Thomas Pennant Barton.

Contents.

1. Julia Agrippina. 1639. (A)
2. Cleopatra. 1654.

Shay's Comedies of the "Heir" and the "Old Couple" in quarto are bound up separately; and I hope hereafter to procure a copy of the Antigone in order to complete the set. A tragedy in Latin, under the name of Julius Cæsar, has also been ascribed to Shay, but is not printed. J. F.

A. A mistake. Mar. 1854.
J. P. W.

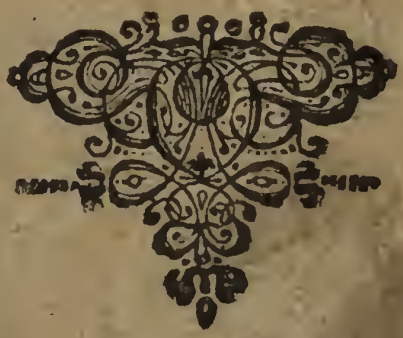
THE TRAGEDI

OF

JULIA AGRIPPINA

Written by

THOMAS MAY, *Esq;*



LONDON,
Printed for *Humphrey Moseley*, and a
to be sold at his Shop at the *Princes*
Armes in St. *Pauls* Church-
yard. 1654.

The Speakers.

Claudius Cæsar.
Nero Cæsar.
Britannicus.
Seneca.
Burrhus.
Vitellius.
Pollio.
Crispinus.
Geta.
Otho.
Montanus.
Petronius.
Pallas.
Narcissus.
Anicetus.

Agrippina.
Octavia.
Poppæa.
Fulvia.
Acte.
Locusta.
L.

ACTED 1628.

OCTOB. 26. 1638.

Imprimatur,

MATTH. CLAY.

MEGÆRA *ascends.*

Megæra.

THus to the Romane *Palace, as our home*
And proper mansion, is Megæra *come*
No stranger to these walls; not more in Hell
Then here, doe mischiefs, and we Furies dwell
Let the unenvy'd Gods henceforth possesse
Poore Peasants hearts, and rule in Cottages;
Let Vertue lurke among the rurall Swaines,
Whilest Vice in Romes *Imperiall Palace reignes,*
And rules those breasts, whom all the world obeys.
What though the Gods and Vertue first did raise
Rome *to that height it holds? they did but make*
An Empire large enough for us to take,
And build a strength for us to manage now,
Though Vertue made the Romane greatnesse grow:
Shee now forsakes it at the height: the Powers,
And fruits of all her diligence are ours.
But to preserve that interest, and keep high
Our hold in this commanding family,
A blacker Fury then my selfe must rise,
To fill these roofes with fresh Impieties.
Rise cruell Ghost, ascend Caligula,
That lately didst the worlds proud scepter sway
Beyond our wish; who though an Emperour,
In wickednesse wer't greater then in power;
And cloth'd with flesh among mankind did'st dwell
A Fiend more black then any was in Hell.

From those darke vaults ascend; to blast this faire
And gorgious Palace, like that poisonous aire,
Which Earth-quakes from the grounds torne entrailes breath
To fill the world with pestilence and death.
Hee comes; Hee comes: the very house begins
To shake with horrour of approching sinnes.
The night growes blacker then before, and I
My selfe am fill'd with new Impiety.

CALIGULA'S Ghost.

Why am I raised from the vaults below?
What mischiefs can an aëry shadow do?
What can a naked Ghost performe? In vain
Are all intents, unlesse I reign'd againe
Obey'd by all the Romane power, and wore
That wicked body which I had before.
What then I did you know, and if your power
Could have maintain'd me longer Emperour,
I had outdone your wishes, and given birth
To such new mischiefes, as the suffring earth
Had groan'd to feele: what my intentions were
Did to the world in those black bookes appeare,
When all Romes Senate were to death design'd,
And chests of poison that I left behind,
Which since my death into the Ocean throwne,
Poison'd the waves for many leagues, and on
Poore fishes wrought that execution,
Which on mankind I ment they should have done.
What can I now performe alas?

MEGÆRA. *Enough.*

With thy contagious presence blast this roofe;
Infect th' Imperiall House with all the ill
That Hell and thou canst bring. Let mischiefe still
Reigne here, and keep out banish'd Piety,
Iustice, and Conscience; let no sacred ty
Of Nature, or Religious lawes restraine
Their Parricidall hands: all names bee vaine

Of brother, childe, or parent. let the wife
With impious rage destroy her husbands life,
The brother kill the brother, and the Sonne
Rip up his parents bowels.

GHOST.

'Twill be done.
The actors are my kindred, and like mine
Must play their parts: ambitious Agrippine,
Pursue thy cruell projects, and upon
A husband's murther raise thy Impious Sonne,
That he may play the Parricide againe,
And murder thee, that gav'st him life and reigne.
That all the world astonish'd at so high
Ingratitude and foule Impiety,
May feare the Monsters reigne, yet suffer more
Then they could feare, or ere was felt before.
Let what no foes, no furies durst conspire
To act 'gainst Rome, *nor I my selfe desire*
When I was Prince; bee cursed Nero's *crimes.*
Let his dire story in succeeding times
From all earths Tyrants else the wonder draw,
And men almost forget Caligula.

MEGÆRA.

The Fates consent; that thunder, which wee heare
From Acheron, *confirmes the Omen there.*
Downe wicked Ghost into thy cell below,
Wee must no longer bide; the Cocks doe crow,
The twinkling starres begin to hide their heads
The day would dawne, and from Auroraes *bed*
Would Titan *rise, but that he feares to see*
Such instruments of Hells impiety.
The Gods themselves forbid our longer stay,
For feare our presence should retard the day. Exeunt.

A Tragedy.

ACT. I. SCEN. I.

PALLAS, VITELLIUS,
POLLIO.

Pallas.

NOw is the time noble *Vitellius*,
For you, and you most honour'd *Pollio*,
To make that service you have done com-
To royall *Agrippina*; briefly thus: (pleat
The two commanders o'th' Prætorian
Crispinus Rufus, and that *Lucius Geta* (campe
Must be displac'd, and some of neerer trust
To her designes advanced in their roome,
Or else our power will nere be full, they love
Britannicus too well, this is the thing
The Empresse wishes; let your eloquence
And wisdome further it in *Cæsar's* eare.

Vitelli.

Feare us not *Pallas*; but what successors
Have we to take their charge?

Pallas.

One must take all.

You

You may pretend the inconvenience
Of two commanders, and so take from *Cesar*
All jealousie of the plot.

Pollio.

Who shall it be?

Pallas.

Burrhus Afranius a wise valiant man,
Belov'd and honour'd by the souldiers.
None can except against him, and the change
Will not displease the campe: nor can his merit
Make him lesse thankfull to her; knowing well,
'Twas in her power to make it otherwise.
But the advancing of such able men
As *Seneca* and *Burrhus* will take off
All envy from the Empresse and our selves.
Then wee with praise have wrought our purposes,
And made our party strong, while *Seneca*
Shall sway the Senate, *Burrhus* rule the campe
To her designes: but I'le presume no farther
T'instruct your wisedomes, or much lesse to doubt
Your true affections to the state and honour
Of *Agrippina*, who will then have power
To make more large requitall to her friends,
In which most high and happy ranke, you two
Are chiefly seated: shee acknowledges
Her selfe indebted to your eloquence
Noble *Vitellius*, who in Senate lately
You proov'd her marriage lawfull, and being Censor,
Depos'd *Silanus* from his Prætorship,
Who should have married young *Octavia*.
To you, brave *Pollio*, whose perswasions
Have beene the cause young *Nero* now enjoyes
That happy marriage, which *Silanus* lost.
But most of all shee ow'd to both your paines
In causing *Cæsar* to adopt her *Nero*.

Vitellius.

'Twas hard to worke at first. *Cæsar* stuck at it,
Alledging that the *Claudian* family
Never adopted any, and besides
When *Lucius Geta* and *Crispinus Rufus*
In love they bore to young *Britannicus*
Told him that that adoption to the world
Would bee ridiculous: by president
Wee did refute it, shewing how *Tiberius*
Having a Sonne and Nephew both alive,
Adopted th' issue of *Germanicus*.

Pallas.

My Lords, 'twas nobly carryed; this designe
That now wee have in hand, though not so hard
To worke, will prove as advantageous.
Bee you with *Cæsar*; I'le goe satisfie
The Empresse of your loves.

Vitellius. Pollio.

Farewell brave *Pallas*. *Exeunt Vitel. & Pol.*

Pallas.

Farewell my Lords. Goe flattering Senatours,
Goe use your best persuasive eloquence,
Whilest I alone upon your envie rise,
Whilest I injoy in *Agrippinaes* love
The fruit of your obsequious diligence.
What though my birth be humble, and my stile
But one of *Cæsars* freed-men, though I boast not
Patritian blood, nor in my galleries
Display old ranks of nose-lesse ancestours,
Or eare-cropt images, if I enjoy
What ever high Nobility can give
Respect and power: the state can witnesse it.
The Senate feare mee, and in flattery
Have su'd to *Cæsar* to conferre on mee
Prætorian and Quæstorian ornaments.
Which I at last vouchsafed to accept.

When my command alone has doom'd to death
The nobleſt of that order; men whoſe names
Old *Rome* has boaſted of, whoſe vertues rais'd
Her to that envi'd height that now ſhe holds.
Their murders ſtupid *Cæſar* rather choſe
To take upon himſelfe, then queſtion mee.
Let dull Patricians boaſt their aëry titles,
And count me baſe, whileſt I commend their lives,
And for the furtherance of my high intents,
Make nobleſt men my hated inſtruments.

Enter NARCISSUS.

But ha! *Narciſſus?* yes; there comes a man
That was my rivall once, whom I fear'd more
Then all the Lords of *Rome*, my fellow free'd man,
That knew our wayes of power; that not the Senate,
But *Cæſars* chamber did command the world,
And rule the fate of men: but Fortune's turn'd,
And he not worth my regard or feare.
In maſtring him I feele my greateſt ſtrength *exit.*

Narciſſus.

Not looke upon mee! am I fall'n ſo low?
Did I in equall place with this proud man,
Nay farre above him, ſway the ſtate, and rule
Great *Cæſar's* heart, while *Meſſallina* liv'd,
And was not there content (Oh puniſhment
Of my ambitious aimes) but cauſ'd the death
Of that looſe Empreſſe to bring in th' expulſt
Aelia Petina, and inſtead of her
Have let this Tygreſſe *Agrippina* in
This dragon ſpirit to devour us all
Except proud *Pallas* her adulterer?
What unavoided dangers every way
Threaten this life? For if young *Nero* reigne,
I dye, that ſought to croſſe his mothers match:
If ere *Britannicus* do reigne, I dye
That cauſ'd his mothers death. What ſhall I doo?

Where

Where shall I leane for safety? better trust
The innocent goodnesse of *Britannicus*
Then *Agrippinaes* feirce and cruell nature;
Nor can I hope more goodnesse from her sonne.
That may give longer respite to my feare.
Besides it bearcs the greater shew of justice,
And honest service to my Roiall Master.
Since wee must fall, it is some happinesse
To fall the honest way, if wee may call
That honesty at all, or reall vertue
To which necessity enforces us,
And wee by fortune not election practise.

Enter GETA, CRISPINUS.

Here comes two freinds of young *Britannicus*.
Haile *Lucius Geta*, haile *Crispinus Rufus*.

Geta. *Narcissus* haile.

Narcissus,

Brave *Romans* your are come
Fitly to ease my overburden'd breast
Of weighty thoughts, which I dare freely trust
Vnto your noble eares.

Geta.

You may *Narcissus*
Trust truth with us.

Crispinus.

Or any honest secret.

Geta.

What is 't you would with us?

Narcissus.

You know my Lords,
(And I must needs confesse) I was a meanes
Of *Messalinaes* death; but all the Gods
Can witnesse with mee how unwillingly
I lent a hand to that sad action;
And but for *Cæsar's* safety, which I prize
Above my life and fortunes, and which then

I thought

I thought endanger'd much by her hold act,
Nought in the world could ere have moov'd mee to it.

Crispinus.

What hence would you inferre?

Narcissus.

Then Know my Lords,
How little I respect my private ends
To doe the publike service, and can loose
My selfe for *Cæsars* good: it may be thought
When the most hopefull Prince *Britannicus*
Shall weare that wreath which all the world adores,
To me it may be fatall, as a foe
Vnto his mother: but I rather wish
My selfe for ever lost, then that brave Prince
Should not succeed his father.

Geta.

How! succeed?
What feare is there of that?

Crispinus.

What power on earth,
Can barre his right, whilest wee command the campe?
I'de rather see (which all the Gods avert)
Rome rent againe with civill broiles, then hee
Should loose unjustly the Imperiall throne.

Narcissus.

Y'are true and Noble friends; and here I vow
To joyne with you, and use my uttermost power
T' advance the honour of *Britannicus*.

Crispinus.

What danger threatens it?

Narcissus.

Doe you not know
To whom the Sonne of *Agrippina's* married;

Crispinus. Yes.

Narcissus.

And that honor were (no igh for him.

Without

Without adoption too, were his aimes private,
And that his crafty Mother did not cast
A way for him to the succession.

Crispinus.

'Twas strangely done of *Cæsar* I confesse.

Narcissus.

They make the faction strong, and cunningly
Encrease the traine of *Nero*, and displace
The faithfull servants af *Britannicus*.
Wise *Seneca* 's recall'd from banishment
By *Agrippinaes* meanes, not for the love
Shee beares his vertue; but to make him hers,
That *Seneca* 's authority may gaine
The peoples love to her ambitious sonne,
Ofwhose young yeares hee takes tuition.

Crispinus. I think no lesse.

Geta. Besides to make the match
For her young *Nero* with *Octavia*.
Noble *Silanus* dy'd, who might have proov'd
A faithfull prop to *Claudius* family.

Narcissus.

In blood that fatall marriage was begun,
I feare the Omen; *Agrippina's* feirce
And cruell nature has too much been seene
In this short time. *Lollia Paulina*, Neece
To *Cotta Messalinus*, and late wife
To *Caius Cæsar*, for no other cause
Then aiming once at *Claudius* marriage
Is banish'd *Italy*; her goods are seiz'd,
And but five millions of Sesterces left her
Of all her great estate; but there the malice
Of this fell woman stayes not: now wee heare
A *Tribune* is dispach'd away, to kill
The banish'd Lady, and bring back her head.

Crispinus.

Oh barbarous cruelty!

Narcissus.

Narcissus.

Yet more I feare,
Since her *Domitius* is adopted now.
I feare shee 'll shortly aime at higher blood.

Geta.

Wee 'll guard the life of young *Britannicus.*

Narcissus.

And I 'll be vigilant for *Cæsar 's* safety.
When all her ends are wrought, his death is next.

Enter BRITANNICUS.

Geta.

Here comes the youthfull hope of *Rome* and us.

Britanicus.

Tell mee, my *friends*, am not I *Cæsar 's* sonne?

Crispinus.

My Lord, who dares to question it?

Britannicus.

I 'm sure,
I was his eldest sonne, and whilest I liv'd
I thought that *Cæsar* had not lack'd an heire
But I at last have found an elder brother,
Domitius is adopted *Cæsar's* sonne
His name is *Nero* now. I cannot tell
What is my fault.

Geta.

Excellent youth, how much
Beyond his yeeres hee apprehends his wrongs?

Crispinus.

Feare not sweet Prince, though *Agrippinas* sonne
Bee two yeere elder then your selfe, the Senate
Will never judge that an adopted Sonne
Shall in succession bee preferr'd before
The true and naturall heire.

Britannicus.

You ever lov'd mee,
Pray doe so still.

Geta

While wee have breath, my Lord,
You shall command our lives.

Crispinus

How unawares
Has feeble *Cæsar* wrought a snare to catch
His own unhappy life in! grow sweet prince,
Grow up to strengthen the Imperiall house,
And Curbe the furious malice of thy foes.

Enter NERO, PALLAS.

Nero.

Brother *Britannicus* haile.

Britannicus.

Haile to you
Domitius Anobarbus.

Nero.

Doe you scorne
My salutation, or not know my name?

Britannicus.

That was your fathers name; and why not yours?

Nero.

How 's that? Proud boy. *Exeunt Brit. & reliqui.*

Pallas.

Well, let them goe, my Lord.
'Twas not the braine of young *Britannicus*
That could give birth to this minurious scorne,
Though for his yeeres, the boy be capable.
But riper heads then his: there went his counsell
Crispinus Rufus, and that *Lucius Geta*,
Who swell the youth with boasting hopes, and thinke
Their power can give protection to his pride.
I'le make them see their errour, and perceive,
One breath of mine can blow them from their strengths.
This newes I 'll beare to *Agrippina* straight.
Come Prince; *Britannicus* shall find anon
What feeble props his pride has lean 'd upon. *Exeunt.*

AGRIPPINA, SENECA, VITELLIUS, POLLIO.

Agrippina.

You are my Judges.

Seneca.

Your poore ſervants, Madam.

Agrippina.

Nay that muſt be your office; you have read
My Commentaries over, and I looke for
A faithfull cenſure: I am ſure, my Lords,
You have both learning able to diſcerne,
And ſuch integritie as will not flatter.
Speake *Seneca*; I ſee they looke on you:
How doe you like them?

Seneca. Royall *Agrippina*,
Such, and ſo good they bee, that ableſt men
May boldly ſpeake, and not offend the truth,
Nor you at all; the ſtile is full and Princely.

Vitellius.

Stately and abſolute, beyond what ere
Theſe eyes have ſeene; and *Rome*, whoſe majeſtie
Is there deſcrib'd, in after times ſhall owe
For her memoriall to your learned pen,
More then to all thoſe fading monuments
Built with the riches of the ſpoiled world.
When ruſt ſhall eate her braſſe, when times ſtrong hand
Shall bruiſe to duſt her marble Palaces,
Triumphall Arches, Pillars, Obeliskes,
When *Julius* Temple, *Claudius* Aquæducts,
Agrippa's Baths, and *Pompey's* Theater,
Nay *Rome* it ſelfe ſhall not be found at all,
Hiſtorians books ſhall live; thoſe ſtrong records,
Thoſe deathleſſe monuments alone ſhall ſhew
What, and how great the *Roman* Empire was.

Pollio.

The act is Noble; not the preſent world

Alone

Alone ſhall owe to *Agrippinas* worth
(As for her gratious government it does)
But future ages ſhall acknowledge more
To the rich labours of her Royall pen.

Agrippina.

The wiſeſt Princes never ſought to raiſe
Their preſent ſtate alone, but to preſerve
Themſelves immortall by an endleſſe fame.
For memory of mee, beſides theſe bookes,
If that our Augures faile not in their skill,
Or flatter not, that *German* Colony,
Which I of late deducted o're the *Rhine*
To *Ubium*, for evermore the name
Of *Agrippinaes* Colony ſhall beare.

Vitellius.

That act, though great, declares your power alone,
Your wealth and greatneſſe: but theſe learned bookes
Expreſſe your wiſedome, and for theſe you owe
Nothing at all to Fortune.

Agrippina.

Thus I meane
To ſpend all time which from affaires of ſtate,
And buſineſſe of our Empire can be ſpar'd.

Seneca.

Is ſhe already turn'd our Emperour?

Agrippina.

Thoſe wretches have too narrow ſoules, who thinke
That perſons great and eminent in ſtate
Can ſpare no time to purchaſe fame by writing,
But what they ſteale from action and imployment,
As if no mind were large enough for both.
Who was more full of action, and more fit
To rule, nay rule the world, then *Julius Cæſar*?
Yet he was of my mind.

Seneca.

Oh ſtrange male ſpirit!
Can there be found no other parallell

But

But *Julius Cæsar* to a womans minde?

Agrippina.

Yet *Julius* was too blame, hee toild too much
To get his honour, and too much debarr'd
His nature the free use of Princely pleasures.
Sure *Lucius Sylla* had an ample minde;
Tis *Syllas* Character, that *Salust* gives him,
A free and great enjoyer of his pleasures,
Yet how industrious his actions speake,
Hee found fit time to rule the *Romane* world,
And write both Greeke and Latine Commentaries.

Seneca.

The soules of *Sylla* and of *Cæsar* both
I thinke have enter'd her.

Agrippina.

Well worthy friends,
You doe approve my way of writing then.

Seneca.

Yes, gracious Madam; and because you nam'd
Great *Julius* to us, I was thinking now
That as in blood, so in your stiles of writing
There was some neerenesse.

Agrippina.

Seneca, I thanke you;
But I confesse your positive approbation
Pleas'd mee as well as that comparison.

Seneca.

Does not your Majestie esteeme his booke?

Agrippina.

Indifferent well; a good loose carelesse way.
I thinke directly with *Asinius Pollio*,
Had *Cæsar* liv'd, hee would have mended it;
The man had farre more in him then that shewes.

Seneca.

Yet under favour, Madam, some have thought
Those Commentaryes hardly could be mended,

A ſtile ſo ſtrong, naked, and beautifull,
Free from affected words, and from all gloſſe
Or dreſſe of Oratory, as in ſtead
Of leading others in a way to write,
It quite diſcourages the ableſt men.
So *Hirtius* thought, and that ſam 'd *Cicero*,
The greateſt maſter ef *Romes* eloquence.

Agrippina.

Are thoſe your authors then? that *Hirtius*
Was *Cæſars* ſervant partiall in his heart,
Or elſe hee flatter'd him; for *Cicero*,
They were ſo farre out of his tedious ſtraine,
Hee could not cenſure them.

Seneca.

Yet able men
Can truly cenſure of another ſtile
Then what themſelves have uſ'd.

Agrippina.

Hee was not able,
No, not in Oratory; had I rul'd
Rome and her Senate then, as now I doe,
Not all th' Orations that e're *Cicero*
Made in the Senate, ſhould have ſav'd one haire
Of an offendour, or condemn'd a Mouſe.

Vitellius.

How confident ſhee is in cenſuring!

Seneca.

I am amaz'd: but let her have her way.
Forgive my ſilence noble *Cicero*;
Here thy defence is vaine; but what I ſpare,
The tongues of all poſterity ſhall ſpeake.

Enter PALLAS, *Tribune.*

Pallas.

The Tribune, Madam, is return'd and brings
Lollia Paulinaes head.

Agrippina.

Let him come in.

Tribune.

Your pleasure, great *Augusta*, is perform'd.

Agrippina.

Let me peruse this face: ha! 'tis much chang'd.
Her teeth shall make me sure, they did not grow *Dio.*
The common way; I am confirm'd; 'tis shee.
Reward him *Pallas.*

Tribune.

The Gods preserve
Augusta Agrippina.

Agrippina.

O pale death,
Thou mock of beauty, and of greatnesse too:
Was this the face, that once in *Cæsar's* love
Was *Agrippinaes* rivall, and durst hope
As much 'gainst mee, as my unquestion'd power
Has wrought on her? Was this that beautie, once
That wore the riches of the world about it?
For whose attire, all lands, all seas were search'd,
All creatures rob'd? This! This was that *Paulina*,
Whom *Cajus Cæsar* serv'd, whom *Rome* ador'd
And the world feared.

Seneca.

Such a sight mee 'thinks
Should make her sadly thinke of humane frailty.

Agrippina.

Take hence the head, least in her death shee gaine
A greater conquest o're mee, then her life
Could ever doe, to make me shed a teare.
I would not wrong the justice I have done
So much as to lament it now: You know
My friends, shee had a spirit dangerous.
And though my nature could have pardon'd her,
Reason of state forbade it, which then told mee

Great

Great ruines have been wrought by foolish pity.

Seneca.

Would shee had such a nature! but 'tis now
Too late to give her counsell.

Pallas.

So let all
That dare contest with *Agrippina*, fall. *Enter servant.*

Servant.

Cæsar is come to visite you.

Agrippina.

Now friends,
Vitellius, Pollio, Pallas second mee.

Enter CÆSAR, ANTISTIUS.

Cæsar.

How fares my *Agrippina*?

Agrippina.

Wondrous well,
When I am blest with *Cæsars* company.

Cæsar.

That shall be oft, my love, when *Romes* affaires,
And publike businesse will give me leave.

Agrippina.

I would partake my selfe of those affaires,
Rather then want your presence.

Pallas.

I beleeve it.

Cæsar.

Thou shalt; 'tis onely for thy dearest sake
I love my fortunes, thy sweet fellowship
Makes light the burthen of my government.

Agrippina.

To ease great *Cæsars* care, shall ever bee
The height of my desires: before you came
My heart was sad. I sent for these my friends
T'impart the reason to them.

Cæſar.

Sad; for what?

Agrippina.

Weighing the troubles of a Princely ſtate,
And all the dangers that ſtill threaten it.

Cæſar.

Dangers!

Pallas.

Shee ſtrikes upon the fitteſt ſtring;
No paſſion reignes in him ſo much as feare.

Agrippina.

Wee were deviſing of the fitteſt meanes
To give your ſtate ſecurity: you know
Your ſtrongeſt guard is the Prætorian campe.

Cæſar.

Moſt true.

Agrippina.

That campe commanded now by two,
May be by Captaines too ambitious ſtrife
Divided into factions, and ſo made
Leſſe ſerviceable, ſhould your ſafety need them.

Vitellius.

Cæſar remembers when that bold attempt
Of *Silius* was, how the Prætorian campe
Was by their generall ſtrife in mutiny,
And had not one been choſen for that day
To rule them all, *Cæſar* had not been ſafe.

Pollio.

Wiſe men in calmes provide for ſtormes to come.
None knowes how dangerous the times may prove,
Though now the ſtate be ſafe, and may the Gods
To *Cæſar's* honor long preſerve it ſo.

Seneca.

What new deſigne is this, that all of them *aſide.*
Second ſo readily, and I was not
Acquainted with it? If't prove miſchievous,

I thanke

I thanke the Empresse for my ignorance.

Agrippina.

Burrhus Afranius is a worthy man,
Fit for the place, and faithfull, well-belov'd
By all the souldiers: such a change, my Lord,
None can except against: Let him take all.

Seneca.

What ere her ends may bee, this proposition
For noble *Burrhus* sake, I must approve.

Cæsar.

'Tis true, my love, I make no question
Of *Burrhus* worth, and fitnesse for the place:
But what offence have *Geta* and *Crispinus*
Been e're accus'd of? Or what just suspitions
Are there of them?

Agrippina.

I will not be unjust,
To accuse guiltlesse men, although I price
Thy safety, *Cæsar*, equall to my life.
I know no crimes of note they have committed.

Vitellius.

Cæsar, it is no losse to them at all;
They both have plentious fortunes to retire to.

Pollio.

And in so neere a cause, who dares examine
Great *Cæsar's* counsells, or enquire the reason?

Agrippina.

Shall *Burrhus* have it *Cæsar*? speake thy pleasure.
Or if my care offend, I shall hereafter
Forbeare to meddle.

Cæsar.

No, sweet *Agrippina*;
Since thou wilt have it so; goe *Pallas*, draw
The warrant straight, and seale it in our name:
Let *Geta* and *Crispinus* be remoov'd,
And *Burrhus* take possession presently.

This day, my love, the *Britane* prisoners
Sent from *Ostorius Scapula*, and late
Arriv'd at *Rome*, shall be in publike shew'd.
There thou shalt see that brave *Barbarian* Prince,
That bold *Caractacus*, whose stubborne spirit
So many yeares contemn'd the *Roman* power.
Hee now is taken.

Pollio.

'Twas a victory
Sent from the Gods to honor *Claudius* reigne.

Agrippina.

Had he been basely taken, or at first
Yeelded himselfe, as hee had got no honour,
But been forgotten in his fall, and nought
Had e're been mention'd of him but his death:
So had thy glory *Cæsar* been farre lesse.

Vitellius.

Not warre-like *Syphax* the *Numidian* King,
Stubborne *Jugurtha*, nor great *Perseus*
Ere brought to *Rome* by their captivity
More reall honour then this *Britane* Prince.

Cæsar.

Nor doe wee price our name *Brittannicus*
Fetch'd from that Iland, lesse then *Scipio*
His honour'd name of *Africanus* priz'd.

Pollio.

Thy stile, O *Cæsar*, is the greater farre
Drawne from the conquest of another world,
Which nature ment by enterposing cold
And stormy seas, to guard from Latian armes.

Vitellius.

Great *Julius Cæsar* did but only shew
That land to us, whose conquest was reserv'd
By heavens decree to honour *Claudius* name.

Agrippina.

Cæsar, let's sit together; one Tribunall

Will hold us both.

Cæsar.

It shall bee so, my love,
Thou, as my selfe, shalt pardon or condemne.

ACTUS II.

POPPÆA, OTHO.

Poppæa.

MY love, deare *Otho*, faine would bid thee stay:
But danger now forbids it, for my Lord
Returnes by this time homewards from the Pallace.

Otho.

Wee must obey the times necessity
Sweetest *Poppæa*, though I part from thee
With such a sad'nesse as will loose by all
Comparisons and cannot bee exprest
But by it selfe, to say that *Otho* parts
From faire *Poppæa*, is more tragicall
Then soule from body, honour from a man.

Poppæa.

I could, mee thinkes, flatter my feares, to keepe
Thee ever heere.

Otho.

And I can scorne all feares,
And dangers too, if thou command mee stay.

Poppæa.

No, goe, my Love, and warily let's meete
That wee may often meete (but why ſhould ſtill
Our higheſt bliſſe want freedome?)

Otho.

'Tis, my faire one,
The envy of the Gods, who thinke the ſtate
Of men would æquall theirs, if greateſt joyes
Were eaſyeſt to obtaine, and therfore ſtill
In horrid dangers wrap their deareſt guifts,
As all the Poëts ancient fables taught.
Fire-breathing Buls did guard the Colchian fleece;
A waking dragon kept the golden fruit.
But thou, *Poppæa*, in my thoughts a prize
Of greater value, and more luſtre farre
Then that which drew the bold Theſſalian forth
So farre from Greece, or made Alcmenaes ſonne
Invade th' Heſperides, art kept from mee
By ſtronger guards, the awfull Roman lawes,
Thoſe lawes reſiſt our love.

Poppæa.

Oh where was *Otho*
Then, when my virgin bloſſome was the hope
Of thouſand noble youths? hadſt thou beene ſeene
Poppæas bed and beauties had beene thine,
And with a lawfull uncontrolled flame
Had met thy wiſh in thoſe delights, which now
Wee are inforc'd to ſteale.

Otho.

Muſt it bee ſo
For ever then?

Poppæa.

It muſt while *Rufus* lives.

Otho.

Nor can I blame bleſt *Rufus*, if hee ſtrive
To keepe that wealth, which if it lay beyond

The

The Indian *Ganges*, Scythian *Tanais*,
Or horned *Ammons* ſcorch'd and thirſty ſands,
Would draw the Roman Monarch to forſake
His worlds Imperiall ſeat there to enjoy,
And think thoſe baniſh'd that remain'd at Rome.
If I were *Cæſar*, and condemn'd by fate
To want *Poppæas* love, I ſhould bee poore.
No other deare prerogative could that
High wreath beſtow, but only power to make
Thee mine without a rivall: I might then
With boldneſſe take thee from *Criſpinus* armes.

Poppæa.

But could that act bee lawfull?

Otho.

Canſt thou doubt it?
Where two loves meete can marriage bee unlawfull?
Of which love is the ſoule, the very forme.
That gives it being no dead outward ty,
But natures ſtrong and inward ſympathy.
Can make a marriage, which the Gods alone
Have power to breede in us, and therfore they
Have only power to ty ſo ſweete a knot.
I am thy mate; nor did thy father, when
Hee gave that ſnowy hand unto another,
Ought but rebell againſt the Gods decree.

Poppæa.

Thou art to good an advocate, and I
Too partiall for a judge.

Otho.

Bee conſtant to mee
Till fortune give a bolder priviledge.
And warrant to our love, of which I have
Receiv'd ſuch faire preſages, as I cannot
Deſpaire; meane while by ſtealth I muſt behold
Thoſe ſtarry eyes, and think my ſelfe moſt happy
In that, though no man know my happineſſe.

Poppæa.

Can men count those delights a happinesse
Which they conceale?

Otho.

Yes, those that truly love. *Enter Fulvia.*

Fulvia.

Madam, my Lord is come.

Poppæa.

Farewell deare *Otho.*

Otho.

Farewell: love guard thee till wee meete againe. *exit.*

Enter CRISPINUS, GETA.

Crispinus.

Come *Lucius* study to forget it now,
And let's bee truly merry; my *Poppæa*
Bid' *Lucius Geta* welcome, my colleague
That was, but still my frend.

Poppæa.

You are most welcome.

Geta.

Thankes fairest *Lady.*

Poppæa.

But my Lord, what meanes
That speech of yours, that *Lucius Geta* once
Was your colleague and is not.

Crispinus.

I'l tell thee,
Great *Agrippina* has commanded *Cæsar*
To command *Pallas* to command us two.
To quit our charge and suddainly resigne
The governement of the Prætorian campe
To Burrhus hand; at which hee stormes; but I
Am merryer farre, and lighter then before.
Wee may live freely now; *Cæsar* has tane
A weighty burthen from my weary necke
I thanke his goodnesse.

Geta

Geta.

Thanke his ſottiſhneſſe,
Tis that has pleaſured you. ah frend it needes
Muſt grieve all noble hearts, that can love juſtice,
And pity ſuffring innocence, to ſee
The harmeleſſe yeares of young *Britannicus*
Expoſ'd to all the malice of his foes,
And ſtupid *Cæſar* made the inſtrument
To ruine his owne ſonne: whileſt his great power
By others is abuſ'd againſt himſelfe
And his poſterity.

Criſpinus.

I do beleive it.

Geta.

His ſervants all, that to himſelfe were true,
Or faithfull to his ſonne, are murther'd now,
Or elſe diſplac'd by her: our truth's the cauſe
That wee have loſt our places.

Criſpinus.

Tis no matter;
Wee looſe no honour by our truth; and ſince
While wee had power, wee faithfully diſcharg'd
Our truſt to *Cæſar*, let's no longer ſtirve
To guard him 'gainſt his will; but take his gift.
Hee gives us eaſe, and freedome, to retire,
And taſt the ſweetes of privaty, and there
Enjoy our lives free from the glorious noiſe,
And troubles of a Court; inſtead of waiting
On *Cæſar* now, on thee I will beſtow
That time, my faire *Poppæa*, and attend
On thy delights; thou wilt not caſt mee off
As *Cæſar* does.

Fulvia.

Shee cannot promiſe you
I kuow her heart better then you in that.

Crispinus.

None can describe the sweetes of countrey life
But those blest men that do enjoy, and tast them.
Plaine husband men, though farre below our pitch
Of fortune plac'd, enjoy a wealth above us.
To whome the earth with true and bountious justice
Free from warres cares returnes an easy food.
They breath the fresh and uncorrupted aire,
And by cleare brookes enjoy untroubled sleepes.
Their state is fearlesse, and secure, enrich'd
With severall blessings, such as greatest Kings
Might in true justice envy, and themselves
Would count too happy, if they truly knew them.

Geta.

Tis true, *Crispinus*, greatest Monarchs oft
Have in the midst of all their carefull glories
Desir'd such lives as those plaine people lead.

Crispinus.

Let us enjoy that happinesse then *Lucius*
The countrey sports and recreations
And friends as innocent as wee, with whom
Wee need not feare the strength of richest wine
In drawing out our secrets: but well fill'd
At supper time may hold a free discourse
Of *Cæsar's* weakenesse, of the wealth and pride
Of his freed'men, how lordly *Pallas* rules;
How feirce and cruell *Agrippina* is,
What slaves the Roman Senate are become,
And yet next morne awake with confidence.

Poppœa.

All this, my Lord, you may discourse at Rome
If you can wisely choose your company.

Crispinus.

Well said *Poppœa*, thou art a woman right
Thou lov'st the city well.

Geta.

I cannot blame her,
Such beauty seekes no corners, but may well
Become th' Imperiall city of the world.

Crispinus.

Come *Lucius Geta*, let's goe in and laugh
At our proud enemies, enjoy theire malice,
And drowne our cares in rich *Falernian* wine
As ancient as *Opimius* Consulship.

Enter to them NARCISSUS.

Geta.

Here comes a man, *Crispinus*, I beleive
Is sory for this change.

Crispinus.

I thinke so *Lucius*.

Narcissus.

Haile noble *Romans*.

Crispinus.

Haile to you *Narcissus*.
How dare you venture a salute on us,
Or make a visite to such guilty men?

Narcissus.

Guilty my Lord, in what?

Crispinus.

In beeing wrong'd.
Those that are wrong'd in Court, are made offendours.

Narcissus.

I must confesse, my Lord, it was a wrong
To you and your Colleague to bee displac'd;
But you have spirits great enough to scorne
That injury, and pity him that did it,
I meane that suffer'd his proud foes to doe it
Rather against himselfe then you; the wrong
Must fall on *Cæsar*, and his haplesse house.
Blinded by fate, and neere his fall, hee throwes
Away the best supporters of his state.

Geta.

Geta.

The thought of that as I am true, *Narcissus*,
Afflicts mee more then mine owne losse can doe.

Crispinus.

For mee, I thinke my selfe well free'd from trouble
Were't not for feare of poore *Britannicus*.

Narcissus.

I doo beleeve it, noble Lords; but you
Are now dischar'gd, and may retire with safety.
My part is yet to play, a part of danger,
And I will act it bravely: here I vow
By all the Gods, no feare shall make mee shrinke
Till I have once more righted *Claudius*
Against the lusts and treasons of a wife.
Nor do I boast of *Messalinaes* death.
It was the times necessity, that made
Mee then to shew my power: that power perchance
Is yet as much; nor shall the Lordly *Pallas*,
Though swell'd with *Agrippinaes* lustfull favours,
And back'd by her authority, hee thinke
Himselfe sole ruler in th' Imperiall house,
Finde that *Narcissus* is so fall'n in spirit
But that I dare attempt as much as then.
Great *Cæsar's* safety is as much in danger
As then it was, his nuptiall bed as stain'd,
And I will dy, or take the same revenge,
That then was taken; all their plots and treasons
Will I reveale to *Cæsar*, and pursue it
With such a dauntlesse constancy, that if
The Gods forget not to bee just, this day
Proud *Agrippina*, and her minion fall.
The young *Britannicus* shall stand secure
In his high birthright; *Messalinaes* ghost
Shall then perchance, although shee hate mee now,
Forgive the hand that caus'd her overthrow,

Geta.

Bravely resolu'd, *Narcissus.*

Crispinus.

You shall doe
An act that all good men shall thank you for.
Will you goe in, and taste my wine'.

Narcissus.

Not now.
I came but only to reveale my purpose
To you, whose noble wishes may befriend it,
And when occasion serves, may truly witnesse
My just intents; this hower I am expected
By *Cæsar* in his gardens; there I'll put
My life upon the hazard; every minute
May breede a change, and all delayes have danger.
For *Cæsar* upon those discoveryes
That I already have made to him, utter'd
Some words last night at supper in his wine.
Of which I feare that *Agrippina* tooke
Too great a notice; therfore speede must helpe us.
Farewell my Lords.

Ambo.

Farewell: the Gods assist thee. *Exeunt.*

OTHO.

Otho.

So rich a bondage is *Poppæas* love,
That I were base if I should wish for freedome,
Nay more, ingrate, should I desire to change
So sweete a care for quietnesse it selfe;
Should I suppose that state, which some dull soules
Call calme content, were halfe so rich, so free
As are these pinings, this captivity.
Were there in love no cares, no sighs, no feares,
There were in love no happinesse at all.
What blisse, what wealth did e're the world bestow
On man, but cares and feares attended it?

Yet

Yet who ſo baſe, as, to bee freed from thoſe,
Would throw away the higheſt bliſſe on earth?
Let ſilly ſhepheards, whoſe poore narrow ſoules
Not much exceede the beaſts they tend and feede,
That know, like them, no farther regions
Then ſome few feilds, no larger bounds of pleaſure
Then ſatisfaction of bare natures needes,
Bee ſtill ſecure ſince they have nought to looſe,
And reſt content becauſe they never knew
What cityes were, and gorgeous *Pallaces*.
Should Monarchs, who are taught to know th' extent
Of natures wealth, and what the world affords,
Forgoe their glorious fortunes, cauſe they want
That wretched thing, which only ignorance,
And low contempt can give, Security?
Should I forgoe my faire *Poppæas* love
Becauſe ſome cares, ſome feares, and ſighs attend it:
When every ſmile of hers can recompence
A thouſand ſuch? were too much pooreneſſe in mee
Had I nere ſeene thoſe ſtarry eyes of hers
More hapleſſe farre my ignorance had beene.
I had, like wretched men, that are borne blinde,
Nere knowne there was a Sunne to guild the world.
But to injoy her love without all feares,
Without all rivalls, were a bliſſe beyond
Mortality: the Gods would envy mee.
Shee's now another mans: that may bee thought
The greateſt barre to *Otho's* happineſſe.
But I have framed in my jealous thoughts
A greater barre then that: young *Nero Cæſar*,
In whoſe acquaintance I of late have found
So neere a roome, as faire preſages tell us,
Is like to weare th' Imperiall wreath: his power
May take her for mee from *Criſpinus* armes.
But then perchance I looſe her more then ever.
Or ſhould hee ſee her now to rivall mee

I were

I were undone: hee's amorous, and oft
Sollicites mee to let him ſee my Miſtres.
I for that frendſhip, which I dare not looſe,
Dare not deny his importunity.
And therfore to prevent what may enſue
(For yet hee never heard *Poppæas* name)
I have made love to the faire freed woman
Young *Acte* of meane ranke, but ſuch a face,
As whoſoever had not ſeene *Poppæa*
Would thinke this *Acte* natures Maſterpeice.
On her will I divert young *Nero's* love.
And to that purpoſe I have got her picture.
But here hee comes. *Enter Nero.*

Nero.

What *Otho*, ſtill retir'd?
Where lives the face that breedes this melancholy?
There is no other cauſe can doe't: I know
Thou art not buſy'd with affaires of ſtate.
I prithee let mee ſee her: a friends counſell
May eaſe thy paſſion.

Otho.

Tis not fit a Prince
Should ſtoope ſo low as to the paſſions
Of private men.

Nero.

The name of friend admits
Of no ſuch diſtance.

Otho.

Sr. no man, whom you
Are pleaſ'd to call a friend, deſerves that name,
Unleſſe hee know himſelfe to bee your ſervant.

Nero.

Come prithee leave thy fooling, and bee plaine.
Where there is no familiarity
Society is loſt: why art thou fearfull
To let mee ſee her whoſoere ſhee bee?

Otho.

Sr. I could give you a plaine common reason,
If shee bee foule, shee is not worth your sight.
If faire, you are too great a rivall for mee.
But yet, know Sr. I am so free from those
Unworthy feares, that I dare trust my life,
My love, and all I have into your hands.

Nero.

Spoke like a friend, and thou maist safely doo't.
Then first behold her picture, and by that
Find whether shee bee worth the sight or no.

Nero.

Can any mortall beauty bee so sweete?

Otho.

I would there were not.

Nero.

Sure the painter flatters.

Otho.

Oh no, hee had not art enough to reach
The glory of it; were the substance here
How dull would this now lovely table show!
See how his greedy eyes devoure the picture.
Hee's caught, hee's caught; Cupid' I thanke thee uow.

Nero.

I never saw true beauty till this houre.
But wherfore didst thou wish there were no substance
So sweete as this? why would'st thou bee depriv'd
Of such a happinesse? but I perceive
It is thy feare: come, let it not bee so.
I but desire to see whether the painter
Have err'd or no: and do not thinke, my *Otho*,
That I will wrong thy love so much, or make
My wife *Octavia* jealous.

Otho.

Sr. how ere,
My life, my love, and fortunes all are yours. *Exeunt.*

CLAU-

CLAUDIUS, NARCISSUS.

Narcissus.

Your Majesty may yet prevent it all,
And justly throw upon the Traitors heads
That ruine which so boldly threatens you,
And your too much abused family.
Yet *Cæsar* may bee safe, if hee will use
That power the Gods have put into his hands.

Cæsar.

What course, *Narcissus*, can wee run, to make
The people sensible of our estate,
What danger threatens us, and how our Justice
Is forc'd to meete the treasons of a wife?

Narcissus.

Let not too vaine a care of popular breath,
Or what the Vulgar may surmise, outweigh
The safety of youre person' and youre house.
But I am most assur'd that all the world
Except youre selfe, have long observ'd theire plots,
And if they see your waken'd Justice now
Arise to censure *Agrippinaes* death,
They will not thinke the execution done
Too soone on her: these humble knees, Oh *Cæsar*.
Which for your safety I so oft have bow'd
Before the Gods, now to your sacred selfe
I bow, entreating that you would bee safe,
And not beleeve the Gods by miracle
Will worke for you, whilest you neglect your selfe.

Cæsar.

Arise *Narcissus*, tis th' unhappy fate
Of Princes ever (as *Augustus Cæsar*
Was wont to say) the people ne're beleeve
That treasons were complotted 'gainst theirepersons
Untill those treasons take effect, and then
Too late perchance they pity and beleeve.

Nar-

Narcissus.

But was the wise *Augustus* therfore slow
Or timorous to cut offenders off?
Fear'd hee the peoples whispers? *Cæsar*, no.
Hee well knew to use the sword hee had.
Hee had not else liv'd till times gentle hand
Dissolv'd in peace his long felicity,
And made the world by such continuance
Of power, beleeve hee was a God on earth.

Cæsar.

But some offendours are too great to suffer
The common course of Justice: against such
Wise Princes have forborne to draw the sword,
And rather sought some wayes of policy
How to ensnare them.

Narcissus.

Cæsar, those are wayes
As much unfit for Princes as unsafe.
As many Monarchs have in dangerous times
Beene ruin'd quite by going wayes too low
(Though they have seemed subtle) as proud subjects
Have beene undone by playing Princes parts.
And as this high, and open way befits
The power and person of earths greatest Monarch:
So it befits the times necessity.
You have already, *Cæsar*, shew'd your sword,
And if you strike not now, you do not right
Your selfe at all, but only arme your foes
With plots of mischeife to prevent their owne,
And hasten on your quicke destruction.
You have already threaten'd, and those speeches
By *Agrippina*, and her minion *Pallas*
Were overheard; who, like seene snakes will now
Bestirre themselves in a more desperate fury.
I have already cast mine owne poore life
Into the utmost hazard: but alas!

That is a thing not now conſiderable.
The Gods above can tell how willingly
For *Cæſar's* ſafety I would ſacrifice
This life; make mee the cheifeſt inſtrument
Impoſe what part of this exploit you pleaſe
Upon *Narciſſus* hand, and if I faile
To execute, I'll not refuſe to dy.

Cæſar.

Oh my *Narciſſus*; I have found thy faith
In other ſervices: it is reſolv'd,
Their pride ſhall feele my juſtice; thou ſhalt ſee
How ſoone I will ſecure my ſelf and thee. *Exeunt.*

AGRIPPINA, PALLAS.

Agrippina.

Wee are diſcover'd *Pallas*: all our drifts
Are ſounded by *Narciſſus*, and by him
Lay'd ope to *Cæſar*, who diſſembling yet
The knowledge of it, ſeekes a ſuddaine way
To ruine both of us: nor had wee fear'd
So ſoone as felt his fury, had not wine
Betray'd his thoughts to us; you know laſt night
What ſpeeches *Cæſar* in his drunkenneſſe
Let fall before us; and twas lately told mee
That meeting young *Britannicus* hee wept,
Confeſt that hee had wrong'd him, and there vow'd
A quicke redreſſe: what counſell ſhall wee take?

Pallas.

Wee have no time for counſell: but muſt act
As ſoone as thinke: wee goe not now to worke
But to prevent a miſcheife, and our cure
Muſt bee as ſtrong, and quicke of operation
As our diſeaſe is dangerous and ſuddaine.
That bird, that ſees the ſnare, and will bee caught
Deſerves his death, and ſince that *Cæſar* knowes
His purpoſe is diſcover'd (as *Narciſſus*
Ha's before this inform'd him that wee heard it)

Hee'll

Hee'l quickly act what elſe hee had deferr'd.
No way is left us but to meete the danger,
And for prevention firſt attempt to doe
That which wee feare to ſuffer.

Agrippina.

By what meanes
Shall wee procure his death? for poiſon ſlow
Perchance may faile to lend a timely helpe
Unto our ſafety; and too quicke a venome
May make the fact ſupected.

Pallas.

Should the fact
Bee nere ſo much ſuſpected, your eſtate
Would bee more ſafe then now it is; but who
Would dare to utter it when *Cæſar's* dead,
And your owne Sonne the Emperour: for ſo
My confidence aſſures mee it will bee.
Therfore bee ſpeedy, Madam; for your danger
Where fame, where life, and Empire all are threaten'd,
Gives you no nice election. So 't bee done
No matter how.

Agrippina.

Thou haſt confirm'd mee, *Pallas.*
The way's reſolv'd already; there were lately
The faireſt muſhromes ſent from Lybia
That ere theſe eyes beheld, a meat which hee
Affects with greedineſſe; in one of thoſe
Cæſar ſhall meete his death; if that ſhould faile
His cheife *Phyſitian Xenophon* is mine.
But are things ſtong, and ready to confirme
The Empire upon *Nero.*

Pallas.

Tis the beſt
And happieſt time, before *Britannicus*
Bee growne to riper yeares, while yet hee weares
His childiſh robe, and *Nero* has beene ſhowne

To

) all the people in triumphall weedes.
when the deed is done, place warily
ur guards about the Pallace gates, and keepe
itannicus within; whileſt *Nero* back'd
y *Seneca* and *Burrhus*, by the campe
And *Senate* bee ſaluted Emperonr,
And all be ſetled ſure.

Agrippina.

How fit a time
To work his own deſtruction *Cæſar* choſe
To tempt with threatning *Agrippinas* fury!

ACTUS III. SCENA. I.

PETRONIUS, OTHO, MONTANUS.

Petronius.

Is *Nero* fir'd?

Otho.

Extremly. I at firſt
Seem'd melancholy to looſe *Acte* ſo,
And hee ſeem'd loath to wrong mee; but at laſt
When his deſires were high, I cunningly
Withdrew my intereſt, and gave way to his.
Which hee has taken for the greateſt favour

 That

That ever man could doe him and I hope
It has endear'd him ſtrongly.

Montanus.

Thou wilt grow
A happy man.

Petronius.

Tis the beſt way to riſe.
The wench is faire, and of behaviour
Wanton enough to make the arrantſt novice
A perfect ſcholler in the ſchoole of *Venus*.
Seneca himſelfe rather will give way
That hee ſhould ſatisfie his luſt on her
Then ſeeke th'adulteries of noble women.

Montanus.

But gentlemen, have you not heard the newes?
There is a great combuſtion in the Palace
As I have been inform'd, theeves are fall'n out.
The two proud freemen *Pallas* and *Narciſſus*
Are claſhing 'gainſt each other.

Petronius.

I am glad ont.
I hope ſome curious rogeries will come on't.
Thoſe are the fellowes that have rul'd the ſtate
Theſe many yeeres, and trampled on the lives
Of noble men *Cæſar's* credulous weakeneſſe.
But yet mee thinks *Narciſſus* ſhould not dare
Now to conteſt with *Pallas* he has got
Too great a ſtart of him, and is too neere
Acquainted with the empreſſe.

Montanus.

So they ſay.

Otho.

Has a fine time on't who would think the rogue
Sould bee ſo ambitious as to court an Empreſſe?

Petronius.

'Twas her ambitions to bee made the wife

Of *Claudius*, that first made her prostitute
Her selfe so low, and court this fellows love,
Whom she perceiv'd to have a ruling power
Over his doating master, to ambition
Shee sacrific'd her honour tis well known.

Montanus.

And hee by dooing of the Empresse, takes
The surest way of keeping *Cæsars* love

Petronius.

Yes, there's no doubt of that. You know the proverbe.

Enter to them ANICETUS.

Anicetus.

Well met my Lords; I come to finde you out.

Otho.

What's the newes *Anicetus*?

Anicetus.

Great my Lord.
Cæsar, is wondrous sick; 'tis thought to death.
The Pallas is by souldiers guarded round.
A great and frequent *Senate* is assembling.
The Consuls and the Priests are making vowes
For *Cæsar's* safety.

Montanus.

Claudius is old

Petronius.

There have been other wayes to end a Prince
Besides old age. But what is that to us?
Come let's away and shew our forwardnesse
To joy or mourning as occasion serves.
I am prepar'd for both.

Montanus.

And so am I.

Otho.

Both must be done, if *Cæsar* dye, our greifse
Must last but till the successor bee known;
And then wee must rejoyce.

Petronius.

Tis true.

Otho.

But I
Shall have true cause of joy if *Nero* reigne, *Exeunt.*

BRITANNICUS, OCTAVIA, XENOPHON.

Britannicus

Shall I not see my father ere hee dy?

Octavia.

Good *Xenophon.*

Xenophon.

Good Madam pardon mee,
Nothing is now so great an enemy
To his disease as noise and company.
Hee's lately fall'n into a gentle slumber.
Deep sleeps his feaver will not let him take.
I'll certify your highnesse when hee wakes.
And wait upon you.

Octavia.

Thankes good *Xenophon.* *Exeunt.*

AGRIPPINA.

Agrippina.

I long to heare what favour *Nero* findes
In the Pretorian campe, how *Cæsar's* death
Is by the souldiers and the *Senate* taken.

Enter PALLAS.

Welcome my dearest *Pallas* What's the newes?

Pallas

Madam, as good as *Jove* himselfe could send,
No sooner in the campe was *Cæsar's* death
Divulgd, but *Burrhus* enters to his charge,
And *Nero* with him, who by all the cohorts
Was presently saluted Emperour.
Only some few were silent, and a while
Stood still expecting young *Britannicus*;

But

But when they ſaw their expectation
Was all in vaine, and none but *Nero* came,
Fearing at laſt to looſe the Donative
Which *Burrhus* promiſ'd them in *Neros* name,
They joyn'd themſelves unto the greater part.

Agrippina.

Britannicus within the Pallace here
Is ſafe enough for comming forth to day.
The *Senate* have ſcarſe heard of *Cæſar's* death
For wee conceal'd it till all things were ready.

Pallas.

Now in a Princely chariot mounted high
Guarded by *Burrhus* and the ſouldiers
Nero ſets forward to the *Senate* houſe.
But having paſt the campe, you need not feare
The *Senate*, Madam.

Agrippina.

Pallas thou wert ever
A meſſenger of lucky newes to mee.
A ſafe contriver of the higheſt plots,
A happy inſtrument thou haſt deſerv'd
What ere thou haſt enjoy'd, though thou have taſted
That which a *Cæſar* ſu'd to taſt, and bought
The world in recompence.

Pallas. If ever *Pallas*
Had any fire that could advance his thoughts
To high and great exploits, hee kindled it
At your cæleſtiall beauty, as from heaven
Prometheus ſtole that active fire, by which
Hee durſt himſelf adventure to create
The nobleſt creature man. What act on earth,
What undertaking ſhould he tremble at
Whom *Agrippinas* favours animate?
And what had I been but a peece of earth
Cold, dull, and uſeleſſe, had I not been quickn'd
By your ætheriall touch.

Agrippina.

The happineſſe

Of this high day has made thee eloquent)

Pallas

The love of royall *Agrippina* can
Inspire the dullest Soule with life and language.
When the *Idalian* Queene was pleas'd to grace
A shepheards boy more then his humble thoughts
Could hope or wish, the ravish'd tongue forgot
That rurall language which before it us'd.

Agrippina.

Ah *Pallas* what a glorious change is here!
How is the lownesse of our late despaire
Turn'd to the height of joy and happinesse?

Pallas

Quicke resolution well pursu'd will cure
The saddest state.

Agrippina.

Goe thou and heare more newes,
Whilest I dispose of things about the Palace *Exeunt*

A SENATE, POLLIO CONSUL, VITELLIUS, SENECA, OTHO, PETRONIUS, MONTANUS.

Pollio.

May all the Gods accept our sacrifice,
And bee propitious to the vowes, that wee
Have vow'd for *Cæsar's* safety.

Vitellius.

Let the great
Divine and sacred *Nero Claudius*
The care of heaven, sole ruler of the earth,
And *Romes* high Father not forsake his world
So soone t'encrease the number of the Gods,

Enter BURRHUS.

Burrhus.

Haile to the *Consul*, and this sacred *Senate*.
Great *Claudius Cæsar's* dead, in whose high throne
With one consent the souldiers have agreed

To

To ſeat young *Nero* his adopted ſonne;
And do by mee entreat your ſuffrages
Fathers conſcript; to ratifie their choice.

Seneca.

Let not young *Nero's* yeeres diſparage him,
Nor trouble you, ſince happy preſidents
May well be ſhowne, grave Fathers. Great *Auguſtus*
Of glorious memory, no more in debt
To yeeres then hee began to rule the ſtate,
With what ſucceſſe not one in all this noble
And great aſſembly can bee ignorant.
But weigh with mee the difference of the times.
The ſtate is ſetled, and has flouriſh'd long
In peacefull government; no civill rents.
No factions now, nor armies are a foot
To ſtaine with *Latian* blood *Philippi* plaines,
To dye the *Actiak* and *Sicilian* Seas,
And through all regions beare th' unnaturall wounds
Of bleeding *Rome*. No ſuch affrighting names
As *Marcus Brutus*, *Caſſius*, *Lepidus*.
Great *Pompey's* ſonne, or feirce *Antonius*
Arm'd with the power of halfe the Roman world
Stand to oppoſe him. Oh yee Gods how great!
How many dangers had beſet the ſtate
When young *Auguſtus* mannag'd it! yet hee
Withſtood and vanquiſh'd all thoſe difficulties.
And why ſhould *Nero* our elected Prince
Ag'd like *Auguſtus*, not bee able now
To ſway a peacefull ſcepter? for the right
To this high, wreath although *Britannicus*
Were borne the naturall ſonne of *Claudius*,
A Prince of hope enough, and may by ſome
Bee thought much wrong'd in this election,
Yet weigh it rightly, and no wrong is done.
For *Nero* was adopted. But beſides
The claime of his adoption, hee is borne

A truer heire to our Imperiall houſe
Sprung up from the loines of great *Auguſtus Cæſar*.
Britannicus from *Liviaes* ſonnes alone.

Vitellius.

Nor are the yeeres of young *Britannicus*
So ripe as his to govern.

Pollio.

Seneca,
Has wiſely ſhewed his undoubted right,
And I with joy approve the ſouldiers choiſe.

Octavia.

The Gods preſerve *Nero* our Emperour.

Otho.

Now is the height of all my wiſhes reach'd.

Enter NERO *with* TRIBUNE.

Tribune.

Roome for *Cæſar*.
Hee goes on, and takes his ſtate.

Pollio.

Haile *Nero Cæſar*.

Seneca.

Haile great Emperour.

Vitellius.

Ever *Auguſtus*.

Otho.

Moſt invincible

Petronius

Moſt ſacred *Tribune*

Montanus.

Holyeſt higheſt Prieſt.

Pollio.

Father of *Rome*

Nero

That honorable title
Is yet too weighty for my tender yeeres.
Then let mee weare it, fathers, when my paines
My toile and travell for the publike weale

By

By ayde and favour of the Gods have made
Mee worthy of it. But your free consent
Fathers conscript, your powerfull suffrages
Powerfull and honor'd as the voice of heaven
In confirmation of the souldiers choise
Fils mee with joy immortall, and shall binde
My best indeavours to requite that love.
My heart is cleare, my education
Was not in factious, in tumultuous times,
Or civil broiles, my former life has been
As free from doing as receiving wrong;
And therefore bring I to th' Imperiall Throne
No feares, no grudges, hatred or reveneg.
This sacred *Senate*, which the world adores,
Shall still retaine her old prerogative
While *Nero* lives. My privat house affayres
Shall from the free Republicke bee divided,
And never turne the course of common Justice.
No publike Office shall bee bought for gold.
The sacred Consulary power shall judge
As heretofore, th' affaires of *Italy*
And forreigne provinces. My care alone
Sall bee to rule and lead the Souldiers.
And such to all the people will I bee
As I would wish th' immortall Gods to mee.

Vitellius.

Oh speech most worthy *Jupiter* himselfe!
Worthy for ever to be registed
In brazen Pillars for the world to read.

Pollio.

Let publike thanks by *Senate* bee decreed
To *Cæsar's* grace and goodnesse.

Nero.

No *Asinius*,
Let me deserve them first, first give me leave
What I have promis'd to performe in deedes,

That then if thankes or praiſes bee beſtow'd
They my bee judg'd as due, and better Crowne
Your owne true juſtice, and the Princes merits.

Pollio.

Oh happy *Rome* in such an Emperour!
Long may hee reigne on earth, and late, oh late
Become a glorious ſtarre in Heaven

Tribune.

What word.
Will *Cæſar* give the watching ſouldiers?

Nero.

The excellent mother, *Tribune*, is their word.
Your company, noble *Conſul*, wee'll entreate
Home to the Pallace.

Pollio.

I'll attend on *Cæſar*.

Exeunt.

Manent OTHO, PETRONIUS, MONTANUS.

Montanus.

The Prince has promis'd faire.

Petronius.

Elſe *Seneca*,
That made the ſpeech for him had been too blame.

Otho.

Well, let him ſpeake as *Seneca* inſtructs
In publicke ſtill ſay I, I know his heart
And ſecret thoughts better then *Seneca*
Shall ever doe; and there are Joviall dayes
A comming, gallants, ſay I prophecy.

Montanus.

Will it bee lawfull to eat Lybian muſhroms,
And Britiſh oyſters without being cited
Before the cenſor?

Otho.

Yes *Curtius*, and to whore
For vacuation after them; thoſe gifts

Will

Will bee Court vertues. Come, the Prince is hopefull,

Petronius.

Would I might have the bringing of him up.

Otho.

If I can helpe it, thou ſhalt have a ſhare
In his tuition. Welcome *Anicetus*, *Anicetus*:
Is it to mee you come?

Anicetus.

To you, my Lord.
Cæſar deſires your company at the pallace.

Otho.

Cæſars deſire, is a command, which I
With joy obey, returne my humble duty
Good *Anicetus*, I'll attend him ſtrait.

Exit Auicetus.

Otho.

Now my mad ſhavers, do you know me yet?

Petronius.

Yes, very well; the queſtion is if thou
Wilt know us now.

Otho.

Tut man, *Nero* ſhall know you.
I'll bring you both into his neare acquaintance.
Now faire *Poppæa's* mine and mine alone.
Cæſar muſt grant my firſt petition,
Or elſe deny the love hee ſwore to mee
If ere hee wore the worlds Imperiall wreath.
His power muſt fetch *Poppæa* from her husband.
Nor is the deed ſo envious. Other Princes
Have done the like, and yet not tax'd in ſtory.

Petronius.

Beſides, hee knowes *Criſpinus* never lov'd him,
And was an enemy to his adoption.
'Gainſt him perchance hee will the ſooner grant it.

Exeunt.

Agrip. This is the day that sets a glorious Crown
On all my great designes this day declares
My power, and makes the trembling world to know
That *Agrippina.* only can bestow
The *Roman* Empire, and command the wheel
Of suffring Fortune, holding in her hand
The fate of nation. Is there not a name
Above *Augusta* to enforme the world
How great I am? What *Roman* Deity
Shall I assume? the petty Goddesses
Would all resigne; but that they blushing think
Their stiles and altars are too meane for mee.
Lacinion Juno shall bee proud to share
Her gloryes all with mee, and think her power
Grac'd with my fellowship would brighter shine;
Or leave her name, and bee ador'd by mine.

Enter NERO, POLLIÒ, SENECA, *Burrhus.*

My *Nero* is return'd, haile *Nero Cæsar.*

Nero.

Haile great and deare *Augusta*, best of Mothers.
To whose sole care and goodnesse *Cæsar* owes
All those rich honours that he weares to day,
And will ackowledge ever

Agrippina.

Brighter still
For many yeeres let this blest day returne,
That does bestow for my deare Lord and husband
The ne're-enough lamented *Claudius*
So true a solace on my greiv'd Soule.
This is that *Cæsar* now, on whom my hopes
And comforts all rely.

Nero.

This is that *Cæsar.*
Who in obedience and true filiall love
To *Agrippina* will for ever strive

With

With vertuons æmulation to excell
Her most admir'd and exemplary goodnesse.

Pollio.

How well this piety becomes them both.

Pallas. *Enter Pallas*

Long live great *Nero Cæsar.*

Nero.

Thankes good *Pallas.*
Wee are indebted to thy faithfull service;
And therefore till wee finde some greater meanes
To make requitall, still retaine that office
Which in our father *Claudius* time thou held'st.
Bee still our steward of th' Emperiall house.

Agrippina.

Hee has deserv'd it.

Nero.

For the funerals
Of our dead father, in what state and order
They shall bee celebrated, wee refer
To you deare Mother.

Agrippina.

Let the order of them
Bee like *Augustus Cæsar's.* Let him have
A Censors funeralls with divine honours,
And put among the number of the Gods.
Nor shall our grandmother great *Livia*
With her *Tiberius* to *Augustus* show
More piety, or more magnificence
Then wee to our divinest *Claudius.* *Exeunt*

ACTUS IIII.

NARCISSUS, GETA.

Narcissus.

If wee bee bound to think the Gods consider

This

This humane world, why are wee not as well
Bound to beleeve the greatest members of it
On whom the fates of all the rest depend,
Should be their greatest care? why should the Gods
Extend their narrow providence, and show
Their power in woods and rurall villages,
Yet thinke th' Imperiall family of *Rome*
Not worth their care at all? for if they had
Where slept their justice, when great *Claudius*
Was murdred by his servants and his wife,
And they ador'd, and honour'd by the state
For acting that accursed deed! what right
Can all the subject world receive from thence!
What good can dwell upon the earth with safety?
Proud *Pallas*, thou hast got the victory
O're poore *Narcissus*, and mayest safely triumph
With thy false Empresse; for no law can reach
The height you soare at now but yet take heed
That very crime, the same Impiety
That aided you in your foule enterprise
To vanquish mee and justice on my side,
May one day pull you downe.)

Geta.

Alas *Narcissus*!
Too truly *Rufus*, thou, and I foresaw
This fatall storme 'gainst *Claudius* wofull house.
Britannicus is now the object growne
Of all mens pitty.

Narcissus.

In the wrong hee did
Unto his hopefull sonne hee needs must see
His own destruction woven. But if *Claudius*,
When I detected all their plots to him,
Had beene of nature quick and resolute
Hee had prevented all, and scap'd his murder.
Tis certaine hee was poison'd.

Geta.

Rome it selfe
I feare will rue that sad adoption,
And in the wrongs of young *Britannicus*
Will beare too deepe a share. while the fierce rule
Of *Agrippina* lasts.

Narcissus.

What better hope
Does *Nero* promise us?
Those that are neere, *Xiphilin*
And inward with his nature, doe suspect
In him all seedes of vice and tyranny,
Though smoother'd for a time, at least, not hurtfull
While he refraines from medling with the state
That his night rambling revels, drinking feasts,
And cruell sports that he's delighted in,
Are vices of his nature, not his youth.

Geta:

Tis true, *Narcissus*, I of late have heard
Many beginne to feare the prophecy
of *Aenobarbus* his detested sire *Xiphilin.*
That nothing good could be begot twixt him
And *Agrippina*. Too too true alas!
Such prophecies of some of our late Princes
Have prov'd to *Rome*, as that *Augustus* made
Of the slow-jaw'd *Tiberius*, and *Tiberius*
Of his successour *Caius*, whom hee nam'd
A Phaëton to the unhappy world.

Narcissus.

All that I hope for is a wretched life,
If that bee not too much for mee to hope:
Into Campania will I go, but there
If death pursue mee, *Cæsars* armes are long,
And I am arm'd for any accident.
Let none, but with a spirit prepar'd to dye,
Dare to adventure on prosperity.

Geta.

Geta.

Rufus and I are both resolv'd to leave
The city too, wee are not safe within it.
But farre perchance, removed from her sight
Wee may escape fell *Agrippinas* spight.

Enter to them CRISPINUS.

Crispinus.

Ah *Lucius Geta*, I am now enforc'd
To that retirement, which wee lately talk'd of.
Because my danger mov'd mee not before,
Fresh cause is giv'n mee. Now I would not breath
The aire of *Rome* for all the wealth within it.

Geta.

What cause is that *Crispinus*? speake

Crispinus.

Poppæa,
That was my wife is carried from my house,
And divoc'd from mee by command from *Cæsar*,

Narcissus

The Prince begins his reigne most hopefully.

Crispinus.

Do you not wonder how I beare it thus?

Geta.

I must confesse the losse is wondrous great.

Crispinus.

True, had shee been my chast and faithfull wife,
The losse had been beyond all æstimation.
Nor could a manly spirit have borne the wrong.
But shee was none of mine, her heart, my *Lucius*.
As I have since discover'd, long ago
Was given to wanton *Otho*, and with him
Tis thought she stole her close adulterous houres.
For on that *Otho*, *Nero* has bestow'd her. *Xiphilin ex*
Wanting her heart, that gawdy peice of Earth *Dione.*
That men call beauty, I should soone have scorn'd,
Though *Cæsar's* warrant had not come at all.

Shall

Shall wee be gone, my freind?

Geta.

With all my heart.
It was my feare *Poppæa* would have caus'd
Your ſtay too long.

Criſpinus.

I'll put her from my thoughts.

Narciſſus.

Farewell my Lords, all happineſſe attend
Your Country life, though I can hope for none.

Criſpinus

Farewell *Narciſſus* may the Gods protect thee. *Exeunt.*

Otho, Poppæa. *Otho,*

Thus greateſt Monarchs oft have given away
What they themſelves ne're ſaw, nor e're knew how
To value truely. *Nero* has beſtow'd
A guift unknown on mee, which I, that taſte
How ſweet it is, would not againe forgo
For all his Empires wealth.

Poppæa.

Nor would I change
My *Otho's* love for great *Auguſtus* ſtate.

Otho.

There to enjoy where both extreamly love
Is ſuch a happines (as I have heard
Some do obſerve) it ſeldome does befall
A marryed paire, or if it doe, that bliſſe
Endures not long, ſo envious are the fates.
But that's a dreame, my love, I doe not feare.

Poppæa.

Thou need'ſt not feare *Poppæas* conſtancy
Though *Cæſar* were thy rivall,

Otho.

Sweet I do not;
I dare not wrong thy truth, or take ſo much
From mine own happineſſe, as to ſuſpect

Thy

Thy conſtant minde at all: but *Cæſar's* power
Is of extent as large as mans deſire.
'Twas that, that made thee mine; and nought but that
That gave, can take my happineſſe away.
Thou haſt a face, *Poppæa*, that would cleare
A raviſher from guilt, that would excuſe
The treaſon of a freind, and make my wrong
No ſtaine to *Cæſar's* honour, though the Gods,
Or *Cato* were his judges.

Poppæa.

Cæſar would not;
Hee loves thee wel beſides a noble minde
Would ſcorne to taſte the fruites of forced love,

Otho.

A long beſeidging is as forcible
As an aſſault, and wins the fort as ſure
Though not ſo ſoone.

Poppæa.

Nay ſpare your arguments.
I can looke through them; thou art fearfull, *Otho*,
That I ſhould long to ſee the Co urt: alas
I have no ſuch ambition to bee known
To *Agrippina* or *Octavia*.

Otho.

Miſtake mee not, ſweete love, I am ſo farre
From jealouſy of thee, that 'twas my purpoſe
To make it my requeſt that thou would'ſt go
And ſee great *Cæſar's* Court: nor do I thinke
Octavia would bee jealous, or that danger
That once befell the faire *Calphurnia*,
Whom *Agrippina* baniſh'd Italy
Becauſe that *Claudius Cæſar* praiſ d her beauty,
Should fall on thee.

Poppæa.

It ſhall not fall on mee,
I will noe ſee the Court: fy *Otho* fy

How

How wretchedly in ſtriving to conceale
Thy jelouſy, thou doſt betray it to mee!
Why doſt thou tell mee ſo of *Cæſar's* power,
Octaviaes wrath, *Calphuniaes* baniſhment
Through *Agrippinaes* envy? (tis thy love
Better then all theſe ſubtle tricks will keepe
My thoughts at home)

Otho.

It ſhall appeare to thee
I do not feare at all; or if I did,
Tis not the failing of thy conſtancy.
Enjoy what freedome thou deſir'ſt, *Poppæa.*
Now for a little while excuſe my abſence,
I muſt for ſake thee, though unwillingly.
Cæſar, I feare, expected my return
Long before this love has beguil'd the time,
And made my ſtay ſeeme ſhorter then it is.
But I ſhall think till I returne againe
The houres are long, till then farewell *Poppæa.* *Exit.*

Poppæa.

I finde his feares alreadie, my eſtate
Was better farre before *Rufus Criſpinus*
Was grave. and knew not wantonneſſe enough
To make him jealous as this *Otho* does
That too unlawfull love, which then I ſhew'd
To *Otho*, is the mother of theſe feares.
Is old *Seleucus* the Magician come; *Enter Fulvia*

Fulvia:

Madam hee waites without,

Poppæa.

Go call him hither.
Seleucus is the maſter of his Art.
All his prædictions hitherto have prov'd
Moſt true and certaine. why ſhould I deſire
To know my future fate; and haſten woe
(Should it prove ill) before the time of woe?

But

But tis a longing that I cannot check *Enter Seleucus.*
Welcom *Seleucus*, have you found it out?

Seleucus.

Madam, your ſcheme is drawn, and there I finde
The ſtars alot another husband to you

Poppæa.

Another after *Otho*?

Seleucus.

Yes, a third.

Poppæa.

What ſhall hee bee?

Seleucus

The greateſt Prince on earth.

Poppæa

Ha, *Cæſar*?

Seleucus.

Yes; it muſt be *Cæſar*, Madam.
And tis as true as if the oracles
Of *Jove* and *Phœbus* had foretold it both.

Poppæa.

This *Cæſar* that now lives?

Seleucus.

I can no further
Inſtruct you Madam; what you heare is true.

Poppæa.

Drinke this *Seleucus* for my ſake. Farewell.

Exit Seleucus

To bee *Auguſta* is the greateſt gift
The fates can give; nor does it ſeems to mee
A thing ſo much unlikely. *Otho's* feare
Perchance was fatall. If it were, in vaine
His care will bee, nor can hee then accuſe
Mee, but the fates that overrul'd my love.

AGRIPPINA, PALLAS.

Agrippina.

It is decreed, *Silanus* muſt not live.

Th'

Th' Imperial blood, that runs within his veines
Were there no other cause, is crime enough.
Hee is descended in the same degree
That *Nero* is from great *Augustus* loines.
And some have lately whisper'd that his age
Is more mature for soveraignty then *Nero's*.
Besides thou know'st his brother *Lucius*,
That should have marryed young *Octavia*,
By us was hunted to his death; and hee
May meditate revenge.

Pallas.

You need not feare
A spirit so sluggish as *Silanus* is.
Your brother *Caius Cæsar*, in the midd'st
Of all his feares and jealousyes to which
Hee sacrific'd so many noble branches
Of your Imperiall house, contemn'd *Silanus*
As one in whom there was no spirit, or danger,
And call'd him nothing but the golden beast.

Agrippina.

Wee cannot tell, if times of trouble come,
How much that beast by courage of attendants
And confluence of souldiers may bee chang'd.
Hee is Proconsul now of *Asia*,
And may here after, if the people should
Maligne our government, bring power against us.

Pallas.

If you will have it so *Publius Celerius*
And *Aelius* now going for *Asia*
Have undertaken there to poison him.

Agrippina.

Let it bee done. But *Pallas*, first of all
Let a centurion bee dispach'd into
Campania, to kill *Narcissus*. there *Xiphilin.*
Hee must not live, that did contrive our ruine
And knowes, I feare, the meanes by which wee scap'd it.

By

By our command it ſhall bee warranted.
But tell me Pallas, ere thou goeſt, are all
The German ſouldiers come?
Pall: Madam they are.
You have a royall guard. *Ag*: Go dearest *Pallas*,
Diſpatch *Celerius* into *Aſia*,
And the Centurion to Campania. *Exit Pallas*
Now *Agrippina* is her ſelfe, and all
The power and dignity ſhe holds, her own.
I do not owe it to a marriage bed,
Or poore dependance on a husbands love,
Where every minion might have rival'd mee.
There is no power, no ſtate at all, but what
Is independent, abſolute and free.
Beſides my proper and peculiar guards
Two lictors by the *Senate* are aſſign'd
Diſtinct from *Cæſar* and the Conſuls ſtate
To wate on mee, that all the world at laſt
Th' Imperiall power may in a woman know
I was an Empreſſe but ne're reign'd till now. *Exit*

A banquet.

Enter NERO, BRITANNICUS, OTHO, PETRONIUS, MONTANUS, ACTE.

Ne. Come ſit my friends, they here are freely welcome
That bring free Joviall hearts farre hence bee all
Sad lookes, ſower geſtures, and Cenſorious thoughts
They fit not *Nero's* table. kiſſe mee *Acte*,
And ſmile upon the feaſt. *Acte*: *Cæſar's* command
Is warrant ſtrong enough.

Nero.

And thou ſhalt finde
No rigid *Catoes* here.

Petronius.

True, great *Cæſar*,
Let ſuch ſowre *Scauri* ſit at home, and write
Againſt the pleaſure of this happy age
Dull ſatyres, ſuch as water, or the lees

Of Tuſcan wine beget, let them admire
Thoſe old penurious times. when Curius fed
On leekes and onions, when *Fabritius*
Feaſted the frugall *Senate* with hung beefe
And ruſty bacon, and in earthen pots
Drunke ſmal Etrurian wine, let them bee ſtill
Such as themſelves would make themſelves, unworthy
To taſte the plenty that *Rome* now enjoyes.

Nero.

Why did our famed anceſtours ſo farre
Extend their conquering armes, and ſtrive to get
The riches of the world, but that their Nephews
Might now enjoy them? twere ingratitude
To their rich labours, ſhould wee ſcorne to uſe
What they have got: or if the uſe of it
In us bee riot, ſure 'twas avarice
In them, that toil'd ſo much to purchaſe it.

Otho.

Which of thoſe rigid Cenſors, that declaime
Againſt the vices of the times, and tax
Rome as luxurious now would call it vertue
In a rich Citizen, whoſe ſtore-houſes
Were fraught with the beſt proviſions, his cheſts crow-
His cellars full of rich Campanian wine (ded
Yet hee himſelfe to drinke the courſeſt lees,
To feede on ackornes, pulſe, and crabs, to wrong
His nature, and defraud his Genius?
Tis ſaid the Furies keep pin'd *Tantalus*
From taſting thoſe delicious fruits hee ſees.
Such would the Roman vertue bee, ſhould ſhee
Affright her ſonnes the maſters of the world
From taſting that which they themſelves poſſeſſe.

Petronius.

Tis true; thoſe former ages were moſt frugall;
Wee thank them for't, the better is our fare.
Let thoſe that liſt, now when they have no need,

Still

Still imitate, and boast their hungry vertue,
Whilest wee poore sinners are content with pleasants,
Numidian hens, and *Lybian* purple wings
Wilde goates, bores, hares, thrushes, and musheroms,
Oysters, and mullets, and such vicious meates.

Nero.

Fill mee some wine. *Montanus* melancholy,
And silent now?

Montanus.

Cæsar, I was but listning
To heare *Petronius* good morality,

Nero.

Otho I know cannot bee melancholy,
Hee is a bridegrome, and but new possest
Of that faire treasure he has courted
So long, well *Otho*, I must have a sight
Of faire *Poppæa*,; such I know shee is.

Otho.

Shee is unworthy of great *Cæsar's* sight.

Nero.

A round, go *Anicetus* bring the lots;
Because that no respect of power shall let
The freedome of our mirth, who ever drawes
The longest cut shall bee our King to night,
And bee obey'd what ere hee shall command.
I will resigne my chaire to him. Com draw. *Enter Anicetus they draw.*
Tis I that am your King.

Montanus.

I shall beleive
That Fortune has her eyes.

Britannius

In getting Crownes
Nero; thy fortune is too good for mine.

Nero.

I know none envy mee.

Britannicus

No envy can
Redresse my wrongs. *Nero.*
I will beginne with *Otho.*
I do command thee send by *Anicetus*
Some trusty token that immediatly
May fetch *Poppæa* hither to the banquet.

Otho.

It shall bee done, this ring will fetch her hither,
Exit Anicetus.
I ever though 'twould come to this.

Petronius.

Thy plot
Of bringing *Acte* in, I see has fail'd.

Otho.

I care not much; he would at last have seene her.

Nero.

Thou wilt not frowne my *Acte*, though thou see
Another beauty here.

Acte.

No royall *Cæsar*,
Nor shall you heare mee envious, or detracting,
Although I know *Poppæa* is a Lady
Whose beauty does as farre excell poore *Acte*
As *Cinthia* does the lesser starres, or *Venus*
The other Sea-nimphs.

Nero.

Freely spoke, faire *Acte.*

Acte.

Here you shall finde the saying does not hold
That women are detractors from each other.

Nero.

Meane time begin a health.

Montanus

To please it *Cæsar*
To great *Augusta*, *Agrippina's* health.

Nero.

Let it go round. And now *Petronius*
I come to thee, I doo command thee write
A Satyre presently againſt thoſe pleaſures
Thou didſt ſo lately prayſe, againſt th' attire,
And coſtly diet of this notorious age.
This is thy Taske.

Petronius.

I muſt obey the King:
And now's the fitteſt time for ſuch a ſatyre.
I never finde my vertue of that ſtrength
As to contemne good Victualls, but upon
A well fill'd ſtomacke.

Nero.

Give him wine to heighten't.

Petronius.

I've writ already a Satirick Poëm
In a grave angry way, where I complaine
That Romes exceſſe, corruption, luxury,
Ruin'd the preſent governement, and twixt
Cæſar, and *Pompey* caus'd a civill warre.
Liſten, and heare my caſtigations.
„ Now all the world victorious *Rome* had wonne
„ All lands, all Seas, the morne and evening Sunne,
„ Nor was content; the Ocean's furrow'd ore
„ With armed ſhips; if any farre-hid ſhore,
„ Or land there were, whence burniſh'd gold was brough
„ It was their foe: by impious warre they ſought
„ (Fates fitted ſo) for wealth, old known delight
„ They ſcorne, and Vulgar bare-worne pleaſure flight
„ Pearles in th' Aſſirian lakes the ſouldiers love.
„ Bright poliſh'd earth in hew with purple ſtrove.
„ Numidia marble brings the Scythian yeilds
„ His early fleece, the Arabs ſpoile their fields,
„ But ſee more ruine yet, and greater wounds
„ Of injur'd peace, the Mauritanian grownds

,, And Libyan Ammon's fartheſt woods, to get
,, Wilde beaſts are ſearch'd whoſe teeth a price muſt ſet
,, Upon their death, fierce Tigers fetch'd from farre,
,, And ſtalking ſtately on the Theater
,, Are fed with humane ſlaughter to delight
,, The peoples eyes: after the perſian rite
,, (Alas I ſhame to ſpeake it, and diſplay
,, The ruine-threatning fates) they cut away
,, Manhood from growth ſpoil'd youths, for Venery
,, Softning their nature, to keepe backe thereby
,, In ſpite of time, their age. her ſelfe in kinde
,, Abuſed nature ſeekes, but cannot finde.
,, They dote on Catamites, weake bending hammes,
,, Unnerved bodyes, and a thouſand names
,, Of new attires, looſe haire of men, in whom
,, All man is loſt! lo ſlaves from Affrick come,
,, Rich Citron boards, bright purple, which to view
,, Couſening the ſenſes beare a gold like hew.
,, A wanton traine, in wine and ſurffets drown'd
,, The far fetch'd table do encompaſſe round.
,, The wealth that all the ſpacious world containes
,, By lawleſſe armes the roming ſouldier gaines,
,, Their gluttony growes witty; guilt-heads caught
,, At Sea, alive are to their tables brought.

Nero.

No more, my furious Satyriſt, thou haſt chid
The times ſufficiently.

Petronius.

If you bee pleas'd
I have obey'd.

Nero.

Well, I perceive *Petronius*
A man may write a Satyre, and yet bee
No *Scaurus*, *Curius*, or *Fabritius*.

Petronius.

A Satyriſt ſhould bee the contrary,

 And

And know those vices, which hee meanes to tax.

Nero.

Brother *Britannicus* thy taske is next,
Stand up and sing a song.

Britannicus

Give mee some time:
I cannot doo't extempore, what subject?

Nero.

Choose that your selfe.

Britannicus.

Then give me leave to sing
Mine owne misfortunes, how I came to loose
The Roman scepter.

Nero.

How! that will not fit
A feast of mirth.

Britannicus.

No, let them laugh that winne.

Petronius.

A good smart youth.

Nero.

This must not bee endur'd.
I must bee freed from this continuall feare:
Then bee excus'd, be merry Gentlemen,
I wonder *Anicetus* stayes so long.

Enter ANICETUS *with* POPPÆA.

But see they come, is this *Poppæa, Otho.*

Otho.

Tis shee great *Cæsar.*

Nero.

Wonder of her sex!
Bright paragon of *Rome*! all beautyes yet
That I have seene, have been but foiles to set
A greater lustre on this starre of light.

Otho.

His eys are fixt; his changing lookes do speake

A depth

A depth of passion, or my jealous feares.
Dazle mine eyes too much.

Petronius.

Tis so; shee's lost.
If ever Lady were a tennis ball
Tis this, shee's bandy'd so from one to tother.

Nero.

Must then another reape the envy'd fruit
Of my injustice? must *Poppæa* bee
My crime, that tooke her from her other Lord,
To be his pleasure?

Otho.

Is great *Cæsar* sad!

Nero.

No *Otho*, still shee shewes more faire and faire.
I cannot check my love; (Sir faireſt Lady.
And with your lustre grace our feast) I see
Thou art a most incomparable judge
In beauty, *Otho*, and were I to choose
A wife againe, I'd trust no eye but thine.)

Otho.

Would I might serve you Sr. in any thing.

Nero.

But tell mee thy oppinion in one question.
Which dost thou thinke the noblest in a Prince,
If hee would use his power, and do an act
That may bee thought unjust, to do't for frendship,
Or satisfaction of his owne delight.

Otho.

Sr. had you made the case a private man's
(For the delights of Princes, as themselves,
Wee must count sacred) I could soone resolve it.

Nero.

Let it bee so for tis the same in justice.

Otho.

I thinke it noblest then to do't for frendship.

For friendship ever was held honorable,
But satisfaction of our own delights
A thing of weakenesse rather then of honour.

Petronius.

I see his drift.

Nero.

Augustus Cæsar then
And I by power have done the selfe same act.
But in the cause I have excell'd *Augustus*,
For hee to satisfie his own hot love
From *Claudius Nero* tooke faire *Livia*.
I from *Crispinus* took a brighter beauty
To shew my selfe no lover. but a frend.
Doo not mistake mee *Otho*, and suppose
I do repent the favour I have done
I know tis well bestow'd.

Otho.

Twas such a favour
That I confesse, great *Cæsar*, as no tongue
Can bee enough expressive; so tis hard
To find a heart that's large enough to pay
Sufficient thankes in thought, but pious men
Have still acknowledg'd that no thankes of ours
Can æqualize the bounty of the Gods.
And Princes are like them, should I thinke lesse
I should both wrong the giver, and the gift.

Nero.

In valuing her aright thou shew'st thy selfe
As wise as just. I wish thee joy of her.
But fairest Lady, since it was so late
Before you grac'd our feast, I cannot thinke
That I have entertain'd you yet at all.
The scene shall therefore change, another roome
Shall bid *Poppæa* wellcome to the Court.

Exeunt.

Vitel-

VITELLIUS, POLLIO.

Vitellius.

Yet *Cæsar* and his mother well agree.

Pollio.

The Gods continue it, but *Vitellius*,
I feare the sequell. *Agrippinaes* fierce
And haughty disposition will too much
Provoke her sonne 'tis thought; and hee too forward
To throw all nature off.

Vitellius.

I thinke so too.
And therefore I could wish that *Agrippina*
Would go a gentler way, shee must not build
Too much upon her merits, though wee know
Twas shee that put the scepter in his hand.
For vicious natures, where they once begin
To take distast, and purpose no requitall,
The greater debt they owe, the more they hate.

Pollio.

Besides shee 'll find it harder far to worke
Her ends upon a sonne then twas to rule
A doating husband.

Pollio.

Time will shew it all,
And we ere long shall know which way to leane.

Exeunt.

BURRUS, SENECA.

Burrhus.

Will *Agrippina* sit to day with *Cæsar*
On his Tribunall, to give audience
To those Armenian Embassadors?

Seneca.

There is no doubt shee would; but I have spoil'd
That state I hope; for I have councell'd *Nero*.
That if shee come, hee shall arise and meet her,
As if hedi d it in respect, and duty

Deferring th' audience of th' Embassador,
I hope shee will not understand our drift.

Burrhus.

Pray heaven shee do not, for you know her fircenesse.

Seneca.

It would bee *Romes* disgrace, the *Senates* shame
And my great crime if the Embassadors
That come to plead their countryes cause at Rome,
Should see a woman perching up with *Cæsar*
Into the chare to give them audience.
And sit commanding ore the Roman ensignes:
Twas not the custome of our Ancestors
To see such sights.

Burrhus.

True *Lucius Seneca*,
Our Ancestours had no such kinde of women,
Shee in her heart's a man, and you mistake
If you esteem her onely *Cæsars* mother;
Not his Colleague, and partner in the Empire
Or more then so.

Seneca.

I am not so ingratefull
To hate the woman, since I know it was
Her favour, that repeal'd my banishment.
But I dislike these things, that forreigne states
In her unseemly carriage should behold *Xiphilin.*
The shame of Rome, and would shee keepe a temper
Fitting the quality of her sex and place,
I should admire the bravery of her minde.

Enter NERO, VITELLIUS, POLLIO, NERO, *takes his state, after them the Embassadors.*

Embassadors.

Long live great *Nero Cæsar*, the cheife care

Of

Of heaven, and highest Souveraigne of the Earth,
The Princes of *Armenia*, *Vologeses*
And *Tiridates* greete your Majesty
By us, and do congratulate the honor,
Which since divinest *Claudius* left the earth
To make a God in heaven, is fall'n on you.
And to your high Tribunall doo referre
The controversie that is now betwixt them.

Nero. *Enter Agrippina.*

My mother's come, deser th' Embassadors
As twas appointed *Seneca*.

Seneca.

I will.

Nero.

Haile dearest mother.

Agrippina.

Wherefore rises *Cæsar*
From his Tribunall when affaiers of state
Are brought before him?

Nero.

No respect can bee
Too much for mee to give great *Argippina*.

Agrippina.

Excuse mee, *Cæsar*, if it bee respect,
Tis now unseasonable, take your seate,
I'll sit with you my selfe, and here th' affaires
Of these Armenian Embassadors.

Nero.

Wee have deferred the businesse a while,
And thought upon a fitter time to heare it.

Agrippina.

If you arise because the audience
Is ended or deferr'd upon just reasons,
Tis not respect to mee that made you rise,
As you alldg'd at first, but I have found it,
The reason that deferr'd this audience

Was *Agrippinaes* comming.

Burrhus.

This I fear'd.

Seneca.

Twas carryed ill of *Cæsar* at the first.

Agrippina.

I see thou blushest, *Nero*, and may'st justly,
To call that reverence, which was affront,
Was a dissembling not befitting *Cæsar*.
And to affront a mother so deserving
Was not the duty that befitted *Nero*.

Nero.

Can nearest *Agrippina*. thinke her *Nero*.
Will ever doo an act that may bee judg'd
Affront to her

Agrippina.

This was thou know'st it *Nero*.
And so does thy adviser *Seneca*
From him it came, no other Senator
Durst to have councell'd my disgrace but hee

Seneca.

Never will *Seneca*, so much obleidg'd
To *Agrippinaes* royall favour, wish
Or councell her disgrace.

Agrippina.

Oh *Seneca*.
Philosophy nere taught ingratitude.
If you had thought the place unfit for mee,
You might have told mee privatly before,
Not us'd this tricke which how so ere it hold
In Stoticisme, I'm sure is nought in state.

Vitellius.

Shee payes him home.

Pallas.

Her spirit cannot brooke
The least appearance of an injury.

Agrippina.

Cæsar, I'll leave thee now, nor shall my presence
Bee any hinderance to thy state affaires.

Nero.

I'll go a long with you.

Agrippina.

For *Seneca*
I'll shortly teach him new Philosophy.

Exeunt.

manent. BURRHUS, SENECA.

Seneca.

Shee's full of anger; but it moves not mee,
Since what I did was just, and for the honour
Of *Rome* and *Cæsar*; honest actions
Will bee enough protection to them selves.

Burrhus.

Take the best courses to prevent her fury.

Seneca.

Ah noble *Burrhus*, it must bee hereafter
Our greatest care to curbe that womans pride,
And what wee can remove her from all rule
And government of state, for *Agrippina*
Is of too hot and fierce a disposition.

Burrhus.

What should wee doo? twere pitty to incense
Her sonne against her.

Seneca.

The Gods forbid that wee
Should stirve to make the Prince unnaturall.
But to prevent this inconvenience
I will perswade young *Cæsar* not with purpose
To wrong his mother, somewhat to abate
Her dangerous greateneſſe, to remove from her
Part of her guard of German souldiers,
And to displace her wicked counsellour
That insolent and Lordly free'dman *Pallas*.

Burrhus.

You need not uſe perſwaſions to your Pupill
(The Gods forgive it if I judge amiſſe)
To ſtand againſt his mother, I much feare
Hee will too quickly hate her, for no reaſon
To ſtate belonging; but becauſe ſhee growes
Imperious over him, and ſtrives to curbe
His luſt and riots, thoſe, thoſe *Seneca*
I feare are ſeedes of future tyranny
And for his love (as if the fates decreed
To make his paſſions all prepoſterous)
His vertuous wife noble *Octavia*
The only inſtance in this wicked age
Of women great and good, is loath'd by him.

Seneca.

That moſt afflicts mee: could wee finde a cure
For that diſeaſe, all other maladyes
A riper age will in ſome part redreſſe,
And I will ſtrive to change them by degrees,
And get him to forſake his looſe aſſociates.
But let us firſt endeavour to remove
Fierce *Agrippina* from all rule of ſtate.

Burrhus.

I'l joyne with you, and uſe my beſt endeavours.

Exeunt.

NERO.

Nero.

Shall I that am an Emperor, bee check'd,
Control'd and baffled in my Pallace thus?
I will remove this mother farre from mee,
And give command to *Burrhus* to provide
That houſe that was *Antoniaes* for her.
The Pallace ſhall bee free to my delights,
I make no doubt but that the people know,
And hate her pride, and will the leſſe repine
At what I do againſt her, I have told her

For

(For ſhee provok'd mee paſt all patience)
Part of my minde already, ſhee ſhall rue
Perchance too late the fierceneſſe ſhee has ſhew'd

Exit.

AGRIPPINA.

Agrippina.

Ingratefull *Nero*, is thy mothers power
So ſoone offenſive growne? canſt thou ſo ſoone
Caſt off all filiall dutyes, and forget
What I deſerve from thee? wouldſt thou deprive
Mee of all power that gave all power to thee?
Did I ſo wickedly for thee procure
The height of human ſtate, that thou ſhouldſt take
All ſtate from mee with greater wickedneſſe?
Oh wronged *Claudius*, this ſad puniſhment
My bloody treaſon, and ingratitude
To thy offended *Manes* juſtly payes.
By the moſt loving, and moſt injur'd Lord,
The worſt of wives was more belov'd then now
The beſt of mothers by a wicked Sonne.
I'le make him know what hand it was that rais'd
His fortunes to this height: but wherefore weeps

Enter Octavia.

My deare *Octavia*?

Octavia.

What accurſed fate
Purſues the wofull *Claudian* family?

Agrippina.

Deare daughter ſpeake thy griefe.

Octavia.

Was I beſtow'd,
Or rather loſt in marriage, to advance
Upon my brother's ruine, *Nero*'s ſtate
To bee by him deſpys'd, hated and made
A baſe freed-womans ſlave?

Agrippina.

Agrippina.

What freed woman?

Xiphilin.

Octavia.

Acte thy *Nero's* concubine my mistris
That dares within the palace to contest
Nay to revile *Octavia.*

Agrippina.

She dares not,
Nor shall she doo't, I'll slit the strumpets nose,
If she dare speake 'gainst thee.

Octavia.

You cannot mother.
Nero delights in none but her, his soule
In *Acte* lives; on her he does bestow
That love, that's due to mee:- But mee hee loaths;
Oh dismall love, Oh fatall marriage!

Agrippina.

Take comfort sweete *Octavia*, I'll redresse
Thy wrongs, or venture mine owne fall with thee.

Enter Nero.

Nero.

You have complain'd I see, *Octavia.*
Is there a chiding toward?

Agrippina

Has thy guilt,
And th' unkinde wrongs thou hast already done
Unthankefull *Nero*, to thy vertuous wife

Xiphilin.

Arm'd thee with such an impudence, that now
Thou canst prevent her just accusing thus?

Nero.

How's this?

Agrippina.

Mee thinkes although thou hadd'st no sparke
Of goodnesse left thee, yet in Pollicy

Thou

Thou ſhould'ſt not dare maintain a baſe borne ſtrumpet
Againſt thy lawfull wife great *Claudius* daughter.

Nero.

Mee thinkes in policy you might remember
You ſpeake to *Cæſar*, not a childe.

Agrippina.

Tis true,
Thou haſt forgot the dury of a childe.

Nero.

I will bee better known; if I bee Croſt
In my delights, I will bee bold to croſſe
You in your pleaſures too

Agrippina.

Oh heavens, what pleaſures
What joyes or ſtudies have I ever had
But to preferre thee *Nero?* are my cares
And all my labours thus requited now?
Let not too vaine and fooliſh confidence
Of what thou art, make thee preſume to wrong
Thy mother and thy wife; or thou ſhalt know
The Empires lawſull heire is yet alive.
The wrong'd *Britannicus* is growing up
To take his right, and to revenge the wrongs
Which hee and all his family ſuſteine *Xiphilin.*
I'll go my ſelfe to the *Prætorian* Campe,
And plead his cauſe before the Souldiers.
There let one-handed *Burrhus*, and that baſe
Unthankefull exile *Seneca*, appeare
Againſt the daughter of *Germanicus*.

Nero.

Yes plead the cauſe of young *Britannicus*;
And when y'have done, provide an advocate
To plead your own.

Exeunt Nero.

Agrippina.

Gone ſo abruptly from us!

Slights

Slights hee mine anger ſo?

Octavia.

Madam I feare
You tooke too harſh a way; his lookes were wilde
And full of rage; my ſad miſgiving ſoule
Tels mee ſome miſcheiſe's working in his thoughts.

Agrippina.

Feare not, *Octavia*, weell take the beſt
And ſureſt courſes to prevent the ill
That may enſue: and if mature advice
And councell cannot bridle him, wee'll uſe
Another meanes to curbe his inſolence:
I have already by my bounty made
Moſt of the Tribunes and Centurions.
My guards are ſtrong, and ſhall bee vigilant
Over the ſafety of *Britannicus*,
As mine own perſon, there's no open act
Of miſchiefe can bee on the ſuddaine wrought.

Octavia.

The Gods I hope will guard our innocence.

Exeunt.

NERO *ſolus.*

Nero.

My feares have been too ſlow, and twas high time
That *Agrippinaes* thundring threats had wak'd
My ſleeping miſcheefes; which ſhall now no more
Study diſguiſes, but appeare in bold
And open acts with *Cæſars* ſtampe upon um,
Feareleſſe of vulgar whiſpering jealouſyes.
Upon thy death, *Britannicus*, a price
No leſſe then *Romes* imperiall wreath is ſet.
The deede, when done, will priviledge it ſelfe,
And make the power of *Nero* ſtrong enough
To warrant his miſdeede, who dare revenge
Or blame th' offence that frees mee from a rivall?
But I ſhall leave a worſe, and nearer farre

Behinde,

Behinde, my mother *Agrippina* lives;
Shee lives my rivall, nay my partner ſtill,
Nay more then that my Queene and Governeſſe.
I am no Prince, no man, nothing at all
While *Agrippina* lives, muſt ſhee then live
To make mee nothing? muſt the name of mother
Outweigh a ſcepter? could the name of husband
Protect her *Claudius*? no; her owne example
Shall teach mee ſtate: but firſt *Britannicus*
Muſt bee remov'd; his death aſſures my ſtate,
And makes mee able to conteſt with her.
That gentle poiſon, which *Locuſta* gave him,
If poiſon 'twere, whileſt wee did vainely feare
The peoples talke, has kept my feares alive.
Where is this hagge?

Enter Locuſta.

Locuſta.

Cæſar.

Nero.

Witch. beats her.
Feind, fary, divell.

Locuſta.

Mercy, mercy, *Cæſar.*

Nero.

I'll hew thy curſed carcaſſe into atomes,
Thou gav'ſt *Britannicus* an antidote
In ſtead of poyſon.

Locuſta.

Twas a gentle poyſon,
And ſuch as you commanded mee to make;
Hold *Cæſar* hold; I will redeeme all yet.

Nero.

Do it or dy, make mee a poiſon ſtrong,
A quicke and ſpeeding one.

Locuſta.

It ſhall bee done.

No

No ſooner taſted, but it ſhall deſtroy.

Nero.

I'll ſee the tryall of it, and reward
Thy ſervice well; but if *Britannicus*
Out live this day, this day ſhall bee thy laſt.

Exeunt.

ACTUS V. SCENA. I.

BURRHUS, VITELLIUS, ANNICETUS, *Souldiers*

Burrhus.

It is the will of, *Cæſar*, ſouldiers
You muſt bee all diſcharg'd from guarding her.
But you ſhall have allowance, and thus much
I'll promiſe for your comforts, you ſhall bee
The next that are aſcrib'd into the liſt
Of the *Prætorian* campe.

Souldiers.

Thankes noble *Burrhus*.

Burrhus.

Go *Anicetus*, give command that ſtraight
That houſe, which was *Antoniaes* bee prepar'd
For *Agrippina*, and her family.
Cæſar will have the Palace to himſelfe.

Vitellius.

Does *Agrippina* know't

Burrhus.

Burhus.

Not yet I think:
Is there displeasure then 'twixt her and *Caesar?*

Burhus.

I know not. you'll excuse my hast, my Lord
I must take leave.

exit *Burhus.*

Vitellius.

I like not these new turnes.
I came to visit her: but now I'll spare
My haile this morne. whither so fast my Lord?

Pollio.

To visit *Agripina.*

Vitellius.

Stay, I'll tell you.
There is some diffrence twixt her and *Caesar.*
Her guards are tane away. I parted now
From *Burhus*, who discharg'd them. shee her selfe
Shall be remov'd from the Imperiall palace.

Pollio.

I like not that; I'll spare my visit then.

exeunt

PETRONIUS, MONTANUS.

Montanus.

Otho will loose his wife then.

Petronius.

Yes, no doubt;
And I believe must leave the City too.
Nero's extremely fir'd, and hee will have her
Alone; poore *Otho* must not rivall *Caesar*
Nor indeed is it fitting that the husband
Should make th' adulterer a cuckold.

Montanus.

Do'st thou beleeve, *Petronius*, that this change
Pleases *Poppaea?*

Petro-

Petronius

Yes, I warrant her.
Shee thinkes her beauty never oonld have done her
A greater ſervice.

Montanus.

But ſhee ſeem'd to love
Otho extremèly.

Petronius.

I confeſſe *Montanus*
I thinke her appetite ſtood well to *Otho*;
For it is a raſcall of a winning carriage
And curious feature; but ſhee has enjoyedhim
Sometime already, and that paſſion
Which you call love, does move in a degree
So low, and feeble, it is ſoone ſwallow'd up
In the deepe torrent of ambition.
Poppæa's proud; nor can that breaſt of hers
Harbour a love ſo ſtrong, but it muſt yeeld
To pride her quality prædominant.

Montanus.

What can ſhee bee but *Nero's* concubine?
I ſee not what high honour lyes in that.

Petronius.

You cannot tell what ſhee may bee in time.

Montanus.

Shee cannot bee *Auguſta*; that high name
Octavia, while ſhee lives, will keep, hee dares not
Forſake that wife (how e're hee do affect her)
To whom hee may bee ſayd to owe the Empire.

Petronius.

For mine own part, I know not how twill go.
But I dare ſweare *Poppæa* e're this time
Has ask'd and heard what the Chaldæans ſay
About her fortunes: our fine dames of *Rome*
Muſt ſtil bee tampering with that kinde of cattell.
Their doggs, their monkeys, and themſelves do nothing

Without

Vithout th' advise of such a cunning man,
Hast thou seene *Otho* lately?

Montanus.

Yes to day:

Petronius.

How does hee looke upon the businesse?

Montanus.

Faith somewhat sad; but *Cæsar* seemes to use him
So wonderfull kindly that he cannot thinke
Hee's wrong'd at all.

Petronius.

Prithee let's finde him out. *Exeunt*

PALLAS *solus.*

Pallas.

No longer steward of th' Imperiall house!
Are greatest benefits so soone forgot
By wicked Princes? tis and ever was
The fate of Courts, Monarchs unjustly hate
Acknowledgment: what power, what honor now
Does *Nero*, hold but what hee owes to mee?
My merrit, nay my wickednesse, which did
To him encrease the merit, for this heart
Has bled the more for my ingratitude
To my best master *Claudius*, his sad wrongs
Another now revenges! oh *Narcissus*,
Perchance the conquest that I got ore thee,
When wee two strove about the successor
To *Claudius Cæsar*, will hereafter prove
More fatall to the conqueror, then him
That lost the day, thou in *Campania*
Di'dst happily, though hunted to thy death
By us; and carry'dst to thy grave the honor
Of aiding the just side, oh Royall Empresse,

Enter Agrippina.

I feare our care to raise unthankfull *Nero*
Will prove at last our own destruction

My

My places loſſe I weigh not, but for feare
It prove a ſtep to your diſhonour, Madam.

Agrippina.

Tis for my ſake that thou haſt loſt it, *Pallas*,
With mee my frends are hated. Oh ſad fate
That followes impious actions! well perchance
And happily might I have liv'd if wrong'd
Britannicus had reign'd! Oh would the loſſe
Of this unworthy life could yet procure
That injur'd Prince his due.

Pallas.

Can fortune turne
The courſe of things ſo ſtrangely, that you Madam,
The Prince his mother and his raiſer too
Should wiſh the others reigne

Agrippina.

It can, it can.
This is the power and juſtice of the Gods,
That when wee thinke our ſelves moſt ſafe in ill,
Can fruſtrate all our confidence, and make
That power, which ſeem'd to bee our prop, to bee
Our onely cauſe of ruine, wee are children,
Vice makes us children, like to them, wee cry
For Knives to hurt our ſelves with, and the Gods
To puniſh us oft grant what wee deſire.

An herſe brought in OCTAVIA. *following.*

Pall. What dolefull noiſe is this?

Agrippina

Ay mee, I feare.

Octavia.

Oh diſmall day! Oh wretched family!
Fly back bright *Phœbus* to the Eaſterne ſhore,
Or hide thy head; thou haſt at Rome beheld
A feaſt more black then ere Mycenæ ſaw.
Ah dearest brother, ſweet *Britannicus*.

Agrip-

Agrippina.

Britannicus.

Octavia.

Murder'd *Britannicus*,
Poison'd at *Nero's* table.

Agrippina

Breake my heart
The greatest woe, that could befall, is come.
Forgive mee, gentle Soule, twas I that gave
That viper life, and rule to ruin thee.
Thou need'st not curse mee; the impiety
Of him that kill'd thee, will revenge thy death.

Pallas

Faire hope of *Rome*, sweet flower untimely cropt,
What parentasion shall sad *Pallas* make
T'appease thy wronged ghost, and expiate
My foule offences? to the King and Queene
Of sable night I'll build two grassey altars;
And yeerely there, if any yeeres at all
I have to live. with sad libations
Invoke the manes of *Britannicus*,
Thou from the groves of faire Elysium
For ever wail'd for ever honour'd Prince,
Deigne to accept my humble sacrifice.
Or if those rights bee too too meane for thee,
Perchance the Genius of afflicted *Rome*
Shall weep hereafter ore thy grave, and waile
Th' untimely death of her *Britannicus*.

Agrippina.

Gentle to thee let earth and water prove.

Exit Octavia,

This wofull murder of *Britannicus*.

& funus.

Bodes ill to mee, and my presaging soule
Is fill'd with ghastly feares. Ah *Pallas*, *Pallas*,
This is the entrance into Paricide,

And

And but the Prologue to a mothers death.

Pallas.

Would I could ſpeake to your deſtreſſe and feares
A true and reall comfort, ſuch a one
As might not flatter your eſtate, and make
You weaker then before, by taking from you
All ſtudy of prevention.

Servant.

Servant.

Cæſar. Madam,
Is come to viſit you.

Agrippina.

Pallas farewell. *Enter Nero.*

Nero.

What weeping Madam? what unworthy cauſe
Dares force a teare from greate *Auguſtaes* eye
While *Nero* lives? if 't bee my brother's death,
That caus'd this ſorrow, I could joyne in teares
Had not that tragedy already rob'd
Mine eyes of moyſture,

Agrippina.

This hypocriſie
Makes mee leſſe truſt his nature then before.

Nero.

The Gods have rob'd mee of one comfort now
The fellowſhip of ſweet *Britannicus*,
That all my piety may bee confin'd
To you, deare mother, you containe alone
Within a Parents ſacred name, all ſtiles
Of kindred now, all bonds of pious love.
Feare not a change in mee.

Agrippina.

I do not *Cæſar.*

Nero.

Minervus feaſt is celebrated now

Xiphilin

Five

Nero.

Minervaes feast is celebrated now
Five dayes at Baiæ thither you shall go — *Xiphilin.*
And feast with mee deare mother, there forget
All jealous feares, and you shall never more
Complaine of *Nero.* If the stratagem — *aside.*
Of *Anicetus* prosper, her complaint
Shall be to *Pluto*, and the Ghosts below. — *exeunt.*

OTHO *with his Commission.*

Otho.

The Gonernment of *Lusitania.*
By *Nero's* grace and favor is bestow'd
On mee! Oh glorious name of banishment!
Yet welcome now, since faire *Poppæa's* lost.
I thanke thee, *Nero*, thou provid'st a brave
And honourable cure for that sad wound
Thou hast inflicted on my love-sicke Soule.
How great a torture had it been to mee
To live in *Rome* divorc'd from her, and see
That beauty folded in another's armes!
Hence wanton thoughts; fond love for ever vanish,
Collect my soule what ere thou hast within thee
Of Roman left, and answer to the call
Bright honour makes, some favourable God
Pittying the lusts and riots of a youth
So much misled, has sent this seeming losse
To wake me from so base a lethargy.
Employ'd in forreigne action, I shall live
Free from th' infectious vices of this Court,
And farre from seeing the abhorr'd effects
Of future tyranny, which needs must breake
From *Nero's* vicious nature. At my birth
The Augures promis'd high and glorious hopes.
This is the way to bring them. Spaine shall find
Another *Otho* then was sent from *Rome.*
Poppæa promis'd here to meete, and take

Her laſt leave of mee. why ſhould I againe
Renue my paſſion by the ſight of her?
But't is but one poore look. and ſo farewell.

Enter SELEUCUS.

Seleucus.

Haile *Marcus Otho* Emperour of *Rome*,
Cæſar that ſhall bee.

Otho.

Ha!

Seleucus.

It is thy fate,
Which ſhall not bee prevented.

Otho.

Tell mee father
(For your predictions ever have been true)
Shall I behold *Poppæaes* face againe,
When I have left the City?

Seleucus.

Never more. *Exit Seleucus.*

Otho.

Never! a heavy doome yet I in lieu
Of her ſhall gaine the Empire of the world.
Juno will heale the wounds that *Venus* gives.

Enter POPPÆA.

See, there ſhee comes; her beauty waxes ſtill,
Or elſe the ſad conceit of never more
Seeing that face, makes it appeare more faire.
How dull the edge of Honour growes already!
Here could I ſtay, and like the Trojan Prince
Lockt in faire *Didoes* armes forget for ever
Th' *Italian* land, and all my future fame.
Him Jove admoniſh'd to depart from thence.
Mee the command of *Cæſar* forces hence,
And leaves no power in my election.
Farewell *Poppæa*.

Poppæa.

Oh hard fate in love
Is mine, whose joyes were never lasting yet.
Speake not so soone that killing word farewell.

Otho.

What gaine, alas, can one small minute bee?
Or if twere gaine to mee, to the *Poppæa*
Twere losse to keepe thee from thy *Cæsars* sight.
Hee is thy servant, whom the world obeyes.

Poppæa.

Ah *Otho*, love can witnesse that this fortune
Was never sought by mee.

Otho.

Thou wert too great
A treasure for a privat man to keep.
No; live still happy with thy *Cæsar* here
And grant mee one request; if of that love
Which once wee vow'd so deare, there yet remaines
So small a part as may deserve the name
Of comon frendship, use thy power with *Cæsar*
My goverment may be continu'd long.

Poppæa.

Rather let mee intreate the contrary,
And keepe thee here at *Rome*.

Otho.

It must not bee.
Never while *Nero* lives, and lives with thee.
It must bee love no more, but frendship now
Twixt us *Poppæa*, which may still bee kept
In absence by good wishes, and without
Those nearer comforts which fond love requires.
But who shall teach mee to forget that sweet
Delicious lesson which loves schoole did teach,
When thy admired beauty was the booke,
And I a Scholler too too forward then?
Oh would great *Cæsars* power to cure my wound,

 Could

Could but bestow so privative a good
As losse of memory. but that, alas,
Were too unjust a cure, and I could wish
Rather to suffer still then quite forget
That I was once *Poppæaes* envi'd love.
I'll rather strive to solace my sick soul
With contemplation of past happinesse,
And by recounting ore our former joyes
Deceive those houres of sorrow I must passe.
Pop. And I for comfort of our absent love
Will cherrish hopes that wee shall meet againe.
Oth. No, thinke mee dead, bright love, and I'll enforce
My imagination to beleeve that thou
Translated by some amorous Deity
Hast left the earth to beautify the sky,
And turne Astronomer in love, to finde
Thy figure out among those radiant lights
Which *Joves* transformed Paramours have made.
'Mongst those I'll seeke for faire *Poppæaes* starre,
And sweare I see it, rather then beleeve
Thou liv'st on earth debarr'd from *Otho's* sight.
I must begin to part, *I* see; for thou
In modesty art loath to chide mee hence,
And bid mee quit the place. Farewell *Poppæa.*
Such height of happinesse may st thou enjoy
As *Cæsars* constant love can bring to thee.
Pop. As much good fortune follow *Otho* still
Tis power that parts us. all the Gods can tell *Exit Otho*
How well *I* love thee *Otho.* but those Gods,
That have ordain'd another fate for mee
Must bee obey'd yet *Nero* must bee wrought
With cunning to my ends, or else my fortune
*I*s low and poore, my title nought at all.
Tis not the love of *Cæsar*, but the honour,
And that high title which attends his love
That is *Poppæaes* aime, *Octavia*

Debarres

Debarres mee yet from that, and *Agrippina*
Is fierce, and keeps her ſonne in Pupillage.

Enter NERO.

Nero.

Now faire *Poppæa*, thou art mine alone;
Otho's remov d, embrace the happy change
That fortune brings thee, thou haſt found inſtead
Of him, a *Cæſar*, who beſides his ſtate
Has brought a heart as true to thee, and love
As ſtrong and fervent as poore *Otho's* was
Thou wert before a diamond conrſly ſet,
A clouded ſtarre. the Fates did pitty thee,
And would no longer let that beauty ly
Ecclippſed in a private family
No ſeat but *Romes* Imperiall throne, no ſphære
But *Cæſars* armes were fit for theſe bright eyes
To ſhine in, and the ſubject world t' adore
Their luſtre, like ſome conſtellation
New riſen to amaze mortality.
Not *Rome* alone, but all the fartheſt ſhores
That *Peleus* ſilver-footed wife ere knew
Shall call *Poppæa* miſtrrſſe.

Poppæa.

Thoſe are honours
Cæſar, too high, too great for mee to hope.

Nero.

To hope, my love, they are thine owne already.

Poppæa.

Cæſar, thou know'ſt it cannot bee; and I
That might have liv'd content with *Otho's* love;
And there enjoy'd the honour'd name of wife,
Muſt in the Palace find a baſer ſtile.

Nero.

Thou wrong'ſt my power, *Poppæa*, if thou thinke
I cannot give the higheſt ſtile to thee:
And if thou thinke I meane it not, thou wrong'ſt

My trueſt love

Poppæa.

Octavia is alive
No love of thine can beare *Auguſtus* ſtate
But onely ſhee

Nero.

Shee ſhall bee ſoon remov'd
To make a roome for faire *Poppæaes* honour.
Nor will the *Senate* dare to grumble at it.

Poppæa.

Though all were ſilent elſe, fierce *Agrippina* *Xiphilin.*
Would in that act controll thee, and thinke mee
To meane for *Cæſars* wife, though I am ſprung
(For I may ſpeake a truth that *Rome* can witneſſe)
From noble and triumphant Anceſtors.

Nero.

There, love, thou ſtrik'ſt upon the trueſt ſtring.
That *Agrippina* was my greateſt feare,
Though now ſhee is not; for I'll tell it thee,
If *Anicetus* ſtratagem have taken,
Ere this ſhee wanders on the Stygian ſhore.
Weary I was of her imperious pride,
And fear'd her cruell plots. How that ſucceedes
Is now my greateſt expectation.
Nor do I live till *Anicetus* come
And bring my ſafety in that womans death

Enter ANICETUS.

Poppæa.

See, *Anicetus* is return'd

Nero.

Speake man
What is my fate? thou carrieſt in thy voyce
The life and death of *Cæſar*

Anicetus

Your command
Was done, great *Cæſar*, but your mother ſcap'd.

Nero.

Nero.

Escap'd? how could it bee, but you were false,
And all conspir'd together to betray *Xiphilin.*
My life in saving hers? how could shee scape?

Anicetus.

Wee chose the night to act it in; but night,
Prov'd not so black as night; the starrs gave light,
No wind at all blew as wee lanched forth *Xiphilin.*
Down in the Galley *Agrippina* lay,
And at her feet lay *Aceronia*
With joy discoursing of your curtesie,
And favour lately shew'd her, but when I
The watch-word gave, the covering of the place
Loaden with lead fell downe, and prest to death
Her servant *Gallus*. But when th' other part
By fortune stronger, broke not, nor the vessell
Was loos'd asunder, all beeing in amaze
The rowers straitway thought it best to weigh,
The galley at one side, and sinke her so
There *Aceronia* floating in the waves
Faining her selfe to bee the Empresse, cry'd
Helpe, helpe the Prince his mother. But the rowers
With poles, and oares straight kill'd her as shee swamme,
But *Agrippina* in a silence caus'd
By policy or feare, swamme to the banke,
Having received but one wound, and there
Succour'd by little barkes, through *Lucrine* lake
To her owne house was carryed at the last.

Nero.

Oh, I am lost and dead; I shall bee straight
Surpris'd and kill'd; shee 'll arme her slaves, and stirre
The souldiers up, or to the Senate house
Complaine, and shew the wound shee has receiv'd
And tell the story there. What shall I doo?
Advise mee, my *Poppæa, Anicetus,*
But yet advise mee nothiug but her death,

No

No other courſe is ſafe, *Nero* muſt dy
If *Arippina*. live, call *Burrhus* to mee;
Send forth the ſouldiers to diſpach her ſtraight.

Poppæa

It is no action for a ſouldiers hand
Nor will the campe for brave *Germanicus*,
Her father's ſake bee drawne to butcher her
Let *Anicetus*. finiſh the exploit
Hee has begunne.

Nero.

It muſt be ſo; go on
With thy religious act, good *Anicetus*.
Thou art obleig'd to finiſh it; or elſe
What thou haſt done already, will procure
My ruine rather then ſecurity
Chooſe thee what aide thou wilt.

Anicetus

I have them ready.
Feare it not *Cæſar*, *Agrippinaes* dead.

Nero.

Oh comfortable voice! thou art the man
Thou only *Anicetus*, that beſtow'ſt
The Empire upon *Nero*. to thy guiſt
I will acknowlegd it, and celebrate
This as my day ofcoronation.
What plot ſhall wee invent to hide the deede,
And put th' intent of murder upon her?
To bring you newes of her eſcape, I'll finde
A way to doo't, tis ſtrange none yet come from her.
See *Agerinus* comes *Enter Agerinus.*

Agerinus.

All health to *Cæſar*
Auguſta by the favour of the Gods
Has lately ſcap'd a ſtrange and wounderfull
Danger at Sea.

Ani. *Cæſar* when any of her ſervants come

What

What meanes this ponyard *Anicetus lets fall a ponyard*
In *Cæsars* presence, *Agerinus* ? *behinde Agerinus.*

Nero.

Treason. *Ziphilin.*
Shee sends to murder mee; dragge hence the slave,
And torture him to death.

Agerinus.

I am as free
From guilt in this as innocence it selfe.

Nero.

Hence with the villaine to his death, and thou
Deare *Anicetus*, forward with thy plot. *Exeunt*

AGRIPPINA, *brought in by Mnester, and* Seleucus, *shee sits.*

Agripina.

Leave mee alone; but bee not farre from mee. *Exeunt.*
Who would rely upon the gratitude
Of men? or trust the fruit of benefits,
That now behold, or shall hereafter reade
My wofull fortune ? I, that have bestow'd
What ere the world containes, to bee possest
By impious *Nero*, in reward, expect
Nothing but bloody death twas too too true
That strange deceitfull galley was a plot
An impious engine made to murder mee,
As by the fiercenesse of the slaves, my wound,
And *Aceroniaes* death it did appeare.
Can I expect that *Nero* should relent ?
Or that the tyrant in a brothers blood
Embrew'd already, should not rather thinke
No mischeife can bee safe till fully done ?
Oh had his thoughts beene good, had my escape
Beene gratefull to him, all the house ere this
With visitants, and clients had been fill'd
To aske and see how *Cæsars* mother did
Where now are all the hailes the bended knees,

Low

Low proſtrate faces, and officious tongues,
That ſtrove in honoring *Agrippinaes* name?
Vaniſh'd alas, and nought but ſolitude,
Ill-boding ſilence, and neglect remaine
In this forſaken Palace. But too ſoone
Ay mee, I feare the approach of vilany.
What noiſe is that at doore! where are my ſervants?
Mneſter, Seleucus, Galla, Xenophon.
No anſwer made! are they departed too!
Then vaniſh all my hopes falſe world farewell
With all thy fading glories. But alas,
Whither from hence ſhall *Agrippina* fly?
What regions are there in the other world
But my injuſtice has already fill'd
With wronged Ghoſts? there young *Silanus* wanders,
Lollia Paulina and great *Claudius*
My murdred Lord, yet thoſe ſad ſpirits perchance
Abhorring *Nero's* baſe ingratitude,
And glutted with revenge, will ceaſe to hate
At laſt, and pitty *Agrippinas* ſtate.

Enter ANICETUS, OLOARITUS, *and others*

Ay mee, is *Anicetus*. come againe?
Then I am dead paſt hope, murder, helpe. help *Xiphilin.*

Anicetus.

You gueſſe our buſineſſe right but tis in vaine
To call for helpe, your guards are farre enough.

Agrippina.

Oh hold your hands a while; heare mee but ſpeake
Conſider with your ſelves before you act
A deed ſo execrable as will ſtick
A laſting brand on your abhorred names.
This murder will bee famous through the world.
All men will fly your hated company.
Like birds of night ſhall you for ever hide
Youre guilty heads; or, which is worſe then that,
Nero himſelfe, who did command the deede,

As you pretend) ſhall guerdon you with death,
And quit himſelfe by puniſhing of you.
O rather venter *Neros* frowne, and keepe
Your innocence.

Anicetus.

Can they bee innocent,
That diſobey their Prince his will?

Agrippina

But ſure
You did miſtake the Prince. I am his mother.
Twas I that gave him birth; nay more, that put
into his hand the ſcepter of the world.
Could hee command my death?

Anicetus

Nee did not ſtand
Examining the cauſe.

Agrippina.

Then ſtrike this wombe
This tragicall, and ever curſed wombe,
That to the ruine of mankinde brought forth *Xiphilin.*
That monſter *Nero*, here, here take revenge.
Here Juſtice bids you ſtrike. let theſe ſad wounds
Serve to appeaſe the hatred of the earth
Gainſt *Agrippina* for dire *Nero's* birth.

ſhee dyes.

FINIS.

THE TRAGEDIE OF CLEOPATRA Queen of *Ægypt*.

Written by

THOMAS MAY *Esq*;.

Luc.

——— quantùm impulit Argos,
Iliacasque domos facie Spartana nocenti
Hesperios auxit tantùm Cleopatra *furores.*

LONON,
Printed for *Humphrey Moseley*, and are to be sold at his Shop at the *Princes Armes* in St. *Pauls* Church-yard.
1654

TO THE MOST ACCOMPLISH'D Sr. *Kenelme Digby.*

Sr.

THat it pleased you to cast an eye of favour upon these poor Plays has given me the boldnesse, not only to publish them (which I thought not to have done) but to shelter them, though most unworthy, under that name, to which for authority and approbation the richest pieces that this nation can boast, might be proud to flie. You are to learning what learning is to others a gracefull ornament; and known not only able to receive, but fit to make that which we call literature; it being nothing else but rules and observations drawne at the first from such able natures as yours is; and by your daily conversation is better expressed, then wee by writing can define it. Your composition was made to justifie those old Philosophers who resembled a man to the whole world. For as in the world

all varieties do meet to make a perfect harmony: so in the largneſſe of your ſoule the ſeverall abilities of moſt different Nations are conjoyned to an honourable advantage of one entire temper, where the predominancies are magnanimity, prudence, and gentleneſſe. But I dare not offer to crowd into a narrow Epiſtle your noble Character, which will require a longer Treatiſe and a better pen. For the defects in theſe two Plays, I that have already been ſo much obliged to your goodneſſe in other matters, cannot here deſpaire of your forgiveneſſe, which is the only thing that puts confidence into

Your moſt obliged and

devoted ſervant

Tho. May.

THE TRAGEDIE OF *CEOPATRA.*

Actus Primus.

TITIUS, PLANCUS, CANIDIUS.

TITIUS.

Hame and dishonour to the Roman name
A triumph held at Alexandria
Only to honour *Cleopatraes* pride ?

PL.

Ah *Marcus*, this Ægyptian Queen was (made
To be the ruine of *Antonius*.

CA.

To be the pleasure of *Antonius*.

PL.

How can you jest *Canidius*, on a theame
So sad ?

CA.

How *Plancus* can you prophecie
So sadly on so merry an occasion,

As is the love of Ladies?

TI.

Let *Canidius*
Have his own way, *Munatius*, tis in vain
To talk to him.

CA.

Would you could let me have
Antonius his way, upon condition
I suffer'd you to censure gravely of it,
And prophecie my ruine. But my Lords,
You were as good be merry too, and take
Your share of pleasure in th' Ægyptian Court.
You'l do no good with these perswasions.
He loves the Queen, and will do so in spite.
Of our morality.

PL.

Tis too too true,
That face of hers, that beauty in the bud
Not fully blown, in yeers of innocence
(If any yeers of hers were innocent)
Set off with no adulterisme of art,
Nor cloath'd with state and pompous Majestie,
But in a fortune clouded and distrest
A wretched prisoner in her brother's Court,
Yet then I say that charming face could move
The manly temper of wise *Julius Cæsar*.
That *Mars* in heat of all his active warre,
When he pursu'd the flying *Pompey* hither,
His sword yet reeking in *Pharsalices* slaughter
At sight of her became a doting Lover:
And could we think that our *Antonius*
A man not master of that temperance
That *Cæsar* had, could finde a strength to guard
His soul against that beauty now set off
With so much wealth and majesty?

CA.

No surely.
I did not think *Antonius* was an Eunuch.
Nor could I have believ'd he had been worthy
To be a successour in *Cæsar's* power,
Unlesse he had succeeded him in her.
Great *Julius* noble acts in warre and state
Assur'd the world that he was wise and valiant:
But if he had not falne in love with her
I should have much suspected his good nature.

PL.

Nay then, *Canidius*, it shall be yours.

CA.

Or what indeed were greatnesse in the world
If he that did possesse it, might not play
The wanton with it? this Ægyptian Queen
Is a state-beauty, and ordain'd by fate
To be possest by them that rule the world.
Great *Pompey*'s sonne enjoy'd her first, and pluck'd
Her Virgin blossome. When that Family, *Plutarch.*
Whose ruine fill'd the World, was overthrown,
Great *Iulus* next came in as conquerour
To have his share, and as he did in power,
Succeeded him in *Cleopatraes* love.
Now our *Antonius* takes his turn, and thinks
That all the legions, all the swords, that came
To make his greatnesse up when *Julius* dy'd,
Could give no greater priviledge to him
Then power to be the servant to this Queen.
Thus whosoere in Rome be conquerour
His laurell wreath is *Cleopatraes* love.
And to speak justly of her, Nature teem'd
To build this woman for no meaner height.
Her soule is full of greatnesse, and her wit
Has charms as many as her beauty has.
With Majestie beyond her sex she rules

Her ſpatious Kingdomes, and all neighbour Princes
Admire her parts. How many languages
Speaks ſhe with elegance? Embaſſadors
From th' Æthiopians, Arabs, Troglodites, *Plut.*
From th' Hebrews, Syrians, Medes, and Parthians
Have in amazement heard this learned Queen
Without the aid of an interpreter
In all their ſeverall tongues returne their anſwers;
When moſt of her dull predeceſſor Kings
Since *Ptolemaus Philadelphus* time
Scarce underſtood th' Ægyptian tongue, and ſome
Had quite forgot the Macedonian.

TI.

How well *Canidius* deſcants on this theame!

PLA.

I'll lay my life it pleaſes him; the man
Is deep in love, and pity tis he has
So great a rivall as *Antonius*.

CA.

Well uſe your wit upon me; but I doubt
If any man could ſearch your ſecret thoughts,
Tis envy, not morality that makes
You taxe his love, how gravely ere you talke.

TI.

But can *Canidius* think it ſhould be juſt
In our *Antonius* to forſake for her
His lawfull wife the good *Octavia*?

CA.

Then like a Roman let me anſwer, *Marcus*.
Is it become a care worthy of us
What woman *Antony* enjoys? have we
Time to diſpute his matrimoniall faults,
That have already ſeen the breach of all
Romes ſacred laws, by which the world was bound?
Have we endur'd our Conſuls ſtate and power
To be ſubjected by the lawleſſe arms

Of private men, or Senators proſcrib'd,
And can we now conſider whether they
That did all this, may keep a wench or no?
It was the crime of us, and Fate it ſelf
That *Antony* and *Cæſar* could uſurpe
A power ſo great; beyond which we can ſuffer
No more worth thinking of. Nor were't to us
Any great fortune if *Antonius*
Were honeſt of his body.

PLA.

Have we then,
Who have been greateſt Magiſtrates, quite loſt
All ſhew of liberty, and now not dare
To counſell him?

CA.

A ſhew of liberty
When we have loſt the ſubſtance, is beſt kept
By ſeeming not to underſtand thoſe faults
Which we want power to mend. For mine own part
I love the perſon of *Antonius*;
And through his greateſt looſeneſſe can diſcern
A nature here, honeſter then *Cæſars*.
And if a warre do grow twixt them (as ſurely
Ambition would ere long finde out a cauſe
Although *Octavia* had not been neglected)
Rather then Rome ſhould ſtill obey two Lords,
Could wiſh that all were *Anthony's* alone.
Who would, I think, be brought more eaſily
Then *Cæſar*, to reſigne the government.

TI.

Would I could think that either would do ſo.
Here comes her ſervant *Mardio*. *Enter* Mardio.

MAR.

Noble Lords,
The Queen by mee entreats your company
At ſupper with the Lord *Antonius*.

CA.

Marcio return our humble ſervices,
Wee 'll inſtantly attend her. Now my friends,
Can you a while put off auſterity,
And rigid cenſures, to be freely merry ?

TI.

It may be ſo. Wee'll try what wine can do. *Exeunt.*

A Feaſt preparing. EUPHRONIUS, GLAUCUS, CHARMIO.

EU.

Glaucus, let more of this perfume be got.

GLA.

I have enough in readineſſe; or elſe
'Twould be too late to think on't now, the Queen
Is upon entrance.

EU.

Charmio, art thou ſure
Thoſe tapers ſtand juſt as the Queen commanded ?

CLA.

Tis the ſame order that *Antonius*
When laſt he feaſted here, ſo much admir'd;
And ſaid 'mongſt all the curioſities *Plutarch.*
That he had ſeen, the placing of thoſe lights.
Did not the leaſt affect him.

EU.

Though the Romans
In power and warlike ſtate exceed us farre,
Yet in our Court of Ægypt they may learn
Pleaſure and bravery, but art thou ſure
That all things here are well ?

CHA.

As exquiſite
As the Queens wiſh would have it. Hark they come.

A-

ACHOREUS *the Priest*, ANTONIUS, CLEOPATRA, CANIDIUS, TITIUS, PLANCUS.

CLE.

To say, my Lord, that you are welcome hither
Were to disparage you, who have the power
To make your self so, what ere you see
In Ægypt is your own.

AN.

What Ægypt holds
If I be judge, not all the world besides
Can equalize.

CLE.

Will 't please you take
Your place, and these your noble Roman friends?

AN.

Father *Acboreus*, sit you neer to mee.
Your holy Orders, and great age, which shews
The Gods have lov'd you well, may justly challenge
A reverence from us.

CLE.

Great *Julius Cæsar*
Did love my father well; he oft was pleas'd
At houres of leisure to conferre with him
About the nature of our Nile, of all
The mysteries of Religion, and the wonders
That Ægypt breeds.

ACH.

He had a knowing soule,
And was a master of Philosophy
As well as Warre.

AN.

How like the spangled sky
These tapers make the high-arch'd roofe to show?
While *Cleopatra* like bright *Cynthia*
In her full orbe more guilds the cheerfull night.

Shee's ſtill at full; yet ſtill me thinks ſhe vexes,
And grows more fair and more majeſticall.

CLE.

My Lords, you Romans, whoſe victorious arms
Have made you Maſters of the world, poſſeſſe
Such full and high delights in Italy,
That our poor Ægypt can preſent no pleaſure
Worth your acceptance: but let me entreat
You would be freely merry, and forgive
Your entertainment.

ANT.

'Tis an entertainment
That might invite and pleaſe the Gods. Me thinks,
Jove ſhould deſcend, while *Cleopatra's* here,
Diſguis'd for love, as once for fear he was,
When bold *Typhœus* ſcal'd the ſtarry sky,
And all the Gods diſguis'd in Ægypt lurk'd.
Love were a nobler cauſe then fear to bring him,
And ſuch a love as thine.

CLE.

If I could think
That ere great *Jove* did play ſuch feats as thoſe,
I'de now beleeve that he were here diſguis'd,
And took the noble ſhape of *Anthony*

ANT.

This complement ſo farre tranſcends, it leaves
No anſwer for a wit ſo dull as mine.

A Song.

NOt hee, that knows how to acquire
But to enjoy, is bleſt.
Nor does our happineſſe conſiſt
In motion, but in reſt.

The Gods passe man in blisse, because
They toile not for more height;
But can enjoy, and in their own
Eternall rest delight.

Then, Princes, do not toile, nor care;
Enjoy what you possesse.
Which whilest you do, you equalize
The Gods in happinesse.

TI.

Minutius Plancus, I was thinking now
How *Hannibal* was charm'd at Capua,
When that delicious place had mollifi'd
His rough and cruell soul, and made him learn
The lessons of soft love, and luxury.

PLA.

There was no cause, *Marcus*, for such a thought.
For our *Antonius* in the heat of all
His active life knew how to revell well.

ANT.

Let this soft Musique cease, and louder sound.
This second course is mine. Call in *Lucilius*.

Enter LUCILIUS *with three Crowns.*

Fair *Cleopatra*, for addition *Plutarch.*
To what thou hold'st, the world-commanding Rome
Presents these Crowns, and by my hand invests
Thee, *Cleopatra* Queen of wealthy *Cyprus*,
Of Cœlosyria, and Phœnicia.
Blush not, my Love, nor let Romes bounty force
Thy modesty: these Crowns from thy fair brow
Receive more lustre then they can bestow.

TI.

I think he need not greatly fear her blushing.

PLA.

No *Marcus* no; alas these petty Kingdomes
(Though too too great to be so ill bestow'd)
Are not the scope of her ambitious aymes!

CLE.

My Lord, I dare not make excuse, or plead
Unworthinesse, where once *Antonius* wisdome
Has made election to conferre his favours.

ANT.

Admire not, friends; the God-like power of Rome
Is more declar'd by what it gives away *Plusarch.*
Then what it holds. But these are still our owne
And *Cleopatra* Romes deserving friend.

CA.

I cannot choose but think how fit a state
For *Cleopatra Cyprus* Kingdome is;
And shall believe that it was ominous
That noble *Julius Cæsar* after all
Those foure rich triumphs which he held at Rome
When he resolv'd with like magnificence
To build a Temple to the Goddesse *Venus*,
From whom his house derive their pedigree
Within his stately Temple, to expresse
The Image of that Goddesse, he set up
Fair *Cleopatraes* figure in the place
Supposing her to be the Queen of Love.
You know my Lord Antonius, this is true.
And Cyprus ever was fair *Venus* Ile.

AN.

'Twas well observ'd noble *Canidius*.

CA.

Fill me some wine. Health to the Cyprian Queen.

AN.

Drink it to me *Canidius*; and I thank thee.
Let it go round, my friends.

CLE.

CLE.

I ever thought
My ſelf much bound to brave *Canidius*
Since I was happy in his company.

AN.

How fit it is, no other *Cyprian* Queen,
But *Cleopatra* ſhall the Poëts know,
Whoſe fancies now ſhall raiſe that Kingdome higher.
More amorous now will *Paphos* mountains ſhow,
And all thoſe flowery Meads, the Fields of love,
Ore which no windes but Weſtern ever blow.
The aire it ſelf will yield a ſweeter breath
While *Cleopatra* reignes the Cyprian Queen.

PLA.

How amorous in his language he is grown.

TI.

The times, I fear *Minutius*, will require
A rougher language ſhortly. We ſhall heare
Aſſoon as any news can come from Rome.

AN.

But long ago was I enforc'd to know
That *Cleopatra* was the Queen of love,
When firſt I met thee in Cilicia, *Plut.*
And down the ſilver ſtream of *Cydnus*, thou
In *Venus* ſhape com'ſt ſayling, while the aire
Was raviſh'd with thy Muſick, and the windes
In amorous gales did kiſſe thy ſilken ſayls.
Thy maids in Graces habits did attend,
And boys, like *Cupids*, painted quivers bore,
While thouſand *Cupids* in thoſe ſtarry eyes
Stood ready drawn to wound the ſtouteſt hearts.

CLE.

You came like *Mars* himſelf in threatning arms
To ruine me, and my poor Country then.
I took that ſhape, becauſe I knew no ſtrength
No power on earth was able to reſiſt
The conquering fury of *Antonius*.

AN.

AN.

That face of thine resisted me, and did
So sweetly conquer, I was proud to yield;
And more rejoyc'd in that captivity,
Then any Roman in a triumph did. *Enter* Hipparchus.
How now, what news with thee?

HIP.

Letters from Rome, my Lord.

AN.

From whom?

HIP.

Geminius.

AN.

To morrow wee'll peruse them. No affairs
Of what import or height so ere, shall have
Power to disturbe the pleasures of this night.
Our theam to night is love, which oft has made
The Thunderer himself a while lay by
The weary burden of his government.
Come lead away.
'Twere fit to read them now.
None knows what gain a little time may be

AN.

You may peruse them *Titius*; lead away. *Exeunt.*

Manent TITIUS, PLANCUS.

Can no affairs of what import so ere
Break one nights pleasure? well *Antonius*,
The tottering state thou holdst, must be supported
By nobler vertues, or it cannot stand.

PLA.

Cyprus, Phœnice, Cœlosyria,
Three wealthy Kingdoms got with Roman bloud,
And our forefathers valour, given away
As the base hire of an adulterous bed.
Was *Cyprus* conquer'd by the sober vertue
Of *Marcus Cato*, to be thus bestow'd?

TI.

TI.

This act will please yong *Cesar*.

PLA.

'Twill displease
The Senate, *Marcus*, and *Antonius* friends.

TI.

Alas, he knows not what true friendship means,
But makes his friends his slaves, and which is worse
Slaves to his lusts and vices; could he else
Slight our advise so? men, whom Rome has seen
Wearing her highest honours, and of birth
As great as his. Unlesse he change his minde
I shall believe my friendship was ill plac'd,
And strive to place it better.

PLA.

This last act
Will quickly be at Rome.

TI.

They have enough
Already, noble *Plancus*; think you not
It will be censur'd that the Roman name
Was much dishonour'd by that base surprize *Dio.Cass*
Of *Artavases* the Armenian King? *Plutarch.*
Whom through the streets of Alexandria
He led in triumph bound with golden chains
Forcing the captive King, (if all his threats
Could have enforc'd so much) prostrate t'adore
Proud *Cleopatra*, as if all his acts,
And all the honour of his armes were due
To her and not to Rome. *Calvisius* too *Plutarch.*
In Senate late accus'd him for bestowing
On *Cleopatra* that so farre renown'd
And famous Library of Pergamus,
In which there were two hundred thousand Books.
How many such wilde actions have her charms
Enforc'd his weaknesse to?

PLA.

PLA.

His Testament,
Which now at Rome the Vestall Virgins keep,
Of which we two are privy to the sealing,
Should it be known, would stirre all Romans hate,
Willing his bodie, though he dy'd at Rome, *Dio.*
To be intert'd at Alexandria. *Plutarch.*
But if a watre 'twixt him and *Cæsar* grow
(As needs it must, although not yet declar'd)
For *Cæsar* now is levying men and money
Through Italy, Spain, France and Germany,
Against what foe can his designe be bent
But our *Antonius*? if a warre I say
Twixt them should happen, tell me, noble *Titius*,
What should we do?

TI.

Fight for *Antonius*.

PLA.

True friend, were he himself, or were there hope,
Or possibility he could be so.
But shall our valour toile in sweat and bloud
Only to gain a Roman Monarchy
For *Cleopatra*, and th'effeminate rout
Of base *Canopus*? shall her timbrels fright
Romes Capitoll, and her advanced pride
Tread on the necks of captive Senators?
Or, which is more, shall th' earths Imperiall seat *Dio.*
Remove from Rome to Ægypts swarthy sands?
For who can tell if mad *Antonius*
Have promis'd her, as *Caius Marius* once
Promis'de the Samnites, to transferre the state?

TI.

It may be so, his dotage is enough
To grant it her, her pride enough to aske it.
Minutius Plancus, in this whole discourse
Thou speak'st my very thoughts no more, here comes

Lucilius, whither so fast? *Enter* Lucilius.

LU.

My Lords,
Down to the Fort to wait upon the Consuls,
The Roman Consuls both, *Titus Domitius*, *Dio*
And *Caius Sossius* are from Rome arriv'd *Sueton*
Here at Pelusium, what the matter is
Is not yet known.

PLA.

Wee'll go along with thee;
This now begins to look like businesse, *Marcus. Exeunt*

Actus Secundus.

ANTONIUS, SOSSIUS, DOMITIUS CANIDIUS, TITIUS, PLANCUS, VENTIDIUS.

AN.

TIs not the place, nor marble wals that make
A Senate lawfull, or decrees of power,
But convocation of the men themselves
The sacred order by true Magistrates.
Then Rome is here; here both her Consuls are,
Here are her axes, and her fasces born,
And no small number of that sacred order
Are here assisting, when the barbarous Gaules
Had taken Rome, when all the Senate fled,
And with *Camillus* their Dictator then

At *Veii* liv'd, Rome then at Veii was,
As now in Ægypt. Fathers, know the face,
Of your assembly, know your lawfull power.
Consult, decree, and act what ere may be
Happy, and prosperous for the Common-wealth.

SOS.

Whilst power of laws, whilst reverence of the Senate,
And due respect t' a Consuls dignity
Could give protection to the Consuls persons
We did maintain thy cause *Antonius*
Against proud *Cæsars* faction. Now since laws
Are put to silence, and the Senate forc'd,
The Consuls sacred priviledge infring'd
By rage and lawlesse armes, we are expell'd;
And suffer banishment to be restor'd,
And re-indeniz'd by thy conquering sword.
Now justly draw it. Fate approves thy cause,
And on thy conquest sets a glorious prize,
Greater then all thy former wars could give.
Sextus Pompeius, Marcus Lepidus
Are ruin'd both, and all competitors
Are tane away; Fortune has left but one
To share the world with thee; nor canst thou share
The world with him, his pride would barre thy right,
And *Cæsar's* glory dim *Antonius* light.
Thou canst not shine unlesse alone thou shine.
Or all the world, or nothing must be thine.

DOM.

The Consulship, that was design'd to thee, *Dio*
The Senate have revoked, and decree
'Gainst *Cleopatra* warre, but meant 'gainst thee.
What would their malice dare *Antonius*,
Had Fortune frown'd, thy Kings and Provinces
Revolted from thee, that dare now provoke
Thy growing fortunes and assisting Gods?
Their injury has made thy quarrell just.

Be ſpeedy then, and loſe no time of action:

SOS.

Cæſar is needy; his Italian ſouldiers *Dio.*
Are apt to mutiny for want of pay, *Plutarch.*
And might with eaſe be tempted to revolt.

CAN.

We need them not; our ſtrengths are greater farre
Then *Cæſar's* are; our præparations readier.
Nought but delay can queſtion our ſucceſſe.
Shall we decree the warre?

AN.

Stay noble Romans;
Before we publiſh a Decree, or ſhew
The reaſon our arms ſo juſtly tane;
Weigh but with me the means and ſtrength we have.
Know worthy friends it is no deſperate warre
Your valours are engag'd in; briefly thus:
Our Roman ſtrength is nineteen Legions.
Ten Kings in perſon will attend our Camp;
The Kings of Africk, Comagena, Thrace, *Plutarch.*
Upper Cilicia, Paphlagonia,
Of Cappadocia, Pontus, Palæſtine,
Of rich Arabia, and Galatia.
Our ſtrength at Sea five hundred fighting ſhips
Well rigg'd and mann'd: our treaſuries are full;
And twenty thouſand talents to the warre
Does *Cleopatra* freely contribute.
Why ſpeak I more? the Crown of all my ſtrength,
Your loves and ſpirits are. The injuries
On which we ground our juſt and lawfull warre,
Are briefly theſe. *Cæſar* unjuſtly holds
Thoſe Provinces, and armies all, that late *Dio.*
Belong'd to *Pompey* and to *Lepidus* *Plutarch.*
Refuſing to divide them, or deliver
The moity which appertains to me
Though oft demanded by my friends at Rome,

And

And letters from my ſelf: beſides he levies
Both men and money ore all Italy,
Which country, as you know, by our agreement
Belongs to both, and ſhould be held in common.

TI.

Moſt true.

CA.

Theſe wrongs are paſt all ſufferance.
Thy warre is but defenſive, to regain
Thine own unjuſtly taken.

DOM.

The warre's juſt.

SOSS.

And *Cæſar* the beginner of theſe broyls
From whom the wrong firſt ſprung, moſt juſtly may
Be judg'd an enemy to the peace of Rome.

AN.

If Fortune aid us in a cauſe ſo juſt,
And we return victorious, noble Romans,
I make a vow, and let it be recorded,
Within two moneths after the warre is ended, *Dio.*
I will lay down the government I hold,
And freely then reſigne my power again
Unto the Senate and the people of Rome.

SOSS.

Let it be ſix moneths rather; for two moneths *Dio.*
Will be too ſhort a time to ſettle it.

DOM.

Scſſius ſpeaks well, my Lord.

ANT.

Let it be ſo,
And all the Gods aſſiſt me as I mean
A juſt and true performance.

CA.

All the Gods
Preſerve *Antonius* father of his Country.

OMN.

OMN.

Author and Champion of our liberty.

Exeunt. manent TITIUS, PLANCUS.

TI.

Let them believe that list; for me, I think
The resignation of a power so great
Will be a temperance too great for him
Ere to expresse.

PLA.

Or if he would, he must
Aske leave of *Cleopatra*, and her pride
Will hardly grant him that.

TI.

Nor will I fight
To make her Mistris of the world and him.
Have you consider'd, noble friend of what
We lately spake?

PLA.

And am resolved *Marcus*.
The friends and followers we shall bring with us
Will make us welcome guests to *Cæsars* side.
It seems the City favours *Cæsar* much
That both the Consuls fled from Rome for fear.
Nor is our action base; the scorns and wrongs
We have endur'd at *Cleopatraes* hands *Plutarch.*
Would tempt a moyle to fury, and both sides
Stand equall yet.

TI.

Come let's away; tis time. *Dio.*

PLA.

Ægypt farewell.

TI.

Farewell *Antonius*. *Exeunt.*

SELEUCUS, GLAUCUS.

SE.

How ſuddenly the Scene is changed here
From love and banquets to the rough alarms
And threatning noiſe of warre!

GLA.

The change, *Seleucus*
Is not ſo ſuddain as you ſpeak; this ſtorm
Has been expected long; the two great Lords
Of all the Roman world, *Antonius*
And *Cæſar* have in heart been enemies
Theſe many yeers; and every man has wonder'd
'T has been withheld ſo long, conſidering
How much complaining has been daily made
By them, their friends, and factions 'gainſt each other:
Whoſe cauſe is juſteſt let the Gods determine.

SE.

No other juſtice then ambition
Makes them to draw their ſwords; no other cauſe
Then that the world cannot endure two Suns.

GLA.

The thing that troubles me, *Seleucus*, is
I hear it ſpoken in the Court, the Queen
Her ſelf in perſon will aſſociate
Antonius to the warre.

SE.

I hear that rumour;
But hope it is not true, how nakedly
And in what great confuſion would this land
Be left! and what addition can her perſon
Among ſo many Roman Legions
Bring to *Antonius*?

GLA.

Let us enquire
The certainty; I fain would be reſolv'd.

SE.

SE.

I on neceſſity muſt know, before
The Queen can go, that order may be taken
About the Fort I keep, what ſtrength ſhe means
To leave within it in her abſence.

GLA.

True,
That reaſon will excuſe thee for enquiring. *Exeunt.*

CLEOPATRA, CANIDIUS.

CLE.

Noble *Canidius*, I'll entruſt no more,
Nor uſe more circumſtances; for I know
To whom I have referr'd my buſineſſe,
And truſt your wiſdome.

CA.

Royall *Cleopatra.*
I am ſo fortify'd with reaſons now *Plutarch.*
That maugre *Soſſius* and *Domitius*
With all their beſt perſwaſions, I'll prevaile
You ſhall not ſtay behinde; fear it not Madam.

CLE,

Brave Roman, wear this jewell for my ſake;
And be poſſeſt of *Cleopatraes* love.
Second my ſuit, there lies not in my power
A thing to grant I ſhould deny *Canidius.*

CA.

The favours, Madam, you can give, have power
T' oblige the greateſt Monarchs of the World.

CLE.

Be ready, worthy friend; he'll ſtraight be here. *Exit* Can.
None but *Canidius* has the power to work
Antonius in this action, which the reſt
Will all oppoſe, I know; a thing on which
My ſtate, my hopes, and fortunes all depend.

He

He must perſwade *Antonius* to take
Me with him to the warre; for if I ſtay
Behinde him here, I run a deſperate hazard;
For ſhould *Octavia* enterpoſe her ſelf
In this great warre (as once before ſhe did)
And make her brother, and her husband friends
Wher's *Cleopatra* then? but here he comes.

ANTONIUS, CLEOPATRA.

AN.

Sweet *Cleopatra*, I ſhould plead excuſe
For leaving thee awhile, but that the cauſe
Is of a nature ſo immenſe and high,
And brings effects of ſuch advantage home,
That thou I know art pleas'd it ſhould be ſo;
And with a patience canſt reſolve to bear
So ſmall an abſence, that my wiſh'd return
May call thee miſtris of the ſubject world.

CLE.

Cannot *Antonius* then be fortunate
If *Cleopatra* go? is there in me
So bad an *Omen?* did I think there were,
Not for the world would I deſire to bear
You company but rather die at home.

AN.

Farre are my thoughts from giving entertainment
To ſuch fond dreams. I would not venture thee.

CLE.

My life and fortunes both depend on yours.
As much in Ægypt will my danger be,
As in your army, and my torment more,
To die each houre for feare: and to remain
In ſad ſuſpence till meſſengers can bring
The news ſo farre: but if my company
Diſtaſt my Lord, I cannot wiſh his grief.

AN.

AN.

Can *Cleopatra* think her heavenly preſence,
Can be diſtaſtfull, or not valued more
Then all joys elſe; parted from thee I think,
All places ſad, all lands diſconſolate,
Before this life I prize thy company,
But muſt not have it now; do not entreat;
I have deny'd it to my ſelf already.
And in the Camp ſhould be aſham'd to riſe
From *Cleopatraes* arms, when wars rough noiſe
Shakes all the world, when Kings and Senators
Are venturing lives and fortunes in my ſervice.
Oh ſtay behinde! and let thy preſence make
Ægypt a place, to which I would deſire
If *Cæſar's* fortune conquer, to retire.

CLE.

If that ſhould happen (which the Gods avert)
What land, alas! could comfort me, or lend
A ſafe retreat to vanquiſh'd *Antony?*
Thou would'ſt diſdain to draw a wretched breath,
And I as much ſhould ſcorn captivity.
But I had thought the Roman *Antony*
Had lov'd ſo great a Queen with nobler love;
Not as the pleaſure of his wanton bed
Or miſtris only of ſome looſer houres,
But as a partner in his higheſt cares,
And one whoſe ſoul he thought were fit to ſhare
In all his dangers, all his deeds of honour.
Without that love I ſhould diſdain the other.

AN.

Do not miſtake me, noble Queen, I know
Thy breſt is full of high heroike worth.

CLE.

How can you think it ſo, that could ſo long
In times of peace and pleaſure recreate
Your ſelf with me in Ægypt Court; yet now

When

When honour calls, reject my company?

AN.

I should desire it rather then my life;
But that my Roman friends are all against it.

Enter SOSSIUS, DOMITIUS, CANIDIUS.

See here they come, if they agree tis done.
Now noble friends on whose oraculous counsels
And matchlesse valour my whole fate depends,
Speak what you think, should *Cleopatra* go
In person to the warre, or stay behinde?

SO.

I have delivered my opinion,
And so has my Colleague.

AN.

What thinks *Canidius?*

CA.

I think tis fit, my Lord, the Queen, whose bounty
Has brought so great assistance to the warre,
Should not be left behinde, besides her presence
Will much encourage her Ægyptian souldiers,
Of which a great part of the fleet consists. *Plutarch.*

AN.

Tis true *Canidius.*

CLE.

Let not my sex
Disparage me, for which of all those Kings
That now in person serve *Antonius*
Have more experience in affairs of weight
Then I, my Lord, which have so long been privy
To your high counsels, and in love to you
And your designes who should compare with me?

AN.

What think you friends? you heare *Canidius.*

DOM.

If you be pleas'd, I will subscribe.

SOS.

SOS.

And I,
Since things go ſo.

CLE.

My wiſhes are effected.

AN.

Titius, and *Plancus* are both fled to *Cæſar*.

CAN.

You ſhall not need their help my Lord, at all.

AN.

Come, let's away.

CLE.

My ſtrengths are ready all,
And wait but your command.

AN.

Spoke like *Bellona*.
Canidius, return you to your charge
And bring thoſe ſixteen Cohorts down to ſea; *Plutarch.*
Meet me at Samos with them; both the Conſuls
Shall go along with me. Great Father *Mars*,
And all you Gods, that from the skies behold
The Roman labours, whoſe propitious aid
Advanc'd my fortunes to ſo great an height,
Make perfect that, which you your ſelves begun.
This is the ſwords laſt work, the judging houre
Of Nations fates, of mine and *Cæſar's* power.
On which the ſtars and deſtinies attend,
And all the fortunes of Mankinde depend. *Exeunt*

ACHOREUS.

What dire portents ſent from the wrathfull Gods?
Threaten th'aſtoniſh'd world? What plagues are thoſe
Which in the skies prodigious face I read?
Tumultuous Nature teems with monſtrous births,
As if the throws would break her labouring wombe.

What ruine lesse then *Chaos* shall involve
The mourning face of Nature? what great fate,
What kinde of mischief is it? oh ye Gods,
Why did you adde to wretched men a care
So past their strength to bear, to let them know
By sad presages their ensuing woe?
Unknown and secret let your vengeance be,
And none foresee their following misery;
But hope as well as fear. *Jove* hide thy dooms;
Keep shut, oh fates, your adamantine books!
Let not the bainfull curiosity
Of humane knowledge search your secret counsels,
And read your purposes, to nourish so
A killing fear before the danger grow.

Enter SELEUCUS, GLAUCUS.

SE.

That Comet's gone.

GLA.

It mov'd directly upward,
And did not vanish till it seem'd to reach *Dio.*
The firmament.

ACH.

What talk you of my sonnes?

GLA.

That Comet, father, ore the Græcian Sea.

ACH.

It was a strange one both for form and greatnesse,
And bodes some mischief whersoere it light.
The Gods avert it from our Ægypts coast.

SE.

Pinnarius Scarpus had received news
That Italy and Rome it self are fill'd
With prodigies: an ugly Owle of late *Dio.*
Did fly into the house of Concord first,

Phenice-

Thence being driven away it pearch'd again
Within the Temple of the peoples *Genius*.
There, though all ſtriv'd, it neither could be caught,
Nor driven away, but flew at leiſure out.
A ſacred Trophey on Mount Aventine, *Dio.*
Victoriaes Image on the Theater *Dio.*
By ſuddain tempeſts were thrown down and broken.

GLA.

In Rome and other parts of Italy
Sudden and ſtrangely kindled fires have done
Exceeding waſte; and we are certifi'd
That now Sicilian Ætna nouriſhes *Dio.*
More horrid flames then uſually it does,
And farther caſts his ſcorching entrails forth,
Blaſting the fields and burning up the corn.

SE.

A two-legg'd Dragon in Etruria *Dio.*
Full fourſcore foot in length was lately ſeen,
Which after much annoyance of the Country
It ſelf with lightning was conſum'd at laſt.
But theſe portents do threaten Italy.

ACH.

Alas, my ſonne, there need no prodigies
To ſhew the certain loſſe of Italy.
For on both ſides do Roman Eagles ſtand,
And Rome muſt bleed who ere be conquerour,
Beſides her liberty for ever loſt
When this ſad field is fought: but that's not all,
What clime ſo farre, what region ſo remote,
But that the Roman fortune reaches thither?
All nations ſhare in this.

GLA.

What haſt thou got
By all thy conqueſt Rome, by all the bloud
Which thy ambition through the world has ſhed,
But rais'd a power, which now thou canſt not rule,

Nourish'd a Lion to devoure thy felf?

SE.

Would none but Roman bloud might quench the fire
Of Romes dissentions, and no land beside
Be forc'd to pay the forfeit of their pride.
With evill *Omen* did Æneas first
Transport the reliques of Troyes fatall fire
To Italy, that kindled greater there
It might at last like lightning through the world
Rend every Nation. Was it not enough,
That first your conquests strew'd the earth with slaugh-
And dy'd all Regions with their natives blouds, (ter,
But your dissentions still must tear the world?

ACHO.

I'll go within, and make an offering
To great *Osiris*. *Exit* Achoreus.

GLA.

Well may it succeed.
Ægypt will flourish if *Antonius* conquer.

SE.

If he should fall, the fury of the warre
Would light on Ægypt most, and we should rue
That ere *Antonius* lov'd this haplesse land.

Enter MARDIO.

Oh Gentlemen, the strongest news, that ere
Was seen in Ægypt.

GLA.

What's that *Mardio*?

MAR.

Thousands of people with astonishment
And fear beheld it: on those fruitfull plains
That Southward ly from Alexandria,
Where never rain was known to fall before, *Dio.*
It rain'd whole showers of bloud, whose colour set

A purple die upon thoſe verdant fields;
And in the clouds that horrid noiſe was heard
That meeting armies make, beating of drums,
Shrill trumpets ſound, armor againſt armor claſhing,
As if the bloud that fell, dropp'd from the wounds *Die.*
Thoſe aëry battails made.

GLA.

This is more ſtrange
Then all the reſt: this is our own *Seleucus.*

SE.

Well Gentlemen, I'll to Peluſium,
And fortifie the town to keep our foes,
If foes be couquerours, from entring there.

GLA.

Yes, and our friends, if they be vanquiſhed,
Keep out our friends, *Seleucus*, if their preſence
May pluck a warre, and ruine on our heads.

SE.

As there's occaſion wee'll determine that.

Enter ACHOREUS.

Avert your angers, Gods, if all too late
Our prayers came not now.

GLA.

What is it father?
Your looks, I ſee, are full of ruth and wo.

ACHO.

Ah wretched Ægypt, ah unhappy land
In what haſt thou ſo ſtor'd the wrath of heaven?
The grieved God refus'd his offering
Bellowing aloud that all the Temple rung,
And from his ſacred eys the tears run down.
Would I could contradict, or not beleeve
The skill which ſureſt obſervations teach.
This ſignifies a change of government.

GLA.

What heaven is pleas'd to ſend; we much endure.

ACO.

True ſonne; and let a wiſe man place his ſtrengths
Within himſelf, nor truſt to outward aids.
That whatſoever from the Gods can come
May finde him ready to receive their doom. *Exeunt.*

Actus Tertius.

Enter PINNARIUS SCARPUS *with Souldiers.*

PIN.

TIs not *Antonius*, worthy ſouldiers,
But Rome herſelf to whom you owe your valours.
What he could claim, you have perform'd already;
And ſerv'd him truly, whilſt he was to you
A Generall, to Rome a Magiſtrate.
You are diſcharg'd from all obedience
You ow'd to him, by fate it ſelf, and may
Nay, ought to follow him, whom Roman fates
Appoint your Generall, the noble *Cæſar*
Great *Julius* heir, not to his name alone
But ſpirit and fortunes; which have both appear'd
In this ſo great and finall a defeat
Given to *Antonius*. Before we knew not

To

To whom the Gods and Fortune had assign'd
Our service souldiers; now they have declar'd,
And let us follow where they please to lead.
For faith is impious striving to sustain
That side, whose fall the Gods themselves ordain.

SOL.

Cæsar, Cæsar, Cæsar.

PIN.

Your judgments guide you right; for could you think
So small a strength as ours could raise again
The desperate state of faln *Antonius*,
Under whose ruine all those legions sunk?
What madnesse were it, souldiers to preferre
A hopelesse civill warre before the weal
And peace of Rome? and desperatly provoke
The prosperous fortunes of victorious *Cæsar*?
I have already to *Cornelius Gallus* *Dis.*
By letter signifyid our purposes,
Who sent from *Cæsar* now is marching hither,
To joyn his strength with ours; but hark, his Drum
Give notice of his comming.

Enter GALLUS.

Hail *Pinnarius.*

PIN.

Ah hail *Cornelius Gallus*,
Most wish'd for, an most happily arriv'd
At Parætonium.

GAL.

Victorious *Cæsar*
With love and favour greets *Pinnarius Scarpus*,
Cæsar, then whom the world acknowledges
No other power; whom Fortune now has made
Sole Lord of all.

PI.

I, and my souldiers
With Paræonium are at *Cæsar's* service.
Whither's *Antonius* fled?

GAL.

Hither to Ægypt
With *Cleopatra*? 'Twas a victory
So strangely given away, as not the like
In former times I think has ere been heard;
On which especially so great a price
As the sole sway of all the world depended.
The Fleets encountred both, while with the Camps
On either shore stood to behold the fight, *Dio.*
Heer the Cæsarian, there the Antonian Fleet
With equall hopes came on, with fury equall.
And long maintain'd a sharpe and cruell fight,
With mutuall slaughter, while the Oceans face
Was forc'd to lose his colour, and receive
A crimson die. The ships *Antonius* had
Were tall, and slowly did like Castles move.
But *Cæsar's* small, yet quick and active, stirr'd *Dio.*
On every side with all advantages. *Florus.*
Long fortune doubted, and bright victory *Plutarch.*
Knew not which way to lean, but kept them both
In equall ballance; till *Antonius*
Himself at last betray'd his glorious hopes.
For when his Mistris *Cleopatra* fled, *Plutarch.*
Although a while within his manly breast *Dio.*
The Roman honour strove 'gainst wanton love, *Florus.*
Love got the conquest, and *Antonius*
Fled after her, leaving his souldiers there
To sell their lives in vain; who many houres
Though he were fled, made good the navall fight.
And had *Antonius* stay'd, it may be fear'd
Cæsar had not prevail'd: at last the Fleet
Wanting their Admirall, though not without

Much

Much ſlaughter, fled, or yielded all to *Cæſar*.

PIN.

But what became of all his ſtrength on land?

GAL.

Nay, there's the wonder, there's *Antonius* madneſſe,
And ſuch a madneſſe as will ſtrike amazement
To all that heare it told: after his flight
He nere return'd, though in the campe he had
Under the conduct of *Canidius*
And other Captains nineteen legions
Freſh and unfought, which might with reaſon hope
Had he been there, to have recover'd all.
They ſtill remayn'd encamped, and though oft
Sollicited by *Cæſar* to revolt
Were kept from yielding, by *Canidius*
In hope of *Antony's* return. Untill
Canidius fearing his own ſouldiers minds *Plutarch.*
And *Cæſar's* anger fled away by night,
They then deſpairing yielded all to *Cæſar*.
Who by this time I think's arriv'd in Ægypt.
About Peluſium.

PI.

Will you view the town?

GAL.

With all my heart, noble *Pinnarius*. *Exeunt.*

Enter CÆSAR, AGRIPPA, TITIUS, PLANCUS, THYREUS, EPAPHRODITUS, PROCULEIUS.

Cæ.

Antonius then with *Cleopatra's* fled
To Alexandria.

AGR.

'Tis certain, *Cæſar*.

PHA.

They say the vanquish'd Queen most cunningly: *Dio.*
(Feating it seems, to be excluded else
From her own Kingdome) fain'd her self victorious,
Landing in Ægypt with triumphant songs
Her ships all crown'd with laurell, to deceive
The credulous people: where being enter'd once
She leaves unpractis'd no strange tyranny;
And, as we hear, to win the Parthan King
Unto her side, beheaded *Artavasdes* *Dio.*
King of Armenia, and the Parthians so,
Who was her prisoner, that *Artavasdes*,
Whom *Antbony* so basely had surpris'd.

TI.

Cæsar, twere fit to take Pelusium
Before we march to Alexandria.

Cæ.

'Twas our intent, good *Titius*, not to leaue
A town of that import behinde our backs:
Go *Proculeius*, summon it, and know
Wie her the Governour will yield or no. *Exit. Proc.*

Enter Servant.

What news with thee?

SER.

Cæsar, a messenger
From *Cleopatra* craves admittance.

Cæ.

Bring him.

Enter EUPHRONIUS.

Queen *Cleopatra* to great *Cæsar* wishes
All health and victory; and humbly proffers
Self and all her fortunes to his service: *Dio.*
of which she here presents by mee

This

This Crown and Scepter.

TI.

Brave and ominous.

EUP.

Humbly entreating *Cæsar's* noble favour
To her and hers; the rest of her desires
So please it *Cæsar* to peruse the same,
This letter holds.

PLA.

I warrant a love-letter.

Cæ.

But tell me first, where is *Antonius?*

EUP.

I'll truly tell (though it may seem to some
Incredible) that great *Antonius*
A man of late in conversation
So free, and full of jollity, in a strange
Deep melancholly has retir'd himself *Plut. Strabo*
To *Pharos* Ile; where like Athenian *Timon*, *lib. 1.*
Who did professe a hatred to mankinde,
And fled all company, he lives alone;
And on the solitary shore has built
A little house to feed his frantike humour,
And imitate that *Timon*'s life, whose name
He takes unto himself: no friends at all
Nor servants are admitted to his presence,
But only two, Roman *Lucilius*
And *Aristocrates* the Græcian.

Cæ.

Not *Cleopatra?* then I doubt the man
Grows weary of these worldly vanities.

AGR.

I never heard of such a change as this.
Give me the letter I'll peruse it now *He reads.*

AGRIPPA, AGR. CÆSAR. *they retire.*

CÆS.

Here the woman writes
That for her liberty, and to confirme
The Crown of Ægypt to her ſelf and children
To gratifie my favour ſhe has hid *Dio.*
Within her pallace a great maſſe of gold. *Plutarch.*
Unknown t' *Antonius.*

AGRI.

'Tis like ennough,
For *Cleoptrea*'s rich, and long has been,
Beſides the ſacriledge ſhe lately did
In robbing all the Temples of the Gods
About theſe parts.

CÆ.

I would not loſe this gold,
Nor willingly let *Cleopatra* die
Before her perſon have adorn'd my triumph.

AGR.

That will be hard to bring to paſſe, and muſt
Be wrought with ſubtilty: you muſt not ſend
A threatning meſſage backs for if you do,
All's loſt, her life, her gold and all are vaniſh'd.
For *Cleopatra*, as in all her acts
It has appear'd, is of a wondrous ſpirit,
Of an ambition greater then her fortunes
Have ever been, though ſhe ſo long have ſway'd
A ſoveraignty ore half the Roman world,
Trod on the necks of humbled Kings, and rul'd
Antonius as her ſlave: her haughty ſpirit
Will never ſtoop ſo much as to a thought
Of ſuch captivity.

CÆ.

I do not mean

To

To let her know my minde, or once suspect
If I can help it, but I have it now.
Thyreus come hither; I must now rely
Upon thy wisdome, care, and diligence
In an employment that concerns me neerly.
But I am confident: go with this fellow *Dio.*
To Alexandria; use to the Queen *Plutarch.*
Thy best and most perswasive Oratory.
Tell her I love her, and extremly dote
On her admired beauty, thou art wise
And need'st no great instructions; the successe
I do not doubt, the woman's credulous,
And thinks all men are bound to be in love
With that insnaring face; if thou perceive
She will be wrought on, winne her to betray
Antonius to my hand: the way to woo her
I leave good *Thyreus* to thy eloquence
And cunning working of it: spare thy reply *to* Euph.
Bid him come hither. Commend my hearty love
To *Cleopatra*; bid her fear no ill
From me at all. What I desire from her
My freed man *Thyreus* has commission
To utter to her self. *Epaphroditus,*
Go see him well rewarded.

EPA.

Health to *Caesar.* *Exeunt.* Epa. & Euph.

Enter PROCULEIUS.

The Governour is stout, and does resolve
To stand th'extremest hazard of the warre
Before he yield Pelusium.

Cæ.

Let him rue
His stubborn loyalty, souldiers make ready!
For the assault; 'tis shame so small a town,

Should

Should ſtay our fortune in the full carreer. *Exeunt.*

ANTONIUS *diſguis'd like* TIMON, *reading.*

Here bury'd do I lie; thou gentle wave
Keep hateſull man from treading Timons *grave.*
Reader be gone; enquire no more of me,
A curſe upon thee whatſoere thou be.

Callimahi Epigr. *de* Timone.

ANT.

Good, good; oh *Timon*, Athens nere could boaſt
A wiſe philoſoher but thee. Thou knew'ſt
The nature of all men, that all were falſe;
True *Timon*, true, they are all Knaves indeed.
Thou wiſely hat'ſt that wicked thing call'd man,
Whom other forced Philoſophers admire,
And call a noble creature, and partaker
Of divine nature: they were fools, fools *Timon*,
All other Sects were fools, and I will follow
No ſect but thine; I am a Timoniſt.
That's not enough, *Timon* himſelf I am.

Enter LUCILIUS, ARISTOCRATES.

Yonder he ſits, ſee *Ariſtocrates*
How much unlike that great *Antonius*,
Whoſe perſon late ſo many legions guarded,
So many Kings attended as their Lord.

ARI.

Antonius, where? thou art deceiv'd *Lucilius*,
That's *Timon* man.

LU.

How canſt thou jeſt at this
This wofull paſſion, which alone's enough
To melt his foes and *Cæſar* into tears.

ARI.

We feed this fooliſh paſſion, to give way,

And keep aloof thus. I'll go to him. *Timon.*

AN.

Ha! what art thou? be gone I ſay from me.
Get you to *Cæſar* man: I hate you all.

ARI.

I hate thee, *Timon*; doſt thou think 'tis love
Has brought me hither? I am come to vex thee.

AN.

Oh welcome, what's thy name? i'ſt *Alcibiades?*

ARI.

Haſt thou forgot me?

ANT.

Doſt thou hate all men?

ARI.

Why doſt thou think me ſo unnatural?
To love a man? but may we not love women?

AN.

Yes, they may be belov'd; provided always
That they be falſe.

ARI.

True *Timon*, wicked women
May be belov'd, becauſe they ruine men.

ANT.

Right, right; and now I better think upon't
I'll ſet no gallowſes or gibbets up
As I entended once, for men to come
And hang themſelves, I'll keep a bawdy houſe.

ARI.

A better way by farre, 'twill ruine moe,
I wonder, *Timon*, at that fooliſh plot
That I have heard, that in thy gardens once
In Athens thou did'ſt ſet up gallowſes
For men in diſcontent to hang themſelves.
How few think'ſt thou would be ſo mad to do it?
But to a wench they'll come, and then the office
That thou ſhalt have will be of more account.

For

For where have you a man of any fashion
That now adays turnes hangman; but a Pandar]
Is on employment that befits a Statesman,
A thing requires good parts and gravity.

ANT.

I'de try that course; but tis too slow a plot.
Oh for a speedy way to kill the world!
I have done somewhat in my days; my wars
And bloudy battels were not made in vain.
For I was once *Antonius*, and a Roman,
As in the wars of Troy *Pythagoras*
Before that transmigration of his soul,
Had been *Euphorbus*.

AN.

Thou art like him still.

ANT.

And when I was *Triumvir* first at Rome,

AN.

That was a time indeed, then I could heare
Of those good deeds, which must be still a comfort
To your good consciences, though they be past.
When Rome was fill'd with slaughter, slow'd with bloud.
But they perchance were Knaves that were proscrib'd,
And might have done more mischief had they liv'd.

AN.

No, they were honest men; I look'd to that.

ARI.

'Twas well, and carefully.

AN.

Behold the list.
But one among the rest most comforts me,
That talking fellow *Cicero*, that us'd
To taxe the vicious times, and was forsooth
A lover of his Country.

ARI.

ARI.

Out upon him,
Then he was rightly ſerv'd : for is it fit
In a well govern'd ſtate ſuch men ſhould live
As love their Country? had 't not been for him
Catiline's plot had thriv'd.

AN.

Tis trne, I'm ſure
Cæſar was on that ſide, he favour'd it.

ARI.

Yes, *Cæſar* underſtood himſelf; ther's hope
That this young *Cæſar* too will prove as good
A Patriot as ere his father was.

ANT.

He will do reaſon man : he is of nature
Cruell enough; in that proſcription
It did appear; but now he'll reigne alone.

ARI.

Oh for ſuch factions as were then a foot
To rend the ſtate, and fill the world with ſlaughter.

ANT.

Oh, let me hug thee *Alcibiades*.

Enter CANIDIUS, LUCILIUS.

CA.

Is that he yonder? what ſtrange ſhape is that ?

LU.

None talks with him but *Ariſtocrates*,
Who following his own way, and ſuiting juſt
With his conceit thinks to reclaim him ſo.

CA.

The news, that I ſhall bring, will make him worſe,
And fright that little reaſon that is left
Quite from his breſt.

LU.

LU.

It cannot so *Canidius*;
Perchance to hear th'extremity of all
Will cure his fit; it cannot make him worse.
For death it self were better and more noble.

CA.

How weak a thing is man that seats his hopes
In fortunes slippery, and unconstant favours,
And seeks no surer strengths to guard his soul?
Wanting a strong foundation, he is shaken
With every winde, orethrown by every storm.
And what so frequent as those storms in fortune?
Whose fairest weather never brings assurance
Of perpetuity but come what will
I'll tell him all.

LU.

Do, good *Canidius*.

ANT.

Well *Alcibiades*, I am resolv'd
I'll to the wars again, and either conquer
Mine enemies, or take a course to starve
And kill up my own souldiers, and so be
Reveng'd on some body: One of these two
May easily be brought to passe. How think'st thou?

ARI.

Yes, yes: but lets to Court, and there consult.

Enter MARDIO.

See who comes here, now for our bawdy project.
Here is a servant I must needs preferre
Well vers'd in bawdry, Master of the art.
Come neer brave *Mardio*, come.

MAR.

My businesse
Is not to you;

ARI-

ARI.

Mark him but well, and tell me
How he would execute the place.

MAR.

My Lord,
The Queen entreats your presence at the Palace,
The grieved Queen, who in your absence pines,
Who suffers in your grief.

ARI.

Well urg'd old *Eunuch.*

ANT.

Ha! what of her? will she revolt to *Cæsar?*

MAR.

She's farre from that, my Lord.

ANT.

What i'st he says?

ARI.

He says the constitution of her body
Cannot hold out unlesse you visit her.

MAR.

The Queen shall know it, *Aristocrates.*

ARI.

Did you not say she pin'd and languish'd Sir,
And what's the difference? tell your tale your self.

ANT.

What does she say? does she not hate me man?

MAR.

Oh no my Lord, she loves you as her life.
No spite of fortune that she has endur'd,
Or can hereafter fear, grieves her so much
As does your absence and strange melancholy.

ARI.

Well *Mardio*, thou art fittest for the place.

CAN.

My Lord *Antonius?*

ANT.

AN.

Ha! mo men upon us?

CA.

I come to bring thee heavy news *Antonius.*
The forces all, which thou didst leave encamp'd
At Actium, horse and foot are gone to *Cæsar.*
And all th' auxiliary Kings; no strength
At all is left thee, but what here thou hast
At Alexandria.

AN.

Ha!

LU.

This sinks into him.

CA.

It makes a deep impression in his passion.

ARK.

And may perchance expell his other fit.

AN.

All you here yet! then I have friends I see.
But tell me, can you be so mercifull
As to forgive that most unmanly fit
I have been in? oh, I am all in blushes.

CA.

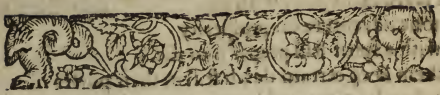
My Lord, take better comfort.

AN.

Dearest friends.
I will be proof 'gainst any fortune now. *Plutarch.*
Come let's together to the Court, and there
Drown sadnesse in rich cups of Meroë wine,
And laugh at Fortunes malice, for your sight
More cheers my spirits, then her frowns can dull them.

Exeunt.

Actus



Actus Quartus.

CLEOPATRA, GLAUCUS.

GLA.

MAdam, all drugs with pain and torment kill
That kill with ſpeed. No eaſie way to death
Is wrought but by a flow and lingring courſe,
Where Natures ſtrength is by degrees ſubdu'd,
And yielding ſo decayes inſenſibly.
No art at all can make a drug that's quick
And gentle too. No poyſon but the Aſpe
Of all the mortall brood of Libyaes Snakes
Kils with a ſuddain, and yet eaſie death
As if brought forth to contradict our skill
By envious Nature, who diſdains frail man
Should hope to finde her ſecrets wholly out.
None but that Serpent, Madam, can effect *Plutarch.*
What you deſire; of which I here have brought.

CLE.

Leave it good *Glaucus*; leave the potion too.
Tis quick, thou ſayſt.

GLA.

Yes Madam; but too painfull
And violent.

CLE.

Well leave them both with me. *Exit* Glaucus.
Let none adventure on prosperity
But with a spirit still prepar'd to die.
Let them keep certain death still in their power
That dare be great and happy, nought but that
Sees states when they are fall'n. Well did wise
And liberall Nature on mankinde bestow
A gift so soveraigne as power to die,
An Antidote 'gainst Fortunes cruelty,
That is the deere preservative, that must
Controll the spite of Fortune, and redeem
Wofull life from lothed servitude.
The venome's gentle; tother rough and cruell.
Tis not safe to trust mine honour so,
On doubtfull props: the poysons both may fail,
Or differ farre from what vain fame reports
Their operation. Tis experience
That must confirme me. *Mardio* is return'd.

Enter Mardio *with two prisoners.*

MAR.

Here are two men, Madam, condemn'd for murder
To cruell death, and are to die to morrow.

CLE.

Come neerer both, and tell me, dare you die? *Dio.*

1 PRI.

Great Queen, necessities strict law imposes *Plutarch.*
That doom upon us; in forc'd actions
Courage can have no triall.

CLE.

Dare you die
A lesse dishonorable way, to scape
The common hangman's hand, and from a Queen
Receive your death, and that an easier death?

BOTH.

BOTH.

Moſt willingly, great Queen; we are prepar'd.

CLE.

Give them their lots, *Mardio*; the ſhorteſt lot
Is to die firſt.

2 PRI.

That lot is mine.

CLE.

The Aſpe ſhall be thy fate: now Aſpe confirme
What fame reports of thee; ſtay thou thy draught
Till he be dead: feel'ſt thou no pain?

2 PRI.

A faintneſſe ſeizes me, and I would ſleep.

MAR.

How gently he lies down? and ſcarcely ſtrives
Againſt his death at all.

CLE.

I think he's dead
Already. Sure he feels but little pain.
I am confirm'd.

MAR.

He's dead and ſtiffe already.

CLE.

Wee'll try no more, as for thy draught of poyſon
Thus we diſcharge thee of it, and from death
Doom'd by the law our royall pardon frees thee.
Publiſh it *Mardio*.

PRI.

The Gods preſerve
Royall and gracious *Cleopatra*'s life. *Exeunt.*

CLE.

I am reſolv'd; nought but the Libyan Aſpe
Shall be renown'd for *Cleopatra*'s death.
Thou precious worme, that canſt redeem alone
The loſſe of honour at a rate ſo eaſie,
That kill'ſt as gently as the hand of age,

And

And art miſcall'd a plague of Africa,
Since thou alone mak'ſt batren Afrike envy'd,
By other lands, though fruitfull, wanting thee.
Who croſſe the Seas, and hence at higheſt price
Tranſporr the Aſpe as choiſeſt Merchandiſe.
On thee I truſt, one gentle touch of thine
Can free this life from lothed ſervitude,
From *Cæſar*'s triumph, the baſe peoples mocks,
Proud *Liviaes* ſcorn, and mad *Octavianes* ſpight.
But why are all my thoughts turn'd to deſpair?
Why think I now of death? me thinks my *Genius*
Checks this cold fear, and Fortune chiding tels me
I am ungratefull to diſtruſt, her now.
My race of life and glory is not run,
Nor *Cleopatraes* fortunes yet arriv'd
At that great height that muſt eternize her,
And fix her glorious name aboue the ſtars.
I long to hear what anſwer *Cæſar* ſends.
I do not know his temper, but he's young;
And why ſhould I deſpair? are *Cupid*'s fires
Extinguiſh'd quite? are all his arrows ſpent?
Or is this beauty, that can boaſt the conqueſt
Of *Julius Cæſar*; and great *Antony*,
So waned now, it cannot move the temper
Of one, whom youth makes fit for *Cupid*'s conqueſt?

Entr EUPHRONIUS, THYREUS.

EUP.

Madam, your gifts were more graciouſly receiv'd,
And *Cæſar* with a ſmiling brow return'd
All ſeeming love and friendſhip; he has ſent
His free'dman *Thyreus* to attend your highneſſe,
And to impart his counſels to your eare.

CLE.

He's welcome to us. What's great *Cæsar's* will.

Exit Euphro.

THY.

Cæsar's best wishes, royall *Cleopatra*,
None but your fairest self can ratifie.
No power on earth can give what *Cæsar* wants
But you, great Queen. For let your Majesty
Give credit to poor *Thyreus* though the meanest
Of all the servants that attend on *Cæsar*,
Ther's none about him is more neer in trust
To whom he's pleased to impart his thoughts,
And secret wishes: nothing but your love
Can crown his happinesse.

CLE.

We are no subject
For *Cæsar's* mocks though in our worst of fortune.

THY.

You are the Queen of Fortune, and still hold
A lasting Scepter ore that fickle Goddesse
(Fickle to others, to you true and constant)
Your radiant light lends that blind Goddesse eyes,
And guides her to your service, making all
Actions, nay losses steps to greater honour.
The late defeat at Actium, which your errour
Perchance miscals a losse, was Fortunes labour
To make you greater, and remove your brightnesse
Which was ill plac'd (as Diamonds coursly set)
From old *Antonius* to yong *Cæsar's* love,
A fitter sphere for those fair eys to shine in.

CLE.

Without these courtings, *Thyreus*, if great *Cæsar*
Please to embrace our friendship, we and Ægypt
Shall do him faithfull service.

THY.

Mighty Queen,

If my rude ſpeech have err'd, I humbly beg
That you would pleaſe to think it zeal in me
To do my maſter ſervice, and ſuch ſervice
As he eſteems the beſt, to gain your love,
I oft have heard him (let your Majeſty
Not be offended with that truth I utter)
Raviſh'd with fame of your perfections,
And noble ſpirit; call *Antonius* happy,
Whom fortune brought to Ægypt, to behold
That Queen, whom he ſo much deſir'd to ſee.
But when his eys beheld your portraiture
Drawn by a skilfull, and a faithfull hand;
He oft would ſay it was a likely ſeat
To hold thoſe Graces. Such perfections
Were fit for none but *Cæſar's* to admire.

CLE.

There was a *Cæſar*, lov'd me once; but I
Am not ſo proud to think it was my merit,
Though he would ſay I did deſerve farre more
Then he could utter, that great *Julius*,
Whoſe name and actions fill'd the triple world.

THY.

Though all in him were great, yet nothing greater
Then his adopting ſo divine an heire.
This *Cæſar*, Madam, for your deareſt love,
Beſides that power and greatneſſe, which the world
Both knows and fears, brings ſuch a youth and beautie
To plead for him, as in a mean eſtate
Might move a Princeſſe love: which that your eys
may better read, I here from him preſent
His true, and moſt unflatter'd portraiture.

CLE.

The faireſt form that ere theſe eys beheld.
Where all the beſt of each beſt modell meets,
Cupid's ſweet ſmiles, lodg'd in the eye of *Mars*,
Ganymed's cheek, th' Imperiall brow of *Jove*

Where

Where love and majesty are proud to dwell.

THY.

His age, great Queen, is yet not thirty yeers.

CLE.

I nere till now saw beautie: but *Thyreus*
May we repose a confidence in thee
As our true friend? we will deserve thy love.

THY.

To do divinest *Cleopatra* service
Is all poor *Thyreus* pride: in serving you
I best discharge my dutie to my master.

CLE.

Then briefly thus; because I would not have
Any take notice of long privacie
Twixt thee and me, and instantly w'expect
Antonius here, I will devise some means
How to deserve great *Cæsar's* love, and act
What he shall thank us for: mean while stay here
With us, good *Thyreus*, for we cannot yet
Dispatch thee with that message we intend.

THY.

I will attend your highnesse.

CLE.

Till anone
Farewell, good *Thyreus*: but be neer about us.

Exit Thyreus.

What more then this could all the fates contrive?
What more then *Cæsars* love could I have wish'd
On which all power, all state, and Glories wait.
But oh the weak and fluctuating state
Of humane frailty still too much depreſt
Or rais'd too much 'twixt fears and flattring hopes!
But hence base fear; a Princely confidence
Fits *Cleopatraes* minde and beautie better.

Enter ANTONIUS, CANIDIUS, LUCIIIUS, ARISTOCRATES.

My dearest Lord.

AN.

Ah sweetest *Cleopatra*,
In this embrace, and this Ambrosiake kisse
I am again possest of all my wealth,
Of all my fortunes. Had the angry Gods
Purpos'd to wreak their fury fully on me
They had not left my life so sweet a comfort.

CLE.

Possest of you I stand above the reach
Of Fortunes threatning, or proud *Cæsar's* power.
Nought but your grief, and melancholly had
Power to deject my spirits.

AN.

Thy true worth
Deserves a happier friend, that could bestow
Not take alone his happinesse from thee.
In thy sweet love, and these my faithfull friends
I still am happy, I have lost no friends.
All that are gone from me to *Cæsar's* side,
Ingratefull *Titius* and *Domitius*.
Plancus, *Silanus*, *Dellius* and *Hipparchus*,
Were Fortunes friends not mine.

CLE.

Let's in and feast,
This day we'll dedicate to mirth and freedome:
To crown your welcome hither.

AN.

Sweetly spoken.
Let not a woman teach us souldiers
To be magnanimous.

CLE

CLE.

This feast we'll stile
The feast of fellow-dyers: for no band *Plutarch.*
No tie of friendship is so firme as that
They live in love that mean to die together. *Exeunt.*

CÆSAR, AGRIPPA, TITIUS, PLANCUS, ARIUS.

Cæ.

Grave *Arius*, in thy troubled looks I read
Fear for thy native Alexandria;
But banish fear, and know thy power with *Cæsar*,
If they obey our summons, none shall die.
But though to th'utmost they resist, thy will
Shall rule our Justice.

AR.

Humble *Arius*.
Is too much honour'd in great *Cæsar's* favour.

Cæ.

We give but what we owe, a debt so great
As mine to thee can nere be overpay'd.
Great *Alexander*, whose victorious hand
Founded that City, whose eternizd name
For ever honours it, though in great deeds
He past our glory farre, shall not exceed
Cæsar in piety: he oft would say
He ought a better being to his Master
Then to father; one meer naturall,
The other mentall, and diviner farre.
Who's that?

Enter EPAPHRODITUS *with*
FERGUS.

EPA.

Fergusius the Philosopher
Condemn'd to death by you.

Cæ.

Dispatch him then.

EPA.

He craves a word with *Arius* ere he die.

ARI.

What is it brother?

FER.

Ah good *Arius*, *Plutarch.*
Wisemen, if truly wise, save wise men still.

ARI.

Most mighty *Cæsar*.

Cæ.

Arius, no more,
I know what thou desir'st; *Fergusius* live;
That thou know'st him has sav'd thee.

FER.

Victorie,
And fame still wait on *Cæsar*.

Cæ.

Let's away
And march with speed to Alexandria.

AGR.

Cæsar, your horse are weary: 'tis not fit
Too much to toil them, for I fear a sally
From Alexandria.

Cæ.

They dare not man.

AGR.

Antonius is strong in well-provided
And skilfull horsemen; and despair of favor

(Sinc

(Since twice you have refus'd his propositions)
Will put another valour into him.

Cæ.

What conquest can *Antonius* hope for here?

AGR.

His hopes (as nere as I conjecture them)
Are to break through your troops, and get to Sea.
For yet he has a Fleet, that may transport him
To other lands, to gather new supplyes.
But any fortune would prove higher farre
To him, then staying here, without all hope
To be shut up in a besieged town.
In my opinion let your march be slow
And gentle; that the horse may be refresh'd.
And we prevent the worst.

Cæ.

Let it be so. *Exeunt.*

Enter LUCILLIUS, ARISTOCRATES.

LU.

How formlesse is the forme of man the soul,
How various still how different from it self?
How falsly call'd Queen of this little world?
When she's a slave, and subject not alone
Unto the bodies temperature, but all
The storms of Fortune.

ARI.

What occasion
Make thee thus offer at Philosophy?

LU.

Where hast thou liv'd thou shouldst not know th' occa-
The sits and changes of *Antonius* (sion?
Are the am enough: how strange a loving soule
Is the late hater of mankinde become!

ARI.

ARI.

That is not ſtrange, he's out of breath with curſing
And now 'tis time to ſtop his mouth with kiſſing.
But what can he conceive of this ſame *Thyreus*
That holds ſuch ſecret conference with her?

LU.

He cannot chooſe but ſee it.

ARI.

Unleſſe love
Have blinded him, ſhe carries it ſo plainly.
Well, I ſhall think if there be knavery in't,
(As knavery there muſt be) that *Cleopatra*
Is not ſo ſubtle as we took her for.

LU.

He muſt be told it, if he will not ſee
Upon my life there is ſome plot of treaſon
Which yet may be diſcover'd.

ARI.

Heer they come
Let us go fetch *Antonius* if we can.

CLEOPATRA, THYREUS.

CLE.

Peluſium ſhall be rendred up to *Cæſar* *Dio.*
By our command to our Lieutenant there *Plutarch.*
Seleucus, whoſe obedience we not doubt.

THY.

Nobleſt of Queens, you make Imperiall *Cæſar*
As much a debtor to your courteſie
As he's already captive to your beauty.

CLE.

Nor do we wrong *Antonius* at all
In giving up a town which is our own.
It may be thought tis done to weaken him;

Alas,

Alas, *Antonius* is already fall'n
So low, that nothing can redeem him now
Nor make him able to contest with *Cæsar*.
He has not only lost his armies strength
But lost the strength of his own soul, and is not
That *Antony* he was when first I knew him.
I can do *Cæsar* now no greater service.
Though I shall never want a heart to do it.
But we shall quickly see th' event of things;
Antonius now is desperate, and puts
His hopes upon the fortune of one sally,
Which will be suddenly perform'd, before
That thou canst bear a message back to *Cæsar*.

ANTONIUS, LUCILIUS, ARISTOCRATES.

AN.

Hands on that *Thyreus* there, to prison with him.

THY.

To prison!

ANT.

Yes; away with him I say. *Plutarch.*

THY.

Cæsar would not have us'd your messenger
So ill.

AN.

Thou wert no Messenger to me.

CLE.

For my sake dearest Lord.

AN.

Oh for your sake?
I cry you mercy Lady, bear him hence. *Exit* Thyreus.
I had forgot that *Thyreus* was your servant.
But what strange act should he perform for you?

Is it to help you to a happier friend?

CLE.

Can you ſuſpect it? was my trueſt love
So ill beſtow'd? Can he, for whoſe dear ſake
A Queen ſo highly born as I preferr'd
Love before fame, and fondly did neglect
All names of honour when falſe *Fulvia*,
And proud *Octavia* had the name of wives, *Plutarch.*
Requite me thus? ungratefull *Anthony*;
For now the fury of a wronged love
Juſtly provokes my ſpeech.

ANT.

Oh *Cleopatra*,
It is not *Thyreus* but this heart of mine
That ſuffers now, deep wounded with the thought
Of thy unconſtancre: did Fortune leave
One only comfort to my wretched ſtate
And that a falſe one? for what conference
Could'ſt thou ſo oft, and in ſuch privacie
With *Cæſar's* ſervant hold, if true to me?
Which with the rack I could enforce from him.
But that I ſcorn to do.

CLE.

You do not ſcorn
To wrong with baſe unworthy jealouſies
A faithfull heart: but if you think me falſe
Heer ſheath your ſword: make me the ſubject rather
Of manly rage then childiſh jealouſie.
It is a nobler crime, and fitter farre
For you to act, eaſier for me to ſuffer.
For live ſuſpected I nor can nor will.
The lovely Aſpe, which I with care have kept
And was intended a preſervative
'Gainſt *Cæſar's* crueltie, I now muſt uſe
Againſt *Antonius* baſeneſſe a worſe ſo

Then

Then *Cæsar* is: farewell, till death approve
That I was true, and you unjust in love.

ANT.

Stay *Cleopatra*, dearest Love, forgive me
Let not so small a winde have power to shake
A love so grown as ours: I did not think
That thou wert false: my heart gave no consent
To what my tongue so rashly uttered.
Nor could I have out-liv'd so sad a thought.
Let *Thyreus* be released, and sent to *Cæsar*.

Enter CANIDIUS.

Now is the time to sally forth, my Lord,
The so is tir'd with marching, and your horse
Are readie all, and wait the signall only.
The least delay loses the action.

ANT.

I come *Canidius*; dearest Love farewell.
Few houres will tell thee what *Antonius* is. *Exunt.*

CLE.

How timorous is guilt? how are my thoughts
Distracted sadly now? on every side
My dangers grow: for should *Antonius*
Return in safety home, and know what past
'Twixt me and *Thyreus*, I have lost his heart,
And cannot choose but fear him: if he die
I am not confident of *Cæsar*'s love.
'Twas but a servants tongue I built upon.
'Tis best to make all sure: within there, *Eira*.

EIRA.

Madam!

CLE.

Are all things readie in the tombe?

EIRA.

EI.

Yes, Madam; *Carmio's* there and *Mardia*.

CLE.

Then thither will I go, if fate contrive
A future ſtate of happineſſe for me,
It is my caſtle: if my death they doom,
I am poſſeſt already of a tombe. *Exit.*

Actus Quintus.

ANTONIUS, LUCILIUS, ARISTOCRATES.

AN.

DEfeated are my troops, my fleet revolted,
The Seas and Lands are loſt; and nothing now
Is left *Antonius* but a Roman hand,
A ſword and heart to die. You trueſt ſervants,
Whoſe faith and manly conſtancie upbraids
This wicked age, and ſhall inſtruct the next,
Take from a wretched hand this legacie.
Fortune has made my will, and nought but this
Can I bequeath you. Carry it to *Cæſar*;
If he be noble, it contains enough
To make you happier then *Antonius* can.

My glasse of life and Empire now is run,
And from this hand expects a period.

LU.

My Lord, take fairer hopes.

AN.

Fie, fie, *Lucilius*;
Lose not thy former merits in perswading
A man, whom once thou lov'dst to such a shame
As to preferre a loath'd captivity
Before a noble death.
Thy looks speak grief *Die.*

Enter EROS.

Speak *Eros*, wher's the Queen?

ERO.

She's dead my Lord. *Plutarch.*
When those unhappy tydings came to her
Of your defeat, she straight shut up her self
Within her tombe, and dy'd.

AN.

Oh *Cleopatra*,
Why have I lingred thus, that thou a woman
Should'st teach so old a souldier how to die?
Fortune, I blame not thee; I have enjoy'd
What thou could'st give, and on the envy'd top
Of thy proud wheel have long unshaken stood.
Whom Kings have serv'd, and Rome her self obey'd;
Whom all the Zones of earths diffused Globe,
That know inhabitants, have known, and fear'd.
Nor is my fall so much degenerate.
My strength no arms but Roman arms subdue, *Plutarch.*
And none, but Monarch of the world succeeds.
Glutted with life and Empire now I go
Free and undaunted to the shades below.
Here *Eros*, take this sword, perform the promise
Which thou hast made, to kill me whensoere

I should command: make no reply in words.

ER.

I will be true or die. Stand fair; your *Eros*
Will be your Usher to th'Elizian fields. *Kils himself.*

AN.

What hast thou done unfaithfull faithfull *Eros* *Dio.*
Too kindly cruell, falsly vertuous? *Plutarch.*
I'll trust no more, to be no more directed
By such examples: but we must be speedie.
The gates ere this time are set ope to *Cæsar.*
Fair *Cleopatra*, I am comming now
To dwell with thee, and ever to behold
Thy heavenly figure, where nor time nor death
Shall make divorce of our eternall loves.
Thus, thus I come to thee: unfaithfull sword,
I never knew thee slow in giving death
Till this sad houre, some friendly hand lend aid,
And with another wound release my soule.

Enter MARDIO.

Where is my Lord *Antonius*? Oh sad sight
The Queen enclosed in her tombe desir'd
To take her last leave of you.

AN.

Is she living?
Tis welcome news, convey me quickly, friends, *Plutarc.*
Oh quickly thither, that I may expire *Dio.*
That breath that's left in *Cleopatrae's* arms. *Exeunt.*

A-

AGRIPPA, GALLUS, EPAPHRODITUS, PROCULEIUS, *Citizens.*

AGR.

Go you, *Epaphroditus*, and beſiege
The Palace, to ſurprize *Antonius*;
You *Proculeius*, and *Cornelius Gallus*,
Go preſently to *Cleopatraes* tombe,
Wo her with all your art and eloquence
With all aſſurances of *Cæſar's* love
To leave that place, and yield her perſon to him.
Spare no attempts of force or policy
To draw her thence: for you the Citizens
Of Alexandria, cheer your fainting hearts,
I'll mediate in your behalf to *Cæſar*,
To ſpare the City.

CI.

Thanks to the moſt noble
And good *Agrippa*.

AGR.

Heer he comes himſelf.

Enter CÆSAR, ARRUS, TITIUS, PLANCUS.

Cæ.

The paleneſſe of your fear declares your guilt.
But that, though nere ſo great, ſhall not exceed
Our clemencie, to let you know it was
Your happineſſe to be ſubdu'd by us.
Mercy ſhall rule our juſt ſeveritie.
Firſt for your founder *Alexanders* ſake, *Plutarch.*
Next for the love of reverent *Arius* *Dio.*
Our Maſter heer: whoſe goodneſſe far out-weighs

All

All your offences and rebellions.

CIT.

Cæsar in goodneſſe, as in greatneſſe, bears
Equalitie with *Jove*.

Enter ACHOREUS.

ACHO.

Hail mighty *Cæsar*.

Cæ.

What's he?

ARI.

Achoreus, *Osiris* Prieſt,
A good and holy man.

Cæ.

We dare believe thee,
And therfore welcom him.

ACHO.

Pleaſe it great *Cæsar*,
To give *Achoreus* leave to wait on him
Into the ancient Temples of our Gods
To ſhew th' Ægyptian rites and myſteries,
And all the Deities that we adore.

Cæ.

Moſt willingly *Achoreus*, I would ſee *Dio.*
Gods, but not Oxen.

TI.

He has blank'd the Prieſt.

Cæ.

I fain would ſee great *Alexander's* herſe *Sueton.*
The manſion once of ſo divine a ſoul
A ſpirit greater then the world it ſelf,
Whom the world fear'd but could not ſatisfie.

ACH.

Within the vault of our Pyramides

His

His bodie yet all whole may *Cæsar* see.
And all the bodies of our *Ptolomeys*.

Cæ.

I'd see Kings only, not dead carcasses. *Sueton.*
But see, *Epaphroditus* is return'd. *Dio.*

Enter EPAPHRODITUS, LVCILIUS, ARISTOCRATES.

Cæ.

Speak man, where is *Antonius?*

EP.

Slain, my Lord.

Cæ.

How? slain? what hand durst do it?

EPA.

His own hand.

Cæ.

That was our fear: cruell *Antonius*.
Too cruell to thy self, to Rome, and me
How white a day have all the people lost?
How great might *Cæsar's* happinesse have been
Had but the fates permitted me to lay
These conquering arms aside, and once again
Embrace thee, dear *Antonius*, as a friend
Thou worthy aider of my infant fortunes, *Plutarch.*
Thou brave revenger of great *Julius* death,
Witnesse these tears, though I were forc'd to warre
(Whilst thou preferring forreigne love before
Cæsar's alliance, did'st reject my kindred,
And scorn my love) I still could honour thee.
But since too cruell fate denies to me
So great an happinesse as to expresse
This love to thee alive, let thy dear ghost
Behold my Pietie, and see the hon ours

Cæsar

Cæsar will do to thy sad funerall.

LU.

Most royall *Cæsar*-like dissimulation.

ARI.

I hope how ere 'twill serve our turns *Lucilius*:
Now is the fittest time.

Cæ.

What men are these?

EPAP.

Two of *Antonius* truest servants, *Cæsar*,
Who bring a letter from their dying Lord.

Cæ.

Let me peruse it well, it shall be granted.
Your lives and fortunes both are safe, and since
We ever lov'd fidelitie, you shall
If so you like, be welcome to our service,

LU.

'Tis our desire; our lives and fortunes ever
Shall do great *Cæsar* true and faithfull service
As they before did to *Antonius*.

Cæ.

Where did he die?

EPA.

In *Cleopatraes* arms
By her with ropes let up into the tombe,
After his deadly wound.

Cæ.

Is she there still?

Enter GALLUS.

Now I shall know; speak *Gallus*, what's the news?

GAL.

We came and call'd at *Cleopatraes* tombe, *Dio.*
Who from above made answer, and deny'd *Plutarch.*

To

To yield herſelf, but upon *Ceſar's* word.
When I with beſt perſuaſions ſtrove to winne her,
And held her talk awhile, whilſt *Proculeius*
On tother ſide the tombe eſpy'd a place
That open ſtood, by which the Queen receiv'd
Dying *Antonius*, which he ſcaling enter'd
Behinde the Queen: but had he not been ſpeedy
She there had ſlain herſelf: a maid of hers
Spy'd *Proculeius* entring, and aloud
Cry'd out oh Queen thou art ſurpriz'd alive.
She drawing a ſhort poniard was reſtrain'd
By *Proculeius*, who both held her hand
And ſpake her fair; at laſt obtain'd ſo much
By ſtrong perſuaſions of your clemencie
He drew her thence, and got her to the Palace.
Where now ſhe is, and *Proculeius* ſtays.
But her deſire is ſtill to ſpeak with you.
Till when from us ſhe will admit no comfort.

Cæ.

We will in perſon preſently go ſee her.
Protect me *Pallas* 'gainſt falſe *Venus* charms. *Exeunt.*

CLEOPATRA *in mourning.*

Known miſchiefs have their cure; but doubts have (none,
And better is deſpair then fruitleſſe hope
Mixt with a killing fear: my thoughts are now
More black and balefull then this ſad attire.
If *Ceſar* come, I do not fear his chiding
I have a certain Antidote 'gainſt that.
'Tis not his anger, but his love afflicts
My doubting ſoul, whether that love will prove
Fained or true, yet may ſtraight apppear.

He's

He's not ſo old, nor I ſo ignorant
But that his actions, geſtures, words, and looks
Will make his heart lie open to my view.

Enter CÆSAR, *and* EPAPHRODITUS.

CÆ.

How ſweet a ſorrow dwels upon that brow!
How would ſhe look in ſmiling dalliance?
Oh pardon me thou powerfull God of love,
That durſt preſume to tempt thy Deitie.
Forgive my confidence. I now excuſe
Antonius weakneſſe, but ſtay there my heart,
My vertuous *Livia* is more fair then ſhe,

CLE.

Hail mighty Prince; for that high name the Gods. *Dio.*
Who reft me of it, have beſtow'd on thee. *Plutarch.*

CÆ.

Riſe *Cleopatra*, *Cæſar's* victory
Takes nought from you.

CLE.

Oh let me never riſe
Till *Cæſar* grant my ſuit.

CÆ.

Good Queen ſtand up,
And freely ſpeak what you deſire:

CLE.

I beg
A boon but ſmall, which *Cæſar* nere deni'd
His greateſt enemies.

CÆ.

And can you think
I ſhould deny it you? Do but expreſſe it;

CLE.

CLE.

That thou would'ſt kill me *Cæſar*; I have liv'd
Theſe many yeers too long: I ſhould have dy'd *Dio.*
When that great Worthy, that renowmed *Cæſar*
Was baſely murther'd in Romes Capitoll.
Surviving him was my unhappineſſe.
But I have liv'd to ſee his ſonne inherit *Dio.*
His ſtate and Empire, and controll the world.

Cæ.

Be cheery *Cleopatra*, fear no wrong
At *Cæſar*'s hands.

CLE.

Death is no wrong at all.
I have deſerv'd it, Sir.

Cæ.

But can you think
That we, whoſe clemencie ſo many men
And ſtubborn enemies ſo oft have prov'd,
Should now at laſt be cruell to a Queen?
But we muſt chide you, that ſo long together
Have ſided with *Antonius*, and with him
Conſpir'd the wrack of Rome.

CLE.

That's ſoon excus'd.
If 'twere a crime to love *Antonius* *Dio.*
(Which I confeſſe I did, and his large favours *Plutarch.*
Truly deſerv'd it) think it was not mine
But fates own crime, that firſt allotted me
To his protection: had your ſhare of rule
In Egypt lyen, I had been *Cæſars* friend.

Cæ.

Beſides with men and money you give aid
To *Caius Caſſius* in Philippi field
Who murther'd *Cæſar* in the Capitoll.

CLE.

CLE.

Cæsar, as false as truth ie selfis true.
I was accused to *Antonius* *Plutarch.*
For that before; but in Cilicia *Appian.*
I quickly cleer'd those causeless jealousies,
Witnesse thou glorious starre, which the great soule
Of noble *Julius*, when he left the earth,
Added to heaven, how innocent I am
From any fault in that: but *Cæsar* know *Dio.*
Against thy father not the act alone,
But even suspition shall be purg'd with death.
I can no longer live.

Cæ.

What have I done?
I fear my rashnesse has too far betray'd *Dio.*
My thoughts to *Cleopatra*; gentle Queen
Be comforted; expect at *Cæsar's* hand
Nothing but love and friendship: do not wrong
My goodnesse with unjust suspition
All former grievances are quite forgot.
Your port and state shall be maintain'd at full.
Your houshold servants not diminished.
Epaphroditus, see the Queen attended
As fits her state and honour; and till next
We visit you, rest with a full assurance
Of our best love and friendship.

CLE.

All the payment
That my poor fortunes can return to *Cæsar*
Is thanks and service.

Cæ.

Epaphroditus.

EPAP.

Cæsar. *they whisper.*

CLE.

CLE.

Yes. whiſper on; you cannot over-reach
My jealouſies: no ſignes of love at all, *Exit* Cæſar.
No ſmile, nor amorous glance, I was deceiv'd,
And meerly cooſen'd by baſe *Thyreus*.
But I muſt hide my fears, and cleer this brow
The better to effect my purpoſes.

EPA.

How fares your Majeſty?

CLE.

Never ſo well
As now I am, I did not think great *Cæſar*
Had been ſo full of love and courteſie.

EPA.

Oh Madam, *Cæſar*'s th' unexampled mirrour
Of royaltie, and does as far exceed
All petie Kings in goodneſſe as in power,
And if my humbleſt ſervices in ought
May give content to royall *Cleopatra*
I ſhall be proud to be commanded ſtill.

CLE.

Thanks good *Epaphroditus*,
That love is true that's ſhew'd in miſery.
But what have I forgot? I had a note
Of ſome particulars I meant to give
To *Cæſar*'s hand and quite forgot it here.
Nor would I truſt the cariage of a thing
Of ſo great conſequence to every hand.

EPA.

Will you command my ſervice?

CLE.

I ſhall reſt
Indebted to your love; *Cæſar* will thank you.
It much concerns both his eſtate and mine, *Dio.*

Be

Be ſpeedy good *Epaphroditus*, for
I long to heare his anſwer.

EPA.

Fear not Madam.
A quick performance, it rejoyces me
To ſee her look ſo cheerily again. *Exit* Epa.

CLE.

So now my trouble is remov'd, I come,
I come my deareſt Lord *Antonius*,
Never till now thy true and faithfull love.
My much abuſed Lord, do not diſdain
Or bluſh t'acknowlege *Cleopatra's* name
When tears and bloud have waſh'd her ſpotted ſoul.
Wert thou alive again, not all the world
Should ſhake my conſtancie, or make divorce
Twixt thee and mee: but ſince too late, alas,
My tears of ſorrow come, I'll follow thee,
And beg thy pardon in the other world.
All crimes are there for evermore forgot.
There *Ariadne* pardons *Theſeus* falſhood.
Dido forgives the perjur'd Prince of Troy,
And *Troilus* repentant *Creſſida*.
Though falſe to thee alive, I now am come
A faithfull lover of thy duſt and tombe. *Exit.*

Enter AGRIPPA, GALLUS, *and two* Pſyls.

GAL.

Marcus Agrippa, I have here provided
As *Ceſar* gave in charge two Libyan *Pſyls*.
All Afrik yields not fitter for his purpoſe.

AGRI.

They look like likely ones.

GAL.

GAL.

They have been prov'd,
And have already on my souldiers,
When they were bit by Serpents, done strange cures;
Past all belief or hope, recall'd fled life
Back to his mansion, and beyond the power
Of *Æsculapius* have suck'd and charm'd
The mortall venome from their dying limbs.
These two, *Agrippa* in their infancy
Their doubting sires to try their lawfull births *Plinius.*
(As Eagles try their Eaglets 'gainst the Sun) *Solinus.*
Expos'd to mortall Serpents, and were so *Lucanus.*
Confirm'd in what they sought, the trembling Snakes
Durst not assault the Infants.

Enter CÆSAR.

AG.

Here he comes.

Cæ.

Are those the men?

GAL.

Yes, *Cæsar.*

Cæ.

Carry them
To *Cleopatras* Palace; let them wait
Neer to *Epaphroditus.* What's the news?
How fares the Queen?

EPA.

Never more cheery Sir.
Her looks expresse her hopes; nor in her words
Can she conceal her inward cheerfulnesse.
But one thing, Sir, she sai'd she had forgot,
Which neerly did concern both you and her;
And that in such a cause she durst not trust
A common messenger, requesting me
To give it to your hands.

Cæ.

She has deceiv'd thee,
And all of us; the worſt that I could fear
Is come to paſſe: oh run *Epaphroditus*,
I'll follow thee with all the ſpeed I can.
But all too late, I fear, our ſpeed will come. *Exeunt.*

Enter CLEOPATRA *crown'd, attended by* GLAUCUS, MARDIO, EIRA, CHARMIO, *ſhee takes her ſtate.* ANTHONY'S *Herſe brought in.*

CLE.

This is my ſecond Coronation day;
But nobler then the firſt, and fuller farre
Of reall honour, and magnificence.
Nor till this pompous houre was *Cleopatra*
A perfect Queen, alas, I did not ſway
A Scepter over fortune, or command
As now I do, the deſtinies themſelves.
I wore a painted honour, a meer ſhadow
Of Royall ſtate, and ſuch a feeble Crown
As warre could threaten, treaſon undermine,
And every puffe of Fortune blow it off.
My ſtate is conſtant now, my thoughts above
The fear of dangers or oppoſing foes.

MAR.

What new addition has ſhe got off ſtate?

GLA.

I cannot tell, nor can I gueſſe her meaning.

CLE.

Glaucus and *Mardio*, leave the room a while.

Exeunt Glaucus *and* Mardio.

Come hither Girles, I will no longer hide
My joys from you; in ſuch attire as this
I go to meet my dear *Antonius*.

CHAR.

CHAR.

Madam, he's dead.

CLE.

Alas, thou art deceiv'd.
He lives my *Charmio* in the other world,
And ſtays for me; I have been too too ſlack
In comming to him: this that here lies dead
Was but the houſe that lodg'd my deareſt Lord,
That earthly Manſion, that did once contain
The kindeſt, nobleſt, and the trueſt ſoule
That ever liv'd; and this our ſecond meeting
Is farre more ſweet, and full of noble love
Then when we firſt met in Cilicia,
When our magnificence and pomp did fill
The world with wonder and aſtoniſhment.
Why weep you girles? is it to ſee your Miſtris
Greater then ere in Glory? if you lov'd me,
You'd weep to ſee great *Cleopatra* led
A wretched captive through the ſtreets of Rome
Before proud *Cæſar's* chariot, mock'd and flowted,
And from a Queen become *Octavian's* drudge.
No, no, my girles, I will be ſtill my ſelf
And from this ſeat of ſtate look down in ſcorn
On Rome, and *Cæſar's* threats as things below me.

EI.

Nor heer ſhall my attendance leave you, Madam,
I'll wait upon you to th'Eliſian ſhades.

CHAR.

Nor will poor *Charmio* be left behinde.

CLE.

My earthly race is run, and I deſcend
As great a ghoſt as *Theban Semele*,
When her ambitious love had ſought and met
The Thunderers embraces, when no Pile
Of earthly wood, but *Jove's* celeſtiall fire
Conſum'd her beauties reliques, and ſent down

Her ſoul from that Majeſtick funerall.
Farewell thou fading remnant of my Love.
When I am gone, I'll leave theſe earthly parts
To keep thee company: never to part,
But dwell together, and diſſolve together.
Come Aſpe, poſſeſſe thy manſion; freely feed
On theſe two hils, upon whoſe ſnowy tops
The winged *Cupid* oft has taken ſtand,
And ſhot from thence the proudeſt hearts on earth.
Corruption now, and rottenneſſe muſt ſeize
This once admired fabrick, and diſſolve
This fleſh to common elements again;
When skilfull nature, were ſhe ſtrictly bound
To ſearch through all her ſtore-houſe would be pos'd
To tell which piece was *Cleopatra* once.
Sweet Aſpe, I feel thy touch, and life begins
From theſe cold limbs to take her gentle flight.
A ſlumber ſeizes me; farewell my girles.
Thus let the Romans finde me dead, and know
Maugre the power of Rome, and *Cæſar's* ſpleen
That *Cleopatra* liv'd, and di'd a Queen.

CHAR.

She's dead, and *Eira* too. I heare a noiſe.
There is no dallying now; I muſt be ſpeedy,
And uſe the common and ſure way to death.

She ſtabs her ſelf.

Enter

Enter CÆSAR, AGRIPPA, TITIUS, PLANCUS, GALLUS, EPAPHRODITUS, PROCULEIUS.

CÆ.

We come too late, and all in vain I fear
Our care has been.

EPA.

Here lies her ſervant bleeding,
Not dead: ſpeak *Charmio*, how dy'd the Queen?

CHAR.

A death that well beſeem'd her royall birth. *Ayts.*

AGR.

See *Cæſar*, ſee; the mark upon her breſt,
And here the fatall authour.

CÆ.

'Twas the Aſpe.
Be ſpeedie now, and uſe your utmoſt power *Sueton.*
You skilfull *Pſylls*, call back this royall ſoul *Dio.*
To her fair ſeat, and take from *Cæſar's* bounty
Above your wiſh: ſuck thou the wounded place,
And mutter thou thy ſtrongeſt charms to fright
Pale death from thence, and you infernall Gods,
If ere to humane prayers you could lend
An exorable eare, 'tis *Cæſar* begs,
Cæſar, whoſe ſword has ſent to your black ſhades
A hundred thouſand ſouls, and ſtill has power
T'enlarge your Empire, begs in lieu of all
But reſtitution of one ſoul alone.

TI.

How royally ſhe dy'd?

PLA.

No conquer'd Prince.
Did ever finde a nobler way to death.

Had