here and swiftly, as I  
thought,

Thou wouldst not here sit by their  
leave with me:

They get not so much grace who are  
now to die,

And could not need it; yet I have heard  
it said

The headsman grants what sort of  
grace he may —

A grievous grace — to one about to  
bleed

That asks some boon before his neck  
lie down;

Thy face was haply such a boon to me,  
Being cradle-fellows and fast-hearted

friends,

To see before I died, and this the gift  
Given of my headsmen's grace: what  
think'st thou?

*Mary Beaton.* Nay,  
That I know naught of headsmen.

*Queen.* Thou hast seen —

It is a sharp, strange thing to see men  
die.

I have prayed these men for life, thou  
knowest, — have sent

Prayers in my son's and my dead  
father's name,

Their kings that were and shall be, and  
men say

One was well loved of the people, and  
their love

Is good to have, a goodly stay — and  
yet

I do not greatly think I fear to die.

I would not put off life yet; if I live,

For one thing most shall these men pay  
me dear, —

That I was ever touched with fear of  
death.

Thou hast heard how seeing a child on  
the island once,

Strayed over from the shore, I cried to  
him

Through the pierced wall, between five  
feet of stone,

To bid my friends pray God but for  
my soul,

My body was worth little; and they  
thought

I was cast down with bitter dread of  
heart:

Please God, for that will I get good  
revenge.

I dream no more each night now on  
my lord,

And yet God knows how utterly I  
know

I would be hewn in pieces — yea, I  
think —

Or turned with fire to ashes for his  
sake:

Surely I would.

*Enter LADY LOCHLEVEN.*

*Lady Lochleven.* Good morrow to  
your grace.

*Queen.* Good madam, if the day be  
good or no

Our grace can tell not; while our grace  
had yet

The grace to walk an hour in the sun's  
eye

With your fair daughters and our bed-  
fellows

About your battlements that hold us  
fast,

Or breathe outside the gateway where  
our foot

Might feel the terrace under, we might  
say

The morn was good or ill: being here  
shut up,

We make no guesses of the sun, but  
think

To find no more good morrows.

*Lady Lochleven.* Let your grace  
Chide not in thought with me; for this  
restraint,  
That since your late scarce intercepted  
flight  
Has been imposed upon me, from my  
heart  
I think you think that I desired it not.

*Queen.* Ay, we were fools, we Maries  
twain, and thought  
To be into the summer back again,  
And see the broom blow in the golden  
world, —  
The gentle broom on hill. For all  
men's talk  
And all things come and gone yet, yet I  
find

I am not tired of that I see not here, —  
The sun, and the large air, and the  
sweet earth,  
And the hours that hum like fire-flies  
on the hills  
As they burn out and die, and the  
bowed heaven,  
And the small clouds that swim and  
swoon i' the sun,  
And the small flowers. Now should I  
keep these things  
But as sweet matter for my thoughts in  
French.

To set them in a sonnet. here at home  
I read too plain in our own tongue my  
doom,

To see them not, and love them.  
Pardon me:

I would have none weep for me but  
my foes,  
And then not tears. Be not more dis-  
content

Than I to think that you could deem  
of me

As of one thankless; who were thank-  
less found,  
Not knowing that by no will or work of  
yours

I sit suppressed thus from the sun: 'tis  
mine,

My fault that smites me; and my  
masters' will,

Not mine or yours, it is, that for my fault  
Devised this penance; which on me  
wrought out

May fall again on them.

*Lady Lochleven.* Madam, alas!  
I came on no such errand to your  
grace  
As lacked more words to make it sad  
than those  
It was to speak; and these have I put  
back  
Too long and idly. Here are now at  
gate  
Three messengers sent from the parlia-  
ment  
To speak with you.

*Queen.* With us to speak? you know,  
Nor chamberlain nor herald have we  
here  
To marshal men before us. Let them  
come,  
Whom all our kingdom left could keep  
not out  
From this high presence-chamber. Stay:  
I would not

Be stricken unaware, nor find in you  
That which I thought not; it were out  
of kind,  
Unwomanlike, to give me to their  
hands  
Who came to slay me, knowing not  
why they came;  
Is it for that?

*Lady Lochleven.* God's grace forbid  
it! nay —

*Queen.* I ask if they bring warrant  
for my death?

I have seen such things and heard, since  
leaves bloomed last,  
That this were no such marvellous  
thing to hear.

But if this be, before I speak with them,  
I will know first.

*Lady Lochleven.* Let not your high-  
ness dread —

*Queen.* I do not bid you put me out  
of dread.

Have you not heard, and hear? The  
queen desires

To know of her born subject till she  
die,

And keeper of her prison, if these men  
Be come to slay her.

*Lady Lochleven.* They come to bid  
your grace —

*Queen.* Bid my grace do their bid-  
ding? that is like:



That I should do it were unlike. I  
must live,  
I see, this some while yet. What men  
are these?

*Lady Lochleven.* The first, Sir Robert  
Melville; then the lords  
Ruthven and Lindsay.

*Queen.* Bid my first friend in,  
While one friend may be bidden; he, I  
think,  
Can come but friendlike.

[*Exit LADY LOCHLEVEN.*

What should these desire?

One head of theirs I swore last month  
to have,

That then beheld me, some day, if that  
hand

Whereon I swore should take not first  
my life.

And one, the son of him that being nigh  
dead

Rose from his grave's edge to pluck  
down alive

A murdered man before him, — what  
should he

Bring less than murder, being his  
father's son,

In such a hand as his that stabbed my  
friend?

*Mary Beaton.* Perchance they come  
to take your crown, not life.

*Queen.* What, my name too? but till  
I yield it them,

They have but half the royal thing  
they hold,

The state they ravish; and they shall  
not have

My name but with my life; while that  
sits fast,

As in my will it sits, I am queen, and  
they

My servants yet that fear to take my  
life;

For so thou seest they fear; and I did  
ill,

That in first sight of present-seeming  
death

Made offer to resign into their hands  
What here is mine of empire: I shall

live,  
And being no queen I live not.

*Enter SIR ROBERT MELVILLE.*  
Welcome, sir;

I have found, since ever times grew  
strange with me,

Good friends of your good brother and  
yourself,

And think to find. What errand have  
you hero?

*Sir R. Melville.* Let not your majesty  
cast off the thought

Which calls me friend, though I be  
first to bear

An evil errand. 'Tis the council's mind  
That you shall live, and in their hand

the proofs  
Shall die that plead against you —

*Queen.* Is this ill?  
I know not well what proof that man

could show  
Would prove men honest that make

war on faith,  
Show treason trusty, bleach rebellion

white,  
Bid liars look loyal; and much less I

know  
What proof might speak against me

from their lips  
Whose breath may kill and quicken

evidence,  
Or what good change of mind rebuke

the lie  
That lived upon them; but that I must

live,  
And of their proofs unspotted, sounds

not worse  
Than if a friend had come to bear me

word  
That I must die belied.

*Sir R. Melville.* Upon these terms  
Are they content for you to live in

ward: —  
That you yield up as with free hand the

crown  
And right of kingdom to your son, who

straight  
At Stirling shall receive it from their

hands;  
Else shall your grace be put to trial,

and bear  
The doom ensuing, with what of mortal

weight  
May hang upon that sentence.

*Queen.* Sir, methought  
This word of doom for shame's sake

now was dead

Even in their mouths that first it soiled,  
and made

Even shamelessness astonished; not  
again

We thought to hear of judgment, we  
that are,

While yet we are any thing, and yet  
must be,

The voice which deals, and not the ear  
which takes,

Judgment. God gave man might to  
murder me,

Who made me woman, weaker than a  
man;

But God gave no man right, I think, to  
judge,

Who made me royal. Come then, I  
will die :

I did not think to live. Must I die  
here?

*Sir R. Melville.* Madam, my errand—

*Queen.* Ay, sir, is received

Here in my heart: I thank you; but  
you know

I had no hope before; yet sounds it  
strange

That should not sound, to die at such  
men's hands,

A queen, and at my years. Forgive  
me, sir :

Me it not comforts to discomfort you,  
Who are yet my friend—as much as  
man on earth—

If any, you—that come to bid me  
die.

*Sir R. Melville.* Be not cast down so  
deep: I have an errand

From the English queen, your friend,  
and here ensheathed

By my sword's secret side, for your fair  
hand

A letter writ from her ambassador  
Praying you subscribe what thing my  
comrades will,

Since naught whereto your writing was  
compelled

Can hang hereafter on you as a chain  
When but for this bond written you  
stand free.

*Queen.* Ay, I know that: how speaks  
Elizabeth?

*Sir R. Melville.* She bids you at all  
times account of her

As a sure friend and helpful; has, I  
know,

Indeed no mind to fail you.

*Queen.* This your comfort

Is no small comfort to me; I had  
rather

Be bounden to her than any prince  
alive.

Is it her counsel, then, that I subscribe  
My traitors' writing? I will do it. But,

sir,

Of those that sit in state in Edinburgh  
Which was it chose you for my com-  
forter?

I know my lord of Morton would send  
none;

It was the secretary?

*Sir R. Melville.* Madam, the same.

*Queen.* Did I not well then, think  
you, when I cast

This body of mine between him and  
the swords

That would have hewn his body? I  
did think

He was my friend. Bid now mine ene-  
mies in,

And I will sign what sort of shame  
they will,

And rid them hence.

*Enter LINDSAY and the younger RUTH-  
VEN.*

'Tis five weeks gone, my lord,  
[*To LINDSAY.*

Since last we looked on you; for you,  
fair sir, [*To RUTHVEN.*

A year I think and four good months  
are sped

Since, at that father's back whose name  
you bear,

I saw your face dashed red with blood  
My lords,

Ye come to treat with us ambassa-  
dors

Sent from our subjects; and we cannot  
choose,

Being held of them in bonds from  
whom ye come,

But give you leave to speak.

*Lindsay.* Thus, briefly, madam:—

If you will live to die no death by  
doom,

This threefold bond of contract that  
we bring

Requires your hand; wherein of your  
free wil'  
First must you yield the crown of Scot-  
land up  
To your child's hand; then by this sec-  
ond deed  
The place and name of regent through  
this realm  
To the earl of Murray shall you here  
assign,  
Or, if he list not take this coil in hand,  
Then to the council; last, this deed em-  
powers  
The lords of Mar and Morton with my-  
self  
To set the crown upon the young king's  
head.  
These shall you sign.  
*Queen.* These I shall sign, or die.  
But hear you, sirs: when hither you  
brought these,  
Burned not your hearts within you by  
the way  
Thinking how she that should subscribe  
was born  
King James's daughter? that this  
shameful hand,  
Fit to sustain nor sword nor staff o'  
the realm,  
Hath the blood in it of those years of  
kings  
That tamed the neck and drove with  
spurs the sides  
Of this beast people that now casts off  
me?  
Ay, this that is to sign, no hand but  
this  
Throbs with their sole inheritance of  
life  
Who held with bit and bridle this  
bound land,  
And made it pace beneath them.  
What are ye  
That I should tell you so, whose fathers  
fought  
Beneath my fathers? Where my grand-  
sire fell,  
And all this land about him, were there  
none  
That bore on Flodden, sirs, such names  
as yours,  
And shamed them not? Heard no  
men past of lords,

That for the king's crown gave their  
crown of life  
For death to harry? Did these grieve  
or grudge  
To be built up into that bloody wall  
That could not fence the king? Were  
no dead found  
Of that huge cirque wherein my grand-  
sire lay,  
But of poor men and commons? Yea,  
my lords,  
I think the sires that bred you had not  
heart  
As men have writ of them, but sent to  
fight  
For them their vassals visored with  
their crests,  
And these did well, and died, and left  
your sires  
That hid their heads forever and lived  
long,  
The name and false name of their deeds  
and death.  
How should their sons else, how should  
ye, being born,  
If born ye be, not bastards, of those  
lords  
Who gat this lying glory to be called  
Loyal, and in the reek of a false field  
To fall so for my fathers, — how, I say,  
Dare sons of such come hither, how  
stand here,  
From off the daughter's head of all  
those kings  
To pluck the crown that on my fathers'  
heads  
Ye say they died to save? I will not  
sign:  
No, let some Flodden sword dip in my  
blood;  
Here I sit fast, and die. — Good friend  
that was,  
[To SIR R. MELVILLE.  
Tell my great sister that you saw my  
hand  
Strive, and leave off to sign: I had no  
skill  
To shape false letters.  
*Ruthven.* Madam, no man here  
But knows by heart the height of your  
stout words  
And strength of speech or sweetress  
all this breath

Can blow not back the storm yourself  
 raised up,  
 Whose tempest shakes the kingdom  
 from your hand,  
 And not men's hate. You have been  
 loved of men;  
 All faith of heart, all honor possible,  
 While man might give, men gave you.  
 Now those deeds  
 Which none against your will enforced  
 you do  
 Have set that spirit against you in  
 men's minds,  
 That till you die (as then your memory  
 may),  
 Nor your fair beauty nor your fiery  
 heart  
 Can lay with spells asleep.

*Sir R. Melville (aside).* I pray you,  
 madam,

Think on mine errand.

*Queen.* Wherefore should I sign?

If I be queen that so unqueen myself,  
 What shall it profit me to give my foes  
 This one thing mine that hallows me,  
 this name,

This royal shadow? If I be no queen,  
 Let me bleed here; as being uncrowned  
 I know

That I shall die of all your promises.

*Lindsay.* We came not, madam, to  
 put force on you,

And save your life by violence; but  
 take note,

*[Laying his hand on her arm.*

As in this hand your own is fast, and  
 hath

No power till mine give back its power  
 again

To strive or sign, so fast are you in  
 ward,

For life or death, of them that bid you  
 live

And be no queen, or die.

*Queen.* I thank you, sir,

That of your love and courtesy have  
 set

This knightly sign upon my woman's  
 flesh

For proof if I be queen or no, that  
 bear

Such writing on my body of men's  
 hands

To seal mine abdication. Sirs, read  
 here:

What need I sign again? Here may  
 men see

If she be queen of Scotland on whose  
 arm

Are writ such scriptures as I wist not  
 yet

Men's eyes might read on any woman  
 born.

Yet will I write, being free, to assure  
 myself

This is my hand indeed that wears the  
 sign

Which proves it vassal to the stronger.  
 Sirs,

Take back your papers; and albeit, my  
 lord,

The conquest you have made of me,  
 henceforth

Lift up your heart with pride, I pray  
 you yet,

Boast not yourself on women overmuch,  
 Lest being their conqueror called, and  
 praised for that,

Men call you too their tyrant. Once  
 and twice

Have we grasped hands: the third  
 time they shall cross

Must leave one cold forever. Nay, I  
 pray,

Who may command not surely, yet I  
 pray,

Speak not, but go: ye have that ye  
 came for; go,

And make your vault to have found so  
 meek a thing

As would yield all, and thank you.

*[Exeunt LINDSAY, RUTHVEN, and SIR  
 R. MELVILLE.]*

Hast thou read

Of sick men healed with baths of chil-  
 dren's blood?

I must be healed of this my plague of  
 shame,

This sickness of disgrace they leave  
 with me,

Bathing in theirs my body.

*Mary Beaton.* In such streams

You have washed your hands already.

*Queen.* What, in war?

Ay, there I have seen blood shed for  
 we, and yet

Wept not nor trembled; if my heart  
shrink now,

It is for angry pity of myself  
That I should look on shame.

*Mary Beaton.* What shame, my  
queen?

*Queen.* Thy queen? why, this, that I,  
queen once of Scots,  
Am no more now than thine. Call  
back the lords:

I will unsign their writing, and here die;  
It were the easier end.

*Mary Beaton.* It is your will —  
Forgive me, madam — on this cause  
again

To grapple with Lord Lindsay?

*Queen.* True, not yet;  
Thou thought'st to make me mad,  
remembering that;  
But it hath made me whole. My wits  
are sound,  
Remembering I must live. When I  
have slept,

Say I would gladly see the kindlier  
face

Again of our dear hostess with her son  
To put those angry eyes out of my  
sight

That lightened late upon me; say, being  
sad,

And (if thou wilt) being frightened, I  
must find

The comfortable charities of friends  
More precious to me. 'Tis but truth,  
I am fain,

Being tired, to sleep an hour: mine  
eyes are hot;

Where tears will come not, fire there  
breeds instead,

Thou knowest, to burn them through.  
Let me lie down;

I will expect their comforts in an hour.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. — HOLYROOD.

MAITLAND and SIR NICHOLAS

THROGMORTON.

*Throgmorton.* Why would your coun-  
cil give no ear to me

Ere they rode hence so hot to crown  
their prince?

Why hear not first one word?

*Maitland.* One threat the more  
From your queen's lips bequeathed by  
rote to yours,

Or one more promise? If we run her  
course,

This queen will leave us in the briers,  
we know,

There to lie fast or labor till the thorns  
Have rent our flesh and raiment.

*Throgmorton.* Sir, take thought  
If help were sent not at the siege of  
Leith,

When France had grasped you by the  
throat, and sea

To land gave battle, from that sove-  
reign's hand

Whom now ye trust not.

*Maitland.* Ay, for her own ends  
She cast the French out, and flung back  
their power

Which here was deadly to her, and of  
that deed

Had recompense with surety: but what  
aid

Must we now look for of her, on whose  
will

Hang all our enemies' hopes? I would  
I had been

Banished seven years my country, and  
your queen

On that condition had but as a friend  
Dealt freely with us. Let her now

proclaim,

Her own seed failing, this our prince  
her heir,

And England shall no less have care of  
him

Than we his lineal servants; else, if  
hence

We yield him to your keeping, men  
will say

We have given our natural master to  
be kept

As among wolves a sheep, and made  
our hope

The fosterling of danger: and small  
trust

Should we put in her that has newly  
dealt

By secret message to subvert our state,  
We know, with those indeed of our  
queen's kin

From whose report we know it.

*Throgmorton.* What have they said?  
*Maitland.* That you brought proffers  
 of her aid and love  
 To incite their arms, to quicken the  
 slow snake  
 Whose sting lies cold yet in their policy,  
 But watched and warmed of her with  
 hand and eye  
 The perfect poison should put forth,  
 and thrust  
 At once the hot and cloven tongue of  
 war  
 Even in our face and bosom; but for  
 fear,  
 It may be, or being yet at heart's root  
 Scots, —  
 For this or that cause, through false  
 heart or true,  
 So is it, that in doubt of your good  
 mind  
 Toward them or Scotland, in whose  
 breast you sought  
 To make the mutual swords of her own  
 sons  
 Clash as they crossed once more, drink-  
 ing her blood,  
 They sent us word of all your embassy.  
*Throgmorton.* But you, whate'er these  
 thought or feigned to think,  
 Think no such foolish evil as fools  
 may, —  
 Deem not of England as the Scot who  
 deems  
 She hath no will, no line of life, no  
 hope,  
 No thought but Scotland's ruin, and  
 our queen  
 No sense of aught here done, — her  
 sister's doom,  
 The people's rage, the council's pur-  
 pose, — naught  
 But where to find in these a guileful  
 mean  
 To strike at Scotland? why, these fears  
 are old,  
 White-bearded dreams, suspicions long  
 grown gray,  
 Dangers and doubts toothless and eye-  
 less now  
 That fright nor babe nor dotard; and  
 your thought  
 Finds room for such? What profit  
 should she have

To turn your swords against each  
 other's throats,  
 And pick some privy chance of vantage  
 up  
 That fell between your factions at her  
 feet?  
 Such chance indeed of vantage might  
 there fall  
 For your own queen, who nowise has  
 been slow  
 To nurse the chance, and wait on it and  
 serve,  
 From strifes rekindled and requicken-  
 ing claims  
 Set each at each in England, whence  
 or craft  
 Or force might flch or seize for Scot-  
 land's sake  
 Some no less jewel than her eye ere  
 now  
 Was fixed so fast on, even the crown  
 that hangs  
 In doubt yet of unsure inheritance,  
 As hangs not yours for us to pluck at,  
 who,  
 Reign whoso may when this queen's  
 life is quenched,  
 In Scotland shall reign never.  
*Maitland.* That I know,  
 And this no less: that he who reigns  
 shall reign  
 Never by right of England's leave or  
 love,  
 Her ward or servant; as, this queen  
 removed,  
 Haply ye hope her lineal heir might  
 be,  
 And in that hope work with these  
 Hamiltons  
 To strike at us in Mary's name, and  
 pluck  
 Death from our hands upon her; you,  
 your queen,  
 And they her kinsfolk, all ye seek her  
 death;  
 No word but of her freedom in your  
 mouths,  
 No end than this less looked for in  
 your hearts.  
 Speak to the council as but now to me,  
 Defy them in her cause, not all the  
 world  
 For three days' space shall save her

*Throgmorton.* Nay, not we  
Desire the queen's death at your hand  
provoked,  
But here from Tullibardine's mouth I  
know

Her kin at secret heart desire no less;  
And will ye but allow their house its  
right

By heritage to reign, no need, they say,  
To take more care for her, who privily  
May be put out of life, and no man  
more

In that dead name be troubled; and  
again,

If they with no such promise being  
assured

Shall not join hands with you, and  
England then

Shall bring the queen back whom ye  
spared to slay,

Ye are lost, and they not winners.  
Therefore is it

That of Lord Mar and of yourself I  
seek

Help for the queen's deliverance, who  
being dead

Can profit no man but your foes and  
ours

That love not England more than they  
love you,

Nor you than they love England: shall  
not both

With their own cause take part?

*Maitland.* It is too late;

What part should we take with you, to  
what end,

Since all the council knows your traffic  
now

With their chief foes, and how being  
there betrayed

You can but bring us such a friendship  
back

As they would none of?

*Throgmorton.* Sir, if yet you fear,

If you suspect yet that our queen  
desires

To speed the death of yours or make  
it sure

By pleading for her, or by threat of war  
Denounced for her sake, let this letter  
be

The seal and warrant of our single  
heart,

Wherein she threatens war, — but smile  
not yet, —

If in his mother's name for him dis-  
crowned

Ye crown the child that has but wailed  
one year.

This should the lords have seen; but  
even for doubt

Lest it should set their spirits on such  
fire

As but her blood shed presently could  
slake,

And this be deemed its aim indeed at  
heart

And privy purpose of her hand who  
writ,

Your eye alone must read that reads it  
now

And the lord Murray's; for they know  
that send,

And with it send me this for secret  
charge,

They know the truth and heat of fiery  
will

That urges our queen's heart upon this  
war,

And for no end but for her sake who  
sits

Held fast in bonds of her own subjects  
born,

And with her all the majesty on earth  
That walks with monarchs, and no  
king alive

But wears some shameful parcel of her  
chain.

*Maitland.* Though this be truth, yet  
they that hold it false

Will join in wrath with them that hold  
it true,

Even for the threat's sake and for  
shame, will join

To write red answer in the slain  
queen's blood

Back to the queen that threatens. Nay,  
herself

Who sits in bonds yet of us will not  
yield

To come forth singly safe, nor give  
consent

That Bothwell should fare worse than  
she, or have

More harm or danger; and being thus  
incensed,

A three-edged weapon in the council's hand  
 Is drawn to smite at need, a treble charge  
 Whereon to impeach her: on that statute first  
 Made of this land's religion seven years since,  
 Which though she signed not, yet its breach in her  
 Shall stand for guilt before them; and thereto  
 Shall she be challenged of incontinence  
 With more than Bothwell, who by noteless nights  
 Have made her bed adulterous, and of each  
 The proof that seals her shame in him, they say,  
 Lies in their hand; last, of her murdered lord  
 Their warrant cries against her; and from these  
 No man may think to quit her nor secure,  
 Save he that here comes timeliest for such toil  
 As none beside may take upon his hand.

*Enter MURRAY.*

Welcome, my lord, and to a land that lacks  
 As never yet it lacked or looked for you.  
 What comfort bring you for her wounds from France  
 Besides that present help of hand and head  
 We heard returned an hour since?  
*Murray.* Sir, thus much:  
 All of our faith in France will in our cause  
 Live or die fighting; gold, and men in arms,  
 Will flow thence on us in full stream and free  
 If Scotland set but open hand or breast  
 To greet them coming; they will buy our love  
 At what best price they may.

*Throgmorton.* But you, my lord,  
 That have loved England ever, and that know

The worth and unworth weighed of either friend,  
 French faith or English, will not surely buy  
 With heavy hate of England the light love  
 That France and fraud would sell you; nor for this  
 Cast off the fortune and the peace unborn  
 That may bind fast in one strong ring of sea  
 Two jewels become one jewel, one such land  
 As from the stout fort of a single heart  
 Fixed like a sea-rock might look forth and laugh  
 Upon the under wars of all the world,  
 And see not higher the heads of kingdoms risen  
 Than of small waves in summer? Will you pluck  
 This hope out of the hopeful hand of time  
 Ere he can gather, — this good fruit that grows  
 On the green present branch of time's gray tree  
 To feed the future where the hungry past  
 Could get but blood for bread, and with bare steel  
 Died starved and smitten?  
*Murray.* Sir, when I came in  
 By secret flight from France, out of the guard  
 Wherein I lived inwalled with watch of men  
 That the court set about me to withhold  
 My foot from England; when an English boat  
 Had borne me oversea by secret night  
 From privy port to port, — at the long last  
 I saw your queen's face darken on mine own  
 As on a servant favor-fallen, that came  
 To take rebuke, and speak not; in her speech  
 I found no note of favor, no good word,  
 Nor honor such as late in France I found,



And finding fled from: sharply with  
 strange eyes  
 She glanced against me; taxed me with  
 the bonds  
 Wherein men held my sister; half a  
 threat  
 Was all her promise; I returned but  
 this,—  
 I would be still a Scotsman, and this  
 land  
 I had more mind to serve, and do her  
 good,  
 Than either of these queens; so parted  
 thence  
 Unfriendlike, yet with no breach openly  
 Proclaimed of friendship; and being  
 here, my mind  
 Is yet to serve no mistress but alone  
 This earth my bones were bred of, this  
 kind land  
 Which moulded me and fostered; her  
 strong milk  
 Put manhood in my blood, and from  
 my heart  
 If she that nurtured need it now to  
 drink  
 I think not much to shed it. If those  
 lords  
 In whom her power now stands shall  
 with one mouth  
 Bid me put on this weight of regency,  
 For no man's fear shall I deny them:  
 she,  
 Your queen, that threatens me with  
 ignominy  
 If I obey their choice and call, must  
 know  
 That to God only and my heart, those  
 twain  
 That are one eye to know me and to  
 judge,  
 Will I refer it; and of them being  
 known  
 That with pure purpose and no soiled  
 intent  
 I take this charge up, I will bear it  
 through  
 To the right end. Yet, ere my mind  
 be fixed,  
 I will behold her that was queen, and  
 see  
 How sits the spirit within her; but  
 howe'er,

Till Bothwell in our hands lie trapped  
 and dead  
 She must not pass forth free; and we  
 will hold  
 No traffic for the bear's skin merchant-  
 like  
 Before the bear be caught; but if your  
 queen  
 Proclaim against us therefore war, be  
 sure  
 We will not lose our lives, yield up our  
 lands,  
 And bear repute of rebels through the  
 world,  
 Who might, how loath soe'er, in all  
 men's eyes  
 Make our cause clear as righteousness:  
 the proofs  
 Which in our hands lie darkling yet,  
 but bear  
 The perfect witness of those ill deeds  
 past  
 That bring her thus in danger of our  
 doom  
 And righteous peril of all-judging law,  
 Must to the world's eye nakedly set forth  
 What cause is hers, and ours; when if  
 I stand  
 In the king's likeness of the state elect,  
 To him in me shall all knees bend, and  
 hearts  
 Kneel subjected; for them that hold  
 apart,  
 No head shall stand of any Hamilton  
 That shall not bow before my sword or  
 me.

## SCENE IV. — LOCHLEVEN CASTLE.

*The QUEEN and GEORGE DOUGLAS.*

*Queen.* Will he be here to-day? Alas,  
 my friend!

I made my hope of this till he should  
 come,

And now he comes I would not look  
 on him.

I know not what put hope into my fear:  
 That this your mother's and my father's  
 son

Should do me good for evil.

*George Douglas.* Madam, I think  
 The mind can be but good that mar-  
 shals him

To your fair presence; nay, though  
 even his soul  
 Were damned so deep as to desire your  
 death,  
 He durst not come to show us his  
 purpose here  
 Who were not chosen for murderers  
 at his hire,  
 But guards and servants that would  
 shed their lives  
 Ere yours should look on danger.

*Queen.* That we know,  
 And have no better wage than love to  
 give,  
 Which more to give we grudge not,  
 being so poor,  
 Than from your queen's hands you  
 disdain to take;  
 But what knows he? For aught our  
 brother knows,  
 Your mother and yourself are envious  
 guards  
 That hate me for my faith as for my  
 fault,  
 And hold your hands but till he bids  
 you slay,  
 Or yield me to my slayers. Ah! my  
 last knight,  
 You shall do well to leave me at my  
 need:  
 He will command you: when this  
 brother knows  
 I am not hated, think you then my  
 friend

Shall not be chidden from me?  
*George Douglas.* When my life  
 Is bidden from my body: not till then  
 Shall I be found obedient.

*Enter LADY LOCHLEVEN.*

*Queen.* Be but wise,  
 And wisdom shall not let you dis-  
 obey.  
 Our noble hostess, you have borne a  
 son,  
 I dare not say more noble, but I dare  
 More simple, than his elders, — one  
 whose heart  
 Stands fast when fortune stands not,  
 and requires,  
 As other men do power and glory and  
 gold,  
 No guerdon but the memory writ of  
 him

To have been most true when fortun  
 was most false,  
 And most to have loved whom she  
 most hated: this  
 Shall not of them be written. Come  
 you not  
 To bring one to me that shall never sin  
 As he by faith and folly? I would say  
 Of my great brother and your kingly  
 son  
 Nothing but good; yet can nor you  
 nor I  
 Say that he loves me and my fallen  
 estate  
 More than the power he comes to take  
 from me,  
 Or rather from their hands that ere he  
 came  
 Had rent it out of mine. Nay, look  
 not sad:  
 You should be merrier than my mother  
 might,  
 Were she now living.

*Lady Lochleven.* God shall witness  
 me  
 What joy I have of such a guest, or  
 pride  
 To be so stricken, madam, of your  
 tongue  
 Chastising me for triumph: if my heart  
 Exalt itself for this day's sake, God  
 knows,  
 Who hears you mock me.

*Queen.* Nay, I said no scorn;  
 I had rather need to pray you in his  
 name  
 Scorn not at me. Let him come in: I  
 know  
 What ceremony my masters should put  
 on  
 Were but to mock their servant.

*Enter MURRAY, ATHOL, and MORTON*  
 Sirs, you twain  
 That brought me two months since  
 between you safe  
 Out of the town by night that sought  
 my blood  
 Myself bid welcome; but she is not I  
 That in this presence should make wel-  
 come here  
 My father's son; nor shall my speech  
 usurp  
 For modesty that office; yet indeed

I am glad, my lord, to see your face,  
that must

Bring comfort, or an end of all this life  
That yet needs comfort.

*Murray.* What I may, I will:  
Yet haply shall you find not in my  
words

Or death or comfort; as you give them  
heed,

Shall they prove comfortable or deadly.

— Sirs,

I have that to speak and hear that but  
requires

The Lady Mary's ear and mine: I pray  
you,

Take not offence that I crave leave to  
say

We must for some space lack your  
company.

*Morton.* My lord, the land that puts  
her trust in you

Bids us obey, well knowing that love  
nor fear

Shall bend you from her service.

*Lady Lochleven.* Sir —

*Murray.* Your will?

*Lady Lochleven.* I am ne parcel of the  
sovereign state

That gives you of its greatness, nor  
have right

To speak commandingly; yet ere I go  
I would desire you by what name I  
may,

Look on this lady with such equal eyes  
As nor the wrath and hate of violent  
men,

Nor sense of evil done to this land's  
peace

By her mischance and evil counsellors,  
Nor (what I would not fear to find in  
you)

Desire of rule with pride of station,  
may

Divert to do her wrong, or glance asid:  
From the plain roadway of that right-  
eousness

Whose name is also mercy. This at  
least

Surely by me may be of you required,  
That in this house no wrong by word  
or act,

By deed or threat, may touch her.

*Murray.* Be assured

No wrong shall ever touch her by my  
hand,

And be content to know it.

*Queen.* Madam, these lords  
Know that I thought ere this to find of  
you

A mediatrix between me and your  
son:

I have my hope, and with a humble  
heart

I take your intercession thankfully.

[*Exeunt all but the QUEEN and MUR-  
RAY.*

*Murray.* I would I had another cause  
to speak,

Or you to listen, than this bitter theme  
That brings us back together, though for  
that

I had died a foreign man.

*Queen.* I thought not, sir,  
When we last parted ere the break of  
spring,

To meet you thus in summer; but  
these months

Have wrought things stranger on me.

*Murray.* Say, yourself  
Have made of them more strange and  
perilous use

Than is the fruit they bear. I am not  
come

To flatter with you; that I seek you  
death

I think you fear not, yet should surely  
know

The man that seeks were now more like  
to speed

Than he that would preserve it  
Heaven and earth

As with the tongue of one same law  
demand

Justice against you; nor can pity  
breathe

But low and fearful, till the right be  
weighed

That must in pity's spite and fear's be  
done,

Or this land never thrive. For that  
right's sake,

And not for hatred or rebellious heart,  
Do men require that judgment pass on  
you,

And bring forth execution: the broad  
world

Expects amazedly when we that rule  
 Shall purge this land of blood, which  
     now looks red  
 In the world's eye, and blushing not  
     for shame  
 Blushes with bloodshed; in men's general  
     mouths  
 The name of Scot is as a man's attaind  
 Of murderous treason, or as his more  
     vile  
 That for base heart and fear, or hire of  
     gold,  
 With folded hands watches the hands  
     that slay  
 Grow great in murder; and God's  
     heavy doom  
 Shall be removed not from us, nor his  
     wrath,  
 Well may we fear, shall lighten, till the  
     deed  
 That reeks as recent yet toward the  
     fair heavens  
 Be thoroughly cleansed with judgment.  
*Queen.* Must I too  
 Bleed to make Scotland clean of baser  
     blood  
 Than this she seeks of mine?  
*Murray.* If you shall die,  
 Bethink you for what cause, and that  
     sole thought  
 Shall seal your lips up from all pride  
     of plea  
 That would put in between your deed  
     and doom  
 The name of queen to cover you. No  
     age  
 That lived on earth red-handed with-  
     out law  
 Ever let pass in peace and unchastised  
 Such acts as this that yet in all men's  
     ears  
 Rings as a cry unanswered. When  
     your lord  
 Lay newly murdered, and all tongues  
     of friends  
 Were loud in prayer to you to save  
     your name  
 From stain of accusation, and yield up  
 That head to judgment which the whole  
     world held  
 Blood-guilty, first with subtle stretch of  
     time  
 Did you put back the trial, then devise

To make it fruitless save of mockery;  
     next,  
 I cannot say for shame what shame  
     foregone  
 Moved you to put upon this loathing  
     land  
 That great dishonor to behold and bear  
 The man your lover for its lord, and  
     you,  
 Queen of all Scots and thrall of one  
     most base,  
 While yet the ring was from his finger  
     warm  
 That sealed it first, and on his wedded  
     hand  
 The young blood of your husband, ere  
     the print  
 Had cooled of marriage or of murder,—  
     you  
 In the hot circle of his amorous arms  
 A new-espoused adulteress. Will you  
     say  
 You were enforced or by false counsels  
     bent  
 To take him to your bosom? In what  
     eye  
 Was not the foregone commerce of  
     your loves  
 As bare as shame? what ear had heard  
     not blown  
 His name that was your sword and  
     paramour,  
 Whose hand in yours was now as steel  
     to slay,  
 Now as a jewel for love to wear, a  
     pledge  
 Hot from your lips and from your hus-  
     band's heart?  
 Who knew not what should make this  
     man so proud  
 That none durst speak against him of  
     your friends  
 But must abide for answer unaware  
 The peril of the swords that followed  
     him?  
 Went he not with you where you went,  
     and bade  
 Men come and go, do this or do not,  
     stand  
 Or pass as pleased him, ere that day  
     had risen  
 Which gave the mockery of a ravished  
     bride

|   |   |
|---|---|
| To the false violence of his fraudful<br>rape   | Or hope of vantage some that know<br>will seem  |
| That hardly she could feign to fear, or<br>hide   | To know not, and some eyes be rather<br>blind   |
| The sweetness of the hour when she<br>might yield                                       | Than see what eyeless ignorance in its<br>sleep,  |
| That which was his before, and in men's<br>eyes   | If but it would, must needs take note<br>of: none   |
| Make proof of her subjection? Nay,<br>forbear;  | Whose mind is maimed not by his own<br>mere will,   |
| Plead not for shame that force was put<br>on you  | And made perforce of its own deed<br>perverse,  |
| To bear that burden and embrace that<br>shame   | Can read this truth awry. What have<br>you done?  |
| For which your heart was hungry: foe<br>nor friend                                      | Men might weep for you, yea, behold-<br>ing it,   |
| Could choose but see it, and that the<br>food desired                                   | The eyes of angels melt: no tide of<br>tears  |
| Must be but mortal to you. Think on<br>this,—   | Could wash from hand or soul the sin-<br>ful sign   |
| How you came hither crowned these<br>six years gone,                                    | That now stands leprous there; albeit<br>God knows  |
| In this same summer month, and with<br>what friends                                     | Myself for very pity could be glad<br>By mine own loss to ransom you, and<br>set  |
| Girt round about, and guarded with<br>what hopes,                                       | Upon your soul again the seal of peace,<br>And in your hand its empire; but your<br>act                                       |
| And to a land how loving; and these<br>years,   | Has plucked out of men's hearts that<br>fain would keep   |
| These few brief years, have blown from<br>off your boughs                               | The privilege of mercy. God alone<br>Can lose not that forever, but retains   |
| All blossom of that summer, though<br>nor storm   | For all sins done that cry for judgment<br>here   |
| Nor fire from heaven hath wrecked nor<br>wind laid low                                  | The property of pity, which in man<br>Were mere compliance and confederacy<br>With the sin pardoned. So shall you<br>do best, |
| That stately tree that shadowed a glad<br>land,   | Being thus advised, to entertain the<br>hope  |
| But now being inly gnawn of worms to<br>death,  | Of nothing but God's mercy, and hence-<br>forth   |
| And made a lurking-place for poisonous<br>things  | Seek that as chiefest refuge; for in<br>man   |
| To breed and fester at its rotten root,<br>The axe is come against it. None save<br>you | There shall no trust deliver you, nor<br>free   |
| Could have done this, to turn all hearts<br>and hands,                                  | Body nor soul from bonds. Weep not<br>for that;   |
| That were for love's sake laid before<br>your feet,                                     | But let your tears be rather as were<br>hers  |
| To fire and iron whetted and made<br>hot  | That wept upon the feet of God, and<br>bought   |
| To war against you. No man lives that<br>knows  | With that poor price her pardon.  |
| What is your cause, and loathes not;<br>though for craft                                |   |

*Queen.* So should I,  
 If grief more great may buy it than  
 any of theirs  
 That had sinned more than I; nay,  
 such have been,  
 And have been pardoned. I have done  
 ill, and given  
 My name for shame to feed on, put  
 mine honor  
 Into mine enemies' keeping, made my  
 fame  
 A prey and pasture for the teeth of  
 scorn.  
 I dare not say I wist not by what mean  
 I should be freed of one that marred  
 my life,  
 Who could by no mean else be quit of  
 him  
 Save this blind way of blood: yet men  
 there were  
 More wise than I, men much less  
 wronged of him,  
 That led me to it, and left me; but  
 indeed  
 I cite not them to extenuate by strange  
 aid  
 Mine own rash mind and unadvised-  
 ness,  
 That brought forth fruit of death; yet  
 must you know  
 What counsels led me by the hand,  
 and whence  
 My wrath was fostered; and how all  
 alone,  
 How utterly uncomforted, and girt  
 With how great peril, when the man  
 was slain,  
 I stood, and found not you to counsel  
 me,  
 And no man else that loved; and in  
 such need,  
 If I did ill to seek to that strong hand  
 Which had for me done evil, — if evil  
 it were  
 To avenge me of mine enemy, — what  
 did they  
 That by their hands and voices on his  
 side  
 Put force on me to wed him? Yet I  
 say not,  
 I was indeed enforced: I will not mock  
 With one false plea my penitent heart,  
 nor strive

With words to darken counsel, nor  
 incense  
 By foolishness your wisdom, to provoke  
 A judgment heavier than I wait for  
 nay,  
 You have not said that bitter thing of  
 me  
 That I may dare unsay; what most I  
 would,  
 I must deny not: yet I pray you think,  
 Even as might God, being just, what  
 cause I had,  
 What plea to lighten my sore load of  
 sin, —  
 Mismated and miscounselled, and had  
 seen  
 Of my sad life not wholly nineteen  
 years  
 When I came hither crowned; as yet  
 would God  
 Your head, my brother, had endured  
 for mine  
 That heaviness of honor, and this  
 hand  
 The weight of Scotland, that being laid  
 in mine  
 Has fallen and left it maimed, and on  
 my brows  
 A mark as his whose temples for his  
 crime  
 Were ringed with molten iron! Take  
 them now,  
 Though but for pity of me that pray  
 you take,  
 And bear them better than I did; for  
 me,  
 Though no plea serve me in the sight  
 of man,  
 Nor grace excuse my fault, I am yet  
 content,  
 If I may live but so much time in  
 bonds  
 As may suffice for God to pardon me,  
 Who shall not long put off to pardon,  
 then  
 Shut eyes and sleep to death.  
*Murray.* I had thought to-night  
 To speak no more with you, but let that  
 hope  
 Which only in God's name I gave you  
 bear  
 What fruit it might with prayer and  
 watching: yet

Take comfort, and assure yourself of  
life,

And, if it may be, honor; one of these  
I may take on me to redeem, and one  
So as I may will I preserve from death  
Dealt of men's tongues that murder it.

But you,  
Keep these things in your heart: that  
if you raise

Within this realm a faction, or devise  
To break these bonds, I shall not keep  
an hour

This power I have to save you; nor  
shall keep

If France or England be by word of  
yours

Stirred up to strike at our frail peace;  
nor yet

If you shall cleave to him that should  
for shame

As from this land be cast out from your  
heart:

But if toward God your faults be faith-  
fully

In good men's sight acknowledged, and  
that life

You led with your false lord, and all  
sins past,

Loathed and lamented, and in days to  
be

The living purpose in you manifest  
Of a more modest habit, and a life  
More nobly fashioned; if the slaughter  
done

On your dead husband seem of you  
abhorred,

And those ill days misliked wherein  
your fame

Drank mortal poison from his murder-  
er's hand, —

If this be seen, and that your mind  
lives clear

From counsel of revenge upon those  
lords

Who sought your reformation, nor  
with hope

Nor dangerous forethought of device to  
be

Renews itself to do them some day  
wrong, —

Then may you now sit safe, and un-  
reproved

Expect an end of bondage; for at large

You cannot think to live yet, who in  
time

May haply by repentance be restored,  
And, for your prison somewhere here  
endured,

Find yet your throne again, and sit  
renewed

More royal than men wist who saw the  
ship

Put in from France that bore you.

*Queen.* O my friend,  
O brother, found now father to me too,  
Who have raised and rebegotten me  
from death,

By how much less I thank you for my  
life,

Think so much more for honor I give  
thanks

That you raise up the hope in me to  
have

Which was nigh dead for shame. Oh!  
let me hold

[*Embracing him.*

My comfort in mine arms, and with  
dumb lips

Kiss you my thanks: I looked for less  
than this,

But yet for comfort of you. One thing  
more,

Having so much, will I require, and  
cease, —

Even for my son's sake and mine own  
to lay

The charge upon you of this regency  
Which none might bear so noble, nor  
bring back

Her peace again to Scotland, as I know  
Your hand shall bring; and, had I  
known betimes,

I had not started from its curb aside,  
Nor set against its strength, in no good  
hour,

The feebleness of mine. But if your  
heart

Be large enough to let forgiveness in  
Of my wrongs done, and days of wan-  
ton will,

Take this charge too, — to keep for me  
the forts

Of all that was my kingdom: I would  
have

Nothing of mine lie now not in your  
hand.

Keep too my jewels; all I had of worth,  
 What help without you should I have of it,  
 What profit or what surety? Let your heart  
 Cast her not out who prays you of your grace,

Take these in trust and me.

*Murray.* I may not these;  
 But you, that put yourself into my trust,  
 I will not fail.

*Queen.* Nay, you shall keep them too.

*Murray.* I would not put my hand forth uncompelled  
 To take for life and death the burden up

That burns as fire, and bows the back that bears

As with an iron load; and certainly  
 He that shall take this kingdom on his hand,

I think, shall live not long: nor pride nor hope,

But very love and strong necessity,  
 Could only bow me down to obey their will

Who should enforce on mine the task to bear

This grievous office, that if Scotland bid  
 I for her sake must bear till I may die.  
 But if I be not bidden, for no love  
 Or fear, or lust of kingdom, will I seek  
 The labor and the grief of that great charge

That I may live and feel not.

*Queen.* By my lips,  
 That have no royal right to speak for her

Now, think that yet she bids you, seeing none else

To undo mine evil done on her, and heal

The wounds mine enemies and myself have made

In her sweet peace; she hath no stay but you:

Whom other should she seek to? And for me

Again I dare not urge you, but my heart

Is turned into a prayer that pleads with yours

To lend its weakness comfort of your strength

By taking off its fears; these that break mine

Can bow not yours: oh! take from me that weight

Which were to you but sport and ornament, —

The natural honor of a hand so strong  
 And spirit elect of all men's souls alive  
 To do a work imperial.

*Murray.* If not else  
 But by me only may this land find peace,

By me, then, shall it. For your private charge,

Impute not to me for default of love  
 That I beseech you lay no more on me

Than public need enforces: in my trust  
 Your treasures were no safer than they stand

Now that I keep them not, and no man's tongue

Can tax me with them as detained from you

By fraud or usurpation; which mine ear  
 Were loth to know was muttered.

*Queen.* But you see  
 Nor they nor I have surety save in you:  
 Let it be seen of them that else may doubt,

How thankfully I trust you; even for that

Do thus, to do me good in men's report  
 When they shall see us at one: from mine own hand,

Except you take them, shall they not be rent

By craft or force of hidden or harrying hands

That could not wrest from yours what mine must yield

For fault of you to help me?

*Murray.* As you will.

I would not cross you where I might content:

Yet willingly I cannot take on me  
 More charge than needs of privy trusts to keep

That bring men's blame about them but in this

My will shall be your servant.



*Re-enter* LADY LOCHLEVEN and  
GEORGE DOUGLAS.

For this time

I take farewell: be patient, and seek  
peace

Whence God may send it.—To your  
gentler hand,

While yet the Lady Mary lives in ward,  
Behooves not me commend her, being  
but bound

As reverently as may beseem your son  
In the state's name to charge you that  
she find

At all men's hands that guard her now  
about

Good usage with safe keeping; which  
to assure

Shall hardly need this young man's  
service here,

For whom the state has other use, and  
I

A worthy work than still to keep such  
watch

As porters use or pages.

*Lady Lochleven.* He and I

Stand at your bidding; yet were nowise  
loth

The state that gave should take this  
charge away

It laid upon us.

*Queen.* Sir, the grace you brought  
And comfort, to me sorrowing and  
afraid,

Go ever with you; and farewell.

*Murray.* Farewell.

[*Exeunt* LADY LOCHLEVEN and MUR-  
RAY.

*Queen.* Will you not go?

*George Douglas.* Whither you bid,  
and when, I will go swiftly.

*Queen.* With your lord and mine,

I would have said: yet irks it me to  
say

My lord, who had none under heaven,  
and was

Of these my lords once lady. Said I  
not

You should do well to cast off care of  
me,

Whom you must leave indeed now at  
command

More powerful of more potent lips  
than mine?

I would not have you set your younget  
will

Against his word imperial; nor, I think,  
Doth he fear that, who bids us come  
and go,

And whose great pleasure is that you  
part hence,

And I sit here. Be patient, and seek  
peace,

You heard him bid me: patience we  
must have

If we would rest obedient; and for  
peace,

So haply shall we find it, having  
learnt

What rest is in submission.

*George Douglas.* Bid me stay,  
And that my will shall part not hence  
alive

What need I swear?

*Queen.* Alas! your will may stay,  
Your will may wait on me to do me  
good,

Your loves and wishes serve me, wher  
yourself

Shall live far off. Our lord forbids  
them not:

It is the service of your present hand,  
The comfort of your face, help of your  
heart,

That he forbids me.

*George Douglas.* And, though God  
forbade,

Save by my death he should compel  
me not

To do this bidding: only by your  
mouth,

Of all that rule in heaven and earth,  
will I

Be willingly commanded.

*Queen.* You must go.

Nay, I knew that: how should one stay  
by me?

There was not left me, by God's wrath  
or man's,

One friend when I came hither, in the  
world.

And from the waste and wilderness of  
grief

If one grain ripen, — from the stone and  
sand

If one seed blossom, — if my misery  
find

One spring on earth to assuage its fiery  
lip, —

How should I hope that God or man  
will spare

To trample or to quench it?

*George Douglas.* I am here  
While you shall bid me live, and only  
hence

When you shall bid me but depart and  
die.

*Queen.* There was a time when I  
would dream that men

There were to do my bidding, — such  
as loved

And were beloved again, and knew not  
fear

Nor hope but of love's giving; but  
meseemed

That in my dream all these were cast  
away,

And by God's judgment, or through  
wrath of men,

Or mine own fault, or change and chance  
of time,

I lived too long to look for love in  
vain.

Many there are that hate me now of  
men:

Doth one live yet that loves?

*George Douglas.* If one there were  
That for your love's sake should abhor  
his life,

Hating all hope save this, to die for  
you, —

What should he do to die so?

*Queen.* If I bade

That for my love's sake he should love  
his life,

And use its strength to cherish me,  
who knows

If he would heed? or say I gave com-  
mand

To do some ill thing or of ill report, —  
Were it to slay our brother now gone  
hence, —

Would one do that? I would not have  
it done,

Though I should bid him. Do not  
answer me

As though I questioned with you seri-  
ously,

Or spake of things that might be  
thought upon,

Who do but jest with grief as with my  
friend,

That plays again familiarly with me,  
And from the wanderings of a joyless  
wit

Turn to clasp hands with sorrow. You  
must go.

*George Douglas.* Ay, when you bid;  
but were my going from you

Part of your grief, which is more grief  
to me

Than my soul's going from forth my  
body were,

I would not set my face from hence  
alive.

*Queen.* I hold it not for no part of  
my grief

To bid you from me: yet being here  
bound in

As I with walls and waters, we should  
find

Less help than yet I hope for of your  
hand

Being hence enlarged. We will take  
counsel, sir,

And choose, with no large choice to  
make of friends, —

To whom we shall appoint you, — by  
what mean

To deal for our deliverance: as, with  
one

Once of my household, and this lady's  
kin,

Who here of all my Maries the last  
left

Partakes my bonds; the Laird of  
Ricarton,

My husband's kinsman; and what readi-  
est friends

Once more may be raised up, as when  
I fled

From shame and peril, and a prison-  
house

As hateful as these bonds, to find on  
earth —

Ah! no such love and faith as yours in  
man.

SCENE V. — HOLYROOD.

MURRAY and MORTON.

*Murray.* I am vexed with divers  
counsels, and my will

Sees nor its way nor end. This act  
 proclaimed  
 That seals the charge of murder on the  
 queen  
 To justify our dealing had to it hands  
 That here first met: Kirkaldy with  
 Glencairn,  
 Balfour with Maitland, Huntley with  
 Argyle,  
 True man with traitor,—all were as  
 one mind,  
 One tongue to tax her with complicity,  
 Found art and part with them that  
 slew her lord.  
 Men praised the council for this judg-  
 ment given  
 As from a single and a resolute soul;  
 Scarce one withstood save Herries,  
 and his voice  
 Was as a wind that sings in travellers'  
 ears  
 Unheeded; then the doom that gives  
 to death  
 All that in act maintain the former  
 faith,  
 And writes for Catholic traitor, should  
 have purged  
 The state of treacherous or of danger-  
 ous friends  
 Such as made protest then against this  
 law,  
 And fled from our part to the Hamil-  
 tons,—  
 Caithness and Athol, with the bishop  
 called  
 Of Murray, whom the Assembly met  
 to judge  
 By one same doom has with Argyle  
 condemned  
 To stand in sackcloth for adulteries  
 past  
 At Stirling through the time of service  
 held  
 Within the chapel royal. Such men's  
 stay  
 It irks not me to lose, who by their loss  
 Were fain to win their enemies for my  
 friends  
 More fast and faithful; but men's sun-  
 dering minds  
 Nor council nor assembly can reknit,  
 Though Knox there sit by Maitland,  
 and Balfour

Touch sides with Craig; and while the  
 state as now  
 Lives many-minded and distraught of  
 will,  
 How shall its hope be stable?  
*Morton.* Some there are  
 Have all their will, or more than we  
 that rule  
 By secular wit and might: the preachers  
 reign  
 With heavier hand than ours upon the  
 state,  
 Who in this late assembly by their  
 doom  
 Bade your fair sister of Argyle partake  
 The sackcloth penance of her slippery  
 lord  
 For scandal to the Kirk done when last  
 year  
 At the foot's edge her arms sustained  
 our prince  
 For baptism of such hands as served  
 the mass:  
 If it have leave long to sit lawgiver,  
 Their purity will pinch us.  
*Murray.* Have no fear:  
 It shall not Douglas; and we lack  
 their help  
 Who sway the commons only with  
 their breath,  
 Now most of all when our high coun-  
 sels fail,  
 And hopes are turned as 'twere to  
 running streams  
 That flow from ours to feed our ene-  
 mies' hands  
 With washings of our wreck, waifs of  
 our strength,  
 That melts as water from us. Those  
 chief twain  
 Whose league I sought by marriage,  
 and had hope  
 To bind them to us as brethren, when  
 Argyle  
 With me should knit himself anew, to  
 wed  
 His brother to the sister of my wife  
 With happier hope than he espoused  
 mine own,  
 While Huntley's son should lead my  
 daughter home,  
 And with this fourfold knot our loves  
 be tied,

And fortunes with each other's growth  
 ingrafted, —  
 Both these look back now toward the  
 Hamiltons  
 To mingle factions with them, being  
 assured  
 Our hands now lack the secret sword  
 we had  
 To draw at need against them, since  
 their names  
 Set at Craigmillar to the bond of blood  
 Are with that bond consumed, and no  
 tongue left  
 To wag in witness of their part of guilt,  
 Now Bothwell's knaves are hanged  
 that laid the train,  
 And Hay with them, and one most  
 near his trust, —  
 His kinsman Hepburn, from whose  
 mouth condemned,  
 And Ormiston's, we have confession  
 wrung  
 That marks with blood as parcel of  
 their deed  
 More than Balfour that in the assem-  
 bly sit,  
 And must partake his surety. This, my  
 lord,  
 Craves of us care and counsel, that our  
 names  
 Be writ not fool or coward, who took  
 in hand  
 Such trust to work such treason.  
*Morton.* Nay, no Scot  
 Shall say we fell from faith or treach-  
 erously  
 Let men's hopes fade that trusted us,  
 and sank  
 Through febleness of ours: yet have  
 we strength  
 To lower the height of heart and confi-  
 dence  
 That makes their faction swell, who  
 were but late  
 Too faint of spirit, too fearful and un-  
 sure,  
 To be made firm with English subsi-  
 dies.  
 Three thousand marks, that Scrope by  
 secret hand  
 Sent from Carlisle to Herries, could  
 not serve  
 To give or shape or sinew to their plots

Who are now so great their houses'  
 heir must wed  
 No lowlier than a queen, and Both-  
 well's wife,  
 For this divorced or widowed.  
*Murray.* Ay; we know  
 The archbishop his good uncle with  
 this youth  
 Hath in Dumbarton fortified himself;  
 And while they there sit strong and  
 high in hope  
 Our prisoner and our penitent late, we  
 hear,  
 Grows blithe of mood and wanton;  
 from her sight  
 Have I dismissed my mother's youngest  
 born,  
 Lest in her flatteries his weak faith be  
 snared  
 And strangled with a smile; and for  
 her hand  
 I have found a fitter suitor than  
 Arbroath  
 When she shall wed again, within  
 whose veins  
 Some drops of blood run royal as her  
 own;  
 Methuen, whose grandsire was the  
 third that set  
 His ring on that Queen Margaret's  
 wedded hand  
 From the seventh Henry sent ambassa-  
 dress  
 To our fourth James, to bring for  
 bridal gift  
 Her father's love and England's to her  
 lord,  
 And with the kiss of marriage on his  
 lips  
 To seal that peace which with her hus-  
 band's life  
 Found end at Flodden from her  
 brother's hand  
 That split the heart of Scotland. So  
 the queen,  
 If she wed Methuen, shall espouse a  
 man  
 Whose father of the same queen's  
 womb was born  
 That bore her father; and whose blood  
 as hers  
 Is lineal from the seed of English  
 kings,

Through one same mother's sons, queen  
 once of Scots,  
 And daughter born and sister, though  
 unqueened,  
 Of those twain Henries that made  
 peace and war  
 With Scotland and her lord; and by  
 this match  
 The Hamiltons being frustrate of their  
 hope  
 Could yet not tax us with a meaner  
 choice  
 Than they would make for her, who  
 while she lives  
 Must stand thenceforth far off from  
 their designs  
 And disallied from all that in her name  
 Draw now to head against us; and  
 some help  
 We need the more to cross them now,  
 that France,  
 To whom I thought to seek as to my  
 friend  
 And thence find aid in this necessity  
 That else finds none, since England's  
 jealous craft  
 Puts in our enemies' hands gold for a  
 sword  
 More sharp than steel — France, that  
 would send at need  
 The choice of all her sons that hold our  
 faith  
 To live and die beside us here in arms,  
 Grows chillier toward us than the chang-  
 ing wind  
 That brings back winter; for the brood  
 of Guise,  
 Our prisoner's friends and kinsmen of  
 Lorraine,  
 Prevail again on Catherine's adverse  
 part,  
 Whose hate awhile gives way to them,  
 and yields  
 Our cause into their hands that were  
 more like  
 To help this daughter of their danger-  
 ous house  
 Take up the crown resigned, and through  
 their strength  
 Renew this kingdom's ruin with her  
 reign,  
 Than send us aid and arms to guard its  
 peace

From inroad as from treason: which I  
 doubt  
 We shall hear news of from my  
 brother's tongue,  
*Enter SIR WILLIAM DOUGLAS.*  
 Who comes without a herald.  
*Sir W. Douglas.* Sir, the news  
 Is dashed with good and evil equally,  
 That here I bring you; for the treasons  
 laid  
 Have missed their mark, and left un-  
 wounded yet  
 My house's honor, that retains in trust  
 So great a charge. You had word ere  
 this of me,  
 By what strange fortune was their plot  
 made known,  
 Who thought to fall upon us unaware,  
 And find a ferry for some seventy  
 swords  
 To cross the lake in mine own barge  
 surprised,  
 And smite those thirty guards that hold  
 the walls,  
 And make a murderous passage for the  
 queen  
 To come forth free with feet that  
 walked in blood;  
 And how by one, a Frenchman of her  
 train,  
 Who, being not in their counsel, heard  
 some speech  
 Of such a preparation, and conceived  
 This was a plot to take her from your  
 hand,  
 Laid by the fiercer faction of the Kirk  
 That sought to snare and slay her in  
 your despite,  
 To me was all discovered; and be-  
 times  
 I gave command no barge thenceforth  
 should pass  
 Between the main shore and mine island  
 walls,  
 But a skiff only that with single oars  
 Might be rowed over. Baffled thus,  
 here friends  
 Were fain to buy the boatman's faith  
 with gold,  
 Whom on suspicion I dismissed, but  
 since,  
 Finding less trust and service in the  
 knave

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>That had his place, called back, and<br/>bade take heed<br/>Of these that would have won to their<br/>device<br/>A foundling page within my castle bred,<br/>And called by mine own name; who<br/>by this plot<br/>Should have seduced for them my sen-<br/>tinels,<br/>And oped the gate by night: but yet<br/>I find,<br/>For all toils set and gins to take their<br/>faith,<br/>In him and them no treason; yet so<br/>near<br/>Was treason to us, that not long since<br/>the queen<br/>Had well-nigh slipped beyond our guard<br/>by day,<br/>In habit of a laundress that was hired<br/>So to shift raiment with her; but being<br/>forth<br/>Betimes, as was this woman's use to<br/>come,<br/>In the low light by dawn, at such an<br/>hour<br/>As she was wont to sleep the morning<br/>out,—<br/>The fardel in her hand of clothes<br/>brought forth,<br/>And on her face the muffler,—it befell<br/>That as she sat before the rowers, and<br/>saw<br/>Some half her free brief way of water<br/>past,<br/>By turn of head or lightning of her<br/>look<br/>For mirth she could not hide, and joy-<br/>ous heart,<br/>Or but by some sweet note of majesty,<br/>Some new bright bearing and imperious<br/>change<br/>From her false likeness, so she drew<br/>their eyes<br/>That one who rowed, saying merrily,<br/><i>Let us see</i><br/><i>What manner of dame is this,</i> would<br/>fain pluck down<br/>Her muffler, who to guard it suddenly<br/>Put up her fair white hands, which see-<br/>ing they knew,<br/>And marvelled at her purpose; she<br/>thereat,</p> | <p>A little wroth but more in laughter<br/>bared<br/>Her head, and bade stretch oars and<br/>take the land<br/>On their lives' peril; which regarding<br/>not,<br/>They straight put back as men amazed,<br/>but swore<br/>To keep fast locked from mine of all<br/>men's eyes<br/>The secret knowledge of this frustrate<br/>craft,<br/>So set her down on the island side again,<br/>With muffled head and hidden hands<br/>to wring<br/>And weep apart for passion, where my<br/>watch<br/>Looks now more strict upon her; but I<br/>think,—<br/>For all her wrath and grief to be by<br/>chance<br/>From her near hope cast down and<br/>height of mind<br/>Wherein she went forth laughingly to<br/>find<br/>What good might God bring of her<br/>perilous hour,—<br/>She hath lost not yet nor changed that<br/>heart nor hope,<br/>But looks one day to mock us.<br/><i>Murray.</i> So I think;<br/>And in that fear would have you keep<br/>fast watch<br/>By night and day till we take off the<br/>charge<br/>Laid on your faith, and or enfranchise<br/>her<br/>Or change her place of ward; which,<br/>ere the spring<br/>That holds in chase this winter's flying<br/>foot<br/>Be turned to summer, haply shall be<br/>done.<br/>What fashion holds our mother with the<br/>queen?<br/><i>Sir W. Douglas.</i> As she was ever<br/>tender of her state,<br/>And mild in her own office, so she<br/>keeps<br/>Observance yet and reverence more<br/>than meet<br/>Save toward a queen, toward this her<br/>guest enforced,</p> |
|---|---|

Who smiles her back a prisoner's  
thanks, and sighs  
That should smile in prison; but 'twixt  
whiles  
Some change of mood will turn to  
scorn or spleen  
Her practised patience, and some word  
take wing  
Forth from her heart's root through her  
lips that hath  
The gall of asps within it; yet not  
this  
Turns the heart hard or bitter that  
awaits  
Her gentler change, pitying the wrong  
it bears,  
And her that wrongs it for the sorrow's  
sake  
That chafes and rends her.

*Murray.* Pity may she give,  
And be praised for it; but to entertain  
Hope or desire that wars against her  
trust  
Should turn that praise to poison.  
Have you seen  
Since George went thence, or noted ere  
he went,  
In her no token of a mingled mind  
That sways 'twixt faith and such a faith-  
less hope  
As feeds a mother's love with deadly  
dreams  
Of prophesying ambition? for in him  
I spied the sickness of a tainted heart  
And fever-fired from the most mortal  
eyes  
That ever love drank death of.

*Sir W. Douglas.* No, my lord.  
*Murray.* I would fain trust her mind  
were whole in this,  
And her thoughts firm; yet would not  
trust too far,  
Who know what force of fraud and fire  
of will  
In that fierce heart and subtle, without  
fear,  
That God hath given so sweet a hiding-  
place,  
Make how much more the peril and the  
power  
Of birth and kinglier beauty, that lay  
wait

For her son's sake to tempt her. We  
will hold  
More speech of this: here shall you  
rest to-night. [*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE VI.—LOCHLEVEN CASTLE.

*The QUEEN and MARY BEATON.*

*Queen.* Is it not sunset? what should  
ail the day  
To hang so long in heaven? the world  
was blind  
By this time yesternight. The lake  
gleams yet.  
Will the sun never sink, for all the  
weight  
That makes this hour so heavy?  
*Mary Beaton.* While you speak,  
The outer gate that stands till nightfall  
wide  
Shuts on the sundown; and they bring  
the keys  
That soon the page shall put into our  
hand  
To let in freedom.

*Queen.* I could weep and laugh  
For fear and hope and angry joy and  
doubt  
That wring my heart. I am sick at  
once and well.  
Shall I win past them in this handmaid's  
dress  
If we be spied? My hood is over  
broad;  
Help me to set it forward: and your  
own  
Sits loose; but pluck it closer on your  
face  
For cloak and cover from the keen  
moon's eye  
That peers against us. Twice, thou  
knowest, yea thrice,  
God has betrayed me to mine enemies'  
hands  
Even when my foot was forth: if it slip  
now,  
He loves nor kings that hold his office  
here  
Nor his own servants, but those faith-  
less mouths  
That mock all sovereignties in earth or  
heaven.  
If here he fail me, and I fall again

To sit in bonds a year — by God's own truth,  
 I swear I will not keep this wall of flesh  
 To cage my spirit within these walls of stone,  
 But break this down to set that free from these,  
 That, being delivered of men's wrongs and his,  
 It may stand up, and gazing in his eyes  
 Accuse him of my traitors.

*Mary Beaton.* Keep good heart.  
 Your hope before was feverish and too light,  
 And so it failed you: in this after-plot  
 There is more form and likeness than in those  
 That left you weeping. Let not passion now  
 Foil your good fortune twice, or heat of mood  
 From keen occasion take the present edge,  
 And blunt the point of fortune.

*Queen.* If I knew  
 This man were faithful — oh, my heart that was  
 Is melted from me, and the heart I have  
 Is like wax melting. Were my feet once free,  
 It should be strong again: here it sinks down  
 As a dead fire in ashes. Dare we think  
 I shall find faith in him, who have not found  
 In all the world? no man of mine there is,  
 None of my land or blood, but hath betrayed,  
 Betrayed or left me.

*Mary Beaton.* Nay, too strange it were  
 That you should come to want men's faith, and look  
 For love of man in vain. These were your jewels,  
 You cannot live to lack them: nay, but less, —  
 Your common ornaments to wear and leave,  
 Your change of raiment to cast off, and bind

A fresher robe about you: while men live,  
 And you live also, these must give you love,  
 And you must use it.

*Queen.* So one told me once, —  
 That I must use and lose it. If my time  
 Be come to need man's love, and find it not,  
 I have known death make a prophet of a man  
 That living could foretell but his own end,  
 Not save himself, being foolish; and I too,  
 I am mad as he was, now to think on him  
 Or my dead follies. Were these walls away,  
 I should no more; ay, when this strait is past,  
 I shall win back my wits and my blithe heart,  
 And make good cheer again.

*Enter PAGE.*

*Page.* Here are the keys.  
 I had wrought instead a ladder for our need,  
 With two strong oars made fast across, for fear  
 I had failed at last from under my lord's eye  
 To sweep them off the board-head here they ring,  
 As joy-bells here to give your highness note  
 The skiff lies moored on the island's lee, and waits  
 But till the castle boats by secret hands  
 Be stripped of oars and rowlocks, and pursuit  
 Made helpless, maimed of all its means; the crew  
 Is ready that shall lend us swifter wing  
 Than one man's strength to fly with; and beyond  
 Your highness' friends upon the further bank  
 Wait with my master's horses. Never was  
 A fairer plot or likelier.



*Queen.* How thy face  
 Lightens! Poor child, what knowest  
 thou of the chance  
 That cast thee on my fortunes? it may  
 be  
 To death ere life break bud, and thy  
 poor flower  
 The wind of my life's tempest shall cut  
 off,  
 And blow thy green branch bare. Many  
 there be  
 Have died, and many that now live  
 shall die,  
 Ere my life end, for my life's sake; and  
 none  
 There is that knows, of all that love or  
 hate,  
 What end shall come of this night's  
 work, and what  
 Of all my life-days. I shall die in  
 bonds,  
 Perchance, a bitter death; yet worse it  
 were  
 To outlive dead years in prison, and to  
 loathe  
 'The life I could not lose. This will  
 not be:  
 No days and nights shall I see wax and  
 wane,  
 Kindled and quenched in bondage, any  
 more:  
 For if to-night I stand not free on earth  
 As the sun stands in heaven, whose  
 sovereign eye  
 Next day shall see me sovereign, I  
 shall live  
 Not one day more of darkling life, as  
 fire  
 Pent in a grate, bound in with blacken-  
 ing bars,  
 But like a star by God hurled forth of  
 heaven  
 Fall, and men's eyes be darkened, and  
 the world  
 Stand heart-struck, and the night and  
 day be changed  
 That see me falling. If I win not forth,  
 But, flying, be taken of the hands that  
 were  
 Before laid on me, they shall never  
 think  
 To hold me more in fetters, but take  
 heart

To do what earth saw never yet, and  
 lay  
 By doom and sentence on their sover-  
 eign born  
 Death; I shall find swift judgment,  
 and short shrift  
 My justicers shall give me: so at least  
 Shall I be quit of bondage. Come, my  
 friends,  
 That must divide with me for death or  
 life  
 This one night's issue; be it or worst  
 or best,  
 Yet have ye no worse fortune than a  
 queen,  
 Or she than ye no better. On this hour  
 Hang all those hours that yet we have  
 to live:  
 Let us go forth to pluck the fruit of  
 this  
 That leans now toward our hand. My  
 heart is light:  
 Be yours not heavier; for your eyes  
 and mine  
 Shall look upon these walls and waves  
 no more. [Exeunt.]

SCENE VII.—THE SHORE OF LOCH  
 LEVEN.

GEORGE DOUGLAS, BEATON, RICAR-  
 TON, *with Attendants.*

*George Douglas.* I hear the beat of  
 the oars: they make no haste.

How the stars thicken! if a mist would  
 take

The heaven but for an hour, and hide  
 them round—

*Ricarton.* How should they steer then  
 straight? We lacked but light.

And these are happy stars that sign  
 this hour

With earnest of good fortune; and  
 betimes

See by their favor where the prize we  
 seek

Is come to port.

*Enter the QUEEN, MARY BEATON,  
 Page, and a girl attending.*

*Queen.* Even such a night it was  
 I looked again for to deliver me,  
 Remembering such a night that broke  
 my bonds

Two wild years past that brought me  
 through to this ;  
 The wind is loud beneath the mount-  
 ing moon,  
 And the stars merry. Noble friends,  
 to horse ;  
 When I shall feel my steed exult with  
 me,  
 I will give thanks for each of your good  
 deeds  
 To each man's several love. I know  
 not yet  
 That I stand here enfranchised ; for  
 pure joy  
 I have not laid it yet to heart : me-  
 thinks  
 This is a lightning in my dreams to-  
 night,  
 That strikes and is not, and my flat-  
 tered eyes  
 Must wake with dawn in bonds. —  
 Douglas, I pray,  
 If it be not but as a flash in sleep,  
 And no true light now breaking, tell  
 me you,  
 That were my prison's friend : I will  
 believe  
 I am free as fire, free as the wind, the  
 night,  
 All glad fleet things of the airier ele-  
 ment  
 That take no hold on earth ; for even  
 like these  
 Seems now the fire in me that was my  
 heart,  
 And is a song, a flame, a burning  
 cloud  
 That moves before the sun at dawn,  
 and fades  
 With fierce delight to drink his breath  
 and die.  
 If ever hearts were stabbed with joy to  
 death,  
 This that cleaves mine should do it,  
 and one sharp stroke  
 Pierce through the thrilled and trem-  
 bling core like steel,  
 And cut the roots of life. Nay, I am  
 crazed,  
 To stand and babble like one mad  
 with wine,  
 Stung to the heart and bitten to the  
 brain

With this great drink of freedom ; oh !  
 such wine  
 As fills man full of heaven, and in his  
 veins  
 Becomes the blood of gods. I would  
 fain feel  
 That I were free a little, ere that sense  
 Be put to use : those walls are fallen  
 for me,  
 Those waters dry, those gaolers dead,  
 and this  
 The first night of my second reign, that  
 here  
 Begins its record. I will talk no more,  
 Nor waste my heart in joyous words,  
 nor laugh  
 To set my free face toward the large-  
 eyed sky,  
 Against the clear wind and the climb-  
 ing moon,  
 And take into mine eyes and to my  
 breast  
 The whole sweet night and all the stars  
 of heaven,  
 But put to present work the heart and  
 hand  
 That here rise up a queen's. Bring me  
 to horse :  
 We will take counsel first of speed,  
 and then  
 Take time for counsel.  
*Beaton.* Madam, here at hand  
 The horses wait : Lord Seyton rides  
 with us  
 Hence to Queen's Ferry, where beyond  
 the Forth  
 We reach Claude Hamilton, who with  
 fresh steeds  
 Expects us ; to Long Niddry thence,  
 and there  
 Draw rein among the Seytons, ere  
 again  
 We make for Hamilton, whose walls  
 should see  
 The sun and us together.  
*Queen.* Well devised.  
 Where is the girl that fled with us, and  
 gave  
 These garments for my surety ? She  
 shall have  
 Her part in my good hour, that in mine  
 ill  
 Did me good service.

*Ricarton.* Madam, she must stay:  
We have not steeds enough, and those  
we have  
May bear no load more than perforce  
they must,  
Or we not hope to speed.

*Queen.* Nay, she shall go,  
Not bide in peril of mine enemies  
here

While we fly scathless hence.

*Girl.* Most gracious queen,  
Of me take no such care: I am well  
content  
They should do with me all they would,  
and I

Live but so long to know my queen as  
safe

As I for her die gladly.

*Ricarton.* She says well:  
Get we to horse. I must ride south to  
rouse  
My kinsfolk, and with all our Hepburn  
bands

Seize on Dunbar; whence northward I  
may bear  
Good tidings to your lord.

*Queen.* God make them good  
That he shall hear of me, and from his  
mouth

Send me good words and comfort! You  
shall ride

Straight from Lord Seyton's with my  
message borne

To all good soldiers of your clan and  
mine,

And wake them for our common lord's  
dear love

To strike once more, or never while  
they live

Be called but slaves and kinless: then  
to him

For whom the bonds that I put off to-  
night

Were borne and broken. — Douglas, of  
that name

Most tender and most true to her that  
was

Of women most unfriended, and of  
queens

Most abject and unlike to recom-  
pense,

Take in your hand the hand that it set  
free,

And lead me as you led me forth of  
bonds  
To my more perfect freedom. — Sirs, to  
horse. [Exeunt.]

SCENE VIII. — HAMILTON CASTLE.

*The QUEEN, ARGYLE, and HUNTLEY.*

*Queen.* I ever thought to find your  
faiths again

When time had set me free; nor shall  
my love

To my good friends be more unprofit-  
able

Than was my brother's, from whose  
promised hand

Both have withdrawn the alliance of  
your own

To plight once more with mine: your  
son, my lord,

And, noble sir, your brother, will not  
fail

Of worthier wedlock and of trustier  
ties

Than should have bound them to a  
traitor's blood,

His daughter, and the sister of his wife,  
Whom he so thought to honor, and in  
them

Advance his counsels and confirm his  
cause,

Through your great names allied, who  
now take part

More worthily with one long over-  
thrown,

And late re-risen with many a true man's  
more

And royally girt round with many a  
friend's;

Nor need we lay upon our kinsmen  
here

All our hope's burden, nor submit our  
hand

To marriage with our cousin's of  
Arbroath

For fault of other stay. For mine own  
mind,

I would stand rather on Dumbarton  
rock

Walled in with Fleming's spears, than  
here sit fast

With these six thousand ranged about  
the walls

That five days' suns have brought to  
 strengthen me  
 Since I fled hither in these poor same  
 weeds  
 That yet for need I wear. Now, by the  
 joy  
 I had that night to feel my horse be-  
 neath  
 Bound like my heart that through those  
 darkling ways  
 Shot sunwards to the throne, I do not  
 think  
 Thus to sit long at wait, who have the  
 hands  
 Subscribed here of so many loyal lords  
 To take no thought but of their faith to  
 me,  
 Nor let dissension touch their hearts  
 again  
 Till I sit crowned as arbitress of all  
 When the great cause is gained. Each  
 bloodless day  
 Makes our foes greater: from Dunbar  
 Lord Hume,  
 Who thence with hand too swift cut off  
 our friends,  
 Brings now six hundred to my brother's  
 flag,  
 Who hangs hard by us; and from Ed-  
 inburgh  
 Grange leads his hundreds; all the  
 Glasgow folk,  
 For love of Lennox, with the Lothian  
 carles,  
 Draw round their regent hither; and  
 God knows  
 These are no cowards nor men vile  
 esteemed  
 That stand about him: better is he  
 served  
 Of them than we of Herries, whose false  
 wit  
 Works with an open face and a close  
 heart  
 For other ends than live upon his  
 tongue,  
 And fill with protestation those loud  
 lips  
 That plead and swear on both sides;  
 he would stand  
 My counsellor, yet has not craft enough  
 To draw those enemies hence that watch  
 us here

By tumult raised along the border side  
 For none to quell but Murray, who was  
 bound  
 From Glasgow where he lies yet to  
 Dumfries,  
 But halts to gather head, and fall on us  
 When we set forth; which by my pri-  
 vate will  
 I would not yet, but that my kinsmen  
 yearn  
 To bid him battle; and with victory won  
 Seize to themselves the kingdom by my  
 hand,  
 Which they should wield then at their  
 will, and wed  
 To their next heir's: so should ye have  
 their seed  
 For kings of Scotland, who were  
 leagued ere this  
 With our main foes, and to their hands  
 but late  
 By composition and confederacy  
 Would have given up my life to buy  
 their ends  
 Even with the blood whose kinship in  
 their veins  
 They thought should make them royal.  
*Argyle.* We must fear  
 These days that fleet, and bring us no  
 more strength,  
 Bring to the regent comfort and good  
 hope  
 From England of a quiet hand main-  
 tained  
 Upon the borders, and such present  
 peace  
 As fights against us there upon his side,  
 While he stands fast and gathers friends,  
 who had  
 But common guard about him when  
 your grace  
 Flew hither first, yet would not at the  
 news  
 For dread of our near neighborhood  
 turn back  
 With that thin guard to Stirling; and  
 by this  
 The chiefs of all his part are drawn to  
 him,  
 Morton and Mar, Semple with Ochil  
 tree,  
 And they that wrung forth of your royal  
 hand

The writing that subscribed it kingdom-  
less :

All these are armed beneath him.

*Queen.* These are strong,  
Yet are our friends not weaker: twain  
alone,

You twain with whom I speak, being  
on my side,

I would not fear to bide the feud of  
these ;

And here are Cassilis, Eglinton, Mont-  
rose,

Ross, Crawford, Errol, Fleming, Suther-  
land,

Herries with Maxwell, Boyd and Oli-  
phant,

And Livingstone, and Beaumont that  
was sent

To speak for France as with mine  
uncle's tongue

Pleading with those my traitors for that  
life

Which here he finds enfranchised; and  
all these

As one true heart to me and faithful  
hand,

In God's name and their honor's  
leagued as friends

Who till mine enemies be cast down  
will know

Naught save their duty to me, that no  
strife

Shall rend in sunder, and no privy jar  
Rive one from other that stands fast by  
me.

This have they sworn; and, by my trust  
in them,

I will not doubt with favor or with force  
To quell the hardiest heart set opposite.

Have I not sent forth word of amnesty  
To every soul in Scotland free save  
these,

The top and crown of traitors, Morton  
first ;

And Lindsay, from whose hand I took  
a pledge

To be redeemed with forfeit of his head ;  
Semple, that writ lewd ballads of my  
love,

And that good provost whom I swore  
to give,

For one night's prison given me in his  
house,

A surer gaol for narrower resting-place  
Than that wherein I rested not; and  
last

Balfour, that gave my lord's trust up  
and mine ?

Upon these five heads fallen will I set  
foot

When I tread back the stair that  
mounts my throne.

All others shall find grace: yea, though  
their hearts

Were set more stark against me and  
their hands

More dangerous aimed than these; for  
this God knows

My heart more honours and shall ever  
love

A hardy foe more than a coward friend;  
And Hume and Grange, mine enemies  
well approved,

Could love or recompense reknit their  
faiths

To my forsworn allegiance, in mine  
eyes

Should stand more clear than un-  
revolted men

Whose trustless faith is farther from  
my trust

Than from my veins the nearness of  
their blood.

I am not bitter-hearted, nor take pride  
To keep the record of wrongs done to  
me

For privy hate to gnaw upon, and fret  
Till all its wrath be wroken; I desire

Not blood so much of them that seek  
mine own

As victory on them, who being but  
subdued

For me may live or die my subjects:  
this

I care not if I win with liberal words  
Or weapons of my friends, for love or  
fear,

Or by their own dissensions that may  
spring

And blossom to my profit; and I hold  
Nor fear nor grief grievous nor terri-  
ble

That might buy victory to me, for  
whose sake

Peril and pain seem pleasant, and all  
else

That men thirst after as I thirst for  
this —

Wealth, honour, pleasure, all things  
weighed therewith —

Seem to my soul contemptible and vile.  
Nor would I reign that I might take  
revenge,

But rather be revenged that I might  
reign.

For to live conquered and put on defeat,  
To sit with humbled head and bear  
base life,

Endure the hours to mock me, and the  
days

To take and give me as a bonds slave up  
For night by night to tread on — while  
death lives,

And may be found, or man lay hold on  
him,

I will not have this to my life, but die.  
I know not what is life that outlives  
hope,

But I will never: when my power were  
past,

My kingdom gone, my trust brought  
down, my will

Frustrate, I would not live one heart-  
less hour

To think what death were gentlest;  
none so sharp

But should be softer to my bosom  
found

Than that which felt it strike.

*Huntley.* You speak as ever

Your own high soul and speech; no  
spirit on earth

Was ever seen more kinglike than lifts  
up

With yours our hearts to serve you for  
its sake

As these have served that here would  
speak with you.

*Enter BEATON and MARY BEATON.*

To whom our loves yield place.

[*Exeunt ARGYLE and HUNTLEY.*

*Queen.* My chance were ill

If to no better love your loves gave  
way

Than that which makes us friends. —  
You are come betimes,

If you come ready now to ride; here lie  
The letters you must bear: the cardi-  
nal's this,

Mine uncle's of Lorraine, to whose  
kind hand

Did I commend the first news of my  
flight

Sent from Lord Seyton's while our  
horses breathed;

By this shall he receive my mind writ  
large,

And turn his own to help me. Look  
you say

Even as I write, you left me in such  
mind

As he would know me, — for all past  
faults done

Bent but to seek of God and of the  
world

Pardon; as knowing that none but only  
God

Has brought me out of bonds, and inly  
fixed

In perfect purpose for his mercy shown  
To show a thankful and a constant  
heart,

As simple woman or as queen of Scots,  
In life and death fast cleaving to his

Church,  
As I would have him that shall read  
believe

My life to come shall only from his lips  
Take shape and likeness, by their breath

alone  
Still swayed and steered; to whom you  
know I look

For reconciling words that may subdue  
To natural pity of my laboring cause

The queen that was my mother, and  
her son

My brother king that in my husband's  
seat

Sits lineal in succession. Say too this,  
That without help I may not hold mine

own;

And therefore shall he stand the more  
my friend,

And do the kindlier, the more haste he  
makes

With all good speed to raise and to  
despatch

A levy of a thousand harquebusmen  
To fill the want up of my ranks, that

yet  
Look leaner than mine enemies'. This  
for France.

And this to the English queen deliver-  
ing say,  
I look, being free now, for that help of  
hers  
That in my last years' bonds not once  
or twice  
I had by word of promise, and not  
doubt  
This year to have indeed; which if I  
may,  
When from her hand I take my crown  
again,  
I shall thenceforth look for no other  
friend,  
And try no further faith. This private  
word  
In London to the ambassador of Spain  
Fail not to bear, that being set round  
with spies  
I may not write; but he shall tell his  
king  
The charges that men cast on me are  
false,  
And theirs the guilt that held me in  
their bonds  
Who stand in spirit firm to one faith  
with him  
From whom I look for counsel. I well  
think  
My sister's love shall but desire to hold  
A mean betwixt our parties, and pro-  
nounce  
On each side judgment, as by right and  
might  
'Twixt mine and me the imperial medi-  
atress,  
Commanding peace, controlling war,  
that must  
Determine this dark time, and make  
alone  
An end of doubt and danger; which  
perchance  
May come before her answer. Haste,  
and thrive.

[Exit BEATON.]  
Now, what say you? shall fortune stand  
our friend  
But long enough to seem worth hope  
or fear,  
Or fall too soon from us for hope to  
help  
r fear to hurt more than an hour of  
chance

Might make and unmake? This were  
now my day  
To try the soothsaying of men's second  
sight  
Who read beyond the writing of the  
hour,  
And utter things unborn: now would  
I know,  
And yet I would not, how my life shall  
move  
And toward what end forever; which  
to know  
Should help me not to suffer, nor  
undo  
One jot that must be done or borne  
of me,  
Nor take one grain away. I would not  
know it;  
For one thing haply might that knowl-  
edge do,  
Or one thing undo,—to bring down  
the heart  
Wherewith I now expect it. We shall  
know,  
When we shall suffer, what God's hour  
will bring;  
If filled with wrath full from his heavy  
hand,  
Or gently laid upon us. I do think,  
If he were wroth with aught once done  
of me,  
That anger should be now fulfilled, and  
this  
His hour of comfort; for he should not  
stand,  
For his wrath's sake with me, mine  
enemies' friend,  
Who are more than mine his enemies.  
Never yet  
Did I desire to know of God or man  
What was designed me of them; nor  
will now  
For fear desire the knowledge. What  
I may,  
That will I foil of all men's enmities,  
And what I may of hope and good  
success  
Take, and praise God. Yet thus much  
would I know,  
If in your sight, who have seen my  
whole life run  
One stream with yours since either had  
its spring,

My chance to come look foul or fair  
again

By this day's light and likelihood.

*Mary Beaton.* In sooth,  
No soothsayer am I; yet so far a seer,  
That I can see but this of you and me,  
We shall not part alive.

*Queen.* Dost thou mean well?  
Thou hast been constant ever at my  
hand

And closest when the worst part of my  
fate

Came closest to me; firm as faith or  
love

Hast thou stood by my peril and my  
pain,

And still, where I found these, there  
found I thee;

And where I found thee, these were  
not far off.

When I was proud and blithe (men  
said) of heart,

And life looked smooth and loving in  
mine eyes,

Thou wouldst be sad and cold as au-  
tumn winds,

Thy face discomfortable, and strange  
thy speech,

Thy service joyless; but when times  
grew hard,

And there was wind and fire in the  
clear heaven,

Then wast thou near; thy service and  
thy speech

Were glad and ready; in thine eyes thy  
soul

Seemed to sit fixed at watch as one  
that waits

And knows, and is content with what  
shall be.

Nor can I tell now if thy sight should  
put

More faith in me, or fear, to trust or  
doubt

The chance forefigured in thee; for  
thou art

As 'twere my fortune, faithful as man's  
fate,

Inevitable. I cannot read the roll  
That I might deem were hidden in thy  
hand,

Writ with my days to be, nor from  
thine eyes

Take light to know; for fortune is too  
blind

As man that knows not of her; and  
thyself,

That art as 'twere a type to me and  
sign

Incognizable, art no more wise than I  
To say what I should hope and fear to  
learn,

Or why, from thee.

*Mary Beaton.* This one thing I know  
well,

That hope nor fear need think to feed  
upon,

That I should part from you alive, or  
you

Take from me living mine assurance yet  
To look upon you while you live, and  
trace

To the grave's edge your printed feet  
with mine.

*Queen.* Wilt thou die too?

*Mary Beaton.* Should I so far, so  
long,

Follow my queen's face, to forsake at  
last,

And lose my name for constancy? or  
you,

Whose eyes alive have slain so many  
men,

Want, when death shuts them, one to  
die of you

Dying, who had so many loving lives  
To go before you living?

*Queen.* Thou dost laugh  
Always, to speak of death; and at this  
time

God wot it should beseem us best to  
smile

If we must think upon him. I and thou  
Have so much in us of a single heart,

That we can smile to hear of that or  
see

Which sickens and makes bleed faint  
hearts for fear.

And well now shall it stand us both in  
stead

To make ours hard against all chance,  
and walk

Between our friends and foes indiffer-  
ently

As who may think to see them one day  
shift



From hate to love, and love again to hate,  
 As time with peaceable or warlike hand  
 Shall carve and shape them; and to go  
 thus forth,  
 And make an end, shall neither at my  
 need  
 Deject me nor uplift in spirit, who pass  
 Not gladly nor yet loathly to the field  
 That these my present friends have in  
 my name  
 Set for the trial of my death or life.  
 Thou knowest long since God gave me  
 cause to say  
 I saw the world was not that joyous  
 thing  
 Which men would make it, nor the hap-  
 piest they  
 That lived the longest in it: so I thought  
 That year the mightiest of my kinsmen  
 fell,  
 Slain by strong treason; and these five  
 years gone  
 Have lightened not so much my life to  
 me,  
 That I should love it more, or more  
 should loathe  
 That end which love or loathing, faith  
 or fear,  
 Can put not back nor forward by a day.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IX. — LANGSIDE.

MURRAY, MORTON, HUME, LINDSAY,  
 OCHILTREE, SIR WILLIAM DOUG-  
 LAS, KIRKALDY, and their forces.

*Murray.* They cannot pass our place  
 of vantage here,  
 To choose them out a likelier. Let our  
 lines  
 Lie close on either side the hollow strait  
 Flanked as the hill slopes by those cot-  
 tage walls,  
 While here the head of our main force  
 stands fast  
 With wings flung each way forth: that  
 narrow street  
 Shall take them snared and naked.

*Sir W. Douglas.* I beseech you,  
 If you suspect no taint or part in me  
 Of treason in our kin, that I may have  
 The first of this day's danger

*Murray.* No man here,  
 Of all whose hearts are armed for Scot  
 land, hath  
 First place in this day's peril, no man  
 last;  
 But all one part of peril, and one  
 place  
 To stand and strike, if God be good to  
 us,  
 In the last field that shall be fought for  
 her  
 Upon this quarrel. Who are they that  
 lead  
 The main of the queen's battle?

*Kirkaldy.* On their left  
 Lord Herries, and Argyle in front;  
 with him  
 Claude Hamilton and James of Evan-  
 dale  
 Bring up their turbulent ranks.

*Lindsay.* Why, these keep none  
 That crowd against us; horse and ming-  
 led foot  
 Confound each other hurtling as they  
 come  
 Sheer up between the houses.

*Murray.* Some default  
 That maims the general strength has in  
 their need  
 Held them an hour delaying; our  
 harquebusmen,  
 Two thousand tried, the best half of our  
 foot,

Keep the way fast each side even to  
 this height  
 Where stands our strength in the open.  
 We shall have,

If aught win through of all their chiv-  
 alry,  
 Some sharp half-hour of hand-to-hand  
 at last

Ere one thrust other from this brow. —  
 Lord Hume,  
 Keep you the rear of our right wing that  
 looks

Toward Herries and his horsemen;  
 Ochiltree,  
 Stand you beside him; Grange and  
 Lindsay here

Shall bide with me the main front of  
 their fight  
 When these break through our guard  
 Let word be given

That no man when the day is won shall dare  
Upon our side to spill one drop of blood  
That may be spared of them that yield  
or fly. [Exeunt.]

SCENE X.—ANOTHER PART OF THE  
FIELD.

*Enter HERRIES and SEYTON, with their soldiers.*

*Herries.* If they of our part hold the hill-top yet,  
For all our leader's loss we have the day.

*Seyton.* They stand this half-hour locked on both sides fast,  
And grappling to the teeth. I would to God

When for faint heart and very fear  
Argyle

Fell from his horse before the battle met,

The devil had writhed his neck round;  
whose delay

At point to charge first maimed us; else  
by this

We had scattered them as crows.  
Make up again,

And drive their broken lines in on the rear

While those in front stand doubtful.  
Charge once more,

*Enter OCHILTREE and HUME, with soldiers.*

And all this side is ours. — Lord Ochil-tree,

Yield, in the queen's name.

*Ochiltree.* In the king's I stand  
To bid his traitors battle.

[*They fight; OCHILTREE falls.*]

*Herries.* Stand thou too,  
Or give us place: I had rather have to-day

At my sword's end thee than a meaner man

To try this cause.

*Hume.* This edge of mine shall try  
Which side and steel be truer.

[*They fight; HUME is wounded.*]

*Seyton.* God and the queen!  
Set on; this height once ours, this day is too,

And all days after

*Herries.* Halt not yet, good friends,  
Till with our bright swords we have crowned the hill

Whereon they stand at grapple. Close again,

And we ride lords at large of the free field

Whence these fall hurled in sunder.

*Seyton.* To the height!

Our fellows are fast locked yet with our foes:

Make up there to their comfort.

*Enter LINDSAY, KIRKALDY, SIR WILLIAM DOUGLAS, young OCHILTREE, with soldiers.*

*Lindsay.* Sirs, not yet:

Ere ye win through, there be more spears to break

Than there in fight are fastened. Stand, or yield.

*Herries.* The Highland folk that doubtfully held off

Are fallen upon our flank: hear you the noise?

Back, sirs, bear back: we are sped.

[*Exit with his followers.*]

*Seyton.* The day is gone:

Let life go after; for I will not fly  
To meet my queen's face as a beaten man.

*Enter MURRAY, MORTON, etc., with soldiers.*

*Murray.* Charge once, and then sheathe swords; the field is ours:

They fly now both ways broken. Some one spur

To bid those knaves that howl upon the rear

Cut short their quest of blood. They were too slack

Who are now so hot, when first the hunt was up:

They shall not flesh those fangs on flying men

That in the fight were bloodless.

*Seyton.* Men, stand fast;

Let not the currish cry of Highland hounds

Bark on your fugitive quarry: here a man

May fall not like a stag or harried hare,

But die more soldier-like than in the  
toils

With their loud pack upon him.

*Young Ochiltree.* Die then here,  
And pay me for my father, if God  
please

My life with his shall lie not on thy  
hand,

But thine on mine as forfeit.

[*They fight*; SEYTON falls.

*Murray.* Slay him not:

I say, put up your sword.

*Young Ochiltree.* Sir, pardon me.  
There bleeds my father yet: he too  
shall die.

*Murray.* Young man, nor he nor any  
of his part

When I say, Live. Take up your sword  
again;

And by this hand that struck it from  
your own

Be ruled, and learn what loyal use it  
hath,

Which is not on its prisoner. Send  
forth word

That none take life of any man that  
yields.

Pursue, but slay not; for the day is won,  
And this last battle ended that shall see

By Scottish hands the reek of Scots-  
men slain

Defame the face of Scotland. While  
I live,

If God as on this day be good to her,  
Her eyes shall look on her own blood

no more. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE XI.—THE HEIGHTS NEAR  
LANGSIDE.

*The QUEEN, MARY BEATON, FLEMING,  
BOYD, and young MAXWELL.*

*Queen.* This is the last time I shall  
look on war:

Upon this day I know my fate is set  
As on a sword's point. Does the fight

stand still,  
That we see nothing on that hill's brow  
stir

Where both sides lashed together?

*Fleming.* If the light  
Tell mine eyes truth that reel with  
watching, both

Stand with spears crossed and locked  
so hard, and points

So fast inwound with such inveteracy,  
That steel can thrust not steel an inch  
away,

Nor foot push foot a hair's-breadth  
back that hangs

On the hill's edge, and yields not.  
Hark! the noise

Grows sharper and more various in its  
cry

Than first it was: there comes upon the  
day

Some change for good or ill; but for  
my charge,

I would not say, *Would God my hand  
were there!*

But take its chance upon it.

*Queen.* Be content

To stand this day our soldier at her side  
Who will not live to lay such charge

again  
On them that love her. Lo there! on  
the left

They charge again from our part.

*Maxwell.* There it is

My father fights: his horse are they  
that make

The hill's length rock and lighten as a  
sea.

Look where the waves meet as that  
wind of steeds

Sweeps them together; how they reel  
and fall

There with the shock from under of  
the storm

That takes in rear and breaks their  
guard, and leaves

The right wing of the rebels cloven in  
twin,

And in the cleft their first men fallen  
that stood

Against the sea-breach. Oh! this gal-  
lant day

Shows us our fortune fair as her fair  
face

For whom we came to seek it, and the  
crown

That it gives back more glorious.

*Queen.* If we knew

How fares our van— Nay, go not  
from me one,

Lest we be scattered.

*Boyd.* Hear you not a cry  
As from the rear, a note of ruin, sent

Higher than the noise of horsemen ;  
and therewith

A roar of fire as though the artillery  
there

Spake all at once its heart untimely out ?

Pray God our powder be not spent by  
chance,

And in its waste undo us !

*Queen.* My heart is sick,

Yet shall it not subdue me while my  
will

Hath still a man's strength left. I was  
not thus —

I will not think what ever I have been.

The worst day lasts no longer than a  
day,

And its worst hour hath but an hour of  
life

Wherein to work us evil.

*Mary Beaton.* Here comes one  
Hot-spurred with haste, and pale with  
this hour's news :

Now shall we know what work it had  
to do,

And what the next hour may.

*Enter GEORGE DOUGLAS.*

*George Douglas.* The day is lost.

There is but one way with us ; here we  
stand

As in death's hand already. You must  
fly,

Madam, while time be left or room for  
flight,

As if there be I know not.

*Fleming.* Is the van

Broken ?

*George Douglas.* Look up where late  
it stood so fast

That well-nigh for an hour the grappling  
ranks

Were so enlinked in front, the men be-  
hind

That fired across the rank of them be-  
fore,

And hurled their pistols in their ene-  
mies' face

Above their comrades' heads that held  
the van

Saw them yet reeking on the spear-  
shafts lodged

That caught them flatlong fallen athwart  
the staves

Fixed opposite and level, till a shot

Slew him that led behind the artillery  
up

As the first round was ended on our  
part,

And straight a gunner's linstock  
dropped, and gave

Fire to the powder-wagon.

*Maxwell.* But the horse —

We saw my father's with Lord Seyton's  
horse

Hurl up against the left side round the  
hill,

And break their right wing in the rear.

*George Douglas.* Ye saw ?

But not who brought them rescue, and  
bore back

Your father's force with might and ruin :  
Grange

And Lindsay, with my brother third,  
who fights

With the more bitter heart and hate to-  
day

For our name's sake to purge him of  
my deed,

And wreak him on my friends ; and  
would to God,

But for the service' sake I had to do,

He had met me whom perchance he  
sought, and slain,

Ere I had borne this news out of the  
fight

To bid you fly !

*Queen.* Where will God set mine end ?  
I am wearied of this flying from death

to death

That is my life, and man's : where'er I  
go,

From God and death I fly not ; and  
even here

It may be they must find me.

*Mary Beaton.* Nay, not yet :

Take heart again, and fly.

*Queen.* Oh ! this I knew, —

Even by thine eyes I knew it a great  
while since

As now by mine. Our end of fear is  
come,

That casts out hope as well. Let us  
make hence.

Perchance our help is in Dumbarton  
yet,

Upon the rock where I would fain at  
first

Have set my feet. — How say you, Flem-  
ing, now?

May we there make us fast?

*George Douglas.* The ways are  
thronged

With arms and noise of enemies;  
everywhere

The land is full of death and deadly  
cries

From throats that gape for blood; the  
regent's horse

Hold all the highway; and the straiter  
lanes

Stand thick with peasant folk whose  
hands are armed

With staves and sickles in their rage  
caught up

To strike at you for fault of sword or  
pike

Wherewith to charge us flying: no way  
is left

But south to Galloway and Lord Her-  
ries' land,

Where you may breathe but for a  
doubtful day

In the sea's sight of refuge.

*Maxwell.* In God's name,  
Take his good counsel, madam; as you  
know

The noble Douglas wise and true, be-  
lieve

So shall you find my father's men and  
mine

In this great need.

*Queen.* Come, help me then to horse;  
If I must ride some hundred miles to  
breathe,

As we must fly no less, I think, or fall  
Among our foes that follow, in my  
mind

The worst it were not, nor the unkind-  
liest death,

To die in saddle. I will not give again,  
So please it God, into mine enemies'  
hands

My body up for bondage. Twice or  
thrice

I have ridden hard by stars of March  
or May,

With false or true men to my left and  
right,

The wild night through, for death or  
kingly life;

And if I ride now with few friends at  
hand,

I have none false of them; or if as  
once

One ride with me that had my hate  
alive,

Who rode with me to his own grave,  
and now

Holds me in chase toward mine, — O  
thou that wast

My hate and husband, whom these men  
to-day

Take on them to revenge, and in thy  
name

Turn all men's hearts against me that  
were born

Mine, and all swords that served me!  
if thou be

A shadow at hand, a ghost uncon-  
ciled,

That waits to take his triumph, hear  
and see

If in this hour that smites me, which is  
thine,

Thou find one thought in me that bows  
my heart,

One pang that turns it from the thing  
it was,

One pulse that moves me to repent or  
fear

For what was done or shall be; if thou  
have

But so much power upon me to be  
called

Less hateful or more fearful, and thy  
death

With aught of dread have clothed the  
thought of thee

That thy life had not; if thou seest me  
fly,

Then must thou see too that thou shalt  
not see,

In death or life, one part of spirit or  
sense

In me that calls thee master. To God's  
hand

I give the rest; but in mine own I hold  
The perfect power for good or evil  
days

To keep the heart I had, and on my-  
self

Lose not one jot of lordship: so may  
God

Love me no less, and be no slower, I think,  
 To help my soul than theirs more vile than mine  
 And made for chance to mar, whereon their fate  
 Has power as on their bodies. If he will,  
 Now should he help, or never; for we leave  
 A field more fatal to us, and day more foul,  
 Than ever cast out hope. I am loath to go  
 More than to die; yet, come what will soe'er,  
 I shall no more. — Thou told'st me not of this,

[To MARY BEATON.

But yet I learnt it of thee. Come, we have  
 One dark day less of doom to see and live,  
 Who have seen this, and die not. Stay by me:  
 I know thou wilt; if I should bid thee go,  
 It were but even as if I bade thee stay  
 Who hast as far to flee from death as I.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE XII. — DUNDRENNAN ABBEY.

*The QUEEN and HERRIES.*

*Queen.* Talk not to me of France. This man it was  
 That gave his tongue to serve my kinsmen's plea,  
 Who fain had seen me plight at Hamilton  
 To their Arbroath my hand and kingdom; nay,  
 I will not seek my fate at Catherine's hand,  
 Nor on those lips that were my mother's watch  
 My life hang weighed between a word and smile,  
 Nor on that sleek face of the Florentine  
 Read my doom writ, nor in her smooth swart cheek

See the blood brighten with desire of mine.

I will not live or die upon her tongue  
 Whose hate were glad to give me death or life

More hateful from her giving; and I know

How she made proffer to my last year's lords

To take me from their bondage to her own,

And shut my days up cloistered; even such love

Should France afford me now that in men's sight

I stand yet lower, as fallen from this year's hope

To live disrowned forever. Tell him this

Who rode with you behind me from the field,

And bid him bear his mistress word of me

As one that thinks not to be made the mean

For them to weave alliance with my foes,

And with the purchase of my bartered blood

Buy back their power in Scotland.

*Herries.* I shall say it.

Yet this man's friendship, madam, might find faith,

Who by so wild a way has followed you

To this third day that sees your flight at end,

Where you may sit some forty days secure

In trust and guard of mine.

*Queen.* Ay, here I might,

Were I well weary with my two nights' sleep

On this hard earth that was my naked bed

Whom it casts out of kingdom; but, my lord,

For thirty leagues and more of ridden ground,

And two days' fare of peasants' meal and milk,

I am not yet nigher but by two days to death,

Nor spent in spirit for weariness or  
 fear,  
 Nor in my body broken, that my need  
 Should hold me here in bonds, or on  
 your faith  
 Lay a new charge of danger. Here,  
 you say,  
 And Beaumont with you, I may bide  
 awhile  
 The levy of my friends whose rallying  
 force  
 May gather to me, or in their default  
 Hence to Dumbarton may I pass by  
 sea,  
 Or forth to France with safer sails, and  
 prove  
 What faith is there in friendship. Now  
 my mind  
 Is nowise here to tarry: your true love  
 Shall not for guerdon of its trust and  
 care  
 Be tried again with peril, that as well  
 May be put by for your faith's sake and  
 mine  
 So mutually made much of; nor shall  
 they,  
 Whose wounds run red yet from their  
 regent's hand  
 That on this border laid so sore a  
 scourge  
 As late their blood bore witness, for  
 my sake  
 Or give their blood again, or lose their  
 faith  
 That should for me be proven, and  
 being found true  
 Bring them to death should we twice  
 fail, or false  
 Turn their safe life to shame. This  
 shall not be;  
 But I, content to make no trial of these,  
 Will hold them true, and leave them  
 unessayed  
 To live in honor. Friends I yet should  
 have  
 Whose peace and life lie not in those  
 men's hands  
 That would make prey of mine; their  
 faith is firm  
 And their hearts great as mine own  
 hope in them  
 Who look toward me from England;  
 all the north

No less desires me than I need their  
 love,  
 To lift our creed and cause up that lies  
 low,  
 But wounded not to death. I have  
 their names  
 Who first I think will meet me face to  
 face,  
 And lay their loyal hands in mine, and  
 pledge  
 Their noble heads for surety; lord and  
 knight  
 Whose fathers yielded up their lives  
 for faith  
 Shall fail not now to seek me cast out  
 hence,  
 And gird me fast with all their follow-  
 ing round  
 And stalwart musters of their spearmen  
 raised  
 To do me service of stout heart and  
 steel  
 For these lords' sake that call me lady;  
 names  
 That bear the whole might of this north-  
 ern land  
 Upon their blazon, and the grace and  
 strength  
 Of their old honor with them to that  
 side  
 That they shall serve on; first the two  
 great earls,  
 Then Dacre, Norton, Swinburne, Mark-  
 infield,  
 With all their houses, all the border's  
 flower  
 Of ancient faith and fame; had I but  
 these  
 To rise up when I call, and do me right,  
 I were not poorly friended, with no  
 more  
 Than this for trust to lean on. But I  
 think  
 To find not such friends only as their  
 name  
 And cause should make in danger fast  
 to mine,  
 To link our names in all men's eyes that  
 read  
 Of faith in man forever: even the queen  
 My sister's self shall fight upon my side,  
 Being either found my friend for whom  
 she swore,

If I were slain, to fill this land with  
fires,  
Or, casting off my cause and me, stand  
up  
As much their enemy that partake my  
faith  
As mine who lack not friends in all her  
land  
That in this cause cast off will strike at  
her  
For God's sake on my party. But  
indeed  
I look to find not such a foe of her  
As should have heart or wit to fight  
with me,  
Though she had will who has not; for  
her mind,  
Still moving like a blown and barren  
sea,  
Has yet not ever set so far toward storm  
Or so much shifted from its natural  
tide  
As to seem safe or prosperous for their  
sails  
Who traffic for my ruin; and I fear  
No wind of change that may breathe  
sharp on me  
When once I stand in mine own name  
to speak  
Before her face and England's. If she  
will,  
By her shall I come back to reign her  
friend:  
If not by her, then by their loves and  
hands  
Who shall put off her sovereignty for  
mine.  
There is not and there needs no better  
way  
Than here lies fair before my feet, which  
yet  
Are not so tired but they may tread it  
through  
To the good end. My heart is higher  
again  
Than ere that field it was, I know not  
why,  
Which sent me hither. You shall write  
for me  
Word to the warden of Carlisle, and  
say  
Your queen seeks covert for her crown-  
less head

With him the first in England; and  
thereon

Ere he send answer, or to-morrow set,  
Will I pass over.

*Herries.* I would fain believe  
His queen were true of heart, and all  
your friends

As strong to serve as faithful: yet may  
she

Have better will than she has power to  
make,

As it would be, your servant; and the  
land

Is many-minded, rent with doubt in  
twain,

And full of fears and factions. You  
may pass,

Even in this hope that now builds up  
your heart,

To find less help at no less need than  
here

On darker ways and deadlier: yet your  
will

Shall if it hold be done.

*Queen.* Despatch, and write:

To stand before the gate of days to  
be,

And beat their doors for entrance, is  
more pain

Than to pass in, and look on life or  
death.

Here will I sleep within your ward to-  
night,

And then no more in Scotland. Nay,  
make haste:

I would those hours were past that bold  
me here.

SCENE XIII. — THE SHORE OF SOL-  
WAY FIRTH.

*The QUEEN, MARY BEATON, HERRIES,  
GEORGE DOUGLAS, Page and Attend-  
ants.*

*Queen.* Is not the tide yet full?

*Herries.* Come half an hour,  
And it will turn; but ere that ebb begin.  
Let me once more desire your pardon,  
though

I plead against your pleasure. Here  
you stand

Not yet dethroned from royal hope, not  
yet



Discrowned of your great name, whose  
 natural power  
 Faith here forgets not, nor man's loyal  
 love  
 Leaves off to honor : but gone hence,  
 your name  
 Is but a stranger's, subject to men's  
 laws,  
 Alien and liable to control and chance  
 That are the lords of exile, and com-  
 mand  
 The days and nights of fugitives; your  
 hope  
 Dies of strange breath, or lives between  
 strange lips;  
 And nor your will nor only God's  
 beside  
 Is master of your peace of life, but  
 theirs  
 Who, being the lords of land that har-  
 bors you,  
 Give your life leave to endure their  
 empire. What  
 Can man do to you that a rebel  
 may,  
 Which fear might deem as bad as ban-  
 ishment?  
 Not death, not bonds, are bitterer than  
 his day  
 On whom the sun looks forth of a  
 strange sky,  
 Whose thirst drinks water from strange  
 hands, whose lips  
 Eat strangers' bread for hunger; who  
 lies down  
 In a strange dark, and sleeps not, and  
 the light  
 Makes his eyes weep for their own  
 morning, seen  
 On hills that helped to make him man,  
 and fields  
 Whose flowers grew round his heart's  
 root; day like night  
 Denies him, and the stars and airs of  
 heaven  
 Are as their eyes and tongues who know  
 him not.  
 Go not to banishment: the world is  
 great,  
 But each has but his own land in the  
 world.  
 There is one bosom that gives each  
 man milk, —

One country, like one mother: none  
 sleeps well  
 Who lies between strange breasts; no  
 lips drink life  
 That seek it from strange fosters. Go  
 not hence:  
 You shall find no man's faith or love on  
 earth  
 Like theirs that here cleave to you.  
*Queen.* I have found,  
 And think to find, no hate of men on  
 earth  
 Like theirs that here beats on me  
 Hath this earth  
 Which sent me forth a five-years' child,  
 and queen  
 Not even of mine own sorrows, to come  
 back  
 A widowed girl out of the fair warm  
 sun  
 Into the grave's mouth of a dolorous  
 land  
 And life like death's own shadow, that  
 began  
 With three days' darkness, — hath this  
 earth of yours  
 That made mine enemies, at whose  
 iron breast  
 They drank the milk of treason; this  
 hard nurse,  
 Whose rocks and storms have reared  
 no violent thing  
 So monstrous as men's angers, whose  
 wild minds  
 Were fed from hers and fashioned;  
 this that bears  
 None but such sons as being my friends  
 are weak,  
 And strong, being most my foes, — hath  
 it such grace  
 As I should cling to, or such virtue  
 found  
 In some part of its evil as my heart  
 Should fear, being free, to part from?  
 Have I lived,  
 Since I came here in shadow and storm,  
 three days  
 Out of the storm and shadow? Have  
 I seen  
 Such rest, such hope, such respite from  
 despair,  
 As thralls and prisoners in strong dark-  
 ness may

Before the light look on them? Hath  
 there come  
 One chance on me of comfort, one poor  
 change,  
 One possible content that was not born  
 Of hope to break forth of these bonds,  
 or made  
 Of trust in foreign fortune? Here, I  
 knew,  
 Could never faith nor love nor comfort  
 breed  
 While I sat fast in prison: ye, my  
 friends,  
 The few men and the true men that  
 were mine,  
 What were ye but what I was, and  
 what help  
 Hath each love had of other, yours of  
 mine,  
 Mine of your faith, but change of fight  
 and flight,  
 Fear and vain hope and ruin? Let me  
 go,  
 Who have been but grief and danger to  
 my friends:  
 It may be I shall come with power  
 again  
 To give back all their losses, and build  
 up  
 What for my sake was broken.  
*Herries.* Did I know it,  
 Yet were I loath to bid you part, and  
 find  
 What there you go to seek; but know-  
 ing it not,  
 My heart sinks in me, and my spirit is  
 sick,  
 To think how this fair foot once parted  
 hence  
 May rest thus light on Scottish ground  
 no more.  
*Queen.* It shall tread heavier when it  
 steps again  
 On earth which now rejects it; I shall  
 live  
 To bruise their heads who wounded me  
 at heel,  
 When I shall set it on their necks.  
 Come, friends,  
 I think the fisher's boat hath hoised up  
 sail  
 That is to bear none but one friend and  
 me:

Here must my true men and their  
 queen take leave,  
 And each keep thought of other. — My  
 fair page,  
 Before the man's change darken on  
 your chin,  
 I may come back to ride with you at  
 rein  
 To a more fortunate field. how'er  
 that be,  
 Ride you right on with better hap, and  
 live  
 As true to one of merrier days than  
 mine  
 As on that night to Mary once your  
 queen.  
 Douglas, I have not won a word of  
 you:  
 What would you do to have me tarry?  
*George Douglas.* Die.  
*Queen.* I lack not love, it seems, then,  
 at my last.  
 That word was bitter; yet I blame it  
 not,  
 Who would not have sweet words upon  
 my lips  
 Nor in mine ears at parting. I should  
 go,  
 And stand not here as on a stage to  
 play  
 My last part out in Scotland: I have  
 been  
 Too long a queen too little. By my  
 life,  
 I know not what should hold me here,  
 or turn  
 My foot back from the boat-side, save  
 the thought  
 How at Lochleven I last set foot  
 aboard,  
 And with what hope, and to what end,  
 and now  
 I pass not out of prison to my friends,  
 But out of all friends' help to banish  
 ment. —  
 Farewell, Lord Herries.  
*Herries.* God go with my queen,  
 And bring her back with better friends  
 than I!  
*Queen.* Methinks the sand yet cleav-  
 ing to my foot  
 Should not with no more words be  
 shaken off,

Nor this my country from my parting  
   eyes  
 Pass unsaluted; for who knows what  
   year  
 May see us greet hereafter? Yet take  
   heed,  
 Ye that have ears, and hear me; and  
   take note,  
 Ye that have eyes, and see with what  
   last looks  
 Mine own take leave of Scotland.  
   Seven years since  
 Did I take leave of my fair land of  
   France,  
 My joyous mother, mother of my joy,  
 Weeping; and now with many a woe  
   between,  
 And space of seven years' darkness, I  
   depart  
 From this distempered and unnatural  
   earth  
 That casts me out unmothered, and go  
   forth  
 On this gray, sterile, bitter, gleaming  
   sea  
 With neither tears nor laughter, but a  
   heart  
 That from the softest temper of its  
   blood  
 Is turned to fire and iron. If I live,  
 If God pluck not all hope out of my  
   hand,  
 If aught of all mine prosper, I that go  
 Shall come back to men's ruin, as a  
   flame  
 The wind bears down, that grows  
   against the wind,  
 And grasps it with great hands, and  
   wins its way,  
 And wins its will, and triumphs; so  
   shall I  
 Let loose the fire of all my heart to  
   feed  
 On these that would have quenched it.  
   I will make  
 From sea to sea one furnace of the  
   land,  
 Whereon the wind of war shall beat its  
   wings

Till they wax faint with hopeless hope  
   of rest,  
 And with one rain of men's rebellious  
   blood  
 Extinguish the red embers. I will leave  
 No living soul of their blaspheming  
   faith  
 Who war with monarchs: God shall  
   see me reign  
 As he shall reign beside me, and his  
   foes  
 Lie at my foot with mine; kingdoms  
   and kings  
 Shall from my heart take spirit, and at  
   my soul  
 Their souls be kindled to devour for  
   prey  
 The people that would make its prey  
   of them,  
 And leave God's altar stripped of sac-  
   rament  
 As all kings' heads of sovereignty, and  
   make  
 Bare as their thrones his temples; I  
   will set  
 Those old things of his holiness on  
   high  
 That are brought low, and break be-  
   neath my feet  
 These new things of men's fashion; I  
   will sit  
 And see tears flow from eyes that saw  
   me weep,  
 And dust and ashes and the shadow of  
   death  
 Cast from the block beneath the axe  
   that falls  
 On heads that saw me humbled; I will  
   do it,  
 Or bow mine own down to no royal  
   end,  
 And give my blood for theirs if God's  
   will be,  
 But come back never as I now go forth  
 With but the hate of men to track my  
   way,  
 And not the face of any friend alive.  
   *Mary Beaton.* But I will never leave  
   you till you die.

# MARY STUART: A TRAGEDY.

ἀντί μὲν ἐχθρᾶς γλώσσης ἐχθρὰ  
 γλῶσσα τελεισθῶ· τοῦφειλόμενον  
 πρᾶσσουσα δικῆ μὲγ' αὐτεῖ·

ἀντί δὲ πληγῆς φονίας φονίαν  
 πληγὴν τινέτω· δράσαντι παθεῖν,  
 τριγέρων μῦθος τάδε φωνεῖ.

ÆSCH. *Cho.* 309-315.

I DEDICATE THIS PLAY, NO LONGER, AS THE FIRST PART OF THE TRILOGY WHICH IT COMPLETES WAS DEDICATED, TO THE GREATEST EXILE, BUT SIMPLY TO THE GREATEST MAN OF FRANCE; TO THE CHIEF OF LIVING POETS; TO THE FIRST DRAMATIST OF HIS AGE; TO MY BELOVED AND REVERED MASTER, VICTOR HUGO.

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MARY STUART.  
 MARY BEATON.  
 QUEEN ELIZABETH.  
 BARBARA MOWBRAY.  
 LORD BURGHLEY.  
 SIR FRANCIS WALSINGHAM.  
 WILLIAM DAVISON.  
 ROBERT DUDLEY, *Earl of Leicester.*  
 GEORGE TALBOT, *Earl of Shrewsbury.*  
 EARL OF KENT.  
 HENRY CAREY, *Lord Hunsdon.*  
 SIR CHRISTOPHER HATTON.  
 SIR THOMAS BROMLEY, *Lord Chancellor.*  
 POPHAM, *Attorney-General.*  
 EGERTON, *Solicitor-General.*  
 GAWDY, *the Queen's Sergeant.*  
 SIR AMYAS PAULET.  
 SIR DREW DRURY.

SIR THOMAS GORGES.  
 SIR WILLIAM WADE.  
 SIR ANDREW MELVILLE.  
 ROBERT BEALE, *Clerk of the Council.*  
 CURLE and NAU, *Secretaries to the Queen of Scots.*  
 GORION, *her Apothecary.*  
 FATHER JOHN BALLARD,  
 ANTHONY BABINGTON,  
 CHIDIOCK TICHBORNE,  
 JOHN SAVAGE,  
 CHARLES TILNEY,  
 EDWARD ABINGTON,  
 THOMAS SALISBURY,  
 ROBERT BARNWELL,  
 THOMAS PHILLIPPS, *Secretary to Walsingham.*  
 M. DE CHÂTEAUNEUF.  
 M. DE BELLIÈVRE.

*Conspirators.*

*Commissioners, Privy Councillors, Sheriffs, Citizens, Officers, and Attendants.*

TIME, FROM AUGUST 14, 1586, TO FEBRUARY 18, 1587.

ACT I.—ANTHONY BABINGTON.

SCENE I.—BABINGTON'S LODGING.  
*A Veiled Picture on the Wall.*

*Enter* BABINGTON, TICHBORNE, TILNEY, ABINGTON, SALISBURY, and BARNWELL.

*Babington.* Welcome, good friends,  
 and welcome this good day

That casts out hope, and brings in certainty  
 To turn raw spring to summer. Now not long  
 The flower that crowns the front of all our faiths  
 Shall bleach to death in prison; now the trust  
 That took the night with fire as of a star  
 Grows red and broad as sunrise in our sight,

Who held it dear and desperate once,  
 now sure,  
 But not more dear, being surer. In my  
 hand  
 I hold this England and her brood, and  
 all  
 That time out of the chance of all her  
 fate  
 Makes hopeful or makes fearful: days  
 and years,  
 Triumphs and changes bred for praise  
 or shame  
 From the unborn womb of these un-  
 known, are ours  
 That stand yet noteless here; ours even  
 as God's,  
 Who puts them in our hand as his, to  
 wield  
 And shape to service godlike. None  
 of you  
 But this day strikes out of the scroll of  
 death,  
 And writes apart immortal: what we  
 would,  
 That have we; what our fathers, breth-  
 ren, peers,  
 Bled and beheld not, died and might  
 not win,  
 That may we see, touch, handle, hold it  
 fast,  
 May take to bind our brows with. By  
 my life,  
 I think none ever had such hap alive  
 As ours upon whose plighted lives are  
 set  
 The whole good hap and evil of the  
 State,  
 And of the Church of God, and world of  
 men,  
 And fortune of all crowns and creeds  
 that hang  
 Now on the creed and crown of this our  
 land,  
 To bring forth fruit to our resolve, and  
 bear  
 What sons to time it please us; whose  
 mere will  
 Is father of the future.  
*Tilney.* Have you said?  
*Babington.* I cannot say too much of  
 so much good.  
*Tilney.* Say nothing, then, a little, and  
 hear one while:

Your talk struts high and swaggers  
 loud for joy,  
 And safely may perchance, or may not,  
 here;  
 But why to-day we know not.  
*Babington.* No, I swear,  
 Ye know not yet, no man of us but one,  
 No man on earth; one woman knows,  
 and I,  
 I that best know her, the best begot of  
 man  
 And noblest: no king born so kingly  
 souled,  
 Nor served of such brave servants.  
*Tichborne.* What, as we?  
*Babington.* Is there one vein in one of  
 all our hearts  
 That is not blown aflame as fire with  
 air  
 With even the thought to serve her?  
 And, by God,  
 They that would serve had need be  
 bolder found  
 Than common kings find servants.  
*Salisbury.* Well, your cause?  
 What need or hope has this day's heat  
 brought forth  
 To blow such fire up in you?  
*Babington.* Hark you, sirs:  
 The time is come, ere I shall speak of  
 this,  
 To set again the seal on our past oaths.  
 And bind their trothplight faster than  
 it is  
 With one more witness; not for shame-  
 ful doubt,  
 But love and perfect honor. Gentlemen,  
 Whose souls are brethren sealed and  
 sworn to mine,  
 Friends that have taken on your hearts  
 and hands  
 The selfsame work and weight of deed  
 as I,—  
 Look on this picture: from its face to-  
 day  
 Thus I pluck off the muffled mask, and  
 bare  
 Its likeness and our purpose. Ay, look  
 here;  
 None of these faces but are friends of  
 each,  
 None of these lips unsworn to all the  
 rest,

None of these hands unplighted. Know  
 ye not  
 What these have bound their souls to?  
 And myself,  
 I that stand midmost painted here of  
 all,  
 Have I not right to wear of all this  
 ring  
 The topmost flower of danger? Who  
 but I  
 Should crown and close this goodly  
 circle up  
 Of friends I call my followers? There  
 ye stand,  
 Fashioned all five in likeness of mere  
 life,  
 Just your own shapes, even all the man  
 but speech,  
 As in a speckless mirror; Tichborne,  
 thou,  
 My nearest heart and brother next in  
 deed,  
 Then Abington, there Salisbury, Tilney  
 there,  
 And Barnwell, with the brave bright  
 Irish eye  
 That burns with red remembrance of  
 the blood  
 Seen drenching those green fields turned  
 brown and gray  
 Where fire can burn not faith out, nor  
 the sword  
 That hews the boughs off lop the root  
 there set  
 To spread in spite of axes. Friends,  
 take heed:  
 These are not met for nothing here in  
 show,  
 Nor for poor pride set forth and boast-  
 ful heart  
 To make dumb brag of the undone deed,  
 and wear  
 The ghost and mockery of a crown  
 unearned  
 Before their hands have wrought it for  
 their heads  
 Out of a golden danger, glorious doubt,  
 An act incomparable, by all time's  
 mouths  
 To be more blessed and cursed than all  
 deeds done  
 In this swift fiery world of ours, that  
 drives

On such hot wheels toward evil goals  
 or good,  
 And desperate each as other; but that  
 each,  
 Seeing here himself and knowing why  
 here, may set  
 His whole heart's might on the instant  
 work, and hence  
 Pass as a man rechristened, bathed  
 anew,  
 And swordlike tempered from the touch  
 that turns  
 Dull iron to the two-edged fang of steel  
 Made keen as fire by water: So, I  
 say,  
 Let this dead likeness of you, wrought  
 with hands  
 Whereof ye wist not, working for mine  
 end  
 Even as ye gave them work, unwittingly,  
 Quicken with life your vows and pur-  
 poses  
 To rid the beast that troubles all the  
 world  
 Out of men's sight and God's. Are ye  
 not sworn  
 Or stand not ready girt at perilous need  
 To strike under the cloth of state itself  
 The very heart we hunt for?  
*Tichborne.* Let not then  
 Too high a noise of hound and horn  
 give note  
 How hot the hunt is on it, and ere we  
 shoot  
 Startle the royal quarry; lest your cry  
 Give tongue too loud on such a trail,  
 and we  
 More piteously be rent of our own  
 hounds  
 Than he that went forth huntsman too,  
 and came  
 To play the hart he hunted.  
*Babington.* Ay, but, see,  
 Your apish poet's-likeness holds not  
 here,  
 If he that fed his hounds on his changed  
 flesh  
 Was charmed out of a man, and bayed  
 to death,  
 But through pure anger of a perfect  
 maid;  
 For she that should of huntsmen turn  
 us harts

Is Dian but in mouths of her own  
knaves,  
And in paid eyes hath only godhead on,  
And light to dazzle none but them to  
death.

Yet I durst well abide her, and proclaim  
As goddess-like as maiden.

*Barnwell.* Why, myself  
Was late at court in presence, and her  
eyes

Fixed somehow on me full in face; yet,  
'faith,

I felt for that no lightning in my blood,  
Nor blast in mine as of the sun at noon  
To blind their balls with godhead: no,  
ye see,

I walk yet well enough.

*Abington.* She gazed at you?

*Barnwell.* Yes, 'faith: yea, surely:  
take a Puritan oath

To seal my faith for Catholic. What,  
God help,

Are not mine eyes yet whole, then? am  
I blind

Or maimed or scorched, and know not?  
By my head,

I find it sit yet none the worse for fear  
To be so thunder-blasted.

*Abington.* Hear you, sirs?

*Tichborne.* I was not fain to hear it.

*Barnwell.* Which was he  
Spake of one changed into a hart? by  
God,

There be some hearts here need no  
charm, I think,

To turn them hares of hunters; or if  
deer,

Not harts but hinds, and rascal.

*Babington.* Peace, man, peace!

Let not at least this noble cry of hounds  
Flash fangs against each other. See  
what verse

I bade write under on the picture here:  
*These are my comrades, whom the peril's  
self*

*Draws to it.* How say you? will not all  
in the end

Prove fellows to me? how should one  
fall off

Whom danger lures and scares not?  
Tush! take hands;

't was to keep them fast in all time's  
sight

I bade my painter set you here, and me  
Your loving captain; gave him sight of  
each

And order of us all in amity.  
And if this yet not shame you, or your  
hearts

Be set as boys' on wrangling, yet,  
behold,

I pluck as from my heart this witness  
forth [Taking out a letter.

To what a work we are bound to,—  
even her hand

Whom we must bring from bondage,  
and again

Be brought of her to honor. This is  
she,

Mary the queen, sealed of herself and  
signed

As mine assured good friend forever.  
Now,

Am I more worth, or Ballard?

*Tilney.* He it was

Bade get her hand and seal to allow of  
all

That should be practised; he is wise.

*Babington.* Ay, wise!

He was in peril too, he said, God wot,  
And must have surety of her, he; but I,  
'Tis I that have it, and her heart and  
trust,

See all here else, her trust and her good  
love,

Who knows mine own heart of mine  
own hand writ

And sent her for assurance.

*Salisbury.* This we know:

What we would yet have certified of  
you

Is her own heart sent back, you say, for  
yours.

*Babington.* I say? not I, but proof  
says here, cries out

Her perfect will and purpose. Look  
you, first

She writes me what good comfort hath  
she had

To know by letter mine estate, and thus  
Reknit the bond of our intelligence,

As grief was hers to live without the  
same

This great while past; then lovingly  
commends

In me her own desire to avert betimes

Our enemies' counsel to root out our  
faith

With ruin of us all; for so she hath  
shown

All Catholic princes what long since  
they have wrought

Against the king of Spain; and all this  
while

The Catholics naked here to all misuse  
Fall off in numbered force, in means  
and power,

And if we look not to it shall soon lack  
strength

To rise and take that hope or help by  
the hand

Which time shall offer them; and see  
for this

What heart is hers! she bids you know  
of me

Though she were no part of this cause,  
who holds

Worthless her own weighed with the  
general weal, —

She will be still most willing to this end  
To employ therein her life and all she  
hath

Or in this world may look for.

*Tichborne.* This rings well;

But by what present mean prepared  
doth hers

Confirm your counsel? or what way set  
forth

So to prevent our enemies with good  
speed

That at the goal we find them not, and  
there

Fall as men broken?

*Babington.* Nay, what think you, man,  
Or what esteem of her, that hope should  
lack

Herein her counsel? hath she not been  
found

Most wary still, clear-spirited, bright of  
wit,

Keen as a sword's edge, as a bird's eye  
swift,

Man-hearted ever? First, for crown  
and base

Of all this enterprise, she bids me here  
Examine with good heed of good event

What power of horse and foot among  
us all

We may well muster, and in every shire

Choose out what captain for them, if  
we lack

For the main host a general, — as, in-  
deed,

Myself being bound to bring her out of  
bonds,

Or here with you cut off the heretic  
queen,

Could take not this on me, — what  
havens, towns,

What ports to north and west and south,  
may we

Assure ourselves to hold in certain  
hand

For entrance and receipt of help from  
France,

From Spain, or the Low Countries; in  
what place

Draw our main head together; for how  
long

Raise for this threefold force of foreign  
friends

Wage and munition, or what harbors  
choose

For these to land; or what provision  
crave

Of coin at need or armor; by what  
means

The six her friends deliberate to pro-  
ceed;

And, last, the manner how to get her  
forth

From this last hold wherein she newly  
lies:

These heads hath she set down, and  
bids me take

Of all seven points counsel and com-  
mon care

With as few friends as may be of the  
chief

Ranged on our part for actors; and  
thereon

Of all devised with diligent speed de-  
spatch

Word to the ambassador of Spain in  
France,

Who, to the experience past of all the  
estate

Here on this side aforetime that he hath,  
Shall join goodwill to serve us.

*Tilney.* Ay, no more?

Of us no more I mean, who being most  
near



To the English queen our natural mistress born  
 Take on our hands, her household pensioners',  
 The stain and chiefest peril of her blood  
 Shed by close violence under trust; no word,  
 No care shown further of our enterprise  
 That flowers to fruit for her sake?  
*Babington.* Fear not that;  
 Abide till we draw thither — ay — she bids  
 Get first assurance of such help to come,  
 And take thereafter, what before were vain,  
 Swift order to provide arms, horses, coin,  
 Wherewith to march at word from every shire  
 Given by the chief; and save these principals  
 Let no man's knowledge less in place partake  
 The privy ground we move on, but set forth  
 For entertainment of the meaner ear  
 We do but fortify us against the plot  
 Laid of the Puritan part in all this realm  
 That have their general force now drawn to head  
 In the Low Countries, whence being home returned  
 They think to spoil us utterly, and usurp  
 Not from her only and all else lawful heirs  
 The kingly power, but from their queen that is  
 (As we may let the bruit fly forth disguised)  
 Wrest that which now she hath, if she for fear  
 Take not their yoke upon her, and therefrom  
 Catch like infection from plague-tainted air  
 The purulence of their purity; with which plea  
 We so may stablish our confederacies  
 As wrought but for defence of lands, lives, goods,  
 From them that would cut off our faith and these;

No word writ straight or given directly forth  
 Against the queen, but rather showing our will  
 Firm to maintain her and her lineal heirs,  
*Myself* (she saith) *not named.* Ha! gallant souls,  
 Hath our queen's craft no savor of sweet wit,  
 No brain to help her heart with?  
*Tichborne.* But our end —  
 No word of this yet?  
*Babington.* And a good word here,  
 And worth our note, good friend: being thus prepared,  
 Time then shall be to set our hands on work,  
 And straight thereon take order that she may  
 Be suddenly transported out of guard,  
 Not tarrying till our foreign force come in,  
 Which then must make the hotter haste; and seeing  
 We can make no day sure for our design,  
 Nor certain hour appointed when she might  
 Find other friends at hand on spur of the act  
 To take her forth of prison, ye should have  
 About you always, or in court at least,  
 Scouts furnished well with horses of good speed  
 To bear the tiding to her and them whose charge  
 Shall be to bring her out of bonds, that these  
 May be about her ere her keeper have word  
 What deed is freshly done, — in any case,  
 Ere he can make him strong within the house  
 Or bear her forth of it; and need it were  
 By divers ways to send forth two or three,  
 That one may pass if one be stayed — nor this

Should we forget, to assay in the hour  
of need  
To cut the common posts off: by this  
plot  
May we steer safe, and fall not miser-  
ably,  
As they that labored heretofore here-  
in,  
Through over-haste to stir upon this  
side  
Ere surety make us strong of strangers'  
aid.

And if at first we bring her forth of  
bonds,  
Be well assured, she bids us — as I  
think  
She doubts not me that I should let  
this slip,  
Forget so main a matter — well as-  
sured  
To set her in the heart of some strong  
host,  
Or strength of some good hold, where  
she may stay  
Till we be mustered, and the ally drawn  
in.

For should the queen, being scathless  
of us yet  
As we unready, fall upon her flight,  
The bird untimely fled from snare to  
snare  
Should find, being caught again, a nar-  
rower hold,  
Whence she should fly forth never, if  
cause indeed  
Should seem not given to use her  
worse; and we  
Should be with all extremity pursued,  
To her more grief; for this should  
grieve her more  
Than what might heaviest fall upon  
her.

*Tilney.* Ay?

She hath had, then, work enough to do  
to weep  
For them that bled before: Northum-  
berland,  
The choice of all the north, spoiled,  
banished, slain;  
Norfolk, that should have ringed the  
fourth sad time  
The fairest hand wherewith fate ever  
led

So many a man to deathward, or sealed  
up

So many an eye from sunlight.

*Babington.* By my head,  
Which is the main stake of this cast, I  
swear

There is none worth more than a tear  
of hers

That man wears living or that man  
might lose,

Borne upright in the sun, or for her  
sake

Bowed down by theirs she weeps for.  
Nay, but hear:

She bids me take most vigilant heed,  
that all

May prosperously find end assured, and  
you

Conclude with me in judgment; to my-  
self,

As chief of trust in my particular,  
Refers you for assurance, and com-  
mends

To counsel seasonable and time's ad-  
vice

Your common resolution; and again,  
If the design take yet not hold, as  
chance

For all our will may turn it, we should  
not

Pursue her transport nor the plot laid  
else

Of our so baffled enterprise; but say  
When this were done we might not  
come at her,

Being by mishap close guarded in the  
Tower

Or some strength else as dangerous,  
yet, she saith,

For God's sake leave not to proceed  
herein

To the utmost undertaking; for her-  
self

At any time shall most contentedly  
Die, knowing of our deliverance from  
the bonds

Wherein as slaves we are holden.  
*Barnuell.* So shall I,

Knowing at the least of her enfran-  
chisement

Whose life were worth the whole blood  
shed o' the world

And all men's hearts made empty.

*Babington.* Ay, good friend,  
 Here speaks she of your fellows, that  
 some stir  
 Might be in Ireland labored to begin  
 Some time ere we take aught on us,  
 that thence  
 The alarm might spring right on the  
 part opposed  
 To where should grow the danger: she  
 meantime  
 Should while the work were even in  
 hand assay  
 To make the Catholics in her Scotland  
 rise,  
 And put her son into their hands, that  
 so  
 No help may serve our enemies thence;  
 again,  
 That from our plots the stroke may  
 come, she thinks  
 To have some chief or general head of  
 all  
 Were now most apt for the instant end;  
 wherein  
 I branch not off from her in counsel,  
 yet  
 Conceive not how to send the ap-  
 pointed word  
 To the earl of Arundel now fast in  
 bonds  
 Held in the Tower she spake of late,  
 who now  
 Would have us give him careful note  
 of this,  
 Him or his brethren; and from oversea  
 Would have us seek, if he be there at  
 large,  
 To the young son of dead Northum-  
 berland,  
 And Westmoreland, whose hand and  
 name, we know,  
 May do much northward; ay, but this  
 we know,  
 How much his hand was lesser than his  
 name  
 When proof was put on either; and the  
 lord  
 Paget, whose power is in some shires  
 of weight  
 To incline them us-ward; both may  
 now be had,  
 And some, she saith, of the exiles prin-  
 cipal,

If the enterprise be resolute once, with  
 these  
 May come back darkling; Paget lies in  
 Spain,  
 Whom we may treat with by his broth-  
 er's mean,  
 Charles, who keeps watch in Paris.  
 Then in the end  
 She bids beware no messenger sent forth  
 That bears our counsel bear our letters:  
 these  
 Must through blind hands precede  
 them, or ensue  
 By ignorant posts, and severally de-  
 spatched;  
 And of her sweet wise heart, as we  
 were fools, —  
 But that I think she fears not, — bids  
 take heed  
 Of spies among us and false brethren,  
 chief  
 Of priests already practised on, she  
 saith,  
 By the enemy's craft against us. What!  
 forsooth,  
 We have not eyes to set such knaves  
 apart,  
 And look their wiles through, but  
 should need misdoubt  
 — Whom shall I say the least on all  
 our side? —  
 Good Gilbert Gifford with his kind  
 boy's face  
 That fear's lean self could fear not?  
 But God knows  
 Woman is wise, but woman: none so  
 bold,  
 So cunning none, God help the soft  
 sweet wit,  
 But the fair flesh with weakness taints  
 it: why,  
 She warns me here of perilous scrolls  
 to keep  
 That I should never bear about me,  
 seeing  
 By that fault sank all they that fell  
 before  
 Who should have walked unwounded  
 else of proof,  
 Unstayed of justice. But this following  
 word  
 Hath savor of more judgment: we  
 should let

As little as we may our names be  
 known,  
 Or purpose here, to the envoy sent from  
 France,  
 Whom though she hears for honest, we  
 must fear  
 His master holds the course of his  
 design  
 Far contrary to this of ours, which  
 known  
 Might move him to discovery.  
*Tichborne.* Well forewarned:  
 Fore-armed enough were now that cause  
 at need  
 Which had but half so good an armor  
 on  
 To fight false faith or France in  
*Babington.* Peace a while;  
 Here she winds up her craft. She hath  
 long time sued  
 To shift her lodging, and for answer  
 hath  
 None but the castle of Dudley named  
 as meet  
 To serve this turn; and thither may  
 depart,  
 She thinks, with parting summer;  
 whence may we  
 Devise what means about those lands  
 to lay  
 For her deliverance; who from present  
 bonds  
 May but by one of three ways be dis-  
 charged:  
 When she shall ride forth on the moors  
 that part  
 Her prison-place from Stafford, where  
 few folk  
 Use to pass over, on the same day set,  
 With fifty or threescore men, well  
 horsed and armed,  
 To take her from her keeper's charge,  
 who rides  
 With but some score that bear but  
 pistols; next,  
 To come by deep night round the dark-  
 ling house,  
 And fire the barns and stables, which  
 being nigh  
 Shall draw the household huddling  
 forth to help,  
 And they that come to serve her, wear-  
 ing each

A secret sign for note and cognizance,  
 May some of them surprise the house,  
 whom she  
 Shall with her servants meet and sec-  
 ond; last,  
 When carts come in at morning, these  
 being met  
 In the main gateway's midst may by  
 device  
 Fall or be sidelong overthrown, and we  
 Make in thereon, and suddenly possess  
 The house, whence lightly might we  
 bear her forth  
 Ere help came in of soldiers to relief  
 Who lie a mile or half a mile away  
 In several lodgings. But, howe'er this  
 end,  
 She holds her bounden to me all her  
 days,  
 Who proffer me to hazard for her love,  
 And doubtless shall as well esteem of  
 you,  
 Or scarce less honorably, when she  
 shall know  
 Your names who serve beneath me; so  
 commends  
 Her friend to God, and bids me burn  
 the word  
 That I would wear at heart forever:  
 yet,  
 Lest this sweet scripture haply write  
 us dead,  
 Where she set hand I set my lips, and  
 thus  
 Rend mine own heart with her sweet  
 name, and end.

[Tears the letter.]  
*Salisbury.* She hath chosen a trusty  
 servant.  
*Babington.* Ay, of me?  
 What ails you at her choice? was this  
 not I  
 That laid the ground of all this work,  
 and wrought  
 Your hearts to shape for service? or  
 perchance  
 The man was you that took this first  
 on him,  
 To serve her dying and living, and  
 put on  
 The blood-red name of traitor and the  
 deed  
 Found for her sake not murderous?

*Salisbury.* Why, they say  
 First Gifford put this on you, Ballard  
 next,  
 Whom he brought over to redeem your  
 heart  
 Half lost for doubt already, and refresh  
 The flagging flame that fired it first, and  
 now  
 Fell faltering half in ashes, whence his  
 breath  
 Hardly with hard pains quickened it,  
 and blew  
 The gray to red rekindling.  
*Babington.* Sir, they lie  
 Who say for fear I faltered, or lost  
 heart  
 For doubt to lose life after: let such  
 know  
 It shames me not, though I were slow  
 of will,  
 To take such work upon my soul and  
 hand  
 As killing of a queen; being once  
 assured,  
 Brought once past question, set beyond  
 men's doubts  
 By witness of God's will borne sensibly,  
 Meseems I have swerved not.  
*Salisbury.* Ay, when once the word  
 Was washed in holy water, you would  
 wear  
 Lightly the name so hallowed of  
 priests' lips  
 That men spell murderer; but till Bal-  
 lard spake,  
 The shadow of her slaying whom we  
 shall strike  
 Was ice to freeze your purpose.  
*Tichborne.* Friend, what then?  
 Is this so small a thing, being English  
 born,  
 To strike the living empire here at  
 heart  
 That is called England? stab her pres-  
 ent state,  
 Give even her false-faced likeness up  
 to death,  
 With hands that smite a woman? I  
 that speak,  
 Ye know me if now my faith be firm,  
 and will  
 To do faith's bidding; yet it wrings  
 not me

To say I was not quick nor light of  
 heart,  
 Though moved perforce of will un-  
 willingly,  
 To take in trust this charge upon me.  
*Barnwell.* I  
 With all good will would take, and give  
 God thanks,  
 The charge of all that falter in it: by  
 heaven,  
 To hear in the end of doubts and  
 doublings heaves  
 My heart up as with sickness. Why,  
 by this  
 The heretic harlot that confounds our  
 hope  
 Should be made carrion, with those  
 following four  
 That were to wait upon her dead: all  
 five  
 Live yet to scourge God's servants, and  
 we prate  
 And threaten here in painting. By my  
 life,  
 I see no more in us of life or heart  
 Than in this heartless picture.  
*Babington.* Peace, again.  
 Our purpose shall not long lack life,  
 nor they  
 Whose life is deadly to the heart of  
 ours  
 Much longer keep it: Burghley, Wal-  
 singham,  
 Hunsdon and Knowles, all these four  
 names writ out,  
 With hers at head they worship, are  
 but now  
 As those five several letters that spell  
 death,  
 In eyes that read them right. Give me  
 but faith  
 A little longer: trust that heart a  
 while  
 Which laid the ground of all our glo-  
 ries; think  
 I that was chosen of our queen's friends  
 in France,  
 By Morgan's hand there prisoner for  
 her sake  
 On charge of such a deed's device as  
 ours  
 Commended to her for trustiest, and a  
 man

More sure than might be Ballard and  
 more fit  
 To bear the burden of her counsels, — I  
 Can be not undeserving, whom she  
 trusts,  
 That ye should likewise trust me ;  
 seeing at first  
 She writes me but a thankful word,  
 and this,  
 God wot, for little service ; I return,  
 For aptest answer and thankworthiest  
 meed,  
 Word of the usurper's plotted end, and  
 she  
 With such large heart of trust and  
 liberal faith  
 As here ye have heard requites me :  
 whom, I think,  
 For you to trust is no too great thing  
 now  
 For me to ask and have of all.  
*Tichborne.* Dear friend,  
 Mistrust has no part in our mind of you  
 More than in hers ; yet she too bids  
 take heed,  
 As I would bid you take, and let not  
 slip  
 The least of her good counsels, which  
 to keep  
 No whit proclaims us colder than her-  
 self  
 Who gives us charge to keep them,  
 and to slight  
 No whit proclaims us less unserviceable  
 Who are found too hot to serve her,  
 than the slave  
 Who for cold heart and fear might fail.  
*Babington.* Too hot !  
 Why, what man's heart hath heat  
 enough or blood  
 To give for such good service ? Look  
 you, sirs,  
 This is no new thing for my faith to  
 keep,  
 My soul to feed its fires with, and my  
 hope  
 Fix eyes upon for star to steer by : she  
 That six years hence the boy that I was  
 then,  
 And page, ye know, to Shrewsbury,  
 gave his faith  
 To serve and worship with his body  
 and soul

For only lady and queen, with power  
 alone  
 To lift my heart up and bow down  
 mine eyes  
 At sight and sense of her sweet sove-  
 reignty,  
 Made thence her man forever ; she  
 whose look  
 Turned all my blood of life to tears  
 and fire,  
 That going or coming, sad or glad (for  
 yet  
 She would be sometime merry, as  
 though to give  
 Comfort, and ease at heart her servants,  
 then  
 Weep smilingly to be so light of mind,  
 Saying she was like the bird grown  
 blithe in bonds,  
 That if too late set free would die for  
 fear,  
 Or wild birds hunt it out of life ; if  
 sad,  
 Put madness in me for her suffering's  
 sake,  
 If joyous, for her very love's sake) still  
 Made my heart mad alike to serve her,  
 being  
 I know not when the sweeter, sad or  
 blithe,  
 Nor what mood heavenliest of her, all  
 whose change  
 Was as of stars and sun and moon in  
 heaven, —  
 She is well content — ye have heard  
 her — she, to die,  
 If we without her may redeem our-  
 selves,  
 And loose our lives from bondage ; but  
 her friends  
 Must take, forsooth, good heed they be  
 not, no,  
 Too hot of heart to serve her ! And  
 for me,  
 Am I so vain a thing of wind and smoke  
 That your deep counsel must have care  
 to keep  
 My lightness safe in wardship ? I sought  
 none, —  
 Craved no man's counsel to draw plain  
 my plot,  
 Need no man's warning to dispose my  
 deed.

Have I not laid of mine own hand a  
snare  
To bring no less a lusty bird to lure  
Than Walsingham with proffer of my-  
self  
For scout and spy on mine own friends  
in France  
To fill his wise wide ears with large  
report  
Of all things wrought there on our side,  
and plots  
Laid for our queen's sake? and for all  
his wit  
This politic knave misdoubts me not,  
whom ye  
Hold yet too light and lean of wit to  
pass  
Unspied of wise men on our enemies'  
part,  
Who have sealed the subtlest eyes up  
of them all.

*Ticborne.* That would I know; for  
if they be not blind,  
But only wink upon your proffer, seeing  
More than they let your own eyes find  
or fear,  
Why, there may lurk a fire to burn us all  
Masked in them with false blindness.

*Babington.* Hear you, sirs?  
Now, by the faith I had in this my friend,  
And by mine own yet flawless toward  
him, yea  
By all true love and trust that holds  
men fast,  
It shames me that I held him in this  
cause  
Half mine own heart, my better hand  
and eye,  
Mine other soul and worthier. Pray  
you, go:  
Let us not hold you; sir, be quit of us;  
Go home, lie safe, and give God thanks;  
lie close,  
Keep your head warm and covered.  
Nay, be wise;  
We are fit for no such wise folk's fel-  
lowship,  
No married man's who being bid forth  
to fight  
Holds his wife's kirtle fitter wear for  
man  
Than theirs who put on iron: I did  
know it,

Albeit I would not know; this man that  
was,  
This soul and sinew of a noble seed,  
Love and the lips that burn a bride-  
groom's through  
Have charmed to deathward, and in  
steel's good stead  
Left him a silken spirit.

*Ticborne.* By that faith  
Which yet I think you have found as  
fast in me  
As ever yours I found, you wrong me  
more  
Than, were I that your words can make  
me not,  
I had wronged myself and all our  
cause; I hold  
No whit less dear, for love's sake even,  
than love,  
Faith, honor, friendship, all that all my  
days  
Was only dear to my desire, till now  
This new thing, dear as all these only  
were,  
Made all these dearer. If my love be  
less  
Toward you, toward honor, or this  
cause, then think  
I love my wife not either, — whom you  
know  
How close at heart I cherish, — but in  
all  
Play false alike. Lead now which way  
you will,  
And wear what likeness: though to all  
men else  
It look not smooth, smooth shall it  
seem to me,  
And danger be not dangerous; where  
you go,  
For me shall wildest ways be safe, and  
straight  
For me the steepest; with your eyes  
and heart  
Will I take count of life and death,  
and think  
No thought against your counsel; yea,  
by heaven,  
I had rather follow and trust my friend,  
and die,  
Than halt and hark mistrustfully be-  
hind  
To live of him mistrusted.

*Babington.* Why, well said :  
Strike hands upon it ; I think you shall  
not find  
A trustless pilot of me. Keep we fast,  
And hold you fast my counsel, we shall  
see  
The state high-builed here of heretic  
hope  
Shaken to dust and death. Here comes  
more proof  
To warrant me no liar.—You are  
welcome, sirs ;  
*Enter BALLARD, disguised, and SAVAGE.*  
Good father captain, come you plumed  
or cowed,  
Or stoled or sworded, here at any hand  
The true heart bids you welcome.  
*Ballard.* Sir, at none  
Is folly welcome to mine ears or eyes.  
Nay, stare not on me stormily : I say,  
I bid at no hand welcome, by no name,  
Be it ne'er so wise or valiant on men's  
lips,  
Pledge health to folly, nor forecast  
good hope  
For them that serve her, I, but take of  
men  
Things ill done ill at any hand alike.  
Ye shall not say I cheered you to your  
death,  
Nor would, though naught more danger-  
ous than your death,  
Or deadlier for our cause and God's in  
ours,  
Were here to stand the chance of, and  
your blood,  
Shed vainly with no seed for faith to  
sow,  
Should be not poison for men's hopes  
to drink.  
What is this picture ? Have ye sense  
or souls,  
Eyes, ears, or wits to take assurance  
in  
Of how ye stand in strange men's eyes  
and ears,  
How fare upon their talking tongues,  
how dwell  
In shot of their suspicion, and sustain  
How great a work how lightly ? Think  
ye not  
These men have ears and eyes about  
your ways,

Walk with your feet, work with your  
hands, and watch  
When ye sleep sound and babble in  
your sleep ?  
What knave was he, or whose man  
sworn and spy,  
That drank with you last night ? whose  
hireling lip  
Was this that pledged you, Master  
Babington,  
To a foul quean's downfall and a fair  
queen's rise ?  
Can ye not seal your tongues from tav-  
ern speech,  
Nor sup abroad but air may catch it  
back,  
Nor think who set that watch upon your  
lips  
Yourselves can keep not on them ?  
*Babington.* What, my friends !  
Here is one come to counsel, God be  
thanked,  
That bears commission to rebuke us  
all.  
Why, hark you, sir, you that speak  
judgment, you  
That take our doom upon your double  
tongue  
To sentence and accuse us with one  
breath,  
Our doomsman and our justicer for  
sin,  
Good Captain Ballard, Father Fortes-  
cue,  
Who made you guardian of us poor  
men, gave  
Your wisdom wardship of our follies,  
chose  
Your faith for keeper of our faiths, that  
yet  
Were never taxed of change or doubted ?  
You,  
'Tis you that have an eye to us, and  
take note  
What time we keep, what place, what  
company,  
How far may wisdom trust us to be  
wise  
Or faith esteem us faithful ; and your-  
self  
Were once the hireling hand and  
tongue and eye  
That waited on this very Walsingham



To spy men's counsels and betray their  
 blood  
 Whose trust had sealed you trusty? By  
 God's light,  
 A goodly guard I have of you, to  
 crave  
 What man was he I drank with yester-  
 night,  
 What name, what shape, what habit, as,  
 forsooth,  
 Were I some statesman's knave and  
 spotted spy,  
 The man I served, and care dnot how,  
 being dead,  
 His molten gold should glut my throat  
 in hell,  
 Might question of me whom I snared  
 last night,  
 Make inquisition of his face, his gait,  
 His speech, his likeness. Well, be  
 answered, then:  
 By God, I know not; but God knows I  
 think  
 The spy most dangerous on my secret  
 walks,  
 And witness of my ways most worth  
 my fear,  
 And deadliest listener to devour my  
 speech,  
 Now questions me of danger, and the  
 tongue  
 Most like to sting my trust and life to  
 death  
 Now taxes mine of rashness.  
*Ballard.* Is he mad?  
 Or are ye brain-sick all with heat of  
 wine,  
 That stand and hear him rage like men  
 in storms  
 Made drunk with danger? Have ye  
 sworn with him  
 To die the fool's death too of furious  
 fear  
 And passion scared to slaughter of  
 itself?  
 Is there none here that knows his cause  
 or me,  
 Nor what should save or spoil us?  
*Tichborne.* Friend, give ear:  
 For God's sake, yet be counselled.  
*Babington.* Ay, for God's!  
 What part hath God in this man's  
 counsels? Nay,

Take you part with him; nay, in God's  
 name go;  
 What should you do to bide with me!  
 Turn back:  
 There stands your captain.  
*Savage.* Hath not one man here  
 One spark in spirit or sprinkling left  
 of shame?  
 I that looked once for no such fellow  
 ship,  
 But soldiers' hearts in shapes of gen-  
 tlemen,  
 I am sick with shame to hear men's  
 jangling tongues  
 Outnoise their swords unbloodied.  
 Hear me, sirs;  
 My hand keeps time before my tongue,  
 and hath  
 But wit to speak in iron; yet as now  
 Such wit were sharp enough to serve  
 our turn  
 That keenest tongues may serve not.  
 One thing sworn  
 Calls on our hearts: the queen must  
 singly die,  
 Or we, half dead men now with daii-  
 ing, must  
 Die several deaths for her brief one,  
 and stretched  
 Beyond the scope of sufferance; where-  
 fore here  
 Choose out the man to put this peril on,  
 And gird him with this glory; let him  
 pass  
 Straight hence to court, and through  
 all stays of state  
 Strike death into her heart.  
*Babington.* Why, this rings right;  
 Well said, and soldierlike; do thus,  
 and take  
 The vanguard of us all for honor.  
*Savage.* Ay,  
 Well would I go, but seeing no courtly  
 suit  
 Like yours, her servants and her pen-  
 sioners,  
 The doorkeepers will bid my baseness  
 back  
 From passage to her presence.  
*Babington.* Oh! for that,  
 Take this, and buy: nay, start not from  
 your word;  
 You shall not.

*Savage.* Sir, I shall not.  
*Babington.* Here's more gold;  
 Make haste, and God go with you. If  
 the plot  
 Be blown on once of men's suspicious  
 breath,  
 We are dead, and all die bootless  
 deaths — be swift —  
 And her we have served we shall but  
 surely slay.  
 I will make trial again of Walsingham  
 If he misdoubt us. Oh! my cloak and  
 sword — [*Knocking within.*]  
 I will go forth myself. What noise is  
 that?  
 Get you to Gage's lodging; stay not  
 here;  
 Make speed without for Westminster;  
 perchance  
 There may we safely shift our shapes  
 and fly,  
 If the end be come upon us.  
*Ballard.* It is here.

Death knocks at door already. Fly!  
 farewell.

*Babington.* I would not leave you,  
 but they know you not:  
 You need not fear, being found here  
 singly.

*Ballard.* No.

*Babington.* Nay, halt not, sirs; no  
 word but haste; this way,  
 Ere they break down the doors. God  
 speed us well!

[*Exeunt all but BALLARD. As they go  
 out enter an Officer with Soldiers.*]

*Officer.* Here's one fox yet by the  
 foot: lay hold on him.

*Ballard.* What would you, sirs?

*Officer.* Why, make one foul bird  
 fast,

Though the full flight be scattered; for  
 their kind

Must prey not here again, nor here  
 put on

The jay's loose feathers for the raven  
 priest's

To mock the blear-eyed marksman:  
 these plucked off

Shall show the nest that sent this  
 fledgling forth,

Hatched in the hottest holy nook of  
 bell.

*Ballard.* I am a soldier.

*Officer.* Ay, the badge we know  
 Whose broidery signs the shoulders of  
 the file  
 That Satan marks for Jesus. Bind him  
 fast:  
 Blue satin and slashed velvet and gold  
 lace,  
 Methinks we have you, and the hat's  
 band here  
 So seemly set with silver buttons, all  
 As here was down in order. By my  
 faith,  
 A goodly ghostly friend to shrieve a  
 maid  
 As ever kissed for penance. pity 'tis  
 The hangman's hands must hallow him  
 again  
 When this lay slough slips off, and  
 twist one rope  
 For priest to swing with soldier. Bring  
 him hence. [*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II. — CHARTLEY.

MARY STUART and MARY BEATON.

*Mary Stuart.* We shall not need  
 keep house for fear to-day:  
 The skies are fair and hot; the wind  
 sits well  
 For hound and horn to chime with. I  
 will go.

*Mary Beaton.* How far from this to  
 Tixall?

*Mary Stuart.* Nine or ten,  
 Or what miles more, I care not: we  
 shall find  
 Fair field and goodly quarry, or he  
 lies,

The gospeller that bade us to the sport  
 Protesting yesternight the shire had  
 none

To shame Sir Walter Aston's. God  
 be praised,

I take such pleasure yet to back my  
 steed

And bear my crossbow for a deer's  
 death well,

I am almost half content — and yet I  
 lie —

To ride no harder nor more dangerous  
 heat,

And hunt no beast of game less gallant

*Mary Beaton.* Nay,  
 You grew long since more patient.  
*Mary Stuart.* Ah, God help!  
 What should I do but learn the word  
 of him  
 These years and years, the last word  
 learnt but one,  
 That ever I loved least of all sad  
 words?  
 The last is death for any soul to learn,  
 The last save death is patience.  
*Mary Beaton.* Time enough  
 We have had ere death of life to learn  
 it in  
 Since you rode last on wilder ways  
 than theirs  
 That drive the dun deer to his death.  
*Mary Stuart.* Eighteen—  
 How many more years yet shall God  
 mete out  
 For thee and me to wait upon their  
 will,  
 And hope or hope not, watch or sleep,  
 and dream  
 Awake or sleeping? Surely fewer, I  
 think,  
 Than half these years that all have  
 less of life  
 Than one of those more fleet that flew  
 before.  
 I am yet some ten years younger than  
 this queen,  
 Some nine or ten; but if I die this  
 year,  
 And she some score years longer than  
 I think  
 Be royal-titled, in one year of mine  
 I shall have lived the longer life, and  
 die  
 The fuller-fortuned woman. Dost thou  
 mind  
 The letter that I writ nigh two years  
 gone  
 To let her wit what privacies of hers  
 Our trusty dame of Shrewsbury's  
 tongue made mine  
 Ere it took fire to sting her lord and  
 me?  
 How thick soe'er o'erscurfed with poi-  
 sonous lies,  
 Of her I am sure it lied not; and per-  
 chance  
 I did the wiselier, having writ my fill,

Yet to withhold the letter when she  
 sought  
 Of me to know what villanies had it  
 poured  
 In ears of mine against her innocent  
 name:  
 And yet thou knowest what mirthful  
 heart was mine  
 To write her word of these, that, had  
 she read,  
 Had surely, being but woman, made  
 her mad,  
 Or haply, being not woman, had not  
 'Faith,  
 How say'st thou? did I well?  
*Mary Beaton.* Ay, surely well  
 To keep that back you did not ill to  
 write.  
*Mary Stuart.* I think so, and agair  
 I think not; yet  
 The best I did was bid thee burn it  
 She,  
 That other Bess I mean of Hardwick,  
 hath  
 Mixed with her gall the fire at heart  
 of hell,  
 And all the mortal medicines of the  
 world,  
 To drug her speech with poison; and  
 God wot  
 Her daughter's child here that I bred  
 and loved,  
 Bess Pierpoint, my sweet bedfellow  
 that was,  
 Keeps too much savor of her grand-  
 am's stock  
 For me to match with Nau: my secre-  
 tary  
 Shall with no slip of hers ingraft his  
 own,  
 Begetting shame or peril to us all  
 From her false blood and fiery tongue.  
 Except  
 I find a mate as meet to match with  
 him  
 For truth to me as Gilbert Curle hath  
 found,  
 I will play Tudor once, and break the  
 banns,  
 Put on the feature of Elizabeth  
 To frown their hands in sunder.  
*Mary Beaton.* Were it not  
 Some tyranny to take her likeness on

And bitter-hearted grudge of matrimony

For one and not his brother secretary,  
Forbid your Frenchman's banners for jealousy,

And grace your English with such liberal love

As Barbara fails not yet to find of you  
Since she writ Curle for Mowbray?  
And herein.

There shows no touch of Tudor in your mood

More than its wont is; which indeed is naught;

The world, they say, for her should waste, ere man

Should get her virginal goodwill to wed.

*Mary Stuart.* I would not be so tempered of my blood,

So much mismade as she in spirit and flesh,

To be more fair of fortune. She should hate

Not me — albeit she hate me deadly — more

Than thee or any woman. By my faith,

Fain would I know, what knowing not of her now

I muse upon and marvel, — if she have Desire or pulse or passion of true heart  
Fed full from natural veins, or be indeed

All bare and barren all as dead men's bones

Of all sweet nature and sharp seed of love,

And those salt springs of life, through fire and tears

That bring forth pain and pleasure in their kind

To make good days and evil, all in her  
Lie serene and sapless as the dust of death.

I have found no great good hap in all my days,

Nor much good cause to make me glad of God;

Yet have I had and lacked not of my life

My good things and mine evil, being not yet

Barred from life's natural ends of evil and good

Foredoomed for man and woman through the world

Till all their works be nothing; and of mine

I know but this — though I should die to-day,

I would not take for mine her fortune.

*Mary Beaton.* No?

Myself perchance I would not.

*Mary Stuart.* Dost thou think

That fire-tongued witch of Shrewsbury spake once truth,

Who told me all those quaint, foul, merry tales

Of our dear sister, that at her desire I writ to give her word of, and at thine

Withheld, and put the letter in thine hand

To burn, as was thy counsel? For my part,

How loud she lied soever in the charge  
That for adultery taxed me with her lord,

And, being disproved before the council here,

Brought on their knees to give themselves the lie

Her and her sons by that first lord of four

That took in turn this hell-mouthed hag to wife,

And got her kind upon her, — yet in this

I do believe she lied not more than I

Reporting her by record, how she said  
What infinite times had Leicester and his queen

Plucked all the fruitless fruit of baffled love

That being contracted privily they might;

With what large gust of fierce and foiled desire

This votaress crowned, whose vow could no man break,

Since God, whose hand shuts up the unkindly womb,

Had sealed it on her body, man by man

Would course her kindless lovers, and in quest

Pursue them hungering as a hound in  
 heat,  
 Full on the fiery scent and slot of lust,  
 That men took shame and laughed and  
 marvelled: one,  
 Her chamberlain, so hot would she  
 trace,  
 And turn perforce from cover, that him-  
 self,  
 Being tracked at sight thus in the gen-  
 eral eye,  
 Was even constrained to play the pite-  
 ous hare,  
 And wind and double till her amorous  
 chase  
 Were blind with speed and breathless;  
 but the worst  
 Was this, that for this country's sake  
 and shame's  
 Our huntress Dian could not be content  
 With Hatton, and another born her  
 man  
 And subject of this kingdom, but to  
 heap  
 The heavier scandal on her countrymen  
 Had cast the wild growth of her lust  
 away  
 On one base-born, a stranger, whom of  
 nights  
 Within her woman's chamber would  
 she seek  
 To kiss and play for shame with  
 secretly;  
 And with the duke her bridegroom that  
 should be, —  
 That should and could not, seeing for-  
 sooth no man  
 Might make her wife or woman, — had  
 she dealt  
 As with this knave his follower; for by  
 night  
 She met him coming at her chamber  
 door  
 In her bare smock and night-rail, and  
 thereon  
 Bade him come in; who there abode  
 three hours.  
 But fools were they that thought to  
 bind her will,  
 And stay with one man, or allay the  
 mood  
 That ranging still gave tongue on sev-  
 eral heats

To hunt fresh trails of lusty love. Ah  
 this,  
 Thou knowest, on record truly was set  
 down,  
 With much more villanous else: she  
 prayed me write  
 That she might know the natural spirit  
 and mind  
 Toward her of this fell witch whose  
 rancorous mouth  
 Then bayed my name, as now being  
 great with child  
 By her fourth husband, in whose charge  
 I lay  
 As here in Paulet's; so being moved I  
 wrote,  
 And yet I would she had read it, though  
 not now  
 Would I re-write each word again,  
 albeit  
 I might, or thou, were I so minded, or  
 Thyself so moved to bear such witness.  
 But  
 'Tis well we know not how she had  
 borne to read  
 All this and more; what counsel gave  
 the dame,  
 With loud excess of laughter urging  
 me  
 To enter on those lists of love-making  
 My son for suitor to her, who thereby  
 Might greatly serve and stead me in  
 her sight;  
 And, I replying that such a thing could  
 be  
 But held a very mockery, she returns,  
 The queen was so infatuate and dis-  
 traught  
 With high conceit of her fair fretted  
 face  
 As of a heavenly goddess, that her  
 self  
 Would take it on her head with no  
 great pains  
 To bring her to believe it easily;  
 Being so past reason fain of flattering  
 tongues,  
 She thought they mocked her not no  
 lied who said  
 They might not sometimes look her full  
 in face  
 For the light glittering from it as the  
 sun;

And so perforce must all her women  
say,

And she herself that spake, who durst  
not look

For fear to laugh out each in other's  
face

Even while they fooled, and fed her  
vein with words,

Nor let their eyes cross when they  
spake to her,

And set their feature fast in a frame  
To keep grave countenance with gross  
mockery lined;

And how she prayed me chide her  
daughter, whom

She might by no means move to take  
this way,

And for her daughter Talbot was  
assured

She could not ever choose but laugh  
outright

Even in the good queen's flattered face.  
God wot,

Had she read all, and in my hand set  
down,

I could not blame her though she had  
sought to take

My head for payment: no less poise on  
earth

Had served, and hardly, for the writer's  
fee;

I could not much have biamed her; all  
the less,

That I did take this, though from slan-  
derous lips,

For gospel and not slander, and that  
now

I yet do well believe it.

*Mary Beaton.* And herself  
Had well believed so much, and surely  
seen, —

For all your protest of discredit made  
With God to witness that you could  
not take

Such tales nor truth of her, nor would  
not, — yet

You meant not she should take your  
word for this,

As well I think she would not.

*Mary Stuart.* Haply, no.  
We do protest not thus to be believed.

And yet the witch in one thing seven  
years since

Belied her, saying she then must needs  
die soon

For timeless fault of nature. Now  
belike

The soothsaying that speaks short her  
span to be

May prove more true of presage.  
*Mary Beaton.* Have you hope

The chase to-day may serve our further  
ends

Than to renew your spirit, and bid  
time speed?

*Mary Stuart.* I see not, but I may  
the hour is full

Which I was bidden expect of them to  
bear

More fruit than grows of promise.  
Babington

Should tarry now not long; from  
France our friends

Lift up their heads to us-ward, and  
await

What comfort may confirm them from  
our part

Who sent us comfort; Ballard's secret  
tongue

Has kindled England, striking from  
men's hearts

As from a flint the fire that slept, and  
made

Their dark dumb thoughts and dim  
disfigured hopes

Take form from his and feature, aim  
and strength,

Speech and desire toward action; all  
the shires

Wherein the force lies hidden of our  
faith

Are stirred and set on edge of present  
deed

And hope more imminent now of help  
to come

And work to do than ever; not this  
time

We hang on trust in succor that comes  
short

By Philip's fault from Austrian John,  
whose death

Put widow's weeds on mine unwedded  
hope,

Late trothplight to his enterprise in v<sup>o</sup>l<sup>u</sup>  
That was to set me free, but might not  
seal

The faith it pledged, nor on the hand  
 of hope  
 Make fast the ring that weds desire  
 with deed  
 And promise with performance; Parma  
 stands  
 More fast now for us in his uncle's  
 stead,  
 Albeit the lesser warrior, yet in place  
 More like to avail us, and in happier  
 time  
 To do like service; for my cousin of  
 Guise,  
 His hand and league hold fast our  
 kinsman king,  
 If not to bend and shape him for our  
 use,  
 Yet so to govern as he may not thwart  
 Our forward undertaking till its force  
 Discharge itself on England: from no  
 side  
 I see the shade of any fear to fail  
 As those before so baffled; heart and  
 hand  
 Our hope is armed with trust more  
 strong than steel,  
 And spirit to strike more helpful than  
 a sword  
 In hands that lack the spirit; and here  
 to-day  
 It may be I shall look this hope in the  
 eyes,  
 And see her face transfigured. God is  
 good:  
 He will not fail his faith forever. Oh  
 That I were now in saddle! Yet an  
 hour,  
 And I shall be as young again as  
 May  
 Whose life was come to August; like  
 this year,  
 I had grown past midway of my life,  
 and sat  
 Heartsick of summer; but new-mounted  
 now  
 I shall ride right through shine and  
 shade of spring  
 With heart and habit of a bride, and  
 bear  
 A brow more bright than fortune.  
 Truth it is,  
 These words of bride and May should  
 on my tongue

Sound now not merry, ring no joy-bells  
 out  
 In ears of hope or memory; not for  
 me  
 Have they been joyous words; but this  
 fair day  
 All sounds that ring delight in fortu-  
 nate ears,  
 And words that make men thankful  
 even to me  
 Seem thankworthy for joy they have  
 given me not  
 And hope which now they should not.  
*Mary Beaton.* Nay, who knows?  
 The less they have given of joy, the  
 more they may;  
 And they who have had their happiness  
 before  
 Have hope not in the future; time o'er-  
 past  
 And time to be have several ends, nor  
 wear  
 One forward face and backward.  
*Mary Stuart.* God, I pray,  
 Turn thy good words to gospel, and  
 make truth  
 Of their kind presage! but our Scots-  
 women  
 Would say, to be so joyous as I am,  
 Though I had cause, as surely cause I  
 have,  
 Were no good warrant of good hope  
 for me.  
 I never took such comfort of my trust  
 In Norfolk or Northumberland, nor  
 looked  
 For such good end as now of all my  
 fears  
 From all devices past of policy  
 To join my name with my misnated  
 son's  
 In handfast pledge with England's, ere  
 my foes  
 His counsellors had flawed his craven  
 faith,  
 And moved my natural blood to cast  
 me off  
 Who bore him in my body, to come  
 forth  
 Less childlike than a changeling. But  
 not long  
 Shall they find means by him to work  
 their will,

Nor he bear head against me; hope  
 was his  
 To reign forsooth without my fellow-  
 ship,  
 And he that with me would not shall  
 not now  
 Without or with me wield not or divide  
 Or part or all of empire.

*Mary Beaton.* Dear my queen,  
 Vex not your mood with sudden change  
 of thoughts;  
 Your mind but now was merrier than  
 the sun  
 Half rid by this through morning: we  
 by noon  
 Should blithely mount and meet him.

*Mary Stuart.* So I said.  
 My spirit is fallen again from that glad  
 strength  
 Which even but now arrayed it; yet  
 what cause  
 Should dull the dancing measure in my  
 blood  
 For doubt or wrath, I know not. Being  
 once forth,  
 My heart again will quicken.

[Sings.

*And ye maun braid your yellow hair,  
 And busk ye like a bride;  
 Wi' sevencore men to bring ye hame,  
 And ae true love beside;  
 Between the birk and the green rowan  
 Fu' blithely shall ye ride.*

*O ye maun braid my yellow hair,  
 But braid it like nae bride;  
 And I maun gang my ways, mither,  
 Wi' nae true love beside;  
 Between the kirk and the kirkyard  
 Fu' sadly shall I ride.*

How long since,  
 How long since was it last I heard or  
 sang  
 Such light lost ends of old faint rhyme  
 worn thin  
 With use of country songsters? When  
 we twain  
 Were maidens but some twice a span's  
 length high,  
 Thou hadst the happier memory to hold  
 rhyme,  
 But not for songs the merrier.

*Mary Beaton.* This was one  
 That I would sing after my nurse, I  
 think,  
 And weep upon in France at six years  
 old  
 To think of Scotland.

*Mary Stuart.* Would I weep for  
 that,  
 Woman or child, I have had now years  
 enough  
 To weep in; thou wast never French  
 in heart,  
 Serving the queen of France. Poor  
 queen that was,  
 Poor boy that played her bridegroom I  
 now they seem  
 In these mine eyes that were her eyes  
 as far  
 Beyond the reach and range of old-  
 world time  
 As their first fathers' graves.

*Enter SIR AMYAS PAULET.*

*Paulet.* Madam, if now  
 It please you to set forth, the hour is  
 full,  
 And there your horses ready.

*Mary Stuart.* Sir, my thanks.  
 We are bounden to you and this goodly  
 day  
 For no small comfort. Is it your will  
 we ride  
 Accompanied with any for the nonce  
 Of our own household?

*Paulet.* If you will, to-day  
 Your secretaries have leave to ride with  
 you.

*Mary Stuart.* We keep some state,  
 then, yet. I pray you, sir,  
 Doth he wait on you that came here  
 last month,—

A low-built, lank-cheeked, Judas-  
 bearded man,  
 Lean, supple, grave, pock-pitten, yellow-  
 polled,  
 A smiling fellow with a downcast eye?

*Paulet.* Madam, I know the man for  
 none of mine.

*Mary Stuart.* I give you joy as you  
 should give God thanks,  
 Sir, if I err not; but meseemed this  
 man  
 Found gracious entertainment here, and  
 took



Such counsel with you as I surely  
thought

Spake him your friend, and honorable.  
But now,

If I misread not an ambiguous word,  
It seems you know no more of him or  
less

Than Peter did, being questioned, of  
his Lord.

*Paulet.* I know not where the cause  
were to be sought

That might for likeness or unlikeness  
found

Make seemly way for such compari-  
son

As turns such names to jest and bitter-  
ness:

Howbeit, as I denied not nor disclaimed  
To know the man you speak of, yet I  
may

With very purity of truth profess  
The man to be not of my following.

*Mary Stuart.* See  
How lightly may the tongue that thinks  
no ill

Or trip or slip, discoursing that or  
this

With grave good men in purity and  
truth,

And come to shame even with a word!  
God wot,

We had need put bit and bridle in our  
lips

Ere they take on them of their foolish-  
ness

To change wise words with wisdom. —  
Come, sweet friend,

Let us go seek our kind with horse and  
hound

To keep us witless company; belike,  
There shall we find our fellows.

[*Exeunt* MARY STUART and MARY  
BEATON.

*Paulet.* Would to God  
This day had done its office! mine till  
then

Holds me the verier prisoner.

*Enter* PHILLIPPS.

*Phillipps.* She will go?

*Paulet.* Gladly, poor sinful fool, —  
more gladly, sir,

Than I go with her.

*Phillipps.* Yet you go not far :

She is come too near her end of way  
faring

To tire much more men's feet that  
follow.

*Paulet.* Ay.

She walks but half blind yet to the end.  
Even now

She spake of you, and questioned  
doubtfully

What here you came to do, or held what  
place

Or commerce with me: when you  
caught her eye,

It seems your courtesy by some grace-  
less chance

Found but scant grace with her.

*Phillipps.* 'Tis mine own blame,  
Or fault of mine own feature; yet for-  
sooth

I greatly covet not their gracious hap  
Who have found or find most grace  
with her. I pray,

Doth Wade go with you?  
*Paulet.* Nay, — what! know you  
not? —

But with Sir Thomas Gorges, from the  
court,

To drive this deer at Tixall.  
*Phillipps.* Two years since,

He went, I think, commissioned from  
the queen

To treat with her at Sheffield?  
*Paulet.* Ay, and since

She hath not seen him; who being  
known of here

Had haply given her swift suspicion  
edge,

Or cause at least of wonder.  
*Phillipps.* And I doubt

His last year's entertainment oversea  
As our queen's envoy to demand of  
France

Her traitor Morgan's body, whence he  
brought

Naught save dry blows back from the  
Duke d'Aumale,

And for that prisoner's quarters here  
to hang

His own not whole but beaten, should  
not much

Incline him to more good regard of her  
For whose love's sake her friends have  
dealt with him

So honorably; nor she that knows of  
this

Be the less like to take his presence  
here

For no good presage to her: you have  
both done well

To keep his hand as close herein as  
mine.

*Paulet.* Sir, by my faith I know not,  
for myself,

What part is for mine honor, or where-  
in

Of all this action laid upon mine hand  
The name and witness of a gentleman  
May gain desert or credit, and increase  
In seed and harvest of good men's  
esteem

For heritage to his heirs, that men  
unborn

Whose fame is as their name derived  
from his

May reap in reputation; and indeed  
I look for none advancement in the  
world

Further than this that yet for no man's  
sa'ke

Would I forego, to keep the name I  
have

And honor, which no son of mine shall  
say

I have left him not for any deed of mine  
As perfect as my sire bequeathed it me:  
I say, for any word or work yet past  
No tongue can thus far tax me of de-  
cline

From that fair forthright way of gentle-  
man,

Nor shall for any that I think to do  
Or ought I think to say alive: howbeit,  
I were much bounden to the man would  
say

But so much for me in our mistress' ear,  
The treasurer's, or your master Walsing-  
ham's,

Whose office here I have undergone  
thus long,

And had I leave more gladly would  
put off

Than ever I put on me; being not one  
That out of love toward England even  
or God

At mightiest men's desire would lightly  
be

For loyalty disloyal, or approved  
In trustless works a trusty traitor; this  
He that should tell them of me, to pro-  
cure

The speedier end here of this work  
imposed,

Should bind me to him more heartily  
than thanks

Might answer.

*Phillips.* Good Sir Amyas, you and I  
Hold no such office in this dangerous  
time

As men make love to for their own  
name's sake

Or personal lust of honor; but herein  
I pray you yet take note, and pardon  
me

If I for the instance mix your name with  
mine,

That no man's private honor lies at  
gage,

Nor is the stake set here to play for  
less

Than what is more than all men's  
names alive, —

The great life's gage of England; in  
whose name

Lie all our own impledged, as all our  
lives

For her redemption forfeit, if the cause  
Call once upon us. Not this gift or  
this,

Or what best likes us, or were gladliest  
given,

Or might most honorably be parted  
with

For our more credit on her best be-  
half,

Doth she we serve, this land that made  
us men,

Require of all her children; but  
demands

Of our great duty toward her full deserts,  
Even all we have of honor or of life,  
Of breath or fame, to give her What  
were I,

Or what were you, being mean or nobly  
born,

Yet moulded both of one land's natural  
womb

And fashioned out of England, to deny  
What gift she crave soever, choose and  
grudge

What grace we list to give or what  
 withhold,  
 Refuse and reckon with her when she  
 bids  
 Yield up, forsooth, not life but fame to  
 come,  
 A good man's praise or gentleman's  
 repute,  
 Or lineal pride of children, and the  
 light  
 Of loyalty remembered? which of these  
 Were worth our mother's death, or  
 shame that might  
 Fall for one hour on England? She  
 must live,  
 And keep in all men's sight her honor  
 fast,  
 Though all we die dishonored; and  
 myself  
 Know not nor seek of men's report to  
 know  
 If what I do to serve her till I die  
 Be honorable or shameful, and its end  
 Good in men's eyes or evil; but for  
 God,  
 I find not why the name or fear of  
 him  
 Herein should make me swerve or  
 start aside  
 Through faint heart's falsehood, as a  
 broken bow  
 Snapped in his hand that bent it, ere  
 the shaft  
 Find out his enemies' heart, and I that  
 end  
 Whereto I am sped for service even of  
 him  
 Who put this office on us.  
*Paulet.* Truly, sir,  
 I lack the wordy wit to match with  
 yours,  
 Who speak no more than soldier; this  
 I know, —  
 I am sick in spirit and heart to have in  
 hand  
 Such work or such device of yours as  
 yet  
 For fear and conscience of what worst  
 may come  
 I dare not well bear through.  
*Phillips.* Why, so last month  
 You writ my master word, and me to  
 boot.

I had set you down a course for many  
 things  
 You durst not put in execution, nor  
 Consign the packet to this lady's hand  
 That was returned from mine, seeing all  
 was well,  
 And you should hold yourself most  
 wretched man  
 If by your mean or order there should  
 spring  
 Suspicion 'twixt the several messengers  
 Whose hands unwitting each of other  
 ply  
 The same close trade for the same  
 golden end,  
 While either holds his mate a faithful  
 fool,  
 And all their souls, base-born or gently  
 bred,  
 Are coined and stamped and minted  
 for our use  
 And current in our service: I thereon,  
 To assuage your doubt and fortify your  
 fear,  
 Was posted hither, where by craft and  
 pains  
 The web is wound up of our enter-  
 prise,  
 And in our hands we hold her very  
 heart  
 As fast as all this while we held im-  
 pawned  
 The faith of Barnes that stood for Gif-  
 ford here  
 To take what letters for his mistress  
 came  
 From southward through the ambassa-  
 dor of France,  
 And bear them to the brewer, your hon-  
 est man,  
 Who wist no further of his fellowship  
 Than he of Gifford's, being as simple  
 knaves  
 As knavish each in his simplicity,  
 And either serviceable alike, to shift  
 Between my master's hands and yours  
 and mine  
 Her letters writ and answered to and  
 fro;  
 And all these faiths as weather-tights  
 and safe  
 As was the box that held those letters  
 close

At bottom of the barrel, to give up  
The charge there sealed and ciphered,  
and receive

A charge as great in peril and in price  
To yield again, when they drew off the  
beer

That weekly served this lady's house-  
hold whom

We have drained as dry of secrets  
drugged with death

As ever they this vessel, and return  
To her own lips the dregs she brewed  
or we

For her to drink have tempered. What  
of this

Should seem so strange now to you, or  
distaste

So much the daintier palate of your  
thoughts,

That I should need reiterate you by  
word

The work of us o'erpast, or fill your  
ear

With long foregone recital, that at last  
Your soul may start not, or your sense  
recoil,

To know what end we are come to, or  
what hope

We took in hand to cut this peril off  
By what close mean soe'er and what  
foul hands

Unwashed of treason, which it yet mis-  
likes

Your knightly palm to touch or close  
with, seeing

The grime of gold is baser than of  
blood

That barks their filthy fingers? yet  
with these

Must you cross hands and grapple, or  
let fall

The trust you took to treasure.

*Paulet.* Sir, I will,  
Even till the queen take back that gave  
it; yet

Will not join hands with these, nor  
take on mine

The taint of their contagion; knowing  
no cause

That should confound or couple my  
good name

With theirs more hateful than the reek  
of hell.

You had these knaveries and these  
knaves in charge,  
Not I that knew not how to handle  
them,

Nor whom to choose for chief of trea-  
sons, him

That in mine ignorant eye, unused to  
read

The shameful scripture of such faces,  
bare

Graved on his smooth and simple  
cheek and brow

No token of a traitor; yet this boy,  
This milk-mouthed weanling with his  
maiden chin,

This soft-lipped knave, late suckled as  
on blood

And nursed of poisonous nipples, have  
you not

Found false or feared by this, whom  
first you found

A trustier thief and worthier of his  
wage

Than I, poor man, had wit to find  
him? I,

That trust no changelings of the church  
of hell,

No babes reared priestlike at the paps  
of Rome,

Who have left the old harlot's deadly  
dugs drawn dry,

I lacked the craft to rate this knave of  
price,

Your smock-faced Gifford, at his worth  
aright,

Which now comes short of promise.

*Phillipps.* Oh, not he!

Let not your knighthood for a slippery  
word

So much misdoubt his knaveship: here  
from France,

On hint of our suspicion in his ear  
Half-jestingly recorded, that his hand

Were set against us in one politic track  
With his old yokefellows in craft and

creed,  
Betraying not them to us but ourselves

to them,  
My Gilbert writes me with such heat

of hand,  
Such piteous protestation of his faith,

So stuffed and swoln with burly-bellied  
oaths, —

And God and Christ confound him if  
 he lie,  
 And Jesus save him as he speaks mere  
 truth, —  
 My gracious godly priestling, that your-  
 self  
 Must sure be moved to take his truth  
 on trust,  
 Or stand for him approved an atheist.  
*Paulet.* Well,  
 That you find stuff of laughter in such  
 gear,  
 And mirth to make out of the godless  
 mouth  
 Of such a twice-turned villain, for my  
 part,  
 I take in token of your certain trust,  
 And make therewith mine own assur-  
 ance sure,  
 To see betimes an end of all such  
 craft  
 As takes the faith forsworn of loud-  
 tongued liars,  
 And blasphemies of brothel-breathing  
 knaves,  
 To build its hope or break its jest  
 upon;  
 And so commend you to your charge,  
 and take  
 Mine own on me less gladly; for by  
 this  
 She should be girt to ride, as the old  
 saw saith,  
 Out of God's blessing into the warm  
 sun,  
 And out of the warm sun into the pit  
 That men have dug before her, as her-  
 self  
 Had dug for England else a deeper  
 grave  
 To hide our hope forever: yet I would  
 This day and all that hang on it were  
 done.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. — BEFORE TIXALL PARK.

MARY STUART, MARY BEATON, PAU-  
 LET, CURLE, NAU, and *Attendants.*

*Mary Stuart.* If I should nevermore  
 back steed alive,  
 But now had ridden hither this fair day  
 The last road ever I must ride on  
 earth,

Yet would I praise it, saying of all  
 days gone  
 And all roads ridden in sight of stars  
 and sun  
 Since first I sprang to saddle, here at  
 last  
 I had found no joyless end. These  
 ways are smooth,  
 And all this land's face merry; yet I  
 find  
 The ways even therefore not so good  
 to ride,  
 And all the land's face therefore less  
 worth love,  
 Being smoother for a palfrey's maiden  
 pace  
 And merrier than our moors for out-  
 look: nay,  
 I lie to say so; there the wind and sun  
 Make madder mirth by midsummer,  
 and fill  
 With broader breadth and lustier  
 length of light  
 The heartier hours that clothe for even  
 and dawn  
 Our bosom-belted billowy-blossoming  
 hills  
 Whose hearts break out in laughter  
 like the sea  
 For miles of heaving heather. Ye  
 should mock  
 My banished praise of Scotland; and  
 in faith  
 I praised it but to prick you on to  
 praise  
 Of your own goodly land; though field  
 and wood  
 Be parked and parcelled to the sky's  
 edge out,  
 And this green Stafford moorland  
 smooth and strait  
 That we but now rode over, and by  
 ours  
 Look pale for lack of large live moun-  
 tain bloom  
 Wind-buffed with morning, it should  
 be  
 Worth praise of men whose lineal  
 honor lives  
 In keeping here of history. But me  
 seems  
 I have heard, Sir Amyas, of your lib-  
 eral west

As of a land more affluent-souled than  
 this,  
 And fruitful-hearted as the south-wind:  
 here  
 I find a fair-faced change of temperate  
 clime  
 From that bald hill-brow in a broad  
 bare plain  
 Where winter laid us both his prison-  
 ers late  
 Fast by the feet at Tutbury; but men  
 say  
 Your birthright in this land is fallen  
 more fair  
 In goodlier ground of heritage: per-  
 chance,  
 Grief to be now barred thence by mean  
 of me,  
 Who less than you can help it or my-  
 self,  
 Makes you ride sad and sullen.

*Paulet.* Madam, no:

I pray you lay not to my wilful charge  
 The blame or burden of discourtesy  
 That but the time should bear which  
 lays on me  
 This weight of thoughts untimely.  
*Mary Stuart.* Nay, fair sir,  
 If I, that have no cause in life to seem  
 Glad of my sad life more than prison-  
 ers may,  
 Take comfort yet of sunshine, he me-  
 thinks  
 That holds in ward my days and nights  
 might well  
 Take no less pleasure of this broad  
 blithe air  
 Than his poor charge that too much  
 troubles him.  
 What! are we nigh the chase?

*Paulet.* Even hard at hand.

*Mary Stuart.* Can I not see between  
 the glittering leaves  
 Gleam the dun hides and flash the  
 startled horns  
 That we must charge and scatter?  
 Were I queen,  
 And had a crown to wager on my hand,  
 Sir, I would set it on the chance to-  
 day  
 To shoot a flight beyond you.

*Paulet.* Verily,

The hazard were too heavy for my skill:

I would not hold your wager.

*Mary Stuart.* No! and why?

*Paulet.* For fear to come a bowshot  
 short of you  
 On the left hand, unluckily.  
*Mary Stuart.* My friend,  
 Our keeper's wit-shaft is too keen for  
 ours  
 To match its edge with pointless iron.  
 Sir,  
 Your tongue shoots farther than my  
 hand or eye  
 With sense or aim can follow.—Gil-  
 bert Curle,  
 Your heart yet halts behind this cry  
 of hounds,  
 Hunting your own deer's trail at home,  
 who lies  
 Now close in covert till her bearing-  
 time  
 Be full to bring forth kindly fruit of  
 kind  
 To love that yet lacks issue; and in  
 sooth  
 I blame you not to bid all sport go by  
 For one white doe's sake travailing,  
 who myself  
 Think long till I may take within mine  
 arm  
 The soft fawn suckling that is yeaned  
 not yet,  
 But is to make her mother. We must  
 hold  
 A goodly christening feast with prison-  
 er's cheer  
 And mirth enow for such a tender thing  
 As will not weep more to be born in  
 bonds  
 Than babes born out of gaoler's ward,  
 nor grudge  
 To find no friend more fortunate than I  
 Nor happier hand to welcome it, nor  
 name  
 More prosperous than poor mine to  
 wear, if God  
 Shall send the new-made mother's  
 breast, for love  
 Of us that love his mother's maiden-  
 hood,  
 A maid to be my name-child, and in  
 all  
 Save love to them that love her, by  
 God's grace,

Most unlike me; for whose unborn  
sweet sake

Pray you meantime be merry. — 'Faith,  
methinks

Here be more huntsmen out afield to-  
day,

And merrier than my guardian. Sir,  
look up:

What think you of these riders? — All  
my friends,

Make on to meet them.

*Paulet.* There shall need no haste:  
They ride not slack or lamely.

*Mary Stuart.* Now, fair sir,  
What say you to my chance on wager?  
Here

I think to outshoot your archery. — By  
my life,

That too must fail if hope now fail me;  
these

That ride so far off yet, being come,  
shall bring

Death or deliverance. Prithee, speak  
but once;

[*Aside to MARY BEATON.*  
Say, these are they we looked for; say,  
thou too

Hadst hope to meet them; say, they  
should be here,

And I did well to look for them; O  
God!

Say but I was not mad to hope; see  
there;

Speak, or I die.

*Mary Beaton.* Nay, not before they  
come.

*Mary Stuart.* Dost thou not hear my  
heart? It speaks so loud,

I can hear nothing of them. Yet I  
will not

Fail in mine enemy's sight. This is  
mine hour

That was to be for triumph; God, I pray,  
Stretch not its length out longer!

*Mary Beaton.* It is past.

*Enter SIR THOMAS GORGES, SIR WIL-  
LIAM WADE, and Soldiers.*

*Mary Stuart.* What man is this that  
stands across our way?

*Gorges.* One that hath warrant, mad-  
am, from the queen

To arrest your French and English  
secretary,

And for more surety see yourself re-  
moved

To present ward at Tixall here hard by,  
As in this paper stands of her sub-  
scribed. —

Lay hands on them.

*Mary Stuart.* Was this your riddle's  
word? [To PAULET.

You have shot beyond me indeed, and  
shot to death

Your honor with my life. — Draw, sirs,  
and stand:

Ye have swords yet left to strike with  
once, and die

By these our foes are girt with. Some  
good friend, —

I should have one yet left of you, —  
take heart,

And slay me here. For God's love,  
draw: they have not

So large a vantage of us, we must needs  
Bear back one foot from peril. Give

not way:  
Ye shall but die more shamefully than  
here,

Who can but here die fighting. What!  
no man?

Must I find never at my need alive  
A man with heart to help me? O my

God,  
Let me die now, and foil them! —

Paulet, you,  
Most knightly liar and traitor, was not

this  
Part of your charge, to play my hang-  
man too,

Who have played so well my dooms-  
man, and betrayed

So honorably my trust, so bravely set  
A snare so loyal to make sure for death

So poor a foolish woman? Sir, or you  
That have this gallant office, great as

his,  
To do the deadliest errand and most  
vile

That even your mistress ever laid on  
man,

And sent her basest knave to bear and  
slay,

You are likewise of her chivalry, and  
should not

Shrink to fulfil your title; being a  
knight,

For her dear sake that made you, lose  
 not heart  
 To strike for her one worthy stroke,  
 that may  
 Rid me defenceless of the loathed long  
 life  
 She gapes for like a bloodhound. Nay,  
 I find  
 A face beside you that should bear for  
 me  
 Not life inscribed upon it; two years  
 since  
 I read therein at Sheffield what good will  
 She bare toward me that sent to treat  
 withal  
 So mean a man and shameless, by his  
 tongue  
 To smite mine honor on the face, and  
 turn  
 My name of queen to servant; by his  
 hand  
 So let her turn my life's name now to  
 death,  
 Which I would take more thankfully  
 than shame  
 To plead and thus prevail not.  
*Paulet.* Madam, no:  
 With us you may not in such suit pre-  
 vail,  
 Nor be by words or wrath of yours be  
 moved  
 To turn their edge back on you, nor  
 remit  
 The least part of our office, which  
 deserves  
 Nor scorn of you nor wonder, whose  
 own act  
 Has laid it on us; wherefore with less  
 rage  
 Please you take thought now to submit  
 yourself,  
 Even for your own more honor, to the  
 effect  
 Whose cause was of your own device,  
 that here  
 Bears fruit unlooked for; which being  
 ripe in time  
 You cannot choose but taste of, nor  
 may we  
 But do the season's bidding, and the  
 queen's  
 Who weeps at heart to know it. — Dis-  
 arm these men.

Take you the prisoners to your present  
 ward,  
 And hence again to London: here  
 meanwhile  
 Some week or twain their lady must  
 lie close,  
 And with a patient or impatient heart  
 Expect an end and word of judgment: I  
 Must with Sir William back to Chart-  
 ley straight,  
 And there make inquisition ere day  
 close  
 What secret serpents of what treasons  
 hatched  
 May in this lady's papers lurk, whence  
 we  
 Must pluck the fangs forth of them yet  
 unfleshed,  
 And lay these plots like dead and  
 strangled snakes  
 Naked before the council.  
*Mary Stuart.* I must go?  
*Gorges.* Madam, no help: I pray your  
 pardon.  
*Mary Stuart.* Ay?  
 Had I your pardon in this hand to give,  
 And here in this my vengeance —  
 Words, and words!  
 God, for thy pity! what vile thing is this  
 That thou didst make of woman? even  
 in death,  
 As in the extremest evil of all our  
 lives,  
 We can but curse or pray, but prate and  
 weep,  
 And all our wrath is wind that works  
 no wreck,  
 And all our fire as water. — Noble sirs,  
 We are servants of your servants, and  
 obey  
 The beck of your least groom; obsequi-  
 ously,  
 We pray you but report of us so much,  
 Submit us to you. Yet would I take  
 farewell,  
 May it not displease you, for old ser-  
 vice' sake,  
 Of one my servant here that was, and  
 now  
 Hath no word for me; yet I blame him  
 not,  
 Who am past all help of man. — God  
 witness me,



I would not chide now, Gilbert, though  
 my tongue  
 Had strength yet left for chiding, and  
 its edge  
 Were yet a sword to smite with, or my  
 wrath  
 A thing that babes might shrink at ;  
 only this  
 Take with you for your poor queen's  
 true last word, —  
 That if they let me live so long to see  
 The fair wife's face again from whose  
 soft side,  
 Now laboring with your child, by violent  
 hands  
 You are reft perforce for my sake, while  
 I live  
 I will have charge of her more carefully  
 Than of mine own life's keeping, which  
 indeed  
 I think not long to keep, nor care, God  
 knows,  
 How soon or how men take it. Nay,  
 good friend,  
 Weep not : my weeping time is well-  
 nigh past,  
 And theirs whose eyes have too much  
 wept for me  
 Should last no longer. — Sirs, I give you  
 thanks  
 For thus much grace and patience shown  
 of you,  
 My gentle gaolers, towards a queen  
 unqueened,  
 Who shall nor get nor crave again of  
 man  
 What grace may rest in him to give her.  
 Come,  
 Bring me to bonds again, and her with  
 me  
 That hath not stood so nigh me all  
 these years  
 To fall ere life doth from my side, or  
 take  
 Her way to death without me till I die.

## ACT II. — WALSINGHAM.

## SCENE I. — WINDSOR CASTLE.

QUEEN ELIZABETH and SIR FRANCIS  
 WALSINGHAM.

*Elizabeth.* What will ye make me?  
 Let the council know

I am yet their loving mistress, but they  
 lay  
 Too strange a burden on my love who  
 send  
 As to their servant word what ways to  
 take,  
 What sentence of my subjects given  
 subscribe,  
 And in mine own name utter. Bid  
 them wait:  
 Have I not patience? and was never  
 quick  
 To teach my tongue the deadly word of  
 death,  
 Lest one day strange tongues blot my  
 fame with blood:  
 The red addition of my sister's name  
 Shall brand not mine.  
*Walsingham.* God grant your mercy  
 shown  
 Mark not your memory like a martyr's  
 red  
 With pure imperial heart's-blood of  
 your own  
 Shed through your own sweet-spirited  
 height of heart  
 That held your hand from justice!  
*Elizabeth.* I would rather  
 Stand in God's sight so signed with  
 mine own blood  
 Than with a sister's — innocent; or  
 indeed  
 Though guilty — being a sister's —  
 might I choose,  
 As being a queen I may not surely, —  
 no —  
 I may not choose, you tell me.  
*Walsingham.* Nay, no man  
 Hath license of so large election given  
 As once to choose, being servant called  
 of God,  
 If he will serve or no, or save the  
 name  
 And slack the service.  
*Elizabeth.* Yea, but in his Word  
 I find no word that whets for king-  
 killing  
 The sword kings bear for justice: yet  
 I doubt,  
 Being drawn, it may not choose but  
 strike at root —  
 Being drawn to cut off treason. *Wal-*  
*singham,*

You are more a statesman than a gos-  
peller;  
Take for your tongue's text now no text  
of God's,  
But what the Devil has put into their  
lips  
Who should have slain me; nay, what  
by God's grace,  
Who bared their purpose to us, through  
pain or fear  
Hath been wrung thence of secrets writ  
in fire  
At bottom of their hearts. Have they  
confessed?  
*Walsingham.* The twain trapped first  
in London.  
*Elizabeth.* What, the priest?  
Their twice-turned Ballard, ha?  
*Walsingham.* Madam, not he.  
*Elizabeth.* God's blood! ye have  
spared not him the torment,  
knaves?  
Of all I would not spare him.  
*Walsingham.* Verily, no;  
The rack hath spun his life's thread out  
so fine  
There is but left for death to slit in  
twain  
The thickness of a spider's.  
*Elizabeth.* Ay, still dumb?  
*Walsingham.* Dumb for all good the  
pains can get of him;  
Had he drunk dry the chalice of his craft  
Brewed in design abhorred of even his  
friends  
With poisonous purpose toward your  
majesty,  
He had kept scarce harder silence.  
*Elizabeth.* Poison? ay—  
That should be still the churchman's  
household sword,  
Or saintly staff to bruise crowned heads  
from far,  
And break them with his precious  
balms that smell  
Rank as the jaws of death, or festal  
fume  
When Rome yet recked with Borgia.  
But the rest  
Had grace enow to grant me for good-  
will  
Some death more gracious than a rat's?  
God wot,

I am bounden to them, and will charge  
for this  
The hangman thank them heartily; they  
shall not  
Lack daylight means to die by. God,  
meseems,  
Will have me not die darkling like a  
dog,  
Who hath kept my lips from poison,  
and my heart  
From shot of English knave or Spanish,  
both  
Dubbed of the Devil or damned his  
doctors, whom  
My riddance from all ills that plague  
man's life  
Should have made great in record; and  
for wage  
Your Ballard hath not better hap to fee  
Than Lopez had or Parry. Well, he  
lies  
As dumb in bonds as those dead dogs  
in earth,  
You say; but of his fellows newly ta'en  
There are that keep not silence: what  
say these?  
Pour in mine ears the poison of their  
plot  
Whose fangs have stung the silly  
snakes to death.  
*Walsingham.* The first a soldier,  
Savage, in these wars  
That sometimes serving sought a trai-  
tor's luck  
Under the prince Farnese, then of late  
At Rheims was tempted of our traitors  
there,  
Of one in chief, Gifford the seminarist,  
My smock-faced spy's good uncle, to  
take off  
Or the earl of Leicester or your gra-  
cious self;  
And since his passage hither, to con-  
firm  
His hollow-hearted hardihood, hath  
had  
Word from this doctor more solicitous  
yet  
Sent by my knave his nephew, who of  
late  
Was in the seminary of so deadly seed  
Their reader in philosophy, that their  
head,

Even Cardinal Allen, holds for just and good  
 The purpose laid upon his hand; this man  
 Makes yet more large confession than of this,  
 Saying from our Gilbert's trusty mouth he had  
 Assurance that in Italy the Pope Hath levies raised against us, to set forth  
 For seeming succor toward the Parmesan,  
 But in their actual aim bent hither, where  
 With French and Spaniards in one front of war  
 They might make in upon us; but from France  
 No foot shall pass for inroad on our peace  
 Till—so they phrase it—by these Catholics here  
 Your majesty be taken, or—  
*Elizabeth.* No more—  
 But only taken? sprunged but bird-like?  
 Ha!  
 They are something tender of our poor personal chance—  
 Temperately tender: yet I doubt the springe  
 Had haply maimed me no less deep than life  
 Sits next the heart most mortal. Or—so be it  
 I slip the springe—what yet may shackle France,  
 Hang weights upon their purpose who should else  
 Be great of heart against us? They take time  
 Till I be taken—or till what signal else  
 As favorable?  
*Walsingham.* Till she they serve be brought  
 Safe out of Pualet's keeping.  
*Elizabeth.* Ay? they know him  
 So much my servant, and his guard so good,  
 That sound of strange feet marching on our soil  
 Against us in his prisoner's name perchance

Might from the walls wherein she sits his guest  
 Raise a funereal echo? Yet I think  
 He would not dare—what think'st thou might he dare  
 Without my word for warrant? If I knew  
 This—  
*Walsingham.* It should profit not your grace to know  
 What may not be conceivable for truth  
 Without some stain on honor.  
*Elizabeth.* Nay, I say not  
 That I would have him take upon his hand  
 More than his trust may warrant: yet have men,  
 Good men, for very truth of their good hearts,  
 Put loyal hand to work as perilous  
 Well,  
 God wot I would not have him so transgress—  
 If such be called transgressors.  
*Walsingham.* Let the queen  
 Rest well assured he shall not. So far forth  
 Our swordsman Savage witnesses of these  
 That moved him toward your murder but in trust  
 Thereby to bring invasion over sea:  
 Which one more gently natured of his birth,  
 Tichborne, protests with very show of truth  
 That he would give no ear to, knowing, he saith,  
 The miseries of such conquest: nor, it seems,  
 Heard this man aught of murderous purpose bent  
 Against your highness.  
*Elizabeth.* Naught? why then, again,  
 To him I am yet more bounden, who may think,  
 Being found but half my traitor, at my hands  
 To find but half a hangman.  
*Walsingham.* Nay, the man  
 Herein seems all but half his own man,  
 being

Made merely out of stranger hearts and  
brains

Their engine of conspiracy; for thus  
Forsooth he pleads, that Babington his  
friend

First showed him how himself was  
wrought upon

By one man's counsel and persuasion,  
one

Held of great judgment, — Ballard, on  
whose head

All these lay all their forfeit.

*Elizabeth.* Yet shall each

Pay for himself red coin of ransom  
down

In costlier drops than gold is. But of  
these

Why take we thought? Their natural-  
subject blood

Can wash not out their sanguine-sealed  
attempt,

Nor leave us marked as tyrant: only  
she

That is the head and heart of all your  
fears,

Whose hope or fear is England's, quick  
or dead,

Leaves or imperilled or impeached of  
blood

Me, that with all but hazard of mine  
own,

God knows, would yet redeem her. I  
will write

With mine own hand to her privily, —  
what else? —

Saying, if by word as privy from her  
hand

She will confess her treasonous prac-  
tices,

They shall be wrapped in silence up,  
and she

By judgment live unscathed.

*Walsingham.* Being that she is,

So surely will she deem of your great  
grace,

And see it but as a snare set wide, or  
net

Spread in the bird's sight vainly.

*Elizabeth.* Why, then, well:

She, casting off my grace, from all  
men's grace

Cuts off herself, and even aloud avows  
By silence and suspect of jealous heart

Her manifest foul conscience: on which  
proof

I will proclaim her to the parliament  
So self-convicted. Yet I would not  
have

Her name and life by mortal evidence  
Touched at the trial of them that now  
shall die,

Or by their charge attainted: lest my-  
self

Fall in more peril of her friends than  
she

Stands yet in shot of judgment.

*Walsingham.* Be assured,

Madam, the process of their treasons  
judged

Shall tax not her before her trial-time  
With public note of clear complicity

Even for that danger's sake which  
moves you.

*Elizabeth.* Me

So much it moves not for my mere life's  
sake —

Which I would never buy with fear of  
death —

As for the general danger's, and the  
shame's

Thence cast on queenship and on wo-  
manhood

By mean of such a murderess. But,  
for them,

I would the merited manner of their  
death

Might for more note of terror be re-  
ferred

To me and to my council: these at  
least

Shall hang for warning in the world's  
wide eye

More high than common traitors, with  
more pains

Being ravished forth of their more vil-  
lanous lives

Than feed the general throat of justice.  
Her

Shall this too touch, whom none that  
serves henceforth

But shall be sure of hire more terrible  
Than all past wage of treason.

*Walsingham.* Why, so far

As law gives leave —

*Elizabeth.* What prat'st thou me of  
law?

God's blood! is law for man's sake  
 made, or man  
 For law's sake only, to be held in  
 bonds,  
 Led lovingly like hound in huntsman's  
 leash  
 Or child by finger, not for help or stay,  
 But hurt and hinderance? Is not all  
 this land  
 And all its hope and surety given to  
 time  
 Of sovereignty and freedom, all the  
 fame  
 And all the fruit of manhood hence to  
 be,  
 More than one rag or relic of its law  
 Wherewith all these lie shackled? as  
 too sure  
 Have states no less than ours been  
 done to death  
 With gentle counsel and soft-handed  
 rule  
 For fear to snap one thread of ordi-  
 nance  
 Though thence the state were strangled.  
*Walsingham.* Madam, yet  
 There need no need be here of law's  
 least breach,  
 That of all else is worst necessity —  
 Being such a mortal medicine to the  
 state  
 As poison drunk to expel a feverish  
 taint  
 Which air or sleep might purge as  
 easily.  
*Elizabeth.* Ay; but if air be poison-  
 struck with plague,  
 Or sleep to death lie palsied, fools  
 were they,  
 Faint hearts and faithless, who for  
 health's fair sake  
 Should fear to cleanse air, pierce and  
 probe the trance,  
 With purging fire or iron. Have your  
 way.  
 God send good end of all this, and pro-  
 cure  
 Some mean whereby mine enemies'  
 craft and his  
 May take no feet but theirs in their  
 own toils,  
 And no blood shed be innocent as  
 mine.

## SCENE II. — CHARTLEY.

MARY BEATON and SIR AMYAS

PAULET.

*Paulet.* You should do well to bid  
 her less be moved  
 Who needs fear less of evil. Since we  
 came  
 Again from Tixall this wild mood of  
 hers  
 Hath vexed her more than all men's  
 enmities  
 Should move a heart more constant.  
 Verily,  
 I thought she had held more rule upon  
 herself  
 Than to call out on beggars at the  
 gate  
 When she rode forth, crying she had  
 naught to give,  
 Being all as much a beggar too as they,  
 With all things taken from her.  
*Mary Beaton.* Being so served,  
 In sooth she should not show nor  
 shame nor spleen.  
 It was but seventeen days ye held her  
 there  
 Away from all attendance, as in bonds  
 Kept without change of raiment, and  
 to find,  
 Being thence haled hither again, no  
 nobler use,  
 But all her papers plundered — then  
 her keys  
 By force of violent threat wrung from  
 the hand  
 She scarce could stir to help herself  
 abed:  
 These were no matters that should  
 move her.  
*Paulet.* None,  
 If she be clean of conscience, whole of  
 heart,  
 Nor else than pure in purpose, but  
 maligned  
 Of men's suspicions: how should one  
 thus wronged  
 But hold all hard chance good to  
 approve her case  
 Blameless, give praise for all, turn all  
 to thanks  
 That might unload her of so sore a  
 charge,

De spoiled not, but disburdened? Her  
 great wrath  
 Pleads hard against her, and itself  
 spake loud  
 Alone, ere other witness might unseal  
 Wrath's fierce interpretation: which  
 ere long  
 Was of her secretaries expounded.

*Mary Beaton.* Sir,  
 As you are honorable, and of equal  
 heart  
 Have shown such grace as man being  
 manful may  
 To such a piteous prisoner as desires  
 Naught now but what may hurt not  
 loyalty  
 Though you comply therewith to com-  
 fort her,  
 Let her not think your spirit so far  
 incensed  
 By wild words of her mistress cast on  
 you  
 In heat of heart and bitter fire of  
 spleen,  
 That you should now close ears against  
 a prayer  
 Which else might fairly find them  
 open.

*Paulet.* Speak  
 More short and plainly: what I well  
 may grant  
 Shall so seem easiest granted.

*Mary Beaton.* There should be  
 No cause, I think, to seal your lips up,  
 though  
 I crave of them but so much breath as  
 may  
 Give mine ear knowledge of the wit-  
 ness borne  
 (If aught of witness were against her  
 borne)  
 By those her secretaries you spake of.

*Paulet.* This  
 With hard expostulation was drawn  
 forth  
 At last of one and other, that they  
 twain  
 Had writ by record from their lady's  
 mouth  
 To Babington some letter which implies  
 Close conscience of his treason, and  
 good-will  
 To meet his service with complicity:

But one thing found therein of dead  
 liest note

The Frenchman swore they set not  
 down, nor she

Bade write one word of favor nor assent  
 Answering this murderous motion to-  
 ward our queen:

Only, saith he, she held herself not  
 bound

For love's sake to reveal it, and thereby  
 For love of enemies do to death such  
 friends

As only for her own love's sake were  
 found

Fit men for murderous treason: and  
 so much

Her own hand's transcript of the word  
 she sent

Should once produced bear witness of  
 her.

*Mary Beaton.* Ay?

How then came this withheld?

*Paulet.* If she speak

But truth, why, truth should sure be  
 manifest,

And shall, with God's good-will, to  
 good men's joy

That wish not evil: as at Fotheringay  
 When she shall come to trial must be  
 tried

If it be truth or no: for which assay  
 You shall do toward her well and faith-  
 fully

To bid her presently prepare her soul  
 That it may there make answer.

*Mary Beaton.* Presently?

*Paulet.* Upon the arraignment of her  
 friends who stand

As 'twere at point of execution now  
 Ere sentence pass upon them of their  
 sin.

Would you no more with me?

*Mary Beaton.* I am bounden to you  
 For thus much tidings granted.

*Paulet.* So farewell. [*Exit.*]

*Mary Beaton.* So fare I well or ill as  
 one who knows

He shall not fare much further toward  
 his end.

Here looms on me the landmark of my  
 life,

That I have looked for now some score  
 of years

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Even with long-suffering eagerness of heart          | Knows, and yet God knows, I would set not hand    |
| And a most hungry patience. I did know,              | To such a work as might put on the time,          |
| Yea, God, thou knowest I knew this all that while,   | And make death's foot more forward for her sake : |
| From that day forth when even these eyes beheld      | Yea, were it to deliver mine own soul             |
| Fall the most faithful head in all the world,        | From bondage and long-suffering of my life,       |
| Toward her most loving, and of me most loved,        | I would not set mine hand to work her wrong.      |
| By doom of hers that was so loved of him             | Tempted I was — but hath God need of me           |
| He could not love me nor his life at all,            | To work his judgment, bring his time about,       |
| Nor his own soul, nor aught that all men love,       | Approve his justice if the word be just,          |
| Nor could fear death nor very God, or care           | That whoso doeth shall suffer his own deed,       |
| If there were aught more merciful in heaven          | Bear his own blow, to weep tears back for tears,  |
| Than love on earth had been to him. Chastelard,      | And bleed for bloodshed? God should spare me this |
| I have not had the name upon my lips                 | That once I held the one good hope on earth, —    |
| That stands for sign of love the truest in man       | To be the mean and engine of her end,             |
| Since first love made him sacrifice of men,          | Or some least part at least therein: I prayed,    |
| This long sad score of years retributive             | God, give me so much grace — who now should pray, |
| Since it was cast out of her heart and mind          | Tempt me not, God. My heart swelled once to know  |
| Who made it mean a dead thing; nor, I think,         | I bore her death about me; as I think             |
| Will she remember it before she die                  | Indeed I bear it: but what need hath God          |
| More than in France the memories of old friends      | That I should clinch his doom with craft of mine? |
| Are like to have yet forgotten; but for me,          | What needs the wrath of hot Elizabeth             |
| Haply, thou knowest, so death not all be death       | Be blown aflame with mere past writing read,      |
| If all these years I have had not in my mind         | Which hath to enkindle it higher al ready proof   |
| Through all these chances this one thought in all, — | Of present practice on her state and life?        |
| That I shall never leave her till she die.           | Shall fear of death or love of England fail,      |
| Nor surely now shall I much longer serve             | Or memory faint, or foresight fall stark blind,   |
| Who fain would lie down at her foot and sleep,       | That there should need the whet and spur of shame |
| Fain, fain have done with waking. Yet my soul        | To turn her spirit into some chafing snake's,     |
|  | And make its fang more feared for mortal? Yet     |

I am glad, and I repent me not, to know  
 I have the writing in my bosom sealed  
 That bears such matter, with her own  
 hand signed,  
 As she that yet repents her not to have  
 writ  
 Repents her not that she refrained to  
 send,  
 And fears not but long since it felt the  
 fire —  
 Being fire itself to burn her, yet un-  
 quenched,  
 But in my hand here covered harmless  
 up  
 Which had in charge to burn it. What  
 perchance  
 Might then the reading of it have  
 wrought for us,  
 If all this fiery poison of her scoffs  
 Making the foul froth of a serpent's  
 tongue  
 More venomous, and more deadly  
 toward her queen,  
 Even Bess of Hardwick's bitterest  
 babbling tales,  
 Had touched at heart the Tudor vein  
 indeed?  
 Enough it yet were surely, though that  
 vein  
 Were now the gentlest that such hearts  
 may hold,  
 And all doubt's trembling balance that  
 way bent,  
 To turn, as with one mortal grain cast  
 in,  
 The scale of grace against her life that  
 writ,  
 And weigh down pity deathward.  
*Enter MARY STUART.*  
*Mary Stuart.* Have we found  
 Such kindness of our keeper as may  
 give  
 Some ease from expectation? or must  
 hope  
 Still fret for ignorance how long here  
 we stay  
 As men abiding judgment?  
*Mary Beaton.* Now not long,  
 He tells me, need we think to tarry;  
 since  
 The time and place of trial are set, next  
 month  
 To hold it in the castle of Fotheringay.

*Mary Stuart.* Why, he knows well  
 I were full easily moved  
 To set forth hence; there must I find  
 more scope  
 To commune with the ambassador of  
 France  
 By letter thence to London: but, God  
 help,  
 Think these folk truly, doth she verily  
 think,  
 What never man durst yet, nor woman  
 dreamed,  
 May one that is nor man nor woman  
 think,  
 To bring a queen born subject of no  
 laws  
 Here in subjection of an alien law  
 By foreign force of judgment? Were  
 she wise,  
 Might she not have me privily made  
 away?  
 And being nor wise, nor valiant but of  
 tongue,  
 Could she find yet foolhardiness of heart  
 Enough to attain the rule of royal  
 rights  
 With murderous madness? I will think  
 not this  
 Till it be proven indeed.  
*Mary Beaton.* A month come round,  
 This man protests, will prove it.  
*Mary Stuart.* Ayl protests?  
 What protestation of what Protestant  
 Can unmake law that was of God's  
 mouth made,  
 Unwrite the writing of the world, unsay  
 The general saying of ages? If I go,  
 Compelled of God's hand or constrained  
 of man's,  
 Yet God shall bid me not nor man  
 enforce  
 My tongue to plead before them for my  
 life.  
 I had rather end as kings before me,  
 die  
 Rather by shot or stroke of murderous  
 hands,  
 Than so make answer once in face of  
 man  
 As one brought forth to judgment. Are  
 they mad,  
 And she most mad for envious heart of  
 all,



To make so mean account of me?  
 Methought,  
 When late we came back hither, soiled  
 and spent  
 And sick with travel, I had seen their  
 worst of wrong  
 Full-faced, with its most outrage: when  
 I found  
 My servant Curle's young new-delivered  
 wife  
 Without priest's comfort, and her babe  
 unblest,  
 A nameless piteous thing born ere its  
 time,  
 And took it from the mother's arms  
 abed,  
 And bade her have good comfort, since  
 myself  
 Would take all charge against her hus-  
 band laid  
 On mine own head to answer,— deem-  
 ing not  
 Man ever durst bid answer for my-  
 self  
 On charge as mortal, — and, mine almo-  
 ner gone,  
 Did I not crave of Paulet for a grace  
 His chaplain might baptize me this poor  
 babe,  
 And was denied it, and with mine own  
 hands  
 For shame and charity moved to chris-  
 ten her  
 There with scant ritual, in his heretic  
 sight,  
 By mine own woful name, whence God,  
 I pray,  
 For her take off its presage? I mis-  
 deemed,  
 Who deemed all these and yet far more  
 than these  
 For one born queen indignities enough,  
 On one crowned head enough of buf-  
 fets: more  
 Hath time's hand laid upon me; yet I  
 keep  
 Faith in one word I spake to Paulet, say-  
 ing  
 Two things were mine though I stood  
 spoiled of all  
 As of my letters and my privy coin  
 By pickpurse hands of office: these  
 things yet

Might none take thievish hold upon to  
 strip  
 His prisoner naked of her natural  
 dower, —  
 The blood yet royal running here un-  
 spilled,  
 And that religion which I think to keep  
 Fast as this royal blood until I die.  
 So, where at last and howsoe'er I fare,  
 I need not much take thought, nor thou  
 for love  
 Take of thy mistress pity: yet meseems  
 They dare not work their open will on  
 me;  
 But God's it is that shall be done, and I  
 Find end of all in quiet. I would sleep  
 On this strange news of thine, that  
 being awake  
 I may the freshlier front my sense there-  
 of  
 And thought of life or death. Come in  
 with me.

## SCENE III. — TYBURN.

*A Crowd of Citizens.*

*First Citizen.* Is not their hour yet  
 on? Men say the queen  
 Bade spare no jot of torment in their  
 end  
 That law might lay upon them.  
*Second Citizen.* Truth it is,  
 To spare what scourge soe'er man's  
 justice may  
 Twist for such caitiff traitors, were to  
 grieve  
 God's with mere inobservance. Hear  
 you not  
 How yet the loud lewd braggarts of  
 their side  
 Keep heart to threaten that for all this  
 foil  
 They are not foiled indeed, but yet the  
 work  
 Shall prosper with deliverance of their  
 queen,  
 And death for her of ours, though they  
 should give  
 Of their own lives for one an hundred-  
 fold?  
*Third Citizen.* These are bold  
 mouths: one that shall die to-  
 day

Being this last week arraigned at Westminster,  
Had no such heart, they say, to his defence,  
Who was the main head of their treasons.

*First Citizen.* Ay,  
And yesterday, if truth belie not him,  
Durst with his doomed hand write some word of prayer  
To the queen's self, her very grace, to crave  
Grace of her for his gracelessness, that she  
Might work, on one too tainted to deserve,  
A miracle of compassion, whence her fame  
For pity of sins too great for pity of man  
Might shine more glorious than his crime showed foul  
In the eye of such a mercy.

*Second Citizen.* Yet men said  
He spake at his arraignment soberly  
With clear mild looks and gracious gesture, showing  
The purport of his treasons in such wise  
That it seemed pity of him to hear them, how  
All their beginnings and proceedings had  
First head and fountain only for their spring  
From ill persuasions of that poisonous priest  
Who stood the guiltiest near, by this man's side  
Approved a valiant villain. Barnwell next,  
Who came but late from Ireland here to court,  
Made simply protestation of design  
To work no personal ill against the queen,  
Nor paint rebellion's face as murder's red  
With blood imperial: Tichborne then avowed  
He knew the secret of their aim, and kept,

And held forsooth himself no traitor, yet  
In the end would even plead guilty: Donne with him,  
And Salisbury, who not less professed he still  
Stood out against the killing of the queen,  
And would not hurt her for a kingdom. So,  
When thus all these had pleaded, one by one  
Was each man bid say fairly, for his part,  
Why sentence should not pass: and Ballard first,  
Who had been so sorely racked he might not stand,  
Spake, but as seems to none effect; of whom  
Said Babington again, he set them on,  
He first, and most of all him, who believed  
This priest had power to assoil his soul alive  
Of all else mortal treason. Ballard then,  
As in sad scorn — *Yea, Master Babington,*  
Quoth he, *lay all upon me, but I wish*  
*For you the shedding of my blood might be*  
*The saving of your life: howbeit, for that,*  
*Say what you will; and I will say no more.*  
Nor spake the swordsman Savage aught again,  
Who, first arraigned, had first avowed his cause  
Guilty; nor yet spake Tichborne aught but Donne  
Spake, and the same said Barnwell, — each had sinned  
For very conscience only; Salisbury last  
Besought the queen remission of his guilt.  
Then spake Sir Christopher Hatton for the rest  
That sat with him commissioners, and showed

How by dark doctrine of the seminaries,  
 And instance most of Ballard, had been brought  
 To extreme destruction here of body and soul  
 A sort of brave youths otherwise endowed  
 With goodly gifts of birthright; and in fine  
 There was the sentence given that here even now  
 Shows seven for dead men in our present sight,  
 And shall bring six to-morrow forth to die.

*Enter BABINGTON, BALLARD (carried in a chair), TICHBORNE, SAVAGE, BARNWELL, TILNEY, and ABINGTON, guarded: Sheriff, Executioner, Chaplain, etc.*

*First Citizen.* What, will they speak?

*Second Citizen.* Ay; each hath leave in turn

To show what mood he dies in toward his cause.

*Ballard.* Sirs, ye that stand to see us take our doom,

I being here given this grace to speak to you

Have but my word to witness for my soul,

That all I have done and all designed to do

Was only for advancement of true faith  
 To furtherance of religion: for myself  
 Aught would I never, but for Christ's dear church

Was mine intent all wholly, to redeem  
 Her sore affliction in this age and land,  
 As now may not be yet: which knowing for truth,

I am readier even at heart to die than live.

And dying I crave of all men pardon whom

My doings at all have touched, or who thereat

Take scandal; and forgiveness of the queen

If on this cause I have offended her.

*Savage.* The like say I, that have no skill in speech,

But heart enough with faith at heart to die,

Seeing but for conscience and the common good,

And no preferment but this general weal,

I did attempt this business.

*Barnwell.* I confess

That I, whose seed was of that hallowed earth

Whereof each pore hath sweated blood for Christ,

Had note of these men's drifts, which I deny

That ever I consented with, or could  
 In conscience hold for lawful. That I

came

To spy for them occasions in the court,  
 And there being noted of her Majesty

She seeing mine eyes peer sharply like a man's

That had such purpose as she wist before

Prayed God that all were well — if this were urged,

I might make answer, it was not unknown

To divers of the council that I there

Had matters to solicit of mine own

Which thither drew me then: yet I confess

That Babington, espying me thence returned,

Asked me what news: to whom again I told,

Her majesty had been abroad that day,

With all the circumstance I saw there. Now,

If I have done her majesty offence,

I crave her pardon: and assuredly

If this my body's sacrifice might yet

Establish her in true religion, here

Most willingly should this be offered up.

*Tilney.* I came not here to reason of my faith,

But to die simply like a Catholic, praying

Christ give our queen Elizabeth long life,

And warning all youth born take heed by me.

*Abington.* I likewise, and if aught I  
have erred in aught  
I crave but pardon as for ignorant sin,  
Holding at all points firm the Catholic  
faith;  
And all things charged against me I  
confess,  
Save that I ever sought her highness'  
death:  
In whose poor kingdom yet ere long, I  
fear,  
Will be great bloodshed.

*Sheriff.* Seest thou, Abington,  
Here all these people present of thy  
kind  
Whose blood shall be demanded at thy  
hands  
If dying thou hide what might en-  
danger them?  
Speak therefore, why or by what mor-  
tal mean  
Should there be shed such blood?

*Abington.* All that I know  
You have on record: take but this for  
sure,—  
This country lives for its iniquity  
Loathed of all countries, and God loves  
it not.  
Whereon I pray you trouble me no  
more  
With questions of this world, but let  
me pray,  
And in mine own wise make my peace  
with God.

*Babington.* For me, first head of all  
this enterprise,  
I needs must make this record of my-  
self,  
I have not conspired for profit, but in  
trust  
Of men's persuasions whence I stood  
assured  
This work was lawful which I should  
have done,  
And meritorious as toward God; for  
which  
No less I crave forgiveness of my queen,  
And that my brother may possess my  
lands  
In heritage else forfeit with my head.

*Tichborne.* Good countrymen and my  
dear friends, you look  
For something to be said of me, that an

But an ill orator; and my text is  
worse.

Vain were it to make full discourse of  
all

This cause that brings me hither, which  
before

Was all made bare, and is well known  
to most

That have their eyes upon me: let me  
stand

For all young men, and most for those  
born high,

Their present warning here: a friend I  
had,

Ay, and a dear friend, one of whom I  
made

No small account, whose friendship for  
pure love

To this hath brought me: I may not  
deny

He told me all the matter, how set  
down,

And ready to be wrought; which al-  
ways I

Held impious, and denied to deal there-  
in:

But only for my friend's regard was I  
Silent, and verified a saying in me,

Who so consented to him. Ere this  
thing chanced,

How brotherly we twain lived heart in  
heart

Together, in what flourishing estate,  
This town well knows: of whom went  
all report

Through her loud length of Fleet-street  
and the Strand

And all parts else that sound men's  
fortunate names,

But Babington and Tichborne? that  
therein

There was no haughtiest threshold  
fount of force

To brave our entry; thus we lived our  
life,

And wanted nothing we might wish for:  
then,

For me, what less was in my head, God  
knows,

Than high state matters? Give me  
now but leave

Scarce to declare the miseries I sus-  
tained

Since I took knowledge of this action,  
whence  
To his estate I well may liken mine,  
Who could forbear not one forbidden  
thing  
To enjoy all else afforded of the world:  
The terror of my conscience hung on  
me;  
Who, taking heed what perils girt me,  
went  
To Sir John Peters hence in Essex,  
there  
Appointing that my horses by his mean  
Should meet me here in London,  
whence I thought  
To flee into the country: but being  
here  
I heard how all was now bewrayed  
abroad;  
Whence Adam-like we fled into the  
woods,  
And there were taken. My dear coun-  
trymen,  
Albeit my sorrows well may be your  
joy,  
Yet mix your smiles with tears: pity  
my case,  
Who, born out of an house whose name  
descends  
Even from two hundred years ere Eng-  
lish earth  
Felt Norman heel upon her, wore it  
yet  
Till this mishap of mine unspotted.  
Sirs,  
I have a wife, and one sweet child: my  
wife,  
My dear wife Agnes: and my grief is  
there;  
And for six sisters too left on my hand:  
All my poor servants were dispersed, I  
know,  
Upon their master's capture: all which  
things  
Most heartily I sorrow for: and though  
Naught might I less have merited at  
her hands,  
Yet had I looked for pardon of my  
fault  
From the queen's absolute grace and  
clemency;  
That the unexpired remainder of my

Might in some sort have haply recom-  
pensed  
This former guilt of mine whereof I  
die:  
But seeing such fault may find not such  
release  
Even of her utter mercies, heartily  
I crave at least of her and all the world  
Forgiveness, and to God commend my  
soul,  
And to men's memory this my penitence  
Till our death's record die from out the  
land.  
*First Citizen.* God pardon him!  
Stand back: what ail these  
knaves  
To drive and thrust upon us? Help  
me, sir;  
I thank you: hence we take them full  
in view:  
Hath yet the hangman there his knife  
in hand?

## ACT III. — BURGHELEY.

SCENE I. — *The presence-chamber in Fotheringay Castle. At the upper end, a chair of state as for QUEEN ELIZABETH; opposite, in the centre of the hall, a chair for MARY STUART. The Commissioners seated on either side along the wall: to the right, the Earls, with LORD CHANCELLOR BROMLEY and LORD TREASURER BURGHELEY; to the left, the Barons, with the Knights of the Privy Council, among them WALSINGHAM and PAULET; POPHAM, EGERTON, and GAWDY, as Counsel for the Crown. Enter MARY STUART, supported by SIR ANDREW MELVILLE, and takes her place.*

*Mary Stuart.* Here are full many  
men of counsel met;  
Not one for me.

[*The Chancellor rises.*  
*Bromley.* Madam, this court is held  
To make strait inquisition as by law  
Of what with grief of heart our queen  
has heard, —  
A plot upon her life, against the faith  
Here in her kingdom stablished: on  
which cause

Our charge it is to exact your answer here,  
And put to proof your guilt or innocence.

*Mary Stuart (rising).* Sirs, whom by strange constraint I stand before,  
My lords, and not my judges, — since no law

Can hold to mortal judgment answerable

A princess free-born of all courts on earth, —

I rise not here to make response as one  
Responsible toward any for my life,  
Or of mine acts accountable to man,  
Who see none higher save only God in heaven.

I am no natural subject of your land,  
That I should here plead as a criminal charged,

Nor in such wise appear I now: I came  
On your queen's faith to seek in England help

By trothplight pledged me: where by promise-breach

I am even since then her prisoner held in ward:

Yet, understanding by report of you  
Some certain things I know not of to be

Against me brought on record, by my will

I stand content to hear and answer these.

*Bromley.* Madam, there lives none born on earth so high

Who for this land's laws' breach within this land

Shall not stand answerable before those laws.

*Burghley.* Let there be record of the prisoner's plea

And answer given such protest here set down,

And so proceed we to this present charge.

*Gawdy.* My lords, to unfold by length of circumstance

The model of this whole conspiracy  
Should lay the pattern of all treasons bare

That ever brought high state in danger.  
This

No man there lives among us but hath heard, —

How certain men of our queen's household folk,

Being wrought on by persuasion of their priests,

Drew late a bond between them, binding these

With others of their faith accomplices  
Directed first of Anthony Babington

By mean of six for execution chosen  
To slay the queen their mistress, and thereon

Make all her trustiest men of trust away;

As, my lord treasurer Burghley present here,

Lord Hunsdon, and Sir Francis Walsingham,

And one that held in charge a while ago

This lady now on trial, — Sir Francis Knowles.

That she was hereto privy, to her power  
Approving and abetting their device,

It shall not stand us in much need to show,

Whose proofs are manifoldly manifest  
On record written of their hands and hers.

*Mary Stuart.* Of all this I know nothing: Babington

I have used for mine intelligencer, sent  
With letters charged at need, but never yet

Spake with him, never writ him word of mine

As privy to these close conspiracies,  
Nor word of his had from him. Never came

One harmful thought upon me toward your queen,

Nor knowledge ever that of other hearts  
Was harm designed against her.

Proofs, ye say,  
Forsooth ye hold to impeach me: I desire

But only to behold and handle them  
If they in sooth of sense be tangible

More than mere air and shadow.  
*Burghley.* Let the clerk

Produce those letters writ from Babington.

*Mary Stuart.* What then? It may be  
such were writ of him:  
Be it proved that they came ever in my  
hands.

If Babington affirm so much, I say  
He, or who else will say it, lies openly.

*Gawdy.* Here is the man's confession  
writ; and here

Ballard's the Jesuit; and the soldier's  
here,

Savage, that served with Parma.

*Mary Stuart.* What of these?  
Traitors they were, and traitor-like they  
lied.

*Gawdy.* And here the last her letter  
of response

Confirming and approving in each  
point

Their purpose, writ direct to Babington.

*Mary Stuart.* My letter? None of  
mine it is. perchance

It may be in my cipher charactered,  
But never came from or my tongue or  
hand.

I have sought mine own deliverance,  
and thereto

Solicited of my friends their natural  
help:

Yet certain whom I list not name there  
were,

Whose offers made of help to set me  
free

Receiving, yet I answered not a word.

Howbeit, desiring to divert the storm  
Of persecution from the Church, for  
this

To your queen's grace I have made  
most earnest suit:

But for mine own part, I would pur-  
chase not

This kingdom with the meanest one  
man's death

In all its commonalty, much less the  
queen's.

Many there be have dangerously  
designed

Things that I knew not: yea, but very  
late

There came a letter to my hand which  
craved

My pardon if by enterprise of some  
Were undertaken aught unknown of  
me.

A cipher lightly may one counterfeit,  
As he that vaunted him of late in  
France

To be my son's base brother; and I  
fear

Lest this, for aught mine ignorance of  
it knows,

May be that secretary's fair handiwork  
Who sits to judge me, and hath prac-  
tised late,

I hear, against my son's life and mine  
own.

But I protest I have not so much as  
thought

Nor dreamed upon destruction of the  
queen:

I had rather spend most gladly mine  
own life

Than for my sake the Catholics should  
be thus

Afflicted only in very hate of me,  
And drawn to death so cruel as these  
tears

Gush newly forth to think of.

*Burghley.* Here no man  
Who hath showed himself true subject  
to the state

Was ever for religion done to death;  
But some for treason, that against the  
queen

Upheld the pope's bull and authority.

*Mary Stuart.* Yet have I heard it  
otherwise affirmed,

And read in books set forth in print as  
much.

*Burghley.* They that so write say too  
the queen hath here

Made forfeit of her royal dignity.

*Walsingham.* Here I call God to  
record on my part

That personally or as a private man  
I have done naught misbeseeeming  
honesty,

Nor as I bear a public person's place  
Done aught thereof unworthy. I con-  
fess

That, being right careful of the queen's  
estate

And safety of this realm, I have  
curiously

Searched out the practices against it  
nay,

Herein had Ballard offered me his help

I durst not have denied him; yea, I  
would

Have recompensed the pains he had  
taken. Say

I have practised aught with him, why  
did he not,

To save his life, reveal it?

*Mary Stuart.* Pray you, sir,  
Take no displeasure at me. truth it is  
Report has found me of your dealings,  
blown

From lip to ear abroad, wherein myself  
I put no credit; and could but desire  
Yourself would all as little make  
account

Of slanders flung on me. Spies, sure,  
are men

Of doubtful credit, which dissemble  
things

Far other than they speak. Do not  
believe

That I gave ever or could give consent  
Once to the queen's destruction. I  
would never,

These tears are bitter witness, never  
would

Make shipwreck of my soul by com-  
passing

Destruction of my dearest sister.

*Garvdy.* This  
Shall soon by witness be disproved: as  
here

Even by this letter from Charles Paget's  
hand

Transcribed, which Curle your secre-  
tary hath borne,

Plain witness you received, touching a  
league

Betwixt Mendoza and Ballard, who con-  
ferred

Of this land's fore-ordained invasion,  
thence

To give you freedom.

*Mary Stuart.* What of this? ye shoot  
Wide of the purpose. this approves  
not me

Consenting to the queen's destruction.

*Garvdy.* That stands proven enough  
by word of Babington,

Who dying avowed it, and by letters  
passed

From him to you, whom he therein  
acclaims

As his most dread and sovereign lady  
and queen,

And by the way makes mention pass-  
ingly

Of a plot laid by transference to con-  
vey

This kingdom to the Spaniard.

*Mary Stuart.* I confess  
There came a priest unto me, saying if I  
Would not herein bear part, I with my  
son

Alike should be debarred the inherit-  
ance:

His name ye shall not have of me; but  
this

Ye know, that openly the Spaniard lays  
Claim to your kingdom, and to none  
will give

Place ever save to me.

*Burghley.* Still stands the charge,  
On written witness of your secretaries.  
Great on all points against you.

*Mary Stuart.* Wherefore then  
Are not these writers with these writ-  
ings brought

To outface me front to front? For  
Gilbert Curle,

He is in the Frenchman's hands a  
waxen toy,

Whom the other, once mine uncle's  
secretary,

The Cardinal's of Lorraine, at his mere  
will

Moulds, turns, and tempers, being him-  
self a knave

That may be hired or scared with peril  
or coin

To swear what thing men bid him.  
Truth again

Is this that I deny not, seeing myself  
Against all right held fast in English  
ward,

I have sought all help where I might  
hope to find;

Which thing that I dispute not, let this  
be

The sign that I disclaim no jot of truth  
In all objected to me. For the rest,

All majesty that moves in all the world,  
And all safe station of all princes born,  
Fall, as things unrespected, to the  
ground,

If on the testimony of secretaries



And on their writings merely these  
 depend,  
 Being to their likeness thence debased.  
 For me,  
 Naught I delivered to them but what  
 first  
 Nature to me delivered, that I might  
 Recover yet at length my liberty.  
 I am not to be convicted save alone  
 By mine own word or writing. If these  
 men  
 Have written toward the queen my sis-  
 ter's hurt  
 Aught, I wist naught of all such writ at  
 all:  
 Let them be put to punishment; I am  
 sure,  
 Were these here present, they by testi-  
 mony  
 Would bring me clear of blame.  
*Gawdy.* Yet by their mean  
 They could not in excuse of you deny  
 That letters of communion to and fro  
 Have passed between you and the Span-  
 iard, whence  
 What should have come on England  
 and the queen  
 These both well know, and with what  
 messages  
 Were English exiles entertained of you  
 By mean of these men, of your secre-  
 taries,  
 Confirmed and cherished in conspiracy  
 For this her kingdom's overthrow: in  
 France  
 Paget and Morgan, traitors in design  
 Of one close mind with you, and in your  
 name  
 Cheered hence for constant service.  
*Mary Stuart.* That I sought  
 Comfort and furtherance of all Catho-  
 lic states,  
 By what mean found soever just and  
 good,  
 Your mistress from myself had note long  
 since  
 And open warning: un-compelled I  
 made  
 Avowal of such my righteous purpose,  
 nor  
 In aught may disavow it. Of these late  
 plots

No proof is here to attain mine inno-  
 cence,  
 Who dare all proof against me: Babing-  
 ton  
 I know not of, nor Ballard, nor their  
 works;  
 But kings my kinsmen, powers that  
 serve the Church,  
 These I confess my comforters, in hope  
 Held fast of their alliance. Yet again  
 I challenge in the witness of my words  
 The notes writ of these letters here  
 alleged  
 In mine own hand: if these ye bring not  
 forth,  
 Judge all good men if I be not con-  
 demned  
 In all your hearts already, who per-  
 chance,  
 For all this pageant held of lawless  
 law,  
 Have bound yourselves by pledge to  
 speak me dead.  
 But I would have you look into your  
 souls,  
 Remembering how the theatre of the  
 world  
 Is wider, in whose eye ye are judged that  
 judge,  
 Than this one realm of England.  
*Burghley.* Toward that realm  
 Suffice it here that, madam, you stand  
 charged  
 With deadly purpose: being of proven  
 intent  
 To have your son conveyed to Spain,  
 and give  
 The title you pretend upon our crown  
 Up with his wardship to King Philip.  
*Mary Stuart.* Nay,  
 I have no kingdom left to assign, nor  
 crown  
 Whereof to make conveyance: yet is  
 this  
 But lawful, that of all things which are  
 mine  
 I may dispose at pleasure, and to none  
 Stand on such count accountable.  
*Burghley.* So be it  
 So far as may be; but your ciphers  
 sent  
 By Curle's plain testimony to Babing-  
 ton,

To the lord Lodovic, and to Fernihurst,  
Once provost on your part in Edinburgh,  
By mean of Grange your friend his  
father-in-law,

Speak not but as with tongue imperial,  
nor

Of import less than kingdoms.

*Mary Stuart.* Surely, sir,  
Such have I writ, and many; nor there-  
in

Beyond my birth have trespassed, to  
commend

That lord you speak of, and another,  
both

My friends in faith, to a cardinal's dig-  
nity,

And that, I trust, without offence:  
except

It be not held as lawful on my part  
To commune with the chiefest of my  
creed

By written word on matters of mine own  
As for your queen with churchfolk of  
her kind.

*Burghley.* Well were it, madam, that  
with some of yours  
You had held less close communion:  
since by proof

Reiterated from those your secretaries  
It seems you know right well that Mor-  
gan who

Sent Parry privily to despatch the queen,  
And have assigned him annual pension.

*Mary Stuart.* This  
I know not, whether or no your charge  
be truth;

But I do know this Morgan hath lost  
all

For my sake, and in honor sure I am  
That rather to relieve him I stand  
bound,

Than to revenge an injury done your  
queen

By one that lives my friend, and hath  
deserved

Well at mine hands: yet, being not  
bound to this,

I did affright the man from such  
attempts

Of crimes against her, who contrariwise  
Hath out of England openly assigned  
Pensions to Gray my traitor, and the  
Scots

Mine adversaries, as also to my son,  
To hire him to forsake me.

*Burghley.* Nay, but seeing  
By negligence of them that steered the  
state

The revenues of Scotland sore impaired,  
Somewhat in bounty did her grace  
bestow

Upon your son the king, her kinsman:  
whom

She would not, being to her so near of  
blood,

Forget from charity. No such help it  
was,

Nor no such honest service, that your  
friends

Designed you, who by letters hither  
writ

To Paget and Mendoza sent as here  
Large proffers of strange aid from over-  
sea

To right you by her ruin.

*Mary Stuart.* Here was naught  
Aimed for your queen's destruction:  
nor is this

Against me to be charged, that foreign  
friends

Should labor for my liberty. Thus  
much

At sundry times I have signified aloud  
By open message to her, that I would  
still

Seek mine own freedom. Who shall  
bar me this?

Who tax me with unreason, that I sent  
Unjust conditions on my part to be

To her propounded, which now many  
times

Have alway found rejection? yea, when  
even

For hostages I proffered in my stead  
To be delivered up with mine own  
son

The Duke of Guise's, both to stand in  
pledge

That nor your queen nor kingdom  
should through me

Take aught of damage; so that hence  
by proof

I see myself utterly from all hope  
Already barred of freedom. But I now  
Am dealt with most unworthily, whose  
fame

And honorable repute are called in  
 doubt  
 Before such foreign men of law as may  
 By miserable conclusions of their craft  
 Draw every thin and shallow circum-  
 stance  
 Out into compass of a consequence :  
 Whereas the anointed heads and con-  
 secrate  
 Of princes are not subject to such laws  
 As private men are. Next, whereas ye  
 are given  
 Authority but to look such matters  
 through  
 As tend to the hurt of your queen's  
 person, yet  
 Here is the cause so handled, and so  
 far  
 Here are my letters wrested, that the  
 faith  
 Which I profess, the immunity and  
 state  
 Of foreign princes, and their private  
 right  
 Of mutual speech by word reciprocate  
 From royal hand to royal, all in one  
 Are called in question, and myself by  
 force  
 Brought down beneath my kingly  
 dignity,  
 And made to appear before a judg-  
 ment-seat  
 As one held guilty; to none end but this,  
 all to none other purpose, but that I  
 Might from all natural favor of the  
 queen  
 Be quite excluded, and my right cut  
 off  
 From claim hereditary: whereas I  
 stand  
 Here of mine own good-will to clear  
 myself  
 Of all objected to me, lest I seem  
 To have aught neglected in the full  
 defence  
 Of mine own innocency and honor.  
 This  
 Would I bring likewise in your minds,  
 how once  
 This queen herself of yours, Elizabeth,  
 Was drawn in question of conspiracy  
 That Wyatt raised against her sister,  
 yet

Ye know she was most innocent. For  
 me,  
 With very heart's religion I affirm,  
 Though I desire the Catholics here  
 might stand  
 Assured of safety, this I would not yet  
 Buy with the blood and death of any  
 one.  
 And on mine own part rather would I  
 play  
 Esther than Judith; for the people's  
 sake  
 To God make intercession, than deprive  
 The meanest of the people born of  
 life.  
 Mine enemies have made broad repor  
 aloud  
 That I was irreligious: yet the time  
 Has been, I would have learnt the faith  
 ye hold,  
 But none would suffer me, for all I  
 sought,  
 To find such teaching at your teachers  
 hands;  
 As though they cared not what my sou  
 became.  
 And now at last, when all ye can ye  
 have done  
 Against me, and have barred me from  
 my right,  
 Ye may chance fail yet of your caus  
 and hope.  
 To God and to the princes of my kin  
 I make again appeal, from you again  
 Record my protestation, and reject  
 All judgment of your court: I had  
 rather die  
 Thus undishonored, even a thousand  
 deaths,  
 Than so bring down the height of  
 majesty;  
 Yea, and thereby confess myself as  
 bound  
 By all the laws of England, even in  
 faith  
 Of things religious, who could never  
 learn  
 What manner of laws these were: I am  
 destitute  
 Of counsellors, and who shall be my  
 peers  
 To judge my cause through, and give  
 doom thereon,

I am ignorant wholly, being an absolute queen,  
 And will do naught which may impair that state  
 In me nor other princes, nor my son ;  
 Since yet my mind is not dejected, nor  
 Will I sink under my calamity.  
 My notes are taken from me, and no man  
 Dares but step forth to be my advocate.  
 I am clear from all crime done against the queen,  
 I have stirred not up one man against her : yet,  
 Albeit of many dangers overpast  
 I have thoroughly forewarned her, still I found  
 No credit, but have always been contemned,  
 Though nearest to her in blood allied.  
 When late  
 Ye made association, and thereon  
 An act against their lives on whose behalf,  
 Though innocent even as ignorance of it, aught  
 Might be contrived to endangering of the queen  
 From foreign force abroad, or privy plots  
 At home of close rebellion, I foresaw  
 That, whatsoever of peril so might rise  
 Or more than all this for religion's sake,  
 My many mortal enemies in her court  
 Should lay upon me all the charge, and I  
 Bear the whole blame of all men.  
 Certainly,  
 I well might take it hardly, nor without High cause, that such confederacy was made  
 With mine own son, and I not knowing : but this  
 I speak not of, being not so grieved thereat  
 As that mine own dear sister, that the queen,  
 Is misinformed of me, and I, now kept  
 These many years in so strait prison, and grown  
 Lame of my limbs, have lien neglected, nor

For all most reasonable conditions made  
 Or proffered to redeem my liberty  
 Found audience or acceptance ; and at last  
 Here am I set with none to plead for me.  
 But this I pray, that on this matter of mine  
 Another meeting there be kept, and I  
 Be granted on my part an advocate  
 To hold my cause up ; or that, seeing ye know  
 I am a princess, I may be believed  
 By mine own word, being princely : for should I  
 Stand to your judgment, who most plainly I see  
 Are armed against me strong in prejudice,  
 It were mine extreme folly : more than this,  
 That ever I came to England in such trust  
 As of the plighted friendship of your queen,  
 And comfort of her promise. Look, my lords,  
 Here on this ring : her pledge of love was this,  
 And surety, sent me when I lay in bonds  
 Of mine own rebels once ; regard it well ;  
 In trust of this I came amongst you none  
 But sees what faith I have found to keep this trust.  
*Burghley.* Whereas I bear a double person, being  
 Commissioner first, then counsellor in this cause,  
 From me as from the queen's commissioner here  
 Receive a few words first. Your protest made  
 Is now on record, and a transcript of it  
 Shall be delivered you. To us is given  
 Under the queen's hand our authority, whence  
 Is no appeal, this grant being ratified  
 With the great seal of England ; nor are we

With prejudice come hither, but to  
 judge  
 By the straight rule of justice. On  
 their part,  
 These the queen's learned counsel here  
 in place  
 Do level at nothing else but that the  
 truth  
 May come to light, how far you have  
 made offence  
 Against the person of the queen. To  
 us  
 Full power is given to hear and dili-  
 gently  
 Examine all the matter, though your-  
 self  
 Were absent: yet for this did we  
 desire  
 To have your presence here, lest we  
 might seem  
 To have derogated from your honor;  
 nor  
 Designed to object against you any  
 thing  
 But what you knew of, or took part  
 therein,  
 Against the queen's life bent. For  
 this were these  
 Your letters brought in question, but to  
 unfold  
 Your aim against her person, and  
 therewith  
 All matters to it belonging; which per-  
 force  
 Are so with other matters interlaced  
 As none may sever them. Hence was  
 there need  
 Set all these forth, not parcels here  
 and there,  
 Whose circumstances do the assurance  
 give  
 Upon what points you dealt with Bab-  
 ington.  
*Mary Stuart.* The circumstances  
 haply may find proof,  
 But the fact never. Mine integrity  
 Nor on the memory nor the credit  
 hangs  
 Of these my secretaries, albeit I know  
 They are men of honest hearts. yet if  
 they have  
 Confessed in fear of torture any thing,  
 Or hope of guerdon and impunity,

It may not be admitted, for just cause  
 Which I will elsewhere allege. Men's  
 minds  
 Are with affections diversly distraught  
 And borne about of passion: no:  
 would these  
 Have ever avowed such things against  
 me, save  
 For their own hope and profit. Letters  
 may  
 Toward other hands be outwardly ad-  
 dressed  
 Than they were writ for: yea, and many  
 times  
 Have many things been privily slipped  
 in mine  
 Which from my tongue came never.  
 Were I not  
 Rest of my papers, and my secre-  
 tary  
 Kept from me, better might I then  
 confute  
 These things cast up against me.  
*Burghley.* But there shall  
 Be nothing brought against you save  
 what last  
 Stands charged, even since the nine-  
 teenth day of June:  
 Nor would your papers here avail you  
 seeing  
 Your secretaries, and Babington him-  
 self,  
 Being of the rack unquestioned, have  
 affirmed  
 You sent those letters to him; which  
 though yourself  
 Deny, yet whether more belief should  
 here  
 On affirmation or negation hang  
 Let the commissioners judge. But, to  
 come back,  
 This next I tell you as a counsellor,  
 Time after time you have put forth  
 many things  
 Propounded for your freedom; that all  
 these  
 Have fallen all profitless, 'tis long of  
 you,  
 And of the Scots; in no wise of the  
 queen.  
 For first the lords of Scotland, being  
 required,  
 Flatly resused, to render up the king

In hostage: and when treaty last was held

Upon your freedom, then was Parry sent

By your dependant Morgan privily  
To make the queen away by murder.

*Mary Stuart.* Ah!

You are my adversary.

*Burghley.* Yea, surely I am

To the queen's adversaries an adversary.

But now hereof enough: let us proceed  
Henceforth to proofs.

*Mary Stuart.* I will not hear them.

*Burghley.* Yet

Hear them will we.

*Mary Stuart.* And in another place  
I too will hear them, and defend myself.

*Gawdy.* First let your letters to  
Charles Paget speak,

Wherein you show him there is none  
other way

For Spain to bring the Netherlands  
again

To the old obedience, but by setting up  
A prince in England that might help  
his cause;

Then to Lord Paget, to bring hastilier  
His forces up for help to invade this  
land;

And Cardinal Allen's letter, hailing you  
His most dread sovereign lady, and signifying

The matter to the prince of Parma's  
care

To be commended.

*Mary Stuart.* I am so sore beset,  
I know not how by point and circumstance

To meet your manifold impeachments.  
This

I see through all this charge for evil  
truth,

That Babington and my two secretaries  
Have even to excuse themselves accused me: yet,

As touching that conspiracy, this I  
say,

Of those six men for execution chosen  
I never heard; and all the rest is  
naught

To this pretended purpose of your  
charge.

For Cardinal Allen, whatsoever he have  
writ,

I hold him for a reverend prelate, so  
To be esteemed, no more: none save  
the Pope

Will I acknowledge for the Church's  
head

And sovereign thence on thought or  
spirit of mine;

But in what rank and place I stand  
esteemed

Of him and foreign princes through the  
world,

I know not, neither can I hinder  
them

By letters writ of their own hearts and  
hands

To hail me queen of England. As for  
those

Whose duty and plain allegiance sworn  
to me

Stands flawed in all men's sight, — my  
secretaries, —

These merit no belief. They which  
have once

Forsworn themselves, albeit they swear  
again

With oaths and protestations ne'er so  
great,

Are not to be believed. Nor may  
these men

By what sworn oath soever hold them  
bound

In court of conscience, seeing they  
have sworn to me

Their secrecy and fidelity before,  
And are no subjects of this country.

Nau  
Hath many times writ other than I  
bade,

And Curle sets down whate'er Nau bids  
him write;

But for my part I am ready in all to  
bear

The burden of their fault, save what  
may lay

A blot upon mine honor. Haply too  
These things did they confess to save

themselves;

Supposing their avowal could hurt not  
me,

Who, being a queen, they thought, good  
ignorant men,

More favorably must needs be dealt  
withal.

For Ballard, I ne'er heard of any such,  
But of one Hallard once that proffered  
me

Such help as I would none of, knowing  
this man

Had vowed his service too to Walsing-  
ham.

*Garudy.* Next, from your letters to  
Mendoza, writ

By Curle, as freely his confession  
shows,

In privy cipher, take these few brief  
notes

For perfect witness of your full de-  
sign.

You find yourself, the Spaniard hears  
thereby,

Sore troubled what best course to take  
anew

For your affairs this side the sea,  
whereon

Charles Paget hath a charge to impart  
from you

Some certain overtures to Spain and  
him

In your behalf, whom you desire with  
prayer

Show freely what he thinks may be  
obtained

Thus from the king his master. One  
point more

Have you reserved thereon depending,  
which

On your behalf you charge him send  
the king

Some secret word concerning, no man  
else,

If this be possible, being privy to it:  
Even this, that seeing your son's great  
obstnacy

In heresy, and foreseeing too sure there-  
on

Most imminent danger and harm thence  
like to ensue

To the Catholic Church, he coming to  
bear rule

Within this kingdom, you are resolved  
at heart,

In case your son be not reduced again  
To the Catholic faith before your death,

— whereof

Plainly you say small hope is yours so  
long

As he shall bide in Scotland, — to give  
up

To that said king, and grant in absolute  
right,

Your claim upon succession to this  
crown,

By your last will made; praying him  
on this cause

From that time forth wholly to take  
yourself

Into his keeping, and therewith the  
state

And charge of all this country; which,  
you say,

You cannot for discharge of conscience  
think

That you could put into a prince's  
hands

More zealous for your faith, and abler  
found

To build it strong upon this side again,  
Even as through all parts else of Chris-  
tendom.

But this let silence keep in secret, lest  
Being known it be your dowry's loss in  
France,

And open breach in Scotland with your  
son,

And in this realm of England utterly  
Your ruin and destruction. On your  
part

Next is he bidden thank his lord the  
king

For liberal grace and sovereign favor  
shown

Lord Paget and his brother, which you  
pray him

Most earnestly to increase, and gratify  
Poor Morgan with some pension for  
your sake,

Who hath not for your sake only en-  
dured so much,

But for the common cause. Likewise,  
and last,

Is one he knows commended to his  
charge

With some more full supply to be sus-  
tained

Than the entertainment that yourself  
allot

According to the little means you have.

*Burghley.* Hereon stands proof apparent of that charge  
Which you but now put by, that you design  
To give your right supposed upon this realm  
Into the Spaniard's hold; and on that cause  
Lie now at Rome Allen and Parsons, men  
Your servants and our traitors.

*Mary Stuart.* No such proof  
Lives but by witness of revolted men,  
My traitors and your helpers; who to me  
Have broken their allegiance bound by oath.

When, being a prisoner clothed about with cares,

I languished out of hope of liberty,  
Nor yet saw hope to effect of those things aught

Which many and many looked for at my hands,

Declining now through age and sickness, this

To some seemed good, even for religion's sake,

That the succession here of the English crown

Should or be established in the Spanish king

Or in some English Catholic. And a book

Was sent to me to avow the Spaniard's claim;

Which being of me allowed not, some there were

In whose displeasure thence I fell; but now

Seeing all my hope in England desperate grown,

I am fully minded to reject no aid  
Abroad, but resolute to receive it.

*Walsingham.* Sirs,  
Bethink you, were the kingdom so conveyed,

What should become of you and all of yours,

Estates and honors and posterities,  
Being to such hands delivered.

*Burghley.* Nay, but these  
In no such wise can be conveyed away

By personal will, but by successive right  
Still must descend in heritage of law.

Whereto your own words witness, saying if this

Were blown abroad your cause were utterly

Lost in all hearts of English friends.  
Therein

Your thoughts hit right: for here in all men's minds

That are not mad with envying at the truth,

Death were no loathlier than a stranger king.

If you would any more, speak: if not aught,

This cause is ended.

*Mary Stuart.* I require again  
Before a full and open parliament

Hearing, or speech in person with the queen,

Who shall, I hope, have of a queen regard,

And with the council. So, in trust hereof,

I crave a word with some of you apart,  
And of this main assembly take farewell.

#### ACT. IV. — ELIZABETH.

##### SCENE I. — RICHMOND.

##### WALSINGHAM and DAVISON.

*Walsingham.* It is God's wrath, too sure, that holds her hand;

His plague upon this people, to preserve

By her sole mean her deadliest enemy, known

By proof more potent than approval of law

In all points guilty, but on more than all

Toward all this country dangerous. To take off

From the court held last month at Fotheringay

Authority with so full commission given

To pass upon her judgment — suddenly  
Cut short by message of some three

lines writ



With hurrying hand at midnight, and  
despatched

To maim its work upon the second  
day,—

What else may this be in so wise a  
queen

But madness, as a brand to sear the  
brain

Of one by God infatuate? yea, and  
now

That she receives the French ambas-  
sador

With one more special envoy from his  
king,

Except their message touch her spleen  
with fire,

And so undo itself, we cannot tell  
What doubt may work upon her. Had

we but  
Some sign more evident of some private  
seal

Confirming toward her by more per-  
sonal proof

The Scottish queen's inveteracy, for  
this

As for our country plucked from immi-  
nent death

We might thank God; but with such  
gracious words

Of piteous challenge and imperial  
plea

She hath wrought by letter on our mis-  
tress' mind,

We may not think her judgment so  
could slip,

Borne down with passion or forgetful-  
ness,

As to leave bare her bitter root of  
heart

And core of evil will there laboring.

*Davison.* Yet

I see no shade of other surety cast  
From any sign of likelihood. It were

Not shameful more than dangerous,  
though she bade,

To have her prisoner privily made  
away;

Yet stands the queen's heart well-nigh  
fixed hereon

When aught may seem to fix it; then  
as fast

Wavers, but veers to that bad point  
again

Whence blowing the wind blows down  
her honor, nor

Brings surety of life with fame's destruc-  
tion.

*Walsingham.* Ay,  
We are no Catholic keepers, and his  
charge

Need fear no poison in our watch-dog's  
fang,

Though he show honest teeth at her, to  
threat

Thieves' hands with loyal danger.

*Enter* QUEEN ELIZABETH, *attended by*  
BURGHLEY, LEICESTER, HUNSDON,

HATTON, *and others of the Council.*

*Elizabeth.* No, my lords,  
We are not so weak of wit as men that  
need

Be counselled of their enemies. Blame  
us not

That we accuse your friendship on this  
cause

Of too much fearfulness: France we  
will hear;

Nor doubt but France shall hear us all  
as loud

As friend or foe may threaten or pro-  
test,

Of our own heart advised, and resolute  
more

Than hearts that need men's counsel.  
Bid them in.

*Enter* CHÂTEAUNEUF *and* BELLIÈVRE,  
*attended*

From our fair cousin of France what  
message, sirs?

*Bellièvre.* I, madam, have in special  
charge to lay

The king's mind open to your majesty,  
Which gives my tongue first leave of  
speech more free

Than from a common envoy. Sure it  
is,

No man more grieves at what his heart  
abhors,

The counsels of your highness' ene-  
mies,

Than doth the king of France: whereir  
how far

The queen your prisoner have borne  
part, or may

Seem of their works partaker, he can  
judge

Naught: but much less the king may understand  
 What men may stand accusers, who rise up  
 Judge in so great a matter. Men of law  
 May lay their charges on a subject. but  
 The queen of Scotland, dowager queen  
 of France,  
 And sister made by wedlock to the king,  
 To none being subject, can be judged  
 of none  
 Without such violence done on rule as  
 breaks  
 Prerogative of princes. Nor may man  
 That looks upon your present majesty  
 In such clear wise apparent, and retains  
 Remembrance of your name through all  
 the world  
 For virtuous wisdom, bring his mind to  
 think  
 That England's royal-souled Elizabeth,  
 Being set so high in fame, can so forget  
 Wise Plato's word, that common souls  
 are wrought  
 Out of dull iron and slow lead, but  
 kings  
 Of gold untempered with so vile alloy  
 As makes all metal up of meaner men  
 But say this were not thus, and all men's  
 awe  
 Were from all time toward kingship  
 merely vain,  
 And state no more worth reverence, yet  
 the plea  
 Were naught which here your ministers  
 pretend,  
 That while the queen of Scots lives you  
 may live  
 No day that knows not danger. Were  
 she dead,  
 Rather might then your peril wax indeed  
 To shape and sense of heavier portent,  
 whom  
 The Catholic states now threat not, nor  
 your land,  
 For this queen's love, but rather for  
 their faith's,  
 Whose cause, were she by violent hand  
 removed,  
 Could be but furthered, and its enter-  
 prise  
 Put on more strong and prosperous pre-  
 text; yea,

You shall but draw the invasion on this  
 land  
 Whose threat you so may think to stay  
 and bring  
 Imminence down of inroad. Thus far  
 forth  
 The queen of Scots hath for your person  
 been  
 Even as a targe or buckler which has  
 caught  
 All intercepted shafts against your  
 state  
 Shot, or a stone held fast within your  
 hand,  
 Which, if you cast it thence in fear or  
 wrath  
 To smite your adversary, is cast away,  
 And no mean left therein for menace.  
 If  
 You lay but hand upon her life, albeit  
 There were that counselled this, her  
 death will make  
 Your enemies weapons of their own  
 despair  
 And give their whetted wrath excuse and  
 edge  
 More plausibly to strike more peril-  
 ously.  
 Your grace is known for strong in fore-  
 sight; we  
 These nineteen years of your wise reign  
 have kept  
 Fast watch in France upon you: of  
 those claims  
 Which lineally this queen here prisoner  
 may  
 Put forth on your succession have you  
 made  
 The stoutest rampire of your rule: and  
 this  
 Is grown a by-word with us, that their  
 cause  
 Who shift the base whereon their poli-  
 cies lean  
 Bows down toward ruin: and of loyal  
 heart  
 This will I tell you, madam, which hath  
 been  
 Given me for truth assured of one whose  
 place  
 Affirms him honorable, how openly  
 A certain prince's minister that well  
 May stand in your suspicion says abroad

That for his master's greatness it were  
 good  
 The queen of Scots were lost already,  
 seeing  
 He is well assured the Catholics here  
 should then  
 All wholly range them on his master's  
 part.  
 Thus long hath reigned your highness  
 happily,  
 Who have loved fair temperance more  
 than violence: now,  
 While honor bids have mercy, wisdom  
 holds  
 Equal at least the scales of interest.  
 Think  
 What name shall yours be found in time  
 far hence,  
 Even as you deal with her that in your  
 hand  
 Lies not more subject than your fame to  
 come  
 In men's repute that shall be. Bid her  
 live,  
 And ever shall my lord stand bound to  
 you,  
 And you forever firm in praise of men.  
*Elizabeth.* I am sorry, sir, you are  
 hither come from France  
 Upon no better errand. I appeal  
 To God for judge between my cause and  
 hers  
 Whom here you stand for. In this  
 realm of mine  
 The queen of Scots sought shelter, and  
 therein  
 Hath never found but kindness; for  
 which grace  
 In recompense she hath three times  
 sought my life.  
 No grief that on this head yet ever fell  
 Shook ever from mine eyes so many a  
 tear  
 As this last plot upon it. I have read  
 As deep, I doubt me, in as many books  
 As any queen or prince in Christendom,  
 Yet never chanced on aught so strange  
 and sad  
 As this my state's calamity. Mine own  
 life  
 Is by mere nature precious to myself,  
 And in mine own realm I can live not  
 safe.

I am a poor lone woman, girt about  
 With secret enemies that perpetually  
 Lay wait for me to kill me. From your  
 king  
 Why have not I my traitor to my hands  
 Delivered up, who now this second time  
 Hath sought to slay me, Morgan? On  
 my part,  
 Had mine own cousin Hunsdon here  
 conspired  
 Against the French king's life, he had  
 found not so  
 Refuge of me, nor even for kindred's  
 sake  
 From the edge of law protection; and  
 this cause  
 Needs present evidence of this man's  
 mouth.  
*Bellèvre.* Madam, there stand against  
 the queen of Scots  
 Already here in England on this charge  
 So many and they so dangerous wit-  
 nesses,  
 No need can be to bring one over more:  
 Nor can the king show such unnatural  
 heart  
 As to send hither a knife for enemies'  
 hands  
 To cut his sister's throat. Most  
 earnestly  
 My lord expects your resolution; which  
 If we receive as given against his  
 plea,  
 I must crave leave to part for Paris  
 hence.  
 Yet give me pardon first if yet once  
 more  
 I pray your highness be assured, and so  
 Take heed in season, you shall find this  
 queen  
 More dangerous dead than living.  
 Spare her life,  
 And not my lord alone, but all that  
 reign,  
 Shall be your sureties in all Christian  
 lands  
 Against all scathe of all conspiracies  
 Made on her party; while such reme-  
 dies' ends  
 As physic states with bloodshedding, to  
 cure  
 Danger by death, bring fresh calami-  
 ties

Far oftener forth than the old are healed  
of them

Which so men thought to medicine. To  
refrain

From that red-handed way of rule, and  
set

Justice no higher than mercy sits beside,  
Is the first mean of kings' prosperity  
That would reign long; nor will my lord  
believe

Your highness could put off yourself so  
much

As to reverse and tread upon the law  
That you thus long have kept and hon-  
orably:

But should' this perilous purpose hold  
right on,

I am bounden by my charge to say, the  
king

Will not regard as liable to your laws  
A queen's imperial person, nor will hold  
Her death as but the general wrong of  
kings,

And no more his than as his brethren's  
all,

But as his own and special injury done,  
More than to these injurious.

*Elizabeth.* Doth your lord  
Bid you speak thus?

*Bellidore.* Ay, madam: from his  
mouth

Had I command what speech to use.

*Elizabeth.* You have done  
Better to speak than he to send it. Sir,  
You shall not presently depart this land  
As one denied of mere discourtesy.

I will return an envoy of mine own  
To speak for me at Paris with the king.  
You shall bear back a letter from my  
hand,

And give your lord assurance, having  
seen,

I cannot be so frightened with men's  
threats

That they shall not much rather move  
my mind

To quicken than to slack the righteous  
doom

Which none must think by menace to  
put back,

Or daunt it with defiance. Sirs, good  
day. [*Exeunt Ambassadors.*]

I were as one belated with false lights

If I should think to steer my darkglin  
way

By twilight furtherance of their wiles  
and words.

Think you, my lords, France yet would  
have her live?

*Burghley.* If there be other than the  
apparent end

Hid in this mission to your majesty,  
Mine envoys can by no means fathom  
it,

Who deal for me at Paris: fear of  
Spain

Lays double hand as 'twere upon the  
king,

Lest by removal of the queen of Scots  
A way be made for peril in the claim

More potent then of Philip; and if  
there come

From his Farnese note of enterprise  
Or danger this way tending, France will  
yet

Cleave to your friendship though his  
sister die.

*Elizabeth.* So, in your mind, this half-  
souled brother would

Steer any way that might keep safe his  
sail

Against a southern wind, which here,  
he thinks,

Her death might strengthen from the  
north again

To blow against him off our subject  
straits,

Made servile then and Spanish? Yet  
perchance

There swells behind our seas a heart  
too high

To bow more easily down, and bring  
this land

More humbly to such handling, than  
their waves

Bow down to ships of strangers, or their  
storms

To breath of any lord on earth but God.  
What thinks our cousin?

*Hunsdon.* That if Spain or France  
Or both be stronger than the heart in  
us

Which beats to battle ere they menace,  
why,

In God's name, let them rise and make  
their prey

Of what was England; but if neither  
be, —

The smooth-cheeked French man-har-  
lot, nor that hand

Which help to light Rome's fires with  
English limbs, —

Let us not keep, to make their weakness  
strong,

A pestilence here alive in England,  
which

Gives force to their faint enmities, and  
burns

Half the heart out of loyal trust and hope  
With heat that kindles treason.

*Elizabeth.* By this light,

I have heard worse counsel from a wise  
mar's tongue

Than this clear note of forthright sol-  
diership.

How say you, Dudley, to it?

*Leicester.* Madam, ere this

You have had my mind upon the matter,  
writ

But late from Holland, that no public  
stroke

Should fall upon this princess, who may  
be

By privy death more happily removed  
Without impeach of majesty, nor leave

A sign against your judgment, to call  
down

Blame of strange kings for wrong to  
kingship wrought

Though right were done to justice.

*Elizabeth.* Of your love

We know it is that comes this counsel;  
nor,

Had we such friends of all our servants,  
need

Our mind be now distraught with dan-  
gerous doubts

That find no screen from dangers. Yet  
meseems

One doubt stands now removed, if doubt  
there were

Of aught from Scotland ever: Walsing-  
ham,

You should have there intelligence  
whereof

To make these lords with us partakers.

*Walsingham.* Nay,

Madam, no more than from a trustless  
hand

Protest and promise: of those twain  
that come

Hot on these Frenchmen's heels in  
embassy,

He that in counsel on this cause was  
late

One with my lord of Leicester now, to  
rid

By draught of secret death this queen  
away,

Bears charge to say as these gone hence  
have said

In open audience, but by personal note  
Hath given me this to know, that how-

soe'er

His king indeed desire her life be spared,  
Much may be wrought upon him, would

your grace

More richly line his ragged wants with  
gold,

And by full utterance of your parlia-  
ment

Approve him heir in England.

*Elizabeth.* Ay! no more?

God's blood! what grace is proffered us  
at need,

And on what mild conditions! Say I  
will not

Redeem such perils at so dear a price,  
Shall not our pensioner too join hands

with France,

And pay my gold with iron barter back  
At edge of sword he dares not look

upon,

They tell us, for the scathe and scare he  
took

Even in this woman's womb when shot  
and steel

Undid the manhood in his veins unborn,  
And left his tongue's threats hand-

less?

*Walsingham.* Men there be,  
Your majesty must think, who bear but

ill,

For pride of country and high-hearted-  
ness,

To see the king they serve your servant  
so

That not his mother's life and once their  
queen's

Being at such point of peril can enforce  
One warlike word of his, for chance of  
war

Conditional against you. Word came late  
 From Edinburgh, that there the citizens  
 With hoot and hiss had bayed him  
 through the streets  
 As he went heartless by; of whom they  
 had heard  
 This published saying, that in his per-  
 sonal mind  
 The blood of kindred or affinity  
 So much not binds us as the friendship  
 pledged  
 To them that are not of our blood: and  
 this  
 Stands clear for certain, that no breath  
 of war  
 Shall breathe from him against us  
 though she die,  
 Except his titular claim be reft from him  
 On our succession; and that all his  
 mind  
 Is but to reign unpartnered with a  
 power  
 Which should weigh down that half his  
 kingdom's weight  
 Left to his hand's share nominally in  
 hold.  
 And for his mother, this would he  
 desire,  
 That she were kept from this day to her  
 death  
 Close prisoner in one chamber, never  
 more  
 To speak with man or woman; and  
 hereon  
 That proclamation should be made of  
 her  
 As of one subject formally declared  
 To the English law whereby, if she  
 offend  
 Again with iterance of conspiracy,  
 She shall not as a queen again be tried,  
 But as your vassal and a private head  
 Live liable to the doom and stroke of  
 death.  
*Elizabeth.* She is bounden to him as  
 he long since to her,  
 Who would have given his kingdom up  
 at least  
 To his dead father's slayer; in whose  
 red hand  
 How safe had lain his life too, doubt  
 may guess,

Which yet kept dark her purpose then  
 on him,  
 Dark now no more to us-ward. Think  
 you then  
 That they belie him, whose suspicion  
 saith  
 His ear and heart are yet inclined to  
 Spain,  
 If from that brother-in-law that was  
 of ours,  
 And would have been our bridegroom,  
 he may win  
 Help of strange gold and foreign sol-  
 diership,  
 With Scottish furtherance of those  
 Catholic lords  
 Who are stronger-spirited in their faith  
 than ours,  
 Being harried more of heretics, as they  
 say,  
 Than these within our borders, to root  
 out  
 The creed there stablished now, and do  
 to death  
 Its ministers, with all the lords their  
 friends,  
 Lay hands on all strong places there,  
 and rule  
 As prince upon their party? since he  
 fain  
 From ours would be divided, and cast  
 in  
 His lot with Rome against us too, from  
 these  
 Might he but earn assurance of their  
 faith,  
 Revolting from his own. May these  
 things be  
 More than mere muttering breath of  
 trustless lies,  
 And half his heart yet hover toward our  
 side  
 For all such hope or purpose?  
*Walsingham.* Of his heart  
 We know not, madam, surely; nor  
 doth he  
 Who follows fast on their first envoy  
 sent,  
 And writes to excuse him of his mes-  
 sage here  
 On her behalf apparent, but in sooth  
 Aimed otherwise; the Master I mean  
 of Gray,

Who swears me here by letter, if he be  
not

True to the queen of England, he is  
content

To have his head fall on a scaffold:  
saying,

To put from him this charge of em-  
bassy

Had been his ruin, but the meaning of  
it

Is modest and not menacing; whereto  
If you will yield not yet to spare the  
life

So near its forfeit now, he thinks it  
well

You should be pleased by some com-  
mission given

To stay by the way his comrade and  
himself,

Or bid them back.

*Elizabeth.* What man is this, then,  
sent

With such a knave to fellow?

*Walsingham.* No such knave,  
But still your prisoner's friend of old  
time found, —

Sir Robert Melville.

*Elizabeth.* And an honest man  
As faith might wish her servants; but  
what pledge

Will these produce me for security  
That I may spare this dangerous life,  
and live

Unscathed of after practice?

*Walsingham.* As I think,  
The king's self and his whole nobility  
Will be her personal pledges; and her  
son,

If England yield her to his hand in  
charge,

On no less strait a bond will undertake  
For her safe keeping.

*Elizabeth.* That were even to arm  
With double power mine adversary,  
and make him

The stronger by my hand to do me  
hurt —

Were he mine adversary indeed: which  
yet

I will not hold him. Let them find a  
mean

For me to live unhurt, and save her  
life,

It shall well please me. Say this king  
of Scots

Himself would give his own inheritance  
up

Pretended in succession, if but once  
Her hand were found, or any friend's of

hers,  
Again put forth upon me for her sake,

Why, haply so might hearts be satisfied  
Of lords and commons then to let her  
live.

But this I doubt he had rather take her  
life

Himself than yield up to us for pledge;  
and less,

These men shall know of me, I will  
not take

In price of her redemption: which  
were else,

And haply may in no wise not be held,  
To this my loyal land and mine own  
trust

A deadlier stroke and blast of sound  
more dire

Than noise of fleets invasive.

*Walsingham.* Surely so  
Would all hearts hold it, madam, in  
that land

That are not enemies of the land and  
yours;

For ere the doom had been proclaimed  
an hour

Which gave to death your main foe's  
head and theirs,

Yourself have heard what fire of joy  
brake forth

From all your people; how their  
church-towers all

Rang in with jubilant acclaim of bells  
The day that bore such tidings, and the  
night

That laughed aloud with lightning of  
their joy

And thundered round its triumph:  
twice twelve hours

This tempest of thanksgiving roared  
and shone

Sheer from the Solway's to the Chan-  
nel's foam

With light as from one festal-flaming  
hearth

And sound as of one trumpet; not a  
tongue

But praised God for it, or heart that  
leapt not up,  
Save of your traitors and their coun-  
try's: these  
Withered at heart and shrank their  
heads in close,  
As though the bright sun's were a bas-  
ilisk's eye,  
And light, that gave all others comfort,  
flame  
And smoke to theirs of hell's own dark-  
ness, whence  
Such eyes were blinded or put out with  
fire.

*Elizabeth.* Yea, I myself, I mind me,  
might not sleep  
Those twice twelve hours thou speak'st  
of. By God's light,  
Be it most in love of me or fear of her  
I know not, but my people seems in  
sooth  
Hot and an hungered on this trail of  
hers:

Nor is it a people bloody-minded, used  
To lap the life up of an enemy's vein  
Who bleeds to death unweaponed: our  
good hounds  
Will course a quarry soldier-like in war,  
But rage not hangman-like upon the  
prey,  
To flesh their fangs on limbs that strive  
not: yet  
Their hearts are hotter on this course  
than mine,  
Which most was deadliest aimed at.

*Walsingham.* Even for that  
How should not theirs be hot as fire  
from hell  
To burn your danger up, and slay that  
soul  
Alive that seeks it? Thinks your maj-  
esty  
There beats a heart where treason hath  
not turned  
All English blood to poison, which  
would feel  
No deadlier pang of dread more death-  
ful to it  
To hear of yours endangered than to  
feel  
A sword against its own life bent, or  
know  
Death imminent as darkness overhead

That takes the noon from one man's  
darkening eye  
As must your death from all this peo-  
ple's? You  
Are very England: in your light of life  
This living land of yours walks only  
safe,  
And all this breathing people with your  
breath  
Breathes unenslaved, and draws at each  
pulse in  
Freedom: your eye is light of theirs,  
your word  
As God's to comfort England, whose  
whole soul  
Is made with yours one, and her wit-  
ness you  
That Rome or hell shall take not hold  
on her  
Again till God be wroth with us so  
much  
As to reclaim for heaven the star that  
yet  
Lights all your land that looks on it,  
and gives  
Assurance higher than danger dares  
assail  
Save in this lady's name and service,  
who

Must now from you take judgment.  
*Elizabeth.* Must! by God,  
I know not *must* but as a word of mine,  
My tongue's and not mine ear's famil-  
iar. Sirs,  
Content yourselves to know this much  
of us,  
Or having known remember, that we  
sent  
The lord of Buckhurst and our servant  
Beale  
To acquaint this queen our prisoner  
with the doom  
Confirmed on second trial against her;  
saying  
Her word can weigh not down the  
weightier guilt  
Approved upon her, and by parliament  
Since fortified with sentence. Yea,  
my lords,  
Ye should forget not how by message  
then  
I bade her know of me with what  
strong force



As strenuous and invincible argument  
I am urged to hold no more in such  
delay

The process of her execution, being  
The seed-plot of these late conspiracies,  
Their author and chief motive; and am  
told

That if I yield not, mine the guilt must  
be

In God's and in the whole world's suffer-  
ing sight

Of all the miseries and calamities  
To ensue on my refusal: whence, albeit  
I know not yet how God shall please to  
incline

My heart on that behalf, I have thought  
it meet

In conscience yet that she should be  
forewarned,

That so she might bethink her of her  
sins

Done both toward God offensive and  
to me,

And pray for grace to be true penitent  
For all these faults: which, had the  
main fault reached

No farther than mine own poor person,  
God

Stands witness with what truth my heart  
protests

I freely would have pardoned. She to  
this

Makes bitter answer as of desperate  
heart,

All we may wreak our worst upon her;  
whom

Having to death condemned, we may  
fulfil

Our wicked work, and God in paradise  
With just atonement shall requite her.

This

Ye see is all the pardon she will ask,  
Being only, and even as 'twere with  
prayer, desired

To crave of us forgiveness; and there-  
on

Being by Lord Buckhurst charged on  
this point home,

That by her mean the Catholics here  
had learnt

To hold her for their sovereign, — on  
which cause

Nor my religion nor myself might live

Uncharged with danger while her life  
should last, —

She answering gives God thanks aloud  
to be

Held of so great account upon his side,  
And in God's cause and in the Church  
of God's

Rejoicingly makes offering of her life;  
Which I, God knows how unrejoicingly,  
Can scarce, ye tell me, choose but take,  
or yield

At least for you to take it. Yet, being  
told

It is not for religion she must die,  
But for a plot by compass of her own  
Laid to dethrone me and destroy, she  
casts

Again this answer barbed with mockery  
back, —

She was not so presumptuous born, to  
aspire

To two such ends yet ever: yea, so far  
She dwelt from such desire removed in  
heart,

She would not have me suffer by her  
will

The fillip of a finger; though herself  
Be persecuted even as David once,  
And her mishap be that she cannot so  
Fly by the window forth as David:

whence

It seems she likens us to Saul, and looks  
Haply to see us as on Mount Gilboa  
fallen,

Where yet, for all the shooters on her  
side,

Our shield shall be not vilely cast away,  
As of one unanointed. Yet, my lords,  
If England might but by my death  
attain

A state more flourishing with a better  
prince,

Gladly would I lay down my life; who  
have

No care save only for my people's sake  
To keep it: for myself, in all the world  
I see no great cause why for all this coil  
I should be fond to live or fear to die.

If I should say unto you that I mean  
To grant not your petition, by my faith,

More should I so say haply than I mean:  
Or should I say I mean to grant it, this

Were, as I think, to tell you of my mind

More than is fit for you to know: and thus  
 I must for all petitionary prayer  
 Deliver you an answer answerless.  
 Yet will I pray God lighten my dark  
 mind,  
 That being illumined it may thence fore-  
 see  
 What for his church and all this com-  
 monwealth  
 May most be profitable: and this once  
 known,  
 My hand shall halt not long behind his  
 will.

## SCENE II. — FOTHERINGAY

SIR AMYAS PAULET *and* SIR DREW  
 DRURY.

*Paulet.* I never gave God heartier  
 thanks than these  
 I give to have you partner of my charge  
 Now most of all, these letters being to  
 you  
 No less designed than me, and you in  
 heart  
 One with mine own upon them. Cer-  
 tainly,  
 When I put hand to pen this morning  
 past,  
 That master Davison by mine evidence  
 Might note what sore disquietudes I  
 had  
 To increase my griefs before of body  
 and mind,  
 I looked for no such word to cut off  
 mine  
 As these to us both of Walsingham's  
 and his.  
 Would rather yet I had cause to still  
 complain  
 Of those unanswered letters two months  
 past,  
 Than thus be certified of such intents  
 As God best knoweth I never sought to  
 know,  
 Or search out secret causes: though to  
 hear  
 Nothing at all did breed, as I confessed,  
 In me some hard conceits against my-  
 self,  
 I had rather yet rest ignorant than  
 ashamed

Of such ungracious knowledge. This  
 shall be  
 Fruit as I think of dread wrought on the  
 queen  
 By those seditious rumors whose report  
 Blows fear among the people lest our  
 charge  
 Escape our trust, or, as they term it now,  
 Be taken away, — such apprehensive  
 tongues  
 So phrase it, — and her freedom strike  
 men's hearts  
 More deep than all these flying fears  
 that say  
 London is fired of Papists, or the Scots  
 Have crossed in arms the Border, or  
 the north  
 Is risen again rebellious, or the Guise  
 Is disembarked in Sussex, or that now  
 In Milford Haven rides a Spanish  
 fleet, —  
 All which, albeit but footless floating  
 lies,  
 May all too easily smite and work too  
 far  
 Even on the heart most royal in the  
 world  
 That ever was a woman's.  
*Drury.* Good my friend,  
 These noises come without a thunder-  
 bolt  
 In such dense air of dusk expectancy  
 As all this land lies under; nor will  
 some  
 Doubt or think much to say of those  
 reports,  
 They are broached and vented of men's  
 credulous mouths  
 Whose ears have caught them from such  
 lips as meant  
 Merely to strike more terror in the  
 queen,  
 And wring that warrant from her hover-  
 ing hand  
 Which falters yet and flutters on her lip  
 While the hand hangs and trembles  
 half advanced  
 Upon that sentence which, the treas-  
 urer said,  
 Should well ere this have spoken, see  
 ing it was  
 More than a full month old and four  
 days more

When he so looked to hear the word of  
it

Which yet lies sealed of silence.

*Paulet.* Will you say,  
Or any as wise and loyal, say or think  
It was but for a show, to scare men's  
wits,  
They have raised this hue and cry upon  
her flight

Supposed from hence, to waken Exeter  
With noise from Honiton and Sampfield  
spread

Of proclamation to detain all ships,  
And lay all highways for her day and  
night,

And send like precepts out four manner  
of ways

From town to town, to make in readi-  
ness

Their armor and artillery, with all speed,  
On pain of death, for London by report  
Was set on fire? though, God be there-  
fore praised,

We know this is not, yet the noise hereof  
Were surely not to be neglected, see-  
ing

There is, meseems, indeed no readier  
way

To levy forces for the achieving that  
Which so these lewd reporters feign to  
fear.

*Drury.* Why, in such mighty matters  
and such mists

Wise men may think what hardly fools  
would say,

And eyes get glimpse of more than sight  
hath leave

To give commission for the babbling  
tongue

Aloud to cry they have seen. This noise  
that was

Upon one Arden's flight, a traitor,  
whence

Fear flew last week all round us, gave  
but note

How lightly may men's minds take fire,  
and words

Take wing that have no feet to fare  
upon

More solid than a shadow.

*Paulet.* Nay, he was  
Escaped indeed: and every day thus  
brings

Forth its new mischief; as this last  
month did

Those treasons of the French ambas-  
sador

Designed against our mistress, which  
God's grace

Laid by the knave's mean bare to whom  
they sought

For one to slay her, and of the Pope's  
hand earn

Ten thousand blood-incrusted crowns a  
year

To his most hellish hire. You will not  
say

This too was merely fraud or vision  
wrought

By fear or cloudy falsehood?

*Drury.* I will say

No more or surelier than I know: and  
this

I know not thoroughly to the core of  
truth

Or heart of falsehood in it. A man may  
lie

Merely, or trim some bald lean truth  
with lies,

Or patch bare falsehood with some tatter  
of truth,

And each of these pass current: but of  
these

Which likeliest may this man's tale be  
who gave

Word of his own temptation by these  
French

To hire them such a murderer, and  
avowed

He held it godly cunning to comply,

And bring this envoy's secretary to  
sight

Of one clapped up for debts in New-  
gate, who

Being thence released might readily, as  
he said,

Even by such means as once this lady's  
lord

Was made away with, make the queen  
away

With powder fired beneath her bed—  
why, this,

Good sooth, I guess not; but I doubt  
the man

To be more liar than fool, and yet, God  
wot,

More fool than traitor; most of all intent

To conjure coin forth of the Frenchman's purse

With tricks of mere effontery: thus at least

We know did Walsingham esteem of him:

And if by Davison held of more account,

Or merely found more serviceable, and made

A mean to tether up those quick French tongues

From threat or pleading for this prisoner's life,

I cannot tell, and care not. Though the queen

Hath stayed this envoy's secretary from flight

Forth of the kingdom, and committed him

To ward within the Tower while Châteauneuf

Himself should come before a council held

At my lord treasurer's, where being thus accused

At first he cared not to confront the man,

But stood upon his office, and the charge

Of his king's honor and prerogative —

Then bade bring forth the knave, who being brought forth

Outfaced him with insistence front to front,

And took the record of this whole tale's truth

Upon his soul's damnation, challenging

The Frenchman's answer in denial hereof,

That of his own mouth had this witness been

Traitorously tempted, and by personal plea

Directly drawn to treason: which awhile

Struck dumb the ambassador as amazed with wrath,

Till presently, the accuser being removed,

He made avowal this fellow some while since

Had given his secretary to wit there lay One bound in Newgate who being

thence released

Would take the queen's death on his hand: whereto

Answering, he bade the knave avoid his house

On pain, if once their ways should cross, to be

Sent bound before the council: who replied

He had done foul wrong to take no further note,

But being made privy to this damned device

Keep close its perilous knowledge; whence the queen

Might well complain against him; and hereon

They fell to wrangling on this cause, that he

Professed himself to no man answerable

For declaration or for secret held Save his own master: so that now is

gone Sir William Wade to Paris, not with charge

To let the king there know this queen shall live,

But to require the ambassador's recall, And swift delivery of our traitors there

To present justice: yet may no man say, For all these half-faced scares and policies,

Here was more sooth than seeming.

*Paulet.* Why, these crafts

Were shameful then as fear's most shameful self,

If thus your wit read them aright; and we

Should for our souls' and lives alike do ill

To jeopard them on such men's surety given

As make no more account of simple faith

Than true men make of liars: and these are they,

Our friends and masters, that rebuke us both

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>By speech late uttered of her majesty<br/>         For lack of zeal in service and of care<br/>         She looked for at our hands, in that we<br/>             have not<br/>         In all this time, unprompted, of our-<br/>             selves<br/>         Found out some way to cut this queen's<br/>             life off,<br/>         Seeing how great peril, while her ene-<br/>             my lives,<br/>         She is hourly subject unto; saying, she<br/>             notes,<br/>         Besides a kind of lack of love to her,<br/>         Herein we have not that particular<br/>             care<br/>         Forsooth of our own safeties, or indeed<br/>         Of the faith rather and the general<br/>             good,<br/>         That politic reason bids; especially,<br/>         Having so strong a warrant and such<br/>             ground<br/>         For satisfaction of our consciences<br/>         To Godward, and discharge of credit<br/>             kept<br/>         And reputation toward the world, as is<br/>         That oath whereby we stand associated<br/>         To prosecute inexorably to death<br/>         Both with our joint and our particular<br/>             force<br/>         All by whose hand and all on whose<br/>             behalf<br/>         Our sovereign's life is struck at: as by<br/>             proof<br/>         Stands charged upon our prisoner.<br/>             So they write,<br/>         As though the queen's own will had<br/>             warranted<br/>         The words that by her will's authority<br/>         Were blotted from the bond, whereby<br/>             that head<br/>         Was doomed on whose behoof her life<br/>             should be<br/>         By treason threatened: for she would<br/>             not have<br/>         Aught pass which grieved her subjects'<br/>             consciences,<br/>         She said, or might abide not openly<br/>         The whole world's view: nor would she<br/>             any one<br/>         Were punished for another's fault: and<br/>             so<br/>         Cut off the plea whereon she now de-<br/>             sires</p> | <p>That we should dip our secret hands in<br/>             blood<br/>         With no direction given of her own<br/>             mouth<br/>         So to pursue that dangerous head to<br/>             death<br/>         By whose assent her life were sought:<br/>             for this<br/>         Stands fixed for only warrant of such<br/>             deed,<br/>         And this we have not, but her word<br/>             instead<br/>         She takes it most unkindly toward her<br/>             self<br/>         That men professing toward her loyally<br/>         That love that we do should in any<br/>             sort,<br/>         For lack of our own duty's full dis-<br/>             charge,<br/>         Cast upon her the burden, knowing as<br/>             we<br/>         Her slowness to shed blood, much more<br/>             of one<br/>         So near herself in blood as is this<br/>             queen,<br/>         And one with her in sex and quality.<br/>         And these respects, they find, or so<br/>             profess,<br/>         Do greatly trouble her: who hath sun-<br/>             dry times<br/>         Protested, they assure us, earnestly,<br/>         That if regard of her good subjects'<br/>             risk<br/>         Did not more move her than the per-<br/>             sonal fear<br/>         Of proper peril to her, she never would<br/>         Be drawn to assent unto this blood-<br/>             shedding:<br/>         And so to our good judgments they<br/>             refer<br/>         These speeches they thought meet to<br/>             acquaint us with<br/>         As passed but lately from her majesty,<br/>         And to God's guard commend us:<br/>             which God knows<br/>         We should much more need than de-<br/>             serve of him<br/>         Should we give ear to this, and as they<br/>             bid<br/>         Make heretics of these papers; which<br/>             three times<br/>         You see how Davison hath enforced<br/>             on us:</p> |
|--|--|

But they shall taste no fire for me, nor  
pass

Back to his hands till copies writ of  
them

Lie safe in mine for sons of mine to  
keep

In witness how their father dealt herein.

*Drury.* You have done the wiselier:  
and what word soe'er

Shall bid them know your mind, I am  
well assured

It well may speak for me too.

*Paulet.* Thus it shall:

That having here his letters in my  
hands,

I would not fail, according to his  
charge,

To send back answer with all possible  
speed

Which shall deliver unto him my great  
grief

And bitterness of mind, in that I am

So much unhappy as I hold myself

To have lived to look on this unhappy  
day,

When I by plain direction am required  
From my most gracious sovereign's

mouth to do

An act which God forbiddeth, and the  
law.

Hers are my goods and livings, and my  
life,

Held at her disposition, and myself

Am ready so to lose them this next  
day

If it shall please her so, acknowledging  
I hold them of her mere goodwill, and

do not

Desire them to enjoy them but so long  
As her great grace gives leave: but

God forbid

That I should make for any grace of  
he, s

So foul a shipwreck of my conscience,  
or

Leave ever to my poor posterity

So great a blot, as privily to shed blood  
With neither law nor warrant. So, in

trust

That she, of her accustomed clemency,  
Will take my dutiful answer in good

part,

By his good mediation, as returned

From one who never will be less in  
love,

Honor, obedience, duty to his queen,  
Than any Christian subject living, thus  
To God's grace I commit him.

*Drury.* Though I doubt

She haply shall be much more wroth  
hereat

Than lately she was gracious, when she  
bade

God treblefold reward you for your  
charge

So well discharged, saluting you by  
name

Most faithful and most careful, you  
shall do

Most like a wise man loyally to write

But such good words as these, whereto  
myself

Subscribe in heart: though being not  
named herein

(Albeit to both seem these late letters  
meant)

Nor this directed to me, I forbear

To make particular answer. And in-  
deed,

Were danger less apparent in her life

To the heart's life of all this living  
land,

I would this woman might not die at  
all

By secret stroke nor open sentence.

*Paulet.* I

Will praise God's mercy most for this  
of all,

When I shall see the murderous cause  
removed

Of its most mortal peril: nor desire

A gerdon ampler from the queen we  
serve,

Besides her commendations of my faith  
For spotless actions and for safe re-  
gards,

Than to see judgment on her enemy  
done;

Which were for me that recompense  
indeed

Whereof she writes as one not given  
to all,

But for such merit reserved to crown its  
claim

Above all common service: nor save  
this

Could any treasure's promise in the  
 world  
 So ease those travails and rejoice this  
 heart  
 That hers too much takes thought of,  
 as to read  
 Her charge to carry for her sake in it  
 This most just thought, that she can  
 balance not  
 The value that her grace doth prize me  
 at  
 In any weight of judgment: yet it were  
 A word to me more comfortable at heart  
 Than these, though these most gracious,  
 that should speak  
 Death to her death's contriver.  
*Drury.* Nay, myself  
 Were fain to see this coil wound up,  
 and her  
 Removed that makes it: yet such things  
 will pluck  
 I rd at men's hearts that think on  
 them, and move  
 Compassion that such long strange  
 years should find  
 So strange an end: nor shall men ever  
 say  
 But she was born right royal; full of  
 sins,  
 It may be, and by circumstance or choice  
 Dyed and defaced with bloody stains  
 and black,  
 Unmerciful, unfaithful, but of heart  
 So fiery high, so swift of spirit and clear,  
 In extreme danger and pain so lifted up,  
 So of all violent things inviolable,  
 So large of courage, so superb of soul,  
 So sheathed with iron mind invincible  
 And arms unbreached of fireproof con-  
 stancy, —  
 By shame not shaken, fear or force or  
 death,  
 Change, or all confluence of calami-  
 ties, —  
 And so at her worst need beloved, and  
 still,  
 Naked of help and honor when she  
 seemed,  
 As other women would be, and of hope  
 Stripped, still so of herself adorable  
 By minds not always all ignobly mad  
 Nor all made poisonous with false grain  
 of faith,

She shall be a world's wonder to all  
 time,  
 A deadly glory watched of marvelling  
 men  
 Not without praise, not without noble  
 tears,  
 And if without what she would never  
 have  
 Who had it never, — pity, — yet from  
 none  
 Quite without reverence and some kind  
 of love  
 For that which was so royal. Yea, and  
 now  
 That at her prayer we here attend on  
 her,  
 If, as I think, she have in mind to  
 send  
 Aught written to the queen, what we  
 may do  
 To further her desire shall on my part  
 Gladly be done, so be it the grace she  
 craves  
 Be naught akin to danger.  
*Paulet.* It shall be  
 The first of all, then, craved by her of  
 man,  
 Or by man's service done her, that was  
 found  
 So harmless ever.  
*Enter MARY STUART and MARY BEA-  
 TON.*  
*Mary Stuart.* Sirs, in time past by  
 I was desirous many times, ye know,  
 To have written to your queen: but  
 since I have had  
 Advertisement of my conviction, seeing  
 I may not look for life, my soul is set  
 On preparation for another world:  
 Yet none the less, not for desire of life,  
 But for my conscience's discharge and  
 rest,  
 And for my last farewell, I have at  
 heart  
 By you to send her a memorial writ  
 Of somewhat that concerns myself,  
 when I  
 Shall presently be gone out of this world.  
 And to remove from her, if such be  
 there,  
 Suspicion of all danger in receipt  
 Of this poor paper that shall come from  
 me,

Myself will take the assay of it, and so  
With mine own hands to yours deliver  
it.

*Paulet.* Will you not also, madam,  
be content

To seal and close it in my presence up?

*Mary Stuart.* Sir, willingly; but I  
beseech your word

Pledged for its safe delivery to the  
queen.

*Paulet.* I plight my faith it shall be  
sent to her.

*Mary Stuart.* This further promise I  
desire, you will

Procure me from above certificate  
It hath been there delivered.

*Drury.* This is more

Than we may stand so pledged for: in  
our power

It is to send, but far beyond our power,  
As being above our place, to promise  
you

Certificate or warrant.

*Mary Stuart.* Yet I trust

Consideration may be had of me  
After my death, as one derived in blood  
From your queen's grandsire, with all  
mortal rites

According with that faith I have pro-  
fessed

All my life-days as I was born therein.

This is the sum of all mine askings:  
whence

Well might I take it in ill part of you  
To wish me seal my letter in your sight,  
Bewraying your hard opinion of me.

*Paulet.* This

Your own words well might put into my  
mind,

That so beside my expectation made  
Proffer to take my first assay for me  
Of the outer part of it: for you must  
think

I was not ignorant that by sleight of craft  
There might be as great danger so con-  
veyed

Within the letter as without, and thus  
I could not for ill thoughts of you be  
blamed,

Concurring with you in this jealousy:  
For had yourself not moved it of your-  
self

Sir Drew nor I had ever thought on it.

*Mary Stuart.* The occasion why I  
moved it was but this:

That having made my custom in time  
past

To send sometimes some tokens to your  
queen,

At one such time that I sent certain  
clothes

One standing by advised her cause my  
gifts

To be tried thoroughly ere she touched  
them; which

I have since observed, and taken order  
thus

With Nau, when last he tarried at the  
court,

To do the like to a fur-fringed counter-  
pane

Which at that time I sent: and as for  
this,

Look what great danger lies between  
these leaves

That I dare take and handle in my  
hands,

And press against my face each part of  
them

Held open thus, and either deadly side,  
Wherein your fear smells death sown  
privily.

*Paulet.* Madam, when so you charged  
your secretary

Her majesty was far from doubt, I  
think,

Or dream of such foul dealing; and I  
would

Suspicion since had found no just cause  
given,

And then things had not been as now  
they are.

*Mary Stuart.* But things are as they  
are, and here I stand

Convicted, and not knowing how many  
hours

I have to live yet.

*Paulet.* Madam, you shall live  
As many hours as God shall please; but  
this

May be said truly, that you here have  
been

Convicted in most honorable sort

And favorable.

*Mary Stuart.* What favor have I  
found?



*Paulet.* Your cause hath been examined scrupulously  
By many our eldest nobles of this realm,  
Whereas by law you should but have been tried  
By twelve men as a common person.

*Mary Stuart.* Nay,  
Your noblemen must by their peers be tried.

*Paulet.* All strangers of what quality soe'er  
In matter of crime are only to be tried  
In other princes' territories by law  
That in that realm bears rule.

*Mary Stuart.* You have your laws:  
But other princes all will think of it  
As they see cause; and mine own son is now

No more a child, but come to man's estate,  
And he will think of these things bitterly.

*Drury.* Ingratitude, whate'er he think of them,  
Is odious in all persons, but of all  
In mightiest personages most specially  
Most hateful: and it will not be denied  
But that the queen's grace greatly hath deserved

Both of yourself and of your son.

*Mary Stuart.* What boon  
Shall I acknowledge? Being in bonds,  
I am set  
Free from the world, and therefore am I not  
Afraid to speak; I have had the favor here

To have been kept prisoner now these many years  
Against my will and justice.

*Paulet.* Madam, this  
Was a great favor, and without this grace  
You had not lived to see these days.

*Mary Stuart.* How so?

*Paulet.* Seeing your own subjects did pursue you, and had  
The best in your own country.

*Mary Stuart.* That is true,  
Because your Mildmay's ill persuasions first  
Made me discharge my forces, and then caused

Mine enemies to burn my friends' main holds,  
Castles and houses.

*Paulet.* Howsoe'er, it was  
By great men of that country that the queen  
Had earnest suit made to her to have yourself  
Delivered to them, which her grace denied,  
And to their great misliking.

*Drury.* Seventeen years  
She hath kept your life to save it; and whereas

She calls your highness sister, she hath dealt  
In truth and deed most graciously with you

And sister like, in seeking to preserve  
Your life at once and honor.

*Mary Stuart.* Ay! wherein?

*Drury.* In that commission of your causes held  
At York, which was at instance of your friends

Dissolved to save your honor.

*Mary Stuart.* No: the cause  
Why that commission was dissolved indeed

Was that my friends could not be heard to inform  
Against my loud accusers.

*Paulet.* But your friend  
The bishop's self of Ross, your very friend,  
Hath written that this meeting was dismissed

All only in your favor; and his book  
Is extant: and this favor is but one  
Of many graces which her majesty  
Hath for mere love extended to you.

*Mary Stuart.* This  
Is one great favor, even to have kept me here

So many years against my will.

*Paulet.* It was  
For your own safety, seeing your countrymen  
Sought your destruction, and to that swift end

Required to have you yielded up to them,  
As was before said.

*Mary Stuart.* Nay, then, I will speak.  
I am not afraid. It was determined  
here

That I should not depart; and when I  
was

Demanded by my subjects, this I know,  
That my lord treasurer with his own  
close hand

Writ in a packet which by trustier  
hands

Was intercepted, and to me conveyed,  
To the earl of Murray, that the devil  
was tied

Fast in a chain, and they could keep  
her not,

But here she should be safely kept.

*Drury.* That earl

Was even as honorable a gentleman  
As I knew ever in that country bred.

*Mary Stuart.* One of the worst men  
of the world he was:

A foul adulterer, one of general lust,  
A spoiler and a murderer.

*Drury.* Six weeks long,

As I remember, here I saw him; where  
He bore him very gravely, and main-  
tained

The reputation even on all men's  
tongues

In all things of a noble gentleman:  
Nor have I heard him evil spoken of  
Till this time ever.

*Mary Stuart.* Yea, my rebels here  
Are honest men, and by the queen  
have been

Maintained.

*Paulet.* You greatly do forget your-  
self

To charge her highness with so foul a  
fault,

Which you can never find ability  
To prove on her.

*Mary Stuart.* What did she with the  
French,

I pray you, at Newhaven?

*Paulet.* It appears

You have conceived so hardly of the  
queen

My mistress, that you still inveterately  
Interpret all her actions to the worst,  
Not knowing the truth of all the cause;  
but yet

I dare assure you that her majesty

Had most just cause and righteous, in  
respect

As well of Calais as for other ends,  
To do the thing she did, and more to  
have done,

Had it so pleased her to put forth her  
power.

And this is in you great unthankfulness  
After so many favors and so great,  
Whereof you will acknowledge in no  
wise

The least of any; though her majesty  
Hath of her own grace merely saved  
your life,

To the utter discontentment of the best  
Your subjects once in open parliament,  
Who craved against you justice on the  
charge

Of civil law-breach and rebellion.

*Mary Stuart.* I

Know no such matter, but full well I  
know

Sir Francis Walsingham hath openly,  
Since his abiding last in Scotland, said  
That I should rue his entertainment  
there.

*Paulet.* Madam, you have not rued  
it, but have been

More honorably entertained than ever  
yet

Was any other crown's competitor  
In any realm save only this: whereof  
Some have been kept close prisoners,  
other some

Maimed and unnaturally disfigured,  
some

Murdered.

*Mary Stuart.* But I was no competi-  
tor:

All I required was in successive right  
To be reputed but as next the crown.

*Paulet.* Nay, madam, you went fur-  
ther, when you gave

The English arms and style, as though  
our queen

Had been but an usurper on your  
right.

*Mary Stuart.* My husband and my  
kinsmen did therein

What they thought good: I had naught  
to do with it.

*Paulet.* Why would you not then  
loyally renounce

Your claim herein pretended, but with  
such

Condition, that you might be authorized  
Next heir apparent to the crown?

*Mary Stuart.* I have made

At sundry times thereon good proffers,  
which

Could never be accepted.

*Paulet.* Heretofore

It hath been proved unto you presently,  
That in the very instant even of all

Your treaties and most friendlike of-  
fers, were

Some dangerous crafts discovered.

*Mary Stuart.* You must think

I have some friends on earth; and if  
they have done

Any thing privily, what is that to me?

*Paulet.* Madam, it was somewhat to  
you, and I would

For your own sake you had forborne  
it, that

After advisement and conscience  
given

Of Morgan's devilish practice, to have  
killed

A sacred queen, you yet would enter-  
tain

The murderer as your servant.

*Mary Stuart.* I might do it

With as good right as ever did your  
queen

So entertain my rebels.

*Drury.* Be advised:

This speech is very hard, and all the  
case

Here differs greatly.

*Mary Stuart.* Yea, let this then be:

Ye cannot yet of my conviction say  
But I by partial judgment was con-  
demned,

And the commissioners knew my son  
could have

No right, were I convicted, and your  
queen

Could have no children of her womb;  
whereby

They might set up what man for king  
they would.

*Paulet.* This is in you too great for-  
getfulness

Of honor and yourself, to charge these  
lords

With two so foul and horrible faults,  
as first

To take your life by partial doom from  
you,

And then bestow the kingdom where  
they liked.

*Mary Stuart.* Well, all is one to me:  
and for my part

I thank God I shall die without regret  
Of any thing that I have done alive.

*Paulet.* I would entreat you yet be  
sorry at least

For the great wrong and well-deserv-  
ing grief

You have done the queen, my mistress.

*Mary Stuart.* Nay, thereon

Let others answer for themselves: I  
have

Nothing to do with it. Have you borne  
in mind

Those matters of my moneys that we  
last

Conferred upon together?

*Paulet.* Madam, these

Are not forgotten.

*Mary Stuart.* Well it is if aught

Be yet at all remembered for my good  
Have here my letter sealed and super-  
scribed,

And so farewell — or even as here men  
may.

[*Exeunt PAULET and DRURY.*

Had I that old strength in my weary  
limbs

That in my heart yet fails not, fain  
would I

Fare forth if not fare better. Tired  
I am,

But not so lame in spirit I might not  
take

Some comfort of the winter-wasted sun  
This bitter Christmas to me, though  
my feet

Were now no firmer nor more helpful  
found

Than when I went but in my chair  
abroad

Last weary June at Chartley. I can  
stand

And go now without help of either  
side,

And bend my hand again, thou seest,  
to write:

I did not well perchance in sight of  
 these  
 To have made so much of this lame  
 hand, which yet  
 God knows was grievous to me, and  
 to-day  
 To make my letter up and superscribe  
 And seal it with no outward show of  
 pain  
 Before their face and inquisition; yet  
 I care not much in player's wise pit-  
 eously  
 To blind such eyes with feigning:  
 though this Drew  
 Be gentler and more gracious than his  
 mate,  
 And liker to be wrought on; but at last  
 What need have I of men?  
*Mary Beaton.* What then you may,  
 I know not, seeing for all that was and is  
 We are yet not at the last; but when  
 you had,  
 You have hardly failed to find more  
 help of them  
 And heartier service than more pros-  
 perous queens  
 Exact of expectation: when your need  
 Was greater than your name or natural  
 state,  
 And wage was none to look for but of  
 death,  
 As though the expectancy thereof and  
 hope  
 Were more than man's prosperities,  
 men have given  
 Heart's thanks to have this gift of God  
 and you  
 For dear life's guerdon, even the trust  
 assured  
 To drink for you the bitterness of death.  
*Mary Stuart.* Ay, one said once it  
 must be, — some one said  
 I must be perilous ever, and my love  
 More deadly than my will was evil or  
 good  
 Toward any of all these that through  
 me should die:  
 I know not who, nor when one said it;  
 but  
 I know too sure he lied not.  
*Mary Beaton.* No; I think  
 This was a seer indeed. I have heard  
 of men

That under imminence of death grew  
 strong  
 With mortal foresight, yet in life-day,  
 past  
 Could see no foot before them, nor  
 provide  
 For their own fate or fortune any thing  
 Against one angry chance of accident  
 Or passionate fault of their own loves  
 or hates  
 That might to death betray them: such  
 an one  
 Thus haply might have prophesied, and  
 had  
 No strength to save himself.  
*Mary Stuart.* I know not: yet  
 Time was when I remembered.  
*Mary Beaton.* It should be  
 No enemy's saying whom you remem-  
 ber not;  
 You are wont not to forget your ene-  
 mies; yet  
 The word rang sadder than a friend's  
 should fall  
 Save in some strange pass of the spirit  
 or flesh  
 For love's sake haply hurt to death.  
*Mary Stuart.* It seems  
 Thy mind is bent to know the name of  
 me,  
 That of myself I know not.  
*Mary Beaton.* Nay, my mind  
 Has other thoughts to beat upon: for  
 me  
 It may suffice to know the saying for  
 true,  
 And never care who said it.  
*Mary Stuart.* True? too sure,  
 God to mine heart's grief hath approved  
 it. See,  
 Nor Scot nor Englishman that takes on  
 him  
 The service of my sorrow, but partakes  
 The sorrow of my service; man by  
 man,  
 As that one said, they perish of me:  
 yea,  
 Were I a sword sent upon earth, or  
 plague  
 Bred of aerial poison, I could be  
 No deadlier where unwillingly I strike,  
 Who where I would can hurt not: Percy  
 died

By his own hand in prison, Howard by  
law ;  
These young men with strange torments  
done to death,  
Who should have rid me and the world  
of her  
That is our scourge, and to the Church  
of God  
A pestilence that wastes it: all the  
north  
Wears yet the scars engraven of civil  
steel  
Since its last rising: nay, she saith but  
right,  
Mine enemy, saying by these her ser-  
vile tongues  
I have brought upon her land mine own  
land's curse,  
And a sword follows at my heel, and  
fire  
Is kindled of mine eyeshot. And be-  
fore,  
Whom did I love that died not of it?  
Whom  
That I would save might I deliver,  
when  
I had once but looked on him with love,  
or pledged  
Friendship? I should have died, I  
think, long since,  
That many might have died not, and  
this word  
Had not been written of me nor ful-  
filled,  
But perished in the saying, a prophecy  
That took the prophet by the throat,  
and slew —  
As sure I think it slew him. Such a  
song  
Might my poor servant slain before my  
face  
Have sung before the stroke of violent  
death  
Had fallen upon him there for my sake.  
*Mary Beaton.* Ah!  
You think so? this remembrance was  
it not  
That hung and hovered in your mind  
but now,  
Moved your heart backward all unwit-  
tingly  
To some blind memory of the man long  
dead?

*Mary Stuart.* In sooth, I think my  
prophet should have been  
David.  
*Mary Beaton.* You thought of him?  
*Mary Stuart.* An old sad thought:  
The moan of it was made long since,  
and he  
Not unremembered.  
*Mary Beaton.* Nay, of him indeed  
Record was made,—a royal record:  
whence  
No marvel is it that you forgot not him.  
*Mary Stuart.* I would forget no  
friends nor enemies: these  
More needs me now remember.  
Think'st thou not  
This woman hates me deadlier — or  
this queen  
That is not woman — than myself could  
hate  
Except I were as she in all things?  
Then  
I should love no such woman as am I  
Much more than she may love me: yet  
I am sure,  
Or so near surety as all belief may be,  
She dare not slay me for her soul's  
sake; nay,  
Though that were made as light of as  
a leaf  
Storm-shaken, in such stormy winds of  
state  
As blow between us like a blast of  
death,  
For her throne's sake she durst not,  
which must be  
Broken to build my scaffold. Yet, God  
wot,  
Perchance a straw's weight now cast in  
by chance  
Might weigh my life down in the scale  
her hand  
Holds hardly straight for trembling: if  
she be  
Woman at all, so tempered naturally  
And with such spirit and sense as thou  
and I,  
Should I for wrath so far forget myself  
As these men sometime charge me  
that I do,  
My tongue might strike my head off.  
By this head  
That yet I wear to swear by, if life be

Thankworthy, God might well be  
thanked for this

Of me or whoso loves me in the world,  
That I spake never half my heart out  
yet,

For any sore temptation of them all,  
To her or hers; nor ever put but once  
My heart upon my paper, writing plain  
The things I thought, heard, knew for  
truth, of her,

Believed or feigned — nay, feigned not  
to believe

Of her fierce follies fed with wry-  
mouthed praise,

And that vain ravin of her sexless lust  
Which could not feed nor hide its hun-  
ger, curb

With patience nor allay with love the  
thirst

That mocked itself as all mouths  
mocked it. Ha!

What might the reading of these truths  
have wrought

Within her maiden mind, what seed  
have sown,

Trow'st thou, in her sweet spirit, of ve-  
nge

Toward me that showed her queenship,  
in the glass

A subject's hand of hers had put in  
mine,

The likeness of it loathed and laugh-  
able

As they that worshipped it with words  
and signs

Beheld her and bemocked her?

*Mary Beaton.* Certainly,  
I think that soul drew never breath  
alive

To whom this letter might seem par-  
donable

Which timely you forbore to send her.

*Mary Stuart.* Nay,  
I doubt not I did well to keep it back —  
And did not ill to write it; for God  
knows

It was no small ease to my heart.

*Mary Beaton.* But say  
I had not burnt it as you bade me burn,  
But kept it privily safe against a need  
That I might haply some time have of  
it?

*Mary Stuart.* What, to destroy me?

*Mary Beaton.* Hardly, sure, to save.

*Mary Stuart.* Why shouldst thou  
think to bring me to my death?

*Mary Beaton.* Indeed, no man am I  
that love you; nor

Need I go therefore in such fear of you  
As of my mortal danger.

*Mary Stuart.* On my life,  
(Long life or short, with gentle or vio-  
lent end,

I know not, and would choose not,  
though I might

So take God's office on me) one that  
heard

Would swear thy speech had in it, and  
subtly mixed,

A savor as of menace, or a sound  
As of an imminent ill or perilous sense  
Which was not in thy meaning.

*Mary Beaton.* No: in mine  
There lurked no treason ever; nor have  
you

Cause to think worse of me than loy-  
ally,

If proof may be believed on witness.

*Mary Stuart.* Sure,  
I think I have not, nor I should not  
have:

Thy life has been the shadow cast of  
mine,

A present faith to serve my present need,  
A foot behind my footsteps; as long  
since

In those French dances that we trod,  
and laughed

The blithe way through together. Thou  
couldst sing

Then, and a great while gone it is by  
this

Since I heard song or music: I could  
now

Find in my heart to bid thee, as the  
Jews

Were once bid sing in their captivity  
One of their songs of Sion, sing me now,  
If one thou knowest, for love of that  
far time,

One of our songs of Paris.

*Mary Beaton.* Give me leave  
A little to cast up some wandering  
words,

And gather back such memories as may  
beat

About my mind of such a song, and yet  
I think I might renew some note long  
dumb

That once your ear allowed of. — I did  
pray, [Aside.

Tempt me not, God: and by her mouth  
again

He tempts me — nay, but prompts me,  
being most just,

To know by trial if all remembrance be  
Dead as remorse or pity that in birth  
Died, and were childless in her: if she  
quite

Forget that very swan-song of thy love,  
My love that wast, my love that wouldst  
not be,

Let God forget her now at last as I  
Remember: if she think but one soft  
thought,

Cast one poor word upon thee, God  
thereby

Shall surely bid me let her live: if none,  
I shoot that letter home, and sting her  
dead.

God strengthen me to sing but these  
words through,

Though I fall dumb at end forever.  
Now — [She sings.

*Après tant de jours, après tant de pleurs,  
Soyez secourable à mon âme en peine.*

*Voyez comme Avril fait l'amour aux  
fleurs;*

*Dame d'amour, dame aux belles couleurs,  
Dieu vous a fait belle, Amour vous fait  
reine.*

*Rions, je t'en prie; aimons, je le veux.*

*Le temps fuit et rit et ne revient guère  
Pour baiser le bout de tes blonds cheveux,  
Pour baiser tes cils, ta bouche et tes yeux;  
L'amour n'a qu'un jour auprès de sa mère.*

Mary Stuart. Nay, I should once  
have known that song, thou  
say'st,

And him that sang it and should now be  
dead:

Was it — but his rang sweeter — was it  
not

Remy Belleau?

Mary Beaton (My letter — here at  
heart!) [Aside.

I think it might be — were it better writ  
And courtlier phrased, with Latin spice  
cast in,

And a more tunable descant.

Mary Stuart. Ay; how sweet

Sang all the world about those stars  
that sang

With Ronsard for the strong mid star  
of all,

His bay-bound head all glorious with  
gray hairs,

Who sang my birth and bridal! When  
I think

Of those French years, I only seem to  
see

A light of swords and singing, only hear  
Laughter of love and lovely stress of  
lutes,

And in between the passion of them  
borne

Sound of swords crossing ever, as of  
feet

Dancing, and life and death still equally  
Blithe and bright-eyed from battle.

Haply now

My sometime sister, mad Queen Madge,  
is grown

As grave as I should be, and wears at  
waist

No hearts of last year's lovers any more  
Enchased for jewels round her girdle-  
stead,

But rather beads for penitence; yet I  
doubt

Time should not more abash her heart  
than mine,

Who live not heartless yet. These  
days like those

Have power but for a season given to  
do

No more upon our spirits than they may,  
And what they may we know not till it  
be

Done, and we need no more take thought  
of it,

As I no more of death or life to-day.

Mary Beaton. That shall you surely  
need not.

Mary Stuart. So I think,

Our keepers being departed; and by  
these,

Even by the uncourtlier as the gentler  
man,

I read as in a glass their queen's plain heart,  
And that by her at last I shall not die.

SCENE III.—GREENWICH PALACE.  
QUEEN ELIZABETH and DAVISON.

*Elizabeth.* Thou hast seen Lord Howard? I bade him send thee.

*Davison.* Madam,

But now he came upon me hard at hand,  
And by your gracious message bade me in.

*Elizabeth.* The day is fair as April:  
hast thou been  
Abroad this morning? 'Tis no winter's sun

That makes these trees forget their nakedness,  
And all the glittering ground, as 'twere  
in hope,

Breathe laughingly.

*Davison.* Indeed, the gracious air  
Had drawn me forth into the park, and  
thence  
Comes my best speed to attend upon  
your grace.

*Elizabeth.* My grace is not so gracious  
as the sun  
That graces thus the late distempered  
air;

And you should oftener use to walk  
abroad,  
Sir, than your custom is: I would not  
have

Good servants heedless of their natural  
health  
To do me sickly service. It were  
strange

That one twice bound as woman and as  
queen

To care for good men's lives and loyal-  
ties  
Should prove herself toward either  
dangerous.

*Davison.* That

Can be no part of any servant's fear  
Who lives for service of your majesty.

*Elizabeth.* I would not have it be,—  
God else forbid!—

Who have so loyal servants as I hold  
All now that bide about me; for I will  
not

Think, though such villany once were  
in men's minds,

That twice among mine English gentle-  
men

Shall hearts be found so foul as theirs  
who thought,

When I was horsed for hunting, to way-  
lay

And shoot me through the back at  
unawares

With poisoned bullets; nor, thou  
knowest, would I,

When this was opened to me, take such  
care,

Ride so fenced round about with iron  
guard,

Or walk so warily as men counselled me  
For loyal fear of what thereafter might

More prosperously be plotted: nay,  
God knows,

I would not hold on such poor terms  
my life,

With such a charge upon it, as to  
breathe

In dread of death or treason till the day  
That they should stop my trembling  
breath, and ease

The piteous heart that panted like a  
slave's

Of all vile fear forever. So to live  
Were so much hatefuller than thus to  
die,

I do not think that man or woman draws  
Base breath of life the loathsomest on  
earth

Who by such purchase of perpetual fear  
And deathless doubt of all in trust of  
none

Would shudderingly prolong it.

*Davison.* Even too well

Your servants know that greatness of  
your heart

Which gives you yet unguarded to men's  
eyes;

And were unworthier found to serve or  
live

Than is the unworthiest of them, did not  
this

Make all their own hearts hotter with  
desire

To be the bulwark or the price of yours  
Paid to redeem it from the arrest of  
death.



*Elizabeth.* So haply should they be  
whose hearts beat true  
With loyal blood; but whoso says they  
are  
Is but a loving liar.

*Davison.* I trust your grace  
Hath in your own heart no such doubt  
of them  
As speaks in mockery through your lips.

*Elizabeth.* By God,  
I say much less than righteous truth  
might speak  
Of their loud loves that ring with  
emptiness,

And hollow-throated loyalties whose  
heart

Is wind and clamorous promise. Ye  
desire, —

With all your souls ye swear that ye  
desire, —

The queen of Scots were happily re-  
moved,

And not a knave that loves me will put  
hand

To the enterprise ye look for only of me  
Who only would forbear it.

*Davison.* If your grace  
Be minded yet it shall be done at all,  
The way that were most honorable and  
just

Were safest, sure, and best.

*Elizabeth.* I dreamt last night  
Our murderess there in hold had tasted  
death

By execution of the sentence done  
That was pronounced upon her; and the  
news

So stung my heart with wrath to hear  
of it

That had I had a sword, — look to't,  
and 'ware! —

I had thrust it through thy body.

*Davison.* God defend!  
'Twas well I came not in your highness'  
way

While the hot mood was on you. But  
indeed

I would know soothly if your mind be  
changed

From its late root of purpose.

*Elizabeth.* No, by God;  
But I were fain it could be somewise  
done,

And leave the blame not on me. And  
so much,

If there were love and honesty in one  
Whom I held faithful and exact of care,  
Should easily be performed; but here  
I find

This dainty fellow so precise a knave  
As will take all things dangerous on his  
tongue,

And nothing on his hand: hot-mouthed  
and large

In zeal to stuff mine ears with promises,  
But perjurous in performance: did he  
not

Set hand among you to the bond where-  
by

He is bound at utmost hazard of his  
life

To do me such a service? yet I could  
Have wrought as well without him, had  
I wist

Of this faint falsehood in his heart.  
There is

That Wingfield whom thou wot'st of,  
would have done

With glad good-will what I required of  
him,

And made no Puritan mouths on't.

*Davison.* Madam, yet  
Far better were it all should but be  
done

By line of law and judgment.

*Elizabeth.* There be men  
Wiser than thou that see this otherwise.

*Davison.* All is not wisdom that of  
wise men comes,

Nor are all eyes that search the ways  
of state

Clear as a just man's conscience.

*Elizabeth.* Proverbs! ha?

Who made thee master of these sen-  
tences,

Prime tongue of ethics and philosophy?

*Davison.* An honest heart to serve  
your majesty;

Naught else nor subtler in its reach of  
wit

Than very simpleness of meaning.

*Elizabeth.* Nay,

I do believe thee; heartily I do.

Did my lord admiral not desire thee  
bring

The warrant for her execution?

*Davison.* Ay,  
Madam; here is it.

*Elizabeth.* I would it might not be,  
Or being so just were yet not neces-  
sary.

Art thou not heartily sorry — wouldst  
thou not,  
I say, be sad — to see me sign it?

*Davison.* Madam,  
I grieve at any soul's mishap that lives,  
And specially for shipwreck of a life  
To you so near allied; but seeing this  
doom  
Wrung forth from justice by necessity,  
I had rather guilt should bleed than  
innocence.

*Elizabeth.* When I shall sign, take  
thou this instantly  
To the lord chancellor: see it straight  
be sealed

As quietly as he may, not saying a  
word,

That no man come to know it untimely:  
then

Send it to the earls of Kent and  
Shrewsbury,

Who are here set down to see this jus-  
tice done:

I would no more be troubled with this  
coil

Till all be through. But, for the place  
of doom,

The hall there of the castle, in my  
mind,

Were fitter than the court or open  
green.

And as thou goest betake thee on thy  
way

To Walsingham, where he lies sick at  
home,

And let him know what hath of us  
been done:

Whereof the grief, I fear me, shall go  
near

To kill his heart outright.

*Davison.* Your majesty  
Hath yet not signed the warrant.

*Elizabeth.* Ha! God's blood!  
Art thou from tutor of philosophy late  
Grown counsellor too, and more than  
counsellor, thou

To appoint me where and what this  
hand of mine

Shall at thy beck obsequiously sub-  
scribe

And follow on thy finger? By God's  
death,

What if it please me now not sign at  
all?

This letter of my kinswoman's last  
writ

Hath more compulsion in it, and more  
power

To enforce my pity, than a thousand  
tongues

Dictating death against her in mine  
ear

Of mine own vassal subjects. Here  
but now

She writes me she thanks God with all  
her heart

That it hath pleased him by the mean  
of me

To make an end of her life's pilgrim-  
age,

Which hath been weary to her; and  
doth not ask

To see its length drawn longer, having  
had

Too much experience of its bitterness:  
But only doth entreat me, since she

may  
Look for no favor at their zealous  
hands

Who are first in councils of my mir-  
istry,

That only I myself will grant her  
prayers;

Whereof the first is, since she cannot  
hope

For English burial with such Catholic  
rites

As here were used in time of the an-  
cient kings,

Mine ancestors and hers, and since the  
tombs

Lie violated in Scotland of her sires,  
That so soon ever as her enemies

Shall with her innocent blood be sati-  
ated,

Her body by her servants may be  
borne

To some ground consecrated, there to  
be

Interred: and rather, she desires, in  
France,

Where sleep her honored mother's  
ashes; so  
At length may her poor body find the rest  
Which living it has never known:  
thereto,  
She prays me, from the fears she hath  
of those  
To whose harsh hand I have abandoned her,  
She may not secretly be done to death,  
But in her servants' sight and others',  
who  
May witness her obedience kept and  
faith  
To the true Church, and guard her  
memory safe  
From slanders haply to be blown  
abroad  
Concerning her by mouths of enemies:  
last,  
She asks that her attendants, who so  
well  
And faithfully through all her miseries  
past  
Have served her, may go freely where  
they please,  
And lose not those small legacies of  
hers  
Which poverty can yet bequeath to  
them.  
This she conjures me by the blood of  
Christ,  
Our kinship, and my grandsire's  
memory,  
Who was her father's grandsire and a  
king,  
And by the name of queen she bears  
with her  
Even to the death, that I will not  
refuse,  
And that a word in mine own hand  
may thus  
Assure her, who will then as she hath  
lived  
Die mine affectionate sister and pris-  
oner. See,  
Howe'er she have sinned, what heart  
were mine, if this  
Drew no tears from me: not the mean-  
est soul  
That lives most miserable but with  
such words  
Must needs draw down men's pity.

*Davison.* Sure it is,  
This queen hath skill of writing: and  
her hand  
Hath manifold eloquence with various  
voice  
To express discourse of sirens or of  
snakes,  
A mermaid's or a monster's, uttering  
best  
All music or all malice. Here is come  
A letter writ long since of hers to you  
From Sheffield Castle, which for shame  
or fear  
She durst not or she would not thence  
despatch,  
Sent secretly to me from Fotheringay,  
Not from her hand, but with her own  
hand writ,  
So foul of import and malignity  
I durst not for your majesty's respect  
With its fierce infamies afire from hell  
Offend your gracious eyesight; but  
because  
Your justice by your mercy's ignorant  
hand  
Hath her fair eyes put out, and walks  
now blind  
Even by the pit's edge deathward, par-  
don me  
If what you never should have seen be  
shown  
By hands that rather would take fire in  
hand  
Than lay in yours this writing.

[Gives her a letter.

*Elizabeth.* By this light,  
Whate'er be here, thou hadst done pre-  
sumptuously,  
And Walsingham thy principal, to  
keep  
Aught from mine eyes that being to me  
designed  
Might even with most offence enlighten  
them.  
Here is her hand, indeed; and she  
takes up [Reading.  
In gracious wise enough the charge  
imposed  
By promise on her and desire of ours,  
How loath soe'er she be, regretfully  
To bring such things in question of  
discourse,  
Yet with no passion but sincerity,

As God shall witness her, declares to  
 us  
 What our good lady of Shrewsbury  
 said to her  
 Touching ourself in terms ensuing:  
 whereto  
 Answering, she chid this dame for such  
 belief,  
 And reprehended for licentious tongue,  
 To speak so lewdly of us; which her-  
 self  
 Believes not, knowing the woman's  
 natural heart  
 An evil will as then to us-ward. Here  
 She writes no more than I would well  
 believe  
 Of her as of the countess. Ha!  
*Davison.* Your grace  
 Shall but defile and vex your eyes and  
 heart  
 To read these villainies through.  
*Elizabeth.* God's death, man! peace:  
 Thou wert not best incense me toward  
 thine own,  
 Whose eyes have been before me in  
 them. What!  
 Was she not mad to write this? *One*  
*that had*  
*Your promise — lay with you times num-*  
*berless —*  
*All license and all privateness that may*  
*Be used of wife and husband! yea, of*  
 her  
 And more dead men than shame remem-  
 bers. *God*  
*Shall stand her witness — with the devil*  
 of hell  
 For sponzor to her vows, whose spirit  
 in her  
 Begot himself this issue. Ha! the duke  
 — Nay, God shall give me patience —  
 and his knave,  
 And Hatton — God have mercy! nay,  
 but hate,  
 Hate and constraint and rage have  
 wrecked her wits,  
 And continence of life cut off from lust,  
 — This common stale of Scotland, that  
 has tried  
 The sins of three rank nations, and con-  
 sumed  
 Their veins whose life she took not, —  
 Italy,

France that put half this poison in her  
 blood,  
 And her own kingdom that being sick  
 therewith  
 Vomited out on ours the venomous  
 thing  
 Whose head we set not foot on; but  
 may God  
 Make my fame fouler through the  
 world than hers,  
 And ranker in men's record, if I spare  
 The she-wolf that I saved, the woman-  
 beast,  
 Wolf-woman — how the Latin rings we  
 know,  
 And what lewd lair first reared her, and  
 whose hand  
 Writ broad across the Louvre and Holy-  
 rood  
*Lupanar*; but no brothel ever bred  
 Or breathed so rank a soul's infection,  
 spawned  
 Or spat such foulness in God's face and  
 man's,  
 Or festered in such falsehood as her  
 breath  
 Strikes honor sick with, and the spirit  
 of shame  
 Dead as her fang shall strike herself, and  
 send  
 The serpent that corruption calls her  
 soul  
 To vie strange venoms with the worm  
 of hell,  
 And make the face of darkness and the  
 grave  
 Blush hotter with the fires wherein that  
 soul  
 Sinks deeper than damnation.  
*Davison.* Let your grace  
 Think only that but now the thing is  
 known  
 And self-discovered which too long your  
 love  
 Too dangerously hath cherished; and  
 forget  
 All but that end which yet remains for  
 her,  
 That right by pity be not overcome.  
*Elizabeth.* God pity so my soul as I  
 do right,  
 And show me no more grace alive or  
 dead

Than I do justice here. Give me again  
That warrant I put by, being foolish:  
yea,  
Thy word spake sooth, — my soul's eyes  
were put out;  
I could not see for pity. Thou didst  
well —  
I am bounden to thee heartily — to cure  
My sight of this distemper, and my soul.  
Here in God's sight I set mine hand,  
who thought  
Never to take this thing upon it, nor  
Do God so bitter service. Take this  
hence,  
And let me see no word nor hear of her  
Till the sun see not such a soul alive.

ACT V. — MARY STUART.

SCENE I. — MARY'S CHAMBER IN  
FOTHERINGAY CASTLE.

MARY STUART and MARY BEATON.  
*Mary Stuart (sings).*

*O Lord my God,  
I have trusted in thee;  
O Jesu my dearest one,  
Now set me free.  
In prison's oppression,  
In sorrow's obsession,  
I weary for thee.  
With sighing and crying  
Bowed down as dying,  
I adore thee, I implore thee, set me free!*

Free are the dead: yet fain I would have  
had  
Once, before all captivity find end,  
Some breath of freedom living. These  
that come,  
I think, with no such message, must not  
find,  
For all this lameness of my limbs, a  
heart  
As maimed in me with sickness. Three  
years gone,  
When last I parted from the earl mar-  
shal's charge,  
I did not think to see his face again  
Turned on me as his prisoner. Now his  
wife

Will take no jealousy more to hear of  
it,  
I trust, albeit we meet not as unfriends,  
If it be mortal news he brings me. Go,  
If I seem ready, as meseems I should,  
And well arrayed to bear myself indeed  
None otherwise than queenlike in their  
sight,  
Bid them come in.

[*Exit MARY BEATON.*

I cannot tell at last  
If it be fear or hope that should expect  
Death: I have had enough of hope, and  
fear

Was none of my familiars while I lived  
Such life as had more pleasant things  
to lose  
Than death or life may now divide me  
from.

'Tis not so much to look upon the sun  
With eyes that may not lead us where  
we will,

And halt behind the footless flight of  
hope

With feet that may not follow; nor were  
aught

So much, of all things life may think to  
have,

That one not cowardly born should find  
it worth

The purchase of so base a price as this,  
To stand self-shamed as coward. I do  
not think

This is mine end that comes upon me;  
but

I had liefer far it were than, were it not,  
That ever I should fear it.

*Enter KENT, SHREWSBURY, BEALE,  
and Sheriff.*

Sirs, good day:  
With such good heart as prisoners have,  
I bid

You and your message welcome.

*Kent.* Madam, this  
The secretary of the council here hath  
charge

To read as their commission.

*Mary Stuart.* Let me hear  
In as brief wise as may beseem the time  
The purport of it.

*Beale.* Our commission here  
Given by the council under the great  
seal

Pronounces on your head for present  
doom

Death, by this written sentence.

*Mary Stuart.* Ay, my lords?

May I believe this, and not hold myself  
Mocked as a child with shadows? In

God's name,

Speak you, my lord of Shrewsbury: let  
me know

If this be dream or waking.

*Kent.* Verily,

No dream it is, nor dreamers we that  
pray,

Madam, you meetly would prepare your-  
self

To stand before God's judgment  
presently.

*Mary Stuart.* I had rather so than  
ever stand again

Before the face of man's. Why speak  
not you,

To whom I speak, my lord earl marshal?  
Nay,

Look not so heavily: by my life, he  
stands

As one at point to weep. Why, good my  
lord,

To know that none may swear by Mary's  
life,

And hope again to find belief of man  
Upon so slight a warrant, should not

bring  
This trouble on your eyes: look up, and

say

The word you have for her that never  
was

Less than your friend, and prisoner.

*Shrewsbury.* None save this,

Which willingly I would not speak, I  
may:

That presently your time is come to die.

*Mary Stuart.* Why, then, I am well  
content to leave a world

Wherein I am no more serviceable at  
all

To God or man, and have therein so  
long

Endured so much affliction. All my life  
I have ever earnestly desired the love

And friendship of your queen; have  
warned her oft

Of coming dangers; and have cherished  
long

The wish that I but once might speak  
with her

In plain-souled confidence, being well  
assured,

Had we but once met, there an end had  
been

Of jealousies between us: but our foes,  
With equal wrong toward either, treach-

erously

Have kept us still in sunder; by whose  
craft

And crooked policy hath my sister's  
crown

Fallen in great peril, and myself have  
been

Imprisoned, and inveterately maligned,  
And here must now be murdered. But

I know

That only for my faith's sake I must die,  
And this to know for truth is recom-

pense

As large as all my sufferings. For the  
crime

Wherewith I am charged, upon this  
holy book

I lay mine hand for witness of my plea,  
I am wholly ignorant of it; and sol-

emly

Declare that never yet conspiracy  
Devised against the queen my sister's

life

Took instigation or assent from me.

*Kent.* You swear but on a popish  
Testament:

Such oaths are all as worthless as the  
book.

*Mary Stuart.* I swear upon the book  
wherein I trust:

Would you give rather credit to mine  
oath

Sworn on your Scriptures that I trust  
not in?

*Kent.* Madam, I fain would have you  
heartily

Renounce your superstition; toward  
which end

With us the godly dean of Peter  
borough,

Good Richard Fletcher, well approved  
for faith

Of God and of the queen, is hither  
come

To proffer you his prayerful ministry.

*Mary Stuart.* If you, my lords, or he  
will pray for me,  
I shall be thankful for your prayers;  
but may not  
With theirs that hold another faith mix  
mine.  
I pray you, therefore, that mine almoner  
may  
Have leave to attend on me, that from  
his hands  
I, having made confession, may receive  
The sacrament.

*Kent.* We may not grant you this.

*Mary Stuart.* I shall not see my  
chaplain ere I die?  
But two months gone, this grace was  
granted me  
By word expressly from your queen, to  
have  
Again his ministrations; and at last  
In the utter hour and bitter strait of  
death,  
Is this denied me?

*Kent.* Madam, for your soul  
More meet it were to cast these mum-  
meries out,  
And bear Christ only in your heart,  
than serve  
With ceremonies of ritual hand and  
tongue  
His mere idolatrous likeness.

*Mary Stuart.* This were strange,  
That I should bear him visible in my  
hand,  
Or keep with lips and knees his titular  
rites,  
And cast in heart no thought upon  
him. Nay,  
Put me, I pray, to no more argument;  
But if this least thing be not granted,  
yet  
Grant me to know the season of my  
death.

*Shrewsbury.* At eight by dawn to-  
morrow you must die.

*Mary Stuart.* So shall I hardly see  
the sun again.  
By dawn to-morrow? meanest men con-  
demned  
Give not their lives' breath up so sud-  
denly:  
Howbeit, I had rather yield you thanks,  
who make

Such brief end of the bitterness of  
death  
For me who have borne such bitter  
length of life,  
Than plead with protestation of appeal  
For half a piteous hour's remission;  
nor  
Henceforward shall I be denied of  
man  
Aught, who may never now crave aught  
again,  
But whence is no denial. Yet shall  
this  
Not easily be believed of men, nor find  
In foreign ears acceptance, that a queen  
Should be thrust out of life thus. Good  
my friend,  
Bid my physician Gorion come to me:  
I have to speak with him — sirs, with  
your leave —

Of certain moneys due to me in France.  
What! shall I twice desire your leave,  
my lords,  
To live these poor last hours of mine  
alive  
At peace among my friends? I have  
much to do,  
And little time wherein to do it is left.

*Shrewsbury (to KENT apart).* I pray  
she may not mean worse than I  
would  
Against herself ere morning.

*Kent.* Let not then  
This French knave's drugs come near  
her, nor himself:  
We will take order for it.

*Shrewsbury.* Nay, this were but  
To exasperate more her thwarted  
heart, and make  
Despair more desperate than itself.  
Pray God  
She be not minded to compel us put  
Force at the last upon her of men's  
hands  
To hale her violently to death, and  
make  
Judgment look foul and fierce as mur-  
der's face

With stain of strife and passion.  
[*Exeunt all but MARY STUART and  
MARY BEATON.*

*Mary Stuart.* So, my friend,  
The last of all our Maries are you left

To-morrow. Strange has been my life,  
 and now  
 Strange looks my death upon me: yet,  
 albeit  
 Nor the hour nor manner of it be mine  
 to choose,  
 Ours is it yet, and all men's in the  
 world,  
 To make death welcome in what wise  
 we will.  
 Bid you my chaplain, though he see  
 me not,  
 Watch through the night, and pray for  
 me: perchance,  
 When ere the sundawn they shall bring  
 me forth,  
 I may behold him, and upon my knees  
 Receive his blessing. Let our supper  
 be  
 Served earlier in than wont was:  
 whereunto  
 I bid my true poor servants here, to  
 take  
 Farewell, and drink at parting to them  
 all  
 The cup of my last kindness, in good  
 hope  
 They shall stand alway constant in  
 their faith,  
 And dwell in peace together: there-  
 upon  
 What little store is left me will I share  
 Among them, and between my girls  
 divide  
 My wardrobe and my jewels severally,  
 Reserving but the black robe and the  
 red  
 That shall attire me for my death; and  
 last  
 With mine own hand shall be my will  
 writ out,  
 And all memorials more set down  
 therein  
 That I would leave for legacies of love  
 To my next kinsmen and my house-  
 hold folk.  
 And to the king my brother yet of  
 France  
 Must I write briefly, but a word to say  
 I am innocent of the charge whereon I  
 die  
 Now for my right's sake claimed upon  
 this crown,

And our true faith's sake, but am  
 barred from sight  
 Even of mine almoner here, though  
 hard at hand;  
 And I would bid him take upon his  
 charge  
 The keeping of my servants, as I think  
 He shall not for compassionate shame  
 refuse,  
 Albeit his life be softer than his heart;  
 And in religion for a queen's soul pray  
 That once was styled Most Christian,  
 and is now  
 In the true faith about to die, deprived  
 Of all her past possessions. But this  
 most  
 And first behooves it, that the king of  
 Spain  
 By Gorion's word of mouth receive my  
 heart,  
 Who soon shall stand before him. Bid  
 the leech  
 Come hither, and alone, to speak with  
 me.

[Exit MARY BEATON.]

She is dumb as death: yet never in her  
 life  
 Hath she been quick of tongue. For  
 all the rest,  
 Poor souls, how well they love me, all  
 as well  
 I think I know; and one of them or  
 twain  
 At least may surely see me to my death  
 Ere twice the hours have changed  
 again. Perchance  
 Love that can weep not would the glad-  
 lier die  
 For those it cannot weep on. Time  
 wears thin:  
 They should not now play laggard:  
 nay, he comes,  
 The last that ever speaks alone with  
 me  
 Before my soul shall speak alone with  
 God.

Enter GORION.

I have sent once more for you to no  
 such end  
 As sick men for physicians: no strong  
 drug  
 May put the death next morning  
 twelve hours back



Whose twilight overshadows me, that  
am  
Nor sick nor medicinable. Let me  
know

If I may lay the last of all my trust  
On you that ever shall be laid on man  
To prove him kind and loyal.

*Gorion.* So may God

Deal with me, madam, as I prove to  
you  
Faithful, though none but I were in the  
world

That you might trust beside.

*Mary Stuart.* With equal heart

Do I believe and thank you. I would  
send  
To Paris for the ambassador from  
Spain

This letter with two diamonds, which  
your craft  
For me must cover from men's thiev-  
ish eyes,

Where they may be not looked for.

*Gorion.* Easily

Within some molten drug may these be  
hid,  
And faithfully by me conveyed to  
him.

*Mary Stuart.* The lesser of them  
shall he keep in sign

Of my good friendship toward himself:  
but this

In token to King Philip shall he give  
That for the truth I die, and dying com-  
mend

To him my friends and servants, Gil-  
bert Curle,  
His sister, and Jane Kennedy, who  
shall

To-night watch by me; and my ladies  
all  
That have endured my prison: let him  
not

Forget from his good favor one of  
these

That I remember to him; Charles  
Arundel,

And either banished Paget; one whose  
heart

Was better toward my service than his  
hand,

Morgan; and of mine exiles for their  
faith,

The prelates first of Glasgow and of  
Ross;

And Liggons and Throgmorton, that  
have lost

For me their leave to live on English  
earth;

And Westmoreland, that lives now  
more forlorn

Than died that earl who rose for me  
with him.

These I beseech him favor for my sake  
Still: and forget not, if he come again

To rule as king in England, one of them  
That were mine enemies here: the

treasurer first,  
And Leicester, Walsingham, and Hunt-  
ingdon,

At Tutbury once my foe, fifteen years  
gone,

And Wade that spied upon me three  
years since,

And Paulet here my gaoler: set them  
down

For him to wreak wrath's utmost jus-  
tice on,

In my revenge remembered. Though  
I be

Dead, let him not forsake his hope to  
reign

Upon this people: with my last breath  
left

I make this last prayer to him, that not  
the less

He will maintain the invasion yet de-  
signed

Of us before on England: let him think,  
It is God's quarrel, and on earth a cause

Well worthy of his greatness; which  
being won,

Let him forget no man of these nor me.  
And now will I lie down, that four

hours' sleep  
May give me strength before I sleep

again,  
And need take never thought for wak-  
ing more.

SCENE II. — THE PRESENCE CHAMBER.  
SHREWSBURY, KENT, PAULET, DRURY,  
MELVILLE, and Attendants.

*Kent.* The stroke is past of eight.  
*Shrewsbury.* Not far, my lord.

*Kent.* What stays the provost and the sheriff yet

That went ere this to bring the prisoner forth?

What! are her doors locked inwards? Then perchance

Our last night's auguries of some close design

By death contrived of her self-slaught'rous hand

To baffle death by justice hit but right The heart of her bad purpose.

*Shrewsbury.* Fear it not: See where she comes, a queenlier thing to see

Than whom such thoughts take hold on.

*Enter MARY STUART, led by two gentlemen and preceded by the Sheriff; MARY BEATON, BARBARA MOWBRAY, and other ladies behind, who remain in the doorway.*

*Melville (kneeling to MARY).* Woe am I,

Madam, that I must bear to Scotland back

Such tidings watered with such tears as these!

*Mary Stuart.* Weep not, good Melville: rather should your heart Rejoice that here an end is come at last

Of Mary Stuart's long sorrows; for be sure

That all this world is only vanity.

And this record I pray you make of me, That a true woman to my faith I die, And true to Scotland and to France; but God

Forgive them that have long desired mine end,

And with false tongues have thirsted for my blood

As the hart thirsteth for the water-brooks.

O God, who art truth, and the author of all truth,

Thou knowest the extreme recesses of my heart,

And how that I was willing all my days That England should with Scotland be fast friends.

Commend me to my son: tell him that I

Have nothing done to prejudice his rights

As king. And now, good Melville, fare thee well.

My lord of Kent, whence comes it that your charge

Hath bidden back my women there at door

Who fain to the end would bear me company?

*Kent.* Madam, this were not seemly nor discreet,

That these should so have leave to vex men's ears

With cries and loose lamentings: haply too

They might in superstition seek to dip Their handkerchiefs for relics in your blood.

*Mary Stuart.* That will I pledge my word they shall not. Nay,

The queen would surely not deny me this,

The poor last thing that I shall ask on earth.

Even a far meaner person dying, I think,

She would not have so handled. Sir, you know

I am her cousin, of her grandsire's blood,

A queen of France by marriage, and by birth

Anointed queen of Scotland. My poor girls

Desire no more than but to see me die.

*Shrewsbury.* Madam, you have leave to elect of this your train

Two ladies with four men to go with you.

*Mary Stuart.* I choose from forth my Scottish following here

Jane Kennedy, with Elspeth Curle: of men,

Bourgoin and Gorion shall attend on me,

Gervais and Didier.—Come then, let us go.

[*Exeunt: manent MARY BEATON and BARBARA MOWBRAY.*

*Barbara.* I wist I was not worthy, though my child

It is that her own hands made Christian: but

I deemed she should have bid you go with her.

Alas! and would not all we die with her?

*Mary Beaton.* Why, from the gallery here at hand your eyes

May go with her along the hall beneath

Even to the scaffold; and I fain would hear

What fain I would not look on. Pray you, then,

If you may bear to see it as those below, Do me that sad good service of your eyes

For mine to look upon it, and declare All that till all be done I will not see: I pray you of your pity.

*Barbara.* Though mine heart

Break, it shall not for fear forsake the sight

That may be faithful yet in following her,

Nor yet for grief refuse your prayer, being fain

To give your love such bitter comfort, who

So long have never left her.

*Mary Beaton.* Till she die —

I have ever known I shall not till she die.

See you yet aught? if I hear spoken words,

My heart can better bear these pulses, else

Unbearable, that rend it.

*Barbara.* Yea, I see

Stand in mid hall the scaffold, black as death,

And black the block upon it; all around,

Against the throng a guard of halberdiers;

And the axe against the scaffold-rail reclined,

And two men masked on either hand beyond;

And hard behind the block a cushion set,

Black, as the chair behind it.

*Mary Beaton.* When I saw

Fallen on a scaffold once a young man's head,

Such things as these I saw not. Nay, but on:

I knew not that I spake; and toward your ears

Indeed I spake not.

*Barbara.* All those faces change; She comes more royally than ever yet

Fell foot of man triumphant on this earth,

Imperial more than empire made her, born

Enthroned as queen sat never. Not a line

Stirs of her sovereign feature: like a bride

Brought home she mounts the scaffold; and her eyes

Sweep regal round the cirque beneath, and rest,

Subsiding with a smile. She sits, and they,

The doomsmen earls, beside her; at her left

The sheriff, and the clerk at hand on high,

Te read the warrant.

*Mary Beaton.* None stands there but knows

What things therein are writ against her: God

Knows what therein is writ not. God forgive

All!

*Barbara.* Not a face there breathes of all the throng

But is more moved than hers to hear this read,

Whose look alone is changed not.

*Mary Beaton.* Once I knew A face that changed not in as dire an hour,

More than the queen's face changes. Hath he not

Ended?

*Barbara.* You cannot hear them speak below:

Come near, and hearken; bid not me repeat

All.

*Mary Beaton.* I beseech you — for I may not come.

*Barbara.* Now speaks Lord Shrewsbury but a word or twain;  
And brieflier yet she answers, and stands up

As though to kneel, and pray.

*Mary Beaton.* I too have prayed:  
God hear at last her prayers not less than mine,

Which failed not, sure, of hearing.

*Barbara.* Now draws nigh  
That heretic priest, and bows himself, and thrice

Strives, as a man that sleeps in pain, to speak,

Stammering: she waves him by, as one whose prayers

She knows may naught avail her; now she kneels,

And the earls rebuke her, and she answers not,

Kneeling. O Christ, whose likeness there engraved

She strikes against her bosom, hear her! Now

That priest lifts up his voice against her prayer,

Praying; and a voice all round goes up with his:

But hers is lift up higher than climbs their cry,

In the great psalms of penitence; and now

She prays aloud in English; for the Pope

Our father, and his Church; and for her son,

And for the queen her murderess; and that God

May turn from England yet his wrath away;

And so forgives her enemies; and implores

High intercession of the saints with Christ,

Whom crucified she kisses on his cross,

And crossing now her breast — ah, heard you not?

*Even as thine arms were spread upon the cross,*

*So make thy grace, O Jesus, wide for me,  
Receive me to thy mercy so, and so  
Forgive my sins.*

*Mary Beaton.* So be it, if so God please.

Is she not risen up yet?

*Barbara.* Yea, but mine eyes  
Darken: because those deadly twain close masked

Draw nigh as men that crave forgiveness, which

Gently she grants; *For now,* she said, *I hope*

*You shall end all my troubles.* Now meseems

They would put hand upon her as to help,

And disarray her raiment; but she smiles —

Heard you not that? can you nor hear nor speak,

Poor heart, for pain? *Truly,* she said, *my lords,*

*I never had such chamber-grooms before  
As these to wait on me.*

*Mary Beaton.* An end, an end!

*Barbara.* Now come those twain upon the scaffold up

Whom she preferred before us; and she lays

Her crucifix down, which now the headsmen takes

Into his cursed hand, but being rebuked  
Puts back for shame that sacred spoil of hers.

And now they lift her veil up from her head

Softly, and softly draw the black robe off,

And all in red as of a funeral flame  
She stands up statelier yet before them,

tall

And clothed as if with sunset; and she takes

From Elspeth's hand the crimson sleeves, and draws

Their covering on her arms: and now those twain

Burst out aloud in weeping; and she speaks —

*Weep not: I promised for you.* Now she kneels;

And Jane binds round a kerchief on her eyes;

And smiling last her heavenliest smile on earth,

She waves a blind hand toward them,  
 with *Farewell*,  
*Farewell, to meet again*; and they come  
 down,  
 And leave her praying aloud, *In thee, O*  
*Lord,*  
*I put my trust.* And now, that psalm  
 being through,  
 She lays between the block and her soft  
 neck  
 Her long white peerless hands up tenderly,  
 Which now the headsman draws again  
 away,  
 But softly too. Now stir her lips  
 again —

*Into thine hands, O Lord, into thine hands,*  
*Lord, I commend my spirit.* And now —  
 But now,  
 Look you, not I, the last upon her.  
*Mary Beaton.* Ha!  
 He strikes awry: she stirs not. Nay,  
 but now  
 He strikes aright, and ends it.  
*Barbara.* Hark, a cry!  
*Voice below.* So perish all found enemies  
 of the queen!  
*Another Voice.* Amen!  
*Mary Beaton.* I heard that very cry go  
 up  
 Far off long since to God, who answers  
 here.

## POEMS AND BALLADS.

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### A LEAVE-TAKING.

LET us go hence, my songs : she will not hear ;

Let us go hence together without fear. Keep silence now, for singing-time is over, And over all old things and all things dear.

She loves not you nor me as all we love her :

Yea, though we sang as angels in her ear,  
She would not hear.

Let us rise up and part : she will not know.

Let us go seaward as the great winds go,  
Full of blown sand and foam. What help is there ?

There is no help, for all these things are so,

And all the world is bitter as a tear.  
And how these things are, though ye strove to show,  
She would not know.

Let us go home and hence : she will not weep.

We gave love many dreams and days to keep,  
Flowers without scent, and fruits that would not grow,  
Saying, "If thou wilt, thrust in thy sickle, and reap."

All is reaped now ; no grass is left to mow :

And we that sowed, though all we fell on sleep,  
She would not weep.

Let us go hence and rest : she will not love.

She shall not hear us if we sing here-of,

Nor see love's ways, how sore they are and steep.

Come hence, let be, lie still ; it is enough.

Love is a barren sea, bitter and deep ;  
And, though she saw all heaven in flower above,

She would not love.

Let us give up, go down : she will not care.

Though all the stars made gold of all the air,

And the sea moving saw before it move

One moon-flower making all the foam-flowers fair ;

Though all those waves went over us, and drove

Deep down the stifling lips and drowning hair. —

She would not care.

Let us go hence, go hence : she will not see.

Sing all once more together ; surely she,

She too, remembering days and words that were,

Will turn a little toward us, sighing ; but we,

We are hence, we are gone, as though we had not been there.

Nay, and though all men seeing had pity on me,

She would not see.

## ITYLUS.

SWALLOW, my sister, O sister swallow,  
How can thine heart be full of the  
spring?

A thousand summers are over and  
dead.

What hast thou found in the spring to  
follow?

What hast thou found in thine heart  
to sing?

What wilt thou do when the summer  
is shed?

O swallow, sister, O fair swift swallow,  
Why wilt thou fly after spring to the  
south,

The soft south whither thine heart  
is set?

Shall not the grief of the old time follow?

Shall not the song thereof cleave to  
thy mouth?

Hast thou forgotten ere I forget?

Sister, my sister, O fleet sweet swallow,  
Thy way is long to the sun and the  
south;

But I, fulfilled of my heart's desire,  
Shedding my song upon height, upon  
hollow,

From tawny body and sweet small  
mouth

Feed the heart of the night with  
fire.

I the nightingale all spring through,  
O swallow, sister, O changing swallow,

All spring through till the spring  
be done,

Clothed with the light of the night on  
the dew,

Sing, while the hours and the wild  
birds follow,

Take flight and follow and find the  
sun.

Sister, my sister, O soft, light swallow,  
Though all things feast in the spring's  
guest-chamber,

How hast thou heart to be glad  
thereof yet?

For where thou fleest I shall not follow,  
Till life forget, and death remember,  
Till thou remember, and I forget.

Swallow, my sister, O singing swallow,  
I know not how thou hast heart to sing.  
Hast thou the heart? is it all past  
over?

Thy lord the summer is good to follow,  
And fair the feet of thy lover the  
spring;

But what wilt thou say to the spring  
thy lover?

O swallow, sister, O fleeting swallow,  
My heart in me is a molten ember,  
And over my head the waves have  
met.

But thou wouldst tarry, or I would follow,

Could I forget, or thou remember,  
Couldst thou remember, and I forget.

O sweet stray sister, O shifting swallow,  
The heart's division divideth us.

Thy heart is light as a leaf of a tree;  
But mine goes forth, among sea-gulfs  
hollow,

To the place of the slaying of Itylus,  
The feast of Daulis, the Thracian  
sea.

O swallow, sister, O rapid swallow,  
I pray thee sing not a little space.

Are not the roofs and the lintels wet?  
The woven web that was plain to follow,

The small slain body, the flower-like  
face,

Can I remember if thou forget?

O sister, sister, thy first-begotten!

The hands that cling and the feet  
that follow,

The voice of the child's blood crying  
yet,

*Who hath remembered me? Who hath  
forgotten?*

Thou hast forgotten, O summer swallow,

But the world shall end when I  
forget.

## RONDEL.

THESE many years since we began to be,  
 What have the gods done with us? what  
 with me,  
 What with my love? They have shown  
 me fates and fears,  
 Harsh springs, and fountains bitterer  
 than the sea,  
 Grief a fixed star, and joy a vane that  
 veers,  
 These many years.

With her, my love, with her have they  
 done well?  
 But who shall answer for her? who shall  
 tell  
 Sweet things or sad, such things as no  
 man hears?  
 May no tears fall, if no tears ever fell,  
 From eyes more dear to me than star-  
 riest spheres  
 These many years!

But if tears ever touched, for any grief,  
 Those eyelids folded like a white-rose  
 leaf,  
 Deep double shells wherethrough the  
 eye-flower peers,  
 Let them weep once more only, sweet  
 and brief,  
 Brief tears and bright, for one who gave  
 her tears  
 These many years.

## A LITANY.

ἐν οὐρανῷ φαεινὰς  
 κρύψω παρ' ὑμῖν αὐγὰς,  
 μίας πρὸ νυκτὸς ἐπὶ τὰ νύκτας ἔξετε, κ.τ.λ.  
*Anth. Sac.*

## FIRST ANTIPHONE.

ALL the bright lights of heaven  
 I will make dark over thee;  
 One night shall be as seven,  
 That its skirts may cover thee;  
 I will send on thy strong men a sword,  
 On thy remnant a rod:  
 Ye shall know that I am the Lord,  
 Saith the Lord God.

## SECOND ANTIPHONE.

All the bright lights of heaven  
 Thou hast made dark over us;  
 One night has been as seven,  
 That its skirt might cover us;  
 Thou hast sent on our strong men a  
 sword,  
 On our remnant a rod:  
 We know that thou art the Lord,  
 O Lord our God!

## THIRD ANTIPHONE.

As the tresses and wings of the wind  
 Are scattered and shaken,  
 I will scatter all them that have sinned:  
 There shall none be taken;  
 As a sower that scattereth seed,  
 So will I scatter them;  
 As one breaketh and shattereth a reed,  
 I will break and shatter them.

## FOURTH ANTIPHONE.

As the wings and the locks of the wind  
 Are scattered and shaken,  
 Thou hast scattered all them that have  
 sinned:  
 There was no man taken;  
 As a sower that scattereth seed,  
 So hast thou scattered us;  
 As one breaketh and shattereth a reed,  
 Thou hast broken and shattered us.

## FIFTH ANTIPHONE.

From all thy lovers that love thee,  
 I God will sunder thee;  
 I will make darkness above thee,  
 And thick darkness under thee;  
 Before me goeth a light,  
 Behind me a sword:  
 Shall a remnant find grace in my sight?  
 I am the Lord.

## SIXTH ANTIPHONE.

From all our lovers that love us,  
 Thou God didst sunder us;  
 Thou madest darkness above us,  
 And thick darkness under us;  
 Thou hast kindled thy wrath for a light,  
 And made ready thy sword:  
 Let a remnant find grace in thy sight,  
 We beseech thee, O Lord!



## SEVENTH ANTIPHONE.

Wilt thou bring fine gold for a payment  
 For sins on this wise?  
 For the glittering of raiment,  
 And the shining of eyes,  
 For the painting of faces,  
 And the sundering of trust,  
 For the sins of thine high places  
 And delight of thy lust?

For your high things ye shall have lowly,  
 Lamentation for song;  
 For, behold, I God am holy,  
 I the Lord am strong.  
 Ye shall seek me, and shall not reach me  
 Till the wine-press be trod;  
 In that hour ye shall turn, and beseech  
 me,  
 Saith the Lord God.

## EIGHTH ANTIPHONE.

Not with fine gold for a payment,  
 But with coin of sighs,  
 But with rending of raiment,  
 And with weeping of eyes,  
 But with shame of stricken faces,  
 And with strewing of dust,  
 For the sin of stately places  
 And lordship of lust;

With voices of men made lowly,  
 Made empty of song,  
 O Lord God most holy,  
 O God most strong,  
 We reach out hands to reach thee  
 Ere the wine-press be trod;  
 We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech  
 thee,  
 O Lord our God!

## NINTH ANTIPHONE.

In that hour thou shalt say to the night,  
 Come down and cover us;  
 To the cloud on thy left and thy right,  
 Be thou spread over us.  
 A snare shall be as thy mother,  
 And a curse thy bride;  
 Thou shalt put her away, and another  
 Shall lie by thy side.

Thou shalt neither rise up by day,  
 Nor lie down by night.  
 Would God it were dark! thou shalt  
 say;  
 Would God it were light!  
 And the sight of thine eyes shall be  
 made  
 As the burning of fire;  
 And thy soul shall be sorely afraid  
 For thy soul's desire.

Ye whom your lords loved well,  
 Putting silver and gold on you,  
 The inevitable hell  
 Shall surely take hold on you;  
 Your gold shall be for a token,  
 Your staff for a rod;  
 With the breaking of bands ye are  
 broken,  
 Saith the Lord God.

## TENTH ANTIPHONE.

In our sorrow we said to the night,  
 Fall down and cover us;  
 To the darkness at left and at right,  
 Be thou shed over us.  
 We had breaking of spirit to mother,  
 And cursing to bride;  
 And one was slain, and another  
 Stood up at our side.

We could not arise by day,  
 Nor lie down by night;  
 Thy sword was sharp in our way,  
 Thy word in our sight;  
 The delight of our eyelids was made  
 As the burning of fire,  
 And our souls became sorely afraid  
 For our soul's desire.

We whom the world loved well,  
 Laving silver and gold on us,  
 The kingdom of death and of hell  
 Riseth up to take hold on us;  
 Our gold is turned to a token,  
 Our staff to a rod:  
 Yet shalt thou bind them up that were  
 broken,  
 O Lord our God!

## A LAMENTATION.

## I.

WHO hath known the ways of time,  
 Or trodden behind his feet?  
 There is no such man among men.  
 For chance overcomes him, or crime  
 Changes; for all things sweet  
 In time wax bitter again.  
 Who shall give sorrow enough,  
 Or who the abundance of tears?  
 Mine eyes are heavy with love,  
 And a sword gone thorough mine ears,  
 A sound like a sword and fire,  
 For pity, for great desire;  
 Who shall insure me thereof,  
 Lest I die, being full of my fears?

Who hath known the ways and the  
 wrath,  
 The sleepless spirit, the root  
 And blossom of evil will,  
 The divine device of a god?  
 Who shall behold it, or hath?  
 The twice-tongued prophets are mute,  
 The many speakers are still;  
 No foot has travelled or trod,  
 No hand has meted, his path.  
 Man's fate is a blood-red fruit,  
 And the mighty gods have their fill  
 And relax not the rein, or the rod.

Ye were mighty in heart from of old,  
 Ye slew with the spear, and are slain.  
 Keen after heat is the cold,  
 Sore after summer is rain,  
 And melteth man to the bone.  
 As water he weareth away,  
 As a flower, as an hour in a day,  
 Fallen from laughter to moan.  
 But my spirit is shaken with fear  
 Lest an evil thing begin,  
 New-born, a spear for a spear,  
 And one for another sin.  
 Or ever our tears began,  
 It was known from of old and said;  
 One law for a living man,  
 And another law for the dead  
 For these are fearful and sad,  
 Vain, and things without breath;  
 While he lives let a man be glad,  
 For none hath joy of his death.

## II.

Who hath known the pain, the old pain  
 of earth,  
 Or all the travail of the sea,  
 The many ways and waves, the birth  
 Fruitless, the labor nothing worth?  
 Who hath known, who knoweth, O  
 gods? not we.

There is none shall say he hath seen,  
 There is none he hath known.  
 Though he saith, Lo, a lord have I  
 been,  
 I have reaped and sown;  
 I have seen the desire of mine eyes,  
 The beginning of love,  
 The season of kisses and sighs,  
 And the end thereof.  
 I have known the ways of the sea,  
 All the perilous ways;  
 Strange winds have spoken with me,  
 And the tongues of strange days.  
 I have hewn the pine for ships;  
 Where steeds run arow,  
 I have seen from their bridled lips  
 Foam blown as the snow.  
 With snapping of chariot-poles  
 And with straining of oars  
 I have grazed in the race the goals,  
 In the storm the shores;  
 As a greave is cleft with an arrow  
 At the joint of the knee,  
 I have cleft through the sea-straits  
 narrow  
 To the heart of the sea.  
 When air was smitten in sunder,  
 I have watched on high  
 The ways of the stars and the thun-  
 der  
 In the night of the sky;  
 Where the dark brings forth light as a  
 flower,  
 As from lips that dissever;  
 One abideth the space of an hour,  
 One endureth forever.  
 Lo, what hath he seen or known  
 Of the way and the wave  
 Unbeholden, unsailed-on, unsown,  
 From the breast to the grave?

Or ever the stars were made, or skies,  
 Grief was born, and the kinless night,

Mother of gods without form or  
name.  
And light is born out of heaven, and  
dies,  
And one day knows not another's  
light;  
But night is one, and her shape the  
same.  
But dumb the goddesses underground  
Wait, and we hear not on earth if their  
feet  
Rise, and the night wax loud with  
their wings;  
Dumb, without word or shadow of  
sound;  
And sift in scales, and winnow as  
wheat  
Men's souls, and sorrow of mani-  
fold things.

## III.

Nor less of grief than ours  
The gods wrought long ago  
To bruise men one by one;  
But with the incessant hours  
Fresh grief and greener woe  
Spring, as the sudden sun  
Year after year makes flowers;  
And these die down and grow,  
And the next year lacks none.

As these men sleep, have slept  
The old heroes in time fled,  
No dream-divided sleep;  
And holier eyes have wept  
Than ours, when on her dead  
Gods have seen Thetis weep,  
With heavenly hair far-swept  
Back, heavenly hands out-spread  
Round what she could not keep,

Could not one day withhold,  
One night; and like as these  
White ashes of no weight,  
Held not his urn the cold  
Ashes of Heracles?  
For all things born, one gate  
Opens, — no gate of gold;  
Opens; and no man sees  
Beyond the gods and fate.

## ANIMA ANCEPS.

TILL death have broken  
Sweet life's love-token,  
Till all be spoken  
That shall be said,  
What dost thou praying,  
O soul, and playing  
With song and saying,  
Things flown and fled?  
For this we know not —  
That fresh springs flow not  
And fresh griefs grow not  
When men are dead;  
When strange years cover  
Lover and lover,  
And joys are over,  
And tears are shed.

If one day's sorrow  
Mar the day's morrow;  
If man's life borrow,  
And man's death pay;  
If souls once taken,  
If lives once shaken,  
Arise, awaken,  
By night, by day, —  
Why with strong crying  
And years of sighing,  
Living and dying,  
Fast ye and pray?  
For all your weeping,  
Waking and sleeping,  
Death comes to reaping  
And takes away.  
Though time rend after  
Roof-tree from rafter,  
A little laughter  
Is much more worth  
Than thus to measure  
The hour, the treasure,  
The pain, the pleasure,  
The death, the birth:  
Grief, when days alter,  
Like joy shall falter;  
Song-book and psalter,  
Mourning and mirth.  
Live like the swallow;  
Seek not to follow,  
Where earth is hollow,  
Under the earth.

## SONG BEFORE DEATH.

(FROM THE FRENCH.)

1795.

SWEET mother, in a minute's span  
 Death parts thee and my love of thee :  
 Sweet love, that yet art living man,  
 Come back, true love, to comfort me.  
 Back, ah, come back! ah, wellaway!  
 But my love comes not any day.

As roses, when the warm West blows,  
 Break to full flower, and sweeten  
 spring,  
 My soul would break to a glorious rose  
 In such wise at his whispering.  
 In vain I listen; wellaway!  
 My love says nothing any day.

You that will weep for pity of love  
 On the low place where I am lain,  
 I pray you, having wept enough,  
 Tell him for whom I bore such pain  
 That he was yet, ah! wellaway!  
 My true love to my dying day.

## ROCOCO.

TAKE hands, and part with laughter;  
 Touch lips, and part with tears;  
 Once more and no more after,  
 Whatever comes with years.  
 We twain shall not re-measure  
 The ways that left us twain,  
 Nor crush the lees of pleasure  
 From sanguine grapes of pain.

We twain once well in sunder,  
 What will the mad gods do  
 For hate with me, I wonder,  
 Or what for love with you?  
 Forget them till November,  
 And dream there's April yet;  
 Forget that I remember,  
 And dream that I forget.

Time found our tired love sleeping,  
 And kissed away his breath;  
 But what should we do weeping,  
 Though light love sleep to death?

We have drained his lips at leisure,  
 Till there's not left to drain  
 A single sob of pleasure,  
 A single pulse of pain.

Dream that the lips once breathless  
 Might quicken if they would;  
 Say that the soul is deathless;  
 Dream that the gods are good;  
 Say March may wed September,  
 And time divorce regret:  
 But not that you remember,  
 And not that I forget.

We have heard from hidden places  
 What love scarce lives and hears;  
 We have seen on fervent faces  
 The pallor of strange tears;  
 We have trod the wine-vat's treasure.  
 Whence, ripe to steam and stain,  
 Foams round the feet of pleasure  
 The blood-red must of pain.

Remembrance may recover,  
 And time bring back to time  
 The name of your first lover,  
 The ring of my first rhyme;  
 But rose-leaves of December  
 The frosts of June shall fret,  
 The day that you remember,  
 The day that I forget.

The snake that hides and hisses  
 In heaven, we twain have known  
 The grief of cruel kisses,  
 The joy whose mouth makes moan;  
 The pulse's pause and measure,  
 Where in one furtive vein  
 Throbs through the heart of pleasure  
 The purpler blood of pain.

We have done with tears and treasons,  
 And love for treason's sake;  
 Room for the swift new seasons,  
 The years that burn and break.  
 Dismantle and dismember  
 Men's days and dreams, Juliette;  
 For love may not remember,  
 But time will not forget.

Life treads down love in flying,  
 Time withers him at root;  
 Bring all dead things and dying,  
 Reaped sheaf and ruined fruit,

Where, crushed by three days' pressure,  
 Our three days' love lies slain;  
 And earlier leaf of pleasure,  
 And latter flower of pain.

Breathe close upon the ashes,  
 It may be flame will leap;  
 Unclose the soft close lashes,  
 Lift up the lids, and weep.  
 Light love's extinguished ember,  
 Let one tear leave it wet,  
 For one that you remember,  
 And ten that you forget.

### A BALLAD OF BURDENS.

THE burden of fair women. Vain delight,  
 And love self-slain in some sweet shameful way,  
 And sorrowful old age that comes by night  
 As a thief comes that has no heart by day,  
 And change that finds fair cheeks and leaves them gray,  
 And weariness that keeps awake for hire,  
 And grief that says what pleasure used to say:  
 This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of bought kisses. This is sore,  
 A burden without fruit in childbearing;  
 Between the nightfall and the dawn threescore,  
 Threescore between the dawn and evening.  
 The shuddering in thy lips, the shuddering  
 In thy sad eyelids tremulous like fire,  
 Makes love seem shameful and a wretched thing:  
 This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of sweet speeches. Nay, kneel down,  
 Cover thy head, and weep; for verily

These market-men that buy thy white and brown  
 In the last days shall take no thought for thee;  
 In the last days like earth thy face shall be,  
 Yea, like sea-marsh made thick with brine and mire,  
 Sad with sick leavings of the sterile sea:  
 This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of long living. Thou shalt fear  
 Waking, and sleeping mourn upon thy bed;  
 And say at night, "Would God the day were here!"  
 And say at dawn, "Would God the day were dead!"  
 With weary days thou shalt be clothed and fed,  
 And wear remorse of heart for thine attire,  
 Pain for thy girdle, and sorrow upon thine head:  
 This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of bright colors. Thou shalt see  
 Gold tarnished, and the gray above the green;  
 And as the thing thou seest thy face shall be,  
 And no more as the thing beforetime seen.  
 And thou shalt say of mercy, "It hath been;"  
 And living, watch the old lips and loves expire,  
 And talking, tears shall take thy breath between:  
 This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of sad sayings. In that day  
 Thou shalt tell all thy days and hours, and tell  
 Thy times and ways and words of love, and say  
 How one was dear, and one desirable,

And sweet was life to hear and sweet  
to smell;  
But now with lights reverse the old  
hours retire,  
And the last hour is shod with fire  
from hell:  
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of four seasons. Rain in  
spring,  
White rain and wind among the ten-  
der trees;  
A summer of green sorrows gather-  
ing;  
Rank autumn in a mist of miseries,  
With sad face set towards the year,  
that sees  
The charred ash drop out of the drop-  
ping pyre,  
And winter wan with many mala-  
dies;  
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of dead faces. Out of sight  
And out of love, beyond the reach of  
hands,  
Changed in the changing of the dark  
and light,  
They walk and weep about the bar-  
ren lands  
Where no seed is, nor any garner  
stands,  
Where in short breaths the doubtful  
days respire,  
And time's turned glass lets through  
the sighing sands:  
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of much gladness. Life  
and lust  
Forsake thee, and the face of thy de-  
light;  
And underfoot the heavy hour strews  
dust,  
And overhead strange weathers burn  
and bite;  
And where the red was, lo the blood-  
less white;  
And where truth was, the likeness of a  
liar;  
And where day was, the likeness of  
the night:  
This is the end of every man's desire.

## L'ENVOY.

Princes, and ye whom pleasure quick-  
eneth,  
Heed well this rhyme before your  
pleasure tire;  
For life is sweet, but after life is death.  
This is the end of every man's desire.

## BEFORE THE MIRROR.

(VERSES WRITTEN UNDER A PICTURE.)

INSCRIBED TO J. A. WHISTLER.

## I.

WHITE rose in red rose-garden  
Is not so white;  
Snowdrops that plead for pardon  
And pine for fright  
Because the hard East blows  
Over their maiden rows,  
Grow not as this face grows from  
pale to bright.

Behind the veil, forbidden,  
Shut up from sight,  
Love, is there sorrow hidden,  
Is there delight?  
Is joy thy dower or grief,  
White rose of weary leaf,  
Late rose whose life is brief, whose  
loves are light?

Soft snows, that hard winds harden  
Till each flake bite,  
Fill all the flowerless garden  
Whose flowers took flight  
Long since when summer ceased,  
And men rose up from feast,  
And warm west wind grew east, and  
warm day night.

## II.

"Come snow, come wind or thunder  
High up in air,  
I watch my face, and wonder  
At my bright hair;  
Naught else exalts or grieves  
The rose at heart, that heaves  
With love of her own leaves and lips  
that pair.

"She knows not loves that kissed her  
 She knows not where :  
 Art thou the ghost, my sister,  
 White sister there,  
 Am I the ghost, who knows ?  
 My hand, a fallen rose,  
 Lies snow-white on white snows, and  
 takes no care.

"I cannot see what pleasures  
 Or what pains were ;  
 What pale new loves and treasures  
 New years will bear ;  
 What beam will fall, what shower,  
 What grief or joy for dower :  
 But one thing knows the flower, — the  
 flower is fair."

## III.

Glad, but not flushed with gladness,  
 Since joys go by ;  
 Sad, but not bent with sadness,  
 Since sorrows die ;  
 Deep in the gleaming glass  
 She sees all past things pass,  
 And all sweet life that was lie down  
 and lie.

There glowing ghosts of flowers  
 Draw down, draw nigh ;  
 And wings of swift spent hours  
 Take flight and fly ;  
 She sees by formless gleams,  
 She hears across cold streams,  
 Dead mouths of many dreams that  
 sing and sigh.

Face fallen and white throat lifted,  
 With sleepless eye  
 She sees old loves that drifted,  
 She knew not why, —  
 Old loves and faded fears  
 Float down a stream that hears  
 The flowing of all men's tears beneath  
 the sky.

IN MEMORY OF WALTER  
 SAVAGE LANDOR.

BACK to the flower-town, side by side,  
 The bright months bring,  
 New-born, the bridegroom and the bride,  
 Freedom and spring.

The sweet land laughs from sea to sea,  
 Filled full of sun ;  
 All things come back to her, being  
 free, —  
 All things but one.

In many a tender wheaten plot  
 Flowers that were dead  
 Live, and old suns revive ; but not  
 That holier head.

By this white wandering waste of sea,  
 Far north, I hear  
 One face shall never turn to me  
 As once this year ;

Shall never smile and turn and rest  
 On mine as there,  
 Nor one most sacred hand be prest  
 Upon my hair.

I came as one whose thoughts half lin  
 ger,  
 Half run before ;  
 The youngest to the oldest singer  
 That England bore.

I found him whom I shall not find  
 Till all grief end,  
 In holiest age our mightiest mind,  
 Father and friend.

But thou, if any thing endure,  
 If hope there be,  
 O spirit that man's life left pure,  
 Man's death set free,

Not with disdain of days that were  
 Look earthward now :  
 Let dreams revive the reverend hair,  
 The imperial brow ;

Come back in sleep, for in the life  
 Where thou art not  
 We find none like thee. Time and strife  
 And the world's lot

Move thee no more ; but love at least,  
 And reverent heart,  
 May move thee, royal and released,  
 Soul, as thou art.

And thou, his Florence, to thy trust  
 Receive and keep,  
 Keep safe his dedicated dust,  
 His sacred sleep.

So shall thy lovers, come from far,  
 Mix with thy name,  
 As morning-star with evening-star,  
 His faultless fame.

A SONG IN TIME OF ORDER.  
 1852.

PUSH hard across the sand,  
 For the salt wind gathers breath;  
 Shoulder and wrist and hand,  
 Push hard as the push of death.

The wind is as iron that rings,  
 The foam-heads loosen and flee;  
 It swells and welters and swings,  
 The pulse of the tide of the sea.

And up on the yellow cliff  
 The long corn flickers and shakes;  
 Push, for the wind holds stiff,  
 And the gunwale dips and rakes.

Good hap to the fresh fierce weather,  
 The quiver and beat of the sea!  
 While three men hold together,  
 The kingdoms are less by three.

Out to the sea with her there,  
 Out with her over the sand,  
 Let the kings keep the earth for their  
 share!  
 We have done with the sharers of  
 land.

They have tied the world in a tether,  
 They have bought over God with a  
 fee;  
 While three men hold together,  
 The kingdoms are less by three.

We have done with the kisses that sting,  
 The thief's mouth red from the feast,  
 The blood on the hands of the king,  
 And the lie at the lips of the priest.

Will they tie the winds in a tether,  
 Put a bit in the jaws of the sea?  
 While three men hold together,  
 The kingdoms are less by three.

Let our flag run out straight in the wind!  
 The old red shall be floated again  
 When the ranks that are thin shall be  
 thinned,  
 When the names that were twenty are  
 ten;

When the devil's riddle is mastered,  
 And the galley-bench creaks with a  
 Pope,  
 We shall see Puonaparte the bastard  
 Kick heels with his throat in a rope

While the shepherd sets wolves on his  
 sheep,  
 And the emperor halts his kine,  
 While Shame is a watchman asleep,  
 And Faith is a keeper of swine,—

Let the wind shake our flag like a  
 feather,  
 Like the plumes of the foam of the  
 sea!

While three men hold together,  
 The kingdoms are less by three.

All the world has its burdens to bear,  
 From Cayenne to the Austrian whips.  
 Forth, with the rain in our hair  
 And the salt sweet foam in our lips;

In the teeth of the hard glad weather,  
 In the blown wet face of the sea;  
 While three men hold together,  
 The kingdoms are less by three.

A SONG IN TIME OF REVOLU-  
 TION. 1860.

The heart of the rulers is sick, and the  
 high-priest covers h's head,  
 For this is the song of the quick that is  
 heard in the ears of the dead.



The poor and the halt and the blind are  
keen and mighty and fleet :  
Like the noise of the blowing of wind is  
the sound of the noise of their  
feet.

The wind has the sound of a laugh in  
the clamor of days and of deeds :  
The priests are scattered like chaff, and  
the rulers broken like reeds.

The high-priest sick from qualms, with  
his raiment bloodily dashed ;  
The thief with branded palms, and the  
liar with cheeks abashed.

They are smitten, they tremble greatly,  
they are pained for their pleasant  
things :  
For the house of the priests made state-  
ly, and the might in the mouth of  
the kings.

They are grieved and greatly afraid ;  
they are taken, they shall not flee :  
For the heart of the nations is made as  
the strength of the springs of the  
sea.

They were fair in the grace of gold, they  
walked with delicate feet ;  
They were clothed with the cunning of  
old, and the smell of their gar-  
ments was sweet.

For the breaking of gold in their hair  
they halt as a man made lame :  
They are utterly naked and bare ; their  
mouths are bitter with shame.

Wilt thou judge thy people now, O king  
that wast found most wise ?  
Wilt thou lie any more, O thou whose  
mouth is emptied of lies ?

Shall God make a pact with thee, till  
his hook be found in thy sides ?  
Wilt thou put back the time of the sea,  
or the place of the season of  
tides ?

Set a word in thy lips, to stand before  
God with a word in thy mouth :  
That ' the rain shall return in the land,  
and the tender dew after drouth."

But the arm of the elders is broken, their  
strength is unbound and undone :  
They wait for a sign of a token ; they  
cry, and there cometh none.

Their moan is in every place, the cry of  
them filleth the land :  
There is shame in the sight of their face,  
there is fear in the thews of their  
hand.

They are girdled about the reins with a  
curse for the girdle thereon :  
For the noise of the rending of chains,  
the face of their color is gone.

For the sound of the shouting of men,  
they are grievously stricken at  
heart :  
They are smitten asunder with pain,  
their bones are smitten apart.

There is none of them all that is whole ;  
their lips gape open for breath :  
They are clothed with sickness of soul,  
and the shape of the shadow of  
death.

The wind is thwart in their feet ; it is  
full of the shouting of mirth ;  
As one shaketh the sides of a sheet, so  
it shaketh the ends of the earth.

The sword, the sword is made keen ; the  
iron has opened its mouth ;  
The corn is red that was green ; it is  
bound for the sheaves of the  
south.

The sound of a word was shed, the sound  
of the wind as a breath,  
In the ears of the souls that were dead,  
in the dust of the deepness of  
death ;

Where the face of the moon is taken,  
The ways of the stars undone,  
The light of the whole sky shaken, the  
light of the face of the sun;

Where the waters are emptied and bro-  
ken, the waves of the waters are  
stayed;

Where God has bound for a token the  
darkness that maketh afraid;

Where the sword was covered and hid-  
den, and dust had grown in its  
side,

A word came forth that was bidden, the  
crying of one that cried:

The sides of the two-edged sword shall  
be bare, and its mouth shall be  
red,

For the breath of the face of the Lord  
that is felt in the bones of the  
dead.

#### TO VICTOR HUGO.

In the fair days when god  
By man as godlike trod,  
And each alike was Greek, alike was  
free,

God's lightning spared, they said,  
Alone the happier head  
Whose laurels screened it; fruitless  
grace for thee

To whom the high gods gave of right  
Their thunders and their laurels and  
their light.

Sunbeams and bays before  
Our master's servants wore,  
For these Apollo left in all men's lands;  
But far from these ere now,  
And watched with jealous brow,  
Lay the blind lightnings shut between  
God's hands,

And only loosed on slaves and kings  
The terror of the tempest of their  
wings.

Born in those younger years  
That shone with storms of spears,

And shook in the wind blown from a  
dead world's pyre,  
When by her back-blown hair  
Napoleon caught the fair  
And fierce Republic with her feet of  
fire,

And stayed with iron words and hands  
Her flight, and freedom in a thousand  
lands:

Thou sawest the tides of things  
Close over heads of kings,  
And thine hand felt the th'nder, and to  
thee

Laurels and lightnings were  
As sunbeams and soft air  
Mixed each in other, or as mist with sea  
Mixed, or as memory with desire,  
Or the lute's pulses with the louder lyre.

For thee man's spirit stood  
Disrobed of flesh and blood,  
And bare the heart of the most secret  
hours;

And to thine hand more tame  
Than birds in winter came  
High hopes and unknown flying forms  
of powers,  
And from thy table fed, and sang  
Till with the tune men's ears took fire  
and rang.

Even all men's eyes and ears  
With fiery sound and tears  
Waxed hot, and cheeks caught flame  
and eyelids light,

At those high songs of thine  
That stung the sense like wine,  
Or fell more soft than dew or snow by  
night,

Or wailed as in some flooded cave  
Sobs the strong broken spirit of a wave.

But we, our master, we  
Whose hearts, uplift to thee,  
Ache with the pulse of thy remembered  
song, —

We ask not nor await  
From the clinched hands of fate,  
As thou, remission of the world's old  
wrong;

Respite we ask not, nor release:  
Freedom a man may have, he shall not  
peace.

Though thy most fiery hope  
 Storm heaven, to set wide ope  
 The all-sought-for gate whence God or  
 chance debars  
 All feet of men, all eyes —  
 The old night resumes her skies,  
 Her hollow hiding-place of clouds and  
 stars,  
 Where naught save these is sure in  
 sight,  
 And, paven with death, our days are  
 roofed with night.

One thing we can : to be  
 Awhile, as men may, free ;  
 But not by hope or pleasure the most  
 stern  
 Goddess, most awful-eyed,  
 Sits, but on either side  
 Sits sorrow and the wrath of hearts that  
 burn,  
 Sad faith that cannot hope or fear,  
 And memory gray with many a flower-  
 less year.

Not that in stranger's wise  
 I lift not loving eyes  
 To the fair foster-mother France, that  
 gave  
 Beyond the pale fleet foam  
 Help to my sires and home ;  
 Whose great sweet breast could shelter  
 those and save  
 Whom from her nursing breasts and  
 hands  
 Their land cast forth of old on gentler  
 lands.

Not without thoughts that ache  
 For theirs and for thy sake,  
 I, born of exiles, hail thy banished head ;  
 I, whose young song took flight  
 Toward the great heat and light  
 On me a child from thy far splendor  
 shed,  
 From thine high place of soul and  
 song,  
 Which, fallen on eyes yet feeble, made  
 them strong.

Ah! not with lessening love  
 For memories born hereof,

I look to that sweet mother-land, and  
 see  
 The old fields and fair full streams,  
 And skies, but fled like dreams  
 The feet of freedom and the thought of  
 thee ;  
 And all between the skies and graves  
 The mirth of mockers and the shame  
 of slaves.

She, killed with noisome air,  
 Even she ! and still so fair,  
 Who said, " Let there be freedom," and  
 there was  
 Freedom ; and as a lance  
 The fiery eyes of France  
 Touched the world's sleep, and as a  
 sleep made pass  
 Forth of men's heavier ears and eyes  
 Smitten with fire and thunder from new  
 skies.

Are they men's friends indeed  
 Who watch them weep and bleed ?  
 Because thou hast loved us, shall the  
 gods love thee ?  
 Thou, first of men and friend,  
 Seest thou, even thou, the end ?  
 Thou knowest what hath been, knowest  
 thou what shall be ?  
 Evils may pass and hopes endure ;  
 But fate is dim, and all the gods obscure.

O nursed in airs apart,  
 O poet highest of heart,  
 Hast thou seen time, who hast seen so  
 many things ?  
 Are not the years more wise,  
 More sad than keenest eyes,  
 The years with soundless feet and sound-  
 ing wings ?  
 Passing we hear them not, but past  
 The clamor of them thrills us, and their  
 blast.

Thou art chief of us, and lord ;  
 Thy song is as a sword  
 Keen-edged and scented in the blade  
 from flowers ;  
 Thou art lord and king ; but we  
 Lift younger eyes, and see  
 Less of high hope, less light on wan-  
 dering hours ;

Hours that have borne men down so long,  
Seen the right fail, and watched uplift  
the wrong.

But thine imperial soul,  
As years and ruins roll  
To the same end, and all things and all  
dreams

With the same wreck and roar  
Drift on the dim same shore,  
Still in the bitter foam and brackish  
streams

Tracks the fresh water-spring to be,  
And sudden sweeter fountains in the  
sea.

As once the high god bound  
With many a rivet round  
Man's savior, and with iron nailed him  
through,

At the wild end of things,  
Where even his own bird's wings  
Flagged, whence the sea shone like a  
drop of dew,

From Caucasus beheld below  
Past fathoms of unfathomable snow:

So the strong God, the chance  
Central of circumstance,  
Still shows him exile who will not be  
slave;

All thy great fame and thee  
Girt by the dim strait sea  
With multitudinous walls of wandering  
wave;

Shows us our greatest from his throne  
Fate-stricken, and rejected of his own.

Yea, he is strong, thou say'st,  
A mystery many-faced,  
The wild beasts know him, and the wild  
birds flee;

The blind night sees him, death  
Shrinks beaten at his breath,  
And his right hand is heavy on the sea:  
We know he hath made us, and is  
king;

We know not if he care for any thing.

Thus much, no more, we know:  
He bade what is, be so.

Bade light be, and bade night be, one  
by one;

Bade hope and fear, bade ill  
And good redeem and kill,  
Till all men be aweary of the sun,  
And this world burn in its own flame,  
And bear no witness longer of his name.

Yet though all this be thus,  
Be those men praised of us  
Who have loved and wrought and sor-  
rowed, and not sinned

For fame or fear or gold,  
Nor waxed for winter cold,  
Nor changed for changes of the worldly  
wind;

Praised above men of men be these,  
Till this one world and work we know  
shall cease.

Yea, one thing more than this,  
We know that one thing is,  
The splendor of a spirit without blame,  
That not the laboring years  
Blind-born, nor any fears,  
Nor men nor any gods can tire or tame;  
But purer power with fiery breath  
Fills, and exalts above the gulfs of death.

Praised above men be thou,  
Whose laurel-laden brow,  
Made for the morning, droops not in the  
night;

Praised and beloved, that none  
Of all thy great things done  
Flies higher than thy most equal spirit's  
flight;

Praised, that nor doubt nor hope  
could bend  
Earth's loftiest head, found upright to  
the end.

#### BEFORE DAWN.

SWEET life, if life were stronger,  
Earth clear of years that wrong her,  
Then two things might live longer,  
Two sweeter things than they, —  
Delight, the rootless flower,  
And love, the bloomless bower;  
Delight that lives an hour,  
And love that lives a day.

From evensong to daytime,  
 When April melts in Maytime,  
 Love lengthens out his playtime,  
 Love lessens breath by breath,  
 And kiss by kiss grows older  
 On listless throat or shoulder  
 Turned sideways now, turned colder  
 Than life that dreams of death.

This one thing once worth giving  
 Life gave, and seemed worth living;  
 Sin sweet beyond forgiving  
 And brief beyond regret:  
 To laugh and love together,  
 And weave with foam and feather  
 And wind and words the tether  
 Our memories play with yet.

Ah! one thing worth beginning,  
 One thread in life worth spinning,  
 Ah, sweet, one sin worth sinning  
 With all the whole soul's will;  
 To lull you till one stilled you,  
 To kiss you till one killed you,  
 To feed you till one filled you,  
 Sweet lips, if love could fill;

To hunt sweet Love, and lose him  
 Between white arms and bosom,  
 Between the bud and blossom,  
 Between your throat and chin;  
 To say of shame — what is it?  
 Of virtue — we can miss it;  
 Of sin — we can but kiss it,  
 And it's no longer sin;

To feel the strong soul, stricken  
 Through fleshly pulses, quicken  
 Beneath swift sighs that thicken,  
 Soft hands and lips that smite;  
 Lips that no love can tire,  
 With hands that sting like fire,  
 Weaving the web Desire  
 To snare the bird Delight.

But love so lightly plighted,  
 Our love with torch unlighted,  
 Paused near us unaffrighted,  
 Who found and left him free:  
 None, seeing us cloven in sunder,  
 Will weep or laugh or wonder;  
 Light love stands clear of thunder,  
 And safe from winds at sea.

As, when late larks give warning  
 Of dying lights and dawning,  
 Night murmurs to the morning,  
 "Lie still, O love, lie still;"  
 And half her dark limbs cover  
 The white limbs of her lover,  
 With amorous plumes that hover  
 And fervent lips that chill;

As scornful day represses  
 Night's void and vain caresses,  
 And from her cloudier tresses  
 Unwinds the gold of his,  
 With limbs from limbs dividing,  
 And breath by breath subsiding;  
 For love has no abiding,  
 But dies before the kiss:

So hath it been, so be it;  
 For who shall live and flee it?  
 But look that no man see it  
 Or hear it unaware;  
 Lest all who love and choose him  
 See Love, and so refuse him;  
 For all who find him lose him,  
 But all have found him fair.

#### THE GARDEN OF PROSERPINE

HERE, where the world is quiet,  
 Here, where all trouble seems  
 Dead winds' and spent waves' riot  
 In doubtful dreams of dreams;  
 I watch the green field growing  
 For reaping folk and sowing,  
 For harvest time and mowing,  
 A sleepy world of streams.

I am tired of tears and laughter,  
 And men that laugh and weep,  
 Of what may come hereafter  
 For men that sow to reap:  
 I am weary of days and hours,  
 Blown buds of barren flowers,  
 Desires and dreams and powers,  
 And every thing but sleep.

Here life has death for neighbor,  
 And far from eye or ear  
 Wan waves and wet winds labor,  
 Weak ships and spirits steer;

They drive adrift, and whither  
They wot not who make thither ;  
But no such winds blow hither,  
And no such things grow here.

No growth of moor or coppice,  
No heather-flower or vine,  
But bloomless buds of poppies,  
Green grapes of Proserpine,  
Pale beds of blowing rushes  
Where no leaf blooms or blushes  
Save this whereout she crushes  
For dead men deadly wine.

Pale, without name or number,  
In fruitless fields of corn,  
They bow themselves and slumber  
All night till light is born ;  
And like a soul belated,  
In hell and heaven unmated,  
By cloud and mist abated  
Comes out of darkness morn.

Though one were strong as seven,  
He too with death shall dwell,  
Nor wake with wings in heaven,  
Nor weep for pains in hell ;  
Though one were fair as roses,  
His beauty clouds and closes ;  
And well though love reposes,  
In the end it is not well.

Pale, beyond porch and portal,  
Crowned with calm leaves, she stands  
Who gathers all things mortal  
With cold immortal hands ;  
Her languid lips are sweeter  
Than love's who fears to greet her  
To men that mix and meet her  
From many times and lands.

She waits for each and other,  
She waits for all men born ;  
Forgets the earth her mother,  
The life of fruits and corn ;  
And spring and seed and swallow  
Take wing for her, and follow  
Where summer song rings hollow,  
And flowers are put to scorn.

There go the loves that wither,  
The old loves with wearier wings ;

And all dead years draw thither,  
And all disastrous things ;  
Dead dreams of days forsaken,  
Blind buds that snows have shaken  
Wild leaves that winds have taken  
Red strays of ruined springs.

We are not sure of sorrow,  
And joy was never sure ;  
To-day will die to-morrow ;  
Time stoops to no man's lure ;  
And love, grown faint and fretful,  
With lips but half regretful  
Sighs, and with eyes forgetful  
Weeps that no loves endure.

From too much love of living,  
From hope and fear set free,  
We thank with brief thanksgiving  
Whatever gods may be  
That no life lives forever ;  
That dead men rise up never ;  
That even the weariest river  
Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Then star nor sun shall waken,  
Nor any change of light ;  
Nor sound of waters shaken,  
Nor any sound or sight ;  
Nor wintry leaves nor vernal,  
Nor days nor things diurnal :  
Only the sleep eternal  
In an eternal night.

#### LOVE AT SEA.

WE are in love's land to-day :  
Where shall we go ?  
Love, shall we start or stay,  
Or sail or row ?  
There's many a wind and way,  
And never a May but May :  
We are in love's hand to-day ;  
Where shall we go ?

Our land-wind is the breath  
Of sorrows kissed to death,  
And joys that were ;  
Our ballast is a rose ;  
Our way lies where God knows,  
And love knows where.  
We are in love's hand to-day —

Our seamen are fledged Loves,  
 Our masts are bills of doves,  
 Our decks fine gold;  
 Our ropes are dead maids' hair,  
 Our stores are love-shafts fair  
 And manifold.  
 We are in love's land to-day —

Where shall we land you, sweet?  
 On fields of strange men's feet,  
 Or fields near home?  
 Or where the fire-flowers blow,  
 Or where the flowers of snow,  
 Or flowers of foam?  
 We are in love's hand to-day —

Land me, she says, where love  
 Shows but one shaft, one dove,  
 One heart, one hand.  
 — A shore like that, my dear,  
 Lies where no man will steer,  
 No maiden land.

*Imitated from Théophile Gautier.*

#### APRIL.

FROM THE FRENCH OF THE VIDAME  
 DE CHARTRES. 12 — ?

WHEN the fields catch flower,  
 And the underwood is green,  
 And from bower unto bower  
 The songs of the birds begin,  
 I sing with sighing between.  
 When I laugh and sing,  
 I am heavy at heart for my sin;  
 I am sad in the spring  
 For my love that I shall not win,  
 For a foolish thing.

This profit I have of my woe,  
 That I know, as I sing,  
 I know he will needs have it so  
 Who is master and king,  
 Who is lord of the spirit of spring.  
 I will serve her, and will not spare  
 Till her pity awake  
 Who is good, who is pure, who is fair,  
 Even her for whose sake  
 Love hath ta'en me and slain unaware.

O my lord, O Love,  
 I have laid my life at thy feet;  
 Have thy will thereof,  
 Do as it please thee with it,  
 For what shall please thee is sweet.  
 I am come unto thee  
 To do thee service, O Love!  
 Yet cannot I see  
 Thou wilt take any pity thereof,  
 Any mercy on me.

But the grace I have long time sought  
 Comes never in sight,  
 If in her it abideth not,  
 Through thy mercy and might,  
 Whose heart is the world's delight.  
 Thou hast sworn without fail I shall die,  
 For my heart is set  
 On what hurts me, I wot not why,  
 But cannot forget  
 What I love, what I sing for and sigh.

She is worthy of praise;  
 For this grief of her giving is worth  
 All the joy of my days  
 That lie between death's day and  
 birth,  
 All the lordship of things upon earth.  
 Nay, what have I said?  
 I would not be glad if I could:  
 My dream and my dread  
 Are of her, and for her sake I would  
 That my life were fled.

Lo, sweet, if I durst not pray to you,  
 Then were I dead;  
 If I sang not a little to say to you,  
 (Could it be said)  
 O my love, how my heart would be  
 fed;  
 Ah, sweet who hast hold of my heart,  
 For thy love's sake I live;  
 Do but tell me, ere either depart,  
 What a lover may give  
 For a woman so fair as thou art.

The lovers that disbelieve,  
 False rumors shall grieve  
 And evil-speaking shall part.

## BEFORE PARTING.

A MONTH or twain to live on honey-comb

Is pleasant; but one tires of scented time,

Cold sweet recurrence of accepted rhyme,

And that strong purple under juice and foam

Where the wine's heart has burst;  
Nor feel the latter kisses like the first.

Once yet, this poor one time: I will not pray

Even to change the bitterness of it,  
The bitter taste ensuing on the sweet,

To make your tears fall where your soft hair lay

All blurred and heavy in some perfumed wise

Over my face and eyes.

And yet who knows what end the scythèd wheat

Makes of its foolish poppies' mouths of red?

These were not sown, these are not harvested,

They grow a month, and are cast under feet,

And none has care thereof,  
As none has care of a divided love.

I know each shadow of your lips by rote,

Each change of love in eyelids and eyebrows;

The fashion of fair temples tremulous

With tender blood, and color of your throat;

I know not how love is gone out of this,  
Seeing that all was his.

Love's likeness there endures upon all these:

But out of these one shall not gather love.

Day hath not strength nor the night shade enough

To make love whole, and fill his lips with ease,

As some bee-built cell  
Feels at filled lips the heavy honey swell.

I know not how this last month leaves your hair

Less full of purple color and hid spice,  
And that luxurious trouble of closed eyes

Is mixed with meaner shadow and waste care;

And love, kissed out by pleasure, seems not yet

Worth patience to regret.

## THE SUNDEW.

A LITTLE marsh-plant, yellow green,  
And pricked at lip with tender red.

Tread close, and either way you tread  
Some faint black water jets between

Lest you should bruise the curious head

A live thing may be; who shall know?

The summer knows and suffers it;

For the cool moss is thick and sweet

Each side, and saves the blossom so

That it lives out the long June heat.

The deep scent of the heather burns

About it: breathless though it be,

Bow down and worship; more than we

Is the least flower whose life returns,

Least weed renascent in the sea.

We are vexed and cumbered in earth's sight

With wants, with many memories:

These see their mother what she is,

Glad-growing, till August leave more bright

The apple-colored cranberries.

Wind blows and bleaches the strong grass,

Blown all one way to shelter it

From trample of strayed kine, with feet

Felt heavier than the moorhen was,

Strayed up past patches of wild wheat.



You call it sundew : how it grows,  
 If with its color it have breath,  
 If life taste sweet to it, if death  
 Pain its soft petal, no man knows :  
 Man has no sight or sense that saith.

My sundew, grown of gentle days,  
 In these green miles the spring begun  
 Thy growth ere April had half done  
 With the soft secret of her ways,  
 Or June made ready for the sun.

O red-lipped mouth of marsh-flower !  
 I have a secret halved with thee.  
 The name that is love's name to me  
 Thou knowest, and the face of her  
 Who is my festival to see.

The hard sun, as thy petals knew,  
 Colored the heavy moss-water :  
 Thou wert not worth green midsummer,  
 Nor fit to live to August blue,  
 O sundew, not remembering her.

#### AN INTERLUDE.

IN the greenest growth of the Maytime,  
 I rode where the woods were wet,  
 Between the dawn and the daytime :  
 The spring was glad that we met.

There was something the season wanted,  
 Though the ways and the woods smelt  
 sweet, —  
 The breath at your lips that panted,  
 The pulse of the grass at your feet.

You came, and the sun came after,  
 And the green grew golden above ;  
 And the flag-flowers lightened with  
 laughter,  
 And the meadow-sweet shook with  
 love.

Your feet in the full-grown grasses  
 Moved soft as a weak wind blows :  
 You passed me as April passes,  
 With face made out of a rose.

By the stream where the stems were  
 slender,  
 Your bright foot paused at the sedge :

It might be to watch the tender  
 Light leaves in the springtime hedge,

On boughs that the sweet month  
 blanches  
 With flowery frost of May ;  
 It might be a bird in the branches ;  
 It might be a thorn in the way.

I waited to watch you linger  
 With foot drawn back from the dew,  
 Till a sunbeam straight like a finger  
 Struck sharp through the leaves at  
 you.

And a bird overhead sang *Follow*,  
 And a bird to the right sang *Here* ;  
 And the arch of the leaves was hol-  
 low,  
 And the meaning of May was clear.

I saw where the sun's hand pointed,  
 I knew what the bird's note said :  
 By the dawn and the dewfall anointed,  
 You were queen by the gold on your  
 head.

As the glimpse of a burnt-out ember  
 Recalls a regret of the sun,  
 I remember, forget, and remember  
 What Love saw done and undone.

I remember the way we parted,  
 The day and the way we met :  
 You hoped we were both broken-  
 hearted,  
 And knew we should both forget.

And May with her world in flower  
 Seemed still to murmur and smile  
 As you murmured and smiled for an  
 hour :  
 I saw you turn at the stile.

A hand like a white wood-blossom  
 You lifted, and waved, and passed,  
 With head hung down to the bosom,  
 And pale, as it seemed, at last.

And the best and the worst of this is,  
 That neither is most to blame,  
 If you've forgotten my kisses,  
 And I've forgotten your name.

## HENDECASYLLABICS.

IN the month of the long decline of  
 roses,  
 I, beholding the summer dead before  
 me,  
 Set my face to the sea, and journeyed  
 silent,  
 Gazing eagerly where above the sea-  
 mark  
 Flame as fierce as the fervid eyes of  
 lions  
 Half divided the eyelids of the sun-  
 set;  
 Till I heard as it were a noise of waters  
 Moving tremulous under feet of angels  
 Multitudinous, out of all the heavens;  
 Knew the fluttering wind, the fluttered  
 foliage,  
 Shaken fitfully, full of sound and  
 shadow;  
 And saw, trodden upon by noiseless  
 angels,  
 Long mysterious reaches fed with  
 moonlight,  
 Sweet sad straits in a soft subsiding  
 channel,  
 Blown about by the lips of winds I knew  
 not,  
 Winds not born in the north nor any  
 quarter,  
 Winds not warm with the south nor any  
 sunshine;  
 Heard between them a voice of exulta-  
 tion,  
 "Lo, the summer is dead, the sun is  
 faded,  
 Even like as a leaf the year is withered,  
 All the fruits of the day from all her  
 branches  
 Gathered, neither is any left to gather.  
 All the flowers are dead, the tender  
 blossoms,  
 All are taken away; the season wasted,  
 Like an ember among the fallen ashes.  
 Now with light of the winter days, with  
 moonlight,  
 Light of snow, and the bitter light of  
 hoar-frost,  
 We bring flowers that fade not after  
 autumn,  
 Pale white chaplets and crowns of lat-  
 ter seasons,

Fair false leaves (but the summer leaves  
 were falsèr),  
 Woven under the eyes of stars and  
 planets  
 When low light was upon the windy  
 reaches  
 Where the flower of foam was blown,  
 a lily  
 Dropt among the sonorous fruitless  
 furrows  
 And green fields of the sea that make  
 no pasture:  
 Since the winter begins, the weeping  
 winter,  
 All whose flowers are tears, and round  
 his temples  
 Iron blossom of frost is bound forever."

## SAPPHICS.

ALL the night sleep came not upon my  
 eyelids,  
 Shed not dew, nor shook nor unclosed  
 a feather,  
 Yet with lips shut close and with eyes  
 of iron  
 Stood and beheld me.

Then to me so lying awake a vision  
 Came without sleep over the seas and  
 touched me,  
 Softly touched mine eyelids and lips;  
 and I too,  
 Full of the vision,

Saw the white implacable Aphrodite,  
 Saw the hair unbound and the feet  
 unsandalled  
 Shine as fire of sunset on western  
 waters;  
 Saw the reluctant

Feet, the straining plumes of the doves  
 that drew her,  
 Looking always, looking with necks  
 reverted,  
 Back to Lesbos, back to the hills where  
 under  
 Shone Mitylene;

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>Heard the flying feet of the Loves behind her<br/>         Make a sudden thunder upon the waters,<br/>         As the thunder flung from the strong unclosing<br/>         Wings of a great wind.</p> <p>So the goddess fled from her place, with awful<br/>         Sound of feet and thunder of wings around her;<br/>         While behind a clamor of singing women<br/>         Severed the twilight.</p> <p>Ah the singing, ah the delight, the passion!<br/>         All the Loves wept, listening; sick with anguish,<br/>         Stood the crowned nine Muses about Apollo;<br/>         Fear was upon them,</p> <p>While the tenth sang wonderful things they knew not.<br/>         Ah the tenth, the Lesbian! the nine were silent,<br/>         None endured the sound of her song for weeping;<br/>         Laurel by laurel,</p> <p>Faded all their crowns; but about her forehead,<br/>         Round her woven tresses and ashen temples<br/>         White as dead snow, paler than grass in summer,<br/>         Ravaged with kisses,</p> <p>Shone a light of fire as a crown forever.<br/>         Yea, almost the implacable Aphrodite<br/>         Paused, and almost wept; such a song was that song,<br/>         Yea, by her name too</p> <p>Called her, saying, "Turn to me, O my Sappho!"<br/>         Yet she turned her face from the Love's, she saw not<br/>         Tears for laughter darken immortal eyelids,<br/>         Heard not about her</p> | <p>Fearful fitful wings of the doves departing,<br/>         Saw not how the bosom of Aphrodite<br/>         Shook with weeping, saw not her shaken raiment,<br/>         Saw not her hands wrung;</p> <p>Saw the Lesbians kissing across their smitten<br/>         Lutes with lips more sweet than the sound of lute-strings,<br/>         Mouth to mouth and hand upon hand her chosen,<br/>         Fairer than all men;</p> <p>Only saw the beautiful lips and fingers,<br/>         Full of songs and kisses and little whispers,<br/>         Full of music; only beheld among them<br/>         Soar, as a bird soars</p> <p>Newly fledged, her visible song, a marvel,<br/>         Made of perfect sound and exceeding passion,<br/>         Sweetly shapen, terrible, full of thunders,<br/>         Clothed with the wind's wings.</p> <p>Then rejoiced she, laughing with love, and scattered<br/>         Roses, awful roses of holy blossom;<br/>         Then the Loves thronged sadly with hidden faces<br/>         Round Aphrodite,</p> <p>Then the Muses, stricken at heart, were silent;<br/>         Yea, the gods waxed pale; such a song was that song.</p> <p>All reluctant, all with a fresh repulsion,<br/>         Fled from before her.</p> <p>All withdrew long since, and the land was barren,<br/>         Full of fruitless women and music only.<br/>         Now perchance, when winds are assuaged at sunset,<br/>         Lulled at the dewfall,</p> <p>By the gray sea-side, unassuaged, un-<br/>         heard of,<br/>         Unbeloved, unseen in the ebb of twilight,</p> |
|--|--|

Ghosts of outcast women return lament-  
ing,  
Purged not in Lethe,

Clothed about with flame and with  
tears, and singing  
Songs that move the heart of the shaken  
heaven,  
Songs that break the heart of the earth  
with pity,  
Hearing, to hear them.

### AT ELEUSIS.

MEN of Eleusis, ye that with long  
staves  
Sit in the market-houses, and speak  
words  
Made sweet with wisdom as the rare  
wine is  
Thickened with honey; and ye sons of  
these  
Who in the glad thick streets go up  
and down  
For pastime or grave traffic or mere  
chance;  
And all fair women having rings of gold  
On hands or hair; and chiefest over  
these  
I name you, daughters of this man the  
king,  
Who dipping deep smooth pitchers of  
pure brass  
Under the bubbled wells, till each  
round lip  
Stooped with loose gurgle of waters in-  
coming,  
Found me an old sick woman, lamed  
and lean,  
Beside a growth of builded olive-boughs  
Whence multiplied thick song of thick-  
plumed throats —  
Also wet tears filled up my hollow  
hands  
By reason of my crying into them —  
And pitied me; for as cold water ran  
And washed 'he pitchers full from lip  
to lip,  
So washed both eyes full the strong salt  
of tears.  
And ye put water to my mouth, made  
sweet

With brown hill-berries: so in time I  
spoke,  
And gathered my loose knees from  
under me.  
Moreover, in the broad, fair halls this  
month  
Have I found space and bountiful abode  
To please me. I Demeter speak of  
this,  
Who am the mother and the mate  
of things:  
For as ill men by drugs or singing  
words  
Shut the doors inward of the narrow  
womb  
Like a lock bolted with round iron  
through,  
Thus I shut up the body and sweet  
mouth  
Of all soft pasture and the tender land,  
So that no seed can enter in by it,  
Though one sow thickly, nor some  
grain get out  
Past the hard clods men cleave and  
bite with steel  
To widen the sealed lips of them for  
use.  
None of you is there in the peopled  
street  
But knows how all the dry-drawn fur-  
rows ache  
With no green spot made count of in  
the black;  
How the wind finds no comfortable  
grass,  
Nor is assuaged with bud nor breath  
of herbs;  
And in hot autumn, when ye house the  
stacks,  
All fields are helpless in the sun, all  
trees  
Stand as a man stripped out of all but  
skin.  
Nevertheless, ye sick have help to get  
By means and stablished ordinance of  
God;  
For God is wiser than a good man is.  
But never shall new grass be sweet in  
earth  
Till I get righted of my wound and  
wrong  
By changing counsel of ill-minded Zeus  
For of all other gods is none save me

Clothed with like power to build and  
 break the year.  
 I make the lesser green begin, when  
 spring  
 Touches not earth but with one fearful  
 foot ;  
 And as a careful gilder with grave art  
 Soberly colors and completes the face,  
 Mouth, chin, and all, of some sweet  
 work in stone,  
 I carve the shapes of grass and tender  
 corn,  
 And color the ripe edges and long  
 spikes  
 With the red increase and the grace of  
 gold.  
 No tradesman in soft wools is cunninger  
 To kill the secret of the fat white  
 fleece  
 With stains of blue and purple wrought  
 in it.  
 Three moons were made, and three  
 moons burnt away,  
 While I held journey hither out of  
 Crete,  
 Comfortless, tended by grave Hecate,  
 Whom my wound stung with double  
 iron point ;  
 For all my face was like a cloth wrung  
 out  
 With close and weeping wrinkles, and  
 both lids  
 Sodden with salt continuance of tears.  
 For Hades and the sidelong will of  
 Zeus,  
 And that lame wisdom that has written  
 feet,  
 Cunning, begotten in the bed of Shame,  
 These three took evil will at me, and  
 made  
 Such counsel, that when time got wing  
 to fly  
 This Hades out of summer and low  
 fields  
 Forced the bright body of Persephone :  
 Out of pure grass, where she lying  
 down, red flowers  
 Made their sharp little shadows on her  
 sides,  
 Pale heat, pale color on pale maiden  
 flesh, —  
 And chill water slid over her reddening  
 feet,  
 Killing the throbs in their soft blood ;  
 and birds,  
 Perched next her elbow, and pecking at  
 her hair,  
 Stretched their necks more to see her  
 than even to sing.  
 A sharp thing is it I have need to say ;  
 For Hades holding both white wrists of  
 hers  
 Unloosed the girdle, and with knot by  
 knot  
 Bound her between his wheels upon  
 the seat,  
 Bound her pure body, holiest yet and  
 dear  
 To me and God as always, clothed  
 about  
 With blossoms loosened, as her knees  
 went down,  
 Let fall as she let go of this and this  
 By tens and twenties tumbled to her  
 feet,  
 White waifs or purple of the pasturage.  
 Therefore with only going up and down  
 My feet were wasted, and the gracious  
 air,  
 To me discomfortable and dun, became  
 As weak smoke blowing in the under-  
 world.  
 And finding in the process of ill days  
 What part had Zeus herein, and how as  
 mate  
 He coped with Hades, yokefellow in  
 sin,  
 I set my lips against the meat of gods,  
 And drank not, neither ate or slept, in  
 heaven.  
 Nor in the golden greeting of their  
 mouths  
 Did ear take note of me, nor eye at all  
 Track my feet going in the ways of  
 them.  
 Like a great fire on some strait slip of  
 land  
 Between two washing inlets of wet sea  
 That burns the grass up to each lip of  
 beach,  
 And strengthens, waxing in the growth  
 of wind,  
 So burnt my soul in me at heaven and  
 earth,  
 Each way a ruin and a hungry plague,  
 Visible evil ; nor could any night

Put cool between mine eyelids, nor the  
 sun  
 With competence of gold fill out my  
 want.  
 Yea, so my flame burnt up the grass  
 and stones,  
 Shone to the salt-white edges of thin sea,  
 Distempered all the gracious work, and  
 made  
 Sick change, unseasonable increase of  
 days  
 And scant avail of seasons; for by this  
 The fair gods faint in hollow heaven:  
 there comes  
 No taste of burnings of the twofold fat  
 To leave their palates smooth, nor in  
 their lips  
 Soft rings of smoke, and weak scent  
 wandering;  
 All cattle waste and rot, and their ill  
 smell  
 Grows away from the lank, unsavory  
 flesh  
 That no man slays for offering; the sea  
 And waters moved beneath the heath  
 and corn  
 Preserve the people of fin-twinkling  
 fish,  
 And river-flies feed thick upon the  
 smooth;  
 But all earth over is no man or bird  
 (Except the sweet race of the kingfisher)  
 That lacks not, and is wearied with  
 much loss.  
 Meantime, the purple inward of the  
 house  
 Was softened with all grace of scent  
 and sound  
 In ear and nostril perfecting my praise;  
 Faint grape-flowers and cloven honey-  
 cake  
 And the just grain with dues of the  
 shed salt  
 Made me content: yet my hand loos-  
 ened not  
 Its gripe upon your harvest all year  
 long.  
 While I, thus woman-muffled in wan  
 flesh  
 And waste externals of a perished face,  
 Preserved the levels of my wrath and  
 love  
 Patiently ruled; and with soft offices

Cooled the sharp noons, and busied the  
 warm nights  
 In care of this my choice, this child my  
 choice,  
 Triptolemus, the king's selected son:  
 That this fair yearlong body, which  
 hath grown  
 Strong with strange milk upon the  
 mortal lip  
 And nerved with half a god, might so  
 increase  
 Outside the bulk and the bare scope of  
 man;  
 And waxen over large to hold within  
 Base breath of yours, and this impover-  
 ished air,  
 I might exalt him past the flame of  
 stars,  
 The limit and walled reach of the great  
 world.  
 Therefore my breast made common to  
 his mouth  
 Immortal saviors, and the taste whereat  
 Twice their hard life strains out the  
 colored veins,  
 And twice its brain confirms the narrow  
 shell.  
 Also at night, unwinding cloth from  
 cloth  
 As who unhusks an almond to the white,  
 And pastures curiously the purer taste,  
 I bared the gracious limbs and the soft  
 feet,  
 Unswaddled the weak hands, and in  
 mid-ash  
 Laid the sweet flesh of either feeble  
 side,  
 More tender for impressure of some  
 touch  
 Than wax to any pen; and lit around  
 Fire, and made crawl the white, worm-  
 shapen flame,  
 And leap in little angers spark by  
 spark  
 At head at once, and feet; and the  
 faint hair  
 Hissed with rare sprinkles in the closer  
 curl,  
 And like scaled oarage of a keen thin  
 fish  
 In sea-water, so in pure fire his feet  
 Struck out, and the flame bit not in his  
 flesh,

But like a kiss it curled his lip, and  
 heat  
 Fluttered his eyelids; so each night I  
 blew  
 The hot ash red to purge him to full  
 god.  
 Ill is it when fear hungers in the soul  
 For painful food, and chokes thereon,  
 being fed;  
 And ill slant eyes interpret the straight  
 sun,  
 But in their scope its white is wried to  
 black:  
 By the queen Metaneira mean I this;  
 For with sick wrath upon her lips and  
 heart,  
 Narrowing with fear the spleenful pas-  
 sages,  
 She thought to thread this web's fine  
 ravel out,  
 Nor leave her shuttle split in combing  
 it;  
 Therefore she stole on us, and with  
 hard sight  
 Peered, and stooped close; then with  
 pale, open mouth  
 As the fire smote her in the eyes be-  
 tween  
 Cried, and the child's laugh sharply  
 shortening  
 As fire doth under rain, fell off; the  
 flame  
 Writhed once all through and died, and  
 in thick dark  
 Tears fell from mine on the child's  
 weeping eyes,  
 Eyes dispossessed of strong inheritance  
 And mortal fallen anew.] Who not the  
 less  
 From bud of beard to pale-gray flower  
 of hair  
 Shall wax vine-wise to a lordly vine,  
 whose grapes  
 Bleed the red, heavy blood of swoln  
 soft wine,  
 Subtle with sharp leaves' intricacy, until  
 Full of white years and blossom of  
 hoary days  
 I take him perfected; for whose one  
 sake  
 I am thus gracious to the least who  
 stands  
 Filleted with white wool and girt upon

As he whose prayer endures upon the  
 lip  
 And falls not waste: wherefore let sac-  
 rifice  
 Burn and run red in all the wider ways,  
 Seeing I have sworn by the pale tem-  
 ples' band  
 And popped hair of gold Persephone  
 Sad-tressed and pleached low down  
 about her brows,  
 And by the sorrow in her lips, and death  
 Her dumb and mournful-mouthed min-  
 ister,  
 My word for you is eased of its harsh  
 weight  
 And doubled with soft promise; and  
 your king  
 Triptolemus, this Celeus dead and  
 swathed  
 Purple and pale for golden burial,  
 Shall be your helper in my services,  
 Dividing earth and reaping fruits there-  
 of  
 In fields where wait, well-girt, well-  
 wreathen, all  
 The heavy-handed seasons all year  
 through;  
 Saving the choice of warm spear-headed  
 grain,  
 And stooping sharp to the slant-sided  
 share  
 All beasts that furrow the remeasured  
 land  
 With their bowed necks of burden  
 equable.

## AUGUST.

THERE were four apples on the bough,  
 Half gold, half red, that one might know  
 The blood was ripe inside the core;  
 The color of the leaves was more  
 Like stems of yellow corn that grow  
 Through all the gold June meadow's  
 floor.

The warm smell of the fruit was good  
 To feed on, and the split green wood,  
 With all its bearded lips and stains  
 Of mosses in the cloven veins,  
 Most pleasant, if one lay or stood  
 In sunshine or in happy rains.

There were four apples on the tree,  
Red stained through gold, that all might see

The sun went warm from core to rind;  
The green leaves made the summer blind

In that soft place they kept for me  
With golden apples shut behind.

The leaves caught gold across the sun,  
And where the bluest air begun,  
Thirsted for song to help the heat;  
As I to feel my lady's feet  
Draw close before the day were done:  
Both lips grew dry with dreams of it.

In the mute August afternoon  
They trembled to some undertune  
Of music in the silver air:  
Great pleasure was it to be there  
Till green turned duskier, and the moon  
Colored the corn-sheaves like gold hair.

That August time it was delight  
To watch the red moons wane to white  
'Twi'xt gray seamed stems of apple-trees:

A sense of heavy harmonies  
Grew on the growth of patient night,  
More sweet than shapen music is.

But some three hours before the moon  
The air, still eager from the noon,  
Flagged after heat, not wholly dead;  
Against the stem I leant my head;  
The color soothed me like a tune,  
Green leaves all round the gold and red.

I lay there till the warm smell grew  
More sharp, when flecks of yellow dew  
Between the round ripe leaves had blurred

The rind with stain and wet; I heard  
A wind that blew and breathed and blew,  
Too weak to alter its one word.

The wet leaves next the gentle fruit  
Felt smoother, and the brown tree-root  
Felt the mould warmer: I, too, felt  
(As water feels the slow gold melt  
Right through it when the day burns mute)

The peace of time wherein love dwelt.

There were four apples on the tree,  
Gold stained on red, that all might see  
The sweet blood filled them to the core:  
The color of her hair is more  
Like stems of fair faint gold, that be  
Mown from the harvest's middle-floor.

### A CHRISTMAS CAROL.<sup>1</sup>

THREE damsels in the queen's chamber,  
The queen's mouth was most fair:  
She spake a word of God's mother  
As the combs went in her hair.  
Mary that is of might,  
Bring us to thy Son's sight.

They held the gold combs out from her.  
A span's length off her head:  
She sang this song of God's mother  
And of her bearing-bed.  
Mary most full of grace,  
Bring us to thy Son's face.

When she sat at Joseph's hand,  
She looked against her side;  
And either way from the short silk band  
Her girdle was all wried.  
Mary that all good may,  
Bring us to thy Son's way.

Mary had three women for her bed:  
The twain were maidens clean;  
The first of them had white and red,  
The third had riven green.  
Mary that is so sweet,  
Bring us to thy Son's feet.

She had three women for her hair:  
Two were gloved soft and shod;  
The third had feet and fingers bare,  
She was the likest God.  
Mary that wieldeth land,  
Bring us to thy Son's hand.

She had three women for her ease:  
The twain were good women;  
The first two were the two Maries,  
The third was Magdalen.  
Mary that perfect is,  
Bring us to thy Son's kiss.

<sup>1</sup> Suggested by a drawing of Mr. D. G. Rossetti's



Joseph had three workmen in his stall,  
 To serve him well upon :  
 The first of them were Peter and Paul,  
 The third of them was John.  
 Mary, God's handmaiden,  
 Bring us to thy Son's ken.

"If your child be none other man's,  
 But if it be very mine,  
 The bedstead shall be gold two spans,  
 The bedfoot silver fine."  
 Mary that made God mirth,  
 Bring us to thy Son's birth.

"If the child be some other man's,  
 And if it be none of mine,  
 The manger shall be straw two spans,  
 Betwixen kine and kine."  
 Mary that made sin cease,  
 Bring us to thy Son's peace

Christ was born upon this wise :  
 It fell on such a night,  
 Neither with sounds of psalteries,  
 Nor with fire for light.  
 Mary that is God's spouse,  
 Bring us to thy Son's house.

The star came out upon the east  
 With a great sound and sweet :  
 Kings gave gold to make him feast,  
 And myrrh for him to eat.  
 Mary, of thy sweet mood,  
 Bring us to thy Son's good.

He had two handmaids at his head,  
 One handmaid at his feet :  
 The twain of them were fair and red,  
 The third one was right sweet.  
 Mary that is most wise,  
 Bring us to thy Son's eyes. Amen.

### THE MASQUE OF QUEEN BER- SABLE

#### A MIRACLE-PLAY.

*King David.* Knights mine, all that  
 be in hall,  
 I have a council to you all,  
 Because of this thing God lets fall  
 Among us for a sign.

For some days hence as I did eat  
 From kingly dishes my good meat,  
 There flew a bird between my feet  
 As red as any wine.

This bird had a long bill of red,  
 And a gold ring above his head ;  
 Long time he sat and nothing said,  
 Put softly down his neck, and fed  
 From the gilt patens fine :  
 And as I marvelled at the last,  
 He shut his two keen eyen fast,  
 And suddenly woxe big and brast  
 Ere one should tell to nine.

*Primus Miles.* Sir, note this that I  
 will say :  
 That Lord who maketh corn with hay,  
 And morrows each of yesterday,  
 He hath you in his hand.

*Secundus Miles (Paganus quidam).*  
 By Satan I hold no such thing ;  
 For if wine swell within a king  
 Whose ears for drink are hot and ring,  
 The same shall dream of wine-bibbing  
 Whilst he can lie or stand.

*Queen Bersabe.* Peace now, lords, for  
 Godis head.  
 Ye chirk as starlings that be fed,  
 And gape as fishes newly dead :  
 The devil put your bones to bed,  
 Lo, this is all to say.

*Secundus Miles.* By Mahound, lords.  
 I have good will  
 This devil's bird to wring and spill ;  
 For now meseems our game goes ill,  
 Ye have scant hearts to play.

*Tertius Miles.* Lo, sirs, this word is  
 there said,  
 That Urias the knight is dead  
 Through some ill craft : by Poullis head,  
 I doubt his blood hath made so red  
 This bird that flew from the queen's bed  
 Whereof ye have such fear.

*King David.* Yea, my good knave,  
 and is it said  
 That I can raise men from the dead ?  
 By God I think to have his head  
 Who saith words of my lady's bed  
 For any thief to hear.  
*Et percutiat eum in capite.*

*Queen Bersabe.* I wis men shall spit  
at me,  
And say it were but right for thee  
That one should hang thee on a tree.  
Ho! it were a fair thing to see  
The big stones bruise her false body;  
Fie! who shall see her dead?

*King David.* I rede you have no fear  
of this,  
For as ye wot, the first good kiss  
I had must be the last of his;  
Now are ye queen of mine, I wis,  
And lady of a house that is  
Full rich of meat and bread.

*Primus Miles.* I bid you make good  
cheer to be  
So fair a queen as all men see.  
And hold us for your lieges free:  
By Peter's soul that hath the key,  
Ye have good hap of it.

*Secundus Miles.* I would that he were  
hanged and dead  
Who hath no joy to see your head  
With gold about it, barred on red:  
I hold him as a sow of lead  
That is so scant of wit.

*Tunc dicat NATHAN propheta.* O  
king! I have a word to thee:  
The child that is in Bersabe  
Shall wither without light to see;  
This word is come of God by me  
For sin that ye have done.  
Because herein ye did not right,  
To take the fair one lamb to smite  
That was of Urias the knight:  
Ye wist he had but one.  
Full many sheep I wot ye had,  
And many women, when ye bade  
To do your will and keep you glad;  
And a good crown about your head  
With gold to show thereon.  
This Urias had one poor house,  
With low-barred latoun shot-windows,  
And scant of corn to fill a mouse;  
And rusty basnets for his brows,  
To wear them to the bone.  
Yea, the roofs also, as men sain,  
Were thin to hold against the rain:  
Therefore what rushes were there lain

Grew wet withouten foot of men;  
The stancheons were all gone in twain  
As sick man's flesh is gone.  
Nathless he had great joy to see  
The long hair of this Bersabe  
Fall round her lap and round her knee  
Even to her small soft feet, that be  
Shod now with crimson royally,  
And covered with clean gold.  
Likewise great joy he had to kiss  
Her throat, where now the scarlet is  
Against her little chin, I wis,  
That then was but cold.  
No scarlet then her kirtle had,  
And little gold about it sprad;  
But her red mouth was always glad  
To kiss, albeit the eyes were sad  
With love they had to hold.

*Secundus Miles.* How! old thief, thy  
wits are lame;  
To clip such it is no shame;  
I rede you in the devil's name,  
Ye come not here to make men game:  
By Termagaunt that maketh game,  
I shall to-bete thine head.

*Hic Diabolus capiat eum.*  
This knave hath sharp fingers, perfay;  
Mahound you thank and keep away,  
And give you good knees to pray;  
What man hath no lust to play,  
The devil wring his ears, I say:  
There is no more but weilaway,  
For now am I dead.

*King David.* Certes his mouth is  
wried and black,  
Full little pence be in his sack:  
This devil hath him by the back,  
It is no boot to lie.

*Nathan.* Sitteth now still, and learn  
of me  
A little while, and ye shall see  
The face of God's strength presently.  
All queens made as this Bersabe,  
All that were fair and foul ye be,  
Come hither; it am I.  
*Et hic omnes cantabunt.*

*Herodias.* I am the queen Herodias.  
This headband of my temples was  
King Herod's gold band wovon me:

This broken dry staff in my hand  
Was the queen's staff of a great land  
Betwixen Perse and Samarie.  
For that one dancing of my feet,  
The fire is come in my green wheat,  
From one sea to the other sea.

*Aholibah.* I am the queen Aholibah.  
My lips kissed dumb the word of *Ah*  
Sighed on strange lips grown sick  
thereby.

God wrought to me my royal bed:  
The inner work thereof was red,  
The outer work was ivory.  
My mouth's heat was the heat of flame  
For lust towards the kings that came  
With horsemen riding royally.

*Cleopatra.* I am the queen of Ethiope.  
Love bade my kissing eyelids ope,  
That men beholding might praise love;  
My hair was wonderful and curled;  
My lips held fast the mouth o' the world  
To spoil the strength and speech  
thereof.

The latter triumph in my breath  
Bowed down the beaten brows of death,  
Ashamed they had not wrath enough.

*Abihail.* I am the queen of Tyrians.  
My hair was glorious for twelve spans,  
That dried to loose dust afterward.  
My stature was a strong man's length:  
My neck was like a place of strength  
Built with white walls, even and hard.  
Like the first noise of rain leaves catch  
One from another, snatch by snatch,  
Is my praise, hissed against and  
marred.

*Azubah.* I am the queen of Amorites.  
My face was like a place of lights  
With multitudes at festival.  
The glory of my gracious brows  
Was like God's house made glorious  
With colors upon either wall.  
Between my brows and hair there was  
A white space like a space of glass  
With golden candles over all.

*Aholah.* I am the queen of Amalek.  
There was no tender touch or fleck  
To spoil my body or bared feet.

My words were soft like dulcimers,  
And the first sweet of grape-flowers  
Made each side of my bosom sweet.  
My raiment was as tender fruit  
Whose rind smells sweet of spice-tree  
root,  
Bruised balm-blossom and budded  
wheat.

*Ahinoam.* I am the queen Ahinoam.  
Like the throat of a soft slain lamb  
Was my throat, softer veined than  
his:

My lips were as two grapes the sun  
Lays his whole weight of heat upon  
Like a mouth heavy with a kiss:  
My hair's pure purple a wrought fleece,  
My temples therein as a piece  
Of a pomegranate's cleaving is.

*Atarah.* I am the queen Sidonian.  
My face made faint the face of man,  
And strength was bound between my  
brows.

Spikenard was hidden in my ships,  
Honey and wheat and myrrh in strips,  
White wools that shine as color does,  
Soft linen dyed upon the fold,  
Split spice and cores of scented gold,  
Cedar and broken calamus.

*Semiramis.* I am the queen Semira-  
mis.  
The whole world, and the sea that is  
In fashion like a chrysopras,  
The noise of all men laboring,  
The priest's mouth tired through thanks-  
giving,  
The sound of love in the blood's  
pause,  
The strength of love in the blood's beat,  
All these were cast beneath my feet,  
And all found lesser than I was.

*Hesione.* I am the queen Hesione.  
The seasons that increased in me  
Made my face fairer than all men's.  
I had the summer in my hair;  
And all the pale gold autumn air  
Was as the habit of my sense.  
My body was as fire that shone:  
God's beauty that makes all things one  
Was one among my handmaidens.

*Chrysothemis.* I am the queen of  
Samothrace.

God, making roses, made my face  
As a rose filled up full with red.  
My prows made sharp the straitened  
seas

From Pontus to that Chersonese  
Whereon the ebbd Asian stream is  
shed.

My hair was as sweet scent that drips :  
Love's breath begun about my lips  
Kindled the lips of people dead.

*Thomyris.* I am the queen of Scy-  
thians.

My strength was like no strength of  
man's,

My face like day, my breast like  
spring.

My fame was felt in the extreme land  
That hath sunshine on the one hand,  
And on the other star-shining.

Yea, and the wind there fails of breath ;  
Yea, and there life is waste like death ;  
Yea, and there death is a glad thing.

*Harhas.* I am the queen of Anakim.  
In the spent years whose speech is dim,

Whose raiment is the dust and death,  
My stately body without stain  
Shone as the shining race of rain

Whose hair a great wind scattereth.  
Now hath God turned my lips to sighs,  
Plucked off mine eyelids from mine eyes,  
And sealed with seals my way of breath.

*Myrrha.* I am the queen Arabian.

The tears wherewith mine eyelids ran  
Smelt like my perfumed eyelids' smell.

A harsh thirst made my soft mouth hard,  
That ached with kisses afterward ;

My braun rang like a beaten bell.  
As tears on eyes, as fire on wood,  
Sin fed upon my breath and blood,  
Sin made my breasts subside and  
swell.

*Pasiphae.* I am the queen Pasiphae.  
Not all the pure clean-colored sea

Could cleanse or cool my yearning  
veins ;

Nor any root nor herb that grew,  
Flag-leaves that let green water through,

Nor washing of the dews and rains.  
From shame's pressed core I wrung the  
sweet

Fruit's savor that was death to eat,  
Whereof no seed but death remains-

*Sappho.* I am the queen of Lesbians.

My love, that had no part in man's,  
Was sweeter than all shape of sweet.

The intolerable infinite desire  
Made my face pale like faded fire

When the ashen pyre falls through  
with heat.

My blood was hot wan wine of love,  
And my song's sound the sound thereof,

The sound of the delight of it.

*Messalina.* I am the queen of Italy.  
These were the signs God set on me :

A barren beauty subtle and sleek,  
Curled carven hair, and cheeks worn  
wan

With fierce false lips of many a man,  
Large temples where the blood ran  
weak,

A mouth athirst and amorous,  
And hungering as the grave's mouth  
does,

That, being an hungered, cannot  
speak.

*Amestris.* I am the queen of Persians.  
My breasts were lordlier than bright  
swans,

My body as amber fair and thin.  
Strange flesh was given my lips for  
bread,

With poisonous hours my days were  
fed,

And my feet shod with adder-skin.  
In Shushan toward Ecbatane

I wrought my joys with tears and pain,  
My loves with blood and bitter sin.

*Ephrath.* I am the queen of Rephaim.  
God, that some while refraineth him,  
Made in the end a spoil of me.

My rumor was upon the world  
As strong sound of swoln water hurled  
Through porches of the straining sea

My hair was like the flag-flower,  
And my breasts carven goodlier  
Than beryl with chalcedony.

*Pasithea.* I am the queen of Cypriotes.  
Mine oarsmen, laboring with brown  
throats,

Sang of me many a tender thing.  
My maidens, girdled loose, and braced  
With gold from bosom to white waist,  
Praised me between their wool-comb-  
ing.

All that praise Venus all night long  
With lips like speech and lids like song  
Praised me till song lost heart to sing.

*Alaciel.* I am the queen Alaciel.  
My mouth was like that moist gold cell  
Whereout the thickest honey drips.  
Mine eyes were as a gray-green sea:  
The amorous blood that smote on me  
Smote to my feet and finger-tips.  
My throat was whiter than the dove,  
Mine eyelids as the seals of love,  
And as the doors of love my lips.

*Erigone.* I am the queen Erigone.  
The wild wine shed as blood on me  
Made my face brighter than a bride's.  
My large lips had the old thirst of earth,  
Mine arms the might of the old sea's  
girth  
Bound round the whole world's iron  
sides.

Within mine eyes and in mine ears  
Were music and the wine of tears,  
And light, and thunder of the tides.

*Et hic exeant, et dicat BERSABE regina.*

Alas! God, for thy great pity  
And for the might that is in thee,  
Behold, I woful Bersabe  
Cry out with stoopings of my knee,  
And thy wrath laid and bound on me  
Till I may see thy love.

Behold, Lord, this child is grown  
Within me between bone and bone  
To make me mother of a son,  
Made of my body with strong moan:  
There shall not be another one  
That shall be made hereof.

*King David.* Lord God, alas! what  
shall I sain?

Lo, thou art as an hundred men  
Both to break and build again:  
The wild ways thou makest plain,

Thine hands hold the hail and rain,  
And thy fingers both grape and grain;  
Of their largess we be all well fain,

And of their great pity:  
The sun thou madest of good gold,  
Of clean silver the moon cold,  
All the great stars thou hast told  
As thy cattle in thy fold

Every one by his name of old;  
Wind and water thou hast in hold,

Both the land and the long sea;  
Both the green sea and the land,  
Lord God, thou hast in hand,  
Both white water and gray sand;  
Upon thy right or thy left hand  
There is no man that may stand:

Lord, thou rue on me.  
O wise Lord, if thou be keen  
To note things amiss that been,  
I am not worth a shell of bean  
More than an old mare meagre and  
lean.

For all my wrong-doing with my queen,  
It grew not of our heartes clean,

But it began of her body.  
For it fell in the hot May,  
I stood within a paven way  
Built of fair bright stone, perfay,  
That is as fire of night and day,  
And lighteth all my house.

Therein be neither stones nor sticks,  
Neither red nor white bricks,  
But for cubits five or six  
There is most goodly sardonxy,  
And amber laid in rows.

It goes round about my roofs,  
(If ye list ye shall have proofs)  
There is good space for horse and hoofs,  
Plain and nothing perilous.

For the fair green weather's heat,  
And for the smell of leavè's sweet,  
It is no marvel, well ye weet,

A man to waxen amorous.  
This I say now by my case  
That spied forth of that royal place:  
There I saw in no great space  
Mine own sweet, both body and face  
Under the fresh boughs.

In a water that was there  
She wesshe her goodly body bare,  
And dried it with her owen hair:  
Both her arms and her knees fair,  
Both bosom and brows;

Both shoulders and eke thighs,  
 Tho she wesse upon this wise ;  
 Ever she sighed with little sighs,  
 And ever she gave God thank.  
 Yea, God wot I can well see yet  
 Both her breast and her sides all wet,  
 And her long hair withouten let  
 Spread sideways like a drawing net ;  
 Full dear bought and full far fet  
 Was that sweet thing there y-set ;  
 It were a hard thing to forget  
 How both lips and eyen met,  
 Breast and breath sank.

So goodly a sight as there she was,  
 Lying looking on her glass  
 By wan water in green grass,  
 Yet saw never man.

So soft and great she was and bright  
 With all her body waxen white,  
 I woxe nigh blind to see the light  
 Shed out of it to left and right :  
 This bitter sin from that sweet sight  
 Between us twain began.

*Nathan.* Now, sir, be merry anon,  
 For ye shall have a full wise son,  
 Goodly and great of flesh and bone :  
 There shall no king be such an one,  
 I swear by Godis rood.

Therefore, lord, be merry here,  
 And go to meat withouten fear,  
 And hear a mass with goddly cheer ;  
 For to all folk ye shall be dear,  
 And all folk of your blood.

*Et tunc dicant Laudamus.*

### ST. DOROTHY.

It hath been seen, and yet it shall be  
 seen,  
 That out of tender mouths God's praise  
 hath been  
 Made perfect, and with wood and simple  
 string  
 He hath played music sweet as shawm-  
 playing  
 To please himself with softness of all  
 sound ;  
 And no small thing but hath been some-  
 time found  
 Full sweet of use, and no such humble-  
 ness

But God hath bruised withal the sen-  
 tences  
 And evidence of wise men witness-  
 ing ;

No leaf that is so soft a hidden thing  
 It never shall get sight of the great sun ;  
 The strength of ten has been the  
 strength of one,  
 And lowliness has waxed imperious.

There was in Rome a man Theophi-  
 lus,  
 Of right great blood and gracious ways,  
 that had

All noble fashions to make people glad  
 And a soft life of pleasurable days.

He was a goodly man for one to praise,  
 Flawless and whole upward from foot  
 to head ;

His arms were a red hawk that alway  
 fed

On a small bird with feathers gnawed  
 upon,

Beaten and plucked about the bosom-  
 bone

Whereby a small round fleck like fire  
 there was :

They called it in their tongue lampa-  
 dias :

This was the banner of the lordly man.  
 In many straits of sea and reaches wan  
 Full of quick wind, and many a shaken  
 firth,

It had seen fighting days of either earth,  
 Westward or east of waters Gaditane  
 (This was the place of sea-rocks under  
 Spain

Called after the great praise of Her-  
 cules),

And north beyond the washing Pontic  
 seas,

Far windy Russian places fabulous,  
 And salt fierce tides of storm-swoln  
 Bosphorus.

Now, as this lord came straying in  
 Rome town,

He saw little lattice open down,  
 And after it a press of maidens' heads  
 That sat upon their cold small quiet  
 beds

Talking, and played upon short-stringed  
 lutes ;

And other some ground perfume out of  
 roots

Gathered by marvellous moons in Asia,  
Saffron and aloes and wild cassia,  
Colored all through and smelling of  
the sun;

And over all these was a certain one  
Clothed softly, with sweet herbs about  
her hair,

And bosom flowerful; her face more  
fair

Than sudden-singing April in soft  
lands;

Eyed like a gracious bird, and in both  
hands

She held a psalter painted green and  
red.

This Theophile laughed at the heart,  
and said, —

“Now God so help me hither and St  
Paul,

As by the new time of their festival  
I have good will to take this maid to  
wife.”

And herewith fell to fancies of her life,  
And soft half-thoughts that ended sud-  
denly.

This is man's guise to please himself,  
when he

Shall not see one thing of his pleasant  
things,

Nor with outwatch of many travailings  
Come to be eased of the least pain he  
hath

For all his love and all his foolish wrath,  
And all the heavy manner of his mind.

Thus is he like a fisher fallen blind,  
That casts his nets across the boat awry  
To strike the sea, but lo! he striketh  
dry,

And plucks them back all broken for  
his pain,

And bites his beard, and casts across  
again,

And reaching wrong slips over in the  
sea.

So hath this man a strangled neck for  
fee,

For all his cost he chuckles in his  
throat.

This Theophile that little hereof wote  
Laid wait to hear of her what she might  
be:

Men told him she had name of Doro-  
thy,

And was a lady of a worthy house.  
Thereat this knight grew inly glorious  
That he should have a love so fair of  
place.

She was a maiden of most quiet face,  
Tender of speech, and had no hardi-  
hood,

But was nigh feeble of her fearful  
blood;

Her mercy in her was so marvellous  
From her least years, that seeing her  
schoolfellows

That read beside her stricken with a  
rod,

She would cry sore, and say some word  
to God

That he would ease her fellow of his  
pain.

There is no touch of sun or fallen rain  
That ever fell on a more gracious  
thing.

In middle Rome there was in stone-  
working

The church of Venus painted royally.

The chapels of it were some two or  
three,

In each of them her tabernacle was,  
And a wide window of six feet in glass

Colored with all her works in red and  
gold.

The altars had bright cloths and cups  
to hold

The wine of Venus for the services,  
Made out of honey and crushed wood-  
berries

That shed sweet yellow through the  
thick wet red,

That on high days was borne upon the  
head

Of Venus' priest, for any man to drink;  
So that in drinking he should fall to  
think

On some fair face, and in the thought  
thereof

Worship, and such should triumph in  
his love.

For this soft wine that did such grace  
and good

Was new trans-shaped and mixed with  
love's own blood,

That in the fighting Trojan time was  
bled;

For which came such a woe to Diomed

That he was stifled after in hard sea.  
And some said that this wine-shedding  
should be

Made of the falling of Adonis' blood,  
That curled upon the thorns and broken wood,

And round the gold silk shoes on  
Venus' feet :

The taste thereof was as hot honey  
sweet,

And in the mouth ran soft and riotous.  
This was the holiness of Venus' house.

It was their worship, that in August  
days

Twelve maidens should go through  
those Roman ways

Naked, and having gold across their  
brows,

And their hair twisted in short golden  
rows,

To minister to Venus in this wise ;

And twelve men chosen in their com-  
panies

To match these maidens by the altar-  
stair,

All in one habit, crowned upon the  
hair.

Among these men was chosen The-  
ophile.

This knight went out, and prayed a  
little while,

Holding Queen Venus by her hands  
and knees :

I will give thee twelve royal images

Cut in glad gold, with marvels of  
wrought stone,

For thy sweet priests to lean and pray  
upon,

Jasper and hyacinth and chrysopras,

And the strange Asian thalamite that  
was

Hidden twelve ages under heavy sea

Among the little sleepy pearls, to be

A shrine lit over with soft candle-flame

Burning all night red as hot brows of  
shame,

So thou wilt be my lady without sin.

Goddess that art all gold outside and  
in,

Help me to serve thee in thy holy  
way.

Thou knowest, Love, that in my bearing  
day

There shone a laughter in the singing  
stars

Round the gold-ceiled bride-bed wherein  
Mars

Touched thee and had thee in your  
kissing wise.

Now, therefore, sweet, kiss thou my  
maiden's eyes

That they may open graciously towards  
me ;

And this new fashion of thy shrine  
shall be

As soft with gold as thine own happy  
head.

The goddess, that was painted with  
face red

Between two long green tumbled sides  
of sea,

Stooped her neck sideways, and spake  
pleasantly :

Thou shalt have grace as thou art  
thrall of mine.

And with this came a savor of shed  
wine,

And plucked-out petals from a rose's  
head :

And softly with slow laughs of lip she  
said, —

Thou shalt have favor all thy days of  
me.

Then came Theophilus to Dorothy,  
Saying : O sweet, if one should strive or  
speak

Against God's ways, he gets a beaten  
check

For all his wage and shame above all  
men.

Therefore I have no will to turn again  
When God saith "go," lest a worse  
thing fall out.

Then she, misdoubting lest he went  
about

To catch her wits, made answer some-  
what thus :

I have no will, my lord Theophilus,  
To speak against this worthy word of  
yours ;

Knowing how God's will in all speech  
endures,

That save by grace there may no thing  
be said.

Then Theophile waxed light from foot  
to head,



And softly fell upon this answering :  
It is well seen you are a chosen thing  
To do God service in his gracious way.  
I will that you make haste and holiday  
To go next year upon the Venus stair,  
Covered none else, but crowned upon  
your hair,

And do the service that a maiden doth.  
She said: But I that am Christ's maid  
were loath

To do this thing that hath such bitter  
name.

Thereat his brows were beaten with  
sore shame,

And he came off, and said no other  
word.

Then his eyes chanced upon his banner-  
bird,

And he fell fingering at the staff of it,  
And laughed for wrath, and stared  
between his feet,

And out of a chafed heart he spake as  
thus:

Lo how she japes at me Theophilus,  
Feigning herself a fool, and hard to  
love;

Yet in good time for all she boasteth of  
She shall be like a little beaten bird.

And while his mouth was open in that  
word,

He came upon the house Janiculum,  
Where some went busily, and other  
some

Talked in the gate called the gate  
glorious.

The emperor, which was one Gabalus,  
Sat over all and drank chill wine alone.

To whom is come Theophilus anon,  
And said as thus: *Beau sire, Dieu vous  
aide.*

And afterward sat under him, and said  
All this thing through as ye have wholly  
heard.

This Gabalus laughed thickly in his  
beard.

Yea, this is righteousness and maiden  
rule.

Truly, he said, a maid is but a fool.

And japed at them as one full villanous,  
In a lewd wise, this heathen Gabalus,  
And sent his men to bind her as he  
bade.

Thus have they taken Dorothy the maid,

And haled her forth as men hale pick-  
purses:

A little need God knows they had of  
this,

To hale her by her maiden gentle hair.  
Thus went she lowly, making a soft  
prayer,

As one who stays the sweet wine in his  
mouth,

Murmuring with eased lips, and is  
most loath

To have done wholly with the sweet of  
it:

Christ king, fair Christ, that knowest  
all men's wit

And all the feeble fashion of my ways,  
O perfect God, that from all yester-  
days

Abidest whole with morrows perfected,  
I pray thee by thy mother's holy head,  
Thou help me to do right, that I not  
slip:

I have no speech nor strength upon my  
lip,

Except thou help me, who art wise and  
sweet.

Do this, too, for those nails that clove  
thy feet,

Let me die maiden after many pains.

Though I be least among thy hand-  
maidens,

Doubtless I shall take death more  
sweetly thus.

Now have they brought her to King  
Gabalus,

Who laughed in all his throat some  
breathing-whiles.

By God, he said, if one should leap two  
miles,

He were not pained about the sides so  
much.

This were a soft thing for a man to  
touch.

Shall one so chafe that hath such little  
bones?

And shook his throat with thick and  
chucked moans

For laughter that she had such holi-  
ness.

What aileth thee, wilt thou do services?  
It were good fare to fare as Venus doth.

Then said this lady with her maiden  
mouth,

Shamefaced, and something paler in the  
cheek :

Now, sir, albeit my wit and will to  
speak

Give me no grace in sight of worthy men,  
For all my shame yet know I this again,  
I may not speak, nor after down-lying  
Rise up to take delight in lute-playing,  
Nor sing nor sleep, nor sit and fold my  
hands,

But my soul in some measure under-  
stands

God's grace laid like a garment over  
me.

For this fair God that out of strong,  
sharp sea

Lifted the shapely and green-colored  
land,

And hath the weight of heaven in his  
hand

As one might hold a bird, and under  
him

The heavy golden planets beam by  
beam

Building the feasting-chambers of his  
house,

And the large world he holdeth with  
his brows,

And with the light of them astonisheth  
All place and time and face of life and  
death,

And motion of the north wind and the  
south,

And is the sound within his angel's  
mouth

Of singing words and words of thanks-  
giving,

And is the color of the latter spring  
And heat upon the summer and the  
sun,

And is beginning of all things begun,  
And gathers in him all things to their  
end,

And with the fingers of his hand doth  
bend

The stretched-out sides of heaven like  
a sail,

And with his breath he maketh the red  
pale,

And fills with blood faint faces of men  
dead,

And with the sound between his lips  
are fed

Iron and fire and the white body of  
snow,

And blossom of all trees in places low,  
And small bright herbs about the little  
hills,

And fruit pricked softly with birds'  
tender bills,

And flight of foam about green fields  
of sea,

And fourfold strength of the great  
winds that be

Moved always outward from beneath  
his feet,

And growth of grass and growth of  
sheavèd wheat

And all green flower of goodly-growing  
lands;

And all these things he gathers with  
his hands,

And covers all their beauty with his  
wings:

The same, even God that governs all  
these things,

Hath set my feet to be upon his ways.  
Now, therefore, for no painfulness of  
days

I shall put off this service bound on  
me.

Also, fair sir, ye know this certainly,  
How God was in his flesh full chaste  
and meek,

And gave his face to shame, and either  
cheek

Gave up to smiting of men tyrannous.

And here with a great voice this  
Gabalus

Cried out and said: By God's blood  
and his bones,

This were good game betwixen night  
and nones

For one to sit and hearken to such  
saws:

I were as lief fall in some big beast's  
jaws

As hear these women's jaw-teeth chat-  
tering;

By God a woman is the harder thing,  
One may not put a hook into her  
mouth.

Now by St. Luke I am so sore adrouth  
For all these saws, I must needs drink  
again;

But I pray God deliver all us men

From all such noise of women and their  
heat.

That is a noble scripture, well I weet,  
That likens women to an empty can;  
When God said that, he was a full wise  
man.

I trow no man may blame him as for  
that.

And herewithal he drank a draught,  
and spat,

And said: Now shall I make an end  
hereof.

Come near, all men, and hearken for  
God's love,

And ye shall hear a jest or twain, God  
wot.

And spake as thus with mouth full  
thick and hot:

But thou do this, thou shalt be shortly  
slain.

Lo, sir, she said, this death and all this  
pain

I take in penance of my bitter sins.

Yea, now, quoth Gabalus, this game  
begins.

Lo, without sin one shall not live a span.

Lo, this is she that would not look on  
man

Between her fingers folded in thwart  
wise.

See how her shame hath smitten in her  
eyes

That was so clean, she had not heard of  
shame.

Certes, he said, by Gabalus my name,  
This two years back I was not so well  
pleased.

This were good mirth for sick men to  
be eased,

And rise up whole and laugh at hearing  
of.

I pray thee, show us something of thy  
love,

Since thou wast maid thy gown is  
waxen wide.

Yea, maid I am, she said, and some-  
what sighed,

As one who thought upon the low fair  
house

Where she sat working, with soft  
bended brows

Watching her threads, among the  
school-maidens.

And she thought well, now God had  
brought her thence,  
She should not come to sew her gold  
again.

Then cried King Galabus upon his  
men

To have her forth, and draw her with  
steel gins.

And as a man hag-ridden beats and  
grins,

And bends his body sidelong in his bed,  
So wagged he with his body and knave's  
head,

Gaping at her, and blowing with his  
breath.

And in good time he gat an evil death  
Out of his lewdness with his cursèd  
wives:

His bones were hewn asunder as with  
knives

For his misliving, certes it is said.

But all the evil wrought upon this maid,  
It were full hard for one to handle it.

For her soft blood was shed upon her  
feet,

And all her body's color bruised and  
faint.

But she, as one abiding God's great  
saint,

Spake not nor wept for all this travail  
hard.

Wherefore the king commanded after  
ward

To slay her presently in all men's sight.

And it was now an hour upon the night,  
And winter-time, and a few stars be-  
gan.

The weather was yet feeble and all wan  
For beating of a weighty wind and  
snow.

And she came walking in soft wise and  
slow,

And many men with faces piteous.

Then came this heavy cursing Gabalus,  
That swore full hard into his drunken  
beard;

And faintly after without any word  
Came Theophile some paces off the  
king.

And in the middle of this wayfaring  
Full tenderly beholding her he said:

There is no word of comfort with  
men dead,

Nor any face and color of things sweet ;  
But always with lean cheeks and lifted  
feet

These dead men lie all aching to the  
blood

With bitter cold, their brows withouten  
hood

Beating for chill, their bodies swathed  
full thin :

Alas ! what hire shall any have herein  
To give his life and get such bitterness ?

Also the soul going forth bodiless  
Is hurt with naked cold, and no man  
saith

If there be house or covering for death  
To hide the soul that is discomforted.

Then she beholding him a little said :  
Alas ! fair lord, ye have no wit of this ;

For on one side death is full poor of  
bliss,

And, as ye say, full sharp of bone and  
lean ;

But on the other side is good and green,  
And hath soft flower of tender-colored  
hair

Grown on his head, and a red mouth as  
fair

As may be kissed with lips ; thereto his  
face

Is as God's face, and in a perfect place  
Full of all sun and color of straight  
boughs,

And waterheads about a painted house  
That hath a mile of flowers either way  
Outward from it, and blossom-grass of  
May

Thickening on many a side for length  
of heat,

Hath God set death upon a noble seat  
Covered with green and flowered in the  
fold,

In likeness of a great king grown full  
old

And gentle with new temperance of  
blood ;

And on his brows a purpled purple hood,  
They may not carry any golden thing ;  
And plays some tune with subtle finger-  
ing

On a small cithern, full of tears and  
sleep,

And heavy pleasure that is quick to  
weep,

And sorrow with the honey in her  
mouth ;

And for this might of music that he  
doth,

Are all souls drawn toward him with  
great love,

And weep for sweetness of the noise  
thereof,

And bow to him with worship of their  
knees ;

And all the field is thick with companies  
Of fair-clothed men that play on shawms  
and lutes,

And gather honey of the yellow fruits  
Between the branches waxen soft and  
wide ;

And all this peace endures in either  
side

Of the green land, and God beholdeth  
all.

And this is girdled with a round fair  
wall

Made of red stone, and cool with heavy  
leaves

Grown out against it, and green blossom  
cleaves

To the green chinks, and lesser wall-  
weed sweet,

Kissing the crannies that are split with  
heat,

And branches where the summer draws  
to head.

And Theophile burnt in the cheek,  
and said :

Yea, could one see it, this were marvel-  
lous.

I pray you, at your coming to this house,  
Give me some leaf of all those tree-  
branches ;

Seeing how sharp and white our  
weather is,

There is no green nor gracious red to  
see.

Yea, sir, she said, that shall I cer-  
tainly.

And from her long sweet throat without  
a fleck

Undid the gold, and through her  
stretched-out neck

The cold axe clove, and smote away  
her head :

Out of her throat the tender blood full  
red

Fell suddenly through all her long soft  
 hair.  
 And with good speed for hardness of  
 the air  
 Each man departed to his house again.  
 Lo! as fair color in the face of  
 men  
 At seed-time of their blood, or in such  
 wise  
 As a thing seen increaseth in men's  
 eyes,  
 Caught first far off by sickly fits of  
 sight, —  
 So a word said, if one shall hear aright,  
 Abides against the season of its growth.  
 This Theophile went slowly, as one  
 doth  
 That is not sure for sickness of his  
 feet;  
 And, counting the white stonework of  
 the street,  
 Tears fell out of his eyes for wrath and  
 love,  
 Making him weep more for the shame  
 thereof  
 Than for true pain: so went he half a  
 mile.  
 And women mocked him, saying:  
 Theophile,  
 Lo, she is dead; what shall a woman  
 have  
 That loveth such an one? so Christ me  
 save,  
 I were as lief to love a man new-hung.  
 Surely this man has bitten on his  
 tongue,  
 This makes him sad and writhled in  
 his face.  
 And when they came upon the paven  
 place  
 That was called sometime the place  
 amorous,  
 There came a child before Theophilus,  
 Bearing a basket, and said suddenly:  
 Fair sir, this is my mistress Dorothy  
 That sends you gifts; and with this he  
 was gone.  
 In all this earth there is not such an  
 one  
 For color and straight stature made so  
 fair.  
 The tender growing gold of his pure  
 hair

Was as wheat growing, and his mouth  
 as flame.  
 God called him Holy after his own  
 name.  
 With gold cloth like fire burning he  
 was clad.  
 But for the fair green basket that he  
 had,  
 It was filled up with heavy white, and  
 red;  
 Great roses stained still where the first  
 rose bled,  
 Burning at heart for shame their heart  
 withholds;  
 And the sad color of strong mari-  
 golds  
 That have the sun to kiss their lips for  
 love;  
 The flower that Venus' hair is woven of,  
 The color of fair apples in the sun,  
 Late peaches gathered when the heat  
 was done,  
 And the slain air got breath; and after  
 these  
 The fair faint-headed poppies drunk  
 with ease,  
 And heaviness of hollow lilies red.  
 Then cried they all that saw these  
 things, and said  
 It was God's doing, and was marvel-  
 lous.  
 And in brief while this knight The-  
 ophilus  
 Is waxen full of faith, and witnesseth  
 Before the king, of God and love and  
 death,  
 For which the king bade hang him  
 presently.  
 A gallows of a goodly piece of tree  
 This Gabalus hath made to hang him  
 on.  
 Forth of this world lo Theophile is  
 gone  
 With a wried neck — God give us better  
 fare  
 Than his that hath a twisted throat to  
 wear!  
 But truly for his love God hath him  
 brought  
 There where his heavy body grieves  
 him nought,  
 Nor all the people plucking at his feet:  
 But in his face his lady's face is sweet,

And through his lips her kissing lips  
are gone.

God send him peace, and joy of such  
an one!

This is the story of St. Dorothy.  
I will you of your mercy pray for me  
Because I wrote these sayings for your  
grace,  
That I may one day see her in the face.

### THE TWO DREAMS.

(FROM BOCCACCIO.)

I WILL that if I say a heavy thing  
Your tongues forgive me; seeing ye  
know that spring  
Has flecks and fits of pain to keep her  
sweet,  
And walks sometime with winter-bitten  
feet.

Moreover it sounds often well to let  
One string, when ye play music, keep  
at fret

The whole song through; one petal  
that is dead

Confirms the roses, be they white or red;  
Dead sorrow is not sorrowful to hear  
As the thick noise that breaks mid  
weeping were;

The sick sound aching in a lifted throat  
Turns to sharp silver of a perfect note;  
And though the rain falls often, and  
with rain

Late autumn falls on the old red leaves  
like pain,

I deem that God is not disquieted.  
Also while men are fed with wine and  
bread,  
They shall be fed with sorrow at his  
hand.

There grew a rose-garden in Florence  
land

More fair than many; all red summers  
through

The leaves smelt sweet and sharp of  
rain, and blew

Sideways with tender wind; and there-  
in fell

Sweet sound wherewith the green waxed  
audible,

As a bird's will to sing disturbed his  
throat,

And set the sharp wings forward like a  
boat

Pushed through soft water, moving his  
brown side

Smooth-shapen as a maid's, and shook  
with pride

His deep warm bosom, till the heavy  
sun's

Set face of heat stopped all the songs  
at once.

The ways were clean to walk, and deli-  
cate;

And when the windy white of March  
grew late,

Before the trees took heart to face the  
sun

With ravelled raiment of lean winter  
on,

The roots were thick and hot with hol-  
low grass.

Some roods away a lordly house  
there was,

Cool with broad courts and latticed  
passage wet

From rush-flowers and lilies ripe to  
set,

Sown close among the strewings of the  
floor;

And either wall of the slow corridor  
Was dim with deep device of gracious  
things;

Some angel's steady mouth and weight  
of wings

Shut to the side; or Peter with straight  
stole

And beard cut black against the aureole  
That spanned his head from nape to  
crown; there

Mary's gold hair, thick to the girdle-  
tie

Wherein was bound a child with tender  
feet;

Or the broad cross with blood nigh  
brown on it.

Within this house a righteous lord  
abode,

Ser Averardo; patient of his mood,  
And just of judgment; and to child he  
had

A maid so sweet that her mere sight  
made glad

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>Men sorrowing, and unbound the brows<br/>of hate;<br/>And where she came, the lips that pain<br/>made strait<br/>Waxed warm and wide, and from un-<br/>tender grew<br/>Tender as those that sleep brings pa-<br/>tience to.<br/>Such long locks had she, that with knee<br/>to chin<br/>She might have wrapped and warmed<br/>her feet therein.<br/>Right seldom fell her face on weeping<br/>wise;<br/>Gold hair she had, and golden-colored<br/>eyes,<br/>Filled with clear light and fire and large<br/>repose<br/>Like a fair hound's; no man there is<br/>but knows<br/>Her face was white, and thereto she<br/>was tall;<br/>In no wise lacked there any praise at<br/>all<br/>To her most perfect and pure maiden-<br/>hood;<br/>No sin I think there was in all her<br/>blood.<br/>She, where a gold grate shut the roses<br/>in,<br/>Dwelt daily through deep summer<br/>weeks, through green<br/>Flushed hours of rain upon the leaves;<br/>and there<br/>Love made him room and space to<br/>worship her<br/>With tender worship of bowed knees,<br/>and wrought<br/>Such pleasure as the pained sense pal-<br/>ates not<br/>For weariness, but at one taste undoes<br/>The heart of its strong sweet, is raven-<br/>ous<br/>Of all the hidden honey; words and<br/>sense<br/>Fail through the tune's imperious<br/>prevalence.<br/>In a poor house this lover kept apart,<br/>Long communing with patience next<br/>his heart<br/>If love of his might move that face at<br/>all,<br/>Tuned evenwise with colors musical;</p> | <p>Then after length of days he said thus:<br/>"Love,<br/>For love's own sake and for the love<br/>thereof,<br/>Let no harsh words untune your gra-<br/>cious mood;<br/>For good it were, if any thing be<br/>good,<br/>To comfort me in this pain's plague of<br/>mine;<br/>Seeing thus, how neither sleep nor<br/>bread nor wine<br/>Seems pleasant to me, yea no thing<br/>that is<br/>Seems pleasant to me; only I know<br/>this,<br/>Love's ways are sharp for palms of<br/>piteous feet<br/>To travel, but the end of such is sweet:<br/>Now do with me as seemeth you the<br/>best."<br/>She mused a little, as one holds his<br/>guest<br/>By the hand musing, with her face<br/>borne down:<br/>Then said, "Yea, though such bitter<br/>seed be sown,<br/>Have no more care of all that you have<br/>said;<br/>Since if there is no sleep will bind your<br/>head,<br/>Lo, I am fain to help you certainly:<br/>Christ knoweth, sir, if I would have<br/>you die;<br/>There is no pleasure when a man is<br/>dead."<br/>Thereat he kissed her hands and yellow<br/>head,<br/>And clipped her fair long body many<br/>times:<br/>I have no wit to shape in written rhymes<br/>A scanted tithe of this great joy they<br/>had.<br/>They were too near love's secret to<br/>be glad,<br/>As whoso deems the core will surely<br/>melt<br/>From the warm fruit his lips caress,<br/>hath felt<br/>Some bitter kernel where the teeth shut<br/>hard;<br/>Or as sweet music sharpens after<br/>ward,</p> |
|--|---|

Being half disrelished both for sharp  
and sweet ;  
As sea-water, having killed over-heat  
In a man's body, chills it with faint  
ache ;  
So their sense, burdened **only** for love's  
sake,  
Failed for pure love ; yet so time served  
their wit,  
They saved each day some gold reserves  
of it,  
Being wiser in love's riddle than such  
be  
Whom fragments feed with his chance  
charity.  
All things felt sweet were felt sweet  
overmuch ;  
The rose-thorn's prickle dangerous to  
touch,  
And flecks of fire in the thin leaf-  
shadows ;  
Too keen the breathèd honey of the  
rose,  
Its red too harsh a weight on feasted  
eyes ;  
They were so far gone in love's histo-  
ries,  
Beyond all shape and color and mere  
breath,  
Where pleasure has for kinsfolk sleep  
and death,  
And strength of soul and body waxen  
blind  
For weariness, and flesh entailed with  
mind,  
When the keen edge of sense foretast-  
eth sin.  
Even this green place the summer  
caught them in  
Seemed half deflowered and sick with  
beaten leaves  
In their strayed eyes ; these gold flower-  
fumèd eyes  
Burnt out to make the sun's love-offer-  
ing,  
The midnight's prayer, the rose's thanks-  
giving,  
The trees' weight burdening the  
strengthless air,  
The shape of her stilled eyes, her  
colored hair,  
Her body's balance from the moving  
feet, —

All this, found fair, lacked yet one grain  
of sweet  
It had some warm weeks back : so  
perisheth  
On May's new lip the tender April  
breath :  
So those same walks the wind sowed  
lilies in  
All April through, and all their latter  
kin  
Of languid leaves whereon the autumn  
blows, —  
The dead red raiment of the last year's  
rose, —  
The last year's laurel, and the last year's  
love,  
Fade, and grow things that death grows  
weary of.  
What man will gather in red summer-  
time  
The fruit of some obscure and hoary  
rhyme  
Heard last midwinter, taste the heart  
in it,  
Mould the smooth semitones afresh, reft  
The fair limbs ruined, flush the dead  
blood through  
With color, make all broken beauties  
new  
For love's new lesson — shall not such  
find pain  
When the marred music laboring in his  
brain  
Frets him with sweet sharp fragments,  
and lets slip  
One word that might leave satisfied his  
lip, —  
One touch that might put fire in all the  
chords ?  
This was her pain : to miss from all  
sweet words  
Some taste of sound, diverse and deli-  
cate, —  
Some speech the old love found out to  
compensate  
For seasons of shut lips and drowsi-  
ness ;  
Some grace, some word the old love  
found out to bless  
Passionless months and undelighted  
weeks.  
The flowers had lost their summer  
scented cheeks,



Their lips were no more sweet than  
daily breath:

The year was plagued with instances of  
death.

So fell it, these were sitting in cool  
grass

With leaves about, and many a bird  
there was

Where the green shadow thickest im-  
pleached

Soft fruit and writhen spray and blos-  
som bleached

Dry in the sun or washed with rains to  
white:

Her girdle was pure silk, the bosom  
bright

With purple as purple water and gold  
wrought in.

One branch had touched with dusk her  
lips and chin,

Made violet of the throat, abashed with  
shade

The breast's bright plaited work: but  
nothing frayed

The sun's large kiss on the luxurious  
hair.

Her beauty was new color to the  
air,

And music to the silent many birds.

Love was an-hungered for some perfect  
words

To praise her with; but only her low  
name

"Andrevuola" came thrice, and thrice  
put shame

In her clear cheek, so fruitful with new  
red

That for pure love straightway shame's  
self was dead.

Then with lids gathered as who late  
had wept,

She began saying, "I have so little  
slept,

My lids drowse now against the very  
sun;

Yea, the brain aching with a dream  
began

Beats like a fitful blood; kiss but both  
brows,

And you shall pluck my thoughts grown  
dangerous

Almost away." He said thus, kissing  
them:

"O sole sweet thing that God is glad  
to name,

My one gold gift, if dreams be sharp  
and sore

Shall not the waking time increase  
much more

With taste and sound, sweet eyesight  
or sweet scent?

Has any heat too hard and insolent  
Burnt bare the tender married leaves,  
undone

The maiden grass shut under from the  
sun?

Where in this world is room enough  
for pain?"

The feverish finger of love had  
touched again

Her lips with happier blood; the pain  
lay meek

In her fair face, nor altered lip nor  
cheek

With pallor or with pulse; but in her  
mouth

Love thirsted as a man wayfaring doth,  
Making it humble as weak hunger is.

She lay close to him, bade do this and  
this,

Say that, sing thus: then almost weep-  
ing-ripe

Crouched, then laughed low. As one  
that fain would wipe

The old record out of old things done  
and dead,

She rose, she heaved her hands up, and  
waxed red

For wilful heart and blameless fear of  
blame;

Saying, "Though my wits be weak, this  
is no shame

For a poor maid whom love so punish-  
eth

With heats of hesitation and stopped  
breath

That with my dreams I live yet heavily  
For pure sad heart and faith's humility.

Now be not wroth, and I will show you  
this.

"Methought our lips upon their  
second kiss

Met in this place, and a fair day we  
had,

And fair soft leaves that waxed and  
were not sad

With shaken rain, or bitten through with  
 drouth;  
 When I, beholding ever how your  
 mouth  
 Waited for mine, the throat being fallen  
 back,  
 Saw crawl thereout a live thing flaked  
 with black  
 Specks of brute slime and leper-colored  
 scale,  
 A devil's hide with foul flame-writhen  
 grail  
 Fashioned where hell's heat festers  
 loathsomest;  
 And that brief speech may ease me of  
 the rest,  
 Thus were you slain and eaten of the  
 thing.  
 My waked eyes felt the new day shud-  
 dering  
 On their low lids, felt the whole east so  
 beat,  
 Pant with close pulse of such a plague-  
 struck heat,  
 As if the palpitating dawn drew breath  
 For horror, breathing between life and  
 death,  
 Till the sun sprang blood-bright and  
 violent."  
 So finishing, her soft strength wholly  
 spent,  
 She gazed each way, lest some brute-  
 hoovèd thing,  
 The timeless travail of hell's child-bear-  
 ing,  
 Should threat upon the sudden: where-  
 at he,  
 For relish of her tasted misery  
 And tender little thornprick of her  
 pain,  
 Laughed with mere love. What lover  
 among men  
 But hath his sense fed sovereignly 'twixt  
 whiles  
 With tears and covered eyelids and sick  
 smiles  
 And soft disaster of a painèd face?  
 What pain established in so sweet a  
 place,  
 But the plucked leaf of it smells fra-  
 grantly?  
 What color burning man's wide-open  
 eye

But may be pleurably seen? what  
 sense  
 Keeps in its hot sharp extreme vio-  
 lence  
 No savor of sweet things? The be-  
 reaved blood  
 And emptied flesh in their most broken  
 mood  
 Fail not so wholly, famish not when  
 thus  
 Past honey keeps the starved lip covet-  
 ous.  
 Therefore this speech from a glad mouth  
 began,  
 Breathed in her tender hair and temples  
 wan  
 Like one prolonged kiss while the lips  
 had breath:  
 "Sleep, that abides in vassalage of  
 death  
 And in death's service wears out half  
 his age,  
 Hath his dreams full of deadly vassal-  
 age,  
 Shadow and sound of things ungra-  
 cious;  
 Fair shallow faces, hooded bloodless  
 brows,  
 And mouths past kissing; yea, myself  
 have had  
 As harsh a dream as holds your eyelids  
 sad.  
 "This dream I tell you came three  
 nights ago:  
 In full mid sleep I took a whim to know  
 How sweet things might be; so I turned  
 and thought;  
 But save my dream all sweet availed me  
 not.  
 First came a smell of pounded spice  
 and scent  
 Such as God ripens in some continent  
 Of utmost amber in the Syrian sea;  
 And breaths as though some costly rose  
 could be  
 Spoiled slowly, wasted by some bitter  
 fire  
 To burn the sweet out leaf by leaf, and  
 tire  
 The flower's poor heart with heat and  
 waste, to make  
 Strong magic for some perfumed wo-  
 man's sake.

Then a cool naked sense beneath my  
 feet  
 Of bud and blossom; and sound of  
 veins that beat  
 As if a lute should play of its own  
 heart  
 And fearfully, not smitten of either  
 part;  
 And all my blood it filled with sharp  
 and sweet  
 As gold swoln grain fills out the huskèd  
 wheat;  
 So I rose naked from the bed, and  
 stood  
 Counting the mobile measure in my  
 blood  
 Some pleasant while, and and through  
 each limb there came  
 Swift little pleasures pungent as a flame,  
 Felt in the thrilling flesh and veins as  
 much  
 As the outer curls that feel the comb's  
 first touch  
 Thrill to the roots and shiver as from  
 fire;  
 And blind between my dream and my  
 desire  
 I seemed to stand, and held my spirit  
 still  
 Lest this should cease. A child whose  
 fingers spill  
 Honey from cells forgotten of the bee  
 Is less afraid to stir the hive and see  
 Some wasp's bright back inside, than I  
 to feel  
 Some finger-touch disturb the flesh like  
 steel.  
 I prayed thus: Let me catch a secret  
 here  
 So sweet, it sharpens the sweet taste of  
 fear,  
 And takes the mouth with edge of wine;  
 I would  
 Have here some color and smooth shape  
 as good  
 As those in heaven whom the chief gar-  
 den hides  
 With low grape-blossom veiling their  
 white sides,  
 And lesser tendrils that so bind and  
 blind  
 Their eyes and feet, that if one come  
 behind

To touch their hair they see not, neither  
 fly;  
 This would I see in heaven, and not die.  
 So praying, I had nigh cried out and  
 knelt,  
 So wholly my prayer filled me: till I  
 felt  
 In the dumb night's warm weight of  
 glowing gloom  
 Somewhat that altered all my sleeping-  
 room,  
 And made it like a green low place  
 wherein  
 Maids mix to bathe: one sets her small  
 warm chin  
 Against a ripple, that the angry pearl  
 May flow like flame about her: the next  
 curl  
 Dips in some eddy colored of the sun  
 To wash the dust well out: another one  
 Holds a straight ankle in her hand and  
 swings  
 With lavish body sidelong, so that rings  
 Of sweet fierce water, swollen and splen-  
 did, fail  
 All round her fine and floated body  
 pale,  
 Swayed flower-fashion, and her balanced  
 side  
 Swerved edgeways lets the weight of  
 water slide,  
 As taken in some underflow of sea  
 Swerves the banked gold of sea-flowers;  
 but she  
 Pulls down some branch to keep her  
 perfect head  
 Clear of the river: even from wall to  
 bed,  
 I tell you, was my room transfigured so.  
 Sweet, green and warm it was, nor could  
 one know  
 If there were walls or leaves, or if there  
 was  
 No bed's green curtain, but mere gentle  
 grass.  
 There were set also hard against the  
 feet  
 Gold plates with honey and green grapes  
 to eat,  
 With the cool water's noise to hear in  
 rhymes:  
 And a wind warmed me full of furze  
 and limes

And all hot sweets the heavy summer  
 fills  
 To the round brim of smooth cup-  
 shapen hills.  
 Next the grave walking of a woman's  
 feet  
 Made my veins hesitate, and gracious  
 heat  
 Made thick the lids and leaden on mine  
 eyes:  
 And I thought ever, surely it were wise  
 Not yet to see her: this may last (who  
 knows?)  
 Five minutes; the poor rose is twice a  
 rose  
 Because it turns a face to her, the wind  
 Sings that way; hath this woman ever  
 sinned,  
 I wonder? as a boy with apple-rind,  
 I played with pleasures, made them to  
 my mind,  
 Changed each ere tasting. When she  
 came indeed,  
 First her hair touched me, then I grew  
 to feed  
 On the sense of her hand; her mouth  
 at last  
 Touched me between the cheek and lip,  
 and past  
 Over my face with kisses here and  
 there  
 Sown in and out across the eyes and  
 hair.  
 Still I said nothing; till she set her  
 face  
 More close and harder on the kissing-  
 place,  
 And her mouth caught like a snake's  
 mouth, and stung  
 So faint and tenderly, the fang scarce  
 clung  
 More than a bird's foot: yet a wound  
 it grew,  
 A great one, let this red mark witness  
 you  
 Under the left breast; and the stroke  
 thereof  
 So clove my sense that I woke out of  
 love,  
 And knew not what this dream was, nor  
 had wit;  
 But now God knows if I have skill of  
 it."

Hereat she laid one palm against her  
 lips  
 To stop their trembling; as when water  
 slips  
 Out of a beak-mouthed vessel with  
 faint noise,  
 And chuckles in the narrowed throat,  
 and cloys  
 The carven rims with murmuring, so  
 came  
 Words in her lips with no word right of  
 them,  
 A beaten speech thick and disconsolate,  
 Till his smile ceasing waxed compas-  
 sionate  
 Of her sore fear that grew from any  
 thing,—  
 The sound of the strong summer thick-  
 ening  
 In heated leaves of the smooth apple-  
 trees:  
 The day's breath felt about the ash-  
 branches,  
 And noises of the noon whose weight  
 still grew  
 On the hot heavy-headed flowers, and  
 drew  
 Their red mouths open till the rose-  
 heart ached;  
 For eastward all the crowding rose was  
 slaked  
 And soothed with shade: but westward  
 all its growth  
 Seemed to breathe hard with heat as a  
 man doth  
 Who feels his temples newly feverous.  
 And even with such motion in her  
 brows  
 As that man hath in whom sick days  
 begin,  
 She turned her throat and spake, her  
 voice being thin  
 As a sick man's, sud'den and tremulous;  
 "Sweet, if this end be come indeed on us,  
 Let us love more;" and held his mouth  
 with hers.  
 As the first sound of flooded hill-waters  
 Is heard by people of the meadow-grass,  
 Or ever a wandering waif of ruin pass  
 With whirling stones and foam of the  
 brown stream  
 Flaked with fierce yellow: so behold  
 ing him

She felt before tears came her eyelids  
     wet,  
 Saw the face deadly thin where life was  
     yet,  
 Heard his throat's harsh last moan  
     before it clomb:  
 And he, with close mouth passionate  
     and dumb,  
 Burned at her lips: so lay they without  
     speech,  
 Each grasping other, and the eyes of  
     each  
 Fed in the other's face: till suddenly  
 He cried out with a little broken cry  
 This word, "O help me, sweet, I am  
     but dead!"  
 And even so saying, the color of fair  
     red  
 Was gone out of his face, and his  
     blood's beat  
 Fell, and stark death made sharp his  
     upward feet  
 And pointed hands; and without moan  
     he died.  
 Pain smote her sudden in the brows  
     and side,  
 Strained her lips open, and made burn  
     her eyes:  
 For the pure sharpness of her miseries  
 She had no heart's pain, but mere  
     body's wrack.  
 But at the last her beaten blood drew  
     back  
 Slowly upon her face, and her stunned  
     brows  
 Suddenly grown aware and piteous  
 Gathered themselves, her eyes shone,  
     her hard breath  
 Came as though one nigh dead came  
     back from death;  
 Her lips throbb'd, and life trembled  
     through her hair.  
     And in brief while she thought to  
     bury there  
 The dead man, that her love might lie  
     with him  
 In a sweet bed under the rose-roots  
     dim  
 And soft earth round the branch'd  
     apple-trees,  
 Full of hushed heat and heavy with  
     great ease,  
 And no man entering divide him thence.

Wherefore she bade one of her hand-  
     maidens  
 To be her help to do upon this wise.  
 And saying so the tears out of her  
     eyes  
 Fell without noise, and comforted her  
     heart:  
 Yea, her great pain eased of the sorest  
     part  
 Began to soften in her sense of it.  
 There under all the little branches sweet  
 The place was shapen of his burial:  
 They shed thereon no thing funereal,  
 But colored leaves of latter rose-blos-  
     som,  
 Stems of soft grass, some withered red  
     and some  
 Fair and flesh-blooded; and spoil splen-  
     dider  
 Of marigold and great spent sunflower.  
     And afterwards she came back with-  
     out word  
 To her own house; two days went, and  
     the third  
 Went, and she showed her father of  
     this thing.  
 And for great grief of her soul's travail-  
     ing  
 He gave consent she should endure in  
     peace  
 Till her life's end; yea, till her time  
     should cease,  
 She should abide in fellowship of pain  
 And having lived a holy year or twain  
 She died of pure waste heart and wear-  
     ness.  
 And for love's honor in her love's dis-  
     tress  
 This word was written over her tomb's  
     head:  
 "Here dead she lieth, for whose sake  
     Love is dead."

## AHOLIBAH.

In the beginning God made thee  
     A woman well to look upon,  
 Thy tender body as a tree  
     Whereon cool wind hath always  
     blown  
     Till the clean branches be well  
     grown.

There was none like thee in the land;  
 The girls that were thy bondwomen  
 Did bind thee with a purple band  
 Upon thy forehead, that all men  
 Should know thee for God's hand-  
 maiden.

Strange raiment clad thee like a bride,  
 With silk to wear on hands and  
 feet,  
 And plates of gold on either side:  
 Wine made thee glad, and thou  
 didst eat  
 Honey, and choice of pleasant  
 meat.

And fishers in the middle sea  
 Did get thee sea-fish and sea-weeds  
 In color like the robes on thee;  
 And curious work of plated reeds,  
 And wools wherein live purple  
 bleeds.

And round the edges of thy cup  
 Men wrought thee marvels out of  
 gold,  
 Strong snakes with lean throats lifted  
 up,  
 Large eyes whereon the brows had  
 hold,  
 And scaly things their slime kept  
 cold.

For thee they blew soft winds in flutes,  
 And ground sweet roots for cunning  
 scent;  
 Made slow because of many lutes,  
 The wind among thy chambers  
 went  
 Wherein no light was violent.

God called thy name Aholibah,  
 His tabernacle being in thee,  
 A witness through waste Asia;  
 Thou wert a tent sewn cunningly  
 With gold and colors of the sea.

God gave thee gracious ministers  
 And all their work who plait and  
 weave:

The cunning of embroiderers  
 That sew the pillow to the sleeve,  
 And likeness of all things that live.

Thy garments upon thee were fair  
 With scarlet and with yellow  
 thread;  
 Also the weaving of thine hair  
 Was as fine gold upon thy head,  
 And thy silk shoes were sewn with  
 red.

All sweet things he bade sift, and  
 ground  
 As a man grindeth wheat in mills  
 With strong wheels alway going round;  
 He gave thee corn, and grass that  
 fills  
 The cattle on a thousand hills.

The wine of many seasons fed  
 Thy mouth, and made it fair and  
 clean;  
 Sweet oil was poured out on thy head,  
 And ran down like cool rain be-  
 tween  
 The strait close locks it melted in.

The strong men and the captains knew  
 Thy chambers wrought and fash-  
 ioned  
 With gold and covering of blue,  
 And the blue raiment of thine head  
 Who satest on a stately bed.

All these had on their garments wrought  
 The shape of beasts and creeping  
 things.  
 The body that availeth not,  
 Flat backs of worms and veined  
 wings,  
 And the lewd bulk that sleeps and  
 stings.

Also the chosen of the years,  
 The multitude being at ease,  
 With sackbuts and with dulcimers  
 And noise of shawms and psalteries,  
 Made mirth within the ears of these.

But as a common woman doth,  
 Thou didst think evil and devise;  
 The sweet smell of thy breast and  
 mouth,  
 Thou madest as the harlot's wise,  
 And there was painting on thine  
 eyes.

Yea, in the woven guest-chamber  
 And by the painted passages  
 Where the strange, gracious paintings  
 were,  
 State upon state of companies,  
 There came on thee the lust of  
 these.

Because of shapes on either wall  
 Sea-colored from some rare blue  
 shell  
 At many a Tyrian interval,  
 Horsemen on horses, girdled well,  
 Delicate and desirable, —

Thou saidest : I am sick of love :  
 Stay with me flagons, comfort me  
 With apples, for my pain thereof,  
 Till my hands gather in his tree  
 That fruit wherein my lips would  
 be.

Yea, saidest thou, I will go up  
 When there is no more shade than  
 one  
 May cover with a hollow cup,  
 And make my bed against the sun  
 Till my blood's violence be done.

Thy mouth was leant upon the wall  
 Against the painted mouth, thy chin  
 Touched the hair's painted curve and  
 fall ;  
 Thy deep throat, fallen lax and  
 thin,  
 Worked as the blood's beat worked  
 therein.

Therefore, O thou Aholibah,  
 God is not glad because of thee ;  
 And thy fine gold shall pass away  
 Like those fair coins of ore that be  
 Washed over by the middle sea.

Then will one make thy body bare  
 To strip it of all gracious things,  
 And pluck the cover from thine hair,  
 And break the gift of many kings,  
 Thy wrist-rings and thine ankle-  
 rings.

Likewise the man whose body joins  
 To thy smooth body, as was said,  
 Who hath a girdle on his loins,  
 And dyed attire upon his head, —  
 The same who, seeing, worshipped,

Because thy face was like the face  
 Of a clean maiden that smells  
 sweet,  
 Because thy gait was as the pace  
 Of one that opens not her feet,  
 And is not heard within the street :

Even he, O thou Aholibah,  
 Made separate from thy desire,  
 Shall cut thy nose and ears away,  
 And bruise thee for thy body's hire,  
 And burn the residue with fire.

Then shall the heathen people say,  
 The multitude being at ease ;  
 Lo, this is that Aholibah  
 Whose name was blown among  
 strange seas,  
 Grown old with soft adulteries.

Also her bed was made of green,  
 Her windows beautiful for glass,  
 That she had made her bed between :  
 Yea, for pure lust her body was  
 Made like white summer-colored  
 grass.

Her raiment was a strong man's spoil ;  
 Upon a table by a bed  
 She set mine incense and mine oil  
 To be the beauty of her head,  
 In chambers walled about with red.

Also between the walls she had  
 Fair faces of strong men portrayed ;  
 All girdled round the loins, and clad  
 With several cloths of woven braid  
 And garments marvellously made.

Therefore the wrath of God shall be  
 Set as a watch upon her way ;  
 And whoso findeth by the sea  
 Blown dust of bones will hardly say  
 If this were that Aholibah.

## MADONNA MIA.

UNDER green apple-boughs  
That never a storm will rouse,  
My lady hath her house  
Between two bowers ;  
In either of the twain,  
Red roses full of rain ;  
She hath for bondwomen  
All kind of flowers.

She hath no handmaid fair  
To draw her curled gold hair  
Through rings of gold that bear  
Her whole hair's weight ;  
She hath no maids to stand  
Gold-clothed on either hand :  
In all the great green land  
None is so great.

She hath no more to wear  
But one white hood of vair  
Drawn over eyes and hair,  
Wrought with strange gold,  
Made for some great queen's head,  
Some fair great queen since dead ;  
And one strait gown of red  
Against the cold.

Beneath her eyelids deep  
Love lying seems asleep,  
Love, swift to wake, to weep,  
To laugh, to gaze ;  
Her breasts are like white birds,  
And all her gracious words  
As water-grass to herds  
In the June-days.

To her all dews that fall  
And rains are musical ;  
Her flowers are fed from all,  
Her joy from these ;  
In the deep-feathered firs  
Their gift of joy is hers,  
In the least breath that stirs  
Across the trees.

She grows with greenest leaves,  
Ripens with reddest sheaves,  
Forgets, remembers, grieves,  
And is not sad ;

The quiet lands and skies  
Leave light upon her eyes :  
None knows her, weak or wise,  
Or tired or glad.

None knows, none understands,  
What flowers are like her hands ;  
Though you should search all lands  
Wherein time grows,  
What snows are like her feet,  
Though his eyes burn with heat  
Through gazing on my sweet,  
Yet no man knows.

Only this thing is said :  
That white and gold and red,  
God's three chief words, man's bread  
And oil and wine,  
Were given her for dowers,  
And kingdom of all hours,  
And grace of goodly flowers  
And various vine.

This is my lady's praise :  
God after many days  
Wrought her in unknown ways,  
In sunset lands.  
This was my lady's birth :  
God gave her might and mirth,  
And laid his whole sweet earth  
Between her hands.

Under deep apple-boughs  
My lady hath her house ;  
She wears upon her brows  
The flower thereof ;  
All saying but what God saith  
To her is as vain breath ;  
She is more strong than death,  
Being strong as love.

## THE KING'S DAUGHTER.

WE were ten maidens in the green corn,  
Small red leaves in the mill-water :  
Fairer maidens never were born,  
Apples of gold for the king's daugh-  
ter.



We were ten maidens by a well-head,  
 Small white birds in the mill-water :  
 Sweeter maidens never were wed,  
 Rings of red for the king's daughter.

The first to spin, the second to sing,  
 Seeds of wheat in the mill-water ;  
 The third may was a goodly thing,  
 White bread and brown for the king's  
 daughter.

The fourth to sew, and the fifth to play,  
 Fair green weed in the mill-water ;  
 The sixth may was a goodly may,  
 White wine and red for the king's  
 daughter.

The seventh to woo, the eighth to wed,  
 Fair thin reeds in the mill-water ;  
 The ninth had gold work on her head,  
 Honey in the comb for the king's  
 daughter.

The ninth had gold work round her  
 hair,  
 Fallen flowers in the mill-water ;  
 The tenth may was goodly and fair,  
 Golden gloves for the king's daugh-  
 ter.

We were ten maidens in a field green,  
 Fallen fruit in the mill-water :  
 Fairer maidens never have been,  
 Golden sleeves for the king's daugh-  
 ter.

By there comes the king's young son,  
 A little wind in the mill-water ;  
 "Out of ten maidens ye'll grant me one,"  
 A crown of red for the king's daugh-  
 ter.

"Out of ten may's ye'll give me the  
 best,"  
 A little rain in the mill-water ;  
 A bed of yellow straw for all the rest,  
 A bed of gold for the king's daughter.

He's ta'en out the goodliest,  
 Rain that rains in the mill-water ;  
 A comb of yellow shell for all the rest,  
 A comb of gold for the king's daugh-  
 ter.

He's made her bed to the goodliest,  
 Wind and hail in the mill-water ;  
 A grass girdle for all the rest,  
 A girdle of arms for the king's daugh-  
 ter.

He's set his heart to the goodliest,  
 Snow that snows in the mill-water ;  
 Nine little kisses for all the rest,  
 An hundredfold for the king's daugh-  
 ter.

He's ta'en his leave at the goodliest,  
 Broken boats in the mill-water ;  
 Golden gifts for all the rest,  
 Sorrow of heart for the king's daugh-  
 ter.

"Ye'll make a grave for my fair body,"  
 Running rain in the mill-water ;  
 "And ye'll streek my brother at the side  
 of me,"  
 The pains of hell for the king's daugh-  
 ter.

## MAY JANET.

(BRETON.)

"STAND up, stand up, thou May Janet,  
 And go to the wars with me."  
 He's drawn her by both hands,  
 With her face against the sea.

"He that strews red shall gather white,  
 He that sows white reap red,  
 Before your face and my daughter's  
 Meet in a marriage-bed.

"Gold coin shall grow in the yellow  
 field,  
 Green corn in the green sea-water,  
 And red fruit grow of the rose's red,  
 Ere your fruit grow in her."

"But I shall have her by land," he said,  
 "Or I shall have her by sea,  
 Or I shall have her by strong treason  
 And no grace go with me."

Her father's drawn her by both hands,  
He's rent her gown from her,  
He's ta'en the smock round her body,  
Cast in the sea-water.

The captain's drawn her by both sides  
Out of the fair green sea :  
"Stand up, stand up, thou May Janet,  
And come to the war with me."

The first town they came to,  
There was a blue bride-chamber ;  
He clothed her on with silk,  
And belted her with amber.

The second town they came to,  
The bridesmen feasted knee to knee ;  
He clothed her on with silver,  
A stately thing to see.

The third town they came to,  
The bridesmaids all had gowns of  
gold ;  
He clothed her on with purple,  
A rich thing to behold.

The last town they came to,  
He clothed her white and red,  
With a green flag either side of her  
And a gold flag overhead.

### THE BLOODY SON.

(FINNISH.)

"O WHERE have ye been the morn sae  
late,  
My merry son, come tell me hither ?  
O where have ye been the morn sae late ?  
And I wot I hae but anither."  
"By the water-gate, by the water-gate,  
O dear mither."

"And whatten kin' o' wark had ye there  
to make,  
My merry son, come tell me hither ?  
And whatten kin' o' wark had ye there  
to make ?  
And I wot I hae but anither."  
"I watered my steeds with water frae  
the lake,  
O dear mither."

"Why is your coat sae fouled the day,  
My merry son, come tell me hither ?  
Why is your coat sae fouled the day ?  
And I wot I hae but anither."  
"The steeds wer stamping sair by the  
weary banks of clay,  
O dear mither."

"And where gat ye thae sleeves of  
red,  
My merry son, come tell me hither ?  
And where gat ye thae sleeves of red ?  
And I wot I hae but anither."  
"I have slain my ae brither by the  
weary water-head,  
O dear mither."

"And where will ye gang to mak your  
mend,  
My merry son, come tell me hither ?  
And where will ye gang to mak your  
mend ?  
And I wot I hae not anither."  
"The warldis way, to the warldis end,  
O dear mither."

"And what will ye leave your father  
dear,  
My merry son, come tell me hither ?  
And what will ye leave your father  
dear ?  
And I wot I hae not anither."  
"The wood to fell and the logs to bear,  
For he'll never see my body mair,  
O dear mither."

"And what will ye leave your mither  
dear,  
My merry son, come tell me hither ?  
And what will ye leave your mither  
dear ?  
And I wot I hae not anither."  
"The wool to card and the wool to  
wear,  
For ye'll never see my body mair,  
O dear mither."

"And what will ye leave for your wife  
to take,  
My merry son, come tell me hither ?  
And what will ye leave for your wife to  
take ?  
And I wot I hae not anither."

"A goodly gown and a fair new make,  
For she'll do nae mair for my body's  
sake,  
O dear mither."

"And what will ye leave your young  
son fair,

My merry son, come tell me hither?  
And what will ye leave your young son  
fair?

And I wot ye hae not anither."

"A twiggen school-rod for his body to  
bear,

Though it garred him greet he'll get  
nae mair,

O dear mither."

"And what will ye leave your little  
daughter sweet,

My merry son, come tell me hither?  
And what will ye leave your little daugh-  
ter sweet?

And I wot ye hae not anither."

"Wild mulberries for her mouth to  
eat,

She'll get nae mair though it garred her  
greet,

O dear mither."

"And when will ye come back frae  
roamin',

My merry son, come tell me hither?  
And when will ye come back frae  
roamin'?

And I wot I hae not anither."

"When the sunrise out of the north is  
comen,

O dear mither."

"When shall the sunrise on the north  
side be,

My merry son, come tell me hither?  
When shall the sunrise on the north  
side be?

And I wot I hae not anither."

"When chuckie-stanes shall swim in  
the sea,

O dear mither."

"When shall stanes in the sea swim,  
My merry son, come tell me hither?

When shall stanes in the sea swim?

And I wot I hae not anither."

"When birdies' feathers are as lead  
therein,  
O dear mither."

"When shall feathers be as lead,  
My merry son, come tell me hither?

When shall feathers be as lead?

And I wot I hae not anither."

"When God shall judge between the  
quick and dead,

O dear mither."

### THE SEA-SWALLOWS

THIS fell when Christmas lights were  
done,

Red rose leaves will never make  
wine;

But before the Easter lights begun;

The ways are sair fra' the Till to the  
Tyne.

Two lovers sat where the rowan blows,  
And all the grass is heavy and

fine,

By the gathering place of the sea-swal-  
lows

When the wind brings them over  
Tyne.

Blossom of broom will never make  
bread,

Red rose leaves will never make  
wine;

Between her brows she is grown red,

That was full white in the fields by  
Tyne.

"O what is this thing ye have on,

Show me now, sweet daughter of  
mine?"

"O father, this is my little son

That I found hid in the sides of  
Tyne.

"O what will ye give my son to eat,

Red rose leaves will never make  
wine?"

"Fen-water and adder's meat,

The ways are sair fra' the Till to the  
Tyne."

"Or what will ye get my son to wear,  
Red rose leaves will never make  
wine?"

"A weed and a web of nettle's hair,  
The ways are sair fra' the Till to the  
Tyne."

"Or what will ye take to line his bed,  
Red rose leaves will never make  
wine?"

"Two black stones at the kirk-wall's  
head,  
The ways are sair fra' the Till to the  
Tyne."

"Or what will ye give my son for land,  
Red rose leaves will never make  
wine?"

"Three girl's paces of red sand,  
The ways are sair fra' the Till to the  
Tyne."

"Or what will ye give me for my son,  
Red rose leaves will never make  
wine?"

"Six times to kiss his young mouth  
on,  
The ways are sair fra' the Till to the  
Tyne."

"But what have ye done with the bear-  
ing-bread,  
And what have ye made of the wash-  
ing-wine?"

Or where have ye made your bearing-  
bed,  
To bear a son in the sides of Tyne?"

"The bearing-bread is soft and new,  
There is no soil in the straining wine;  
The bed was made between green and  
blue,  
It stands full soft by the sides of  
Tyne."

"The fair grass was my bearing-bread,  
The well-water my washing-wine;  
The low leaves were my bearing-bed,  
And that was best in the sides of  
Tyne."

"O daughter, if ye have done this thing,  
I wot the greater grief is mine;

This was a bitter child-bearing,  
When ye were got by the sides of  
Tyne.

"About the time of sea-swallows  
That fly full thick by six and nine,  
Ye'll have my body out of the house,  
To bury me by the sides of Tyne."

"Set nine stones by the wall for twain,  
Red rose leaves will never make  
wine;

For the bed I take will measure ten,  
The ways are sair fra' the Till to the  
Tyne."

"Tread twelve girl's paces out for  
three,  
Red rose leaves will never make  
wine;

For the pit I made has taken me,  
The ways are sair fra' the Till to the  
Tyne."

#### THE YEAR OF LOVE.

THERE were four loves that one by one,  
Following the seasons and the sun,  
Passed over without tears, and fell  
Away without farewell.

The first was made of gold and tears,  
The next of aspen-leaves and fears,  
The third of rose-boughs and rose-roots,  
The last love of strange fruits.

These were the four loves faded. Hold  
Some minutes fast the time of gold  
When our lips each way clung and  
clove  
To a face full of love.

The tears inside our eyelids met,  
Wrung forth with kissing, and wept wet  
The faces cleaving each to each  
Where the blood served for speech.

The second, with low patient brows  
Bound under aspen-colored boughs  
And eyes made strong and grave with  
sleep  
And yet too weak to weep;

The third, with eager mouth at ease  
Fed from late autumn honey, lees  
Of scarce gold left in latter cells  
With scattered flower-smells, —

Hair sprinkled over with spoilt sweet  
Of ruined roses, wrists and feet  
Slight-swathed, as grassy girdled  
sheaves  
Hold in stray poppy-leaves;

The fourth, with lips whereon has bled  
Some great pale fruit's slow color, shed  
From the rank bitter husk whence drips  
Faint blood between her lips, —

Made of the heat of whole great Junes  
Burning the blue dark round their moons  
(Each like a mown red marigold),  
So hard the flame keeps hold, —

These are burnt thoroughly away.  
Only the first holds out a day  
Beyond these latter loves that were  
Made of mere heat and air.

And now the time is winterly  
The first love fades too: none will see,  
When April warms the world anew,  
The place wherein love grew.

### THE LAST ORACLE.

(A. D. 361.)

εἶπαι τῷ βασιλεῖ, χαμαὶ πέσε δαιδαλὸς αὐλά·  
οὐκεῖ Φοῖβος ἔχει καλυβαν, οὐ μάντιδα δάφνην,  
οὐ ποτὶν λαλέουσιν ἀπίσβετο καὶ λάλον ὕδωρ.

YEARS have risen and fallen in dark-  
ness or in twilight,

Ases waxed and waned that knew not  
thee nor thine,

White the world sought light by night  
and sought not thy light,

Since the sad last pilgrim left thy  
dark mid shrine.

Dark the shrine, and dumb the fount of  
song thence welling,

Score for words more sad than tears  
of blood, that said:

Tell the king, on earth has fallen the  
glorious dwelling,

*And the water-springs that spake are  
quenched and dead.*

*Not a cell is left the god, no roof, no  
cover;*

*In his hand the prophet laurel flowers  
no more.*

And the great king's high sad heart,  
thy true last lover,

Felt thine answer pierce and cleave it  
to the core.

And he bowed down his hopeless  
head

In the drift of the wild world's  
tide,

And dying, *Thou hast conquered*, he  
said,

*Galilean*: he said it, and died.

And the world that was thine and  
was ours

When the Graces took hands with  
the Hours

Grew cold as a winter wave

In the wind from a wide-mouthed  
grave,

As a gulf wide open to swallow

The light that the world held dear.

O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,  
Destroyer and healer, hear!

Age on age thy mouth was mute, thy  
face was hidden,

And the lips and eyes that loved thee  
blind and dumb;

Song forsook their tongues that held  
thy name forbidden,

Light their eyes that saw the strange  
god's kingdom come.

Fire for light and hell for heaven and  
psalms for pæans

Filled the clearest eyes and lips most  
sweet of song,

When for chant of Greeks the wail of  
Galilæans

Made the whole world moan with  
hymns of wrath and wrong.

Yea, not yet we see thee, father, as they  
saw thee,

They that worshipped when the world  
was theirs and thine,

They whose words had power by thine  
own power to draw thee

Down from heaven till earth seemed  
more than heaven divine.

For the shades are about us that  
 hover  
 When darkness is half withdrawn,  
 And the skirts of the dead night  
 cover  
 The face of the live new dawn.  
 For the past is not utterly past,  
 Though the word on its lips be the  
 last,  
 And the time be gone by with its  
 creed  
 When men were as beasts that bleed,  
 As sheep or as swine that wallow,  
 In the shambles of faith and of  
 fear.

O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,  
 Destroyer and healer, hear!

Yet it may be, lord and father, could  
 we know it,  
 We that love thee for our darkness  
 shall have light  
 More than ever prophet hailed of old,  
 or poet  
 Standing crowned and robed and  
 sovereign in thy sight.  
 To the likeness of one God their dreams  
 enthralled thee,  
 Who wast greater than all gods that  
 waned and grew;  
 Son of God the shining son of Time  
 they called thee,  
 Who wast older, O our father, than  
 they knew.

For no thought of man made gods to  
 love or honor  
 Ere the song within the silent soul  
 began;  
 Nor might earth in dream or deed take  
 heaven upon her  
 Till the word was clothed with speech  
 by lips of man.  
 And the word and the life wast thou,  
 The spirit of man and the breath;  
 And before thee the gods that bow  
 Take life at thine hands and death.  
 For these are as ghosts that wane,  
 That are gone in an age or twain;  
 Harsh, merciful, passionate, pure,  
 They perish, but thou shalt endure;  
 Be their life as the swan's or the  
 swallow,  
 They pass as the flight of a year.

O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,  
 Destroyer and healer, hear!

Thou the word, the light, the life, the  
 breath, the glory,  
 Strong to help and heal, to lighten  
 and to slay,  
 Thine is all the song of man, the world's  
 whole story;  
 Not of morning and of evening is thy  
 day.

Old and younger gods are buried or  
 begotten  
 From uprising to downsetting of thy  
 sun,  
 Risen from eastward, fallen to westward  
 and forgotten,  
 And their springs are many, but their  
 end is one.

Divers births of godheads find one  
 death appointed,  
 As the soul whence each was born  
 makes room for each;  
 God by god goes out, discrowned and  
 disanointed,  
 But the soul stands fast that gave  
 them shape and speech.

Is the sun yet cast out of heaven?  
 Is the song yet cast out of man?  
 Life that had song for its leaven  
 To quicken the blood that ran  
 Through the veins of the songless  
 years  
 More bitter and cold than tears;  
 Heaven that had thee for its one  
 Light, life, word, witness, O sun, —  
 Are they soundless and sightless and  
 hollow,  
 Without eye, without speech, with-  
 out ear?

O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,  
 Destroyer and healer, hear!

Time arose, and smote thee silent at  
 his warning;  
 Change and darkness fell on men that  
 fell from thee;  
 Dark thou satest, veiled with light, be-  
 hind the morning,  
 Till the soul of man should lift up  
 eyes and see.  
 Till the blind mute soul get speech  
 again and eyesight,

Man may worship not the light of life  
 within ;  
 In his sight the stars whose fires grow  
 dark in thy sight  
 Shine as sunbeams on the night of  
 death and sin.  
 Time again is risen with mightier word  
 of warning,  
 Change hath blown again a blast of  
 louder breath ;  
 Clothed with clouds and stars and  
 dreams that melt in morning,  
 Lo, the gods that ruled by grace of  
 sin and death !  
 They are conquered, they break, they  
 are stricken,  
 Whose might made the whole world  
 pale ;  
 They are dust that shall rise not or  
 quicken  
 Though the world for their death's  
 sake wail.  
 As a hound on a wild beast's trace,  
 So time has their godhead in chase ;  
 As wolves when the hunt makes  
 head,  
 They are scattered, they fly, they are  
 fled ;  
 They are fled beyond hail, beyond  
 hollo,  
 And the cry of the chase, and the  
 cheer.  
 O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,  
 Destroyer and healer, hear !  
 Day by day thy shadow shines in heaven  
 beholden,  
 Even the sun, the shining shadow of  
 thy face :  
 King, the ways of heaven before thy  
 feet grow golden ;  
 God, the soul of earth is kindled  
 with thy grace.  
 In thy lips the speech of man whence  
 gods were fashioned,  
 In thy soul the thought that makes  
 them and unmakes ;  
 By thy light and heat incarnate and im-  
 passionate,  
 Soul to soul of man gives light for  
 light, and takes.  
 As they knew thy name of old time  
 could we know it,

Healer called of sickness, slayer in-  
 voked of wrong,  
 Light of eyes that saw thy light, god,  
 king, priest, poet,  
 Song should bring thee back to heal  
 us with thy song.  
 For thy kingdom is past not away,  
 Nor thy power from the place there-  
 of hurled :  
 Out of heaven they shall cast not the  
 day,  
 They shall cast not out song from  
 the world.  
 By the song and the light they give,  
 We know thy works that they live ;  
 With the gift thou hast given us of  
 speech  
 We praise, we adore, we beseech,  
 We arise at thy bidding, and follow,  
 We cry to thee, answer, appear,  
 O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,  
 Destroyer and healer, hear !

## IN THE BAY.

## I.

BEYOND the hollow sunset, ere a star  
 Take heart in heaven from eastward,  
 while the west,  
 Fulfilled of watery resonance and rest.  
 Is as a port with clouds for harbor-  
 bar  
 To fold the fleet in of the winds from  
 far  
 That stir no plume now of the bland  
 sea's breast ;

## II.

Above the soft sweep of the breathless  
 bay  
 South-westward, far past flight of night  
 and day,  
 Lower than the sunken sunset sinks,  
 and higher  
 Than dawn can freak the front of heaven  
 with fire, —  
 My thought with eyes and wings made  
 wide makes way  
 To find the place of souls that I de-  
 sire.

## III.

If any place for any soul there be,  
Disrobed and disentranced; if the  
  might,  
The fire and force that filled with ar-  
  dent light  
The souls whose shadow is half the  
  light we see,  
Survive, and be suppressed not of the  
  night, —  
This hour should show what all day  
  hid from me.

## IV.

Night knows not, neither is it shown to  
  day,  
By sunlight nor by starlight is it shown,  
Nor to the full moon's eye nor footfall  
  known,  
Their world's untrodden and unkindled  
  way;  
Nor is the breath nor music of it blown  
With sounds of winter or with winds  
  of May.

## V.

But here, where light and darkness  
  reconciled  
Hold earth between them as a weanling  
  child  
Between the balanced hands of death  
  and birth,  
Even as they held the new-born shape  
  of earth  
When first life trembled in her limbs  
  and smiled, —  
Here hope might think to find what  
  hope were worth.

## VI.

Past Hades, past Elysium, past the long,  
Slow, smooth, strong lapse of Lethe;  
  past the toil  
Wherein all souls are taken as a spoil,  
The Stygian web of waters, — if your  
  song  
Be quenched not, O our brethren, but  
  be strong  
As ere ye too shook off our temporal  
  coil;

## VII.

It yet these twain survive your worldly  
  breath,  
Joy trampling sorrow, life devouring  
  death,  
If perfect life possess your life all  
  through,  
And like your words your souls be  
  deathless too,  
To-night, of all whom night encompass-  
  eth,  
My soul would commune with one soul  
  of you.

## VIII.

Above the sunset, might I see thine  
  eyes  
That were above the sun-dawn in our  
  skies,  
Son of the songs of morning, — thine  
  that were  
First lights to lighten that rekindling  
  air  
Wherethrough men saw the front of  
  England rise,  
And heard thine loudest of the lyre-  
  notes there, —

## IX.

If yet thy fire have not one spark the  
  less,  
O Titan, born of her a Titaness,  
Across the sunrise and the sunset's  
  mark  
Send of thy lyre one sound, thy fire one  
  spark,  
To change this face of our unworthi-  
  ness,  
Across this hour dividing light from  
  dark;

## X.

To change this face of our chill time,  
  that hears  
No song like thine of all that crowd  
  its ears,  
Of all its lights that lighten all day long  
Sces none like thy most fleet and fiery  
  sphere's  
Out-lightening Sirius, — in its twilight  
  throng,  
No thunder and no sunrise like thy  
  song.



## XI.

Hath not the sea-wind swept the sea-  
line bare  
To pave with stainless fire, through  
stainless air,  
A passage for thine heavenlier feet to  
tread  
Ungrieved of earthly floor-work? hath  
it spread  
No covering splendid as the sun-god's  
hair  
To veil or to reveal thy lordlier head?

## XII.

Hath not the sunset strewn across the  
sea  
A way majestic enough for thee?  
What hour save this should be thine  
hour — and mine,  
If thou have care of any less divine  
Than thine own soul; if thou take  
thought of me,  
Marlowe, as all my soul takes thought  
of thine?

## XIII.

Before the moon's face as before the  
sun,  
The morning star and evening star are  
one  
For all men's lands as England. Oh, if  
night  
Hang hard upon us, — ere our day take  
flight,  
Shed thou some comfort from thy day  
long done  
On us pale children of the latter light!

## XIV.

For surely, brother and master, and  
lord and king,  
Where'er thy footfall and thy face  
make spring  
In all souls' eyes that meet thee where-  
soe'er,  
And have thy soul for sunshine and  
sweet air, —  
Some late love of thine old live land  
should cling,  
Some living love of England, round  
thee there.

## XV.

Here from her shore, across her sunni-  
est sea,  
My soul makes question of the sun for  
thee,  
And waves and beams make answer.  
When thy feet  
Made her ways flowerier and their  
flowers more sweet  
With childlike passage of a god to be,  
Like spray these waves cast off her foe-  
men's fleet.

## XVI.

Like foam they flung it from her, and  
like weed  
Its wrecks were washed from scornful  
shoal to shoal,  
From rock to rock reverberate; and  
the whole  
Sea laughed and lightened with a death-  
less deed  
That sowed our enemies in her field for  
seed,  
And made her shores fit harborage for  
thy soul.

## XVII.

Then in her green south fields, a poor  
man's child,  
Thou hadst thy short sweet fill of half-  
blown joy,  
That ripens all of us for time to cloy  
With full-blown pain and passion, ere  
the wild  
World caught thee by the fiery heart,  
and smiled  
To make so swift end of the godlike  
boy.

## XVIII.

For thou, if ever godlike foot there trod  
These fields of ours, wert surely like a  
god.  
Who knows what splendor of strange  
dreams was shed  
With sacred shadow and glimmer of  
gold and red  
From hallowed windows, over stone and  
sod,  
On thine unbowed, bright, insubmissive  
head?

## XIX.

The shadow stayed not, but the splendor  
 stays,  
 Our brother, till the last of English days.  
 No day nor night on English earth shall  
 be  
 Forever, spring nor summer, Junes nor  
 Mays,  
 But somewhat as a sound or gleam of  
 thee  
 Shall come on us like morning from the  
 sea.

## XX.

Like sunrise never wholly risen, nor yet  
 Quenched; or like sunset never wholly  
 set,  
 A light to lighten as from living eyes  
 The cold, unlit, close lids of one that lies  
 Dead, or a ray returned from death's far  
 skies  
 To fire us living lest our lives forget.

## XXI.

For in that heaven what light of lights  
 may be,  
 What splendor of what stars, what  
 spheres of flame  
 Sounding, that none may number nor  
 may name,  
 We know not, even thy brethren; yea,  
 not we  
 Whose eyes desire the light that light-  
 ened thee,  
 Whose ways and thine are one way and  
 the same.

## XXII.

But if the riddles that in sleep we read,  
 And trust them not, be flattering truth  
 indeed,  
 As he that rose our mightiest called  
 them, — he,  
 Much higher than thou as thou much  
 higher than we, —  
 There, might we say, all flower of all  
 our seed,  
 All singing souls are as one sounding  
 sea.

## XXIII.

All those that here were of thy kind  
 and kin,  
 Beside thee and below thee, full of love,  
 Full-souled for song, — and one alone  
 above  
 Whose only light folds all your glories  
 in —  
 With all birds' notes from nightingale  
 to dove  
 Fill the world whither we too fain would  
 win;

## XXIV.

The world that sees in heaven the sove-  
 reign light  
 Of sunlike Shakespeare, and the fiery  
 night  
 Whose stars were watched of Webster;  
 and beneath,  
 The twin-souled brethren of the single  
 wreath,  
 Grown in king's gardens, plucked from  
 pastoral heath,  
 Wrought with all flowers for all men's  
 heart's delight.

## XXV.

And that fixed fervor, iron-red like  
 Mars,  
 In the mid moving tide of tenderer stars,  
 That burned on loves and deeds the  
 darkest done,  
 Athwart the incestuous prisoner's bride-  
 house bars;  
 And thine, most highest of all their fires  
 but one,  
 Our morning star, sole risen before the  
 sun.

## XXVI.

And one light risen since theirs to run  
 such race  
 Thou hast seen, O Phosphor, from thy  
 pride of place.  
 Thou hast seen Shelley, him that was  
 to thee  
 As light to fire or dawn to lightning;  
 me, —  
 Me likewise, O our brother, shalt thou  
 see,  
 And I behold thee, face to glorious  
 face?

## XXVII.

You twain the same swift year of man  
 hood swept  
 Down the steep darkness, and our father  
 wept.  
 And from the gleam of Apollonian tears  
 A holier aureole rounds your memories,  
 kept  
 Most fervent-fresh of all the singing  
 spheres,  
 And April-colored through all months  
 and years.

## XXVIII.

You twain, fate spared not half your  
 fiery span;  
 The longer date fulfils the lesser man.  
 Ye from beyond the dark dividing date  
 Stand smiling, crowned as gods, with  
 foot on fate.  
 For stronger was your blessing than his  
 ban,  
 And earliest whom he struck, he struck  
 too late.

## XXIX.

Yet love and loathing, faith and unfaith  
 yet  
 Bind less to greater souls in unison,  
 And one desire that makes three spirits  
 as one  
 Takes great and small as in one spirit-  
 ual net  
 Woven out of hope toward what shall  
 yet be done  
 Ere hate or love remember or forget;

## XXX.

Woven out of faith and hope and love  
 too great  
 To bear the bonds of life and death  
 and fate;  
 Woven out of love and hope and faith  
 too dear  
 To take the print of doubt and change  
 and fear;  
 And interwoven with lines of wrath and  
 hate  
 Blood-red with soils of many a sanguine  
 year.

## XXXI.

Who cannot hate, can love not: if he  
 grieve,  
 His tears are barren as the unfruitful  
 rain  
 That rears no harvest from the green  
 sea's plain,  
 And as thorns crackling this man's laugh  
 is vain.  
 Nor can belief touch, kindle, smite, re-  
 priev  
 His heart who has not heart to dis-  
 believe.

## XXXII.

But you, most perfect in your hate and  
 love,  
 Our great twin-spirited brethren; you  
 that stand  
 Head by head glittering, hand made  
 fast in hand,  
 And underfoot the fang-drawn worm  
 that strove  
 To wound you living; from so far above,  
 Look love, not scorn, on ours that was  
 your land.

## XXXIII.

For love we lack, and help and heat  
 and light  
 To clothe us and to comfort us with  
 might.  
 What help is ours to take or give? but  
 ye —  
 Oh, more than sunrise to the blind cold  
 sea,  
 That wailed aloud with all her waves  
 all night,  
 Much more, being much more glorious,  
 should you be.

## XXXIV.

As fire to frost, as ease to toil, as dew  
 To flowerless fields, as sleep to slacken-  
 ing pain,  
 As hope to souls long weaned from  
 hope again  
 Returning, or as blood revived anew  
 To dry-drawn limbs and every pulseless  
 vein, —  
 Even so toward us should no man be  
 but you.

## XXXV.

One rose before the sunrise was, and one  
 Before the sunset, lovelier than the sun.  
 And now the heaven is dark and bright  
 and loud  
 With wind and starry drift and moon  
 and cloud,  
 And night's cry rings in straining sheet  
 and shroud:  
 What help is ours if hope like yours  
 be none?

## XXXVI.

O well-beloved, our brethren, if ye be,  
 Then are we not forsaken. This kind  
 earth  
 Made fragrant once for all time with  
 your birth,  
 And bright for all men with your love,  
 and worth  
 The clasp and kiss and wedlock of the  
 sea,  
 Were not your mother if not your  
 brethren we.

## XXXVII.

Because the days were dark with gods  
 and kings,  
 And in time's hand the old hours of  
 time as rods,  
 When force and fear set hope and faith  
 at odds,  
 Ye failed not, nor abased your plume-  
 plucked wings;  
 And we that front not more disastrous  
 things,  
 How should we fail in face of kings  
 and gods?

## XXXVIII.

For now the deep dense plumes of night  
 are thinned  
 Surely with winnowing of the glimmer-  
 ing wind  
 Whose feet are fledged with morning;  
 and the breath  
 Begins in heaven that sings the dark to  
 death.  
 And all the night wherein men groaned  
 and sinned  
 Sickens at heart to hear what sundawn  
 saith.

## XXXIX.

O first-born sons of hope and fairest! ye  
 Whose prows first clove the thought  
 unsounded sea  
 Whence all the dark dead centuries  
 rose to bar  
 The spirit of man lest truth should  
 make him free,  
 The sunrise and the sunset, seeing one  
 star,  
 Take heart as we to know you that ye  
 are.

## XL.

Ye rise not, and ye set not: we that say  
 Ye rise and set like hopes that set and  
 rise  
 Look yet but seaward from a land-locked  
 bay;  
 But where at last the sea's line is the  
 sky's,  
 And truth and hope one sunlight in  
 your eyes,  
 No sunrise and no sunset marks their  
 day.

## A FORSAKEN GARDEN.

In a coign of the cliff between lowland  
 and highland,  
 At the sea-down's edge between wind-  
 ward and lee,  
 Walled round with rocks as an inland  
 island,  
 The ghost of a garden fronts the sea.  
 A girdle of brushwood and thorn en-  
 closes  
 The steep square slope of the blos-  
 somless bed  
 Where the weeds that grew green from  
 the graves of its roses  
 Now lie dead.  
 The fields fall southward, abrupt and  
 broken,  
 To the low last edge of the long lone  
 land.  
 If a step should sound or a word be  
 spoken,  
 Would a ghost not rise at the strange  
 guest's hand?

- So long have the gray bare walks lain  
 guestless,  
 Through branches and briers if a man  
 make way,  
 He shall find no life but the sea-wind's,  
 restless  
 Night and day.
- The dense hard passage is blind and  
 stifled  
 That crawls by a track none turn to  
 climb  
 To the strait waste place that the years  
 have rifled  
 Of all but the thorns that are touched  
 not of time.  
 The thorns he spares when the rose is  
 taken;  
 The rocks are left when he wastes  
 the plain;  
 The wind that wanders, the weeds wind-  
 shaken,  
 These remain.
- Not a flower to be prest of the foot that  
 falls not;  
 As the heart of a dead man the seed-  
 plots are dry;  
 From the thicket of thorns whence the  
 nightingale calls not,  
 Could she call, there were never a  
 rose to reply.  
 Over the meadows that blossom and  
 wither,  
 Rings but the note of a sea-bird's  
 song.  
 Only the sun and the rain come hither  
 All year long.
- The sun burns sear, and the rain dishev-  
 els  
 One gaunt bleak blossom of scentless  
 breath.  
 Only the wind here hovers and revels  
 In a round where life seems barren  
 as death.  
 Here there was laughing of old, there  
 was weeping,  
 Haply, of lovers none ever will  
 know,  
 Whose eyes went seaward a hundred  
 sleeping  
 Years ago.
- Heart handfast in heart as they stood,  
 "Look thither,"  
 Did he whisper? "Look forth from  
 the flowers to the sea;  
 For the foam-flowers endure when the  
 rose-blossoms wither,  
 And men that love lightly may die —  
 But we?"  
 And the same wind sang, and the same  
 waves whitened,  
 And or ever the garden's last petals  
 were shed,  
 In the lips that had whispered, the eyes  
 that had lightened,  
 Love was dead.
- Or they loved their life through, and  
 then went whither?  
 And were one to the end — but what  
 end who knows?  
 Love deep as the sea as a rose must  
 wither,  
 As the rose-red seaweed that mocks  
 the rose.  
 Shall the dead take thought for the  
 dead to love them?  
 What love was ever as deep as a grave?  
 They are loveless now as the grass  
 above them  
 Or the wave.
- All are at one now, roses and lovers,  
 Not known of the cliffs and the fields  
 and the sea.  
 Not a breath of the time that has been  
 hovers  
 In the air now soft with a summer to  
 be.  
 Not a breath shall there sweeten the  
 seasons hereafter  
 Of the flowers or the lovers that  
 laugh now or weep,  
 When as they that are free now of weep-  
 ing and laughter  
 We shall sleep.
- Here death may deal not again forever;  
 Here change may come not till all  
 change end.  
 From the graves they have made they  
 shall rise up never,  
 Who have left naught living to rav-  
 age and rend.

Earth, stones, and thorns of the wild  
ground growing,  
While the sun and the rain live, these  
shall be ;  
Till a last wind's breath, upon all these  
blowing,  
Roll the sea.

Till the slow sea rise, and the sheer cliff  
crumble,  
Till terrace and meadow the deep  
gulfs drink,  
Till the strength of the waves of the  
high tides humble  
The fields that lessen, the rocks that  
shrink,  
Here now in his triumph where all  
things falter,  
Stretched out on the spoils that his  
own hand spread,  
As a god self-slain on his own strange  
altar,  
Death lies dead.

## RELICS.

THIS flower that smells of honey and  
the sea,  
White laurustine, seems in my hand to  
be  
A white star made of memory long  
ago  
Lit in the heaven of dear times dead to  
me.

A star out of the skies, love used to  
know  
Here held in hand, a stray left yet to  
show  
What flowers my heart was full of in  
the days  
That are long since gone down dead  
memory's flow.

Dead memory that revives on doubtful  
ways,  
Half hearkening what the buried sea  
son says,  
Out of the world of the unapparent  
dead  
Where the lost Aprils are, and the lost  
Mays.

Flower, once I knew thy star-white  
brethren bred  
Nigh where the last of all the land  
made head  
Against the sea, a keen-faced prom-  
ontory, —  
Flowers on salt wind and sprinkled sea  
dews fed.

Their hearts were glad of the free  
place's glory ;  
The wind that sang them all his stormy  
story  
Had talked all winter to the sleepless  
spray,  
And as the sea's their hues were hard  
and hoary.

Like things born of the sea and the  
bright day,  
They laughed out at the years that  
could not slay,  
Live sons and joyous of unquiet  
hours,  
And stronger than all storms that  
range for prey.

And in the close indomitable flow-  
ers  
A keen-edged odor of the sun and  
showers  
Was as the smell of the fresh honey-  
comb  
Made sweet for mouths of none but  
paramours.

Out of the hard green wall of leaves  
that clomb,  
They showed like windfalls of the snow  
soft foam,  
Or feathers from the weary south-  
wind's wing,  
Fair as the spray that it came shore-  
ward from.

And thou, as white, what word hast  
thou to bring ?  
If my heart hearken, whereof wilt thou  
sing ?  
For some sign surely thou, too, hast  
to bear  
Some word far south was taught thee  
of the spring.

White like a white rose, not like these  
that were  
Fought of the wind's mouth and the  
winter air,  
Poor tender thing of soft Italian  
blood,  
Where once thou grewest, what else  
for me grew there?

Born in what spring and on what city's  
tomb,  
By whose hand wast thou reached, and  
plucked for whom?  
There hangs about thee, could the  
soul's sense tell,  
An odor as of love and of love's  
doom.

Of days more sweet than thou wast  
sweet to smell,  
Of flower-soft thoughts that came to  
flower and fell,  
Of loves that lived a lily's life and  
died,  
Of dreams now dwelling where dead  
roses dwell.

O white birth of the golden mountain-  
side  
That for the sun's love makes its bosom  
wide  
At sunrise, and with all its woods and  
flowers  
Takes in the morning to its heart of  
pride!

Thou hast a word of that one land of  
ours,  
And of the fair town called of the fair  
towers,  
A word for me of my San Gim-  
ignan,  
A word of April's greenest-girdled  
hours;

Of the breached walls whereon the  
wallflowers ran  
Called of Saint Fina, breachless now of  
man,  
Though time with soft feet break  
them stone by stone,  
Who breaks down hour by hour his  
own reign's spaw;

Of the cliff overcome and overgrown  
That all that flowerage clothed as flesh  
clothes bone,  
That garment of acacias made for  
May,  
Whereof here lies one witness over-  
blown.

The fair brave trees with all their  
flowers at play,  
How king-like they stood up into the  
day!  
How sweet the day was with them,  
and the night!  
Such words of message have dead  
flowers to say.

This that the winter and the wind made  
bright,  
And this that lived upon Italian light,  
Before I throw them and these words  
away,  
Who knows but I what memories too  
take flight?

## SESTIMA.

I SAW my soul at rest upon a day  
As a bird sleeping in the nest of  
night,  
Among soft leaves that give the star-  
light way  
To touch its wings but not its eyes  
with light;  
So that it knew as one in visions may,  
And knew not as men waking, of  
delight.

This was the measure of my soul's  
delight;  
It had no power of joy to fly by day,  
Nor part in the large lordship of the  
light;  
But in a secret, moon-beholden way  
Had all its will of dreams and pleasant  
night,  
And all the love and light that sleep  
ers may.

But such life's triumph as men waking  
 may  
 It might not have to feed its faint  
 delight  
 Between the stars by night and sun by  
 day,  
 Shut up with green leaves and a little  
 light;  
 Because its way was as a lost star's  
 way,  
 A world's not wholly known of day  
 or night.

All loves and dreams and sounds and  
 gleams of night  
 Made it all music that such minstrels  
 may,  
 And all they had they gave it of de-  
 light;  
 But in the full face of the fire of  
 day  
 What place shall be for any starry  
 light,  
 What part of heaven in all the wide  
 sun's way?

Yet the soul woke not, sleeping by the  
 way,  
 Watched as a nursling of the large-  
 eyed night,  
 And sought no strength nor knowledge  
 of the day,  
 Nor closer touch conclusive of de-  
 light,  
 Nor mightier joy nor truer than dream-  
 ers may,  
 Nor more of song than they, nor more  
 of light.

For who sleeps once, and sees the secret  
 light  
 Whereby sleep shows the soul a fair-  
 er way  
 Between the rise and rest of day and  
 night,  
 Shall care no more to fare as all men  
 may,  
 But he his place of pain or of delight,  
 There shall he dwell, beholding night  
 as day.

Song, have thy day, and take thy fill of  
 light  
 Before the night be fallen across thy  
 way;  
 Sing while he may, man hath no long  
 delight.

### A WASTED VIGIL.

#### I.

COULDEST thou not watch with me one  
 hour? Behold,  
 Dawn skims the sea with flying feet of  
 gold,  
 With sudden feet that graze the gradual  
 sea:  
 Couldst thou not watch with me?

#### II.

What, not one hour? For star by star  
 the night  
 Falls, and her thousands world by world  
 take flight;  
 They die, and day survives, and what  
 of thee?  
 Couldst thou not watch with me?

#### III.

Lo, far in heaven the web of night un-  
 done,  
 And on the sudden sea the gradual sun;  
 Wave to wave answers, tree responds  
 to tree:  
 Couldst thou not watch with me?

#### IV.

Sunbeam by sunbeam creeps from line  
 to line,  
 Foam by foam quickens on the bright-  
 ening brine;  
 Sail by sail passes, flower by flower gets  
 free:  
 Couldst thou not watch with me?

#### V.

Last year, a brief while since, an age  
 ago,  
 A whole year past, with bud and bloom  
 and snow,



O moon that wast in heaven, what  
friends were we!  
Couldst thou not watch with me?

## VI.

Old moons, and last year's flowers, and  
last year's snows,  
Who now saith to thee, moon? or who  
saith, rose?  
O dust and ashes, once found fair to see!  
Couldst thou not watch with me?

## VII.

O dust and ashes, once thought sweet  
to smell!  
With me it is not, is it with thee, well?  
O sea-drift blown from windward back  
to lee!  
Couldst thou not watch with me?

## VIII.

The old year's dead hands are full of  
their dead flowers,  
The old days are full of dead old loves  
of ours,  
Born as a rose, and briefer born than  
she:  
Couldst thou not watch with me?

## IX.

Could two days live again of that dead  
year,  
One would say, seeking us and passing  
here,  
*Where is she?* and one answering,  
*Where is he?*  
Couldst thou not watch with me?

## X.

Nay, those two lovers are not anywhere;  
If we were they, none knows us what  
we were,  
Nor aught of all their barren grief and  
glee:  
Couldst thou not watch with me?

## XI.

Half false, half fair, all feeble, be my  
verse  
Upon thee not for blessing nor for  
curse,

For some must stand, and some must  
fall or flee:  
Couldst thou not watch with me?

## XII.

As a new moon above spent stars thou  
wast;  
But stars endure after the moon is past,  
Couldst thou not watch one hour,  
though I watch three?  
Couldst thou not watch with me?

## XIII.

What of the night? The night is full.  
the tide  
Storms inland, the most ancient rocks  
divide;  
Yet some endure, and bow nor head  
nor knee:  
Couldst thou not watch with me?

## XIV.

Since thou art not as these are, go thy  
ways;  
Thou hast no part in all my nights and  
days.  
Lie still, sleep on, be glad—as such  
things be:  
Thou couldst not watch with me.

## THE COMPLAINT OF LISA.

(*Double Sestina.*)

DECAMERON, x. 7.

THERE is no woman living that draws  
breath  
So sad as I, though all things sadden  
her.  
There is not one upon life's weariest  
way  
Who is weary as I am weary of all but  
death.  
Toward whom I look as looks the sun-  
flower  
All day with all his whole soul toward  
the sun;  
While in the sun's sight I make moan  
all day,  
And all night on my sleepless maiden  
bed

Weep and call out on death, O Love,  
and thee,  
That thou or he would take me to the  
dead,  
And know not what thing evil I have  
done  
That life should lay such heavy hand  
on me.

Alas! Love, what is this thou wouldst  
with me?

What honor shalt thou have to quench  
my breath,  
Or what shall my heart broken profit  
thee?

O Love, O great god Love, what have  
I done,

That thou shouldst hunger so after my  
death?

My heart is harmless as my life's first  
day:

Seek out some false fair woman, and  
plague her

Till her tears even as my tears fill her  
bed:

I am the least flower in thy flowery  
way,

But till my time be come that I be dead,  
Let me live out my flower-time in the  
sun,

Though my leaves shut before the sun  
flower.

O Love, Love, Love, the kingly sun-  
flower!

Shall he the sun hath looked on look  
on me,

That live down here in shade, out of  
the sun,

Here living in the sorrow and shadow  
of death?

Shall he that feeds his heart full of the  
day

Care to give mine eyes light, or my lips  
breath?

Because she loves him, shall my lord  
love her

Who is as a worm in my lord's kingly  
way?

I shall not see him or know him alive  
or dead;

But thou, I know thee, O Love, and  
pray to thee

That in brief while my brief life-days  
be done,  
And the worm quickly make my mar-  
riage-bed.

For underground there is no sleepless  
bed:

But here since I beheld my sunflower  
These eyes have slept not, seeing all  
night and day

His sunlike eyes, and face fronting the  
sun.

Wherefore, if anywhere be any death,  
I would fain find and fold him fast to  
me,

That I may sleep with the world's eld-  
est dead,

With her that died seven centuries  
since, and her

That went last night down the night-  
wandering way.

For this is sleep indeed, when labor is  
done,

Without love, without dreams, and with-  
out breath,

And without thought, O name unnamed!  
of thee.

Ah! but, forgetting all things, shall I  
thee?

Wilt thou not be as now about my bed  
There underground as here before the  
sun?

Shall not thy vision vex me alive and  
dead,

Thy moving vision without form or  
breath?

I read long since the bitter tale of her  
Who read the tale of Launcelot on a  
day,

And died, and had no quiet after death,  
But was moved ever along a weary way,  
Lost with her love in the underworld;

ah me,

O my king, O my lordly sunflower,  
Would God to me, too, such a thing  
were done!

But if such sweet and bitter things be  
done,

Then, flying from life, I shall not fly  
from thee.

For in that living world without a sun

Thy vision will lay hold upon me  
 dead,  
 And meet and mock me, and mar my  
 peace in death.  
 Yet if being wroth, God had such pity  
 on her,  
 Who was a sinner and foolish in her  
 day,  
 That even in hell they twain should  
 breathe one breath,  
 Why should he not in some wise pity  
 me?  
 So if I sleep not in my soft strait bed,  
 I may look up and see my sunflower  
 As he the sun, in some divine strange  
 way.

O poor my heart, well knowest thou in  
 what way  
 This sore sweet evil unto us was done.  
 For on a holy and a heavy day  
 I was arisen out of my still small bed  
 To see the knights tilt, and one said to  
 me  
 "The king;" and seeing him, somewhat  
 stopped my breath;  
 And if the girl spake more, I heard not  
 her,  
 For only I saw what I shall see when  
 dead,  
 A kingly flower of knights, a sunflower,  
 That shone against the sunlight like  
 the sun,  
 And like a fire, O heart, consuming  
 thee,  
 The fire of love that lights the pyre of  
 death.

Howbeit I shall not die an evil death  
 Who have loved in such a sad and sin-  
 less way,  
 That this my love, lord, was no shame  
 to thee.  
 So when mine eyes are shut against the  
 sun,  
 O my soul's sun, O the world's sun-  
 flower,  
 Thou nor no man will quite despise me  
 dead.  
 And dying I pray with all my low last  
 breath  
 That thy whole life may be as was that  
 day,

That feast-day that made trothplight  
 death and me,  
 Giving the world light of thy great  
 deeds done;  
 And that fair face brightening thy brid-  
 dal bed,  
 That God be good as God hath been to  
 her.

That all things goodly and glad remain  
 with her,  
 All things that make glad life and good-  
 ly death;  
 That as a bee sucks from a sunflower  
 Honey, when summer draws delighted  
 breath,  
 Her soul may drink of thy soul in like  
 way,  
 And love make life a fruitful marriage-  
 bed  
 Where day may bring forth fruits of joy  
 to day  
 And night to night till days and nights  
 be dead.  
 And as she gives light of her love to  
 thee,  
 Give thou to her the old glory of days  
 long done;  
 And either give some heat of light to me,  
 To warm me where I sleep without the  
 sun.

O sunflower made drunken with the sun,  
 O knight whose lady's heart draws thine  
 to her,  
 Great king, glad lover, I have a word to  
 thee.  
 There is a weed lives out of the sun's  
 way,  
 Hid from the heat deep in the meadow's  
 bed,  
 That swoons and whitens at the wind's  
 least breath,  
 A flower star-shaped, that all a summer  
 day  
 Will gaze her soul out on the sunflower  
 For very love till twilight finds her dead.  
 But the great sunflower heeds not her  
 poor death,  
 Knows not when all her loving life is  
 done;  
 And so much knows my lord the king  
 of me.

Ay, all day long he has no eye for  
 me;  
 With golden eye following the golden  
 sun  
 From rose-colored to purple-pillowed  
 bed,  
 From birthplace to the flame-lit place of  
 death,  
 From eastern end to western of his  
 way.  
 So mine eye follows thee, my sunflower,  
 So the white star-flower turns and yearns  
 to thee,  
 The sick weak weed, not well alive or  
 dead,  
 Trod under foot if any pass by her,  
 Pale, without color of summer or sum-  
 mer breath  
 In the shrunk shuddering petals, that  
 have done  
 No work but love, and die before the  
 day.  
  
 But thou, to-day, to-morrow, and every  
 day,  
 Be glad and great, O love whose love  
 slays me.  
 Thy fervent flower made fruitful from  
 the sun  
 Shall drop its golden seed in the world's  
 way,  
 That all men thereof nourished shall  
 praise thee  
 For grain and flower and fruit of works  
 well done;  
 Till thy shed seed, O shining sunflower,  
 Bring forth such growth of the world's  
 garden-bed  
 As like the sun shall outlive age and  
 death.  
 And yet I would thine heart had heed  
 of her  
 Who loves thee alive; but not till she  
 be dead.  
 Come, Love, then, quickly, and take  
 her utmost breath.  
  
 Song, speak for me who am dumb as  
 are the dead;  
 From my sad bed of tears I send forth  
 thee,  
 To fly all day from sun's birth to sun's  
 death

Down the sun's way after the flying  
 sun,  
 For love of her that gave thee wings  
 and breath  
 Ere day be done, to seek the sunflower.

FOR THE FEAST OF GIORDANO  
BRUNO,

PHILOSOPHER AND MARTYR.

I.

SON of the lightning and the light that  
 glows  
 Beyond the lightning's or the morn-  
 ing's light,  
 Soul splendid with all-righteous love  
 of right,  
 In whose keen fire all hopes and fears  
 and woes  
 Were clean consumed, and from their  
 ashes rose  
 Transfigured, and intolerable to  
 sight  
 Save of purged eyes whose lids had  
 cast off night,  
 In love's and wisdom's likeness when  
 they close,  
 Embracing, and between them truth  
 stands fast,  
 Embraced of either; thou whose feet  
 were set  
 On English earth while this was Eng-  
 land yet,  
 Our friend that art, our Sidney's friend  
 that wast,  
 Heart hardier found and higher than all  
 men's past,  
 Shall we not praise thee though thine  
 own forget?

II.

Lift up thy light on us and on thine  
 own,  
 O soul whose spirit on earth was as  
 a rod  
 To scourge off priests, a sword to  
 pierce their God,  
 A staff for man's free thought to walk  
 alone,

A lamp to lead him far from shrine and throne  
 On ways untrodden where his fathers trod  
 Ere earth's heart withered at a high priest's nod,  
 And all men's mouths that made not prayer made moan.  
 From bonds and torments and the ravening flame,  
 Surely thy spirit of sense rose up to greet  
 Lucretius, where such only spirits meet,  
 And walk with him apart till Shelley came  
 To make the heaven of heavens more heavenly sweet,  
 And mix with yours a third incorporate name.

## AVE ATQUE VALE.

IN MEMORY OF CHARLES BAUDELAIRE.

Nous devons pourtant lui porter quelques fleurs ;  
 Les morts, les pauvres morts, ont de grandes douleurs,  
 Et quand Octobre souffle, émondeur des vieux arbres,  
 Son vent mélancolique à l'entour de leurs marbres,  
 Certes, ils doivent trouver les vivants bien ingrats.

*Les Fleurs du Mal.*

## I.

SHALL I strew on thee rose or rue or laurel,  
 Brother, on this that was the veil of thee ?  
 Or quiet sea-flower moulded by the sea,  
 Or simplest growth of meadow-sweet or sorrel,  
 Such as the summer-sleepy dryads weave,  
 Waked up by snow-soft sudden rains at eve ?

Or wilt thou rather, as on earth before.  
 Half-faded fiery blossoms, pale with heat  
 And full of bitter summer, but more sweet  
 To thee than gleanings of a northern shore  
 Trod by no tropic feet ?

## II.

For always thee the fervid languid glories  
 Allured of heavier suns in mightier skies ;  
 Thine ears knew all the wandering watery sighs  
 Where the sea sobs round Lesbian promontories,  
 The barren kiss of piteous wave to wave  
 That knows not where is that Leucadian grave  
 Which hides too deep the supreme head of song.  
 Ah ! salt and sterile as her kisses were,  
 The wild sea winds her and the green gulfs bear  
 Hither and thither, and vex and work her wrong,  
 Blind gods that cannot spare.

## III.

Thou sawest, in thine old singing season, brother,  
 Secrets and sorrows unbeheld of us :  
 Fierce loves, and lovely leaf-buds poisonous,  
 Bare to thy subtler eye, but for none other  
 Blowing by night in some unbreathed-in clime ;  
 The hidden harvest of luxurious time,  
 Sin without shape, and pleasure without speech ;  
 And where strange dreams in a tumultuous sleep  
 Make the shut eyes of stricken spirits weep ;  
 And with each face thou sawest the shadow on each,  
 Seeing as men sow men reap.

## IV.

O sleepless heart and sombre soul un-  
sleeping.  
That were athirst for sleep and no  
more life  
And no more love, for peace and no  
more strife!  
Now the dim gods of death have in  
their keeping  
Spirit and body and all the springs  
of song,  
Is it well now where love can do no  
wrong,  
Where stingless pleasure has no foam  
or fang  
Behind the unopening closure of her  
lips?  
Is it not well where soul from body  
slips,  
And flesh from bone divides without a  
pang  
As dew from flower-bell drips?

## V.

It is enough: the end and the beginning  
Are one thing to thee, who art past  
the end.  
O hand unclasped of unbeholden  
friend!  
For thee no fruits to pluck, no palms  
for winning,  
No triumph and no labor and no lust,  
Only dead yew-leaves and a little  
dust.  
O quiet eyes wherein the light saith  
naught,  
Whereto the day is dumb, nor any  
night  
With obscure finger silences your  
sight,  
Nor in your speech the sudden soul  
speaks thought,  
Sleep, and have sleep for light.

## VI.

Now all strange hours and all strange  
loves are over,  
Dreams and desires and sombre songs  
and sweet,  
Hast thou found place at the great  
knees and feet  
Of some pale Titan-woman like a lover,

Such as thy vision here solicited,  
Under the shadow of her fair vast  
head,  
The deep division of prodigious breasts,  
The solemn slope of mighty limbs  
asleep,  
The weight of awful tresses that still  
keep  
The savor and shade of old-world pine-  
forests  
Where the wet hill-winds weep?

## VII.

Hast thou found any likeness for thy  
vision?  
O gardener of strange flowers, what  
bud, what bloom,  
Hast thou found sown, what gathered  
in the gloom?  
What of despair, of rapture, of deris-  
ion,  
What of life is there, what of ill or  
good?  
Are the fruits gray like dust, or bright  
like blood?  
Does the dim ground grow any seed of  
ours,  
The faint fields quicken any terrene  
root,  
In low lands where the sun and moon  
are mute,  
And all the stars keep silence? Are  
there flowers  
At all, or any fruit?

## VIII.

Alas! but though my flying song flies  
after,  
O sweet strange elder singer, thy  
more fleet  
Singing, and footprints of thy fleeter  
feet,  
Some dim derision of mysterious laugh-  
ter  
From the blind tongueless warders of  
the dead,  
Some gainless glimpse of Proser-  
pine's veiled head,  
Some little sound of unregarded tears  
Wept by effaced unprofitable eyes,  
And from pale mouths some cadence  
of dead sighs, —

These, only these, the hearkening spirit  
hears,  
Sees only such things rise.

## IX.

Thou art far too far for wings of words  
to follow,  
Far too far off for thought or any  
prayer.

What ails us with thee, who art wind  
and air?

What ails us gazing where all seen is  
hollow?

Yet with some fancy, yet with some  
desire,

Dreams pursue death as winds a fly-  
ing fire,

Our dreams pursue our dead, and do  
not find.

Still, and more swift than they, the  
thin flame flies,

The low light fails us in elusive skies,  
Still the foiled earnest ear is deaf, and  
blind

Are still the eluded eyes.

## X.

Not thee, oh! never thee, in all time's  
changes,

Not thee, but this the sound of thy  
sad soul,

The shadow of thy swift spirit, this  
shut scroll

I lay my hand on, and not death es-  
tranges

My spirit from communion of thy  
song;

These memories and these melodies  
that throug

Veiled porches of a Muse funereal,—  
These I salute, these touch, these  
clasp and fold

As though a hand were in my hand  
to hold,

Or through mine ears a mourning musi-  
cal

Of many mourners rolled.

## XI.

Among these, I also, in such station  
As when the pyre was charred, and  
piled the sods,

And offering to the dead made, and  
their gods,  
The old mourners had, standing to make  
libation,

I stand, and to the gods and to the  
dead

Do reverence without prayer or praise,  
and shed

Offering to these unknown, the gods of  
gloom,

And what of honey and spice my  
seed-lands bear,

And what I may of fruits in this  
chilled air,

And lay, Orestes-like, across the tomb  
A curl of severed hair.

## XII.

But by no hand nor any treason stricken,  
Not like the low-lying head of Him,  
the king,

The flame that made of Troy a ruin-  
ous thing,

Thou liest, and on this dust no tears  
could quicken

There fall no tears like theirs that all  
men hear

Fall tear by sweet imperishable tear  
Down the opening leaves of holy poets'  
pages.

Thee not Orestes, not Electra,  
mourns;

But bending us-ward with memorial  
urns

The most high Muses that fulfil all ages  
Weep, and our God's heart yearns.

## XIII.

For, sparing of his sacred strength, not  
often

Among us darkling here the lord of  
light

Makes manifest his music and his  
might

In hearts that open and in lips that  
soften

With the soft flame and heat of songs  
that shine.

Thy lips indeed he touched with bitter  
wine,

And nourished them indeed with bitter  
bread ;  
Yet surely from his hand thy soul's  
food came,  
The fire that scarred thy spirit at his  
flame  
Was lighted, and thine hungering heart  
he fed  
Who feeds our hearts with fame.

## XIV.

Therefore he too now at thy soul's sun-  
setting,  
God of all suns and songs, he too  
bends down  
To mix his laurel with thy cypress  
crown,  
And save thy dust from blame and from  
forgetting.  
Therefore he too, seeing all thou wert  
and art,  
Compassionate, with sad and sacred  
heart,  
Mourns thee of many his children the  
last dead,  
And hallows with strange tears and  
alien sighs  
Thine unmelodious mouth and sun-  
less eyes,  
And over thine irrevocable head  
Sheds light from the under skies.

## XV.

And one weeps with him in the ways  
Lethæan,  
And stains with tears her changing  
bosom chill ;  
That obscure Venus of the hollow  
hill,  
That thing transformed which was the  
Cytherean,  
With lips that lost their Grecian laugh  
divine  
Long since, and face no more called  
Erycine  
A ghost, a bitter and luxurious god.  
Thee also with fair flesh and singing  
spell  
Did she, a sad and second prey, com-  
pel  
Into the footless places once more trod,  
And shadows hot from hell.

## XVI.

And now no sacred staff shall break in  
blossom,  
No choral salutation lure to light  
A spirit sick with perfume and sweet  
night  
And love's tired eyes and hands and  
barren bosom.  
There is no help for these things ;  
none to mend,  
And none to mar ; not all our songs,  
O friend !  
Will make death clear, or make life  
durable.  
Howbeit with rose and ivy and wild  
vine  
And with wild notes about this dust  
of thine  
At least I fill the place where white  
dreams dwell,  
And wreath an unseen shrine.

## XVII.

Sleep ; and if life was bitter to thee,  
pardon,  
If sweet, give thanks ; thou hast no  
more to live ;  
And to give thanks is good, and to  
forgive.  
Out of the mystic and the mournful  
garden  
Where all day through thine hands  
in barren braid  
Wove the sick flowers of secrecy  
and shade,  
Green buds of sorrow and sin, and  
remnants gray,  
Sweet-smelling, pale with poison, san-  
guine-hearted,  
Passions that sprang from sleep and  
thoughts that started,  
Shall death not bring us all as thee one  
day  
Among the days departed ?

## XVIII.

For thee, oh, now a silent soul, my  
brother,  
Take at my hands this garland, and  
farewell.  
Thin is the leaf, and chill the wintry  
smell,



And chill the solemn earth, a fatal  
mother,  
With sadder than the Niobeian womb,  
And in the hollow of her breasts a  
tomb.  
Content thee, howsoe'er, whose days are  
done:  
There lies not any troublous thing  
before,  
Nor sight nor sound to war against  
thee more,  
For whom all winds are quiet as the sun,  
All waters as the shore.

## MEMORIAL VERSES

ON THE DEATH OF THÉOPHILE GAU-  
TIER.

DEATH, what hast thou to do with me?  
So saith  
Love, with eyes set against the face of  
Death;  
What have I done, O thou strong  
Death, to thee,  
That mine own lips should wither from  
thy breath?  
Though thou be blind as fire or as the  
sea,  
Why should thy waves and storms make  
war on me?  
Is it for hate thou hast to find me fair,  
Or for desire to kiss, if it might be, —  
My very mouth of song, and kill me  
there?  
So with keen rains vexing his crownless  
hair,  
With bright feet bruised from no de-  
lightful way,  
Through darkness and the disenchanted  
air, —  
Lost Love went weeping half a winter's  
day.  
And the armed wind that smote him  
seemed to say,  
How shall the dew live when the  
dawn is fled,  
Or wherefore should the Mayflower out-  
last May?

Then Death took Love by the right  
hand, and said,  
Smiling, Come now, and look upon thy  
dead.  
But Love cast down the glories of his  
eyes,  
And bowed down like a flower his  
flowerless head.  
And Death spake, saying, What ails  
thee in such wise,  
Being god, to shut thy sight up from the  
skies?  
If thou canst see not, hast thou ears  
to hear?  
Or is thy soul too as a leaf that dies?  
Even as he spake with fleshless lips of  
fear,  
But soft as sleep sings in a tired man's  
ear,  
Behold, the winter was not, and its  
might  
Fell, and fruits broke forth of the bar-  
ren year.  
And upon earth was largess of great  
light,  
And moving music winged for world-  
wide flight,  
And shapes and sounds of gods be-  
held and heard,  
And day's foot set upon the neck of  
night.  
And with such song the hollow ways  
were stirred  
As of a god's heart hidden in a bird,  
Or as the whole soul of the sun in  
spring  
Should find full utterance in one flower-  
soft word, —  
And all the season should break forth  
and sing  
From one flower's lips, in one rose tri-  
umphing;  
Such breath and light of song as of a  
flame  
Made ears and spirits of them that heard  
it ring.

And Love beholding knew not for the  
same

The shape that led him, nor in face nor  
name;

For he was bright, and great of thews,  
and fair,

And in Love's eyes he was not Death,  
but Fame.

Not that gray ghost whose life is empty  
and bare,

And his limbs moulded out of mortal  
air,

A cloud of change that shifts into a  
shower,

And dies, and leaves no light for time to  
wear;

But a god clothed with his own joy and  
power,

A god re-risen out of his mortal  
hour

Immortal, king and lord of time and  
space,

With eyes that look on them as from a  
tower.

And where he stood the pale sepulchral  
place

Bloomed, as new life might in a blood  
less face,

And where men sorrowing came to  
seek a tomb

With funeral flowers and tears for grief  
and grace, —

They saw with light as of a world in  
bloom

The portal of the House of Fame  
illuminate

The ways of life wherein we toiling  
tread,

And watched the darkness as a brand  
consume.

And through the gates where rule the  
deathless dead

The sound of a new singer's soul was  
shed

That sang among his kinsfolk, and a  
beam

Shot from the star on a new ruler's  
head;

A new star lightening the Lethean  
stream,

A new song mixed into the song su-  
preme

Made of all souls of singers and their  
might,

That makes of life and time and death  
a dream:

Thy star, thy song, O soul that in our  
sight

Wast as a sun that made for man's  
delight

Flowers and all fruits in season, be-  
ing so near

The sun-god's face, our god that gives  
us light.

To him, of all gods that we love or  
fear,

Thou among all men by thy name wast  
dear, —

Dear to the god that gives us spirit  
of song

To bind and burn all hearts of men  
that hear;

The god that makes men's words too  
sweet and strong

For life or time or death to do them  
wrong,

Who sealed with his thy spirit for a  
sign,

And filled it with his breath thy whole  
life long;

Who made thy moist lips fiery with new  
wine

Pressed from the grapes of song the  
sovereign vine,

And with all love of all things loveli-  
est

Gave thy soul power to make them  
more divine, —

That thou might'st breathe upon the  
breathless rest

Of marble, till the brows and lips and  
breast

Felt fall from off them as a cancelled  
curse

That speechless sleep wherewith they  
lived oppress;

Who gave thee strength and heat of  
spirit to pierce  
All clouds of form and color that dis-  
perse,  
And leave the spirit of beauty to  
re-mould  
In types of clean chryselephantine  
verse ;

Who gave thee words more golden than  
fine gold  
To carve in shapes more glorious than  
of old,  
And build thy songs up in the sight  
of time  
As statues set in godhead manifold, —

In sight and scorn of temporal change  
and clime  
That meet the sun re-risen with reflux  
rhyme —  
As god to god might answer face to  
face —  
From lips whereon the morning strikes  
sublime.

Dear to the god, our god who gave thee  
place  
Among the chosen of days, the royal  
race,  
The lords of light, whose eyes of old  
and ears  
Saw even on earth and heard him for a  
space.

There are the souls of those once mor-  
tal years  
That wrought with fire of joy and light  
of tears,  
In words divine as deeds that grew  
thereof,  
Such music as he swoons with love who  
hears.

There are the lives that lighten from  
above  
Our under lives, the spherul souls that  
move  
Through the ancient heaven of song-  
illuminated air,  
Whence we that hear them singing die  
with love.

There all the crowned Hellenic heads,  
and there  
The old gods who made men godlike  
as they were,  
The lyric lips wherefrom all songs  
take fire,  
Live eyes, and light of Apollonian hair.

There, round the sovereign passion of  
that lyre  
Which the stars hear, and tremble with  
desire,  
The ninefold light Pierian is made one  
That here we see divided, and aspire, —  
Seeing, after this or that crown to be  
won ;  
But where they hear the singing of the  
sun,  
All form, all sound, all color, and all  
thought  
Are as one body and soul in unison.

There the song sung shines as a picture  
wrought,  
The painted mouths sing that on earth  
say naught,  
The carven limbs have sense of blood  
and growth,  
And large-eyed life that seeks nor lacks  
not aught.

There all the music of thy living mouth  
Lives, and all loves wrought of thine  
hand in youth,  
And bound about the breasts and  
brows with gold,  
And colored pale or dusk from north  
or south.

Fair living things made to thy will of old,  
Born of thy lips, no births of mortal  
mould,  
That in the world of song about thee  
wait  
Where thought and truth are one and  
manifest.

Within the graven lintels of the gate  
That here divides our vision and our fate,  
The dreams we walk in and the  
truths of sleep,  
All sense and spirit have life inseparate.

There, what one thinks, is his to grasp  
and keep;  
There are no dreams, but very joys to  
reap;  
No foiled desires that die before de-  
light,  
No fears to see across our joys, and weep.

There hast thou all thy will of thought  
and sight,  
All hope for harvest, and all heaven for  
flight;  
The sunrise of whose golden-mouthed  
glad head  
To paler songless ghosts was heat and  
light.

Here, where the sunset of our year is  
red,  
Men think of thee as of the summer  
dead,  
Gone forth before the snows, before  
thy day,  
With unshod feet, with brows un-  
chapleted.

Couldst thou not wait till age had  
wound, they say,  
Round those wreathed brows his soft  
white blossoms? Nay,  
Why shouldst thou vex thy soul with  
this harsh air, —  
Thy bright-winged soul, once free to  
take its way?

Nor for men's reverence hadst thou  
need to wear  
The holy flower of gray time-hallowed  
hair;  
Nor were it fit that aught of thee  
grew old,  
Fair lover all thy days of all things  
fair.

And hear we not thy words of molten  
gold  
Singing? or is their light and heat  
a-cold  
Whereth men warmed their spirits?  
Nay, for all  
These yet are with us, ours to hear and  
hold.

The lovely laughter, the clear tears, the  
call  
Of love to love on ways where shadows  
fall,  
Through doors of dim division and  
disguise,  
And music made of doubts unmusical

The love that caught strange light from  
death's own eyes,<sup>1</sup>  
And filled death's lips with fiery words  
and sighs,  
And half asleep let feed from veins  
of his  
Her close red warm snake's mouth,  
Egyptian-wise:

And that great night of love more  
strange than this,<sup>2</sup>  
When she that made the whole world's  
bale and bliss  
Made king of the whole world's de-  
sire a slave,  
And killed him in mid kingdom with a  
kiss;

Veiled loves that shifted shapes and  
shafts, and gave,<sup>3</sup>  
Laughing, strange gifts to hands that  
durst not crave,  
Flowers doubled-blossomed, fruits of  
scent and hue  
Sweet as the bride-bed, stranger than  
the grave;

All joys and wonders of old lives and  
new  
That ever in love's shine or shadow  
grew,  
And all the grief whereof he dreams  
and grieves,  
And all sweet roots fed on his light and  
dew;

All these through thee our spirit of  
sense perceives,  
As threads in the unseen woof thy music  
weaves,

<sup>1</sup> La Morte Amoureuse.

<sup>2</sup> Une Nuit de Cléopâtre.

<sup>3</sup> Mademoiselle de Maupin.

Birds caught and snared that fill our  
ears with thee,  
ay-blossoms in thy wreath of brow-  
bound leaves.

Mixed with the masque of death's old  
comedy

Though thou too pass, have here our  
flowers, that we

For all the flowers thou gav'st upon  
thee shed,

And pass not crownless to Persephone.

Blue lotus-blooms and white and rosy-  
red

We wind with poppies for thy silent  
head,

And on this margin of the sundering  
sea

Leave thy sweet light to rise upon the  
dead.

### AGE AND SONG.

(TO BARRY CORNWALL.)

#### I.

IN vain men tell us time can alter  
Old loves, or make old memories falter ;

That with the old year the old year's  
life closes.

The old dew still falls on the old sweet  
flowers,

The old sun revives the new-fledged  
hours,

The old summer rears the new-born  
roses.

#### II.

Much more a Muse that bears upon her  
Raiment and wreath and flower of  
honor,

Gathered long since and long since  
woven,

Fades not or falls as fall the vernal  
Blossoms that bear no fruit eternal,

By summer or winter charred or  
cloven.

#### III.

No time casts down, no time upraises,  
Such loves, such memories, and such  
praises,

As need no grace of sun or shower,  
No saving screen from frost or thunder,  
To tend and house around and under  
The imperishable and fearless flower

#### IV.

Old thanks, old thoughts, old aspira-  
tions,

Outlive men's lives and lives of na-  
tions,

Dead, but for one thing which sur-  
vives —

The inalienable and unpriced treasure,  
The old joy of power, the old pride of  
pleasure,

That lives in light above men's lives.

### IN MEMORY OF BARRY CORN- WALL.

(OCT. 4, 1874.)

#### I.

IN the garden of death, where the sing-  
ers whose names are deathless

One with another make music un-  
heard of men,

Where the dead sweet roses fade not  
of lips long, breathless,

And the fair eyes shine that shall  
weep not or change again,

Who comes now crowned with the  
blossom of snow-white yeas?

What music is this that the world of  
the dead men hears?

#### II.

Beloved of men, whose words on our  
lips were honey,

Whose name in our ears and our  
fathers' ears was sweet,

Like summer gone forth of the land his  
songs made sunny,

To the beautiful veiled bright world  
where the glad ghosts meet,

Child, father, bridegroom and bride,  
and anguish and rest,

No soul shall pass of a singer than this  
more blest.

## III.

Blest for the years' sweet sake that were  
 filled and brightened,  
 As a forest with birds, with the fruit  
 and the flower of his song;  
 For the souls' sake blest that heard, and  
 their cares were lightened,  
 For the hearts' sake blest that have  
 fostered his name so long;  
 By the living and dead lips blest that  
 have loved his name,  
 And clothed with their praise and  
 crowned with their love for fame.

## IV.

Ah, fair and fragrant his fame as flowers  
 that close not,  
 That shrink not by day for heat or  
 for cold by night,  
 As a thought in the heart shall increase  
 when the heart's self knows not,  
 Shall endure in our ears as a sound,  
 in our eyes as a light;  
 Shall wax with the years that wane  
 and the seasons' chime,  
 As a white rose thornless that grows in  
 the garden of time.

## V.

The same year calls, and one goes hence  
 with another,  
 And men sit sad that were glad for  
 their sweet songs' sake;  
 The same year beckons, and elder with  
 younger brother  
 Takes mutely the cup from his hand  
 that we all shall take.<sup>1</sup>  
 They pass ere the leaves be past or the  
 snows be come;  
 And the birds are loud, but the lips  
 that outsang them dumb.

## VI.

Time takes them home that we loved,  
 fair names and famous,  
 To the soft long sleep, to the broad  
 sweet bosom of death;  
 But the flower of their souls he shall  
 take not away to shame us,

<sup>1</sup> Sydney Dobell died Aug. 22, 1874.

Nor the lips lack song forever that  
 now lack breath.  
 For with us shall the music and per-  
 fume that die not dwell,  
 Though the dead to our dead bid wel-  
 come, and we farewell.

## EPICEDE.

(James Lorimer Graham died at Florence, April  
 30, 1876.)

LIFE may give for love to death  
 Little: what are life's gifts worth  
 To the dead wrapt round with earth?  
 Yet from lips of living breath  
 Sighs or words we are fain to give,  
 All that yet, while yet we live,  
 Life may give for love to death.

Dead so long before his day,  
 Passed out of the Italian sun  
 To the dark where all is done  
 Fallen upon the verge of May;  
 Here at life's and April's end  
 How should song salute my friend  
 Dead so long before his day?

Not a kindlier life or sweeter,  
 Time, that lights and quenches men,  
 Now may quench or light again;  
 Mingling with the mystic metre  
 Woven of all men's lives with his,  
 Not a clearer note than this,  
 Not a kindlier life or sweeter.

In this heavenliest part of earth  
 He that living loved the light,  
 Light and song, may rest aright,  
 One in death, if strange in birth,  
 With the deathless dead that make  
 Life the lovelier for their sake  
 In this heavenliest part of earth.

Light, and song, and sleep at last,—  
 Struggling hands and suppliant knees  
 Get no goodlier gift than these.  
 Song that holds remembrance fast,  
 Light that lightens death, attend  
 Round their graves who have to  
 friend  
 Light, and song, and sleep at last.

## INFERIÆ.

SPRING, and the light and sound of things on earth

Re-quickening, all within our green sea's girth;

A time of passage or a time of birth  
Fourscore years since as this year,  
first and last.

The sun is all about the world we see,  
The breath and strength of very spring;  
and we

Live, love, and feed on our own hearts:  
but he  
Whose heart fed mine has passed  
into the past.

Past, all things born with sense and blood and breath;

The flesh hears naught that now the spirit saith.

If death be like as birth, and birth as death,

The first was fair — more fair should be the last.

Fourscore years since, and come but one month more,

The count were perfect of his mortal score

Whose sail went seaward yesterday from shore

To cross the last of many an unsailed sea.

Light, love, and labor up to life's last height, —

These three were stars unsetting in his sight,

Even as the sun is life and heat and light,

And sets not nor is dark when dark are we.

The life, the spirit, and the work were one  
That here — ah! who shall say, that here are done?

Not I, that know not; father, not thy son,  
For all the darkness of the night and sea.

MARCH 5, 1877.

## A BIRTH-SONG.

(For Olivia Frances Madox Rossetti, born Sept 20, 1875.)

OUT of the dark sweet sleep  
Where no dreams laugh or weep,  
Borne through bright gates of birth  
Into the dim sweet light

Where day still dreams of night  
While heaven takes form on earth,  
White rose of spirit and flesh, red lily of love,

What note of song have we  
Fit for the birds and thee,  
Fair nestling couched beneath the mother-dove?

Nay, in some more divine  
Small speechless song of thine  
Some news too good for words,

Heart-hushed and smiling, we  
Might hope to have of thee,

The youngest of God's birds,  
if thy sweet sense might mix itself with ours,

If ours might understand  
The language of thy land,  
Ere thine become the tongue of mortal hours:

Ere thy lips learn too soon  
Thy soft first human tune,

Sweet, but less sweet than now,  
And thy raised eyes to read

Glad and good things indeed,  
But none so sweet as thou:

Ere thought lift up their flower-soft lids to see

What life and love on earth  
Bring thee for gifts at birth,  
But none so good as thine who hast given us thee:

Now, ere thy sense forget  
The heaven that fills it yet,

Now, sleeping or awake,  
If thou couldst tell, or we  
Ask and be heard of thee,  
For love's undying sake,

From thy dumb lips divine and bright  
 Mute speech  
 Such news might touch our ear  
 That then would burn to hear  
 Too high a message now for man's to  
 reach.

Ere the gold hair of corn  
 Had withered wast thou born,  
 To make the good time glad;  
 The time that but last year  
 Fell colder than a tear  
 On hearts and hopes turned sad.  
 High hopes and hearts requickening in  
 thy dawn,  
 Even theirs whose life-springs, child,  
 Filled thine with life and smiled,  
 But then wept blood for half their own  
 withdrawn.<sup>1</sup>

If death and birth be one,  
 And set with rise of sun,  
 And truth with dreams divine,  
 Some word might come with thee  
 From over the still sea  
 Deep hid in shade or shine,  
 Crossed by the crossing sails of death  
 and birth,  
 Word of some sweet new thing  
 Fit for such lips to bring,  
 Some word of love, some afterthought  
 of earth.

If love be strong as death,  
 By what so natural breath  
 As thine could this be said?  
 By what so lovely way  
 Could love send word to say  
 He lives and is not dead?  
 Such word alone were fit for only thee,  
 If his and thine have met  
 Where spirits rise and set,  
 His whom we see not, thine whom  
 scarce we see:

His there new-born, as thou  
 New-born among us now;  
 His, here so fruitful-souled,

<sup>1</sup> Oliver Madox Brown died Nov. 5, 1874, in his twentieth year.

Now veiled and silent here,  
 Now dumb as thou last year,  
 A ghost of one year old:  
 If lights that change their sphere in  
 changing meet,  
 Some ray might his not give  
 To thine who wast to live,  
 And make thy present with his past life  
 sweet?

Let dreams that laugh or weep,  
 All glad and sad dreams, sleep;  
 Truth more than dreams is dear.  
 Let thoughts that change and fly,  
 Sweet thoughts and swift, go by;  
 More than all thought is here.  
 More than all hope can forge, or mem-  
 ory feign,  
 The life that in our eyes,  
 Made out of love's life, lies,  
 And flower-like fed with love for sun  
 and rain.

Twice royal in his root  
 The sweet small olive-shoot  
 Here set in sacred earth;  
 Twice dowered with glorious grace  
 From either heaven-born race  
 First blended in its birth;  
 Fair god or genius of so fair an hour,  
 For love of either name  
 Twice crowned, with love and fame,  
 Guard and be gracious to the fair-named  
 flower.

OCT. 19, 1875.

### EX-VOTO.

WHEN their last hour shall rise  
 Pale on these mortal eyes,  
 Herself like one that dies,  
 And kiss me dying  
 The cold last kiss, and fold  
 Close round my limbs her cold  
 Soft shade as raiment rolled,  
 And leave them lying, —

If aught my soul would say  
 Might move to hear me pray  
 The birth-god of my day  
 That he might hearken,



This grace my heart should crave, —  
To find no landward grave  
That worldly springs make brave,  
World's winters darken, —

Nor grow through gradual hours  
The cold blind seed of flowers  
Made by new beams and showers  
From limbs that moulder,  
Nor take my part with earth;  
But find for death's new birth  
A bed of larger girth,  
More chaste and colder.

Not earth's for spring and fall,  
Not earth's at heart, not all  
Earth's making, though men call  
Earth only mother,  
Not hers at heart she bare  
Me, but thy child, O fair  
Sea, and thy brother's care,  
The wind thy brother.

Yours was I born, and ye,  
The sea-wind and the sea,  
Made all my soul in me  
A song forever,  
A harp to string and smite  
For love's sake of the bright  
Wind and the sea's delight,  
To fail them never:

Not while on this side death  
I hear what either saith,  
And drink of either's breath  
With heart's thanksgiving  
That in my veins like wine  
Some sharp salt blood of thine,  
Some springtide pulse of brine,  
Yet leaps up living.

When thy salt lips well-nigh  
Sucked in my mouth's last sigh,  
Grudged I so much to die  
This death as others?  
Was it no ease to think  
The chalice from whose brink  
Fate gave me death to drink  
Was thine, — my mother's?

Thee too, the all-fostering earth,  
Fair as thy fairest birth,

More than thy worthiest worth,  
We call, we know thee,  
More sweet and just and dread  
Than live men highest of head  
Or even thy holiest dead  
Laid low below thee.

The sunbeam on the sheaf,  
The dew-fall on the leaf,  
All joy, all grace, all grief,  
Are thine for giving:  
Of thee our loves are born,  
Our lives and loves, that mourn  
And triumph; tares with corn,  
Dead seed with living;

All good and ill things done  
In eye-shot of the sun  
At last in thee made one  
Rest well contented;  
All words of all man's breath,  
And works he doth or saith,  
All wholly done to death,  
None long lamented.

A slave to sons of thee,  
Thou, seeming, yet art free;  
But who shall make the sea  
Serve even in seeming?  
What plough shall bid it bear  
Seed to the sun and the air,  
Fruit for thy strong sons' fare,  
Fresh wine's foam streaming?

What old-world son of thine,  
Made drunk with death as wine,  
Hath drunk the bright sea's brine  
With lips of laughter?  
Thy blood they drink; but he  
Who hath drunken of the sea  
Once deplier than of thee  
Shall drink not after.

Of thee thy sons of men  
Drink deep, and thirst again, —  
For wine in feasts, and then  
In fields for slaughter;  
But thirst shall touch not him  
Who hath felt with sense grown dim  
Rise, covering lip and limb,  
The wan sea's water.

All fire of thirst that aches  
 The salt sea cools and slakes  
 More than all springs or lakes,  
 Freshets or shallows ;  
 Wells where no beam can burn  
 Through frondage of the fern  
 That hides from hart and hern  
 The haunt it hallows.

Peace with all graves on earth  
 For death or sleep or birth  
 Be always, one in worth  
 One with another ;  
 But when my time shall be,  
 O mother, O my sea,  
 Alive or dead, take me,  
 Me too, my mother !

## PASTICHE.

Now the days are all gone over  
 Of our singing, love by lover,  
 Days of summer-colored seas  
 Blown adrift through beam and breeze.

Now the nights are all past over  
 Of our dreaming, dreams that hover  
 In a mist of fair false things,  
 Nights afloat on wide wan wings.

Now the loves with faith for mother,  
 Now the fears with hope for brother,  
 Scarce are with us as strange words,  
 Notes from songs of last year's birds.

Now all good that comes or goes is  
 As the smell of last year's roses,  
 As the radiance in our eyes  
 Shot from summer's ere he dies.

Now the morning faintlier risen  
 Seems no god come forth of prison,  
 But a bird of plume-plucked wing,  
 Pale with thoughts of evening.

Now hath hope, out-raced in running,  
 Given the torch up of his cunning,  
 And the palm he thought to wear,  
 Even to his own strong child, — despair.

## BEFORE SUNSET.

In the lower lands of day  
 On the hither side of night,  
 There is nothing that will stay,  
 There are all things soft to sight ;  
 Lighted shade and shadowy light  
 In the wayside and the way,  
 Hours the sun has spared to smite,  
 Flowers the rain has left to play.

Shall these hours run down and say  
 No good thing of thee and me ?  
 Time that made us and will slay  
 Laughs at love in me and thee ;  
 But if here the flowers may see  
 One whole hour of amorous breath,  
 Time shall die, and love shall be  
 Lord as time was over death.

## SONG.

LOVE laid his sleepless head  
 On a thorny rosy bed ;  
 And his eyes with tears were red,  
 And pale his lips as the dead.

And fear and sorrow and scorn  
 Kept watch by his head forlorn,  
 Till the night was overworn,  
 And the world was merry with morn.

And Joy came up with the day,  
 And kissed Love's lips as he lay,  
 And the watchers ghostly and gray  
 Sped from his pillow away.

And his eyes as the dawn grew br'ght,  
 And his lips waxed ruddy as light :  
 Sorrow may reign for a night,  
 But day shall bring back delight.

A VISION OF SPRING IN  
WINTER.

## I.

O TENDER time that love thinks long  
 to see,  
 Sweet foot of spring that with her  
 footfall sows

Late snow-like flowery leavings of the  
 snows,  
 Be not too long irresolute to be!  
 O mother-month, where have they hid-  
 den thee?  
 Out of the pale time of the flowerless  
 rose,  
 I reach my heart out toward the spring-  
 time lands.  
 I stretch my spirit forth to the fair  
 hours,  
 The purplest of the prime;  
 I lean my soul down over them, with  
 hands  
 Made wide to take the ghostly  
 growths of flowers;  
 I send my love back to the lovely  
 time.

## II.

Where has the greenwood hid thy  
 gracious head?  
 Veiled with what visions while the  
 gray world grieves,  
 Or muffled with what shadows of  
 green leaves,  
 With warm intangible green shadows  
 spread  
 To sweeten the sweet twilight for thy  
 bed?  
 What sleep enchants thee? what de-  
 light deceives?  
 Where the deep dreamlike dew before  
 the dawn  
 Feels not the fingers of the sunlight  
 yet  
 Its silver web unweave,  
 Thy footless ghost on some unfooted  
 lawn  
 Whose air the unrisen sunbeams fear  
 to fret  
 Lives a ghost's life of daylong dawn  
 and eve.

## III.

Sunrise it sees not, neither set of star,  
 Large nightfall, nor imperial pleni-  
 lune,  
 Nor strong sweet shape of the full-  
 breasted noon;  
 But where the silver-sandalled shadows  
 are,

Too soft for arrows of the sun to mar.  
 Moves with the mild gait of an un-  
 grown moon:  
 Hard overhead the half-lit crescent  
 swims,  
 The tender-colored night draws hard-  
 ly breath,  
 The light is listening;  
 They watch the dawn of slender-shapen  
 limbs,  
 Virginal, born again of doubtful death,  
 Chill foster-father of the weanling  
 spring.

## IV.

As sweet desire of day before the day,  
 As dreams of love before the true  
 love born,  
 From the outer edge of winter over-  
 worn  
 The ghost arisen of May before the  
 May  
 Takes through dim air her unawakened  
 way,  
 The gracious ghost of morning risen  
 ere morn.  
 With little unblown breasts and child-  
 eyed looks  
 Following, the very maid, the girl-  
 child spring,  
 Lifts windward her bright brows,  
 Dips her light feet in warm and moving  
 brooks,  
 And kindles with her own mouth's  
 coloring  
 The fearful firstlings of the plume-  
 less boughs.

## V.

I seek thee sleeping, and awhile I see  
 Fair face that art not, how thy maiden  
 breath.  
 Shall put at last the deadly days to  
 death,  
 And fill the fields and fire the woods  
 with thee,  
 And seaward hollows where my feet  
 would be  
 When heaven shall hear the word  
 that April saith

To change the cold heart of the weary  
 time,  
 To stir and soften all the time to  
 tears,  
 Tears joyfuller than mirth;  
 As even to May's clear height the young  
 days climb  
 With feet not swifter than those fair  
 first years  
 Whose flowers revive not with thy  
 flowers on earth.

## VI.

I would not bid thee, though I might,  
 give back  
 One good thing youth has given and  
 borne away:  
 I crave not any comfort of the day  
 'That is not, nor on time's re-trodden  
 track  
 Would turn to meet the white-robed  
 hours or black  
 That long since left me on their mor-  
 tal way;  
 Nor light nor love that has been, nor  
 the breath  
 That comes with morning from the  
 sun to be,  
 And sets light hope on fire;  
 No fruit, no flower thought once too  
 fair for death,  
 No flower nor hour once fallen from  
 life's green tree,  
 No leaf once plucked, or once ful-  
 filled desire.

## VII.

The morning song beneath the stars  
 that fled  
 With twilight through the moonless  
 mountain air,  
 While youth with burning lips and  
 wreathless hair  
 Sang toward the sun that was to crown  
 his head,  
 Rising; the hopes that triumphed and  
 fell dead,  
 The sweet swift eyes and songs of  
 hours that were,—  
 These may'st thou not give back for-  
 ever; these.

As at the sea's heart all her wrecks  
 lie waste,  
 Lie deeper than the sea:  
 But flowers thou may'st, and winds, and  
 hours of ease,  
 And all its April to the world thou  
 may'st  
 Give back, and half my April back  
 to me.

## AT PARTING.

FOR a day and night Love sang to us,  
 played with us,  
 Folded us round from the dark and  
 the light;  
 And our hearts were fulfilled of the  
 music he made with us,  
 Made with our hearts and our lips while  
 he stayed with us,  
 Stayed in mid passage his pinions  
 from flight  
 For a day and a night.

From his foes that kept watch with his  
 wings had he hidden us,  
 Covered us close from the eyes that  
 would smite,  
 From the feet that had tracked and the  
 tongues that had chidden us  
 Sheltering in shade of the myrtles for-  
 bidden us  
 Spirit and flesh growing one with  
 delight  
 For a day and a night.

But his wings will not rest, and his feet  
 will not stay for us:  
 Morning is here in the joy of its  
 might;  
 With his breath has he sweetened a  
 night and a day for us:  
 Now let him pass, and the myrtles make  
 way for us;  
 Love can but last in us here at his  
 height  
 For a day and a night.

## THE WHITE CZAR.

[In an English magazine of 1877, there appeared a version of some insolent lines addressed by "A Russian Poet to the Empress of India." To these the first of the two following sonnets was designed to serve by way of counterblast. The writer will scarcely be suspected of royalism or imperialism; but it seemed to him that an insult levelled by Muscovite lips at the ruler of England might perhaps be less unfity than unofficially resented by an Englishman who was also a republican.]

## I.

GEHAZI by the hue that chills thy  
cheek  
And Pilate by the hue that sears thine  
hand  
Whence all earth's waters cannot  
wash the brand  
That signs thy soul a manslayer's  
though thou speak  
All Christ, with lips most murderous  
and most meek —  
Thou set thy foot where England's  
used to stand!  
Thou reach thy rod forth over Indian  
land!  
Slave of the slaves that call thee lord,  
and weak  
As their foul tongues who praise thee  
son of them  
Whose presence put the snows and stars  
to shame  
In centuries dead and damned that  
reek below  
Curse-consecrated, crowned with crime  
and flame,  
To them that bare thee like them  
shalt thou go  
Forth of man's life, — a leper white  
as snow.

## II.

Call for clear water, wash thine hands,  
be clean,  
Cry, *What is truth?* O Pilate! thou  
shalt know  
Haply too soon, and gnash thy teeth  
for woe  
Ere the outer darkness take thee round  
unseen

That hides the red ghosts of thy race  
obscene  
Bound nine times round with hell's  
most dolorous flow,  
And in its pools thy crownless head  
lie low  
By his of Spain who dared an English  
queen  
With half a world to hearten him for  
fight,  
Till the wind gave his warriors and  
their might  
To shipwreck and the corpse-encum-  
bered sea.  
But thou, take heed, ere yet thy lips  
wax white,  
Lest as it was with Philip so it  
be,  
O white of name and red of hand,  
with thee!

## RIZPAH.

How many sons, how many genera-  
tions,  
For how long years hast thou be-  
wept, and known  
Nor end of torment nor surcease of  
moan,  
Rachel or Rizpah, wofullest of na-  
tions,  
Crowned with the crowning sign of  
desolations,  
And couldst not even scare off with  
hand or groan  
Those carrion birds devouring bone  
by bone  
The children of thy thousand tribula-  
tions?  
Thou wast our warrior once; thy sons  
long dead  
Against a foe less foul than this made  
head,  
Poland, in years that sound and shine  
afar;  
Ere the east beheld in thy bright sword-  
blade's stead  
The rotten corpse-light of the Russian  
star  
That lights towards hell his bond-  
slaves and their Czar.

## TO LOUIS KOSSUTH.

LIGHT of our fathers' eyes, and in our  
own  
Star of the unsetting sunset! for thy  
name,  
That on the front of noon was as a  
flame  
In the great year nigh thirty years ago  
When all the heavens of Europe shook  
and shone  
With stormy wind and lightning,  
keeps its fame  
And bears its witness all day through  
the same.  
Not for past days and great deeds past  
alone,  
Kossuth, we praise thee as our Landor  
praised;  
But that now too we know thy voice  
upraised,—  
Thy voice, the trumpet of the truth  
of God,  
Thine hand, the thunder bearer's, raised  
to smite  
As with heaven's lightning for a  
sword and rod  
Men's heads abased before the Musco-  
vite.

## THE PILGRIMS.

WHO is your lady of love, O ye that pass  
Singing? and is it for sorrow of that  
which was  
That ye sing sadly or dream of what  
shall be?  
For gladly at once and sadly it  
seems ye sing.  
— Our lady of love by you is un-  
beholden;  
For hands she hath none, nor eyes, nor  
lips, nor golden  
Treasure of hair, nor face nor form.  
But we  
That love, we know her more fair  
than any thing.  
— Is she a queen, having great gifts to  
give?  
— Yea, these that whoso hath seen  
her shall not live

Except he serve her sorrowing, with  
strange pain,  
Travail and bloodshedding and  
bitterer tears;  
And when she bids die he shall surely  
die.  
And he shall leave all things under the  
sky,  
And go forth naked under sun and  
rain,  
And work and wait and watch out  
all his years.  
— Hath she on earth no place of habi-  
tation?  
— Age to age calling, nation answering  
nation,  
Cries out, Where is she? and there  
is none to say;  
For if she be not in the spirit of men,  
For if in the inward soul she hath no  
place,  
In vain they cry unto her, seeking her  
face,  
In vain their mouths make much of  
her; for they  
Cry with vain tongues, till the  
heart lives again.  
— O ye that follow, and have ye no  
repentance?  
For on your brows is written a mortal  
sentence.  
An hieroglyph of sorrow, a fiery sign,  
That in your lives ye shall not  
pause or rest,  
Nor have the sure sweet common love,  
nor keep  
Friends and safe days, nor joy of life  
nor sleep.  
— These have we not, who have one  
thing, the divine  
Face and clear eyes of faith and  
fruitful breast.  
— And ye shall die before your thrones  
be won.  
— Yea, and the changed world and the  
liberal sun  
Shall move and shine without us,  
and we lie  
Dead; but if she too move on  
earth, and live,

- But if the old world with all the old  
irons rent  
Laugh and give thanks, shall we be  
not content?  
Nay, we shall rather live, we shall  
not die,  
Life being so little, and death so  
good to give.
- And these men shall forget you. —  
Yea, but we  
Shall be a part of the earth and the  
ancient sea,  
And heaven-high air august, and  
awful fire,  
And all things good; and no man's  
heart shall beat  
But somewhat in it of our blood once  
shed  
Shall quiver and quicken, as now in us  
the dead  
Blood of men slain and the old same  
life's desire  
Plants in their fiery footprints our  
fresh feet.
- But ye that might be clothed with  
all things pleasant,  
Ye are foolish that put off the fair soft  
present,  
That clothe yourselves with the cold  
future air;  
When mother and father and tender  
sister and brother  
And the old live love that was shall be  
as ye,  
Dust, and no fruit of loving life shall  
be.  
— She shall be yet who is more than  
all these were,  
Than sister or wife or father unto  
us or mother.
- Is this worth life, is this, to win for  
wages?  
I.o, the dead mouths of the awful gray-  
grown ages,  
The venerable, in the past that is  
their prison,  
In the outer darkness, in the un-  
opening grave,  
Laugh, knowing how many as ye now  
say have said,
- How many, and all are fallen, are fallen  
and dead:  
Shall ye dead rise, and these dead  
have not risen?  
— Not we but she, who is tender,  
and swift to save.
- Are ye not weary and faint not by  
the way,  
Seeing night by night devoured of day  
by day,  
Seeing hour by hour consumed in  
sleepless fire?  
Sleepless; and ye too, when shall  
ye too sleep?  
— We are weary in heart and head, in  
hands and feet,  
And surely more than all things sleep  
were' sweet, —  
Than all things save the inexorable  
desire  
Which whoso knoweth shall nei-  
ther faint nor weep.
- Is this so sweet that one were fain  
to follow?  
Is this so sure where all men's hopes  
are hollow,  
Even this your dream, that by much  
tribulation  
Ye shall make whole flawed hearts,  
and bowed necks straight?  
— Nay, though our life were blind, our  
death were fruitless,  
Not therefore were the whole world's  
high hope rootless;  
But man to man, nation would turn  
to nation,  
And the old life live, and the old  
great word be great.
- Pass on, then, and pass by us, and  
let us be,  
For what light think ye after life to  
see?  
And if the world fare better will ye  
know?  
And if man triumph who shall  
seek you and say?  
— Enough of light is this for one life's  
span,  
That all men born are mortal, but not  
man;

And we men bring death lives by  
 night to sow,  
 That man may reap and eat and  
 live by day.

### THE LITANY OF NATIONS.

μᾶ Γᾶ, μᾶ Γᾶ, βοᾶν  
 φοβερόν ἀπότρειπε.

ÆSCH. *Supp.* 890.

#### CHORUS.

IF with voice of words or prayers thy  
 sons may reach thee,  
 We thy latter sons, the men thine  
 after-birth,  
 We the children of thy gray-grown  
 age, O Earth,  
 O our mother everlasting, we beseech  
 thee,  
 By the sealed and secret ages of thy  
 life;  
 By the darkness wherein grew thy  
 sacred forces;  
 By the songs of stars thy sisters in  
 their courses;  
 By thine own song hoarse and hollow  
 and shrill with strife;  
 By thy voice distuned and marred of  
 modulation;  
 By the discord of thy measure's  
 march with theirs;  
 By the beauties of thy bosom, and  
 the cares;  
 By thy glory of growth, and splendor  
 of thy station;  
 By the shame of men thy children, and  
 the pride;  
 By the pale-checked hope that sleeps  
 and weeps and passes,  
 As the gray dew from the morning  
 mountain grasses;  
 By the white-lipped sightless memories  
 that abide;  
 By the silence and the sound of many  
 sorrows;  
 By the joys that leapt up living and  
 fell dead;  
 By the veil that hides thy hands and  
 breasts and head,  
 Wrought of divers-colored days and  
 nights and morrows;

Isis, thou that knowest of God what  
 worlds are worth,  
 Thou the ghost of God, the mother  
 uncreated,  
 Soul for whom the floating forceless  
 ages waited  
 As our forceless fancies wait on thee,  
 O Earth;  
 Thou the body and soul, the father-god  
 and mother,  
 If at all it move thee, knowing of all  
 things done  
 Here where evil things and good  
 things are not one,  
 But their faces are as fire against each  
 other;  
 By thy morning and thine evening, night  
 and day;  
 By the first white light that stirs and  
 strives and hovers  
 As a bird above the brood her bosom  
 covers,  
 By the sweet last star that takes the  
 westward way;  
 By the night whose feet are shod with  
 snow or thunder,  
 Fledged with plumes of storm, or  
 soundless as the dew;  
 By the vesture bound of many-folded  
 blue  
 Round her breathless breasts, and all  
 the woven wonder;  
 By the golden-growing eastern stream  
 of sea;  
 By the sounds of sunrise moving in  
 the mountains;  
 By the forces of the floods and un-  
 sealed fountains;  
 Thou that badest man be born, bid  
 man be free.

#### GREECE.

I am she that made thee lovely with my  
 beauty  
 From north to south:  
 Mine, the fairest lips, took first the fire  
 of duty  
 From thine own mouth.  
 Mine, the fairest eyes, sought first thy  
 laws, and knew them  
 Truths undefiled;



Mine, the fairest hands, took freedom  
 first into them,  
 A weanling child.  
 By my light, now he lies sleeping, seen  
 above him  
 Where none sees other;  
 By my dead that loved, and living men  
 that love him, —  
 (*Cho.*) Hear us, O mother!

## ITALY.

I am she that was the light of thee  
 enkindled  
 When Greece grew dim;  
 She whose life grew up with man's free  
 life, and dwindled  
 With wane of him;  
 She that once by sword and once by  
 word imperial  
 Struck bright thy gloom;  
 And a third time, casting off these years  
 funereal,  
 Shall burst thy tomb.  
 By that bond 'twixt thee and me where-  
 at affrighted  
 Thy tyrants fear us;  
 By that hope and this remembrance re-  
 united, —  
 (*Cho.*) O mother, hear us!

## SPAIN.

I am she that set thy seal upon the  
 nameless  
 West worlds of seas;  
 And my sons as brides took unto them  
 the tameless  
 Hesperides;  
 Till my sins and sons through sinless  
 lands dispersed,  
 With red flame shod,  
 Made accurst the name of man, and  
 thrice accursed  
 The name of God.  
 Lest for those past fires the fires of my  
 repentance  
 Hell's fume yet smother,  
 Now my blood would buy remission of  
 my sentence, —  
 (*Cho.*) Hear us, O mother!

## FRANCE.

I am she that was thy sign and standard-  
 bearer,  
 Thy voice and cry;  
 She that washed thee with her blood,  
 and left thee fairer,  
 The same was I.  
 Were not these the hands that raised  
 thee fallen, and fed thee,  
 These hands defiled?  
 Was not I thy tongue that spake, thine  
 eye that led thee, —  
 Not I thy child?  
 By the darkness on our dreams, and the  
 dead errors  
 Of dead times near us;  
 By the hopes that hang around thee,  
 and the terrors, —  
 (*Cho.*) O mother, hear us!

## RUSSIA.

I am she whose hands are strong, and  
 her eyes blinded,  
 And lips athirst,  
 Till upon the night of nations many-  
 minded  
 One bright day burst;  
 Till the myriad stars be molten into  
 one light,  
 And that light thine;  
 Till the soul of man be parcel of the  
 sunlight,  
 And thine of mine.  
 By the snows that blanch not him, nor  
 cleanse from slaughter,  
 Who slays his brother;  
 By the stains and by the chains on me  
 thy daughter, —  
 (*Cho.*) Hear us, O mother!

## SWITZERLAND.

I am she that shows on mighty limbs  
 and maiden  
 Nor chain nor stain;  
 For what blood can touch these hands  
 with gold unladen,  
 These feet what chain?  
 By the surf of spears one shieldless  
 bosom breasted,  
 And was my shield,

Till the plume-plucked Austrian vulture-heads twin-crested  
 Twice drenched the field.  
 By the snows and souls untrampled  
 and untroubled  
 That shine to cheer us,  
 Light of those to these responsive and  
 redoubled,—  
 (*Cho.*) O mother, hear us!

## GERMANY.

I am she beside whose forest-hidden  
 fountains  
 Slept freedom armed;  
 By the magic born to music in my  
 mountains,  
 Heart-chained and charmed.  
 By those days, the very dream whereof  
 delivers  
 My soul from wrong;  
 By the sounds that make of all my ring-  
 ing rivers  
 None knows what song;  
 By the many tribes and names of my  
 division  
 One from another;  
 By the single eye of sun-compelling  
 vision,—  
 (*Cho.*) Hear us, O mother!

## ENGLAND.

I am she that was and was not of thy  
 chosen,  
 Free, and not free;  
 She that fed thy springs, till now her  
 springs are frozen;  
 Yet I am she.  
 By the sea that clothed and sun that  
 saw me splendid  
 And fame that crowned,  
 By the song-fires and the sword-fires  
 mixed and blended  
 That robbed me round;  
 By the star that Milton's soul for Shel-  
 ley's lighted,  
 Whose rays insphere us;  
 By the beacon-bright Republic far-off  
 sighted,—  
 (*Cho.*) O mother, hear us!

## CHORUS.

Turn away from us the cross-blown  
 blasts of error,  
 That drown each other;  
 Turn away the fearful cry, the loud-  
 tongued terror,  
 O Earth, O mother!  
 Turn away their eyes who track, their  
 hearts who follow,  
 The pathless past;  
 Show the soul of man, as summer shows  
 the swallow,  
 The way at last.  
 By the sloth of men that all too long  
 endure men  
 On man to tread;  
 By the cry of men, the bitter cry of  
 poor men  
 That faint for bread;  
 By the blood-sweat of the people in the  
 garden  
 Inwalled of kings;  
 By his passion interceding for their par-  
 don  
 Who do these things;  
 By the sightless souls and fleshless  
 limbs that labor  
 For not their fruit;  
 By the foodless mouth with foodless  
 heart for neighbor,  
 That, mad, is mute;  
 By the child that famine eats as worms  
 the blossom—  
 Ah God, the child!—  
 By the milkless lips that strain the  
 bloodless bosom  
 Till woe runs wild;  
 By the pastures that give grass to feed  
 the lamb in,  
 Where men lack meat;  
 By the cities clad with gold and shame  
 and famine;  
 By field and street;  
 By the people, by the poor man, by the  
 master  
 That men call slave;  
 By the cross-winds of defeat and of  
 disaster,  
 By wreck, by wave;  
 By the helm that keeps us still to sun-  
 wards driving,  
 Still eastward bound,

Till, as night-watch ends, day burn on  
 eyes reviving,  
 And land be found:  
 We thy children, that arraign not nor  
 impeach thee  
 Though no star steer us,  
 By the waves that wash the morning  
 we beseech thee,  
 O mother, hear us!

## CHRISTMAS ANTIPHONES

## I.

## IN CHURCH.

THOU whose birth on earth  
 Angels sang to men,  
 While thy stars made mirth,  
 Saviour, at thy birth,  
 This day born again.

As this night was bright  
 With thy cradle-ray.  
 Very light of light,  
 Turn the wild world's night  
 To thy perfect day

God whose feet made sweet  
 Those wild ways they trod,  
 From thy fragrant feet  
 Staining field and street  
 With the blood of God;

God whose breast is rest  
 In the time of strife,  
 In thy secret breast  
 Sheltering souls opprest  
 From the heat of life;

God whose eyes are skies  
 Love-lit as with spheres  
 By the lights that rise  
 To thy watching eyes,  
 Orbed lights of tears;

God whose heart hath part  
 In all grief that is,  
 Was not man's the dart  
 That went through thine heart,  
 And the wound not his?

Where the pale souls wall,  
 Held in bonds of death,  
 Where all spirits quail,  
 Came thy Godhead pale  
 Still from human breath, —

Pale from life and strife,  
 Wan with manhood, came  
 Forth of mortal life,  
 Pierced as with a knife,  
 Scarred as with a flame.

Thou the Word and Lord  
 In all time and space.  
 Heard, beheld, adored,  
 With all ages poured  
 Forth before thy face, —

Lord, what worth in earth  
 Drew thee down to die?  
 What therein was worth,  
 Lord, thy death and birth?  
 What beneath thy sky?

Light above all love  
 By thy love was lit,  
 And brought down the Dove  
 Feathered from above  
 With the wings of it.

From the height of night,  
 Was not thine the star  
 That led forth with night  
 By no worldly light  
 Wise men from afar?

Yet the wise men's eyes  
 Saw thee not more clear  
 Than they saw thee rise  
 Who in shepherds' guise  
 Drew as poor men near.

Yet thy poor endure,  
 And are with us yet.  
 Be thy name a sure  
 Refuge for thy poor  
 Whom men's eyes forget.

Thou whose ways we praise,  
 Clear alike and dark,  
 Keep our works and ways  
 This and all thy days  
 Safe inside thine ark.

Who shall keep thy sheep,  
 Lord, and lose not one?  
 Who save one shall keep,  
 Lest the shepherds sleep?  
 Who beside the Son?

From the grave-deep wave,  
 From the sword and flame,  
 Thou, even thou, shalt save  
 Souls of king and slave  
 Only by thy Name.

Light not born with morn  
 Or her fires above,  
 Jesus virgin-born,  
 Held of men in scorn,  
 Turn their scorn to love.

Thou whose face gives grace  
 As the sun's doth heat,  
 Let thy sun-bright face  
 Lighten time and space  
 Here beneath thy feet.

Bid our peace increase,  
 Thou that madest morn;  
 Bid oppressions cease;  
 Bid the night be peace;  
 Bid the day be born.

## II.

## OUTSIDE CHURCH.

We whose days and ways  
 All the night makes dark, —  
 What day shall we praise  
 Of these weary days  
 That our life-drops mark?

We whose mind is blind,  
 Fed with hope of naught;  
 Wastes of worn mankind,  
 Without heart or mind,  
 Without meat or thought,

We with strife of life  
 Worn till all life cease,  
 Want, a whetted knife,  
 Sharpening strife on strife.  
 How should we love peace?

Ye whose meat is sweet  
 And your wine-cup red,  
 Us beneath your feet  
 Hunger grinds as wheat, —  
 Grinds to make you bread.

Ye whose night is bright  
 With soft rest and heat,  
 Clothed like day with light,  
 Us the naked night  
 Slays from street to street.

Hath your God no rod,  
 That ye tread so light?  
 Man on us as God,  
 God as man hath trod, —  
 Trod us down with might.

We that one by one  
 Bleed from either's rod,  
 What for us hath done  
 Man beneath the sun,  
 What for us hath God?

We whose blood is food  
 Given your wealth to feed,  
 From the Christless rood  
 Red with no God's blood,  
 But with man's indeed;

How shall we that see  
 Night-long overhead  
 Life, the flowerless tree,  
 Nailed whereon as we  
 Were our fathers dead, —

We whose ear can hear,  
 Not whose tongue can name,  
 Famine, ignorance, fear,  
 Bleeding tear by tear  
 Year by year of shame, —

Till the dry life die  
 Out of bloodless breast.  
 Out of beamless eye,  
 Out of mouths that cry  
 Till death feed with rest, —

How shall we as ye,  
 Though ye bid us, pray?  
 Though ye call, can we  
 Hear you call, or see,  
 Though ye show us day?

We whose name is shame,  
 We whose souls walk bare,  
 Shall we call the same  
 God as ye by name,  
 Teach our lips your prayer? —

God, forgive and give,  
 For His sake who died? —  
 Nay, for ours who live,  
 How shall we forgive  
 Thee, then, on our side?

We whose right to light  
 Heaven's high noon denies,  
 Whom the blind beams smite  
 That for you shine bright,  
 And but burn our eyes, —

With what dreams of beams  
 Shall we build up day,  
 At what sourceless streams  
 Seek to drink in dreams  
 Ere they pass away?

In what street shall meet,  
 At what market-place,  
 Your feet and our feet,  
 With one goal to greet,  
 Having run one race?

What one hope shall ope  
 For us all as one  
 One same horoscope,  
 Where the soul sees hope  
 That outburns the sun?

At what shrine what wine,  
 At what board what bread,  
 Salt as blood or brine,  
 Shall we share in sign  
 How we poor were fed?

In what hour what power  
 Shall we pray for morn,  
 If your perfect hour,  
 When all day bears flower,  
 Not for us is born?

## III.

## BEYOND CHURCH.

Ye that weep in sleep,  
 Souls and bodies bound,  
 Ye that all night keep  
 Watch for change, and weep  
 That no change is found;

Ye that cry and die,  
 And the world goes on  
 Without ear or eye,  
 And the days go by  
 Till all days are gone:

Man shall do for you,  
 Men the sons of man,  
 What no god would do  
 That they sought unto  
 While the blind years ran.

Brotherhood of good,  
 Equal laws and rights,  
 Freedom, whose sweet food  
 Feeds the multitude  
 All their days and nights

With the bread full-fed  
 Of her body blest  
 And the soul's wine shed  
 From her table spread  
 Where the world is guest, —

Mingling me and thee,  
 When like light of eyes  
 Flashed through thee and me  
 Truth shall make us free,  
 Liberty make wise:

These are they whom day  
 Follows and gives light  
 Whence they see to slay  
 Night, and burn away  
 All the seed of night.

What of thine and mine,  
 What of want and wealth,  
 When one faith is wine  
 For my heart and thine,  
 And one draught is health?

For no sect elect  
Is the soul's wine poured,  
And her table decked :  
Whom should man reject  
From man's common board ?

Gods refuse and choose,  
Grudge and sell and spare :  
None shall man refuse,  
None of all men lose,  
None leave out of care.

No man's might of sight  
Knows that hour before ;  
No man's hand hath might  
To put back that light  
For one hour the more.

Not though all men call,  
Kneeling with void hands,  
Shall they see light fall  
Till it come for all  
Tribes of men and lands.

No desire brings fire  
Down from heaven by prayer,  
Though man's vain desire  
Hang faith's wind-struck lyre  
Out in tuneless air.

One hath breath, and saith  
What the tune shall be, —  
Time, who puts his breath  
Into life and death,  
Into earth and sea.

To and fro years flow,  
Fill their tides and ebb,  
As his fingers go  
Weaving to and fro  
One unfinished web.

All the range of change  
Hath its bounds therein,  
All the lives that range  
All the byways strange  
Named of death or sin.

Star from far to star  
Speaks, and white moons wake,  
Watchful from afar  
What the night's ways are  
For the morning's sake.

Many names and flames  
Pass and flash and fall,  
Night-begotten names,  
And the night reclaims,  
As she bare them, all.

But the sun is one,  
And the sun's name Right ;  
And when light is none  
Saving of the sun,  
All men shall have light

All shall see and be  
Parcel of the morn :  
Ay, though blind were we,  
None shall choose but see  
When that day is born.

#### MATER DOLOROSA.

Citoyen, lui dit Enjolras, ma mère, c'est la République. — *Les Misérables.*

WHO is it that sits by the way, by the  
wild wayside,  
In a rent stained raiment, the robe of a  
cast-off bride,  
In the dust, in the rainfall sitting, with  
soiled feet bare,  
With the night for a garment upon her,  
with torn wet hair ?  
She is fairer of face than the daughters  
of men, and her eyes,  
Worn through with her tears, are deep  
as the depth of skies.

This is she for whose sake being fallen,  
for whose abject sake,  
Earth groans in the blackness of dark-  
ness, and men's hearts break.  
This is she for whose love, having seen  
her, the men that were  
Poured life out as water, and shed their  
souls upon air.  
This is she for whose glory their years  
were counted as foam ;  
Whose face was a light upon Greece,  
was a fire upon Rome.

Is it now not surely a vain thing, a fool-  
ish and vain,  
To sit down by her, mourn to her, serve  
her, partake in the pain ?

She is gray with the dust of time on  
 his manifold ways,  
 Where her faint feet stumble and falter  
 through yearlong days.  
 Shall she help us at all, O fools, give  
 fruit or give fame,  
 Who herself is a name despised, a  
 rejected name?

We have not served her for guerdon.  
 If any do so,  
 That his mouth may be sweet with such  
 honey, we care not to know.  
 We have drunk from a wine-unsweet-  
 ened, a perilous cup,  
 A draught very bitter. The kings of  
 the earth stood up,  
 And the rulers took counsel together,  
 to smite her and slay;  
 And the blood of her wounds is given  
 us to drink to-day.

Can these bones live? or the leaves  
 that are dead leaves bud?  
 Or the dead blood drawn from her  
 veins be in your veins blood?  
 Will ye gather up water again that was  
 drawn and shed?  
 In the blood is the life of the veins, and  
 her veins are dead.  
 For the lives that are over are over, and  
 past things past;  
 She had her day, and it is not; was first,  
 and is last.

Is it nothing unto you, then, all ye that  
 pass by,  
 If her breath be left in her lips, if she  
 live now or die?  
 Behold now, O people, and say if she  
 be not fair,  
 Whom your fathers followed to find  
 her, with praise and prayer,  
 And rejoiced, having found her, though  
 roof they had none, nor bread.  
 But ye care not: what is it to you if  
 her day be dead?

It was well with our fathers; their  
 sound was in all men's lands;  
 There was fire in their hearts, and the  
 hanger of fight in their hands.

Naked and strong they went forth in  
 her strength like flame,  
 For her love's and her name's sake of  
 old, her republican name.  
 But their children, by kings made quiet,  
 by priests made wise,  
 Love better the heat of their hearths  
 than the light of her eyes.

Are they children of these thy children  
 indeed, who have sold,  
 O golden goddess, the light of thy face  
 for gold?  
 Are they sons indeed of the sons of thy  
 dayspring of hope,  
 Whose lives are in fief of an emperor,  
 whose souls of a Pope?  
 Hide then thine head, O beloved! thy  
 time is done;  
 Thy kingdom is broken in heaven, and  
 blind thy sun.

What sleep is upon you, to dream she  
 indeed shall rise,  
 When the hopes are dead in her heart  
 as the tears in her eyes?  
 If ye sing of her dead, will she stir? if  
 ye weep for her, weep?  
 Come away now, leave her: what hath  
 she to do but sleep?  
 But ye that mourn are alive, and have  
 years to be;  
 And life is good, and the world is wiser  
 than we.

Yea, wise is the world and mighty, with  
 years to give,  
 And years to promise; but how long  
 now shall it live?  
 And foolish and poor is faith, and her  
 ways are bare,  
 Till she find the way of the sun, and the  
 morning air.  
 In that hour shall this dead face shine  
 as the face of the sun,  
 And the soul of man and her soul and  
 the world's be one.

## MATER TRIUMPHALIS.

MOTHER of man's time-travelling generations,

Breath of his nostrils, heart-blood of his heart,

God above all gods, worshipped of all nations,

Light above light, law beyond law, thou art.

Thy face is as a sword, smiting in sunder

Shadows and chains, and dreams and iron things;

The sea is dumb before thy face, the thunder

Silent, the skies are narrower than thy wings.

Angels and gods, spirit and sense, thou takest

In thy right hand as drops of dust or dew;

The temples and the towers of time thou breakest,

His thoughts and words and works, to make them new.

All we have wandered from thy ways, have hidden

Eyes from thy glory and ears from calls they heard;

Called of thy trumpets vainly, called and chidden,

Scourged of thy speech, and wounded of thy word.

We have known thee, and have not known thee; stood beside thee,

Felt thy lips breathe, set foot where thy feet trod,

Loved and renounced, and worshipped and denied thee,

As though thou wert but as another god.

"One hour for sleep," we said, "and yet one other;

All day we served her, and who shall serve by night?"

Not knowing of thee, thy face not knowing, O mother,  
O light wherethrough the darkness is as light.

Men that forsook thee hast thou not forsaken,

Races of men that knew not hast thou known;

Nations that slept thou hast doubted not to waken,

Worshippers of strange gods to make thine own.

All old gray histories hiding thy clear features,

O secret spirit and sovereign, all men's tales,

Creeds woven of men, thy children and thy creatures,

They have woven for vestures of thee and for veils.

Thine hands, without election or exemption,

Feed all men fainting from false peace or strife,

O thou, the resurrection and redemption,

The godhead and the manhood and the life.

Thy wings shadow the waters; thine eyes lighten

The horror of the hollows of the night;

The depths of the earth and the dark places brighten

Under thy feet, whiter than fire is white.

Death is subdued to thee, and hell's bands broken;

Where thou art only is heaven: who hears not thee,

Time shall not hear him; when men's names are spoken,

A nameless sign of death shall his name be.



- Deathless shall be the death, the name  
be nameless;  
Sterile of stars his twilight time of  
breath;  
With fire of hell shall shame consume  
him shameless,  
And dying, all the night darken his  
death.
- The years are as thy garments, the  
world's ages  
As sandals bound and loosed from  
thy swift feet;  
Time serves before thee, as one that  
hath for wages  
Praise or shame only, bitter words  
or sweet.
- Thou sayest "Well done," and all a  
century kindles;  
Again, thou sayest, "Depart from  
sight of me,"  
And all the light of face of all men  
dwindles,  
And the age is as the broken glass  
of thee.
- The night is as a seal set on men's  
faces,  
On faces fallen of men that take no  
light,  
Nor give light in the deeps of the dark  
places,  
Blind things, incorporate with the  
body of night.
- Their souls are serpents winter-bound  
and frozen,  
Their shame is as a tame beast, at  
their feet  
Couched; their cold lips deride thee  
and thy chosen,  
Their lying lips made gray with dust  
for meat.
- Then when their time is full and days  
run over,  
The splendor of thy sudden brow  
made bare  
Darkens the morning; thy bared hands  
uncover  
The veils of light and night and the  
awful air.
- And the world naked as a new-born  
maiden  
Stands virginal and splendid as at  
birth,  
With all thine heaven of all its light  
unladen,  
Of all its love unburdened all thine  
earth.
- For the utter earth and the utter air of  
heaven,  
And the extreme depth is thine, and  
the extreme height;  
Shadows of things and veils of ages  
riven  
Are as men's kings unkingdomed in  
thy sight.
- Through the iron years, the centuries  
brazen-gated,  
By the ages' barred, impenetrable  
doors,  
From the evening to the morning have  
we waited,  
Should thy foot haply sound on the  
awful floors.
- The floors untrodden of the sun's feet  
glimmer,  
The star-unstricken pavements of the  
night;  
Do the lights burn inside? the lights  
wax dimmer  
On festal faces withering out of sight.
- The crowned heads lose the light on  
them; it may be  
Dawn is at hand to smite the loud  
feast dumb;  
To bind the torch-lit centuries till the  
day be,  
The feasting kingdoms till thy king-  
dome come.
- Shall it not come? deny they or dis-  
semble,  
Is it not even as lightning from on  
high  
Now? and though many a soul close  
eyes, and tremble,  
How should they tremble at all who  
love thee as I?

I am thine harp between thine hands,  
O mother!

All my strong chords are strained  
with love of thee.

We grapple in love and wrestle, as each  
with other

Wrestle the wind and the unreluctant  
sea.

I am no courtier of thee sober-suited,  
Who loves a little for a little pay

Me not thy winds and storms, nor  
thrones disrooted,

Nor molten crowns, nor thine own  
sins, dismay.

Sinned hast thou sometime, therefore  
art thou sinless;

Stained hast thou been, who art  
therefore without stain;

Even as man's soul is kin to thee, but  
kinless

Thou, in whose womb Time sows the  
all-various grain.

I do not bid thee spare me, O dreadful  
mother!

I pray thee that thou spare not, of  
thy grace.

How were it with me then, if ever  
another

Should come to stand before thee in  
this my place?

I am the trumpet at thy lips, thy  
clarion,

Full of thy cry, sonorous with thy  
breath;

The graves of souls born worms, and  
creeds grown carrion

Thy blast of judgment fills with fires  
of death.

Thou art the player whose organ-keys  
are thunders,

And I, beneath thy foot, the pedal  
prest;

Thou art the ray whereat the rent night  
sunders,

And I the cloudlet borne upon thy  
breast.

I shall burn up before thee, pass and  
perish,

As haze in sunrise on the red sea-  
line;

But thou from dawn to sunsettng shalt  
cherish

The thoughts that led and souls that  
lighted mine.

Reared between night and noon and  
truth and error,

Each twilight-travelling bird that  
trills and screams

Sickens at midday, nor can face fo  
terror

The imperious heaven's inevitable  
extremes.

I have no spirit of skill with equal  
fingers

At sign to sharpen or to slacken  
strings;

I keep no time of song with gold-  
perched singers

And chirp of linnets on the wrists of  
kings.

I am thy storm-thrush of the days that  
darken,

Thy petrel in the foam that bears thy  
bark

To port through night and tempest: if  
thou hearken,

My voice is in thy heaven before the  
lark.

My song is in the mist that hides thy  
morning,

My cry is up before the day for  
thee,

I have heard thee and beheld thee and  
give warning,

Before thy wheels divide the sky and  
sea.

Birds shall wake with thee voiced and  
feathered fairer,

To see in summer what I see in  
spring:

I have eyes and heart to endure thee,  
O thunder-bearer,

And they shall be who shall have  
tongues to sing.

I have love at least, and have not fear,  
and part not  
From thine unnavigable and wingless  
way;  
Thou tarriest, and I have not said thou  
art not,  
Nor all thy night long have denied  
thy day.

Darkness to daylight shall lift up thy  
pæan,  
Hill to hill thunder, vale cry back to  
vale,  
With wind-notes as of eagles Æschylean,  
And Sappho singing in the night-  
gale.

Sung to by mighty sons of dawn and  
daughters,  
Of this night's songs thine ear shall  
keep but one, —  
That supreme song which shook the  
channelled waters,  
And called thee skyward as God calls  
the sun.

Come, though all heaven again be fire  
above thee;  
Though death before thee come to  
clear thy sky;  
Let us but see in his thy face who love  
thee;  
Yea, though thou slay us, arise, and  
let us die.

## SIENA.

INSIDE this northern summer's fold  
The fields are full of naked gold,  
Broadcast from heaven on lands it  
loves;  
The green veiled air is full of doves;  
Soft leaves that sift the sunbeams let  
Light on the small warm grasses wet  
Fall in short broken kisses sweet,  
And break again like waves that beat  
Round the sun's feet.

But I, for all this English mirth  
Of golden-shod and dancing days,

And the old green-girt sweet-hearted  
earth,  
Desire what here no spells can raise.  
Far hence, with holier heavens above,  
The lovely city of my love  
Bathes deep in the sun-satiate air  
That flows round no fair thing more  
fair,  
Her beauty bare.

There the utter sky is holier, there  
More pure the intense white height of  
air,  
More clear men's eyes that mine would  
meet,  
And the sweet springs of things more  
sweet.

There, for this one warm note of doves  
A clamor of a thousand loves,  
Storms the night's ear, the day's assails,  
From the tempestuous nightgales,  
And fills, and fails.

O gracious city well-beloved!  
Italian, and a maiden crowned,  
Siena, my feet are no more moved  
Toward thy strange shapen moun-  
tain-bound;  
But my heart in me turns and moves,  
O lady loveliest of my loves,  
Toward thee, to lie before thy feet,  
And gaze from thy fair fountain-seat  
Up the sheer street;

And the house midway hanging see  
That saw Saint Catherine bodily,  
Felt on its floors her sweet feet move,  
And the live light of fiery love  
Burn from her beautiful strange face,  
As in the sanguine sacred place  
Where in pure hands she took the head  
Severed, and with pure lips still red  
Kissed the lips dead.

For years through, sweetest of the  
saints,  
In quiet without cease she wrought,  
Till cries of men and fierce complaints  
From outward moved her maiden  
thought;  
And prayers she heard and sighs toward  
France, —  
"God, send us back deliverance,

Send back thy servant, lest we die!"  
With an exceeding bitter cry  
They smote the sky.

Then in her sacred saving hands  
She took the sorrows of the lands,  
With maiden palms she lifted up  
The sick time's blood-imbittered cup,  
And in her virgin garment furled  
The faint limbs of a wounded world.  
Clothed with calm love and clear desire,  
She went forth in her soul's attire,  
A missive fire.

Across the might of men that strove  
It shone, and over heads of kings;  
And molten in red flames of love  
Were swords and many monstrous  
things;  
And shields were lowered, and snapt  
were spears,  
And sweeter tuned the clamorous years;  
And faith came back, and peace, that  
were  
Fled; for she bade, saying, "Thou,  
God's heir,  
Hast thou no care?"

"Lo, men lay waste thine heritage  
Still, and much heathen people rage  
Against thee, and devise vain things.  
What comfort in the face of kings,  
What counsel is there? Turn thine  
eyes  
And thine heart from them in like wise;  
Turn thee unto thine holy place  
To help us that of God for grace  
Require thy face.

"For who shall hear us if not thou  
In a strange land? what doest thou  
there?  
Thy sheep are spoiled, and the plough-  
ers plough  
Upon us: why hast thou no care  
For all this, and beyond strange hills  
Liest unregardful what snow chills  
Thy foldless flock, or what rains beat?  
Lo, in thine ears, before thy feet,  
Thy lost sheep bleat.

"And strange men feed on faultless  
lives,  
And there is blood, and men put knives,  
Shepherd, unto the young lamb's throat;  
And one hath eaten, and one smote,  
And one had hunger and is fed  
Full of the flesh of these, and red  
With blood of these as who drinks  
wine.  
And God knoweth, who hath sent thee  
a sign,  
If these were thine."

But the Pope's heart within him burned,  
So that he rose up, seeing the sign  
And came among them; but she turned  
Back to her daily way divine,  
And fed her faith with silent things,  
And lived her life with curbed white  
wings,  
And mixed herself with heaven, and  
died;  
And now on the sheer city-side  
Smiles like a bride.

You see her in the fresh clear gloom,  
Where walls shut out the flame and  
bloom  
Of full-breathed summer, and the roof  
Keeps the keen ardent air aloof  
And sweet weight of the violent sky:  
There bodily beheld on high,  
She seems as one hearing in tune  
Heaven within heaven, at heaven's full  
noon,  
In sacred swoon,—

A solemn swoon of sense that aches  
With imminent blind heat of heaven,  
While all the wide-eyed spirit wakes,  
Vigilant of the supreme Seven,  
Whose choral flames in God's sight  
move,  
Made unendurable with love,  
That without wind or blast of breath  
Compels all things, through life and  
death,  
Whither God saith.

There on the dim side-chapel wall  
Thy mighty touch memorial,  
Razzi, raised up, for ages dead,  
And fixed for us her heavenly head;

And, rent with plaited thorn and rod,  
 Bared the live likeness of her God  
 To men's eyes turning from strange  
 lands,  
 Where, pale from thine immortal hands,  
 Christ wounded stands;

And the blood blots his holy hair  
 And white brows over hungering eyes  
 That plead against us, and the fair  
 Mute lips forlorn of words or sighs  
 In the great torment that bends down  
 His bruised head with the bloomless  
 crown,  
 White as the unfruitful thorn-flower,—  
 A God beheld in dreams that were  
 Beheld of her.

In vain on all these sins and years  
 Falls the sad blood, fall the slow tears,—  
 In vain poured forth as water-springs,  
 Priests, on your altars, and ye, kings,  
 About your seats of sanguine gold:  
 Still your God, spat upon and sold,  
 Bleeds at your hands; but now is gone  
 All his flock from him saving one,—  
 Judas alone.

Surely your race it was that he,  
 O men signed backward with his  
 name!  
 Beholding in Gethsemane,  
 Bled the red bitter sweat of shame,  
 Knowing how the word of Christian  
 should  
 Mean to men evil and not good,  
 Seem to men shameful for your sake,  
 Whose lips, for all the prayers they  
 make,  
 Man's blood must slake.

But blood nor tears ye love not, you  
 That my love leads my longing to,  
 Fair as the world's old faith of flowers,  
 O golden goddesses of ours!  
 From what Idalian rose-pleasance  
 Hath Aphrodite bidden glance  
 The lovelier lightnings of your feet?  
 From what sweet Paphian sward or  
 seat  
 Led you more sweet?

O white three sisters, three as one.  
 With flower-like arms for flowery  
 bands,  
 Your linked limbs glitter like the sun,  
 And time lies beaten at your hands.  
 Time and wild years and wars and men  
 Pass, and ye care not whence or when;  
 With calm lips over-sweet for scorn,  
 Ye watch night pass, O children born  
 Of the old-world morn!

Ah! in this strange and shrineless place,  
 What doth a goddess, what a Grace,  
 Where no Greek worships her shined  
 limbs  
 With wreaths and Cytherean hymns?  
 Where no lute makes luxurious  
 The adoring airs in Amathus,  
 Till the maid, knowing her mother near,  
 Sobs with love, aching with sweet fear?  
 What do ye here?

For the outer land is sad, and wears  
 A raiment of a flaming fire;  
 And the fierce fruitless mountain stairs  
 Climb, yet seem wrath and loath to  
 aspire,—  
 Climb, and break; and are broken down,  
 And through their clefts and crests the  
 town  
 Looks west, and sees the dead sun lie,  
 In sanguine death that stains the sky  
 With angry dye.

And from the war-worn wastes without  
 In twilight, in the time of doubt,  
 One sound comes of one whisper, where  
 Moved with low motions of slow air  
 The great trees nigh the castle swing  
 In the sad-colored evening:  
 "Ricorditi di me, che son  
 La Pia,"—that small sweet word alone  
 Is not yet gone.

"Ricorditi di me,"—the sound  
 Sole out of deep dumb days remote,  
 Across the fiery and fatal ground  
 Comes tender as a hurt bird's note  
 To where, a ghost with empty hands,  
 A woe-worn ghost, her palace stands  
 In the mid city, where the strong  
 Bells turn the sunset air to song,  
 And the towers throng.

With other face, with speech the same,  
A mightier maiden's likeness came  
Late among mourning men that slept,  
A sacred ghost that went and wept,  
White as the passion-wounded Lamb,  
Saying, "Ah, remember me, that am  
Italia." (From deep sea to sea  
Earth heard, earth knew her, that this  
was she.)

"*Ricorditi.*"

"Love made me of all things fairest  
thing,  
And Hate unmade me; this knows  
he  
Who with God's sacerdotal ring  
Enrined mine hand, espousing me."  
Yea, in thy myriad-mooded woe,  
Yea, Mother, hast thou not said so?  
Have not our hearts within us stirred,  
'thou most boliest, at thy word?  
Have we not heard?

As this dead tragic land that she  
Found deadly, such was time to thee;  
Years passed thee withering in the red  
Maremma, — years that deemed thee  
dead,  
Ages that sorrowed or that scorned;  
And all this while, though all they  
mourned,  
Thou sawest the end of things unclean,  
And the unborn that should see thee a  
queen.  
Have we not seen?

The weary poet, thy sad son,  
Upon thy soil, under thy skies,  
Saw all Italian things save one, —  
Italia: this thing missed his eyes;  
The old mother-might, the breast, the  
face,  
That reared, that lit the Roman race, —  
This not Leopardi saw; but we,  
What is it, Mother, that we see, —  
What, if not thee?

Look thou from Siena southward home,  
Where the priest's pall hangs rent on  
Rome,  
And through the red rent swaddling-  
bands  
Toward thine she strains her labouring  
hands.

Look thou and listen, and let be  
All the dead quick, all the bond free;  
In the blind eyes let there be sight;  
In the eighteen centuries of the night  
Let there be light.

Bow down the beauty of thine head,  
Sweet, and with lips of living breath  
Kiss thy sons sleeping and thy dead,  
That there be no more sleep or  
death.

Give us thy light, thy might, thy love,  
Whom thy face seen afar above  
Drew to thy feet: and when, being free,  
Thou hast blest thy children born to  
thee,  
Bless also me, —

Me, that when others played or slept,  
Sat still under thy cross, and wept;  
Me, who so early and unaware  
Felt fall on bent bared brows and hair  
(Thin drops of the overflowing flood!)  
The bitter blessing of thy blood,  
The sacred shadow of thy pain,  
Thine, the true maiden-mother, slain  
And raised again;

Me, consecrated, if I might,  
To praise thee, or to love at least,  
O mother of all men's dear delight,  
Thou madest a choral-souled boy-  
priest,  
Before my lips had leave to sing,  
Or my hands hardly strength to cling  
About the intolerable tree  
Whereto they had nailed my heart and  
thee,  
And said, "Let be."

For to thee too, the high Fates gave  
Grace to be sacrificed and save,  
That being arisen, in the equal sun,  
God and the People should be one;  
By those red roads thy footprints trod,  
Man more divine, more human God,  
Saviour; that where no light was  
known  
But darkness, and a daytime frown,  
Light should be shown.

Let there be light, O Italy!  
 For our feet falter in the night.  
 O lamp of living years to be,  
 O light of God, let there be light!  
 Fill with a love keener than flame  
 Men scaled in spirit with thy name,  
 The cities and the Roman skies,  
 Where men with other than man's eyes  
 Saw thy sun rise.

For theirs thou wast, and thine were  
 they,  
 Whose names outshine thy very day:  
 For they are thine, and theirs thou art,  
 Whose blood beats living in man's  
 heart,  
 Remembering ages fled and dead  
 Wherein for thy sake these men bled;  
 They that saw Trebia, they that see  
 Mentana, they in years to be  
 That shall see thee.

For thine are all of us, and ours  
 Thou; till the seasons bring to birth  
 A perfect people, and all the powers  
 Be with them that bear fruit on  
 earth:  
 Till the inner heart of man be one  
 With freedom, and the sovereign sun;  
 And Time, in likeness of a guide,  
 Lead the Republic as a bride  
 Up to God's side.

## COR CORDIUM.

O HEART of hearts, the chalice of  
 love's fire,  
 Hid round with flowers and all the  
 bounty of bloom;  
 O wonderful and perfect heart, for  
 whom  
 The lyrist liberty made life a lyre;  
 O heavenly heart, at whose most dear  
 desire  
 Dead Love, living and singing, cleft  
 his tomb,  
 And with him risen and regent in  
 death's room  
 All day thy choral pulses rang full  
 choir;

O hearts whose beating blood was run-  
 ning song,  
 O sole thing sweeter than thine own  
 songs were,  
 Help us for thy free love's sake to  
 be free,  
 True for thy truth's sake, for thy  
 strength's sake strong,  
 Till very liberty make clean and fair  
 The nursing earth as the sepul-  
 chral sea.

## TIRESIAS.

## PART I.

It is an hour before the hour of dawn.  
 Set in mine hand my staff, and leave  
 me here  
 Outside the hollow house that blind  
 men fear,  
 More blind than I who live on life  
 withdrawn,  
 And feel on eyes that see not but  
 foresee  
 The shadow of death which clothes  
 Antigone.

Here lay her living body that here lies  
 Dead, if man living know what thing  
 is death,  
 If life be all made up of blood and  
 breath,  
 And no sense be save as of ears and  
 eyes.  
 But heart there is not, tongue there  
 is not found,  
 To think or sing what verge hath life  
 or bound.

In the beginning when the powers that  
 made  
 The young child man a little loved  
 him, seeing  
 His joy of life and fair face of his  
 being,  
 And bland and laughing with the man-  
 child played,  
 As friends they saw on our divine  
 one day,  
 King Cadmus take to queen Harmon-  
 ia.

The strength of soul that builds up as  
 with hands,  
 Walls spiritual and towers and towns  
 of thought  
 Which only fate, not force, can bring  
 to naught,  
 Took then to wife the light of all men's  
 lands,  
 War's child, and love's, most sweet  
 and wise and strong.  
 Order of things and rule and guiding  
 song.

It was long since: yea, even the sun  
 that saw  
 Remembers hardly what was, nor  
 how long;  
 And now the wise heart of the  
 worldly song  
 Is perished, and the holy hand of law  
 Can set no tune on time, nor help  
 again  
 The power of thought to build up life  
 for men.

Yea, surely are they now transformed  
 or dead,  
 And sleep below this world, where  
 no sun warms,  
 Or move about it now in formless  
 forms  
 Incognizable, and all their lordship  
 fled;  
 And where they stood up singing,  
 crawl and hiss  
 With fangs that kill behind their lips  
 that kiss.

Yet though her marriage-garment, seem-  
 ing fair,  
 Was dyed in sin and woven of jeal-  
 ousy  
 To turn their seed to poison, time  
 shall see  
 The gods re-issue from them, and repair  
 Their broken stamp of godhead, and  
 again  
 Thought and wise love sing words of  
 law to men.

I, Tiresias the prophet, seeing in Thebes  
 Much evil, and the misery of men's  
 hands

Who sow with fruitless wheat the  
 stones and sands,  
 With fruitful thorns the fallows and  
 warm glebes,  
 Bade their hands hold lest worse hap  
 come to pass,  
 But which of you had heed of Tiresias ?

I am as Time's self in mine own wearied mind,  
 Whom the strong heavy-footed years  
 have led  
 From night to night and dead men  
 unto dead,  
 And from the blind hope to the memory  
 ory blind;  
 For each man's life is woven, as  
 Time's life is,  
 Of blind young hopes and old blind  
 memories.

I am a soul outside of death and birth.  
 I see before me and afterward I see,  
 O child, O corpse, the live dead face  
 of thee,  
 Whose life and death are one thing  
 upon earth  
 Where day kills night and night again  
 kills day  
 And dies; but where is that Harmonia ?

O all-beholden light not seen of me !  
 Air, and warm winds that under the  
 sun's eye  
 Stretch your strong wings at morn-  
 ing; and thou, sky,  
 Whose hollow circle engirdling earth  
 and sea  
 All night the set stars limit, and all  
 day  
 The moving sun remeasures; ye,  
 I say, —

Ye heights of hills, and thou Dircean  
 spring  
 Inviolable, and ye towers that saw  
 cast down  
 Seven kings keen-sighted toward your  
 seven-faced town,  
 And quenched the red seed of one sight-  
 less king;



- And thou, for death less dreadful  
than for birth,  
Whose wild leaves hide the horror of  
the earth, —
- O mountain whereon gods made chase  
of kings,  
Cithæon, thou that sawest on Pen-  
theus dead  
Fangs of a mother fasten, and wax  
red,  
And satiate with a son thy swollen  
springs,  
And heardst her cry fright all thine  
eyries' nests  
Who gave death suck at sanguine-  
suckling breasts ;
- Yea, and a grief more grievous, without  
name,  
A curse too grievous for the name of  
grief,  
Thou sawest, and heardst the rumor  
scarce belief  
Even unto death and madness, when  
the flame  
Was lit whose ashes dropped about  
the pyre  
That of two brethren made one sun,  
dering fire ;
- O bitter nurse, that on thine hard bare  
knees  
Rear'dst for his fate the bloody-footed  
child  
Whose hands should be more blood-  
ily defiled  
And the old blind feet walk wearier  
ways than these,  
Whose seed, brought forth in dark-  
ness unto doom,  
Should break as fire out of his moth-  
er's womb ;
- I bear you witness as ye bear to me,  
Time, day, night, sun, stars, life,  
death, air, sea, earth,  
And ye that round the human house  
of birth  
Watch with veiled heads and weaponed  
hands, and see
- Good things and evil, strengthless yet  
and dumb,  
Sit in the clouds with cloudlike hours  
to come ;
- Ye forces without form and viewless  
powers  
That have the keys of all our years  
in hold,  
That prophesy too late with tongues  
of gold,  
In a strange speech whose words are  
perished hours,  
I witness to you what good things ye  
give  
As ye to me what evil while I live.
- What should I do to blame you, what  
to praise,  
For floral hours and hours funereal ?  
What should I do to curse or bless  
at all  
For winter-woven or summer-colored  
days ?  
Curse he that will, and bless you  
whoso can :  
I have no common part in you with  
man.
- I hear a springing water, whose quick  
sound  
Makes softer the soft, sunless, patient  
air,  
And the wind's hand is laid on my  
thin hair  
Light as a lover's, and the grasses round  
Have odors in them of green bloom  
and rain,  
Sweet as the kiss wherewith sleep  
kisses pain.
- I hear the low sound of the spring of  
time  
Still beating as the low live throb of  
blood,  
And where its waters gather head and  
flood  
I hear change moving on them, and the  
chime  
Across them of reverberate wings of  
hours  
Sounding, and feel the future air of  
flowers.

The wind of change is soft as snow,  
and sweet

The sense thereof as roses in the sun,  
The faint wind springing with the  
springs that run,

The dim sweet smell of flowering hopes,  
and heat

Of unbcholden sunrise; yet how long  
I know not, till the morning put forth  
song.

I prophesy of life, who live with death;  
Of joy, being sad; of sunlight, who  
am blind;

Of man, whose ways are alien from  
mankind

And his lips are not parted with man's  
breath:

I am a word out of the speechless  
years,

The tongue of time, that no man  
sleeps who hears.

I stand a shadow across the door of doom  
Athwart the lintel of death's house,  
and wait;

Nor quick nor dead, nor flexible by  
fate,

Nor quite of earth nor wholly of the  
tomb;

A voice, a vision, light as fire or air,  
Driven between days that shall be  
and that were.

I prophesy, with feet upon a grave,  
Of death cast out, and life devouring  
death

As flame doth wood and stubble with  
a breath;

Of freedom, though all manhood were  
one slave;

Of truth, though all the world were  
liar; of love,

That time nor hate can raze the wit-  
ness of.

Life that was given for love's sake and  
his law's,

Their powers have no more power  
on: they divide

Spoils wrung from lust or wrath of  
man or pride,

And keen oblivion without pity or pause

Sets them on fire, and scatters them  
on air

Like ashes shaken from a suppliant's  
hair.

But life they lay no hand on; life once  
given

No force of theirs hath competence  
to take;

Life that was given for some divine  
thing's sake,

To mix the bitterness of earth with  
heaven,

Light with man's night, and music  
with his breath,

Dies not, but makes its living food  
of death.

I have seen this, who live where men  
are not,

In the high starless air of fruitful  
night,

On that serenest and obscurest height  
Where dead and unborn things are one

in thought,

And whence the live unconquerable  
springs

Feed full of force the torrents of new  
things.

I have seen this, who saw long since,  
being man,

As now I know not if indeed I be,  
The fair bare Lady of Wisdom, good

to see

And evil, whence my light and night  
began:

Light on the goal and darkness on the  
way,

Light all through night and darkness  
all through day.

Mother, that by that Pegasean spring,  
Didst fold round in thine arms thy  
blinded son,

Weeping, "O holiest, what thing hast  
thou done,

What, to my child? woe's me that see  
the thing!

Is this thy love to me-ward, and  
hereof

Must I take sample how the gods can  
love?

“ O child, thou hast seen indeed, poor  
 child of mine,  
 The breasts and flanks of Pallas bare  
 in sight,  
 But never shalt see more the dear  
 sun's light ;  
 O Helicon, how great a pay is thine  
 For some poor antelopes and wild-  
 deer dead !  
 My child's eyes hast thou taken in  
 their stead ” —

Mother, thou knewest not what she had  
 to give,  
 Thy goddess, though then angered,  
 for mine eyes ;  
 Fame and foreknowledge, and to be  
 most wise,  
 And centuries of high-thoughted life to  
 live,  
 And in mine hand this guiding staff  
 to be  
 As eyesight to the feet of men that  
 see.

Perchance I shall not die at all, nor  
 pass  
 The general door and lintel of men  
 dead ;  
 Yet even the very tongue of wisdom  
 said  
 What grace should come with death to  
 Tiresias,  
 What special honor that god's hand  
 accord  
 Who gathers all men's nations as  
 their lord.

And sometimes when the secret eye of  
 thought  
 Is changed with obscurity, and the  
 sense  
 Aches with long pain of hollow pre-  
 science,  
 And fiery foresight with fore-suffering  
 bought  
 Seems even to infect my spirit and  
 consume,  
 Hunger and thirst come on me for  
 the tomb.

I could be fain to drink my death, and  
 sleep,  
 And no more wrapped about with  
 bitter dreams  
 Talk with the stars and with the  
 winds and streams  
 And with the inevitable years, and weep ;  
 For how should he who communes  
 with the years  
 Be sometime not a living spring of  
 tears ?

O child, that guided of thine only will  
 Didst set thy maiden foot against the  
 gate  
 To strike it open ere thine hour of  
 fate,  
 Antigone, men say not thou didst ill,  
 For love's sake and the reverence of  
 his awe  
 Divinely dying, slain by mortal law ;

For love is awful as immortal death.  
 And through thee surely hath thy  
 brother won  
 Rest, out of sight of our world-weary  
 sun,  
 And in the dead land where ye ghosts  
 draw breath  
 A royal place and honor ; so wast  
 thou  
 Happy, though earth have hold of  
 thee too now

So hast thou life and name inviolable,  
 And joy it may be, sacred and severe,  
 Joy secret-souled beyond all hope or  
 fear,  
 A monumental joy wherein to dwell  
 Seclude and silent, a selected state,  
 Serene possession of thy proper fate.

Thou art not dead as these are dead  
 who live  
 Full of blind years, a sorrow-shaken  
 kind,  
 Nor as these are am I the prophet  
 blind ;  
 They have not life that have not heart  
 to give  
 Life, nor have eyesight who lack  
 heart to see  
 When to be not is better than to be.

O ye whom time but bears with for a span,  
 How long will ye be blind and dead,  
 how long  
 Make your own souls part of your  
 own soul's wrong?  
 Son of the word of the most high gods,  
 man,  
 Why wilt thou make thine hour of  
 light and breath  
 Emptier of all but shame than very  
 death?

Fool, wilt thou live for ever? though  
 thou care  
 With all thine heart for life to keep  
 it fast,  
 Shall not thine hand forego it at the  
 last?  
 Lo, thy sure hour shall take thee by the  
 hair  
 Sleeping, or when thou knowest not,  
 or wouldst fly;  
 And as men died much mightier, shalt  
 thou die.

Yea, they are dead, men much more  
 worth than thou,  
 The savor of heroic lives that were,  
 Is it not mixed into thy common air?  
 The sense of them is shed about thee  
 now.  
 Feel not thy brows a wind blowing  
 from far?  
 Aches not thy forehead with a future  
 star?

The light that thou may'st make out of  
 thy name  
 Is in the wind of this same hour that  
 drives,  
 Blown within reach but once of all  
 men's lives;  
 And he that puts forth hand upon the  
 flame  
 Shall have it for a garland on his head  
 To sign him for a king among the  
 dead.

But these men that the lessening years  
 behold,  
 Who sit the most part without flame  
 or crown,

And brawl and sleep, and wear their  
 life-days down  
 With joys and griefs ignobler than  
 old,  
 And care not if the better day shall  
 be,—  
 Are these or art thou dead, Antigone?

## PART II.

As when one wakes out of a waning  
 dream,  
 And sees with instant eyes the naked  
 thought  
 Whereof the vision as a web was  
 wrought,  
 I saw beneath a heaven of cloud and  
 gleam,  
 Ere yet the heart of the young sun  
 waxed brave,  
 One like a prophet standing by a  
 grave.

In the hoar heaven was hardly beam of  
 breath,  
 And all the colored hills and fields  
 were gray,  
 And the wind wandered seeking for  
 the day,  
 And wailed as though he had found he  
 done to death,  
 And this gray hour had built to bury  
 her  
 The hollow twilight for a sepulchre.

But in my soul I saw as in a glass  
 A pale and living body full of grace  
 There lying, and over it the prophet's  
 face  
 Fixed; and the face was not of Tiresias  
 For such a starry fire was in his eye  
 As though their light it was that made  
 the skies.

Such eyes should God's have been when  
 very love  
 Looked forth of them and set the sun  
 aflame,  
 And such his lips that called the light  
 by name  
 And bade the morning forth at sound  
 thereof;

His face was sad and masterful as  
fate,  
And like a star's his look compas-  
sionate.

Like a star's gazed on of sad eyes so  
long  
It seems to yearn with pity, and all  
its fire  
As a man's heart to tremble with  
desire  
And heave as though the light would  
bring forth song;  
Yet from his face flashed lightning on  
the land,  
And like the thunder-bearer's was his  
hand.

The steepness of strange stairs had  
tired his feet,  
And his lips yet seemed sick of that  
salt bread  
Wherewith the lips of banishment  
are fed;  
But nothing was there in the world so  
sweet  
As the most bitter love, like God's  
own grace,  
Wherewith he gazed on that fair  
buried face.

Grief and glad pride and passion and  
sharp shame,  
Wrath and remembrance, faith and  
hope and hate,  
And pitiless pity of days degenerate,  
Were in his eyes as an incorporate  
flame  
That burned about her, and the heart  
thereof  
And central flower was very fire of  
love.

But all about her grave wherein she  
slept  
Were noises of the wild wind-footed  
years  
Whose footprints flying were full of  
blood and tears,  
Shrieks as of Mænads on their hills  
that leapt

And yelled as beasts of ravin, and  
their meat  
Was the rent flesh of their own sons  
to eat

And fiery shadows passing with strange  
cries,  
And sphinx-like shapes about the  
ruined lands,  
And the red reek of parricidal hands  
And intermixture of incestuous eyes,  
And light as of that self-divided flame  
Which made an end of the Cadmean  
name.

And I beheld again, and lo the grave,  
And the bright body laid therein as  
dead,  
And the same shadow across another  
head  
That bowed down silent on that sleep-  
ing slave  
Who was the lady of empire from  
her birth  
And light of all the kingdoms of the  
earth.

Within the compass of the watcher's  
hand  
All strengths of other men and divers  
powers  
Were held at ease and gathered up  
as flowers;  
His heart was as the heart of his whole  
land,  
And at his feet as natural servants  
lay  
Twilight and dawn and night and  
laboring day

He was most awful of the sons of God.  
Even now men seeing seemed at his  
lips to see  
The trumpet of the judgment that  
should be,  
And in his right hand terror for a rod,  
And in the breath that made the  
mountains bow  
The horned fire of Moses on his  
brow.

The strong wind of the coming of the  
 Lord  
 Had blown as flame upon him, and  
 brought down  
 On his bare head from heaven fire  
 for a crown,  
 And fire was girt upon him as a sword  
 To smite and lighten, and on what  
 ways he trod  
 There fell from him the shadow of a  
 god.

Pale, with the whole world's judgment  
 in his eyes,  
 He stood and saw the grief and shame  
 endure  
 That he, though highest of angels,  
 might not cure,  
 And the same sins done under the same  
 skies,  
 And the same slaves to the same  
 tyrants thrown,  
 And fain he would have slept, and  
 fain been stone.

But with unslumbering eyes he watched  
 the sleep  
 That sealed her sense whose eyes  
 were suns of old;  
 And the night shut and opened, and  
 behold,  
 The same grave where those prophets  
 came to weep,  
 But she that lay therein had moved  
 and stirred,  
 And where those twain had watched  
 her stood a third.

The tripled rhyme that closed in Para-  
 dise  
 With Love's name sealing up its  
 starry speech;  
 The tripled might of hand that found  
 in reach  
 All crowns beheld far off of all men's  
 eyes,  
 Song, color, carven wonders of live  
 stone,—  
 These were not, but the very soul  
 alone.

The living spirit, the good gift of grace,  
 The faith which takes of its own  
 blood to give  
 That the dead veins of buried hope  
 may live,  
 Came on her sleeping, face to naked  
 face,  
 And from a soul more sweet than all  
 the south  
 Breathed love upon her sealed and  
 breathless mouth.

Between her lips the breath was blown  
 as fire,  
 And through her flushed veins leapt  
 the liquid life,  
 And with sore passion and ambigu-  
 ous strife  
 The new birth rent her and the new  
 desire,  
 The will to live, the competence to  
 be,  
 The sense to hearken, and the soul  
 to see

And the third prophet standing by her  
 grave  
 Stretched forth his hand, and touched  
 her; and her eyes  
 Opened as sudden suns in heaven  
 might rise,  
 And her soul caught from his the faith  
 to save;  
 Faith above creeds, faith beyond  
 records, born  
 Of the pure, naked, fruitful, awful  
 morn.

For in the daybreak now that night was  
 dead  
 The light, the shadow, the delight,  
 the pain,  
 The purpose and the passion of those  
 twain,  
 Seemed gathered on that third prophetic  
 head;  
 And all their crowns were as one  
 crown, and one  
 His face with her face in the living  
 sun.

For even with that communion of their eyes

His whole soul passed into her, and made her strong;

And all the sounds and shows of shame and wrong,

The hand that slays, the lip that mocks and lies,

Temples and thrones that yet men seem to see,—

Are these dead, or art thou dead, Italy?

### AN APPEAL.

#### I.

ART thou indeed among these,  
Thou of the tyrannous crew,  
The kingdoms fed upon blood,  
O queen from of old of the seas,  
England,—art thou of them too  
That drink of the poisonous flood,  
That hide under poisonous trees?

#### II.

Nay, thy name from of old,  
Mother, was pure, or we dreamed;  
Purer we held thee than this,  
Purer fain would we hold;  
So goodly a glory it seemed,  
A fame so bounteous of bliss,  
So more precious than gold.

#### III.

A praise so sweet in our ears,  
That thou in the tempest of things  
As a rock for a refuge shouldst stand,  
In the blood-red river of tears  
Poured forth for the triumph of kings;  
A safeguard, a sheltering land,  
In the thunder and torrent of years.

#### IV.

Strangers came gladly to thee,  
Exiles, chosen of men,  
Safe for thy sake in thy shade,  
Sat down at thy feet and were free.  
So men spake of thee then:  
Now shall their speaking be stayed?  
Ah, so let it not be!

#### V.

Not for revenge or affright,  
Pride, or a tyrannous lust,  
Cast from thee the crown of thy praise.  
Mercy was thine in thy might;  
Strong when thou wert, thou wert just;  
Now, in the wrong-doing days,  
Cleave thou, thou at least, to the right.

#### VI.

How should one charge thee, how  
sway,  
Save by the memories that were?  
Not thy gold, nor the strength of thy  
ships,  
Nor the might of thine armies at bay,  
Made thee, mother, most fair;  
But a word from republican lips  
Said in thy name, in thy day.

#### VII.

Hast thou said it, and hast thou forgot?  
Is thy praise in thine ears as a scoff?  
Blood of men guiltless was shed,  
Children, and souls without spot,  
Shed, but in places far off:  
*Let slaughter no more be*, said  
Milton; and slaughter was not.

#### VIII.

Was it not said of thee too,  
Now, but now, by thy foes,  
By the slaves that had slain their  
France,  
And thee would slay as they slew—  
“Down with her walls that enclose  
Freemen that eye us askance,  
Fugitives, men that are true!”

#### IX.

This was thy praise or thy blame,  
From bondsman or freeman,—to be  
Pure from pollution of slaves,  
Clean of their sins, and thy name  
Bloodless, innocent, free:  
Now if thou be not, thy waves  
Wash not from off thee thy shame.

## X.

Freeman he is not, but slave,  
Whoso in fear for the state  
Cries for surety of blood,  
Help of gibbet and grave;  
Neither is any land great  
Whom, in her fear-stricken mood,  
These things only can save.

## XI.

Lo! how fair from afar,  
Taintless of tyranny, stands  
Thy mighty daughter, for years  
Who trod the winepress of war,—  
Shines with immaculate hands;  
Slays not a foe, neither fears;  
Stains not peace with a scar.

## XII.

Be not as tyrant or slave,  
England; be not as these,  
Thou that wert other than they.  
Stretch out thine hand, but to save;  
Put forth thy strength, and release:  
Lest there arise, if thou slay,  
Thy shame as a ghost from the grave.  
Nov. 20, 1867.

## PERINDE AC CADAVER.

In a vision Liberty stood  
By the childless charm-stricken bed  
Where, barren of glory and good,  
Knowing naught if she would not or  
would,  
England slept with her dead.

Her face that the foam had whitened,  
Her hands that were strong to strive,  
Her eyes whence battle had lightened,  
Over all was a drawn shroud tightened  
To bind her asleep and alive.

She turned and laughed in her dream,  
With gray lips arid and cold:  
She saw not the face as a beam  
Burn on her, but only a gleam  
Through her sleep as of new-stamped  
gold.

But the goddess, with terrible tears  
In the light of her down-drawn eyes,  
Spake fire in the dull sealed ears:  
"Thou, sick with slumbers and fears,  
Wilt thou sleep now indeed, or arise?"

"With dreams, and with words, and  
with light  
Memories and empty desires,  
Thou hast wrapped thyself round all  
night:  
Thou hast shut up thine heart from the  
right,  
And warmed thee at burnt-out fires.

"Yet once, if I smote at thy gate,  
Thy sons would sleep not, but heard:  
O thou that wast found so great,  
Art thou smitten with folly or fate,  
That thy sons have forgotten my  
word?"

"O Cromwell's mother, O breast  
That suckled Milton! thy name  
That was beautiful then, that was blest,  
Is it wholly discrowned and deprest,  
Trodden under by sloth into shame?"

"Why wilt thou hate me and die?  
For none can hate me and live.  
What ill have I done to thee? why  
Wilt thou turn from me fighting, and  
fly,  
Who would follow thy feet and for-  
give?"

"Thou hast seen me stricken, and said,  
What is it to me? I am strong:  
Thou hast seen me bowed down on my  
head,  
And laughed, and lifted thine head,  
And washed thine hands of my  
wrong.

"Thou has put out the soul of thy  
sight:  
Thou hast sought to my foemen as  
friend,  
To my traitors that kiss me and smite,  
To the kingdoms and empires of  
night  
That begin with the darkness, and  
end.



"Turn thee, awaken, arise,  
 With the light that is risen on the  
 lands,  
 With the change of the fresh-colored  
 skies :  
 Set thine eyes on mine eyes,  
 Lay thy hands in my hands."

She moved and mourned as she heard,  
 Sighed, and shifted her place,  
 As the wells of her slumber were  
 stirred  
 By the music and wind of the word,  
 Then turned, and covered her face.

"Ah!" she said in her sleep,  
 "Is my work not done with, and  
 done?  
 Is there corn for my sickle to reap?  
 And strange is the pathway, and steep,  
 And sharp overhead is the sun.

"I have done thee service enough,  
 Loved thee enough in my day :  
 Now nor hatred nor love  
 Nor hardly remembrance thereof  
 Lives in me to lighten my way.

"And is it not well with us here?  
 Is change as good as is rest?  
 What hope should move me, or fear  
 That eye should open or ear,  
 Who have long since won what is  
 best?

"Where among us are such things;  
 As turn men's hearts into hell?  
 Have we not queens without stings,  
 Scotched princes, and fangless kings?  
 Yea," she said, "we are well.

"We have filed the teeth of the snake  
 Monarchy : how should it bite?  
 Should the slippery slow thing wake,  
 It will not sting for my sake ;  
 Yea," she said, "I do right."

So spake she, drunken with dreams,  
 Mad; but again in her ears  
 A voice as of storm-swelled streams  
 Spake : "No brave shame then redeem's  
 Thy lusts of sloth and thy fears ?

"Thy poor lie slain of thine hands,  
 Their starved limbs rot in thy sight ;  
 As a shadow the ghost of thee stands  
 Among men living and lands,  
 And stirs not leftward or right.

"Freeman he is not, but slave,  
 Who stands not out on my side ;  
 His own hand hollows his grave,  
 Nor strength is in me to save  
 Where strength is none to abide.

"Time shall tread on his name  
 That was written for honor of old,  
 Who hath taken in change for fame  
 Dust, and silver, and shame,  
 Ashes, and iron, and gold."

#### THE OBLATION.

ASK nothing more of me, sweet :  
 All I can give you, I give.  
 Heart of my heart, were it more,  
 More would be laid at your feet ;  
 Love that should help you to live ;  
 Song that should spur you to soar.

All things were nothing to give,  
 Once to have sense of you more,  
 Touch you and taste of you sweet,  
 Think you and breathe you, and live,  
 Swept of your wings as they soar,  
 Trodden by chance of your feet.

I that have love and no more  
 Give you but love of you, sweet :  
 He that hath more, let him give ;  
 He that hath wings, let him soar ;  
 Mine is the heart at your feet  
 Here, that must love you to live.

#### A SONG OF ITALY.

UPON a windy night of stars that fell  
 At the wind's spoken spell,  
 Swept with sharp strokes of agonizing  
 light  
 From the clear gulf of night,  
 Between the fixed and fallen glories  
 one  
 Against my vision shone,

More fair and fearful and divine than  
they

That measure night and day,  
And worthier worship; and within mine  
eyes

The formless folded skies  
Took shape and were unfolded like as  
flowers.

And I beheld the hours  
As maidens, and the days as laboring  
men,

And the soft nights again  
As wearied women 'to their own souls  
wed,

And ages as the dead.  
And over these living, and them that  
died,

From one to the other side  
A lordlier light than comes of earth or  
air

Made the world's future fair.  
A woman like to love in face, but not  
A thing of transient lot;

And like to hope, but having hold on  
truth;

And like to joy or youth,  
Save that upon the rock her feet were  
set;

And like what men forget,  
Faith, innocence, high thought, laborious  
peace,—

And yet like none of these,  
Being not as these are mortal, but with  
eyes

That sounded the deep skies,  
And clove like wings or arrows their  
clear way

Through night and dawn and day,—  
So fair a presence over star and sun  
Stood, making these as one.

For in the shadow of her shape were all  
Darkened and held in thrall,  
So mightier rose she past them; and  
I felt

Whose form, whose likeness knelt  
With covered hair and face, and clasped  
her knees;

And knew the first of these  
Was Freedom, and the second Italy  
And what sad words said she

For mine own grief I knew not, nor had  
heart  
Therewith to bear my part

And set my songs to sorrow; nor to  
hear

How tear by sacred tear  
Fell from her eyes as flowers or notes  
that fall

In some slain feaster's hall  
Where in mid music and melodious  
breath

Men singing have seen death.  
So fair, so lost, so sweet, she knelt; or  
so

In our lost eyes below  
Seemed to us sorrowing; and her speech  
being said,

Fell, as one who falls dead.  
And for a little she too wept, who stood  
Above the dust and blood

And thrones and troubles of the world;  
then spake,  
As who bids dead men wake:—

“Because the years were heavy on thy  
head;

Because dead things are dead;  
Because thy chosen on hillside, city and  
plain

Are shed as drops of rain;  
Because all earth was black, all heaven  
was blind,

And we cast out of mind;  
Because men wept, saying *Freedom*,  
knowing of thee,

Child, that thou wast not free:  
Because wherever blood was not shame  
was

Where thy pure foot did pass;  
Because on Promethean rocks distent  
Thee fouler eagles rent;

Because a serpent stains with slime and  
foam

This that is not thy Rome;  
Child of my womb, whose limbs were  
made in me,

Have I forgotten thee?  
In all thy dreams through all these years  
on wing,

Hast thou dreamed such a thing?  
The mortal mother-bird out-soars her  
nest,

The child outgrows the breast;  
But suns as stars shall fall from heaven  
and cease,  
Ere we twain be as these;

Yea, utmost skies forget their utmost  
sun,

Ere we twain be not one.

My lesser jewels sewn on skirt and hem,  
I have no heed of them

Obscured and flawed by sloth or craft  
or power;

But thou, that wast my flower,  
The blossom bound between my brows,  
and worn

In sight of even and morn  
From the last ember of the flameless  
west

To the dawn's baring breast —

I were not Freedom if thou wert not  
free,

Nor thou wert Italy.

O mystic rose ingrained with blood,  
impearled

With tears of all the world!

The torpor of their blind brute-ridden  
trance

Kills England and chills France;  
And Spain sobs hard through strang-  
ling blood; and snows

Hide the huge eastern woes.

But thou, twin-born with morning,  
nursed of noon,

And blessed of star and moon!

What shall avail to assail thee any more,  
From sacred shore to shore?

Have Time and Love not knelt down  
at thy feet,

Thy sore, thy soiled, thy sweet,  
Fresh from the flints and mire of mur-  
derous ways

And dust of travelling days?

Hath Time not kissed them, Love not  
washed them fair,

And wiped with tears and hair?

Though God forget thee, I will not for-  
get;

Though heaven and earth be set  
Against thee, O unconquerable child,  
Abused, abased, reviled,

Lift thou not less from no funereal bed  
Thine undishonored head;

Love thou not less, by lips of thine once  
prest,

This my now barren breast;  
Seek thou not less, being well assured  
thereof,

O child, my latest love.

For now the barren bosom shall bear  
fruit,

Songs leap from lips long mute,  
And with my milk the mouths of nations  
fed

Again be glad and red  
That were worn white with hunger and  
sorrow and thirst;

And thou, most fair and first,  
Thou whose warm hands and sweet live  
lips I feel

Upon me for a seal,  
Thou whose least looks, whose smiles  
and little sighs,

Whose passionate pure eyes,  
Whose dear fair limbs that neither  
bonds could bruise

Nor hate of men misuse,  
Whose flower-like breath and bosom,  
O my child,

O mine and undefiled,  
Fill with such tears as burn like bitter  
wine

These mother's eyes of mine,  
Thrill with huge passions and primeval  
pains

The fulness of my veins.  
O sweetest head seen higher than any  
stands,

I touch thee with mine hands,  
I lay my lips upon thee, O thou most  
sweet,

To lift thee on thy feet,  
And with the fire of mine to fill thine  
eyes;

I say unto thee, Arise."

She ceased, and heaven was full of flame  
and sound,

And earth's old limbs unbound  
Shone and waxed warm with fiery dew  
and seed

Shed through her at this her need:  
And highest in heaven, a mother and  
full of grace,

With no more covered face,  
With no more lifted hands and bended  
knees,

Rose, as from sacred seas  
Love, when old time was full of plente-  
ous springs,

That fairest-born of things,

The land that holds the rest in tender  
thrall

For love's sake in them all,  
That binds with words and holds with  
eyes and hands

All hearts in all men's lands.  
So died the dream whence rose the live  
desire

That here takes form and fire,  
A spirit from the splendid grave of sleep  
Risen, that ye should not weep, —  
Should not weep more nor ever, O ye  
that hear,

And ever have held her dear,  
Seeing now indeed she weeps not who  
wept sore,

And sleeps not any more.  
Hearken ye towards her, O people,  
exalt your eyes;

Is this a thing that dies?

Italia! by the passion of the pain

That bent and rent thy chain;  
Italia! by the breaking of the bands,

The shaking of the lands;  
Beloved, O men's mother, O men's  
queen,

Arise, appear, be seen!  
Arise, array thyself in manifold  
Queen's raiment of wrought gold;  
With girdles of green freedom, and  
with red

Roses, and white snow shed  
Above the flush and frondage of the  
hills

That all thy deep dawn fills  
And all thy clear night veils and warms  
with wings

Spread till the morning sings;  
The rose of resurrection, and the bright  
Breast lavish of the light,

The lady lily like the snowy sky  
Ere the stars wholly die;  
As red as blood, and whiter than a  
wave,

Flowers grown as from thy grave,  
From the green fruitful grass in May-  
time hot,

Thy grave, where thou art not.  
Gather the grass and weave, in sacred  
sign

Of the ancient earth divine,

The holy heart of things, the seed of  
birth,

The mystical warm earth.  
O thou her flower of flowers, with treble  
braid

Be thy sweet head arrayed,  
In witness of her mighty motherhood  
Who bore thee and found thee  
good,

Her fairest-born of children, on whose  
head

Her green and white and red  
Are hope and light and life, inviolate  
Of any latter fate.

Fly, O our flag, through deep Italian  
air,

Above the flags that were,  
The dusty shreds of shameful battle-  
flags

Trampled and rent in rags,  
As withering woods in autumn's bitter-  
est breath

Yellow, and black as death;  
Black as crushed worms that sicken in  
the sense,

And yellow as pestilence.  
Fly, green as summer and red as dawn  
and white

As the live heart of light,  
The blind bright womb of color unborn,  
that brings

Forth all fair forms of things,  
As freedom all fair forms of nations  
died

In divers-colored pride.  
Fly fleet as wind on every wind that  
blows

Between her seas and snows,  
From Alpine white, from Tuscan green,  
and where

Vesuvius reddens air.  
Fly! and let all men see it, and all kings  
wail,

And priests wax faint and pale,  
And the cold hordes that moan in misty  
places

And the funereal races  
And the sick serfs of lands that wait  
and wane

See thee and hate thee in vain.  
In the clear laughter of all winds and  
waves,

In the blown grass of graves,

In the long sound of fluctuant boughs  
of trees,

In the broad breath of seas,  
Bid the sound of thy flying folds be  
heard;

And as a spoken word  
Full of that fair god and that merciless  
Who rends the Pythoness,  
So be the sound and so the fire that  
saith

She feels her ancient breath  
And the old blood move in her im-  
mortal veins.

Strange travail and strong pains,  
Our mother, hast thou borne these many  
years

While thy pure blood and tears  
Mixed with the Tyrrhene and the Adrian  
sea.

Light things were said of thee,  
As of one buried deep among the dead;  
Yea, she hath been, they said,  
She was when time was younger, and is  
not;

The very cerecloths rot  
That flutter in the dusty wind of death,  
Not moving with her breath;  
Far seasons and forgotten years enfold  
Her dead corpse old and cold  
With many windy winters and pale  
springs:

She is none of this world's things.  
Though her dead head like a live gar-  
land wear

The golden-growing hair  
That flows over her breast down to her  
feet,

Dead queens, whose life was sweet  
In sight of all men living, have been  
found

So cold, so clad, so crowned,  
With all things faded and with one  
thing fair,

Their old immortal hair,  
When flesh and bone turned dust at  
touch of day:

And she is dead as they.

'So men said sadly, mocking; so the  
slave,

Whose life was his soul's grave;

So, pale or red with change of fast and  
feast,

The sanguine-sandalled priest;  
So the Austrian, when his fortune came  
to flood,

And the warm wave was blood;  
With wings that widened and with beak  
that smote,

So shrieked through either throat  
From the hot horror of its northern  
nest

That double-headed pest;  
So, triple-crowned with fear and fraud  
and shame,

He of whom treason came,  
The herdsman of the Gadarean swine;  
So all his ravening kine,

Made fat with poisonous pasture: so  
not we,

Mother, beholding thee.  
Make answer, O the crown of all our  
slain,

Ye that were one, being twain,  
Twain brethren, twin-born to the sec-  
ond birth,

Chosen out of all our earth  
To be the prophesying stars that  
say

How hard is night on day,  
Stars in serene and sudden heaven re-  
risen

Before the sun break prison  
And ere the moon be wasted; fair first  
flowers

In that red wreath of ours  
Woven with the lives of all whose lives  
were shed

To crown their mother's head  
With leaves of civic cypress and thick  
yew,

Till the olive bind it too,  
Olive and laurel and all loftier leaves  
That victory wears or weaves

At her fair feet for her beloved brow;

Hear, for she too hears now,

O Pisacane, from Calabrian sands;

O all heroic hands  
Close on the sword-hilt, hands of all  
her dead;

O many a holy head,  
Bowed for her sake even to her reddening  
dust;

O chosen, O pure and just.

Who counted for a small thing life's  
estate,

And died, and made it great;  
Ye whose names mix with all her  
memories; ye

Who rather chose to see  
Death, than our more intolerable things;  
Thou whose name withers kings,  
Agesilao; thou too, O chieftiest thou,  
The slayer of splendid brow,  
Laid where the lying lips of fear deride  
The foiled tyrannicide,

Foiled, fallen, slain, scorned, and happy;  
being in fame,

Felice, like thy name,  
Not like thy fortune; father of the fight,  
Having in hand our light.

Ah, happy! for that sudden-swerving  
hand

Flung light on all thy land,  
Yea, lit blind France with compulsory  
ray,

Driven down a righteous way;  
Ah, happiest! for from thee the wars  
began,

From thee the fresh springs ran;  
From thee the lady land that queens  
the earth

Gat as she gave new birth.  
O sweet mute mouths, O all fair dead  
of ours,

Fair in her eyes as flowers,  
Fair without feature, vocal without  
voice,

Strong without strength, rejoice!  
Hear it with ears that hear not, and on  
eyes

That see not let it rise,  
Rise as a sundawn; be it as dew that  
drips

On dumb and dusty lips;  
Eyes have ye not, and see it; neither  
ears,

And there is none but hears.  
This is the same for whom ye bled and  
wept;

She was not dead, but slept.  
This is that very Italy which was  
And is and shall not pass.

But thou, though all were not well done,  
O chief,

Must thou take shame or grief?

Because one man is not as thou or ten,  
Must thou take shame for men?

Because the supreme sunrise is not yet,  
Is the young dew not wet?

Wilt thou not yet abide a little while,  
Soul without fear or guile,  
Mazzini, — O our prophet, O our priest,  
A little while at least?

A little hour of doubt and of control,  
Sustain thy sacred soul;  
Withhold thine heart, our father, but  
an hour;

Is it not here, the flower,  
Is it not blown and fragrant from the  
root,

And shall not be the fruit?  
Thy children, even thy people thou hast  
made,

Thine, with thy words arrayed,  
Clothed with thy thoughts and girt with  
thy desires,

Yearn up toward thee as fires.  
Art thou not father, O father, of all  
these?

From thine own Genoese  
To where of nights the lower extreme  
lagune

Feels its Venetian moon,  
Nor suckling's mouth nor mother's  
breast set free

But hath that grace through thee.  
The milk of life on death's unnatural  
brink

Thou gavest them to drink,  
The natural milk of freedom; and again  
They drank, and they were men.

The wine and honey of freedom and of  
faith

They drank, and cast off death.  
Bear with them now; thou art holier.  
yet endure,

Till they as thou be pure.  
Their swords at least that stemmed half  
Austria's tide

Bade all its bulk divide;  
Else, though fate bade them for a  
breath's space fall,

She had not fallen at all.  
Not by their hands they made time's  
promise true;

Not by their hands, but through.  
Nor on Custoza ran their blood to waste,  
Nor fell their fame defaced

Whom stormiest Adria with tumultuous  
tides

Whirls undersea and hides.

Not his, who from the sudden-settling  
deck

Looked over death and wreck

To where the mother's bosom shone,  
who smiled

As he, so dying, her child;

For he smiled surely, dying, to mix his  
death

With her memorial breath;

Smiled, being most sure of her, that in  
no wise,

Die whoso will, she dies:

And she smiled surely, fair and far  
above,

Wept not, but smiled for love.

Thou too, O splendour of the sudden  
sword

That drove the crews abhorred

From Naples and the siren-footed  
strand,

Flash from thy master's hand,

Shine from the middle summer of the  
seas

To the old Æolides,

Outshine their fiery fumes of burning  
night,

Sword, with thy midday light;

Flame as a beacon from the Tyrrhene  
foam

To the rent heart of Rome,

From the island of her lover and thy  
lord,

Her savior and her sword.

In the fierce year of failure and of fame,  
Art thou not yet the same

That wast as lightning swifter than all  
wings

In the blind face of kings?  
When priests took counsel to devise

despair,  
And princes to forswear,

She clasped thee, O her sword and flag-  
bearer

And staff and shield to her,

O Garibaldi! need was hers and grief,  
Of thee and of the chief,

And of another girt in arms to stand

As good of hope and hand,  
As high of soul and happy, albeit indeed

The heart should burn and bleed,

So but the spirit shake not nor the  
breast

Swerve, but abide its rest,

As theirs did and as thine, though ruin  
clomb

The highest wall of Rome,

Though treason stained and spilt her  
lustral water,

And slaves led slaves to slaughter,

And priests, praying and slaying,  
watched them pass

From a strange France, alas!

That was not freedom; yet when these  
were past

Thy sword and thou stood fast,

Till new men seeing thee where Sicilian  
waves

Hear now no sound of slaves,

And where thy sacred blood is fragrant  
still

Upon the Bitter Hill,

Seeing by that blood one country saved  
and stained,

Less loved thee crowned than chained,  
And less now only than the chief: for

he,

Father of Italy,

Uphore in holy hands the babe new-  
born

Through loss and sorrow and scorn,

Of no man led, of many men reviled;

Till, lo! the new-born child

Gone from between his hands, and in its  
place,

Lo; the fair mother's face.

Blessed is he of all men, being in one

As father to her and son,

Blessed of all men living, that he found

Her weak limbs bared and bound,

And in his arms and in his bosom bore.  
And as a garment wore

Her weight of want, and as a royal  
dress

Put on her weariness.

As in faith's hoariest histories men  
read,

The strong man bore at need

Through roaring rapids when all heaven  
was wild

The likeness of a child

That still waxed greater and heavier as  
he trod,

And altered, and was God.

Praise him, O winds that move the  
 molten air,  
 O light of days that were,  
 And light of days that shall be; land  
 and sea,  
 And heaven and Italy:  
 Praise him, O storm and summer, shore  
 and wave,  
 O skies and every grave;  
 O weeping hopes, O memories beyond  
 tears,  
 O many and murmuring years,  
 O sounds far off in time and visions  
 far,  
 O sorrow with thy star,  
 And joy with all thy beacons; ye that  
 mourn,  
 And ye whose light is born;  
 O fallen faces, and O souls arisen,  
 Praise him from tomb and prison,  
 Praise him from heaven and sunlight;  
 and ye floods,  
 And windy waves of woods;  
 Ye valleys and wild vineyards, ye lit  
 lakes  
 And happier hillside brakes,  
 Untrampled by the accursed feet that  
 trod  
 Fields golden from their god,  
 Fields of their god forsaken, whereof  
 none  
 Sees his face in the sun,  
 Hears his voice from the floweriest  
 wildernesses;  
 And, barren of his tresses,  
 Ye bays unplucked and laurels unin-  
 twined,  
 That no men break or bind,  
 And myrtles long forgetful of the  
 sword,  
 And olives unadored,  
 Wisdom and love, white hands that save  
 and slay,  
 Praise him; and ye as they,  
 Praise him, O gracious might of dews  
 and rains  
 That feed the purple plains,  
 O sacred sunbeams bright as bare steel  
 drawn,  
 O cloud and fire and dawn;  
 Red hills of flame, white Alps, green  
 Apennines,  
 Banners of blowing pines,

Standards of stormy snows, flags of light  
 leaves,  
 Three wherewith Freedom weaves  
 One ensign that once woven and once  
 unfurled  
 Makes day of all a world,  
 Makes blind their eyes who knew not  
 and outbraves  
 The waste of iron waves;  
 Ye fields of yellow fulness, ye fresh  
 fountains,  
 And mists or many mountains;  
 Ye moons and seasons, and ye days  
 and nights;  
 Ye starry-headed heights,  
 And gorges melting sunward from the  
 snow,  
 And all strong streams that flow,  
 Tender as tears, and fair as faith, and  
 pure  
 As hearts made sad and sure  
 At once by many sufferings and one love  
 O mystic deathless dove  
 Held to the heart of earth and in her  
 hands  
 Cherished, O lily of lands,  
 White rose of time, dear dream of  
 praises past, —  
 For such as these thou wast,  
 That art as eagles setting to the sun,  
 As fawns that leap and run,  
 As a sword carven with keen floral gold  
 Sword for an armed god's hold,  
 Flower for a crowned god's forehead, —  
 O our land,  
 Reach forth thine holiest hand,  
 O mother of many sons and memories,  
 Stretch out thine hand to his  
 That raised and gave thee life to run  
 and leap  
 When thou wast full of sleep,  
 That touched and stung thee with young  
 blood and breath  
 When thou wast hard on death.  
 Praise him, O all her cities and her  
 crowns,  
 Her towers and thrones of towns;  
 O noblest Brescia, scarred from foot to  
 head  
 And breast-deep in the dead,  
 Praise him from all the glories of thy  
 graves  
 That yellow Mela laves



With gentle and golden water, whose  
fair flood

Ran wider with thy blood :

Praise him, O born of that heroic breast,  
O nursed thereat and blest,

Verona, fairer than thy mother fair,  
But not more brave to bear :

Praise him, O Milan, whose imperial  
tread

Bruised once the German head ;

Whose might, by northern swords left  
desolate,

Set foot on fear and fate :

Praise him, O long mute mouth of  
melodies,

Mantua, with louder keys,

With mightier chords of music even  
than rolled

From the large harps of old,

When thy sweet singer of golden throat  
and tongue,

Praising his tyrant, sung ;

Though now thou sing not as of other  
days,

Learn late a better praise.

Not with the sick sweet lips of slaves  
that sing,

Praise thou no priest or king,

No brow-bound laurel of discolored leaf,  
But him, the crownless chief.

Praise him, O star of sun-forgotten  
times,

Among their creeds and crimes

That wast a fire of witness in the night,  
Padua, the wise men's light :

Praise him, O sacred Venice, and the  
sea

That now exults through thee,

Full of the mighty morning and the  
sun,

Free of things dead and done ;

Praise him from all the years of thy  
great grief,

That shook thee like a leaf

With winds and snows of torment, rain  
that fell

Red as the rains of hell,

Storms of black thunder and of yellow  
flame,

And all ill things but shame ;

Praise him with all thy holy heart and  
strength ;

Through thy walls' breadth and length

Praise him with all thy people, that their  
voice

Bid the strong soul rejoice,

The fair clear supreme spirit beyond  
stain,

Pure as the depth of pain,

High as the head of suffering, and se-  
cure

As all things that endure.

More than thy blind lord of an hundred  
years

Whose name our memory hears,

Home-bound from harbors of the By-  
zantine

Made tributary of thine,

Praise him who gave no gifts from over-  
sea,

But gave thyself to thee.

O mother Genoa, through all years that  
run,

More than that other son,

Who first beyond the seals of sunset  
prest

Even to the unfooted west,

Whose back-blown flag scared from  
their sheltering seas

The unknown Atlantides,

And as flame climbs through cloud and  
vapor clomb

Through streams of storm and foam,

Till half in sight they saw land heave  
and swim, —

More than this man praise him.

One found a world new-born from virgin  
sea ;

And one found Italy.

O heavenliest Florence, from the mouths  
of flowers

Fed by melodious hours,

From each sweet mouth that kisses  
light and air,

Thou whom thy fate made fair,

As a bound vine or any flowering tree,  
Praise him who made thee free.

For no grape-gatherers trampling out  
the wine

Tread thee, the fairest vine ;

For no man binds thee, no man bruises,  
none

Does with thee as these have done.

From where spring hears loud through  
her long lit vales

Triumphant nightingales.

In many a fold of fiery foliage hid  
den,

Withheld as things forbidden,  
But clamorous with innumerable de-  
light

In May's red, green, and white,  
In the far-floated standard of the spring,  
That bids men also sing,  
Our flower of flags, our witness that we  
are free,

Our lamp for land and sea ;  
From where Majano feels through corn  
and vine,

Spring move and melt as wine,  
And Fiesole's embracing arms enclose  
The immeasurable rose ;

From hillsides plumed with pine, and  
heights wind-worn

That feel the reflux morn,  
Or where the moon's face warm and  
passionate

Burns, and men's hearts grow great,  
And the swoln eyelids labor with sweet  
tears,

And in their burning ears  
Sound throbs like flame, and in their  
eyes new light

Kindles the trembling night ;  
From faint illumined fields and starry  
valleys

Where from the hill-wind sallies,  
From Vallombrosa, from Valdarno raise  
One Tuscan tune of praise.

O lordly city of the field of death,  
Praise him with equal breath,  
From sleeping streets and gardens, and  
the stream

That threads them as a dream  
Threads without light the untravelled  
ways of sleep

With eyes that smile or weep ;  
From the sweet sombre beauty of wave  
and wall

That fades and does not fall ;  
From colored domes and cloisters fair  
with fame,

Praise thou and thine his name.  
Thou too, O little laurelled town of  
towers,

Clothed with the flame of flowers,  
From windy ramparts girdled with  
young gold,

From thy sweet hillside fold

Of wallflowers and the acacia's belted  
bloom

And every blowing plume,  
Halls that saw Dante speaking, chapel  
fair

As the outer hills and air,  
Praise him who feeds the fire that Dante  
fed,

Our highest heroic head,  
Whose eyes behold through floated  
cloud and flame

The maiden face of fame  
Like April's in Valdelsa ; fair as flowers  
And patient as the hours ;

Sad with slow sense of time, and bright  
with faith

That levels life and death ;  
The final fame, that with a foot sub-  
lime

Treads down reluctant time ;  
The fame that waits and watches and i-  
wise,

A virgin with chaste eyes,  
A goddess who takes hands with great  
men's grief ;

Praise her, and him, our chief.  
Praise him, O Siena, and thou her deep  
green spring,

O Fonte Branda, sing :  
Shout from the red clefts of thy fiery  
crags,

Shake out thy flying flags  
In the long wind that streams from hill  
to hill ;

Bid thy full music fill  
The desolate red waste of sunset air  
And fields the old time saw fair,

But now the hours ring void through  
ruined lands,

Wild work of mortal hands ;  
Yet through thy dead Maremma let his  
name

Take flight and pass in flame,  
And the red ruin of disastrous hours  
Shall quicken into flowers.

Praise him, O fiery child of sun and sea  
Naples, who bade thee be ;  
For till he sent the swords that scourged  
and save,

Thou wast not, but thy grave.  
But more than all these praise him and  
give thanks,

Thou, from thy Tiber's banks,

From all thine hills and from thy supreme dome, —

Praise him, O risen Rome!

Let all thy children cities at thy knee

Lift up their voice with thee,

Saying, "For thy love's sake and our perished grief

We laud thee, O our chief!"

Saying, "For thine hand and help when hope was dead

We thank thee, O our head!"

Saying, "For thy voice and face within our sight

We bless thee, O our light;

For waters cleansing us from days defiled

We praise thee, O our child!"

So with an hundred cities' mouths in one

Praising thy supreme son,

Son of thy sorrow, O mother, O maid and mother,

Our queen, who serve none other,

Our lady of pity and mercy, and full of grace,

Turn elsewhere thy face,

Turn for a little and look what things are these

Now fallen before thy knees;

Turn upon them thine eyes who hated thee,

Behold what things they be,

Itaia: these are stubble that were steel,

Dust, or a turning wheel;

As leaves, as snow, as sand, that were so strong;

And howl, for all their song,

And wail, for all their wisdom; they that were

So great, they are all stript bare;

They are all made empty of beauty, and all abhorred,

They are shivered, and 'heir sword;

They are slain who slew, they are heartless who were wise,

Yea, turn on these thine eyes,

O thou, soliciting with soul sublime  
The obscure soul of time,

Thou, with the wounds thy holy body bears

From broken swords of theirs,

Thou, with the sweet swoln eyelids that have bled

Tears for thy thousands dead,

And upon these, whose swords drank up like dew

The sons of thine they slew,

These, whose each gun blasted with murdering mouth

Live flowers of thy fair south,

These, whose least evil told in alien ears  
Turned men's whole blood to tears,

These, whose least sin remembered for pure shame

Turned all those tears to flame,

Even upon these, when breaks the extreme blow

And all the world cries woe,

When heaven reluctant rains long-suffering fire

On these and their desire,

When his wind shakes them and his waters whelm

Who rent thy robe and realm,

When they that poured thy dear blood forth as wine

Pour forth their own for thine,

On these, on these have mercy; not in hate,

But full of sacred fate,

Strong from the shrine and splendid from the god,

Smite, with no second rod.

Because they spared not, do thou rather spare:

Be not one thing they were.

Let not one tongue of theirs who hate thee say

That thou wast even as they.

Because their hands were bloody, be thine white;

Show light where they shed night:

Because they are foul, be thou the rather pure;

Because they are feeble, endure;

Because they had no pity, have thou pity.

And thou, O supreme city,

O priestless Rome that shalt be, take in trust

Their names, their deeds, their dust,

Who held life less than thou wert; be the least

To thee indeed a priest,

Priest and burnt-offering and blood-  
sacrifice

Given without prayer or price,  
A holier immolation than men wist,  
A costlier eucharist,  
A sacrament more saving; bend thine  
head

Above these many dead  
Once, and salute with thine eternal eyes  
Their lowest head that lies.

Speak from thy lips of immemorial  
speech

If but one word for each.  
Kiss but one kiss on each thy dead son's  
mouth

Fallen dumb or north or south;  
And laying but once thine hand on brow  
and breast,

Bless them, through whom thou art  
blest.

And saying in ears of these thy dead  
"Well done,"

Shall they not hear, "O son?"  
And bowing thy face to theirs made  
pale for thee,

Shall the shut eyes not see?  
Yea, through the hollow-hearted world  
of death,

As light, as blood, as breath,  
Shall there not flash and flow the fiery  
sense,

The pulse of prescience?  
Shall not these know as in times over-  
past

Thee loftiest to the last?  
For times and wars shall change, king-  
doms and creeds,

And dreams of men, and deeds;  
Earth shall grow gray with all her golden  
things,

Pale peoples and hoar kings;  
But though her thrones and towers of  
nations fall,

Death has no part in all;  
In the air, nor in the imperishable sea,  
Nor heaven, nor truth, nor thee.

Yea, let all sceptre-stricken nations lie,  
But live thou though they die;  
Let their flags fade as flowers that storm  
can mar,

But thine be like a star;  
Let England's, if it float not for men free,  
Fall, and forget the sea;

Let France's, if it shadow a hateful  
head,

Drop as a leaf drops dead;  
Thine let what storm soever smite the  
rest

Smite as it seems him best;  
Thine let the wind that can, by sea or  
land,

Wrest from thy banner-hand.  
Die they in whom dies freedom, die and  
cease,

Though the world weep for these;  
Live thou, and love and lift when these  
lie dead

The green and white and red.

O our Republic that shalt bind in bands  
The kingdomless far lands,  
And link the chainless ages; thou that  
wast

With England ere she past  
Among the faded nations, and shalt be  
Again, when sea to sea  
Calls through the wind and light of  
morning time,

And throneless clime to clime  
Makes antiphonal answer; thou that art  
Where one man's perfect heart  
Burns, one man's brow is brightened for  
thy sake,

Thine, strong to make or break;  
O fair Republic hallowing with stretched  
hands

The limitless free lands,  
When all men's heads for love, not fear,  
low down

To thy sole royal crown,  
As thou to freedom; when man's life  
smells sweet,

And at thy bright swift feet  
A bloodless and a bondless world is  
laid;

Then, when thy men are made,  
Let these indeed as we in dreams be-  
hold

One chosen of all thy fold,  
One of all fair things fairest, one exalt  
Above all fear or fault,

One unforgetful of unhappier men  
And us who loved her then;  
With eyes that outlook suns and dream  
on graves;

With voice like quiring waves;

With heart the holier for their memo-  
ries' sake  
Who slept that she might wake ;  
With breast the sweeter for that sweet  
blood lost,  
And all the milkless cost ;  
Lady of earth, whose large equality  
Bends but to her and thee ;  
Equal with heaven, and infinite of years,  
And splendid from quenched tears ;  
Strong with old strength of great things  
fallen and fled,  
Diviner for her dead ;  
Chaste of all stains and perfect from all  
scars,  
Above all storms and stars,  
All winds that blow through time, all  
waves that foam, —  
Our Capitolian Rome.

## THALASSIUS.

UPON the flowery forefront of the  
year,  
One wandering by the gray-green April  
sea  
Found on a reach of shingle and shal-  
lower sand,  
Inlaid with starrier glimmering jewel-  
lery  
Left for the sun's love and the light  
wind's cheer  
Along the foam-flowered strand,  
Breeze-brightened, something nearer  
sea than land  
Though the last shoreward blossom-  
fringe was near,  
A babe asleep, with flower-soft face that  
gleamed  
To sun and seaward as it laughed and  
dreamed,  
Too sure of either love for either's  
fear,  
Albeit so birdlike slight and light, it  
seemed  
Nor man, nor mortal child of man, but  
fair  
As even its twin-born tenderer spray-  
flowers were,  
That the wind scatters like an Oread's  
hair.

For when July strewed fire on earth  
and sea  
The last time ere that year,  
Out of the flame of morn Cymothoë  
Beheld one brighter than the sun-bright  
sphere  
Move toward her from its fieriest heart,  
whence trod  
The live sun's very god,  
Across the foam-bright water-ways that  
are  
As heavenlier heavens, with star for  
answering star ;  
And on her eyes and hair and maiden  
mouth  
Felt a kiss falling fierier than the South,  
And heard above afar  
A noise of songs and wind-enamoured  
wings,  
And lutes and lyres of milder and  
mightier strings,  
And round the resonant radiance of his  
car  
Where depth is one with height,  
Light heard as music, music seen as  
light ;  
And with that second moondawn of the  
spring's  
That fosters the first rose,  
A sun-child whiter than the sunlit  
snows  
Was born out of the world of sunless  
things  
That round the round earth flows and  
ebbs and flows.

But he that found the sea-flower by  
the sea,  
And took to foster like a graft of earth,  
Was born of man's most highest and  
heavenliest birth,  
Free-born as winds and stars and waves  
are free ;  
A warrior gray with glories more than  
years,  
Though more of years than change the  
quick to dead  
Had rained their light and darkness on  
his head ;  
A singer that in time's and memory's  
ears  
Should leave such words to sing as all  
his peers

Might praise with hallowing heat of  
rapturous tears,  
Till all the days of human flight were  
fled.

And at his knees his fosterling was fed,  
Not with man's wine and bread,  
Nor mortal mother-milk of hopes and  
fears,

But food of deep memorial days long  
sped;

For bread with wisdom, and with song  
for wine,

Clear as the full calm's emerald hyaline.  
And from his grave glad lips the boy  
would gather

Fine honey of song-notes, goldener than  
gold,

More sweet than bees make of the  
breathing heather,

That he, as glad and bold,  
Might drink as they, and keep his spirit  
from cold.

And the boy loved his laurel-laden hair  
As his own father's risen on the eastern  
air,

And that less white brow-binding bay-  
leaf bloom,

More than all flowers his father's eyes  
relume;

And those high songs he heard,  
More than all notes of any landward  
bird,

More than all sounds less free  
Than the wind's quiring to the choral  
sea.

High things the high song taught  
him: how the breath,

Too frail for life, may be more strong  
than death;

And this poor flash of sense in life, that  
gleams

As a ghost's glory in dreams,  
More stabile than the world's own  
heart's root seems,

By that strong faith of lordliest love,  
which gives

To death's own sightless-seeming eyes  
a light

Clearer, to death's bare bones a verier  
might,

Than shines or strikes from any man  
that lives;

How he that loves life overmuch shall  
die

The dog's death, utterly;  
And he that much less loves it than he  
hates

All wrong-doing that is done,  
Anywhere always underneath the sun,  
Shall live a mightier life than time's or  
fate's.

One fairer thing he showed him, and  
in might

More strong than day and night,  
Whose strengths build up time's tower-  
ing period;

Yea, one thing stronger and more high  
than God,

Which, if man had not, then should God  
not be:

And that was Liberty.  
And gladly should man die to gain, he  
said,

Freedom; and gladlier, having lost, lie  
dead.

For man's earth was not, nor the sweet  
sea-waves

His, nor his own land, nor its very  
graves,

Except they bred not, bore not, hid not  
slaves:

But all of all that is,  
Were one man free in body and soul,  
were his.

And the song softened, even as  
heaven by night

Softens, from sunnier down to starrier  
light,

And with its moon-bright breath  
Blessed life for death's sake, and for  
life's sake death;

Till as the moon's own beam and breath  
confuse,

In one clear hueless haze of glimmering  
hues,

The sea's line, and the land's line, and  
the sky's,

And light for love of darkness almost  
dies,

As darkness only lives for light's dear  
love,

Whose hands the robe of night is woven  
of:

So in that heaven of wondrous words  
 were life  
 And death brought out of strife;  
 Yea, by that strong spell of serene in-  
 crease,  
 Brought out of strife to peace.

And the song lightened, as the wind  
 at morn  
 Flashes, and even with lightning of the  
 wind  
 Night's thick-spun web is thinned,  
 And all its weft unwoven and over-  
 worn  
 Shrinks, as might love from scorn.  
 And as when wind and light, on water  
 and land,  
 Leap as twin gods from heavenward  
 hand in hand,  
 And with the sound and splendor of  
 their leap  
 Strike darkness dead, and daunt the  
 spirit of sleep,  
 And burn it up with fire;  
 So with the light that lightened from  
 the lyre,  
 Was all the bright heat in the child's  
 heart stirred,  
 And blown with blasts of music into  
 flame,  
 Till even his sense became  
 Fire, as the sense that fires the singing  
 bird,  
 Whose song calls night by name.  
 And in the soul within the sense began  
 The manlike passion of a godlike man,  
 And in the sense within the soul again  
 Thoughts that make men of gods, and  
 gods of men.

For love the high song taught him, —  
 love that turns  
 God's heart toward man as man's to  
 Godward; love  
 That life and death and life are fash-  
 ioned of,  
 From the first breath that burns  
 Half-kindled on the flower-like yearn-  
 ing's lip  
 So light and faint that life seems like  
 to slip,

To that yet weaklier drawn  
 When sunset dies of night's devouring  
 dawn;  
 But the man dying not wholly as all  
 men dies  
 If aught be left of his in live men's eyes  
 Out of the dawnless dark of death to  
 rise;  
 If aught of deed or word  
 Be seen for all time, or of all time  
 heard.  
 Love, that though body and soul were  
 overthrown,  
 Should live for love's sake of itself  
 alone,  
 Though spirit and flesh were one thing  
 doomed and dead,  
 Not wholly annihilated.  
 Seeing even the hoariest ash-flake that  
 the pyre  
 Drops, and forgets the thing was once  
 afire,  
 And gave its heart to feed the pile's full  
 flame  
 Till its own heart its own heat over-  
 came,  
 Outlives its own life, though by scarce  
 a span,  
 As such men dying outlive themselves  
 in man,  
 Outlive themselves forever; if the heat  
 Outburn the heart that kindled it, the  
 sweet  
 Outlast the flower whose soul it was,  
 and flit  
 Forth of the body of it  
 Into some new shape of a strange per-  
 fume  
 More potent than its light live spirit of  
 bloom, —  
 How shall not something of that soul  
 re-live,  
 That only soul that had such gifts to  
 give  
 As lighten something even of all men's  
 doom,  
 Even from the laboring womb,  
 Even to the seal set on the unopening  
 tomb?  
 And these the loving light of song and  
 love  
 Shall wrap and lap round, and impend  
 above,

Imperishable; and all springs born il-  
lume  
Their sleep with brighter thoughts than  
wake the dove  
To music, when the hillside winds re-  
sume  
The marriage-song of heather-flower  
and broom  
And all the joy thereof.

And hate the song, too, taught him, —  
hate of all  
That brings or holds in thrall  
Of spirit or flesh, free-born ere God be-  
gan,  
The holy body and sacred soul of man.  
And wheresoever a curse was, or a  
chain,  
A throne for torment or a crown for  
bane  
Rose, moulded out of poor men's molten  
pain,  
There, said he, should man's heaviest  
hate be set  
Inexorably, to faint not or forget  
Till the last warmth bled forth of the  
last vein  
In flesh that none should call a king's  
again,  
Seeing wolves and dogs and birds that  
plague-strike air  
Leave the last bone of all the carrion  
bare.

And hope the high song taught him,  
— hope whose eyes  
Can sound the seas unsoundable, the  
skies  
Inaccessible of eyesight; that can see  
What earth beholds not, hear what wind  
and sea  
Hear not, and speak what all these cry-  
ing in one  
Can speak not to the sun.  
For in her sovereign eyelight all things  
are  
Clear as the closest seen and kindlier  
star  
That marries morn and even and win-  
ter and spring  
With one love's golden ring.

For she can see the days of man, the  
birth  
Of good, and death of evil things on  
earth  
Inevitable and infinite, and sure  
As present pain is, or herself is pure.  
Yea, she can hear and see, beyond all  
things  
That lighten from before Time's thun-  
derous wings  
Through the awful circle of wheel-  
winged periods,  
The tempest of the twilight of all  
gods;  
And, higher than all the circling course  
they ran,  
The sundawn of the spirit that was  
man.

And fear the song, too, taught him, —  
fear to be  
Worthless the dear love of the wind  
and sea  
That bred him fearless, like a sea-mew  
reared  
In rocks of man's foot feared,  
Where naught of wingless life may sing  
or shine.  
Fear to wax worthless of that heaven  
he had  
When all the life in all his limbs was  
glad,  
And all the drops in all his veins were  
wine,  
And all the pulses music; when his  
heart,  
Singing, bade heaven and wind and sea  
bear part  
In one live song's reiteration, and they  
bore:  
Fear to go crownless of the flower he  
wore  
When the winds loved him, and the  
waters knew  
The blithest life that clove their blithe  
life through  
With living limbs exultant, or held  
strife  
More amorous than all dalliance aye  
anew  
With the bright breath and strength of  
their large life,



With all strong wrath of all sheer  
winds that blew,  
All glories of all storms of the air that  
fell  
Prone, ineluctable,  
With roar from heaven of revel, and  
with hue  
As of a heaven turned hell.  
For when the red blast of their breath  
had made  
All heaven aflush with light more dire  
than shade,  
He felt it in his blood and eyes and  
hair  
Burn as if all the fires of the earth and  
air  
Had laid strong hold upon his flesh,  
and stung  
The soul behind it as with serpent's  
tongue,  
Forked like the loveliest lightnings:  
nor could bear  
But hardly, half distraught with strong  
delight,  
The joy that like a garment wrapped  
him round,  
And lapped him over and under  
With raiment of great light,  
And rapture of great sound  
At every loud leap earthward of the  
thunder  
From heaven's most furthest bound :  
So seemed all heaven in hearing and in  
sight,  
Alive and mad with glory and angry  
joy,  
That something of its marvellous mirth  
and might  
Moved even to madness, fledged as even  
for flight,  
The blood and spirit of one but mortal  
boy.

So, clothed with love, and fear that  
love makes great,  
And armed with hope and hate,  
He set first foot upon the spring-flow-  
ered ways  
That all feet pass and praise.  
And one dim dawn between the winter  
and spring,  
In the sharp harsh wind harrying heaven  
and earth

To put back April that had borne his  
birth  
From sunward on her sunniest shower-  
struck wing,  
With tears and laughter for the dew-  
dropt thing,  
Slight as indeed a dewdrop, by the sea  
One met him lovelier than all men may  
be,  
God-featured, with god's eyes; and in  
their might  
Somewhat that drew men's own to mar  
their sight,  
Even of all eyes drawn toward him;  
and his mouth  
Was as the very rose of all men's youth,  
One rose of all the rose-beds in the world:  
But round his brows the curls were  
snakes that curled,  
And like his tongue a serpent's; and his  
voice  
Speaks death, and bids rejoice.  
Yet then he spake no word, seeming as  
dumb,  
A dumb thing mild and hurtless; nor  
at first  
From his bowed eyes seemed any light  
to come,  
Nor his meek lips for blood or tears to  
thirst:  
But as one blind and mute in mild,  
sweet wise,  
Pleading for pity of piteous lips and  
eyes,  
He strayed with faint, bare, lily-lovely  
feet,  
Helpless, and flower-like sweet :  
Nor might man see, not having word  
hereof,  
That this of all gods was the great god  
Love.

And seeing him lovely and like a  
little child  
That well-nigh wept for wonder that it  
smiled,  
And was so feeble and fearful, with soft  
speech  
The youth bespake him softly; but  
there fell  
From the sweet lips no sweet word  
audible  
That ear or thought might reach;

No sound to make the dim cold silence  
 glad,  
 No breath to thaw the hard harsh air  
 with heat;  
 Only the saddest smile of all things  
 sweet,  
 Only the sweetest smile of all things  
 sad.

And so they went together one green  
 way  
 Till April dying made free the world  
 for May;  
 And on his guide suddenly Love's face  
 turned,  
 And in his blind eyes burned  
 Hard light and heat of laughter; and  
 like flame  
 That opens in a mountain's ravening  
 mouth  
 To blear and sear the sunlight from the  
 south,  
 His mute mouth opened, and his first  
 word came:  
 "Knowest thou me now by name?"  
 And all his stature waxed immeasur-  
 able,  
 As of one shadowing heaven and light-  
 ening hell;  
 And stater stood he than a tower that  
 stands  
 And darkens with its darkness far-off  
 sands  
 Whereon the sky leans red;  
 And with a voice that stilled the winds  
 he said,—  
 "I am he that was thy lord before thy  
 birth,  
 I am he that is thy lord till thou turn  
 earth:  
 I make the night more dark, and all the  
 morrow  
 Dark as the night whose darkness was  
 my breath:  
 O fool, my name is Sorrow:  
 Thou fool, my name is Death."

And he that heard spake not, and  
 looked right on  
 Again, and Love was gone.

Through many a night, toward many  
 a wearier day,

His spirit bore his body down its way.  
 Through many a day, toward many a  
 wearier night,  
 His soul sustained his sorrows in her  
 sight.  
 And earth was bitter, and heaven, and  
 even the sea,  
 Sorrowful even as he.  
 And the wind helped not, and the sun  
 was dumb;  
 And with too long strong stress of grief  
 to be,  
 His heart grew sear and numb.

And one bright eve ere summer in  
 autumn sank,  
 At star-dawn standing on a gray sea-  
 bank  
 He felt the wind fitfully shift and  
 heave  
 As toward a stormier eve;  
 And all the wan wide sea shuddered;  
 and earth  
 Shook underfoot, as toward some time-  
 less birth,  
 Intolerable and inevitable; and all  
 Heaven, darkling, trembled like a  
 stricken thrall;  
 And far out of the quivering east, and  
 far  
 From past the moonrise and its guiding  
 star,  
 Began a noise of tempest, and a light  
 That was not of the lightning; and a  
 sound  
 Rang with it round and round,  
 That was not of the thunder; and a  
 flight  
 As of blown clouds by night,  
 That was not of them; and with songs  
 and cries  
 That sang and shrieked their soul out  
 at the skies,  
 A shapeless earthly storm of shapes  
 began  
 From all ways round to move in on the  
 man,  
 Clamorous against him silent; and their  
 feet  
 Were as the winds are fleet,  
 And their shrill songs were as wild  
 birds' are sweet.

And as when all the world of earth  
 was wronged,  
 And all the host of all men driven  
 afoam  
 By the red hand of Rome,  
 Round some fierce amphitheatre over  
 thronged  
 With fair clear faces full of bloodier  
 lust  
 Than swells and stings the tiger when  
 his mood  
 Is fieriest after blood,  
 And drunk with trampling of the mur-  
 derous must  
 That soaks and stains the tortuous  
 close-coiled wood  
 Made monstrous with its myriad-mus-  
 tering brood,  
 Face by fair face panted and gleamed  
 and pressed,  
 And breast by passionate breast  
 Heaved hot with ravenous rapture, as  
 they quaffed  
 The red ripe full fume of the deep live  
 draught,  
 The sharp quick reek of keen fresh  
 bloodshed, blown  
 Through the dense deep drift up to the  
 emperor's throne  
 From the under steaming sands,  
 With clamor of all-applausive throats  
 and hands,  
 Mingling in mirthful time  
 With shrill, blithe mockeries of the  
 lithe-limbed mime;  
 So from somewhence far forth of the  
 un beholden,  
 Dreadfully driven from over and after  
 and under,  
 Fierce, blown through fifes of brazen  
 blast and golden,  
 With sound of chiming waves that  
 drown the thunder,  
 Or thund' r that strikes dumb the sea's  
 own chimes,  
 Began the bellowing of the bull-voiced  
 mimes,  
 Terrible; firs bowed down as briers or  
 palms  
 Even at the breathless blast as of a  
 breeze  
 Fulfilled with clamor and clangor and  
 storms of psalms;

Red hands rent up the roots of old  
 world trees,  
 Thick flames of torches tossed as  
 tumbling seas  
 Made mad the moonless and infuriate  
 air  
 That, ravening, revelled in the riotous  
 hair  
 And raiment of the furred Bassarides.

So came all those in on him; and his  
 heart,  
 As out of sleep suddenly struck a-start,  
 Danced, and his flesh took fire of theirs,  
 and grief  
 Was as a last year's leaf  
 Blown dead far down the wind's way;  
 and he set  
 His pale mouth to the brightest mouth  
 it met  
 That laughed for love against his lips,  
 and bade  
 Follow; and in following, all his blood  
 grew glad  
 And as again a seabird's; for the wind  
 Took him to bathe him deep round  
 breast and brow;  
 Not as it takes a dead leaf drained and  
 thinned,  
 But as the brightest bay-flower blown  
 on bough,  
 Set springing toward it singing: and  
 they rode  
 By many a vine-leafed, many a rose-  
 hung road,  
 Exalt with exaltation; many a night  
 Set all its stars upon them as for spies  
 On many a moon-bewildering mountain  
 height  
 Where he rode only by the fierier light  
 Of his dread lady's hot, sweet hunger-  
 ing eyes.  
 For the moon wandered witless of her  
 way,  
 Spell-stricken by strong magic in such  
 wise  
 As wizards use to set the stars astray.  
 And in his ears the music that makes  
 mad  
 Beat always; and what way them usic  
 bade,  
 That alway rode he; nor was any sleep  
 His, nor from height nor deep.

But heaven was as red iron, slumber-  
less,  
And had no heart to bless ;  
And earth lay sear and darkling as dis-  
traught,  
And help in her was naught.

Then many a midnight, many a morn  
and even,  
His mother, passing forth of her fair  
heaven,  
With goodlier gifts than all save gods  
can give  
From earth or from the heaven where  
sea-things live,  
With shine of sea-flowers through the  
bay-leaf braid  
Woven for a crown her foam-white  
hands had made  
To crown him with land's laurel and  
sea-dew,  
Sought the sea-bird that was her boy :  
but he  
Sat panther-throned beside Erigone,  
Riding the red ways of the revel  
through  
Midmost of pale-mouthed passion's  
crownless crew.  
Till on some winter's dawn of some  
dim year  
He let the vine-bit on the panther's lip  
Slide, and the green rein slip,  
And set his eyes to seaward, nor gave  
ear  
If sound from landward hailed him,  
dire or dear ;  
And passing forth of all those fair  
fierce ranks  
Back to the gray sea-banks,  
Against a sea-rock lying, aslant the  
steep,  
Fell after many sleepless dreams on  
sleep.

And in his sleep the dun green light  
was shed  
Heavily round his head  
That through the vale of sea falls fath-  
om-deep,  
Blurred like a lamp's that when the  
night drops dead  
Dies ; and his eyes gat grace of sleep  
to see

The deep divine dark day-shine of the  
sea,  
Dense water-walls and clear dusk water-  
ways,  
Broad-based, or branching as a sea-  
flower sprays  
That side or this dividing ; and anew  
The glory of all her glories that he  
knew.  
And in sharp rapture of recovering  
tears  
He woke on fire with yearnings of old  
years,  
Pure as one purged of pain that pas-  
sion bore,  
Ill child of bitter mother ; for his own  
Looked laughing toward him from her  
mid-sea throne,  
Up toward him there ashore.

Thence in his heart the great same  
joy began,  
Of child that made him man  
And, turned again from all hearts else  
on quest,  
He communed with his own heart, and  
had rest.  
And like the sea-winds upon loud  
waters ran  
His days and dreams together, till the  
joy  
Burned in him of the boy ;  
Till the earth's great comfort and the  
sweet sea's breath  
Breathed and blew life in where was  
heartless death, —  
Death spirit-stricken of soul-sick days,  
where strife  
Of thought and flesh made mock of  
death and life.  
And grace returned upon him of his  
birth  
Where heaven was mixed with heaven-  
like sea and earth ;  
And song shot forth strong wings that  
took the sun  
From inward, fledged with might of  
sorrow and mirth,  
And father's fire made mortal in his son.  
Nor was not spirit of strength in blast  
and breeze  
To exalt again the sun's child and the  
sea's ;

For, as wild mares in Thessaly grow  
 great  
 With child of ravishing winds, that vio-  
 late  
 Their leaping length of limb with  
 manes like fire,  
 And eyes outburning heaven's  
 With fires more violent than the light-  
 ning levin's,  
 And breath drained out and desperate  
 of desire,  
 Even so the spirit in him, when winds  
 grew strong,  
 Grew great with child of song.  
 Nor less than when his veins first leapt  
 for joy  
 To draw delight in such as burns a boy,  
 Now, too, the soul of all his senses felt  
 The passionate pride of deep sea-pulses  
 dealt  
 Through nerve and jubilant vein  
 As from the love and largess of old  
 time ;  
 And with his heart again  
 The tidal throb of all the tides keep  
 rhyme,  
 And charm him from his own soul's  
 separate sense  
 With infinite and invasive influence,  
 That made strength sweet in him, and  
 sweetness strong,  
 Being now no more a singer, but a song.

Till one clear day, when brighter sea-  
 wind blew,  
 And louder sea-shine lightened, for the  
 waves  
 Were full of godhead and the light that  
 saves,  
 His father's and their spirit had pierced  
 him through,  
 He felt strange breath and light all  
 round him shed  
 That bowed him down with rapture ;  
 and he knew  
 His father's hand, hallowing his hum-  
 bled head,  
 And the old great voice of the old good  
 time, that said :

"Child of my sunlight, and the sea,  
 from birth  
 A fosterling and fugitive on earth ;

Sleepless of soul as wind or wave or  
 fire,  
 A man-child with an ungrown god's  
 desire ;  
 Because thou hast loved not mortal  
 more than me,  
 Thy father, and thy mother-hearted  
 sea ;  
 Because thou hast set thine heart to  
 sing, and sold  
 Life and life's love for song, God's liv-  
 ing gold ;  
 Because thou hast given thy flower and  
 fire of youth  
 To feed men's hearts with visions truer  
 than truth ;  
 Because thou hast kept in those world-  
 wandering eyes  
 The light that makes me music of the  
 skies ;  
 Because thou hast heard, with world-  
 unwearied ears,  
 The music that puts light into the  
 spheres,—  
 Have therefore in thine heart and in  
 thy mouth  
 The sound of song that mingles north  
 and south,  
 The song of all the winds that sing of  
 me,  
 And in thy soul the sense of all the  
 sea."

## HERSE.

WHEN grace is given us ever to behold  
 A child some sweet months old,  
 Love, laying across our lips his finger,  
 saith,  
 Smiling, with bated breath,  
 Hush ! for the holiest thing that lives is  
 here,  
 And heaven's own heart how near !  
 How dare we, that may gaze not on the  
 sun,  
 Gaze on this verier one ?  
 Heart, hold thy peace ; eyes, be cast  
 down for shame ;  
 Lips, breathe not yet its name.  
 In heaven they know what name to call  
 it : we,  
 How should we know ? For, see !

The adorable sweet living marvelous

Strange light that lightens us  
Who gaze, desertless of such glorious  
grace,

Full in a babe's warm face!  
All roses that the morning rears are  
naught,

All stars not worth a thought,  
Set this one star against them, or sup-  
pose

As rival this one rose.  
What price could pay with earth's  
whole weight of gold

One least flushed roseleaf's fold  
Of all this dimpling store of smiles that  
shine

From each warm curve and line,  
Each charm of flower-sweet flesh, to  
re-illuminate

The dappled rose-red bloom  
Of all its dainty body, honey-sweet  
Clenched hands and curled-up feet,

That on the roses of the dawn have  
trod

As they came down from God,  
And keep the flush and colour that the  
sky

Takes when the sun comes nigh,  
And keep the likeness of the smile their  
grace

Evoked on God's own face  
When, seeing this work of his most  
heavenly mood,

He saw that it was good?  
For all its warm sweet body seems one  
smile,

And mere men's love too vile  
To meet it, or with eyes that worship  
dims

Read o'er the little limbs,  
Read all the book of all their beauties  
o'er,

Rejoice, revere, adore,  
Bow down and worship each delight in  
turn,

Laugh, wonder, yield, and yearn.  
But when our trembling kisses dare, yet  
dread,

Even to draw nigh its head,  
And touch, and scarce with touch or  
breath surprise

Its mild miraculous eyes

Out of their viewless vision — O, what  
then,

What may be said of men?  
What speech may name a new-born  
child? what word

Earth ever spake or heard?  
The best men's tongue that ever glory  
knew

Called that a drop of dew  
Which from the breathing creature's  
kindly womb

Came forth in blameless bloom.  
We have no word, as had those men  
most high,

To call a baby by.  
Rose, ruby, lily, pearl of stormless  
seas —

A better word than these,  
A better sign it was than flower or  
gem

That love revealed to them:  
They knew that whence comes light or  
quickenning flame,

Thence only this thing came,  
And only might be likened of our love  
To somewhat born above,

Not even to sweetest things dropped  
else on earth,  
Only to dew's own birth.

Nor doubt we but their sense was  
heavenly true,

Babe, when we gaze on you,  
A dew-drop out of heaven, whose colors  
are

More bright than sun or star,  
As now, ere watching love dare fear or  
hope,

Lips, hands, and eyelids ope,  
And all your life is mixed with earthly  
leaven.  
O child, what news from heaven?

#### EIGHT YEARS OLD.

I.

SUN, whom the faltering snow-cloud  
fears,

Rise, let the time of year be May,  
Speak now the word that April hears,  
Let March have all his royal way:

Bid a spring raise in winter's ears  
 All tunes her children hear or play,  
 Because the crown of eight glad years  
 On one bright head is set to-day.

## II.

What matters cloud or sun to-day  
 To him who wears the wreath of years  
 So many, and all like flowers at play  
 With wind and sunshine, while his ears  
 Hear only song on every way?  
 More sweet than spring triumphant  
 hears  
 Ring through the revel-rout of May  
 Are these, the notes that winter fears.

## III.

Strong-hearted winter knows and fears  
 The music made of love at play,  
 Or haply loves the tune he hears  
 From hearts fulfilled with flowering  
 May,  
 Whose molten music thaws his ears  
 Late frozen, deaf but yesterday  
 To sounds of dying and dawning years,  
 Now quickened on his deathward way.

## IV.

For deathward now lies winter's way  
 Down the green vestibule of years  
 That each year brightens day by day  
 With flower and shower till hope  
 scarce fears,  
 And fear grows wholly hope of May.  
 But we — the music in our ears  
 Made of love's pulses as they play,  
 The heart alone that makes it hears.

## V.

The heart it is that plays and hears  
 High salutation of to-day.  
 Tongue falters, hand shrinks back, song  
 fears  
 Its own unworthiness to play  
 Fit music for those eight sweet years,  
 Or sing their blithe accomplished  
 way.  
 No song quite worth a young child's  
 ears  
 Broke ever even from birds in May.

## VI.

There beats not in the heart of May,  
 When summer hopes and springtide  
 fears,  
 There falls not from the height of day,  
 When sunlight speaks and silence  
 hears,  
 So sweet a psalm as children play  
 And sing, each hour of all their years,  
 Each moment of their lovely way,  
 And know not how it thrills our ears.

## VII.

Ah! child, what are we, that our ears  
 Should hear you singing on your  
 way,  
 Should have this happiness? The  
 years  
 Whose hurrying wings about us play  
 Are not like yours, whose flower-time  
 fears  
 Naught worse than sunlit showers in  
 May,  
 Being sinless as the spring, that hears  
 Her own heart praise her every day.

## VIII.

Yet we, too, triumph in the day  
 That bare, to entrance our eyes and  
 ears,  
 To lighten daylight, and to play  
 Such notes as darkness knows and  
 fears,  
 The child whose face illumines our way,  
 Whose voice lifts up the heart that  
 hears,  
 Whose hand is as the hand of May  
 To bring us flowers from eight full  
 years.

FEB. 4, 1882.

## "NON DOLET"

IT does not hurt. She looked along the  
 knife  
 Smiling, and watched the thick drops  
 mix and run  
 Down the sheer blade: not that which  
 had been done  
 Could hurt the sweet sense of the  
 Roman wife,

But that which was to do yet ere the  
 strife  
 Could end for each forever, and the  
 sun :  
 Nor was the palm yet nor was peace  
 yet won  
 While pain had power upon her hus-  
 band's life.

It does not hurt, Italia. Thou art more  
 Than bride to bridegroom : how shalt  
 thou not take  
 The gift love's blood has reddened  
 for thy sake ?  
 Was not thy life-blood given for us  
 before ?  
 And if love's heart-blood can avail  
 thy need,  
 And thou not die, how should it hurt  
 indeed ?

LINES ON THE DEATH OF  
 EDWARD JOHN TRELAWNY.

LAST high star of the years whose  
 thunder  
 Still men's listening remembrance  
 hears,  
 Last light left of our fathers' years,  
 Watched with honour and hailed with  
 wonder,  
 Thee too, then, have the years borne  
 under,  
 Thou too, then, hast regained thy  
 peers.  
 Wings that warred with the winds of  
 morning,  
 Storm-winds rocking the red great  
 dawn,  
 Close at last, and a film is drawn  
 Over the eyes of the storm-bird, scorn-  
 ing  
 Now no longer the loud wind's warn-  
 ing,  
 Waves that threaten or waves that  
 fawn.

Peers were none of thee left us living,  
 Peers of theirs we shall see no more.  
 Eight years over the full fourscore

Knew thee : now shalt thou sleep, for  
 giving  
 All griefs past of the wild world's giv-  
 ing,  
 Moored at last on the stormless  
 shore.

World-wide liberty's lifelong lover,  
 Lover no less of the strength of  
 song,  
 Sea-king, swordsman, hater of wrong.  
 Over thy dust that the dust shall cover  
 Comes my song as a bird to hover,  
 Borne of its will as of wings along.

Cherished of thee were this brief song's  
 brothers  
 Now that follows them, cherishing  
 thee.  
 Over the tides and the tideless sea,  
 Soft as a smile of the earth our  
 mother's,  
 Flies it faster than all those others,  
 First of the troop at thy tomb to  
 be.

Memories of Greece, and the mountain's  
 hollow  
 Guarded alone of thy loyal sword,  
 Hold thy name for our hearts in  
 ward :  
 Yet more fain are our hearts to fol-  
 low  
 One way now with the southward swal-  
 low  
 Back to the grave of the man their  
 lord.

Heart of hearts, art thou moved not,  
 hearing  
 Surely, if hearts of the dead may  
 hear,  
 Whose true heart it is now draws  
 near ?  
 Surely the sense of it thrills thee, cheer-  
 ing  
 Darkness and death with the news now  
 nearing, —  
 Shelley, Trelawny rejoins thee here.



## OFF SHORE.

WHEN the might of the summer  
Is most on the sea;  
When the days overcome her  
With joy but to be,  
With rapture of royal enchantment, and  
sorcery that sets her not free, —

But for hours upon hours  
As a thrall she remains  
Spell-bound as with flowers,  
And content in their chains,  
And her loud steeds fret not, and lift not  
a lock of their deep white manes;

Then only, far under  
In the depths of her hold,  
Some gleam of its wonder  
Man's eye may behold,  
Its wild weed forests of crimson and  
russet and olive and gold.

Still deeper and dimmer  
And goodlier they glow  
For the eyes of the swimmer  
Who scans them below  
As he crosses the zone of their flower-  
age that knows not of sunshine  
and snow.

Soft blossomless frondage  
And foliage that gleams  
As to prisoners in bondage  
The light of their dreams,  
The desire of a dawn unbeholden, with  
hope on the wings of its beams.

Not as prisoners entombed,  
Waxen haggard and wizen,  
But consoled and illumed  
In the depths of their prison  
With delight of the light everlasting,  
and vision of dawn on them  
risen, —

From the banks and the beds  
Of the waters divine,  
They lift up their heads,  
And the flowers of them shine  
Through the splendor of darkness that  
clothes them, of water that glim-  
mers like wine.

Bright bank over bank  
Making glorious the gloom,  
Soft rank upon rank,  
Strange bloom after bloom,  
They kindie the liquid low twilight, the  
dusk of the dim sea's womb.

Through the subtle and tangible  
Gloom without form,  
Their branches, infrangible  
Even of storm,  
Spread softer their sprays than the  
shoots of the woodland when  
April is warm.

As the flight of the thunder, full  
Charged with its word,  
Dividing the wonderful  
Depths like a bird,  
Speaks wrath and delight to the heart  
of the night that exults to have  
heard, —

So swiftly, though soundless  
In silence's ear,  
Light, winged from the boundless  
Blue depths full of cheer,  
Speaks joy to the heart of the waters  
that part not before him, but hear.

Light perfect and visible,  
Godhead of God,  
God indivisible,  
Lifts but his rod,  
And the shadows are scattered in sun-  
der, and darkness is light at his  
nod.

At the touch of his wand,  
At the nod of his head  
From the spaces beyond  
Where the dawn hath her bed,  
Earth, water, and air are transfigured,  
and rise as one risen from the  
dead.

He puts forth his hand,  
And the mountains are thrilled  
To the heart, as they stand  
In his presence, fulfilled  
With his glory that utters his grace  
upon earth, and her sorrows are  
stilled.

The moan of her travail  
That groans for the light  
Till dayspring unravel  
The west of the night,  
At the sound of the strings of the  
music of morning, falls dumb  
with delight.

He gives forth his word,  
And the word that he saith,  
Ere well it be heard,  
Strikes darkness to death;  
For the thought of his heart is the sun-  
rise, and dawn as the sound of  
his breath.

And the strength of its pulses,  
That passion makes proud,  
Confounds and convulses  
The depths of the cloud  
Of the darkness that heaven was ingirt  
with, divided and rent as a  
shroud, —

As the veil of the shrine  
Of the temple of old,  
When darkness divine  
Over noonday was rolled;  
So the heart of the night by the pulse  
of the light is convulsed and  
controlled.

And the sea's heart, groaning  
For glories withdrawn,  
And the waves' mouths, moaning  
All night for the dawn,  
Are uplift as the hearts and the mouths  
of the singers onlea-side and lawn.

And the sound of the quiring  
Of all these as one,  
Desired and desiring  
Till dawn's will be done,  
Fills full with delight of them heaven  
till it burns as the heart of the  
sun;

Till the waves, too, inherit,  
And waters take part  
In the sense of the spirit  
That breathes from his heart,  
And are kindled with music, as fire when  
the lips of the morning part, —

With music unheard  
In the light of her lips,  
In the life-giving word  
Of the dewfall that drips  
On the grasses of earth, and the wind  
that enkindles the wings of the  
ships.

White glories of wings  
As of seafaring birds,  
That flock from the springs  
Of the sunrise in herds,  
With the wind for a herdsman, and  
hasten or halt at the change of  
his words;

As the watchwords change,  
When the wind's note shifts,  
And the skies grow strange,  
And the white squall drifts  
Up sharp from the sea-line, vexing the  
sea till the low cloud lifts.

At the charge of his word  
Bidding pause, bidding haste,  
When the ranks are stirred  
And the lines displaced,  
They scatter as wild swans, parting  
adrift on the wan green waste.

At the hush of his word,  
In a pause of his breath  
When the waters have heard  
His will that he saith,  
They stand as a flock penned close in  
its fold for division of death.

As a flock by division  
Of death to be thinned,  
As the shades in a vision  
Of spirits that sinned;  
So glimmer their shrouds and their  
sheetings as clouds on the stream  
of the wind.

But the sun stands fast,  
And the sea burns bright,  
And the flight of them past  
Is no more than the flight  
Of the snow-soft swarm of serene wings  
poised and afloat in the light.

Like flowers upon flowers,  
 In a festival way,  
 When hours after hours  
 Shed grace on the day,  
 White blossom-like butterflies hover  
 and glean through the snows of  
 the spray.

Like snow-colored petals  
 Of blossoms that flee  
 From storm that unsettles  
 The flowers as the tree,  
 They flutter, a legion of flowers on the  
 wing, through the field of the sea.

Through the furrowless field  
 Where the foam-blossoms blow,  
 And the secrets are sealed  
 Of their harvest below,  
 They float in the path of the sunbeams,  
 as flakes or as blossoms of snow.

Till the sea's ways darken,  
 And the god, withdrawn,  
 Give ear not, or hearken  
 If prayer on him fawn,  
 And the sun's self seem but a shadow,  
 the noon as a ghost of the dawn.

No shadow, but rather,  
 God, father of song,  
 Shew grace to me, Father  
 God, loved of me long,  
 That I lose not the light of thy face,  
 that my trust in thee work me  
 not wrong, —

While yet I make forward  
 With face toward thee,  
 Not turned yet in shoreward,  
 Be thine upon me;  
 Be thy light on my forehead, or ever I  
 turn it again from the sea.

As a kiss on my brow  
 Be the light of thy grace,  
 Be thy glance on me now  
 From the pride of thy place:  
 As the sign of a sire to a son, be the  
 light on my face of thy face.

Thou wast father of olden  
 Times hailed and adored.

And the sense of thy golden  
 Great harp's monochord  
 Was the joy in the soul of the singers  
 that hailed thee for master and  
 lord.

Fair father of all  
 In thy ways that have trod,  
 That have risen at thy call,  
 That have thrilled at thy nod,  
 Arise, shine, lighten upon me, O sun  
 that we see to be God.

As my soul has been dutiful  
 Only to thee,  
 O God! most beautiful,  
 Lighten thou me,  
 As I swim through the dim long rollers,  
 with eyelids uplift from the sea.

Be praised and adored of us,  
 All in accord,  
 Father and lord of us  
 Always adored,  
 The slayer, and the stayer, and the  
 harper, the light of us all, and  
 our lord.

At the sound of thy lyre,  
 At the touch of thy rod,  
 Air quickens to fire  
 By the foot of thee trod,  
 The savior, and healer, and singer,  
 the living and visible God.

The years are before thee  
 As shadows of thee,  
 As men that adore thee,  
 As cloudlets that flee:  
 But thou art the God, and thy kingdom is  
 heaven, and thy shrine is the sea.

#### EVENING ON THE BROADS.

OVER TWO shadowless waters, adrift as  
 a pinnace in peril,  
 Hangs as in heavy suspense, charged  
 with irresolute light,  
 Softly the soul of the sunset upholden  
 awhile on the sterile  
 Waves and wastes of the land, half  
 repossessed by the night.

Inland glimmer the shallows asleep,  
 and afar in the breathless  
 Twilight: yonder the depths darken  
 afar and asleep.  
 Slowly the semblance of death out of  
 heaven descends on the death-  
 less  
 Waters: hardly the light lives on the  
 face of the deep, —  
 Hardly, but here for a while. All  
 over the gray soft shallow  
 Hover the colors and clouds of the  
 twilight, void of a star.  
 As a bird unfledged is the broad-winged  
 night, whose winglets are cal-  
 low  
 Yet, but soon with their plumes will  
 she cover her brood from afar, —  
 Cover the brood of her worlds that cum-  
 ber the skies with their blossom,  
 Thick as the darkness of leaf-shad-  
 owed spring is encumbered with  
 flowers.  
 World upon world is enwound in the  
 bountiful girth of her bosom,  
 Warm and lustrous with life lovely  
 to lock on as ours.  
 Still is the sunset adrift as a spirit in  
 doubt that dissembles  
 Still with itself, being sick of division,  
 and dimmed by dismay —  
 Nay, not so; but with love and delight  
 beyond passion it trembles,  
 Fearful and fain of the night, lovely  
 with love of the day:  
 Fain and fearful of rest that is like unto  
 death, and begotten  
 Out of the womb of the tomb, born  
 of the seed of the grave:  
 Lovely with shadows of loves that are  
 only not wholly forgotten,  
 Only not wholly suppressed by the  
 dark, as a wreck by the wave.  
 Still there linger the loves of the morn-  
 ing and noon, in a vision  
 Blindly beheld, but in vain; ghosts  
 that are tired, and would rest.  
 But the glories beloved of the night  
 rise all too dense for division,  
 Deep in the depth of her breast shel-  
 tered as doves in a nest.  
 Fainter the beams of the loves of the  
 daylight season enkindled

Wane, and the memories of hours  
 that were fair with the love of  
 them fade;  
 Loftier, aloft of the lights of the sunset  
 stricken and dwindled,  
 Gather the signs of the love at the  
 heart of the night new-made.  
 New-made night, new-born of the sun  
 set, immeasurable, endless,  
 Opens the secret of love hid from  
 old in her heart, —  
 In the deep sweet heart full-charged  
 with faultless love of the friend-  
 less  
 Spirits of men that are eased when  
 the wheels of the sun depart.  
 Still is the sunset afloat as a ship on  
 the waters upholden  
 Full-sailed, wide-winged, poised softly  
 forever a-sway —  
 Nay, not so, but at least for a little  
 a while at the golden  
 Limit of arching air fain for an hour  
 to delay.  
 Here on the bar of the sand-bank  
 steep yet aslope to the gleaming  
 Waste of the water without, waste  
 of the water within,  
 Lights overhead and lights underneath  
 seen doubtfully dreaming  
 Whether the day be done, whether  
 the night may begin.  
 Far and afar and farther again, the  
 falter and hover,  
 Warm on the water, and deep in the  
 sky, and pale on the cloud:  
 Colder again, and slowly remoter, afraid  
 to recover  
 Breath, yet fain to revive, as it seems  
 from the skirt of the shroud.  
 Faintly the heart-beats shorten an  
 pause of the light in the west-  
 ward  
 Heaven, as eastward quicken the  
 paces of star upon star  
 Hurried and eager of life as a child  
 that strains to the breast-ward  
 Eagerly, yearning forth of the deep  
 where the ways of them are,  
 Glad of the glory of the gift of the  
 life and the wealth of its wonder  
 Fain of the night, and the sea, and  
 the sweet wan face of the earth

Over them air grows deeper, intense  
 with delight in them: under  
 Things are thrilled in their sleep, as  
 with sense of a sure new birth.  
 But here by the sand-bank watching,  
 with eyes on the sea-line, stranger  
 Grows to me also the weight of the  
 sea-ridge gazed on of me,  
 Heavily heaped up, changefully change-  
 less, void though of danger,  
 Void not of menace, but full of the  
 might of the dense dull sea.  
 Like as the wave is before me, behind  
 is the bank deep-drifted;  
 Yellow and thick as the bank is. be-  
 hind me, in front is the wave.  
 As the wall of a prison imprisoning the  
 mere, is the girth of it lifted;  
 But the rampire of water in front is  
 erect as the wall of a grave.  
 And the crests of it crumble and topple  
 and change, but the wall is not  
 broken:  
 Standing still dry-shod, I see it as  
 higher than my head,  
 Moving inland alway again, reared up  
 as in token  
 Still of impending wrath still in the  
 foam of it shed.  
 And even in the pauses between them,  
 dividing the rollers in sunder,  
 High overhead seems ever the sea-  
 line fixed as a mark;  
 And the shore where I stand, as a val-  
 ley beholden of hills whence  
 thunder  
 Cloud and torrent and storm, dark-  
 ening the depths of the dark.  
 Up to the sea, not upon it or over it,  
 upward from under  
 Seems he to gaze, whose eyes yearn  
 after it here from the shore;  
 A wall of turbid water, a-slope to the  
 wide sky's wonder  
 Of color and cloud, it climbs, or  
 spreads as a slanted floor.  
 And the large lights change on the face  
 of the mere, like things that were  
 living,  
 Winged and wonderful, beams like  
 as birds are that pass and are free;  
 But the light is dense as darkness, a  
 gift withheld in the giving,

That lies as dead on the fierce dull  
 face of the landward sea.  
 Stained and stifed and soiled, made  
 earthlier than earth is and duller,  
 Grimly she puts back light as re-  
 jected, a thing put away:  
 No transparent rapture, a molten music  
 of color;  
 No translucent love taken and given  
 of the day.  
 Fettered and marred and begrimed, is  
 the light's live self on her falling,  
 As the light of a man's life lighted  
 the fume of a dungeon mars:  
 Only she knows of the wind, when her  
 wrath gives ear to him calling,  
 The delight of the light she knows  
 not, nor answers the sun or the  
 stars.  
 Love she hath none to return for the  
 luminous love of their giving:  
 None to reflect from the bitter and  
 shallow response of her heart.  
 Yearly she feeds on her dead, yet her-  
 self seems dead and not living,  
 Or confused as a soul heavy-laden  
 with trouble that will not depart.  
 In the sound of her speech to the dark-  
 ness the moan of her evil remorse  
 is,  
 Haply, for strong ships gnawed by  
 the dog-toothed sea-bank's fang,  
 And trampled to death by the rage of  
 the feet of her foam-lipped horses,  
 Whose manes are yellow as plague,  
 and as ensigns of pestilence hang,  
 That wave in the foul faint air of the  
 breath of a death-stricken city;  
 So menacing heaves she the manes of  
 her rollers knotted with sand,  
 Discolored, opaque, suspended in sign  
 as of strength without pity,  
 That shake with flameless thunder  
 the low long length of the strand.  
 Here, far off in the farther extreme of  
 the shore as it lengthens  
 Northward, lonely for miles, ere ever  
 a village begin,  
 On the lapsing land that recedes as  
 the growth of the strong sea  
 strengthens  
 Shoreward, thrusting further and fur-  
 ther its outworks in,

Here in Shakespeare's vision, a flower  
 of her kin forsaken,  
 Lay in her golden raiment alone on  
 the wild wave's edge,  
 Surely by no shore else, but here on  
 the bank storm-shaken,  
 Perdita, bright as a dewdrop engilt  
 of the sun on the sedge.  
 Here on a shore unbeheld of his eyes,  
 in a dream, he beheld her  
 Outcast, fair as a fairy, the child of a  
 far-off king;  
 And over the babe-flower gently the  
 head of a pastoral elder  
 Bowed, compassionate, hoar as the  
 hawthorn-blossom in spring,  
 And kind as harvest in autumn: a  
 shelter of shade on the lonely  
 Shelterless unknown shore, scourged  
 of implacable waves:  
 Here, where the wind walks royal,  
 alone in his kingdom, and only  
 Sounds to the sedges a wail as of  
 triumph that conquers and  
 craves.  
 All these waters and wastes are his  
 empire of old, and awaken  
 From barren and stagnant slumber  
 at only the sound of his breath:  
 Yet the hunger is eased not that aches  
 in his heart, nor the goal over-  
 taken  
 That his wide wings yearn for, and  
 labor as hearts that yearn after  
 death.  
 All the solitude sighs and expects with  
 a blind expectation  
 Somewhat unknown of its own sad  
 heart, grown heart-sick of strife:  
 Till sometime its wild heart maddens,  
 and moans, and the vast ulula-  
 tion  
 Takes wing with the clouds on the  
 waters, and wails to be quit of  
 its life.  
 For the spirit and soul of the waste is  
 the wind, and his wings with  
 their waving  
 Darken and lighten the darkness and  
 light of it thickened or thinned,  
 But the heart that impels them is even  
 as a conqueror's insatiably crav-

ing  
 That victory can fill not, as power can  
 not satiate the want of the wind  
 All these moorlands and marshes are  
 full of his might, and oppose no  
 Aught of defence nor of barrier, o  
 forest or precipice piled;  
 But the will of the wind works ever as  
 his that desires what he knows  
 not,  
 And the wail of his want unfulfilled is  
 as one making moan for her child  
 And the cry of his triumph is even as  
 the crying of hunger that mad  
 dens  
 The heart of a strong man, aching in  
 vain as the wind's heart aches;  
 And the sadness itself of the land for  
 its infinite solitude saddens  
 More for the sound than the silence  
 athirst for the sound that slakes  
 And the sunset at last, and the twilight  
 are dead; and the darkness is  
 breathless  
 With fear of the wind's breath ris-  
 ing that seems and seems not to  
 sleep;  
 But a sense of the sound of it alway, a  
 spirit unsleeping and deathless,  
 Ghost or god, evermore moves on  
 the face of the deep.

## THE EMPEROR'S PROGRESS.

### A STUDY IN THREE STAGES.

(On the Busts of Nero in the Uffizj.)

A CHILD of brighter than the morning's  
 birth,  
 And lovelier than all smiles that may  
 be smiled  
 Save only of little children undefiled  
 Sweet, perfect, witless of their own  
 dear worth,  
 Live rose of love, mute melody of  
 mirth,  
 Glad as a bird is when the woods are  
 mild,  
 Adorable as is nothing save a child,  
 Hails with wide eyes and lips his life  
 on earth,

His lovely life with all its heaven to be.  
 And whoso reads the name inscribed,  
 or hears,  
 Feels his own heart a frozen well of  
 tears,  
 Child, for deep dread and fearful pity  
 of thee  
 Whom God would not let rather die  
 than see  
 The incumbent horror of impending  
 years.

## II.

Man, that wast godlike being a child,  
 and now,  
 No less than kinglike, art no more in  
 sooth  
 For all thy grace and lordliness of  
 youth,  
 The crown that bids men's branded  
 foreheads bow,  
 Much more has branded and bowed  
 down thy brow,  
 And gnawn upon it as with fire or  
 tooth  
 Of steel or snake so sorely, that the  
 truth  
 Seems here to bear false witness. Is it  
 thou,  
 Child? and is all the summer of all thy  
 spring  
 This? are the smiles that drew men's  
 kisses down  
 All faded and transfigured to the  
 frown  
 That grieves thy face? Art thou this  
 weary thing?  
 Then is no slave's load heavier than  
 a crown,  
 And such a thrall no bondman as a  
 king.

## III.

Misery beyond all men's most miser-  
 able,  
 Absolute, whole, defiant of defence,  
 Inevitable, inexplicable, intense,  
 More vast than heaven is high, more  
 deep than hell,  
 Past cure or charm of solace or of  
 spell,

Possesses and pervades the spirit  
 and sense  
 Whereto the expanse of the earth  
 pays tribute; whence  
 Breeds evil only, and broods on fumes  
 that swell  
 Rank from the blood of brother and  
 mother and wife.  
 "Misery of miseries, all is misery,"  
 saith  
 The heavy fair-faced hateful head, at  
 strife  
 With its own lusts that burn with  
 feverous breath,  
 Lips which the loathsome bitterness of  
 life  
 Leaves fearful of the bitterness of  
 death.

## SIX YEARS OLD.

To H. W. M.

BETWEEN the springs of six and seven,  
 Two fresh years' fountains, clear  
 Of all but golden sand for leaven,  
 Child, midway passing here,  
 As earth for love's sake dares bless  
 heaven,  
 So dare I bless you, dear.

Between two bright well-heads, that  
 brighten  
 With every breath that blows  
 Too loud to lull, too low to frighten,  
 But fain to rock, the rose,  
 Your feet stand fast, your lit smiles  
 lighten,  
 That might rear flowers from snows.

You came when winds unleashed were  
 snarling  
 Behind the frost-bound hours,  
 A snow-bird sturdier than the star-  
 ling,  
 A storm-bird fledged for showers,  
 That spring might smile to find you,  
 darling,  
 First-born of all the flowers.

Could love make worthy things of  
worthless,

My song were worth an ear :  
Its note should make the days most  
mirthless

The merriest of the year,  
And wake to birth all buds yet birth-  
less,

To keep your birthday, dear.

But where your birthday brightens  
heaven

No need has earth, God knows,  
Of light or warmth to melt or leaven  
The frost or fog that glows  
With sevenfold heavenly lights of seven  
Sweet springs that cleave the snows.

Could love make worthy music of you,  
And match my Master's powers,  
Had even my love less heart to love  
you,

A better song were ours ;  
With all the rhymes like stars above  
you,  
And all the words like flowers.

SEPT. 30, 1880.

#### A PARTING SONG.

(To a friend leaving England for a year's  
residence in Australia.)

THESE winds and suns of spring,  
That warm with breath and wing  
The trembling sleep of earth, till half  
awake

She laughs and blushes ere her slum-  
ber break,

For all good gifts they bring  
Require one better thing,  
For all the loans of joy they lend us,  
borrow

One sharper dole of sorrow,  
To sunder soon by half a world of sea  
Her son from England, and my friend  
from me.

Nor hope nor love nor fear  
May speed or stay one year,

Nor song nor prayer may bid, as mine  
would fain.

The seasons perish and be born again,  
Restoring all we lend,  
Reluctant, of a friend, —

The voice, the hand, the presence, and  
the sight,

That lend their life and light  
To present gladness and heart-strength  
ening cheer,

Now lent again for one reluctant year.

So much we lend indeed,  
Perforce, by force of need,  
So much we must; even these things  
and no more,

The far sea sundering and the sundered  
shore

A world apart from ours,  
So much the imperious hours ;  
Exact, and spare not; but no more  
than these

All earth and all her seas  
From thought and faith of trust and  
truth can borrow,

Not memory from desire, nor hope  
from sorrow.

Through bright and dark and bright  
Returns of day and night

I bid the swift year speed, and change  
and give

His breath of life to make the next  
year live

With sunnier suns for us,  
A life more prosperous,  
And laugh with flowers more fragrant  
that shall see

A merrier March for me,  
A rosier-girdled race of night with  
day,

A goodlier April, and a tenderer May.

For him the inverted year  
Shall mark our seasons here  
With alien alternation, and revive  
This withered winter, slaying the spring  
alive

With darts more sharply drawn  
As nearer draws the dawn,  
In heaven transfigured over earth trans-  
formed,

And with our winters warmed



And wasted with our summers, till the  
beams  
Rise on his face that rose on Dante's  
dreams.

Till fourfold morning rise  
Of star-shine on his eyes,  
Dawn of the spheres that brand steep  
heaven across  
At height of night with semblance of a  
cross

Whose grace and ghostly glory  
Poured heaven on purgatory,  
Seeing with their flamelets risen all  
heaven grow glad  
For love thereof it had  
And lovely joy of loving; so may  
these  
Make bright with welcome now their  
southern seas.

O happy stars, whose mirth  
The saddest soul on earth  
That ever soared and sang, found  
strong to bless,  
Lightening his life's harsh load of heavi-  
ness

With comfort sown like seed  
In dreams though not in deed,  
On sprinkled wastes of darkling thought  
divine!

Let all your lights now shine  
With all as glorious gladness on his  
eyes  
For whom indeed, and not in dream,  
they rise.

As those great twins of air  
Hailed once with old-world prayer  
Of all folk alway faring forth by sea,  
So now may these for grace and guid-  
ance be,

To guard his sail, and bring  
Again to brighten spring  
The face we look for, and the hand we  
lack  
Still, till they light him back,  
As welcome as to first discovering eyes  
Their light rose ever, soon on his to  
rise.

As parting now he goes  
From snow-time back to snows,

So back to spring from summer may  
next year

Restore him, and our hearts receive  
him here, —

The best good gift that spring  
Had ever grace to bring  
At fortune's happiest hour of star-blest  
birth,

Back to love's home-bright earth,  
To eyes with eyes that commune, hand  
with hand,

And the old warm bosom of all our  
mother-land.

Earth and sea-wind and sea  
And stars and sunlight be  
Alike all prosperous for him, and all  
hours

Have all one heart, and all that heart  
as ours.

All things as good as strange,  
Crown all the seasons' change  
With changing flower and compensat-  
ing fruit

From one year's ripening root;  
Till next year bring us, roused at  
spring's recall,

A heartier flower and goodlier fruit  
than all

MARCH 26, 1880.

## BY THE NORTH SEA.

### I.

### I.

A LAND that is lonelier than ruin;  
A sea that is stranger than death;  
Far fields that a rose never blew  
in,

Wan waste where the winds lack  
breath;

Waste endless and boundless, and  
flowerless

But of marsh-blossoms fruitless as  
free;

Where earth lies exhausted, as power-  
less

To strive with the sea.

2.

Far flickers the flight of the swallows,  
 Far flutters the weft of the grass  
 Spun dense over desolate hollows,  
 More pale than the clouds as they  
 pass ;  
 Thick woven as the web of a witch is  
 Round the heart of a thrall that hath  
 sinned,  
 Whose youth and the wrecks of its  
 riches  
 Are waifs on the wind.

3.

The pastures are herdless and sheep-  
 less,  
 No pasture or shelter for herds :  
 The wind is relentless and sleepless,  
 And restless and songless the birds ;  
 Their cries from afar fall breathless,  
 Their wings are as lightnings that  
 flee ;  
 For the land has two lords that are  
 deathless, —  
 Death's self, and the sea.

4.

These twain, as a king with his fellow,  
 Hold converse of desolate speech ;  
 And her waters are haggard and yellow  
 And crass with the scurf of the beach ;  
 And his garments are gray as the hoary  
 Wan sky where the day lies dim ;  
 And his power is to her, and his glory,  
 As hers unto him.

5.

In the pride of his power she rejoices,  
 In her glory he glows and is glad :  
 In her darkness the sound of his voice  
 is,  
 With his breath she dilates, and is  
 mad :  
 " If thou slay me, O death, and outlive  
 me,  
 Yet thy love hath fulfilled me of  
 thee."  
 " Shall I give thee not back if thou give  
 me,  
 O sister, O sea ?"

6.

And year upon year dawns living,  
 And age upon age drops dead :  
 And his hand is not weary of giving,  
 And the thirst of her heart is not  
 fed :  
 And the hunger that moans in her pas-  
 sion,  
 And the rage in her hunger that  
 roars,  
 As a wolf's that the winter lays lash on,  
 Still calls and implores.

7.

Her walls have no granite for girder,  
 No fortalice fronting her stands ;  
 But reefs the bloodguiltiest of murder  
 Are less than the banks of her sands  
 These number their slain by the thou-  
 sand ;  
 For the ship hath no surety to be,  
 When the bank is abreast of her bows,  
 and  
 Aflush with the sea.

8.

No surety to stand, and no shelter  
 To dawn out of darkness but one,  
 Out of waters that hurtle and welter,  
 No succor to dawn with the sun  
 But a rest from the wind as it passes,  
 Where, hardly redeemed from the  
 waves,  
 Lie thick as the blades of the grasses  
 The dead in their graves.

9.

A multitude noteless of numbers,  
 As wild weeds cast on an heap :  
 And sounder than sleep are their slum-  
 bers,  
 And softer than song is their sleep ;  
 And sweeter than all things, and stran-  
 ger  
 The sense, if perchance it may be,  
 That the wind is divested of danger,  
 And scatheless the sea ;

10.

That the roar of the banks they breast  
 Is hurtless as bellowing of herds,

And the strength of his wings that invested

The wind, as the strength of a bird's :  
As the sea-mew's might or the swallow's

That cry to him back if he cries,  
As over the graves and their hollows  
Days darken and rise.

## 11.

As the souls of the dead men disburdened

And clean of the sins that they sinned,  
With a lovelier than man's life guerdoned,

And delight as a wave's in the wind,  
And delight as the wind's in the billow,  
Birds pass, and deride with their glee  
The flesh that has dust for its pillow  
As wrecks have the sea.

## 12.

When the ways of the sun wax dimmer,

Wings flash through the dusk like beams ;

As the clouds in the lit sky glimmer,  
The bird in the graveyard gleams ;

As the cloud at its wing's edge whitens  
When the clarions of sunrise are heard,

The graves that the bird's note brightens

Grow bright for the bird.

## 13.

As the waves of the numberless waters  
That the wind cannot number who guides,

Are the sons of the shore and the daughters

Here lulled by the chime of the tides ;

And here in the press of them standing  
We know not if these or if we

Live truest, — or anchored to landing,  
Or drifted to sea.

## 14.

In the valley he named of decision,  
No denser were multitudes met

When the soul of the seer in her vision  
Saw nations for doom of them set ;  
Saw darkness in dawn, and the splendor

Of judgment, the sword and the rod.  
But the doom here of death is more tender,

And gentler the god.

## 15.

And gentler the wind from the dreary  
Sea-banks by the waves overlapped,  
Being weary, speaks peace to the weary,  
From slopes that the tide-stream hath sapped ;

And sweeter than all that we call so  
The seal of their slumber shall be  
Till the graves that embosom them also  
Be sapped of the sea.

## II.

## I.

For the heart of the waters is cruel,  
And the kisses are dire of their lips,  
And their waves are as fire is to fuel  
To the strength of the seafaring ships,

Though the sea's eye gleam as a jewel  
To the sun's eye back as he dips.

## 2.

Though the sun's eye flash to the sea's  
Live light of delight and of laughter,  
And her lips breathe back to the breeze  
The kiss that the wind's lips wait her

From the sun that subsides, and sees  
No gleam of the storm's dawn after

## 3.

And the wastes of the wild sea-marches  
Where the borderers are matched in  
their might —

Bleak fens that the sun's weight parches,  
Dense waves that reject his light —  
Change under the change-colored  
arches

Of changeless morning and night.

4.

The waves are as ranks enrolled  
 Too close for the storm to sever:  
 The fens lie naked and cold,  
 But their heart fails utterly never:  
 The lists are set from of old,  
 And the warfare endureth forever.

## III.

I.

Miles and miles and miles of desolation!  
 Leagues on leagues on leagues without a change!  
 Sign or token of some eldest nation  
 Here would make the strange land not so strange.  
 Time-forgotten, yea since time's creation,  
 Seem these borders where the sea-birds range.

2.

Slowly, gladly, full of peace and wonder  
 Grows his heart who journeys here alone:  
 Earth and all its thoughts of earth sink under  
 Deep as deep in water sinks a stone;  
 Hardly knows it if the rollers thunder,  
 Hardly whence the lonely wind is blown.

3.

Tall the plumage of the rush-flower tosses;  
 Sharp and soft in many a curve and line,  
 Gleam and glow the sea-colored marsh-mosses,  
 Salt and splendid from the circling brine;  
 Streak on streak of glimmering sea-shine crosses  
 All the land sea-saturate as with wine.

4.

Far, and far between, in divers orders,  
 Clear gray steeples cleave the low gray sky;  
 Fast and firm as time-unshaken warders,  
 Hearts made sure by faith, by hope made high.  
 These alone in all the wild sea-borders  
 Fear no blast of days and nights that die.

5.

All the land is like as one man's face is,  
 Pale and troubled still with change of cares.  
 Doubt and death pervade her clouded spaces;  
 Strength and length of life and peace are theirs,—  
 Theirs alone amid these weary places,  
 Seeing not how the wild world frets and fares.

6.

Firm and fast where all is cloud that changes,  
 Cloud-clogged sunlight, cloud by sunlight thinned,  
 Stern and sweet, above the sand-hill ranges  
 Watch the towers and tombs of men that sinned  
 Once, now calm as earth, whose only change is  
 Wind, and light, and wind, and cloud, and wind.

7.

Out and in and out the sharp straits wander,  
 In and out and in the wild way strives,  
 Starred and paved and lined with flowers that squander  
 Gold as golden as the gold of hives,  
 Salt and moist and multiform; but yonder,  
 See, what sign of life or death survives?

## 8.

Seen then only when the songs of olden  
 Harps were young, whose echoes yet  
 endure,  
 Hymned of Homer when his years  
 were golden,  
 Known of only when the world was  
 pure,  
 Here is Hades, manifest, beholden,  
 Surely, surely here, if aught be sure!

## 9.

Where the border-line was crossed,  
 that, sundering  
 Death from life, keeps weariness from  
 rest,  
 None can tell, who fares here forward  
 wondering;  
 None may doubt but here might end  
 his quest.  
 Here life's lightning joys and woes  
 once thundering  
 Sea-like round him cease like storm  
 suppressed.

## 10.

Here the wise wave-wandering stead-  
 fast-hearted  
 Guest of many a lord, of many a  
 land,  
 Saw the shape or shade of years de-  
 parted,  
 Saw the semblance risen and hard at  
 hand,  
 Saw the mother long from love's reach  
 parted,  
 Anticleia, like a statue stand.

## 11.

Statue? nay, nor tissued image woven  
 Fair on hangings in his father's hall;  
 Nay, too fast her faith of heart was  
 proven,  
 Far too firm her loveliest love of all;  
 Love wherethrough the loving heart  
 was cloven,  
 Love that hears not when the loud  
 Fates call.

## 12.

Love that lives and stands up re-created  
 Then when life has ebbed and an-  
 guish fled;  
 Love more strong than death or all  
 things fated,  
 Child's and mother's, lit by love and  
 led;  
 Love that found what life so long  
 awaited  
 Here, when life came down among  
 the dead.

## 13.

Here, where never came alive another,  
 Came her son across the sundering  
 tide  
 Crossed before by many a warrior  
 brother  
 Once that warred on Ilion at his side;  
 Here spread forth vain hands to clasp  
 the mother  
 Dead, that sorrowing for his love's  
 sake died.

## 14.

Parted, though by narrowest of divis-  
 ions,  
 Clasp he might not, only might im-  
 plore,  
 Sundered yet by bitterest of derisions,  
 Son, and mother from the son she  
 bore—  
 Here? But all dispeopled here of vis-  
 ions  
 Lies, forlorn of shadows even, the  
 shore.

## 15.

All too sweet such men's Hellenic  
 speech is,  
 All too fain they lived of light to see,  
 Once to see the darkness of these  
 beaches,  
 Once to sing this Hades found of  
 me,  
 Ghostless, all its gulfs and creeks and  
 reaches,  
 Sky, and shore, and cloud, and waste,  
 and sea.

## IV.

## 1.

But aloft and afront of me faring  
 Far forward as folk in a dream  
 That strive, between doubting and dar-  
 ing,  
 Right on till the goal for them gleam,  
 Full forth till their goal on them  
 lighten,  
 The harbor where fain they would  
 be,  
 What headlands there darken and  
 brighten?  
 What change in the sea?

## 2.

What houses and woodlands that nes-  
 tle  
 Safe inland to lee of the hill  
 As it slopes from the headlands that  
 wrestle  
 And succumb to the strong sea's  
 will?  
 Truce is not, nor respite, nor pity;  
 For the battie is waged not of hands,  
 Where over the grave of a city  
 The ghost of it stands.

## 3.

Where the wings of the sea-wind  
 slacken,  
 Green lawns to the landward thrive,  
 Fields brighten and pine-woods black-  
 en,  
 And the heat in their heart is alive;  
 They blossom and warble and mur-  
 mur,  
 For the sense of their spirit is free:  
 But harder to shoreward and firmer  
 The grasp of the sea.

## 4.

Like ashes the low cliffs crumble,  
 The banks drop down into dust,  
 The heights of the hills are made hum-  
 ble,  
 As a reed's is the strength of their  
 trust;

As a city's that armies environ,  
 The strength of their stay is of sand:  
 But the grasp of the sea is as iron,  
 Laid hard on the land.

## 5.

A land that is thirstier than ruin;  
 A sea that is hungrier than death;  
 Heaped hills that a tree never grew in;  
 Wide sands where the wave draws  
 breath;  
 All solace is here for the spirit  
 That ever forever may be  
 For the soul of thy son to inherit,  
 My mother, my sea.

## 6.

O delight of the headlands and beaches!  
 O desire of the wind on the wold,  
 More glad than a man's when it reaches  
 That end which it sought from of  
 old,  
 And the palm of possession is dreary  
 To the sense that in search of it  
 sinned;  
 But nor satisfied ever nor weary  
 Is ever the wind.

## 7.

The delight that he takes but in living  
 Is more than of all things that live;  
 For the world that has all things for  
 giving  
 Has nothing so goodly to give:  
 But more than delight his desire is,  
 For the goal where his pinions would  
 be  
 Is immortal as air or as fire is,  
 Immense as the sea.

## 8.

Though hence come the moan that he  
 borrows  
 From darkness and depths of the  
 night,  
 Though hence be the spring of his  
 sorrows,  
 Hence too is the joy of his might,—  
 The delight that his doom is forever  
 To seek, and desire, and rejoice,  
 And the sense that eternity never  
 Shall silence his voice;

9.

That satiety never may stifle,  
 Nor weariness ever estrange,  
 Nor time be so strong as to rife,  
 Nor change be so great as to change  
 His gift that renews in the giving,  
 The joy that exalts him to be  
 Alone of all elements living  
 The lord of the sea.

10.

What is fire, that its flame should consume her?  
 More fierce than all fires are her waves.  
 What is earth, that its gulfs should entomb her?  
 More deep are her own than their graves.  
 Life shrinks from his pinions that cover  
 The darkness by thunders bedinned;  
 But she knows him, her lord and her lover,  
 The godhead of wind.

11.

For a season his wings are about her,  
 His breath on her lips for a space;  
 Such rapture he wins not without her  
 In the width of his world-wide race.  
 Though the forests bow down, and the mountains  
 Wax dark, and the tribes of them flee,  
 His delight is more deep in the fountains  
 And springs of the sea.

12.

There are those too of mortals that love him,  
 There are souls that desire and require,  
 Be the glories of midnight above him,  
 Or beneath him the daysprings of fire;  
 And their hearts are as harps that approve him  
 And praise him as chords of a lyre  
 That were fain with their music to move him  
 To meet their desire.

13.

To descend through the darkness to grace them,  
 Till darkness were lovelier than light:  
 To encompass and grasp and embrace them,  
 Till their weakness were one with his might;  
 With the strength of his wings to caress them,  
 With the blast of his breath to set free;  
 With the mouths of his thunders to bless them  
 For sons of the sea.

14.

For these have the toil and the guerdon  
 That the wind has eternally: these  
 Have part in the boon and the burden  
 Of the sleepless, unsatisfied breeze,  
 That finds not, but seeking rejoices  
 That possession can work him no wrong;  
 And the voice at the heart of their voice is  
 The sense of his song.

15.

For the wind's is their doom and their blessing;  
 To desire, and have always above  
 A possession beyond their possessing,  
 A love beyond reach of their love.  
 Green earth has her sons and her daughters,  
 And these have their guerdons; but we  
 Are the wind's, and the sun's, and the water's,  
 Elect of the sea.

V.

I.

For the sea too seeks and rejoices,  
 Gains and loses and gains,  
 And the joy of her heart's own choice is  
 As ours, and as ours are her pains:

As the thoughts of our hearts are her  
voices,  
And as hers is the pulse of our  
veins.

2.

Her fields that know not of dearth,  
Nor lie for their fruit's sake fallow,  
Laugh large in the depth of their mirth;  
But inshore here in the shallow,  
Embroided with encumbrance of earth,  
Their skirts are turbid and yellow.

3.

The grime of her greed is upon her,  
The sign of her deed is her soil;  
As the earth's is her own dishonor,  
And corruption the crown of her  
toil:  
She hath spoiled and devoured, and  
her honour  
Is this, to be shamed by her spoil.

4.

But afar where pollution is none,  
Nor ensign of strife nor endeavor,  
Where her heart and the sun's are one,  
And the soil of her sin comes never,  
She is pure as the wind and the sun,  
And her sweetness endureth forever.

## VI.

I.

Death, and change, and darkness ever-  
lasting,  
Deaf that hears not what the day-  
star saith,  
Blind past all remembrance and fore-  
casting,  
Dead past memory that it once drew  
breath,—  
These, above the washing tides and  
wasting,  
Reign, and rule this land of utter  
death.

2.

Change of change, darkness of dark-  
ness, hidden,  
Very death of very death, begun

When none knows,— the knowledge is  
forbidden,—  
Self-begotten, self-proceeding, one  
Born, not made—abhorred, unchained,  
unchidden,  
Night stands here defiant of the sun.

3.

Change of change, and death of death  
begotten,  
Darkness born of darkness, one and  
three,  
Ghostly godhead of a world forgotten,  
Crowned with heaven, enthroned on  
land and sea,  
Here, where earth with dead men's  
bones is rotten,  
God of Time, thy likeness worships  
thee.

4.

Lo! thy likeness of thy desolation,  
Shape and figure of thy might, O  
Lord,  
Formless form, incarnate miscreation,  
Served of all things living, and ab-  
horred;  
Earth herself is here thine incarnation,  
Time, of all things born on earth  
adored.

5.

All that worship thee are fearful of  
thee;  
No man may not worship thee for  
fear:  
Prayers nor curses prove not nor dis-  
prove thee,  
Move nor change thee with our  
change of cheer:  
All at last, though all abhorred thee,  
love thee,  
God, the sceptre of whose throne is  
here.

6.

Here thy throne and sceptre of thy  
station,  
Here the palace paven for thy feet;  
Here thy sign from nation unto nation  
Passed as watchword for thy guards  
to greet,—  
Guards that go before thine exaltation,  
Ages, clothed with bitter years and  
sweet.



## 7.

Here, where sharp the sea-bird shrills  
 his ditty,  
 Flickering flame-wise through the  
 clear live calm,  
 Rose triumphal, crowning all a city,  
 Roofs exalted once with prayer and  
 psalm,  
 Built of holy hands for holy pity,  
 Frank and fruitful as a sheltering  
 palm.

## 8.

Church and hospice wrought in fault-  
 less fashion,  
 Hall and chancel bounteous and sub-  
 lime,  
 Wide and sweet and glorious as com-  
 passion,  
 Filled and thrilled with force of  
 choral chime,  
 Filled with spirit of prayer and thrilled  
 with passion,  
 Hailed a god more merciful than  
 Time.

## 9.

Ah! less mighty, less than Time pre-  
 vailing,  
 Shrunk, expelled, made nothing at  
 his nod,  
 Less than clouds across the sea-line  
 sailing,  
 Lies he, stricken by his master's rod.  
 "Where is man?" the cloister mur-  
 murs wailing;  
 Back the mute shrine thunders—  
 "Where is God?"

## 10.

Here is all the end of all his glory,—  
 Dust, and grass, and barren silent  
 stones.  
 Dead, like him, one hollow tower and  
 hoary  
 Naked in the sea-wind stands and  
 moans,  
 Filled and thrilled with its perpetual  
 story.  
 Here, where earth is dense with dead  
 men's bones.

## 11.

Low and loud and long, a voice for-  
 ever,  
 Sounds the wind's clear story like a  
 song.  
 Tomb from tomb the waves devouring  
 sever,  
 Dust from dust as years relapse  
 along;  
 Graves where men made sure to rest,  
 and never  
 Lie dismantled by the seasons' wrong.

## 12.

Now displaced, devoured and dese-  
 crated,  
 Now by Time's hands darkly dis-  
 interred,  
 These poor dead that sleeping here  
 awaited  
 Long the archangel's re-creating  
 word,  
 Closed about with roofs and walls  
 high-gated  
 Till the blast of judgment should be  
 heard.

## 13.

Naked, shamed, cast out of consecra-  
 tion,  
 Corpse and coffin, yea, the very  
 graves,  
 Scoffed at, scattered, shaken from  
 their station,  
 Spurned and scourged of wind and  
 sea like slaves,  
 Desolate beyond man's desolation,  
 Shrink and sink into the waste of  
 waves.

## 14.

Tombs, with bare white piteous bones  
 protruded,  
 Shroudless, down the loose collaps-  
 ing banks,  
 Crumble, from their constant place  
 detruded,  
 That the sea devours and gives not  
 thanks.  
 Graves where hope and prayer and  
 sorrow brooded  
 Gape and slide and perish, ranks on  
 ranks.

## 15.

Rows on rows, and line by line they  
 crumble, —  
 They that thought for all time  
 through to be.  
 Scarce a stone whereon a child might  
 stumble,  
 Breaks the grim field paced alone of  
 me.  
 Earth, and man, and all their gods wax  
 humble,  
 Here, where Time brings pasture to  
 the sea.

## VII.

## 1.

But afar on the headland exalted,  
 But beyond in the curl of the bay,  
 From the depth of his dome deep-vault-  
 ed,  
 Our father is lord of the day.  
 Our father and lord that we follow,  
 For deathless and ageless is he;  
 And his robe is the whole sky's hol-  
 low,  
 His sandal the sea.

## 2.

Where the horn of the headland is  
 sharper,  
 And her green floor glitters with fire,  
 The sea has the sun for a harper,  
 The sun has the sea for a lyre.  
 The waves are a pavement of amber,  
 By the feet of the sea-winds trod,  
 To receive in a god's presence-chamber  
 Our father, the god.

## 3.

Time, haggard and changeful and  
 hoary,  
 Is master and god of the land:  
 But the air is fulfilled of the glory  
 That is shed from our lord's right  
 hand.  
 O father of all of us ever,  
 All glory be only to thee

From heaven, that is void of thee  
 never,  
 And earth, and the sea.

## 4.

O Sun! whereof all is beholden,  
 Behold now the shadow of this death  
 This place of the sepulchres, olden  
 And emptied and vain as a breath,  
 The bloom of the bountiful heather  
 Laughs broadly beyond in thy light,  
 As dawn, with her glories to gather,  
 At darkness and night.

## 5.

Though the gods of the night lie rot-  
 ten,  
 And their honor be taken away,  
 And the noise of their names forgotten,  
 Thou, Lord, art god of the day.  
 Thou art father, and saviour, and spirit,  
 O Sun, of the soul that is free,  
 And hath grace of thy grace to inherit  
 Thine earth and thy sea.

## 6.

The hills and the sands and the beaches,  
 The waters adrift and afar,  
 The banks and the creeks and the  
 reaches,  
 How glad of thee all these are!  
 The flowers, overflowing, overcrowded,  
 Are drunk with the mad wind's  
 mirth:  
 The delight of thy coming unclouded  
 Makes music of earth.

## 7.

I, last least voice of her voices,  
 Give thanks that were mute in me  
 long  
 To the soul in my soul that rejoices  
 For the song that is over my song.  
 Time gives what he gains for the giv-  
 ing,  
 Or takes for his tribute of me;  
 My dreams to the wind ever-living,  
 My song to the sea.

# SONNETS.

## TO WILLIAM BELL SCOTT.

THE larks are loud above our leagues  
of whin,  
Now the sun's perfume fills their glo-  
rious gold  
With odor like the color · all the wold  
Is only light and song and wind wherein  
These twain are blent in one with shin-  
ing din.

And now your gift, a giver's kingly-  
souled,  
Dear old fast friend whose honors  
grow not old,  
Bids memory's note as loud and sweet  
begin.

Though all but we from life be now  
gone forth  
Of that bright household in our joyous  
north

Where I, scarce clear of boyhood just  
at end,  
First met your hand ; yet under life's  
clear dome

Now seventy strenuous years have  
crowned my friend,  
Shines no less bright his full-sheaved  
harvest-home.

APRIL 20, 1882.

## ON THE DEATHS OF THOMAS CARLYLE AND GEORGE ELIOT.

Two souls diverse out of our human  
sight

Pass, followed one with love and each  
with wonder :

The stormy sophist with his mouth  
of thunder,  
Clothed with loud words and mantled  
in the might

Of darkness and magnificence of night ;  
And one whose eye could smite the  
night in sunder,  
Searching if light or no light were  
thereunder,  
And found in love of loving-kindness  
light.

Duty divine and Thought with eyes of  
fire  
Still following Righteousness with deep  
desire

Shone sole and stern before her and  
above  
Sure stars and sole to steer by ; but  
more sweet

Shone lower the loveliest lamp for  
earthly feet, —  
The light of little children, and their  
love.

## AFTER LOOKING INTO CAR- LYLE'S REMINISCENCES.

### I.

THREE men lived yet when this dead  
man was young,  
Whose names and words endure for-  
ever : one

Whose eyes grew dim with straining  
toward the sun,  
And his wings weakened, and his  
angel's tongue

Lost half the sweetest song was ever  
sung,

But like the strain half uttered, earth  
hears none,  
Nor shall man hear till all men's  
songs are done ;

One whose clear spirit like an eagle  
hung

Between the mountains hallowed by his  
 his love  
 And the sky stainless as his soul above ;  
 And one, the sweetest heart that ever  
 spake  
 The brightest words wherein sweet wis-  
 dom smiled.  
 These deathless names by this dead  
 snake defiled  
 Bid memory spit upon him for their  
 sake.

## II.

Sweet heart, forgive me for thine own  
 sweet sake,  
 Whose kind blithe soul such seas of  
 sorrow swam,  
 And for my love's sake, powerless as  
 I am  
 For love to praise thee, or like thee to  
 make  
 Music of mirth where hearts less pure  
 would break,  
 Less pure than thine, our life-un-  
 spotted Lamb.  
 Things hatefullest thou hadst not  
 heart to damn,  
 Nor wouldst have set thine heel on this  
 dead snake.  
 Let worms consume its memory with  
 its tongue,  
 The fang that stabbed fair Truth, the  
 lip that stung  
 Men's memories uncorroded with its  
 breath.  
 Forgive me, that with bitter words like  
 his  
 I mix the gentlest English name that is,  
 The tenderest held of all that know  
 not death.

## A LAST LOOK.

SICK of self-love, Malvolio, like an  
 owl  
 That hoots the sun re-risen where  
 starlight sank,  
 With German garters crossed athwart  
 thy frank  
 Stout Scottish legs, men watched thee  
 snarl and scowl,

And boys responsive with reverberate  
 howl  
 Shrilled, hearing how to thee the  
 springtime stank,  
 And as thine own soul all the world  
 smelt rank,  
 And as thine own thoughts Liberty  
 seemed foul.  
 Now, for all ill thoughts nursed and ill  
 words given  
 Not all condemned, not utterly for  
 given,  
 Son of the storm and darkness, pass  
 in peace.  
 Peace upon earth thou knewest not  
 now, being dead,  
 Rest, with nor curse nor blessing on  
 thine head,  
 Where high-strung hate and strenu-  
 ous envy cease.

## DICKENS.

CHIEF in thy generation born of men  
 Whom English praise acclaimed as  
 English-born,  
 With eyes that matched the world  
 wide eyes of morn  
 For gleam of tears or laughter, tender-  
 est then  
 When thoughts of children warmed  
 their light, or when  
 Reverence of age with love and  
 labour worn,  
 Or godlike pity fired with godlike  
 scorn,  
 Shot through them flame that winged  
 thy swift live pen :  
 Where stars and suns that we behold  
 not burn,  
 Higher even than here, though high-  
 est was here thy place,  
 Love sees thy spirit laugh and  
 speak and shine  
 With Shakespeare, and the soft bright  
 soul of Sterne,  
 And Fielding's kindest might, and  
 Goldsmith's grace ;  
 Scarce one more loved or worthier  
 love than thine.

ON LAMB'S SPECIMENS OF  
DRAMATIC POETS.

## I.

IF all the flowers of all the fields on  
earth  
By wonder-working summer were  
made one,  
Its fragrance were not sweeter in the  
sun,  
Its treasure-house of leaves were not  
more worth  
Than those wherefrom thy light of mus-  
ing mirth  
Shone, till each leaf whereon thy pen  
would run  
Breathed life, and all its breath was  
benison.  
Beloved beyond all names of English  
birth,  
More dear than mightier memories!  
gentlest name  
That ever clothed itself with flower-  
sweet fame,  
Or linked itself with loftiest names of  
old  
By right and might of loving; I, that  
am  
Less than the least of those within thy  
fold,  
Give only thanks for them to thee,  
Charles Lamb.

## II.

So many a year had borne its own bright  
bees  
And slain them since thy honey-bees  
were hived,  
John Day, in cells of flower-sweet  
verse contrived  
So well with craft of moulding melo-  
dies,  
Thy soul perchance in amaranth fields  
at ease  
Thought not to hear the sound on  
earth revived  
Of summer music from the spring  
derived  
When thy song sucked the flower of  
flowering trees.  
But thine was not the chance of every  
day:

Time, after many a darkling hour  
grew sunny,  
And light between the clouds ere  
sunset swam,  
Laughing, and kissed their darkness all  
away,  
When, touched and tasted and ap-  
proved, thy honey  
Took subtler sweetness from the  
lips of Lamb.

## CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE.

CROWNED, girdled, garbed, and shod  
with light and fire,  
Son first-born of the morning, sov-  
eign star!  
Soul nearest ours of all, that wert  
most far,  
Most far off in the abysm of time, thy  
lyre  
Hung highest above the dawn-enkin-  
dled quire  
Where all ye sang together, all that  
are,  
And all the starry songs behind thy  
car  
Rang sequence, all our souls acclaim  
thee sire.

"If all the pens that ever poets held  
Had fed the feeling of their masters'  
thoughts,"  
And as with rush of hurtling chariots  
The flight of all their spirits were im-  
pelled  
Toward one great end, thy glory —  
Nay, not then,  
Not yet mightst thou be praised  
enough of men.

## WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

NOR if men's tongues and angels' all in  
one  
Spake, might the word be said that  
might speak Thee.  
Streams, winds, woods, flowers, fields,  
mountains, yea, the sea,  
What power is in them all to praise the  
sun?

His praise is this, — he can be praised  
of none.

Man, woman, child, praise God for  
him; but he

Exults not to be worshipped, but to  
be.

He is; and, being, beholds his work  
well done.

All joy, all glory, all sorrow, all strength,  
all mirth,

Are his: without him, day were night  
on earth.

Time knows not his from time's own  
period.

All lutes, all harps, all viols, all flutes,  
all lyres,

Fall dumb before him ere one string  
suspIRES.

All stars are angels; but the sun is  
God.

#### BEN JONSON.

BROAD-BASED, broad-fronted, bounteous,  
multiform,

With many a valley impleached with  
ivy and vine,

Wherein the springs of all the streams  
run wine,

And many a crag full-faced against the  
storm,

The mountain where thy Muse's feet  
made warm

Those lawns that revelled with her  
dance divine,

Shines yet with fire as it was wont  
to shine

From tossing torches round the dance  
a-swarm.

Nor less, high-stationed on the gray  
grave heights,

High-thoughted seers with heaven's  
heart-kindling lights

Hold converse: and the herd of  
meaner things

Knows or by fiery scourge or fiery shaft  
When wrath on thy broad brows has  
risen, and laughed,

Darkening thy soul with shadow of  
thunderous wings.

#### BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

AN hour ere sudden sunset fired the  
west,

Arose two stars upon the pale deep  
east.

The hall of heaven was clear for  
night's high feast,

Yet was not yet day's fiery heart at rest  
Love leapt up from his mother's burn  
ing breast

To see those warm twin lights, as  
day decreased,

Wax wider, till, when all the sur  
had ceased,

As suns they shone from evening's  
kindled crest.

Across them and between, a quicken  
ing fire,

Flamed Venus, laughing with appeased  
desire.

Their dawn, scarce lovelier for the  
gleam of tears,

Filled half the hollow shell 'twix  
heaven and earth

With sound like moonlight, mingling  
moan and mirth,

Which rings and glitters down the  
darkling years.

#### PHILIP MASSINGER.

CLOUDS here and there arisen an hour  
past noon

Checked our English heaven with  
lengthening bars

And shadow and sound of wheel  
winged thunder-cars

Assembling strength to put forth ten  
pest soon,

When the clear still warm concord of  
thy tune

Rose under skies unscared by redder  
ing Mars,

Yet, like a sound of silver speech of  
stars,

With full mild flame as of the mellow  
ing moon.

Grave and great-hearted Massinger, the  
face

High melancholy lights with lofty  
grace

Than gilds the brows of revel: sad  
and wise,  
The spirit of thought that moved thy  
deeper song,  
Sorrow serene in soft calm scorn of  
wrong,  
Speaks patience yet from thy majes-  
tic eyes.

## JOHN FORD.

HEW hard the marble from the moun-  
tain's heart  
Where hardest night holds fast in  
iron gloom  
Gems brighter than an April dawn  
in bloom,  
That his Memnonian likeness thence  
may start  
Revealed, whose hand with high fune-  
real art  
Carved night, and chiselled shadow:  
be the tomb  
That speaks him famous graven with  
signs of doom,  
Intrenched inevitably in lines athwart,  
As on some thunder-blasted Titan's  
brow  
His record of rebellion. Not the  
day  
Shall strike forth music from so  
stern a chord,  
Touching this marble: darkness, none  
knows how,  
And stars impenetrable of midnight,  
may.  
So looms the likeness of thy soul,  
John Ford.

## JOHN WEBSTER.

THUNDER: the flesh quails, and the  
soul bows down.  
Night: east, west, south, and north-  
ward, very night.  
Star upon struggling star strives into  
sight,  
Star after shuddering star the deep  
storms drown.

The very throne of night, her very  
crown,  
A man lays hand on, and usurps  
her right.  
Song from the highest of heaven's  
imperious height  
Shoots, as a fire to smite some tower-  
ing town.  
Rage, anguish, harrowing fear, heart-  
crazing crime,  
Make monstrous all the murderous face  
of Time  
Shown in the spherul orbit of a glass  
Revolving. Earth cries out from all  
her graves.  
Frail, on frail rafts, across wide-wallow-  
ing waves,  
Shapes here and there of child and  
mother pass.

## THOMAS DECKER.

OUT of the depths of darkling life,  
where sin  
Laughs piteously that sorrow should  
not know  
Her own ill name, nor woe be count-  
ed woe;  
Where hate and craft and lust make  
drearier din  
Than sounds through dreams that grief  
holds revel in, —  
What charm of joy-bells ringing,  
streams that flow,  
Winds that blow healing in each note  
they blow,  
Is this that the outer darkness hears  
begin?  
O sweetest heart of all thy time save  
one,  
Star seen for love's sake nearest to the  
sun,  
Hung lamplike o'er a dense and dole-  
ful city,  
Not Shakespeare's very spirit, howe'er  
more great,  
Than thine toward man was more com-  
passionate,  
Nor gave Christ praise from lips  
more sweet with pity.

## THOMAS MIDDLETON.

A WILD moon riding high from cloud  
to cloud,  
That sees and sees not, glimmering  
far beneath,  
Hell's children revel along the shud-  
dering heath  
With dirge-like mirth and raiment like  
a shroud;  
A worse fair face than witchcraft's, pas-  
sion-proud,  
With brows blood-flecked behind  
their bridal wreath,  
And lips that bade the assassin's  
sword find sheath  
Deep in the heart whereto love's heart  
was vowed;  
A game of close contentious crafts and  
creeds  
Played till white England bring black  
Spain to shame;  
A son's bright sword and brighter soul,  
whose deeds  
High conscience lights for mother's  
love and fame;  
Pure gypsy flowers, and poisonous  
courtly weeds:  
Such tokens and such trophies crown  
thy name.

## THOMAS HEYWOOD.

TOM, if they loved thee best who called  
thee Tom,  
What else may all men call thee, see-  
ing thus bright  
Even yet the laughing and the weep-  
ing light  
That still thy kind old eyes are kindled  
from?  
Small care was thine to assail and  
overcome  
Time and his child Oblivion: yet of  
right  
Thy name has part with names of  
lordlier might  
For English love and homely sense of  
home,  
Whose fragrance keeps thy small sweet  
bay-leaf young,

And gives it place aloft among thy  
peers,

Whence many a wreath once  
higher strong Time has harled;  
And this thy praise is sweet on Shake-  
speare's tongue, —

“O good old man! how wel' in thee  
appears

The constant service of the antique  
world!”

## JOHN MARSTON.

THE bitterness of death and bitterer  
scorn

Breathes from the broad-leaved aloe-  
plant whence thou

Wast fain to gather for thy bended  
brow

A chaplet by no gentler forehead worn—  
Grief deep as hell, wrath hardly to be  
borne,

Ploughed up thy soul till round the  
furrowing plough

The strange black soil foamed, as a  
black-beaked prow

Bids night-black waves foam where its  
track has torn.

Too faint the phrase for thee that only  
saith

Scorn bitterer than the bitterness of  
death

Pervades the sullen splendor of thy  
soul,

Where hate and pain make war on  
force and fraud,

And all the strengths of tyrants: whence  
unflawed

It keeps this noble heart of hatred  
whole.

## GEORGE CHAPMAN.

HIGH priest of Homer, not elect in  
vain,

Deep trumpets blow before thee,  
shawms behind

Mix music with the rolling wheels  
that wind

Slow through the laboring triumph of  
thy train:



Fierce history, molten in thy forging  
 brain,  
 Takes form and fire and fashion from  
 thy mind,  
 Tormented and transmuted out of  
 kind:  
 But howsoe'er thou shift thy strenuous  
 strain,  
 Like Tailor<sup>1</sup> smooth, like Fisher<sup>2</sup>  
 swollen, and now  
 Grim Yarrington<sup>3</sup> scarce bloodier  
 marked than thou,  
 Then bluff as Mayne's<sup>4</sup> or broad-  
 mouthed Barry's<sup>5</sup> glee,  
 Proud still with hoar predominance of  
 brow  
 And beard like foam swept off the  
 broad blown sea,  
 Where'er thou go, men's reverence  
 goes with thee.

## JOHN DAY.

DAY was a full-blown flower in heaven,  
 alive  
 With murmuring joy of bees and  
 birds a-swarm,  
 When in the skies of song yet flushed  
 and warm  
 With music where all passion seems to  
 strive  
 For utterance, all things bright and  
 fierce to drive  
 Struggling along the splendor of the  
 storm,  
 Day for an hour put off his fiery  
 form,  
 And golden murmurs from a golden  
 hive  
 Across the strong bright summer wind  
 were heard,  
 And laughter soft as smiles from  
 girls at play,  
 And loud from lips of boys brow-  
 bound with May.

<sup>1</sup> Author of *The Hog* hath lost his Pearl.<sup>2</sup> Author of *Fuimus Troes*, or the *True Tro-*  
jans.<sup>3</sup> Author of *Two Tragedies in One*.<sup>4</sup> Author of *The City Match*.<sup>5</sup> Author of *Ram-Alley*, or *Merry Tricks*.

Our mightiest age let fall its gentlest  
 word,  
 When Song, in semblance of a sweet  
 small bird,  
 Lit fluttering on the light swift hand  
 of Day.

## JAMES SHIRLEY.

THE dusk of day's decline was hard on  
 dark  
 When evening trembled round thy  
 glowworm lamp  
 That shone across her shades and  
 dewy damp,  
 A small clear beacon whose benignant  
 spark  
 Was gracious yet for loiterers' eyes to  
 mark,  
 Though changed the watchword of  
 our English camp  
 Since the outposts rang round Mar-  
 lowe's lion ramp,  
 When thy steed's pace went ambling  
 round Hyde Park.

And in the thickening twilight under  
 thee  
 Walks Davenant, pensive in the paths  
 where he,  
 The blithest throat that ever carolled  
 love  
 In music made of morning's merriest  
 heart,  
 Glad Suckling, stumbled from his seat  
 above,  
 And reeled on slippery roads of alien  
 art.

## THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN.

SONS born of many a loyal Muse to  
 Ben,  
 All true-begotten, warm with wine or  
 ale,  
 Bright from the broad light of his  
 presence, hail!  
 Prince Randolph, nighest his throne of  
 all his men,

Being highest in spirit and heart who  
 hailed him then  
 King, nor might other spread so  
 blithe a sail:  
 Cartwright, a soul pent in with nar-  
 rower pale,  
 Praised of thy sire for manful might of  
 pen:  
 Marmion, whose verse keeps always  
 keen and fine  
 The perfume of their Apollonian wine,  
 Who shared with that stout sire of  
 all and thee  
 The exuberant chalice of his echoing  
 shrine:  
 Is not your praise writ broad in gold  
 which he  
 Inscribed, that all who praise his  
 name should see?

ANONYMOUS PLAYS: "AR-  
 DEN OF FEVERSHAM."

MOTHER whose womb brought forth  
 our man of men,  
 Mother of Shakespeare, whom all  
 time acclaim  
 Queen therefore, sovereign queen of  
 English dames,  
 Throned higher than sat thy sonless  
 empress then,  
 Was it thy son's young passion-guided  
 pen  
 Which drew, reflected from encir-  
 cling flames,  
 A figure marked by the earlier of thy  
 names  
 Wife, and from all her wedded kins-  
 women  
 Marked by the sign of murderer?  
 Pale and great,  
 Great in her grief and sin, but in her  
 death  
 And anguish of her penitential breath  
 Greater than all her sin or sin-born  
 fate,  
 She stands, the holocaust of dark  
 desire,  
 Clothed round with song forever as  
 with fire.

ANONYMOUS PLAYS.

YE too, dim watchfires of some dark-  
 ling hour,  
 Whose fame forlorn time saves not  
 nor proclaims  
 Forever, but forgetfulness defames,  
 And darkness and the shadow of death  
 devour,  
 Lift up ye too your light, put forth your  
 power,  
 Let the far twilight feel your soft  
 small flames,  
 And smile, albeit night name not  
 even their names,  
 Ghost by ghost passing, flower blown  
 down on flower;  
 That sweet-tongued shadow, like a star's  
 that passed  
 Singing, and light was from its dark-  
 ness cast  
 To paint the face of Painting fair:  
 with praise:<sup>1</sup>  
 And that wherein forefigured smiles  
 the pure  
 Fraternal face of Wordsworth's Eli-  
 dure  
 Between two child-faced masks of  
 merrier days.<sup>2</sup>

ANONYMOUS PLAYS.

MORE yet and more, and yet we mark  
 not all:  
 The Warning fain to bid fair women  
 heed  
 Its hard brief note of deadly doom  
 and deed;<sup>3</sup>  
 The verse that strewed too thick with  
 flowers the hall  
 Whence Nero watched his fiery festi-  
 val;<sup>4</sup>  
 That iron page wherein men's eyes  
 who read  
 See, bruised and marred between two  
 babes that bleed,

<sup>1</sup> Doctor Dodypol.

<sup>2</sup> Nobody and Somebody.

<sup>3</sup> A Warning for Fair Women.

<sup>4</sup> The Tragedy of Nero.

A mad red-handed husband's martyr  
fall;<sup>1</sup>  
The scene which crossed and streaked  
with mirth the strife  
Of Henry with his sons and witchlike  
wife;<sup>2</sup>  
And that sweet pageant of the kindly  
fiend,  
Who, seeing three friends in spirit  
and heart made one,  
Crowned with good hap the true-love  
wiles he screened  
In the pleached lanes of pleasant  
Edmonton.<sup>3</sup>

## THE MANY.

## I.

GREENE, garlanded with February's  
few flowers,  
Ere March came in with Marlowe's  
rapturous rage;  
Peele, from whose hand the sweet  
white locks of age  
Took the mild chaplet woven of hon-  
ored hours;  
Nash, laughing hard; Lodge, flushed  
from lyric bowers;  
And Lilly, a goldfinch in a twisted  
cage,  
Fed by some gay great lady's pettish  
page  
Till short sweet songs gush clear like  
short spring showers;  
Kid, whose grim sport still gambolled  
over graves;  
And Chettle, in whose fresh funereal  
verse  
Weeps Marian yet on Robin's wild-  
wood hearse;  
Cooke, whose light boat of song one  
soft breath saves,  
Sighed from a maiden's amorous  
mouth averse:  
Live likewise ye: Time takes not you  
for slaves.

<sup>1</sup> A Yorkshire Tragedy.<sup>2</sup> Look about you.<sup>3</sup> The Merry Devil of Edmonton.

## THE MANY.

## II.

HAUGHION, whose mirth gave woman  
all her will;  
Field, bright and loud with laughing  
flower and bird,  
And keen alternate notes of laud  
and gird;  
Barnes, darkening once with Borgia's  
deeds the quill  
Which tuned the passion of Partheno-  
phil;  
Blithe burly Porter, broad and bold  
of word;  
Wilkins, a voice with strenuous pity  
stirred:  
Turk Mason; Brewer, whose tongue  
drops honey still;  
Rough Rowley, handling song with  
Esau's hand;  
Light Nabbes; lean Sharpham, rank  
and raw by turns,  
But fragrant with a forethought once  
of Burns;  
Soft Davenport, sad-robed, but blithe  
and bland;  
Brome, gypsy-led across the wood-  
land ferns:  
Praise be with all, and place among  
our band.

## EPILOGUE.

OUR mother, which wast twice, as his  
tory saith,  
Found first among the nations: once,  
when she  
Who bore thine ensign saw the God  
in thee  
Smite Spain, and bring forth Shake-  
speare; once, when death  
Shrank, and Rome's bloodhounds cower-  
ed, at Milton's breath:  
More than thy place, then first  
among the free;  
More than that sovereign lordship of  
the sea  
Bequeathed to Cromwell from Eliza-  
beth;

More than thy fiery guiding-star, which  
Drake  
Hailed, and the deep saw lit again for  
Blake;  
More than all deeds wrought of thy  
strong right hand,—

This praise keeps most thy fame's  
memorial strong,  
That thou wast head of all these  
streams of song,  
And time bows down to thee as  
Shakespeare's land.

## GENERAL INDEX OF TITLES AND FIRST LINES

(Titles are set in roman; first lines in italics)

- A child of brighter than the morning's birth*, 612  
After Looking Into Carlyle's Reminiscences, 625-626  
Age and Song, 547  
Aholibah, 515-517  
*A land that is lonelier than ruin*, 615  
*A little marsh-plant, yellow green*, 486  
*All the bright lights of heaven*, 470  
*All the night sleep came not upon my eyelids*, 488  
*A month or twain to live on honey-comb*, 486  
*An hour ere sudden sunset fired the west*, 628  
Anima Anceps, 473  
Anonymous Plays, 632-633  
Appeal, An, 581-582  
April, 485  
"Arden of Feversham," 632  
*Art thou indeed among these*, 581  
*Ask nothing more of me, sweet*, 583  
Atalanta in Calydon, 5-43  
At Eleusis, 490-493  
At Parting, 554  
August, 493-494  
Ave Atque Vale, 539-543  
*A wild moon riding high from cloud to cloud*, 630
- Back to the flower-town, side by side*, 477  
Ballad of Burdens, A, 475-476  
Beaumont and Fletcher, 628  
Before Dawn, 482-483  
Before Parting, 486  
Before Sunset, 552  
Before the Mirror, 476-477  
*Between the springs of six and seven*, 613  
*Beyond the hollow sunset, ere a star*, 525  
Birth Song, A, 549-550  
Bloody Son, The, 520-521  
Bothwell: A Tragedy, 130-377  
*Broad-based, broad-fronted, bounteous, multiform*, 628  
*But you will not believe me though you hear*, 131  
By the North Sea, 615-624

- Carlyle, Thomas, On the Deaths of George Eliot and, 625  
 Chapman, George, 630-631  
 Chastelard: A Tragedy, 77-129  
*Chief in thy generation born of men*, 626  
 Christmas Antiphones, 561-564  
 Christmas Carol, A, 494-495  
*Clouds here and there arisen an hour past noon*, 628  
 Complaint of Lisa, The, 535-538  
 Cor Cordium, 573  
 Cornwall, Barry, In Memory of, 547-548  
*Couldst thou not watch with me one hour?* 534  
*Crowned, girdled, garbed, and shod with light and fire*, 627  
  
 Day, John, 631  
*Day was a full-blown flower in heaven alive*, 631  
*Death, what hast thou to do with me?* 543  
 Decker, Thomas, 629  
 Dickens, 626  
  
 Eight Years Old, 604-605  
 Eliot, George, On the Deaths of Thomas Carlyle and, 625  
 Emperor's Progress, The, 612-613  
 Epicede, 548  
 Epilogue, 633-634  
 Erechtheus: A Tragedy, 44-76  
 Evening on the Broads, 609-612  
 Ex-Voto, 550-552  
  
 Fletcher, Beaumont and, 628  
*For a day and night Love sang to us, played with us*, 554  
 Ford, John, 629  
 Forsaken Garden, A, 530-532  
 For the Feast of Giordano Bruno, 538-539  
  
 Garden of Proserpine, The, 483-484  
 Gautier, Théophile, On the Death of, 543-547  
*Gehazi by the hue that chills thy cheek*, 555  
*Greene, garlanded with February's few flowers*, 633  
  
*Haughton, whose mirth gave woman all her will*, 633  
 Hendecasyllabics, 488  
*Here, where the world is quiet*, 483  
 Herse, 603-604  
*How hard the marble from the mountain's heart*, 629  
 Heywood, Thomas, 630  
*High priest of Homer, not elect in vain*, 630  
*How many sons, how many generations*, 555  
 Hugo, Victor, To, 480-482

- If all the flowers of all the fields on earth*, 627  
*If with voice of words or prayers thy sons may reach thee*, 558  
*In a coign of the cliff between lowland and highland*, 530  
*In a vision Liberty stood*, 582  
 Inferiæ, 549  
 In Memory of Barry Cornwall, 547-548  
 In Memory of Walter Savage Landor, 477-478  
*Inside this northern summer's fold*, 569  
 Interlude, An, 487  
 In the Bay, 525-530  
*In the beginning God made thee*, 515  
*In the fair days when god*, 480  
*In the garden of death, where the singers whose names are deathless*, 547  
*In the greenest growth of the Maytime*, 487  
*In the lower lands of day*, 552  
*In the month of the long decline of roses*, 488  
*In vain men tell us time can alter*, 547  
*I saw my soul at rest upon a day*, 533  
*It does not hurt. She looked along the knife*, 605  
*It hath been seen, and yet it shall be seen*, 500  
*It is an hour before the hour of dawn*, 573  
 Itylus, 469  
*I will that if I say a heavy thing*, 508

Jonson, Ben, 628

- King's Daughter, The, 518-519  
*Knights mine, all that be in hall*, 495  
 Kossuth, Louis, To, 556

Lamentation, A, 472-473

- Landor, Walter Savage, In Memory of, 477-478  
*Last high star of the years whose thunder*, 606  
 Last Look, A, 626  
 Last Oracle, The, 523-525  
 Leave-Taking, A, 468  
*Let us go hence, my songs: she will not hear*, 468  
*Life may give for love to death*, 548  
*Light of our fathers' eyes, and in our own*, 556  
 Lines on the Death of Edward John Trelawny, 606  
 Litany, A, 470-471  
 Litany of Nations, The, 558-561  
 Love at Sea, 484-485  
*Love laid his sleepless head*, 552

Madonna Mia, 518-519

- Maiden, and mistress of the months and stars*, 5  
 Many, The, 633  
 Marlowe, Christopher, 627  
 Marston, John, 630

- Mary Stuart: A Tragedy, 378-467  
 Masque of Queen Bersable, The, 495-500  
 Massinger, Philip, 628-629  
 Mater Dolorosa, 564-565  
 Mater Triumphalis, 566-569  
 May Janet, 519-520  
 Memorial Verses, 543-547  
*Men of Eleusis, ye that with long staves*, 490  
 Middleton, Thomas, 630  
*More yet and more, and yet we mark not all*, 632  
*Mother of life and death and all men's days*, 44  
*Mother of man's time-travelling generations*, 566  
*Mother whose womb brought forth our man of men*, 632  
  
 "Non Dolet," 605-606  
*Not if men's tongues and angels' all in one*, 627  
*Now the days are all gone over*, 552  
  
 Oblation, The, 583  
 Off Shore, 607-609  
*O heart of hearts, the chalice of love's fire*, 573  
 On Lamb's Specimens of Dramatic Poets, 627  
 On the Death of Théophile Gautier, 543-547  
 On the Deaths of Thomas Carlyle and George Eliot, 625  
*O tender time that love thinks long to see*, 552  
*Our mother, which wast twice, as history saith*, 633  
*Out of the dark sweet sleep*, 549  
*Out of the depths of darkling life, where sin*, 629  
*Over two shadowless waters, adrift as a pinnace in peril*, 609  
*"O where have ye been the morn sae late,"* 520  
  
 Parting Song, A, 614-615  
 Pastiche, 552  
 Perinde ac Cadaver, 582-583  
 Pilgrims, The, 556-558  
*Push hard across the sand*, 478  
  
 Relics, 532-533  
 Rizpah, 555  
 Rococo, 474-475  
 Rondel, 470  
  
 St. Dorothy, 500-508  
 Sapphics, 488-490  
 Scott, William Bell, To, 625  
 Sea-Swallows, The, 521-522  
 Sestima, 533-534



- Shakespeare, William, 627-628  
*Shall I strew on thee rose or rue or laurel*, 539  
Shirley, James, 631  
*Sick of self-love, Malvolio, like an owl*, 626  
Siena, 569-573  
Six Years Old, 613-614  
Song, 552  
Song Before Death, 474  
Song in Time of Order—1852, A, 478  
Song in Time of Revolution—1860, A, 478-480  
Song of Italy, A, 583-595  
Sonnets, 625-634  
*Son of the lightning and the light that glows*, 538  
*Sons born of many a loyal Muse to Ben*, 631  
*Spring, and the light and sound of things on earth*, 549  
*"Stand up, stand up, thou May Janet,"* 519  
*Sun, whom the faltering snow-cloud fears*, 604  
Sundew, The, 486-487  
*Swallow, my sister, O sister swallow*, 469  
*Sweet life, if life were stronger*, 482  
*Sweet mother, in a minute's span*, 474  
  
*Take hands, and part with laughter*, 474  
Thalassius, 595-603  
*The bitterness of death and bitterer scorn*, 630  
*The burden of fair women. Vain delight*, 475  
*The dusk of day's decline was hard on dark*, 631  
*The heart of the rulers is sick*, 478  
*The larks are loud above our leagues of whin*, 625  
*There is no woman living that draws breath*, 535  
*There were four apples on the bough*, 493  
*There were four loves that one by one*, 522  
*These many years since we began to be*, 470  
*These winds and suns of spring*, 614  
*This fell when Christmas lights were done*, 521  
*This flower that smells of honey and the sea*, 532  
*Thou whose birth on earth*, 561  
*Three damsels in the queen's chamber*, 494  
*Three men lived yet when this dead man was young*, 625  
*Thunder: the flesh quails, and the soul bows down*, 629  
*Till death have broken*, 473  
Tiresias, 573-581  
To Louis Kossuth, 556  
*Tom, if they loved thee best who called thee Tom*, 630  
To Victor Hugo, 480-482  
To William Bell Scott, 625  
Trelawny, Edward John, Lines on the Death of, 606  
Tribe of Benjamin, The, 631-632  
Two Dreams, The, 508-515  
*Two souls diverse out of our human sight*, 625

- Under green apple-boughs*, 518  
*Upon a windy night of stars that fell*, 583  
*Upon the flowery forefront of the year*, 595
- Vision of Spring in Winter, A, 552-554
- Wasted Vigil, A, 534-535  
*We are in love's land to-day*, 484  
Webster, John, 629  
*Welcome, good friends, and welcome this good day*, 378  
*We were ten maidens in the green corn*, 518  
*We whose days and ways*, 562  
*When grace is given us ever to behold*, 603  
*When the fields catch flower*, 485  
*When their last hour shall rise*, 550  
*When the might of the summer*, 607  
White Czar, The, 555  
*White rose in red rose-garden*, 476  
*Who hath known the ways of time*, 472  
*Who is it that sits by the way, by the wild wayside*, 564  
*Who is your lady of love, O ye that pass*, 556
- Years have risen and fallen in darkness or in twilight*, 523  
Year of Love, The, 522-523  
*Ye that weep in sleep*, 563  
*Ye too, dim watchfires of some darkling hour*, 632  
*You never sing now but it makes you sad*, 77



JW.

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