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*Bell's British theatre, consisting of the
most esteemed English plays...*

John Bell

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IN MEMORY OF BESSIE HINCKS
BORN APRIL 11 1865 · DIED JULY 5 1885

Frontispiece to Bells British Theatre.



Published April 10th 1776. by J. Bell in the Strand.

*These ever New, nor subject to decays,
Shed & grow brighter with the length of Days.*

Bell's

BRITISH THEATRE;

TRAGEDIES.



Mortimer del.

Hall sculp.

— L E D B E R —

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BRITISH THEATRE,

Consisting of the most esteemed

ENGLISH PLAYS.

VOLUME THE FIRST.

Being the First VOLUME of **TRAGEDIES.**

CONTAINING

ZARA, by **AARON HILL**, Esq.

VENICE PRESERVED, by **Mr. T. OTWAY**.

JANE SHORE, by **N. ROWE**, Esq.

SIEGE of DAMASCUS, by **Mr. HUGHES**.

DISTRESSED MOTHER, by **Mr. A. PHILLIPS**.

L O N D O N:

Printed for **JOHN BELL**, near *Exeter Exchange*, in the
Strand, and **C. ETHERINGTON**, at *York*.

MDCCLXXVI.

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ish Theatre April 10th 1776.

W. Walker sculp.

Characters of **LUSIGNAN** and **ZARA**.

Zara To what new Wonder am I now reserv'd
Oh! Sir what mean you? —————

BELL'S EDITION.

Z A R A.

A TRAGEDY, by AARON HILL, Esq.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane.

Regulated from the Prompt-Book,

By PERMISSION of the MANAGERS,

By Mr. HOPKINS, Prompter.

With the COMIC CHORUSSES, or Interludes, designed
by the Author to be sung between each Act.



L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN BELL, near Exeter-Exchange, in the Strand,
and C. ETHERINGTON, at York.

MDCCLXXVI.

TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE
P R I N C E.

S I R,

W RITERS, who mean no int'rest, but their
art's ;

Of independing minds and steadfast hearts,
Disclaiming hopes, will empty forms neglect ;
Nor need permission—to address respect.
Frank as the manly faith of ancient time,
Let truth, for once, approach the great in rhyme !
Nor public benefit, misguided, stray,
Because a private wisher points its way.
If wond'ring, here your greatness condescends
To ask, what's he who thus, uncall'd, attends ?
Smile at a suitor, who in courts untrac'd,
Pleas'd, if o'erlook'd, thus owns his humble taste.—
Vow'd an unenvier of the busy great ;
Too plain for flatt'ry ; and, too calm for hate :
Hid to be happy ; who surveys, unknown,
The pow'rless cottage, and the peaceless throne ;
A silent subject to his own control ;
Of active passions, but unyielding soul ;
Engross'd by no pursuits, amus'd by all ;
But deaf, as adders, to ambition's call :
Too free for pow'r (or prejudice) to win,
And safely lodging liberty within.
Pardon, great prince ! th' unfashionable strain,
That shuns to dedicate ; nor seeks to gain :

A 2

That

That (self-resigning) knows no narrow view ;
 And, but for public blessings, courts ev'n you !
 Late, a bold tracer of your measur'd mind,
 (While, by the mournful scene, to grief inclin'd)
 I saw your eloquence of eyes confess
 Soft sense of Belvidera's deep distress,
 Prophetic, thence, fore-deem'd the rising years ;
 And hail'd a happy nation, in your tears !

Oh !—nobly touch'd !—th' inspiring pleasure chuse,
 Snatch from the sable wave the sinking muse !
 Charming, be charm'd ! the stage's anguish heal :
 And teach a languid people how to feel.

Then her full soul, shall tragic pow'r impart,
 And reach three kingdoms in their prince's heart !
 Lightness disclaim'd, shall blush itself away :
 And reas'ning sense resume forgotten sway.
 Love, courage, loyalty, taste, honour, truth,
 Flash'd from the scene, re-charm our list'ning youth ;
 And virtues (by your influence form'd) sustain
 The future glories of their founder's reign.

Nor let due care of a protected stage,
 Misjudg'd amusement, but spare hours engage :
 Strong serious truths, the manly muse displays ;
 And leads charm'd reason through those flow'ry ways,
 While history's cold care but facts enrols !
 The muse (persuasive) saves the pictur'd souls !
 Beyond all Egypt's gums, embalms mankind :
 And stamps the living features of the mind.

Time can eject the sons of pow'r from fame,
 And he who gains a world may lose his name :
 But cherish'd arts insure immortal breath,
 And bid their prop'd defenders tread on death !

Look back, lov'd prince, on ages sunk in shade,
 And feel what darkness absent genius made !
 Think on the dead fore-fillers of your place !
 Think on the stern first founders of your race !
 And, where lost story sleeps in silent night,
 Charge to their want of taste, their want of light.

When, in your rising grove, (no converse nigh)
 Black Edward's awful bust demands your eye,

Think

Think from what cause blind chronicles defame
The gross-told tow'rings of that dreadful name !
Search him thro' fancy : and suppose him, shown
By the long glories, to the muses known :
Shining, disclos'd ;—o'ertrampling death's control !
And opening, backward, all his depth of foul !

Then—breathe a conscious sigh, to mourn his fate,
Who form'd no writers, like his spirit, great !
To limn his living thoughts——past fame renew ;
And build him honours, they reserve for you !

I am, with profound respect,

S I R,

YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS'S

Most humble and obedient servant,

A. H I L L.

COMIC CHORUS;

O R,

INTERLUDES

Designed to be sung between the Acts of ZARA.

P R O L O G U E.

By Mr. Beard, and Mrs. Clive, from opposite entrances.

She. *SO, Sir—you're a man of your word.*

He. *Who would break it, when summon'd by you?*

She. *Very fine that—but pray have you heard,
What it is you are summon'd to do?*

He. *Not a word—but expected to see
Something new in the musical way.*

She. *Why, this author has cast you and me,
As a Prologue, it seems, to his play.*

He. *What then is its tuneful name,
Robinhood, of the Greenwood tree?*

Or what good old ballad of fame
Has he built into tra-ge-dy?

She. Tho' he rails against songs, he thought fit,
Most gravely to urge and implore us,

In aid of his tragical wit,
To erect ourselves into a chorus? [Laughing.
He.

He. *A chorus! what's that—a composing
Of groans, to the rants of his madness?*

She. *No—he hinders the boxes from dozing,
By mixing some spirit with sadness.*

He. *So then—'tis our task, I suppose,
To sing sober sense into relish.
Strike up, at each tragical close,
And unheeded moral embellish.*

She. *'Twas the custom, ye know, once in Greece,
And if here 'tis not witty, 'tis new.*

He. *Well then, when you find an act cease,*
[Turning to the boxes.

Tremble ladies —

She. *And, gentlemen, too——* [To the men.
*If I give not the beaux good advice, [Merrily.
Let me dwindle to recitative!*

He. *Nor will I to the belles-be more nice,
When I catch 'em, but here, to receive.*

She. *If there's ought to be learnt from the play,
I shall sit in a nook, here, behind,
Popping out in the good ancient way,
Now and then, with a piece of my mind.*

He. *But suppose, that no moral shou'd rise,
Worth the ears of the brave or the fair!*

She. *Why, we'll then give the word—and advise——
Face about, and stand all as ye were.*

After

After the First A C T.

Song in duet.

He. **T**He Sultan's a bridegroom—the slaves are set free,

And none must presume to wear fetters but he !

Before honey-moon,

Love's fiddle's in tune ;

So we think (filly souls !) 'tis always to be :

For the man that is blind—how shou'd he foresee !

She. I hate these hot blades, who so fiercely begin ;
To baulk a rais'd hope, is a cowardly sin !

The maid that is wise, let her always procure,

Rather a grave than a spirited woer :

What she loses at breakfast, at supper she'll win.

But your amorous violence never endures :

For to dance without doors

Is the way to be weary, before we get in.

He. Pray how does it happen, that passion so gay,

Blooms, fades and falls away,

Like the rose of this morn, that at night must decay ?

Woman, I fear,

Does one thing appear,

But is found quite another, when look'd on too near.

She. Ah—no—

Not—so—

'Tis the fault of you men, who, with flames of desire,

Set your palates on fire,

And dream not, that eating—will appetite tire ;

So resolve in your heat,

To do nothing, but eate,

Till, alas ! on a sudden,—you sleep o'er your meat !

Therefore, learn, O ye fair ! ——

He. And you lovers, take care——

She. That you trust not before hand—

He. That you trust not at all.

She. Man was born to deceive.

He. Woman form'd to believe.

Both. Trust not one of us all !

For to stand on sure ground is the way not to fall.

After the Second A C T.

Mrs. Clive (sola) to a flute.

1.

O H, jealousy ! thou bane of bleeding love !
 Ah, how unhappy we !
 Doom'd by the partial powers above,
 Eternal slaves to thee !
 Not more unstead than lover's hearts, the wind !
 'This moment dying—and the next unkind.
 Ah ! wavering, weak desires of frail mankind !
 With pleading passion ever to pursue,
 Yet triumph, only to undo.

2.

Go to the deeps, below, thou joyless fiend,
 And never rise again, to sow despair !
 Nor you, ye heedless fair, occasions lend,
 To blast your blooming hopes, and bring on care.
 Never conclude your innocence secure,
 Prudence alone makes love endure.

[As she is going off, he meets her, and pulls her back, detaining her, while he sings what follows.]

He. Ever, ever, doubt the fair in sorrow.
 Mourning, as if they felt compassion ?
 Yet what they weep for to-day—to-morrow,
 They'll be first to laugh into fashion.
 None are betray'd, if they trust not the charmer ;
 Jealousy guards the weak from falling ;
 Wou'd you never catch—you must oft alarm her,
 Hearts to deceive is a woman's calling.

[After the song he lets her go, and they join in duet.]

She. Come—let us be friends, and no longer abuse,
 condemn, and accuse,
 each other.

He. Wou'd you have us agree, you must fairly confess,
 the love we care's
 we smother.

She.

She. I am loath to think that——

He. Yet, you know, it is true?

She. Well,—what if I do,
no matter.

He. Cou'd you teach us a way to love on, without strife?

She. Suit the first part of life
to the latter.

He. 'Tis an honest advice, for when love is new blown,
gay colours are shown,
too glaring.

She. Then alas, for poor wives!—comes a blust'ring day,
and blows 'em away,
most scaring!

After the Third A C T.

By Mr. Beard alone.

MARK, Oh, ye beauties!—gay, and young,
Mark the painful woes and weeping
That from forc'd concealment sprung,
Punish the sin of secret-keeping.
Tell then—nor veil a willing heart,
When the lover, lov'd, alarms it;
But—to sooth the pleasing smart,
Whisper the glowing wish, that warms it.
She that wou'd hide the gentle flame,
Does but teach her hope to languish;
She that boldly tells her aim,
Flies from the path that leads to anguish.
Not that too far your trust shou'd go;
All that you say—to all discover;
All, that you do——but two should know,
One of 'em you, and one your lover.
[She meets him going off.]

She. Ah! man, thou wert always a traitor,

Thou giv'st thy advice to betray;

Ah! form'd for a rover by nature,

Thou leader of love the wrong way.

Wou'd

Wou'd women let women advise 'em,
 They could not so easily stray
 'Tis trusting to lovers supplies 'em
 With will and excuse to betray.
 She's safe, who in guard of her passion,
 Far, far, from confessing her pain,
 Keeps silence, in spite of the fashion,
 Nor suffers her eyes to explain.

After the Fourth A C T.

Duet.

She. **W**ELL, what do you think—of these sor-
 rows and joys,
 These calms and these whirlwinds—this silence and
 noise?

Which love, in the bosom of man, employs?

He. For my part, wou'd lovers be govern'd by me,
 Not one of you women so wish'd-for shou'd be,

Since here we a proof of your mischief see.

She. Why, what wou'd you do, to escape the distress?

He. I wou'd do--I wou'd do--by my soul I can't guess--

She. Poor wretch, by my soul! I imagin'd no less.

Come, come,—let me tell you, these tempests of love,
 Did but blow up desire, its briskness to prove,
 Which else wou'd—you know—too too lazily move.
 Were women like logs—of a make to lie still,
 Men wou'd sleep and grow dull—but our absolute will
 Sets life all a whirling—like wheels in a mill.

He. Ambition in woman, like valour in man,
 Tempts danger--from which they'd be safe if they ran?
 And once get 'em in—get 'em out how you can.

She. Pray, what will you give me to teach you the
 trick,
 To keep your wife pleas'd, either healthy, or sick?

He. The man who hits that, sure, must touch to
 the quick!

She. Learn this—and depend on a life without pain,
 Say

Say nothing to vex her, yet let her complain ;
 Submit to your fate,—and disturb not her reign :
 Be mop'd when she's sad—and be pleas'd when she's
 gay,
 Believe her, and trust her—and give her—her way :
 For want of this rule—there's the devil to pay,
Both. For want of this rule, there's the devil to
 pay.

P R O L O G U E.

Written by COLLEY CIBBER, Esq;

Spoken by Mr. Cibber.

THe French, howe'er mercurial they may seem,
 Extinguish half their fire, by critic phlegm :
 While English writers nature's freedom claim,
 And warm their scenes with an ungovern'd flame.
 'Tis strange that nature never should inspire
 A Racine's judgment with a Shakspeare's fire !
 Howe'er, to-night—(to promise much we're loath)
 But—you've a chance to have a taste of both.
 From English plays, Zara's French author fir'd,
 Confess'd his muse beyond herself inspir'd ;
 From rack'd Othello's rage, he rais'd his style,
 And snatch'd the brand, that lights this tragic pile :
 Zara's success his utmost hopes outflow,
 And a twice twentieth weeping-audience drew.
 As for our English friend, he leaves to you,
 Whate'er may seem to his performance due ;
 No views of gain, his hopes or fears engage,
 He gives a child of leisure to the stage :
 Willing to try, if yet forsaken nature
 Can charm with any one remember'd feature.
 Thus far the author speaks—but now the player,
 With trembling heart, prefers his humble prayer.
 To-night, the greatest venture of my life,
 Is lost or sav'd as you receive—a wife,
 If time, you think, may ripen her to merit,
 With gentle smiles support her wav'ring spirit.

Zara

*Zara in France, at once, an actress rais'd,
 Warm'd into skill by being kindly prais'd :
 O ! cou'd such wonders here from favour flow,
 How would our Zara's heart with transport glow !
 But she, alas ! by juster fears oppress'd,
 Bids but your bare endurance, at the best.
 Her unskill'd tongue would simple Nature speak,
 Nor dares her bounds, for false applauses, break.
 Amidst a thousand faults, her best pretence
 To please—is unpresuming innocence.
 When a chaste heart's distress your grief demands,
 One silent tear outweighs a thousand hands.
 If she conveys the pleasing passions right,
 Guard and support her this decisive night ;
 If she mistakes—or, finds her strength too small,
 Let interposing pity break her fall.
 In you it rests, to save her, or destroy,
 If she draws tears from you, I weep—for joy.*

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M E N.

*Covent-garden.**Drury-lane.*

Osman, sultan of <i>Jerusalem</i> - -	Mr. Aickin.	Mr. Reddish.
Lusignan, last of <i>the blood of the christian kings of Jerusalem</i> - -	Mr. Barry.	Mr. Garrick.
Nerestan, } Chatillon, } <i>French officers,</i> }	Mr. Wroughton.	Mr. Brereton.
	Mr. Hull.	Mr. Aickin.
Oraşmin, minister <i>to the sultan</i> -	Mr. L'Estrange.	Mr. Hurst.
Melidor, an officer <i>of the Seraglio</i> -	Mr. Thompson.	Mr. Norris.

W O M E N.

Zara,	}	Mrs. Barry.	Miss Young.
Selima,		Mrs. Mattocks.	Miss Sherry.
<i>slaves to the sultan,</i>	}		

Z A R A.

Z A R A.

A C T I.

Zara and Selima.

SELIMA.

IT moves my wonder, young and beauteous Zara,
 Whence these new sentiments inspire your heart !
 Your peace of mind increases with your charms ;
 Tears now no longer shade your eyes soft lustre :
 You meditate no more those happy climes
 To which Nerestan will return to guide you.
 You talk no more of that gay nation now,
 Where men adore their wives, and woman's power
 Draws rev'rence from a polish'd people's softness :
 Their husbands' equals, and their lovers' queens !
 Free without scandal ; wife without restraint ;
 ' Their virtue due to nature, not to fear.
 Why have you ceas'd to wish this happy change ?
 A barr'd seraglio !—sad, unsocial life !
 Scorn'd, and a slave ! All this has lost its terror ;
 And Syria rivals, now, the banks of Seine !

Zara. Joys which we do not know, we do not wish.
 My fate's bound in by Sion's sacred wall :
 Clos'd from my infancy within this palace,
 Custom has learnt, from time, the power to please.
 I claim no share in the remoter world,
 The sultan's property, his will my law ;

B 2

Unknow-

Unknowing all but him, his power, his fame;
To live his subject is my only hope,
All else, an empty dream.—

Sel. Have you forgot
Absent Nereftan then? Whose gen'rous friendship
So nobly vow'd redemption from your chains!
How oft have you admir'd his dauntless soul!
Osman, his conqu'ror, by his courage charm'd,
Trusted his faith, and, on his word, releas'd him:
'Tho' not return'd in time—we yet expect him.
Nor had his noble journey other motive,
Than to procure our ransom.—And is this,
This dear, warm hope, become an idle dream?

Zara. Since after two long years he not returns,
'Tis plain his promise stretch'd beyond his power.
A stranger and a slave, unknown like him,
Proposing much, means little;—talks and vows,
Delighted with a prospect of escape:—
He promis'd to redeem ten christians more,
And free us all from slavery!—I own
I once admir'd th' unprofitable zeal,
But now it charms no longer.—

Sel. What if yet,
He, faithful, should return, and hold his vow!
Wou'd you not, then—

Zara. No matter—Time is past,
And every thing is chang'd—

Sel. But, whence comes this?

Zar. Go—'twere too much to tell thee Zara's
fate:

The sultan's secrets, all, are sacred here:
But my fond heart delights to mix with thine.
Some three months past, when thou, and other slaves,
Were forc'd to quit fair Jordan's flow'ry bank;
Heav'n, to cut short the anguish of my days,
Rais'd me to comfort by a powerful hand:
This mighty Osman!

Sel. What of him?

Zar. This sultan,
This conqu'ror of the christians, loves—

Sel.

Sel. Whom ?

Zar. Zara !—

Thou blushest, and I guess, thy thoughts accuse me :
But, know me better—'twas unjust suspicion.

All emperor as he is, I cannot stoop
To honours, that bring shame and baseness with 'em :

Reason and pride, those props of modesty,
Sustain my guarded heart, and strengthen virtue ;

‘ Rather than sink to infamy, let chains

‘ Embrace me with a joy, such love denies :

No—I shall now astonish thee ;—His greatness
Submits to own a pure and honest flame.

Among the shining crowds, which live to please him,
His whole regard is fix'd on me alone :

He offers marriage ; and its rites now wait
To crown me empress of this eastern world.

Sel. Your virtue and your charms deserve it all :
My heart is not surpriz'd, but struck to hear it.

If to be empress can complete your happiness,
I rank myself, with joy, among your slaves.

Zar. Be still, my equal—and enjoy my blessings ;
For, thou partaking, they will bless me more.

Sel. Alas ! but heaven ! will it permit this marriage ?

Will not this grandeur, falsely call'd a bliss,
Plant bitterness, and root it in your heart ?

Have you forgot you are of christian blood ?

Zar. Ah me ! What hast thou said ? Why wou'dst
thou thus

Recall my wav'ring thoughts ?—How know I, what,
Or whence I am ? Heaven kept it hid in darkness,
Conceal'd me from myself, and from my blood.

Sel. Nerestan, who was born a christian, here,
Asserts, that you, like him, had christian parents ;
Besides—that cross, which, from your infant years
Has been preserv'd, was found upon your bosom,
As if design'd by heaven, a pledge of faith
Due to the God, you purpose to forsake !

Zar. Can my fond heart, on such a feeble proof,
Embrace a faith, abhor'd by him I love ?

B. 3.

Lice.

I see too plainly, custom forms us all ;
 Our thoughts, our morals, our most fix'd belief,
 Are consequences of our place of birth :
 Born beyond Ganges, I had been a pagan,
 In France, a christian ; I am here a saracen :
 'Tis but instruction, all ! Our parents' hand
 Writes on our heart, the first faint characters,
 Which time, re-tracing, deepens into strength,
 That nothing can efface, but death or heaven !—
 Thou wert not made a pris'ner in this place,
 'Till after reason, borrowing force from years,
 Had lent its lustre, to enlighten faith :—
 For me, who in my cradle was their slave,
 Thy christian doctrines were too lately taught me :
 Yet, far from having lost the rev'rence due,
 This cross, as often as it meets my eye,
 Strikes thro' my heart a kind of awful fear !
 I honour, from my soul, the christian laws,
 Those laws, which, softening nature by humanity,
 Melt nations into brotherhood ;—no doubt
 Christians are happy ; and 'tis just to love 'em.

Sel. Why have you, then, declar'd yourself their
 foe ?

Why will you join your hand with this proud
 Osman's,

Who owes his triumph to the christians' ruin ?

Zar. Ah !—Who could slight the offer of his
 heart ?

Nay—for I mean to tell thee all my weakness ;

Perhaps I had, ere now, profess'd thy faith,

But Osman lov'd me—and I've lost it all :—

I think on none but Osman—my pleas'd heart,

Fill'd with the blessing, to be lov'd by him,

Wants room for other happiness. ' Place thou

' Before thy eyes, his merit and his fame,

' His youth, yet blooming but in manhood's dawn ;

' How many conquer'd kings have swell'd his pow'r !

' Think, too, how lovely ! how his brow becomes

' This wreath of early glories !—Oh, my friend !

I talk not of a sceptre, which he gives me :

No—

No—to be charm'd with that, were thanks too humble!

Offensive tribute, and too poor for love!

'Twas Osman won my heart, not Osman's crown:

I love not in him, aught besides himself.

Thou think'st, perhaps, that these are starts of passion:

But, had the will of heav'n, less bent to bless him,

Doom'd Osman to my chains, and me to fill

The throne that Osman sits on—ruin and wretchedness

Catch and consume my wishes, but I wou'd—

To raise me to myself, descend to him.

' *Sel.* Hark! the wish'd music sounds—'Tis he—he comes— [Exit Selima.

' *Zar.* My heart prevented him, and found him near:

' Absent two whole long days, the slow-pac'd hour

' At last is come, and gives him to my wishes!

A grand March.

Enter Osman, reading a Paper, which he re-delivers to Orasmin; with Attendants.

Osman. Wait my return—or, shou'd there be a cause
That may require my presence, do not fear
To enter; ever mindful, that my own

[Exit Orasmin, &c.

Follows my people's happiness.—At length,
Cares have releas'd my heart—to love and Zara.

Zar. 'Twas not in cruel absence, to deprive me
Of your imperial image—every where
You reign triumphant: memory supplies
Reflexion with your power; and you, like heaven,
Are always present—and are always gracious.

Osman. The sultans, my great ancestors, bequeath'd
Their empire to me, but their taste they gave not;
Their laws, their lives, their loves, delight not me:
I know our prophet smiles on am'rous wishes,
And opens a wide field to vast desire;

I know,

I know, that at my will I might possess ;
 That, wasting tenderness in wild profusion,
 I might look down to my surrounded feet,
 And bless contending beauties. I might speak,
 Serenely slothful, from within my palace,
 And bid my pleasure be my people's law.
 But, sweet as softness is, its end is cruel ;
 I can look round, and count a hundred kings,
 Unconquer'd by themselves, and slaves to others :
 Hence was Jerusalem to christians lost ;
 ' But heaven, to blast that unbelieving race,
 ' Taught me to be a king, by thinking like one.
 Hence from the distant Euxine to the Nile,
 The trumpet's voice has wak'd the world to war ;
 Yet, amidst arms and death, thy power has reach'd me ;
 For thou disdain'st, like me, a languid love ;
 Glory and Zara join—and charm together.

Zar. I hear at once, with blushes and with joy,
 This passion, so unlike your country's customs.

Ofm. Passion, like mine, disdains my country's
 customs ;

The jealousy, the faintness, the distrust,
 The proud, superior, coldness, of the east.
 I know to love you, Zara, with esteem ;
 To trust your virtue, and to court your soul.
 Nobly confiding, I unveil my heart,
 And dare inform you, that, 'tis all your own :
 My joys must all be yours ; only my cares
 Shall lie conceal'd within—and reach not Zara.

Zar. Oblig'd by this excess of tenderness,
 How low, how wretched, was the lot of Zara !
 Too poor with ought, but thanks, to pay such blessings !

Ofm. Not so—I love—and wou'd be lov'd again ;
 Let me confess it, I possess a soul,
 That what it wishes, wishes ardently.
 I shou'd believe you hated, had you power
 To love with moderation : 'tis my aim,
 In every thing, to reach supreme perfection.
 If, with an equal flame, I touch your heart,

Marriage attends your smile—But know, 'twill make
Me wretched, if it makes not Zara happy.

Zar. Ah, Sir! if such a heart, as gen'rous Osman's,
Can, from my will, submit to take its blifs,
What mortal ever was decreed so happy!
Pardon the pride, with which I own my joy;
Thus wholly to possess the man I love!
To know, and to confess his will my fate!
To be the happy work of his dear hands!
To be—

Enter Orasmin.

Os. Already interrupted! What?
Who?—Whence?

Oras. This moment, Sir, there is arriv'd
That christian slave, who, licens'd on his faith,
Went hence to France—and, now return'd, prays audience.

Zar. [*Aside.*] Oh, heaven!

Os. Admit him—What?—Why comes he not?

Oras. He waits without. No christian dares approach

This place, long sacred to the sultan's privacies.

Os. Go—bring him with thee—monarchs, like
the sun,

Shine but in vain, unwarming, if unseen;
With forms and rev'ence, let the great approach us;
Not the unhappy;—every place alike,
Gives the distress'd a privilege to enter.—

[*Exit Orasmin.*]

I think with horror on these dreadful maxims,
Which harden kings, insensibly, to tyrants.

Re-enter Orasmin with Nerestan.

Ner. Imperial sultan! honour'd, even by foes!
See me return'd, regardful of my vow,
And punctual to discharge a christian's duty.
I bring the ransom of the captive Zara,
Fair Selima, the partner of her fortune,
And of ten christian captives, pris'ners here.

You

You promis'd, sultan, if I should return,
 To grant their rated liberty:—Behold,
 I am return'd, and they are yours no more.
 I wou'd have stretch'd my purpose to myself,
 But fortune has deny'd it;—my poor all
 Suffic'd no further, and a noble poverty
 Is now my whole possession.—I redeem
 The promis'd christians; for I taught 'em hope:
 But, for myself, I come again your slave,
 To wait the fuller hand of future charity.

Osm. Christian! I must confess thy courage charms
 me;

But let thy pride be taught, it treads too high,
 When it presumes to climb above my mercy.
 Go ransomless thyself, and carry back
 Their unaccepted ransoms, join'd with gifts,
 Fit to reward thy purpose; instead of ten,
 Demand a hundred christians; they are thine:
 Take 'em, and bid 'em teach their haughty country,
 They left some virtue among Saracens.—
 Be Lusignan alone excepted—He
 Who boasts the blood of kings, and dares lay claim
 To my Jerusalem—that claim his guilt!
 'Such is the law of states; had I been vanquish'd,
 'Thus had he said of me.' I mourn his lot,
 Who must in fetters, lost to day-light, pine,
 And sigh away old age in grief and pain.
 For Zara—but to name her as a captive,
 Were to dishonour language;—she's a prize
 Above thy purchase:—all the christian realms,
 With all their kings to guide 'em, would unite
 In vain, to force her from me—Go, retire—

Ner. For Zara's ransom, with her own consent,
 I had your royal word. For Lusignan—
 Unhappy, poor, old man——

Osm. Was I not heard?

Have I not told thee, christian, all my will?
 What if I prais'd thee!—This presumptuous virtue,
 Compelling my esteem, provokes my pride:

Be

Be gone—and when to-morrow's sun shall rise
On my dominions, be not found—too near me.

[*Exit Nereflan.*]

Zar. [*Aside.*] Assist him, heaven!

Osm. Zara, retire a moment—

Assume, throughout my palace, sovereign empire,
While I give orders, to prepare the pomp
That waits to crown thee mistress of my throne.

[*Leads her out, and returns.*]

Oraşmin! didst thou mark th' imperious slave?
What cou'd he mean?—he sigh'd—and, as he went,
Turn'd and look'd back at Zara!—did'st thou mark it?

Oraf. Alas! my sovereign master! let not jealousy
Strike high enough to reach your noble heart.

Osm, Jealousy, said'st thou? I disdain it:—No!
Distrust is poor; and a misplac'd suspicion
Invites and justifies the falsehood fear'd.—

Yet, as I love with warmth—so, I cou'd hate!

But Zara is above disguise and art:—

' My love is stronger, nobler, than my power.

Jealous!—I was not jealous!—if I was,

I am not—no—my heart—but, let us drown
Remembrance of the word, and of the image:

My heart is fill'd with a diviner flame.—

Go, and prepare for the approaching nuptials;

' Zara to careful empire joins delight;

I must allot one hour to thoughts of state,

Then, all the smiling day is love and Zara's.

[*Exit Oraşmin.*]

Monarchs, by forms of pompous misery, press'd,
In proud, unsocial misery, unblest'd,
Wou'd, but for love's soft influence, curse their
throne,

And, among crowded millions, live alone.

END of the FIRST ACT.

A C T

A C T II.

Nereſtan, Chatillon.

CHATILLON.

M Atchleſs Nereſtan ! generous and great !
 You, who have broke the chains of hopeleſs
 ſlaves !

‘ You, chriſtian ſaviour ! by a Saviour ſent !
 Appear, be known, enjoy your due delight ;
 The grateful weepers wait to claſp your knees,
 They throng to kiſs the happy hand that ſav’d ’em :
 Indulge the kind impatience of their eyes,
 And, at their head, command their hearts for ever.

Ner. Illuſtrious Chatillon ! this praiſe o’erwhelms
 me ;

What have I done beyond a chriſtian’s duty ?
 Beyond what you would, in my place, have done ?

Chat. True—it is every honeſt chriſtian’s duty ;
 Nay, ’tis the bleſſing of ſuch minds as ours,
 For others’ good to ſacrifice our own.—
 Yet, happy they, to whom heav’n grants the power,
 To execute, like you, that duty’s call !
 For us—the relicks of abandon’d war,
 Forgot in France, and, in Jeruſalem,
 Left to grow old in fetters.—Oſman’s father
 Conſign’d us to the gloom of a damp dungeon,
 Where, but for you, we muſt have groan’d out life,
 And native France have bleſs’d our eyes no more.

Ner. The will of gracious heav’n, that ſofter’d
 Oſman,

Inſpir’d me for your ſakes :—But, with our joy,
 Flows, mix’d, a bitter ſadneſs—I had hop’d
 To ſave from their perverſion, a young beauty,
 Who, in her infant innocence, with me,
 Was made a ſlave by cruel Noradin ;
 When, ſprinkling Syria with the blood of chriſtians,
 Cæſarea’s walls ſaw Luſignan ſurpriz’d,
 And the proud crescent riſe in bloody triumph.

From

From this seraglio having young escap'd,
 Fate, three years since, restor'd me to my chains ;
 Then, sent to Paris on my plighted faith,
 I flatter'd my fond hope with vain resolves,
 To guide the lovely Zara to that court
 Where Lewis has establish'd virtue's throne :
 But Osman will detain her—yet, not Osman ;
 Zara herself forgets she is a christian,
 And loves the tyrant sultan !—Let that pass :
 I mourn a disappointment still more cruel ;
 The prop of all our christian hope is lost !

Chat. Dispose me at your will—I am your own.

Ner. Oh, Sir, great Lusignan, so long their
 captive,

That last of an heroic race of kings !
 That warrior, whose past fame has fill'd the world !
 Osman refuses to my sighs for ever !

Chat. Nay, then we have been all redeem'd in
 vain ;

Perish that soldier who would quit his chains,
 And leave his noble chief behind in fetters.
 Alas ! you know him not as I have known him ;
 Thank heav'n, that plac'd your birth so far remov'd
 From those detested days of blood and woe :
 But I, less happy, was condemn'd to see
 Thy walls, Jerusalem, beat down, and all
 Our pious fathers' labours lost in ruins.
 Heav'n ! had you seen the very temple rifled !
 The sacred sepulchre itself profan'd !
 Fathers with children mingled, flame together !
 And our last king, oppress'd with age and arms,
 Murder'd, and bleeding o'er his murder'd sons !
 Then Lusignan, sole remnant of his race.
 Rallying our fated few amidst the flames,
 Fearless, beneath the crush of falling towers,
 The conqu'rors and the conquer'd, groans and death !
 Dreadful—and, waving in his hand his sword,
 Red with the blood of infidels, cry'd out,
 This way, ye faithful christians ! follow me.—

Ner. How full of glory was that brave retreat !

VOL. I.

C

Chat.

Chat. 'Twas heav'n, no doubt, that sav'd and led
him on ;

Pointed his path, and march'd our guardian guide :
We reach'd Cæsaria—there the general voice
Chose Lusignan, thenceforth to give us laws ;
Alas ! 'twas vain—Cæsarea cou'd not stand
When Sion's self was fallen !—we were betray'd ;
And Lusignan condemn'd, to length of life,
In chains, in damps, and darkness, and despair :
' Yet great, amid'st his miseries, he look'd,
' As if he could not feel his fate himself,
' But as it reach'd his followers. And shall we,
' For whom our gen'rous leader suffer'd this,
' Be vilely safe, and dare be blest'd without him ?

Ner. Oh ! I shou'd hate the liberty he shar'd not.
I knew too well the miseries you describe,
For I was born amidst them. Chains and death,
Cæsaria lost, and Saracens triumphant,
Were the first objects which my eyes e'er look'd on.
Hurried, an infant, among other infants,
Snatch'd from the bosoms of their bleeding mothers,
A temple sav'd us, till the slaughter ceas'd ;
Then were we sent to this ill-fated city,
Here, in the palace of our former kings,
To learn, from Saracens, their hated faith,
And be completely wretched.—Zara, too,
Shar'd this captivity ; we both grew up
So near each other, that a tender friendship
Endear'd her to my wishes : My fond heart—
Pardon its weakness ! bleeds to see her lost,
And, for a barb'rous tyrant, quit her God !

Chat. Such is the Saracens' too fatal policy !
Watchful seducers still of infant weakness :
' Happy that you so young escap'd their hands !
But let us think—May not this Zara's int'rest,
Loving the sultan, and by him belov'd,
For Lusignan procure some softer sentence ?
' The wise and just, with innocence, may draw
' Their own advantage from the guilt of others.

Ner. How shall I gain admission to her presence ?

Osman

Ofinan has banish'd me—but that's a trifle ;
 Will the seraglio's portals open to me ?
 Or, cou'd I find that easy to my hopes,
 What prospect of success from an apostate ?
 On whom I cannot look without disdain ;
 ' And who will read her shame upon my brow.
 The hardest trial of a gen'rous mind
 Is, to court favours from a hand it scorns.

Chat. Think it is Lusignan we seek to serve.

Ner. Well—it shall be attempted—Hark ! who's
 this ?

Are my eyes false ; or is it really she ?

Enter Zara.

Zara. Start not, my worthy friend ! I come to
 seek you ;

The sultan has permitted it ; fear nothing : —
 But to confirm my heart which trembles near you,
 Soften that angry air, nor look reproach ;
 Why should we fear each other, both mistaking ?
 Associates from our birth, one prison held us,
 One friendship taught affliction to be calm,
 Till heav'n thought fit to favour your escape,
 And call you to the fields of happier France ;
 Thence, once again, it was my lot to find you
 A pris'ner here ; where, 'hid amongst a crowd
 Of undistinguish'd slaves, with less restraint,
 I shar'd your frequent converse ; —
 It pleas'd your pity, shall I say your friendship ?
 Or, rather, shall I call it generous charity ?
 To form that noble purpose, to redeem
 Distressful Zara—you procur'd my ransom,
 And, with a greatness that out-soar'd a crown,
 Return'd, yourself a slave, to give me freedom ;
 But heav'n has cast our fate for different climes :
 Here, in Jerusalem, I fix for ever ;
 Yet, among all the shine that marks my fortune,
 I shall with frequent tears remember yours ;
 Your goodness will forever sooth my heart,

C 2

And

And keep your image still a dweller there :
 Warm'd by your great example to protect
 That faith, that lifts humanity so high,
 I'll be a mother to distressful christians.

Ner. How!—You protect the christians! you,
 who can

Abjure their saving truth, and coldly see
 Great Lufignan, their chief, die slow in chains!

Zar. To bring him freedom you behold me here ;
 You will this moment meet his eyes in joy.

Chat. Shall I then live to blefs that happy hour ?

Ner. Can christians owe so dear a gift to Zara ?

Zar. Hopeless I gather'd courage to intreat
 The sultan for his liberty—amaz'd
 So soon to gain the happiness I wish'd!
 See where they bring the good old chief, grown dim
 With age, by pain and sorrows hasten'd on!

Chat. How is my heart dissolv'd with sudden joy!

* *Zar.* I long to view his venerable face,
 * But tears, I know not why, eclipse my sight.
 * I feel, methinks, redoubled pity for him;
 * But I, alas! myself have been a slave;
 * And when we pity woes which we have felt,
 * 'Tis but a partial virtue!

* *Ner.* Amazement!—Whence this greatness in
 an infidel!

Enter Lufignan, led in by two Guards.

Luf. Where am I? From the dungeon's depth,
 what voice
 Has call'd me to revisit long-lost day?
 Am I with christians?—I am weak—forgive me,
 And guide my trembling steps. I'm full of years;
 My miseries have worn me more than age.
 Am I in truth at liberty? [*Seating himself.*]

Chat. You are ;
 And every christian's grief takes end with yours.

Luf. O, light!—O, dearer far than light! that
 voice!

Cha-

Chatillon, is it you ? my fellow martyr !
 And shall our wretchedness, indeed, have end ?
 In what place are we now ?—my feeble eyes,
 Difus'd to day-light, long in vain to find you.

Chat. This was the palace of your royal fathers :
 'Tis now the son of Noradin's seraglio.

Zar. The master of this place—the mighty Of-
 man,

Distinguishes, and loves to cherish virtue.
 This gen'rous Frenchman, yet a stranger to you,
 Drawn from his native soil, from peace and rest,
 Brought the vow'd ransoms of ten christian slaves,
 Himself contented to remain a captive :
 But Osman, charm'd by greatness like his own,
 To equal what he lov'd, has giv'n him you.

Luf. So gen'rous France inspires her social sons !
 They have been ever dear and useful to me—
 Wou'd I were nearer to him——Noble Sir,

[*Nerestan approaches.*

How have I merited, that you for me
 Should pass such distant seas, to bring me blessings,
 And hazard your own safety for my sake ?

Ner. My name, Sir, is Nerestan ; born in Syria,
 I wore the chains of slavery from my birth ;
 Till quitting the proud crescent for the court
 Where warlike Lewis reigns, beneath his eye
 I learnt the trade of arms : — the rank I held
 Was but the kind distinction which he gave me,
 To tempt my courage, to deserve regard.
 Your sight, unhappy prince, wou'd charm his eye ;
 That best and greatest monarch will behold
 With grief and joy those venerable wounds,
 And print embraces where your fetters bound you.
 All Parts will revere the cross's martyr ;
 ' Paris, the refuge still of ruin'd kings !

Luf. Alas ! in times long past, I've seen its
 glory :

When Philip the victorious liv'd, I fought
 A-breast with Montmorency, and Melun,
 D'Estaing, De Neile, and the far-famous Courcy ;—

Names which were then the praise and dread of war!

But what have I to do at Paris now?

I stand upon the brink of the cold grave;

That way my journey lies—to find, I hope,

The king of kings, and ask the recompence

For all my woes, long-suffer'd for his sake.—

You gen'rous witnesses of my last hour,

While I yet live, assist my humble prayers,

And join the resignation of my soul.

Nerestan! Chatillon!—and you, fair mourner!

Whose tears do honour to an old man's sorrows!

Pity a father, the unhappiest sure

That ever felt the hand of angry heav'n!

My eyes, though dying, still can furnish tears;

Half my long life they flow'd, and still will flow!

A daughter and three sons, my heart's proud hopes,

Were all torn from me in their tend'rest years—

My friend Chatillon knows, and can remember—

Chat. Wou'd I were able to forget your woe.

Lus. Thou wert a pris'ner with me in Cæsarea,

And there beheld'st my wife and two dear sons

Perish in flames.

Chat. A captive and in fetters,

I could not help 'em.

Lus. I know thou could'st not—

Oh, 'twas a dreadful scene; these eyes beheld it—

Husband and father, helpless I beheld it!—

Deny'd the mournful privilege to die!

Oh, my poor children! whom I now deplore;

If ye are saints in heav'n, as sure ye are,

Look with an eye of pity on that brother,

That sister whom you left!—If I have yet,

Or son, or daughter:—for in early chains,

Far from their lost and unassisting father,

I heard that they were sent, with numbers more,

To this seraglio; hence to be dispers'd,

In nameless remnants, o'er the east, and spread

Our christian miseries round a faithless world.

Chat. 'Twas true—for, in the horrors of that day,

I snatch'd

I snatch'd your infant daughter from her cradle ;
 ' But finding ev'ry hope of flight was vain,
 ' Scarce had I sprinkled, from a public fountain,
 ' Those sacred drops which wash the soul from sin ;
 When from my bleeding arms, fierce Saracens
 Forc'd the lost innocent, who smiling lay,
 And pointed, playful, at the swarthy spoilers !
 With her, your youngest, then your only son,
 Whose little life had reach'd the fourth, sad year,
 And just giv'n sense to feel his own misfortunes,
 Was order'd to this city.

Ner. I, too, hither,
 Just at that fatal age, from lost Cæsarea,
 Came, in that crowd of undistinguish'd christians.—

Luf. You ! —came you thence ? — Alas ! who knows
 but you

Might heretofore have seen my two poor children ;
 [*Looking up.*] Hah ! Madam ! that small ornament you
 wear,

Its form a stranger to this country's fashion,
 How long has it been yours ?

Zar. From my first birth, Sir—

Ah, what ! you seem surpriz'd ! — why should this
 move you ?

Luf. Wou'd you confide it to my trembling hands ?

Zar. To what new wonders am I now reserv'd ?

Oh, Sir, what mean you ?

Luf. Providence ! and heaven !

Oh, failing eyes, deceive ye not my hope ?

Can this be possible ? — Yes, yes—'tis she !

This little cross—I know it, by sure marks !

Oh ! take me, Heav'n ! while I can die with joy—

Zar. Oh, do not, Sir, distract me ! — rising thoughts,
 And hopes, and fears, o'erwhelm me !

Luf. Tell me yet,

Has it remain'd for ever in your hands ?

What—both brought captives, from Cæsarea hither ?

Zar. Both, both—

' *Ner.* Oh, heaven ! have I then found a father ?

Luf. Their voice ! their looks !

The

The living images of their dear mother !
 O God ! who see'st my tears, and know'st my thoughts,
 Do not forsake me at this dawn of hope——
 Strengthen my heart, too feeble for this joy.
 Madam ! Nereſtan !—Help me, Chatillon ! [*Riſing.*
 Nereſtan, haſt thou on thy breaſt a ſcar,
 Which, ere Cæſarea fell, from a fierce hand,
 Surprizing us by night, my child receiv'd ?

Ner. Bleſs'd hand !—I bear it,—Sir, the mark is
 there !

Luf. Merciful heaven !

Ner. [*Kneeling.*] Oh, Sir !—Oh, Zara, kneel.—

Zar. [*Kneeling.*] My father ?—Oh !—

Luf. Oh, my loſt children !

Both. Oh !

Luf. My ſon ! my daughter ! loſt in embracing
 you,

I wou'd now die, leſt this ſhou'd prove a dream.

Chat. How touch'd is my glad heart, to ſee their
 joy !

Luf. They ſhall not tear you from my arms—my
 children !

Again, I find you—dear in wretchedneſs :

Oh, my brave ſon—and thou, my nameleſs daughter !

Now diſſipate all doubt, remove all dread :

Has heaven, that gives me back my children—giv'n
 'em,

Such as I loſt 'em ?—Come they chriſtians to me ?

One weeps—and one declines a conſcious eye !

Your ſilence ſpeaks—too well I underſtand it.

Zar. I cannot, Sir, deceive you—Oſman's laws
 Were mine—and Oſman is not chriſtian.—

Luf. Her words are thunder buſting on my head ;
 Wer't not for thee, my ſon, I now ſhou'd die ;
 Full ſixty years, I fought the chriſtians cauſe,
 Saw their doom'd temple fall, their power deſtroy'd :
 Twenty, a captive, in a dungeon's depth,
 Yet never for myſelf my tears fought heaven ;
 All for my children roſe my fruitleſs prayers :
 Yet, what avails a father's wretched joy ?

I have

I have a daughter gain'd, and heav'n an enemy.
 Oh, my misguided daughter—lose not thy faith,
 Reclaim thy birthright—think upon the blood
 Of twenty christian kings, that fills thy veins;
 'Tis heroes' blood—the blood of saints, and martyrs!
 What would thy mother feel, to see thee thus!
 She, and thy murder'd brothers!—think, they call
 thee?

Think that thou see'st 'em stretch their bloody arms,
 And weep, to win thee from their murd'ers' bosom.
 Ev'n in the place where thou betray'st thy God,
 He dy'd, my child, to save thee.—' Turn thy eyes,
 ' And see; for thou art near his sacred sepulchre;
 ' Thou can'st not move a step, but where he trod!
 Thou tremblest—Oh! admit me to thy soul,
 Kill not thy aged, thy afflicted father;
 ' Take not, thus soon, again, the life thou gav'st him;
 Shame not thy mother—nor renounce thy God.—
 'Tis past—Repentance dawns in thy sweet eyes;
 I see bright truth descending to thy heart,
 And now, my long-lost child is found for ever.

' *Ner.* Oh, doubly blest! a sister, and a soul,
 ' To be redeem'd together!

Zar. Oh, my father!
 Dear author of my life! inform me, teach me,
 What shou'd my duty do?

Luf. By one short word,
 To dry up all my tears, and make life welcome,
 Say thou art christian—

Zar. Sir—I am a christian.

Luf. Receive her, gracious heaven! and bless her,
 for it.

Enter Orasmin.

Oraf. Madam, the sultan order'd me to tell you,
 That he expects you instant quit this place,
 And bid your last farewell to these vile christians.
 You, captive frenchmen, follow me; for you,
 It is my task to answer.—

Chat,

Chat. Sill new miseries !

How cautious man shou'd be, to say, I'm happy !

Luf. These are the times, my friends, to try our firmness.

Our christian firmness.—

Zar. Alas, Sir! oh!

Luf. O, you !—I dare not name you :
Farewel—but, come what may, be sure remember,
You keep the fatal secret ! for the rest,
Leave all to heaven——be faithful, and be blest.

END of the SECOND ACT.

A C T. III.

Osman, and Orafmin.

OSMAN.

O RASMIN, this alarm was false, and ground-
less?

Lewis no longer turns his arms on me :
The French, grown weary by a length of woes,
Wish not at once to quit their fruitful plains,
And famish on Arabia's desert sands.
Their ships, 'tis true, have spread the Syrian seas ;
And Lewis, hovering o'er the coast of Cyprus,
Alarms the fears of Asia—But I've learnt,
That steering wide from our unmenac'd ports,
He points his thunder at th' Egyptian shore.
There let him war, and waste my enemies ;
Their mutual conflict will but fix my throne.—
Release those christians—I restore their freedom ;
'Twill please their master, nor can weaken me :
Transport 'em at my cost, to find their king ;
I wish to have him know me : carry thither
This Lusignan, whom, tell him I restore,

Be:

Because I cannot fear his fame in arms;
 But love him, for his virtue, and his blood.
 Tell him, my father having conquer'd twice,
 Condemn'd him to perpetual chains; but I
 Have set him free, that I might triumph more.

Oraf. The christians gain an army, in his name.

Osm. I cannot fear a sound.—

Oraf. But, Sir——shou'd Lewis——

Osm. Tell Lewis, and the world—it shall be so:
 Zara propos'd it, and my heart approves:
 Thy statesman's reason is too dull for love!
 ' Why wilt thou force me, to confess it all?
 ' Tho' I to Lewis send back Lusignan,
 ' I give him but to Zara—I have griev'd her;
 ' And ow'd her the atonement of this joy.
 ' Thy false advices, which but now misled
 ' My anger, to confine those helpless christians,
 ' Gave her a pain; I feel for her and me:
 But I talk on, and waste the smiling moments.
 For one long hour I yet defer my nuptials;
 ' But, 'tis not lost, that hour! 'twill be all hers!
 She wou'd employ it in a conference
 With that Nerestan, whom thou know'st—that
 christian!

Oraf. And have you, Sir, indulg'd that strange desire?

Osm. What mean'st thou? They were infant slaves
 together;

Friends shou'd part kind, who are to meet no more;
 When Zara asks, I will refuse her nothing:
 Restraint was never made for those we love.
 Down with these rigours, of the proud seraglio;
 I hate its laws—where blind austerity
 Sinks virtue to necessity.—My blood
 Disclaims your Asian jealousy;—I hold
 The fierce, free plainness of my Scythian ancestors,
 Their open confidence, their honest hate,
 Their love unfearing, and their anger told,
 Go—the good christian waits—conduct him to her;
 Zara expects thee—What she wills, obey.

[Exit Osmán.

Oraf.

Oraf. Ho! christian! enter——wait a moment here.

Enter Nereftan.

Zara will soon approach—I go to find her.

[*Exit Orafmin.*

Ner. In what a ftate, in what a place, I leave her!
Oh, faith! Oh, father, Oh, my poor loft fiftter!
She's here——

Enter Zara.

Thank heaven, it is not, then, unlawful,
To fee you, yet, once more, my lovely fiftter!
Not all fo happy!——We, who met but now,
Shall never meet again——for Lufignan——
We fhall be orphans ftill, and want a father.

Zar. Forbid it heaven!

Ner. His laft sad hour's at hand——
That flow of joy, which follow'd our difcovery,
Too ftrong and fudden for his age's weaknefs,
Wafing his fpirits, dry'd the fource of life,
And nature yields him up to time's demand:
Shall he not die in peace?---Oh! let no doubt
Disturb his parting moments, with diftruff;
Let me, when I return, to clofe his eyes,
Compose his mind's impatience too, and tell him,
You are confirm'd a christian——

Zar. Oh! may his foul enjoy, in earth, and heaven,

Eternal reft! nor let one thought, one figh,
One bold complaint of mine recall his cares!
But, you have injur'd me, who ftill can doubt.——
What! am I not your fiftter? and fhall you
Refufe me credit? You fuppofe me light;
You, who fhould judge my honour by your own,
Shall you diftruff a truth I dar'd avow,
And ftamp apoftate on a fiftter's heart!

Ner. Ah! do not misconceive me!—if I err'd,
Affection, not diftruff, mifled my fear;

Your will may be a christian, yet, not you ;
 There is a sacred mark---a sign of faith,
 A pledge of promise, that must firm your claim ;
 Wash you from guilt, and open heaven before you.
 Swear, swear by all the woes we all have borne,
 By all the martyr'd saints, who call you daughter ;
 That you consent, this day, to seal our faith,
 By that mysterious rite which waits your call.

Zar. I swear by heaven, and all its holy host,
 Its saints, its martyrs, its attesting angels,
 And the dread presence of its living author,
 To have no faith but yours ;—to die a christian !
 Now, tell me what this mystic faith requires.

Ner. To hate the happiness of Osman's throne,
 And love that God, who, thro' his maze of woes,
 Has brought us all, unhoping, thus together.
 For me—I am a soldier, uninstructed,
 Nor daring to instruct, tho' strong in faith :
 But I will bring th' ambassador of heaven,
 To clear your views, and lift you to your God !
 Be it your task, to gain admission for him.—
 But where ? from whom ?—Oh ! thou immortal power !
 Whence can we hope it, in this curs'd seraglio ?
 Who is this slave of Osman ? Yes, this slave !
 Does she not boast the blood of twenty kings ?
 Is not her race the same, with that of Lewis ?
 Is she not Lusignan's unhappy daughter ?
 A christian ? and my sister ?---yet a slave !
 A willing slave !---I dare not speak more plainly.

Zara. Cruel ! go on—Alas ! you do not know me !
 At once, a stranger to my secret fate,
 My pains, my fears, my wishes, and my power :
 I am---I will be christian---will receive
 This holy priest, with his mysterious blessing ;
 I will not do, nor suffer, aught unworthy
 Myself, my father, or my father's race.—
 But, tell me—nor be tender on this point ;
 What punishment your christian laws decree,
 For an unhappy wretch, who, to her self
 Unknown, and all abandon'd by the world

Lost and enslav'd, has, in her sov'reign master,
Found a protector, generous as great,
Has touch'd his heart, and giv'n him all her own?

Ner. The punishment of such a slave shou'd be
Death, in this world—and pain in that to come.

Zar. I am that slave—strike here—and save my
shame.

Ner. Destruction to my hopes!--Can it be you?

Zar. It is---Ador'd by Osman, I adore him:
This hour the nuptial rites will make us one.

Ner. What! marry Osman!--Let the world grow
dark,

That the extinguish'd sun may hide thy shame!
Cou'd it be thus, it were no crime to kill thee.

Zar. Strike, strike---I love him---yes, by heav'n!
I love him.

Ner. Death is thy due---but not thy due from me:
Yet, were the honour of our house no bar-----
My father's fame, and the too gentle laws
Of that religion which thou hast disgrac'd-----
Did not the God thou quitt'st hold back my arm,
Not there---I could not there ;---but, by my soul,
I wou'd rush, desp'rate, to the sultan's breast,
And plunge my sword in his proud heart who damns
thee.

Oh! shame! shame! shame! at such a time as this!
When Lewis, that awak'ner of the world,
Beneath the lifted cross makes Egypt pale,
And draws the sword of heaven to spread our faith!
Now to submit to see my sister doom'd
A bosom slave to him whose tyrant heart
But measures glory by the christian's woe.
Yes—I will dare acquaint our father with it;
Departing Lufignan may live so long,
As just to hear thy shame, and die to 'scape it.

Zar. Stay—my too angry brother—stay—perhaps,
Zara has resolution great as thine:

'Tis cruel—and unkind!--Thy words are crimes;
My weakness but misfortune! Dost thou suffer;
I suffer more; ---Oh! wou'd to heaven this blood

Of

Of twenty boasted kings, would stop at once,
 And stagnate in my heart!--It then no more
 Would rush in boiling fevers thro' my veins;
 And ev'ry trembling drop be fill'd with Osman.
 How has he lov'd me! how has he oblig'd me!
 I owe thee to him! What has he not done,
 To justify his boundless pow'r of charming?
 For me, he softens the severe decrees
 Of his own faith;—and is it just that mine
 Should bid me hate him, but because he loves me?
 No—I will be a christian—but preserve
 My gratitude as sacred as my faith;
 If I have death to fear for Osman's sake,
 It must be from his coldness, not his love.

Ner. I must at once condemn and pity thee;
 ' I cannot point thee out which way to go,
 ' But providence will lend its light to guide thee.
 ' That sacred rite, which thou shalt now receive,
 ' Will strengthen and support thy feeble heart,
 ' To live an innocent, or die a martyr:
 Here then, begin performance of thy vow;
 Here in the trembling horrors of thy soul,
 Promise thy king, thy father, and thy god,
 Not to accomplish these detested nuptials,
 Till first the rev'rend priest has clear'd your eyes,
 Taught you to know, and giv'n you claim to heav'n.
 Promise me this——

Zar. So blest me heaven, I do. —
 Go---hasten the good priest, I will expect him;
 But first return---cheer my expiring father,
 Tell him I am, and will be all he wishes me:
 Tell him, to give him life 'twere joy to die.

Ner. I go—Farewel---farewel, unhappy sister!

[*Exit Nerestan.*]

Zar. I am alone---and now be just, my heart!
 And tell me, wilt thou dare betray thy God?
 What am I? What am I about to be?
 Daughter of Lusignan---or wife to Osman?
 Am I a lover most, or most a christian?
 ' Wou'd Selima were come! and yet 'tis just,

D 2

' All

‘ All friends shou’d fly her who forsakes herself.
 What shall I do?---What heart has strength to bear
 These double weights of duty?---Help me heaven!
 To thy hard laws I render up my soul:
 But, Oh! demand it back---for now ’tis Osman’s.

Enter Osman.

Ofm. Shine out, appear, be found, my lovely Zara!
 Impatient eyes attend---the rites expect thee;
 And my devoted heart no longer brooks
 This distance from its soft’ner!---‘ all the lamps
 ‘ Of nuptial love are lighted, and burn pure,
 ‘ As if they drew their brightness from thy blushes:
 ‘ The holy mosque is fill’d with fragrant fumes,
 ‘ Which emulate the sweetness of thy breathing:
 ‘ My prostrate people all confirm my choice,
 ‘ And send their souls to heaven in prayers for blessings.
 ‘ Thy envious rivals, conscious of thy right,
 ‘ Approve superior charms, and join to praise thee;
 ‘ The throne that waits thee, seems to shine more
 richly,
 ‘ As all its gems, with animated lustre,
 ‘ Fear’d to look dim beneath the eyes of Zara!
 Come, my slow love! the ceremonies wait thee;
 Come, and begin from this dear hour my triumph.

Zar. Oh! what a wretch am I; Oh, grief! Oh,
 love!

‘ *Ofm.* Come---come---

‘ *Zar.* Where shall I hide my blushes?

‘ *Ofm.* Blushes? ---here, in my bosom hide’em---

‘ *Zar.* My lord!

Ofm. Nay, Zara---give me thy hand, and come---

Zar. Instruct me, heaven!

What I shou’d say--- Alas! I cannot speak.

Ofm. Away---this modest, sweet reluctant trifling

But doubles my desires, and thy own beauties.

Zar. Ah, me!

Ofm.

Osman. Nay—but thou should'st not be too cruel,

Zar. I can no longer bear it—Oh, my lord—

Osman. Ha!—‘What?—whence?—how?—

Zar. My lord! my sov'reign!

Heav'n knows this marriage wou'd have been a bliss

Above my humble hopes!—yet, witness love!

Not from the grandeur of your throne, that bliss,

But from the pride of calling *Osman* mine.

‘Wou'd you had been no emperor! and I

‘Possess'd of power and charms deserving you!

‘That, slighting *Asia's* thrones, I might alone

‘Have left a proffer'd world, to follow you

‘Through deserts, uninhabited by men,

‘And bless'd with ample room for peace and love:

But, as it is—these christians—

Osman. Christians! What!

How start two images into thy thoughts,

So distant—as the christians and my love!

Zar. That good old christian, rev'rend *Lusignan*,

Now dying, ends his life and woes together.

Osman. Well! let him die—What has thy heart to feel,

Thus pressing, and thus tender, from the death

Of an old wretched christian?—Thank our prophet,

Thou art no christian!—educated here,

Thy happy youth was taught our better faith:

Sweet as thy pity shines, 'tis now mis-tim'd.

What! tho' an aged sufferer dies unhappy,

Why shou'd his foreign fate disturb our joys?

Zar. Sir, if you love me, and wou'd have me think

That I am truly dear—

Osman. Heaven! if I love!—

Zar. Permit me—

Osman. What?

Zar. To desire—

Osman. Speak out.

Zar. The nuptial rites

May be deferr'd till—

Osm. What!—Is that the voice
Of Zara?

Zar. Oh! I cannot bear his frown!

Osm. Of Zara!

Zar. It is dreadful to my heart,
To give you but a seeming cause for anger;
Pardon my grief—Alas! I cannot bear it;
There is a painful terror in your eye
That pierces to my soul—hid from your sight
I go to make a moment's truce with tears,
And gather force to speak of my despair.

[*Exit disordered.*]

Osm. I stand immovable, like senseless marble;
Horror had frozen my suspended tongue;
And an astonish'd silence robb'd my will
Of power to tell her that she shock'd my soul!
Spoke she to me?—Sure I misunderstood her!
Cou'd it be me she left?—What have I seen!

Enter Orafmin.

Orafmin, what a change is here!—She's gone,
And I permitted it, I know not how.

Oraf. Perhaps you but accuse the charming fault
Of innocence, too modest oft in love.

Osm. But why, and whence those tears?—those
looks! that sight!

That grief! so strongly stamp'd on every feature?
If it has been that Frenchman!—What a thought!

How low, how horrid a suspicion that!

'The dreadful flash at once gives light and kills me;

'My too bold confidence repell'd my caution—

'An infidel! a slave!—a heart like mine

'Reduc'd to suffer from so vile a rival!

But tell me, did'st thou mark 'em at their parting?

Did'st thou observe the language of their eyes?

Hide nothing from me—Is my love betray'd?

Tell me my whole disgrace: nay, if thou tremblest,

I hear thy pity speak, though thou art silent.

Oraf. I tremble at the pangs I see you suffer.

Let

Let not your angry apprehension urge
 Your faithful slave to irritate your anguish;
 I did, 'tis true, observe some parting tears;
 But they are tears of charity and grief:
 I cannot think there was a cause deserving
 This agony of passion——

Osmin. Why no——I thank thee——
Orafin, thou art wise! It cou'd not be
 That I should stand expos'd to such an insult.
 Thou know'st, had *Zara* meant me the offence,
 She wants not wisdom to have hid it better:
 How rightly did'st thou judge!—*Zara* shall know it,
 And thank thy honest service——After all,
 Might she not have some cause for tears, which I
 Claim no concern in—but the grief it gives her?
 What an unlikely fear—from a poor slave!
 Who goes to-morrow, and, no doubt, who wishes,
 Nay, resolves to see these climes no more.

Oraf. Why did you, Sir, against our country's
 custom,
 Indulge him with a second leave to come?
 He said, he shou'd return once more to see her.

Osmin. Return! the traitor! he return!—Dares he
 Presume to press a second interview?
 Wou'd he be seen again?—He shall be seen;
 But dead.—I'll punish the audacious slave,
 To teach the faithless fair to feel my anger.
 Be still, my transports; violence is blind:
 I know my heart at once is fierce and weak;
 • I feel that I descend below myself;
 • *Zara* can never justly be suspected;
 • Her sweetness was not formed to cover treason;
 • Yet, *Osman* must not stoop to woman's follies;
 • Their tears, complaints, regrets, and reconcile-
 ments,
 • With all their light, capricious roll of changes,
 • Are arts too vulgar to be tried on me.
 • It wou'd become me better to resume
 • 'The empire of my will.' Rather than fall
 Beneath myself, I must, how dear so'er

It

It costs me, rise—till I look down on Zara!—
 Away—but mark me—these seraglio doors,
 Against all christians be they henceforth shut,
 Close as the dark retreats of silent death.

[Exit Orasmin.

What have I done, just heav'n! thy rage to move,
 That thou shouldst sink me down so low to love?

n

[Exit.

END of the THIRD ACT.

A C T IV.

Zara, Selima.

SELIMA.

AH, Madam! how at once I grieve your fate,
 And how admire your virtue!—Heaven permits,

And heaven will give you strength, to bear misfortune;

To break these chains, so strong and yet so dear.

Zar. Oh, that I could support the fatal struggle!

Sel. Th' Eternal aids your weakness, sees your will,

Directs your purpose, and rewards your sorrows.

Zar. Never had wretch more cause to hope he does.

Sel. What! tho' you here no more behold your father!

There is a Father to be found above,
 Who can restore that father to his daughter.

Zar. But I have planted pain in Osman's bosom;
 He loves me, even to death! and I reward him
 With anguish and despair:—How base! how cruel!

But.

But I deserv'd him not; I shou'd have been
Too happy, and the hand of heav'n repell'd me.

Sel. What! will you then regret the glorious loss,
And hazard thus a vict'ry bravely won?

Zar. Inhuman vict'ry!—thou dost not know
This love so powerful, this sole joy of life,
This first, best hope of earthly happiness,
Is yet less pow'rful in my heart than heaven!
To him who made that heart, I offer it;
There, there, I sacrifice my bleeding passion;
I pour before him ev'ry guilty tear;
I beg him to efface the fond impresson,
And fill with his own image all my soul:
But while I weep and sigh, repent and pray,
Remembrance brings the object of my love,
And ev'ry light illusion floats before him.
I see, I hear him, and again he charms!
Fills my glad soul, and shines 'twixt me and heav'n!
Oh! all ye royal ancestors! Oh, father!
Mother! you christians, and the christians' God!
You who deprive me of this gen'rous lover!
If you permit me not to live for him,
Let me not live at all, and I am bless'd:
• Let me die innocent; let his dear hand
• Close the sad eyes of her he stoop'd to love,
• And I acquit my fate, and ask no more.
• But he forgives me not—regardless now,
• Whether, or how I live, or when I die.
• He quits me, scorns me—and I yet live on,
• And talk of death as distant. ———

Sel. Ah! despair not;
Trust your eternal helper, and be happy.

Zar. Why—what has Osman done, that he
too should not?

Has heaven so nobly form'd his heart to hate it?
Gen'rous and just, beneficent and brave,
Were he but christian—What can man be more?
I wish, methinks, this reverend priest was come
To free me from these doubts, which shake my soul:
Yet know not why I should not dare to hope,

That

That heav'n, whose mercy all confess and feel,
 Will pardon and approve th' alliance wish'd :
 Perhaps it seats me on the throne of Syria,
 To tax my pow'r, for these good christians' comfort.
 Thou know'st the mighty Saladine, who first
 Conquer'd this empire from my father's race,
 Who, like my Osman, charm'd th' admiring world,
 Drew breath, tho' Syrian, from a christian mother.

Scl. What mean you, Madam ! Ah ! you do not
 see —

Zar. Yes, yes—I see it all ; I am not blind :
 I see my country and my race condemn me ;
 I see, that spite of all, I still love Osman.
 What if I now go throw me at his feet,
 And tell him there sincerely what I am ?

Scl. Consider—that might cost your brother's life,
 Expose the christians, and betray you all.

Zar. You do not know the noble heart of Osman.

Scl. I know him the protector of a faith,
 Sworn enemy to ours ;—The more he loves,
 The less will he permit you to profess
 Opinions which he hates : to-night the priest,
 In private introduc'd, attends you here ;
 You promis'd him admission——

Zar. Wou'd I had not !
 I promis'd too to keep this fatal secret ;
 My father's urg'd command requir'd it of me ;
 I must obey, all dangerous as it is :
 Compell'd to silence, Osman is enrag'd,
 Suspicion follows, and I lose his love.

Enter Osman.

Ofm. Madam ! there was a time when my charm'd
 heart
 Made it a virtue to be lost in love ;
 When without blushing I indulg'd my flame,
 And every day still made you dearer to me.
 You taught me, Madam, to believe my love
 Rewarded and return'd—nor was that hope,
 Methinks,

Methinks, too bold for reason. Emperors
 Who chuse to sigh devoted at the feet
 Of beauties, whom the world conceive their slaves,
 Have fortune's claim, at least, to sure success:
 But, 'twere prophane to think of pow'r in love.
 Dear as my passion makes you, I decline
 Possession of her charms, whose heart's another's.
 You will not find me a weak, jealous lover,
 By coarse reproaches giving pain to you,
 And shaming my own greatness—wounded deeply,
 Yet shunning and disdaining low complaint,
 I come—to tell you—

Zar. Give my trembling heart
 A moment's respite—

Osman. ' That unwilling coldness
 ' Is the just prize of your capricious lightness;
 ' Your ready arts may spare the fruitless pains
 ' Of colouring deceit with fair pretences;
 ' I would not wish to hear your slight excuses;
 ' I cherish ignorance to save my blushes.
 Osman in every trial shall remember
 That he is emperor—Whate'er I suffer,
 'Tis due to honour that I give up you,
 And to my injur'd bosom take despair,
 Rather than shamefully possess you sighing,
 Convinc'd those sighs were never meant for me.—
 Go, Madam—you are free—from Osman's pow'r—
 Expect no wrongs, but see his face no more.

Zar. At last, 'tis come—the fear'd, the murd'ring
 moment
 Is come—and I am curs'd by earth and heaven!

[Throws herself on the ground.]

If it is true that I am lov'd no more;—
 If you—

Osman. It is too true, my fame requires it;
 It is too true, that I unwilling leave you:
 That I at once renounce you and adore—
 Zara!—you weep!

Zar. If I am doom'd to lose you,
 If I must wander o'er an empty world,

Unloving

Unloving and unlov'd——Oh ! yet, do justice
 To the afflicted——do not wrong me doubly :
 Punish me, if 'tis needful to your peace,
 But say not, I deserv'd it——' This, at least,
 ' Believe——for, not the greatness of your soul
 ' Is truth more pure and sacred——no regret
 ' Can touch my bleeding heart, for I have lost
 ' The rank of her you raise to share your throne.
 ' I know I never ought to have been there ;
 ' My fate and my defects require I lose you.
 But ah ! my heart was never known to Osman.
 May heav'n that punishes for ever hate me,
 If I regret the loss of aught but you.

Osman. Rise——' rise——This means not love ?

[*Raises her.*]

' *Zar.* Strike——Strike me, heaven !

Osman. What ! is it love to force yourself to wound
 The heart you wish to gladden ?——But I find
 Lovers least know themselves ; for I believ'd,
 That I had taken back the power I gave you ;
 Yet, see !——you did but weep, and have resum'd me !
 Proud as I am——I must confess, one wish
 Evades my power——the blessing to forget you.
Zara——thy tears were form'd to teach disdain,
 That softness can disarm it.——'Tis decreed,
 I must for ever love——but from what cause,
 If thy consenting heart partakes my fires,
 Art thou reluctant to a blessing meant me ?
 Speak ! ' Is it levity——or, is it fear ?

' Fear of a power that, but for blessing thee,
 ' Had, without joy, been painful.'——Is it artifice ?
 Oh ! spare the needless pains——Art was not made
 For *Zara*.——Art, however innocent,
 Looks like deceiving——I abhor'd it ever.

Zar. Alas ! I have no art ; not even enough
 To hide this love and this distress you give me.

Osman. New riddles ! Speak with plainness to my
 soul ;

What can'st thou mean ?

Zar. I have no power to speak it.

Osman.

Osman. Is it some secret dangerous to my stage?
Is it some christian plot grown ripe against me?

Zara. Lives there a wretch so vile as to betray you!
Osman is blest'd beyond the reach of fear:
Fears and misfortunes threaten only *Zara*.

Osman. Why threaten *Zara*?

Zara. Permit me, at your feet,
Thus trembling, to beseech a favour from you.

Osman. A favour!—Oh, you guide the will of *Osman*.

Zara. 'Ah! wou'd to heav'n our duties were united,

' Firm as our thoughts and wishes!'—But this day;
But this one sad, unhappy day, permit me,
Alone, and far-divided from your eye,
To cover my distress, left you, too tender,
Shou'd see and share it with me—from to-morrow,
I will not have a thought conceal'd from you.

' *Osman.* What strange disquiet! from what stranger cause!

' *Zara.* If I am really blest'd with *Osman's* love,
' He will not then refuse this humble prayer.

Osman. If it must be, it must.—Be pleas'd—my will
Takes purpose from your wishes; and consent
Depends not on my choice, but your decree:
Go—but remember how he loves, who thus
Finds a delight in pain, because you give it.

Zara. It gives me more than pain to make you feel it.

Osman. And——can you, *Zara*, leave me?

Zara. Alas! my lord! [*Exit Zara.*]

Osman. [*Alone.*] It shou'd be yet, methinks, too soon to fly me!

Too soon, as yet, to wrong my easy faith.
The more I think, the less I can conceive,
What hidden cause shou'd raise such strange despair!
Now, when her hopes have wings, and ev'ry wish
Is courted to be lively!—When I love,
And joy and empire press her to their bosom;
' When not alone belov'd, but ev'n a lover:

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' Pro-

' Professing and accepting ; bless'd and blessing ;
 ' To see her eyes, through tears, shine mystic love !
 ' 'Tis madness ! and I were unworthy power,
 ' To suffer longer the capricious insult !
 Yet, was I blameless ?—No—I was too rash ;
 I have felt jealousy, and spoke it to her ;
 I have distrusted her—and still she loves :
 Gen'rous atonement that ! ' and 'tis my duty
 ' To expatiate, by a length of soft indulgence,
 ' The transports of a rage, which still was love.
 ' Henceforth, I never will suspect her false ;
 ' Nature's plain power of charming dwells about
 her,
 ' And innocence gives force to ev'ry word.
 ' I owe full confidence to all she looks,
 ' For in her eye shines truth, and ev'ry beam
 ' Shoots confirmation round her.'—I remark'd,
 Ev'n while she wept, her soul a thousand times
 Sprung to her lips, and long'd to leap to mine,
 With honest, ardent utterance of her love.—
 Who can possess a heart, so low, so base,
 To look such tenderness, and yet have none ?

Enter Melidor with Orasmin.

Mel. This letter, great disposer of the world !
 Address'd to Zara, and in private brought,
 Your faithful guards this moment intercepted,
 And humbly offer to your sovereign eye.

Ofm. Come nearer ; give it me.—To Zara—Rise !
 Bring it with speed—Shame on your flatt'ring dis-
 tance.—

[Advancing, and snatching the letter.]

Be honest—and approach me like a subject
 Who serves the prince, yet not forgets the man.

Mel. One of the christian slaves, whom late your
 bounty
 Releas'd from bondage, sought, with heedful guile,
 Unnotic'd to deliver it.—Discover'd
 He waits, in chains, his doom from your decree.

Osmin. Leave me—I tremble, as if something fatal
Were meant me from this letter——shou'd I read it?

Oraf. Who knows: but it contains some happy
truth

That may remove all doubts, and calm your heart?

Osmin. Be it as 'twill—it shall be read—' my hands

• Have apprehension that out-reaches mine!

• Why shou'd they tremble thus?——'Tis done——
and now, [Opens the letter.

Fate be thy call obey'd——Orafmin, mark——

There is a secret passage tow'r'd the mosque;

That way you might escape; and unperceiv'd,

Fly your observers, and fulfil our hope;

Despise the danger, and depend on me,

Who await you, but to die if you deceive.

Hell! tortures! death! and woman!——What,
Orafmin!

Are we awake? Heard'st thou? Can this be Zara?

Oraf. Wou'd I had lost all sense——for what I
heard

Has cover'd my afflicted heart with horror.

Osmin. Thou see'st how I am treated!

Oraf. Monstrous treason!

To an affront like this you cannot——must not

Remain insensible——You who but now,

From the most slight suspicion, felt such pain,

Must, in the horror of so black a guilt,

Find an effectual cure, and banish love.

Osmin. Seek her this instant—go, Orafmin, fly—

Shew her this letter—bid her read and tremble:

Then, in the rising horrors of her guilt,

Stab her unfaithful breast, and let her die.

Say, while thou strik'st——Stay, stay—return and
pity me:

• I will think first a moment; let that christian

• Be first confronted with her—Stay—I will,

• I will—I knew not what!——Wou'd I were dead!

Wou'd I had dy'd, unconscious of this shame!

Oraf. Never did prince receive so bold a wrong.

Osmin. See here detected this infernal secret!

This fountain of her tears, which my weak heart
Mistook for marks of tenderness and pain !
Why ! what a reach has woman to deceive !
Under how fine a veil of grief and fear
Did she propose retirement 'till to-morrow !
And I, blind dotard ! gave the fool's consent,
Sooth'd her, and suffer'd her to go !—She parted,
Dissolv'd in tears ; and parted to betray me !

Oraf. Reflection serves but to confirm her guilt.
At length resume yourself ; awaken thought ;
Assert your greatness ; and resolve like Osinan.
Osm. Nerestan, too—Was this the boasted honour

Of that proud christian, whom Jerusalem
Grew loud in praising ! whose half-envy'd virtue
I wonder'd at myself ; and felt disdain
To be but equal to a christian's greatness !
And does he thank me thus ; base infidel !
Honest, pretending, pious, praying, villain !
Yet Zara is a thousand times more base,
More hypocrite than he ?—a slave ! a wretch !
So low, so lost, that ev'n the vilest labours,
In which he lay condemn'd, could never sink him
Beneath his native infamy—Did she not know
What I have done, what suffer'd—for her sake ?

Oraf. Cou'd you, my gracious Lord ! forgive my
zeal,

You wou'd—

Osm. I know it—Thou art right—I'll see her—
I'll tax her in thy presence ;—I'll upbraid her—
I'll let her learn—Go—find, and bring her to me.

Oraf. Alas, my lord ! disorder'd as you are,
What can you wish to say ?

Osm. I know not, now :—
But I resolve to see her—lest she think
Her falsehood has, perhaps, the power to grieve me

Oraf. Believe me, Sir, your threatenings, your
complaints,
What will they all produce, but Zara's tears
To quench this fancy'd anger ! your lost heart,
Seduc'd

Seduc'd against itself, will search but reasons
 To justify the guilt, which gives it pain :
 Rather conceal from Zara this discovery ;
 And let some trusty slave convey the letter,
 Reclos'd, to her own hand—then shall you learn,
 Spite of her frauds, disguise and artifice,
 The firmness, or abasement of her soul.

Ofm. Thy counsel charms me ! We'll about it now.

'Twill be some recompence, at least, to see

Her blushes when detected.——

Oraf. Oh, my lord !

I doubt you in the trial——for your heart——

Ofm. Distrust me not—my love, indeed, is weak,

But honour and disdain, more strong than Zara.

Here, take this fatal letter—chuse a slave

Whom yet she never saw, and who retains

His tried fidelity—Dispatch—be gone——

[*Exit Orafmin.*]

Now, whither shall I turn my eyes and steps,

The surest way to shun her : and give time

For this discovering trial ?——Heav'n ! she's here !

Enter Zara.

So, Madam ! fortune will befriend my cause,
 And free me from your fetters.—You are met

Most aptly, to dispel a new-ris'n doubt,

That claims the finest of your arts to gloss it.

Unhappy each by other, it is time

To end our mutual pain, that both may rest :

You want not generosity, but love ;

My pride forgotten, my obtruded throne,

My favours, cares, respect, and tenderness,

Touching your gratitude, provok'd regard ;

'Till, by a length of benefits besieg'd,

Your heart submitted, and you thought 'twas love :

But you deceiv'd yourself, and injur'd me.

There is, I'm told, an object more deserving

Your love than *Ofman*—I wou'd know his name :

Be just, nor trifle with my anger : tell me

10

E 3

Now

Now, while expiring pity struggles faint;
 While I have yet, perhaps, the pow'r to pardon:
 Give up the bold invader of my claim,
 And let him die to save thee. Thou art known;
 Think and resolve——While I yet speak, renounce
 him;

While yet the thunder rolls suspended, stay it;
 Let thy voice charm me, and recall my soul
 That turns averse, and dwells no more on Zara.

Zar. Can it be *Osman* speaks? and speaks to *Zara*?
 Learn, cruel! learn, that this afflicted heart;
 This heart which heaven delights to prove by tor-
 tures,

Did it not love, has pride and pow'r to shun you.

‘ Alas! you will not know me! What have I

‘ To fear, but that unhappy love you question?

‘ That love which only cou'd outweigh the shame

‘ I feel, while I descend to weep my wrongs.

I know not whether heaven, that frowns upon me,

Has destin'd my unhappy days for yours;

But be my fate, or bless'd, or curs'd, I swear

By honour, dearer ev'n than life or love,

Cou'd *Zara* be but mistress of herself,

She wou'd, with cold regard, look down on kings,

And, you alone excepted, fly 'em all.

‘ Wou'd you learn more, and open all my heart?

‘ Know then, that, spite of this renew'd injustice,

‘ I do not——cannot wish to love you less:

‘ That, long before you look'd so low as *Zara*,

‘ She gave her heart to *Osman*; yours, before

‘ Your benefits had bought her, or your eye

‘ Had thrown distinction round her; never had,

‘ Nor ever will acknowledge other lover.——

And to this sacred truth, attesting heaven,

I call thy dreadful notice! If my heart

Deserves reproach, 'tis for, but not from *Osman*.

Osman. ‘ What! does the yet presume to swear sin-
 cerity!

Oh! boldness of unblushing perjury!

Had I not seen; had I not read such proof

Of

Of her light falsehood as extinguish'd doubt,
I cou'd not be a man, and not believe her.

Zar. Alas, my lord ! what cruel fears have seiz'd
you ?

What harsh, mysterious words were those I heard ?

Osmin. What fears should Osmin feel, since Zara
loves him ?

Zar. I cannot live and answer to your voice
In that reproachful tone ; you angry eye
Trembles with fury while you talk of love.

Osmin. Since Zara loves him !

Zar. Is it possible
Osmin should disbelieve it ?—Again, again
Your late-repent'd violence returns—

Alas ! what killing frowns you dart against me !
Can it be kind ? Can it be just to doubt me ?

Osmin. No ; I can doubt no longer—You may re-
tire. [Exit Zara.]

Re-enter Orasmin.

Orasmin, she's perfidious, even beyond
Her sex's undiscover'd power of seeming ;

• She's at the topmost point of shameless artifice ;
• An empress at deceiving ! Soft and easy,
• Destroying like a plague, in calm tranquility :
• She's innocent, she swears—so is the fire ;
• It shines in harmless distance, bright and pleasing,
• Consuming nothing till it first embraces.

Say ; hast thou chos'n a slave ?—Is he instructed ?
Haste do detect her villainess and my wrongs.

Orasmin. Punctual I have obey'd your whole com-
mand :

But have you arm'd, my lord, your injur'd heart
With coldness and indiff'rence ? Can you bear,
All painless and unmov'd the false one's shame ?

Osmin. Orasmin, I adore her more than ever.

Orasmin. My lord ! my emperor ! forbid it, heaven !

• *Osmin.* I have discern'd a gleam of distant hope ;
• This hateful christian, the light growth of France,

noted

Proud

Proud, young, vain, amorous, conceited, rash,
 Has misconceiv'd some charitable glance,
 And judg'd it love in Zara: he alone,
 Then, has offended me. Is it her fault,
 If those she charms are indiscreet and daring?
 Zara, perhaps, expected not this letter;
 And I with rashness, groundless as its writer's,
 Took fire at my own fancy, and have wrong'd her.
 Now hear me with attention—Soon as night
 Has thrown her welcome shadows o'er the palace;
 When this Nereestan, this ungrateful christian,
 Shall lurk in expectation near our walls,
 Be watchful that our guards surprize and seize him;
 Then, bound in fetters and o'erwhelm'd with shame,
 Conduct the daring traitor to my presence:—
 But, above all, be sure you hurt not Zara;
 Mindful to what supreme excess I love.

[Exit Orasmin.]

On this last trial all my hopes depend;
 Prophet, for once thy kind assistance lend,
 Dispell the doubts that rack my anxious breast,
 If Zara's innocent, thy Osman's blest.

[Exit.]

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

A C T V.

Zara and Selima.

ZARA.

SOOTH me no longer, with this vain desire;
 To a recluse like me, who dares henceforth,
 Presume admission!—the seraglio's shut—
 Barr'd and impassable,—as death to time!
 My brother ne'er must hope to see me more:
 How now! what unknown slave acts thus here!

Enter

Enter

Enter Melidor.

Mel. This letter, trusted to my hands, receive,
In secret witness, I am wholly yours.

[Zara reads the letter.]

Sel. *[Aside.]* Thou everlasting ruler of the world!
Shed thy wish'd mercy on our hopeless tears;
Redeem us from the hands of hated infidels,
And save my princess from the breast of Osman.

Zar. I wish, my friend, the comfort of your council.

Sel. Retire---you shall be call'd---wait near---Go,
leave us; *[Exit Mel.]*

Zar. Read this---and tell me what I ought to answer?

For I would gladly hear my brother's voice.

Sel. Say rather you would hear the voice of heav'n,
'Tis not your brother calls you, but your god.

Zar. I know it, nor resist his awful will;
Thou know'st that I have bound my soul by oath?
But can I---ought I---to engage myself,
My brother, and the christians in this danger?

Sel. 'Tis not their danger that alarms your fears;
Your love speaks loudest to your shrinking soul;
' I know your heart of strength to hazard all,
' But it has let in traitors, who surrender
' On poor pretence of safety:---Learn at least,
' To understand the weakness that deceives you:
' You tremble to offend your haughty lover,
' Whom wrongs, and outrage, but endear the more;
' Yes---you are blind to Osman's cruel nature,
' That Tatar's fierceness, that obscures his bounties;
This tyger, savage in his tenderness,
Courts with contempt, and threatens amidst softness;
Yet, cannot your neglected heart efface
His fated, fix'd impression!

Zar. What reproach
Can I with justice make him?---I indeed,
Have given him cause to hate me!---

Was not his throne, was not his temple ready?

Did

Did he not court his slave to be a queen,
 And have not I declin'd it?—I who ought
 To tremble, conscious of affronted power!
 Have not I triumph'd o'er his pride and love?
 Seen him submit his own high will to mine,
 And sacrifice his wishes, to my weakness?

Sel. "Talk we no more of this unhappy passion:
 What resolution will your virtue take?"

Zar. All things combine to sink me to despair:
 From the seraglio, death alone will free me.

I long to see the christians' happy climes;
 Yet in the moment, while I form that prayer,
 I sigh a secret wish to languish here:

How sad a state is mine! my restless soul

All ign'rant what to do, or what to wish?

My only perfect sense is, that of pain.

Oh, guardian heav'n! protect my brother's life:

For I will meet him; and fulfil his prayer,

Then, when from Solyma's unfriendly walls,

His absence shall unbind his sister's tongue,

Osman shall learn the secret of my birth,

My faith unshaken and my deathless love;

He will approve my choice, and pity me.

I'll send my brother word, he may expect me:

Call in the faithful slave—God of my fathers!

[*Exit Selima.*]

Let thy hand save me, and thy will direct.

Enter Selima, and Melidor.

Go—tell the christian who intrusted thee,
 That Zara's heart is fix'd, nor shrinks at danger;
 And that my faithful friend will at the hour,
 Expect, and introduce him to his wish.

Away—the sultan comes; he must not find us.

[*Exeunt Zara and Selima.*]

Enter Osman and Orasmin.

Os. Swifter ye hours move on; my fury glows

Im-

Impatient, and wou'd push the wheels of time
How now ! What message dost thou bring ? Speak
boldly—

What answer gave she to the letter sent her ?

Mel. She blush'd and trembled, and grew pale,
and paus'd.

Then blush'd, and read it ; and again grew pale ;
And wept, and smil'd, and doubted, and resolv'd :
For after all this race of varied passions,
When she had sent me out, and call'd me back,
Tell him (she cry'd) who has intrusted thee,
That Zara's heart is fix'd, nor shrinks at danger ;
And that my faithful friend will, at the hour,
Expect, and introduce him to his wish

Osm. Enough---begone---I have no ear for more.---

[*To the slave.*

Leave me, thou too, Orafmin.---Leave me life,
[*To Orafmin.*

For ev'ry mortal aspect moves my hate :

Leave me to my distraction---I grow mad,

' And cannot bear the visage of a friend.

' Leave me to rage, despair, and shame, and wrongs ;

' Leave me to seek my self---and shun mankind.

[*Ex. Oraf.*

Who am I !---Heav'n ! Who am I ? What resolve ?

Zara ! Nerestan ! found these words like names

Decreed to join ?---Why pause I ?---Perish Zara---

Wou'd I cou'd tear her image from my heart---

' 'Twere happier not to live at all, than live

' Her scorn, the sport of an ungrateful false one !

' And sink the foreign, in a woman's property.

Re-ent' Orafmin.

Orafmin !---Friend ! return, I cannot bear

This absence from thy reason : 'twas unkind,

'Twas cruel to obey me, thus distress'd,

And wanting pow'r to think, when I had lost thee.

How goes the hour ? Has he appear'd ? This rival !

Perish the shameful found---This villain christian !

Has

Has he appear'd below?

Orafm. Silent and dark,
Th' unbreathing world is hush'd, as if it heard,
And listened to your sorrows.

Osm. Oh, treach'rous night!
Thou lend'st thy ready veil to ev'ry treason,
And teeming mischiefs thrive beneath thy shade.

' *Orafmin,* prophet, reason, truth, and love!

' After such length of benefits, to wrong me!

' How have I over-rated, how mistaken,

' The merit of her beauty, !—Did I not

' Forget I was a monarch? Did I remember

' That Zara was a slave?—I gave up all;

' Gave up tranquility, distinction, pride,

' And fell the shameful victim of my love!

' *Oraf.* Sir, sovereign, sultan, my imperial master!

' Reflect on your own greatness,

' The distant provocation.

Osm. Hark! Heard'st thou nothing?

Oraf. My lord?

Osm. A voice, like dying groans?

Oraf. I listen, but can hear nothing.

Osm. Again!—look out—he comes—

Oraf. Nor tread of mortal foot—nor voice I here:]

The still seraglio lies, profoundly plung'd

In death-like silence! nothing stir.—The air

Is soft, as infant sleep, no breathing wing

Steals thro' the shadows, to awaken night.

Osm. Horrors a thousand times more dark than
these,

Benight my suffering soul.—Thou dost not know

To what excess of tenderness I lov'd her:

I knew no happiness, but what she gave me,

Nor cou'd have felt a mis'ry but for her!

Pity this weakness—mine are tears, *Orafmin!*

That fall not oft, nor lightly.—

Oraf. Tears!—Oh, heaven!

' *Osm.* The first which ever yet unmann'd my
Eyes!

' Oh! pity Zara—pity me—*Orafmin,*

' These

' These but forerun the tears of destin'd blood.

Oraf. Oh, my unhappy lord !——I tremble for you——

Osm. Do—tremble at my sufferings, at my love ;
At my revenge too, tremble——for 'tis due,
And will not be deluded.

Oraf. Hark ! I hear

The steps of men, along the neighb'ring wall !

Osm. Fly—seize him——'tis Nerestan ! Wait no chains,

But drag him down to my impatient eye.

[*Exit Orafmin.*]

Enter Zara, and Selima, in the dark.

Zar. Where art thou, Selima ? Give me thy hand.
It is so dark, I tremble as I step,
With fears and startings, never felt 'till now !

Osm. Damnation ! 'tis her voice ! the well-known sound,

That has so often charm'd me into baseness !

' Oh, the perfidious hypocrite !——she goes

' To meet th' inviting infidel !——now, now,

[*Drawing a dagger.*]

Revenge stand firm, and intercept his wishes,—
Revenge ! On whom ?—No matter—Earth and heaven
Wou'd blush, shou'd I forbear : now---Zara, now ;

[*Drops the dagger.*]

I must not, cannot strike, the starting steel,
Unwilling, flies my hand, and shuns to wound her.

Zar. This is the private path---come nearer, lead me——

Are we not notic'd, think'st thou ?

Sel. Fear not, Madam ;

It cannot now be long, ere we shall meet him.

Osm. That word—has given me back my ebbing rage——

[*Recovers the dagger.*]

Zar. I walk in terror, and my heart forebodes.

Who's there !---Nerestan ! Is it you ?---O welcome---

Osm. [*Stabbing her.*] This to thy heart--- 'Tis not the traitor meets thee,

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'Tis

'Tis the betray'd---who writes it in thy blood.

Zar. Oh, gracious heaven! receive my parting soul,
And take thy trembling servant to thy mercy-----

[Dies.

Of. Soul!---then revenge has reach'd thee---I will
now,

Haste from this fatal place---I cannot leave her!

Whom did I strike? Was this the act of love?

Swallow me, earth!---She's silent---Zara's dead!

And shou'd I live to see returning day,

'Twill shew me but her blood!---shew me left joyless,

In a wide, empty world, with nothing round me,

But penitence and pain---And yet, 'twas just:---

Hark!---Destiny has sent her lover to me,

To fill my vengeance, and restore my joy.

Enter Orafmin with Nerestan.

Approach, thou wretch! thou more than curs'd! come
near-----

Thou who, in gratitude for freedom gain'd,

Hast giv'n me miseries beyond thy own!

Thou heart of hero with a traitor's soul!

'Go---reap thy due reward, prepare to suffer,

'Whate'er inventive malice can inflict,

'To make thee feel thy death, and perish slow.

Are my commands obey'd?

Oraf. All is prepar'd.

Ofm. Thy wanton eyes look round, in search of her

Whose love, descending to a slave like thee,

From my dishonour'd hand receiv'd her doom.

See! where she lies-----

Ner. Oh, fatal, rash mistake!

Ofm. Dost thou behold her, slave?

Ner. Unhappy sister!

Ofm. Sister!---Didst thou say sister? If thou
did'st,

Bless me with deafness, heaven!

Ner. Tyrant! I did-----

She was my sister---All that now is left thee,

Dispatch——From my distracted heart drain next
The remnant of the royal christian blood :

Old Lufignan, expiring in my arms,
Sent his too wretched son, with his last blessing,
To his now murder'd daughter !——

Wou'd I had seen the bleeding innocent !
I wou'd have liv'd to speak to her in death ;
Wou'd have awaken'd in her languid heart,
A livelier sense of her abandon'd God :

That God, who left by her, forsook her too,
And gave the poor lost sufferer to thy rage.

Ofm. Thy sister !—Lufignan her father—Selima !
Can this be true ?—and have I wrong'd thee, Zara ?

Sel. Thy love was all the cloud, 'twixt her and
heav'n !

Ofm. Be dumb——for thou art base, to add distraction

To my already more than bleeding heart.
And was thy love sincere ?—What then remains ?

Ner. Why shou'd a tyrant hesitate on murder !
There now remains but mine, of all the blood,
Which, through thy father's cruel reign, and thine,
Has never ceas'd to stream on Syria's lands.

Restore a wretch to his unhappy race ;
Nor hope that torments, after such a scene,
Can force one feeble groan, to feast thy anger.

I waste my fruitless words in empty air ;
The tyrant, o'er the bleeding wound he made,
Hangs his unmoving eye, and heeds not me.

Ofm. Oh, Zara !——

Oras. Alas, my lord, return——whither wou'd
grief

Transport your gen'rous heart ?—This christian dog--

Ofm. Take off his fetters, and observe my will :
To him and all his friends give instant liberty :
Pour a profusion of the richest gifts

On these unhappy christians ; and when heap'd
With vary'd benefits, and charg'd with riches,
Give 'em safe conduct to the nearest port.

Oras. But, Sir——

Ofm. Reply not, but obey.——

Fly—nor dispute thy master's last command,
Thy prince, who orders—and thy friend, who loves
thee !

Go—lose no time—farewel—begone—and thou !

Unhappy warrior !—yet less lost than I——

Haste from our bloody land—and to thy own,

Convey this poor, pale object of my rage.

Thy king, and all his christians; when they hear

Thy miseries, shall mourn 'em with their tears ;

But, if thou tell'st 'em mine, and tell'st 'em truly,

They who shall hate my crime, shall pity me.

Take, too, this poniard with thee, which my hand

Has stain'd with blood, far dearer than my own ;

Tell 'em—with this, I murder'd her I lov'd ;

The noblest and most virtuous among women !

The soul of innocence, and pride of truth ?

Tell 'em, I laid my empire at her feet :

Tell 'em I plung'd my dagger in her blood ;

Tell 'em, I so ador'd—and thus reveng'd her.

[Stabs himself.]

Rev'rence this hero—and conduct him safe. *[Dies.]*

Ner. Direct me, great inspirer of the soul !

How shou'd act I, how judge in this distress ?

Amazing grandeur ! and detested rage !

Ev'n I, amidst my tears, admire this foe,

And mourn his death, who liv'd to give me woe.

END of the FIFTH ACT.

E P I-

E P I L O G U E.

HERE, take a surfeit, Sirs, of being jealous,
 And shun the pains that plague those Turkish fel-
 lows:

Where love and death join hands, their darts confound-
 ing:

Save us, good heaven, from this new way of wounding.
 Curs'd climate! where to cards a lone-left woman
 Has only one of her black guards to summon!
 Sighs, and fits mop'd, with her tame beast to gaze at:
 And that cold treat, is all the game she plays at!
 For, should she once some abler hand be trying,
 Poniard's the word! and the first deal is---dying!

'Slife! shou'd the bloody whim get ground in Britain,
 Where woman's freedom has such heights, to sit on;
 Dagger, provok'd, would bring on desolation:
 And murder'd belles unpeople half the nation!—

Fain wou'd I hope this play, to move compassion;
 And live, to hunt suspicion out of fashion.—
 Four motives, strongly recommend the lovers,
 Hate of this weakness, that our scene discovers.

First then---A woman will, or won't---depend on't:
 If she will do't, she will:---and, there's an end on't.
 But, if she won't---since safe and sound your trust is,
 Fear is affront: and jealousy injustice.

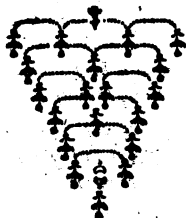
Next,---he who bids his dear do what she pleases,
 Blunts wedlock's edge; and all its torture eases:
 For---not to feel your suff'rings, is the same,
 As not to suffer:---All the diff'rence---name.

Thirdly---The jealous husband wrongs his honour;
 No wife goes lame, without some hurt upon her:

And

*And the malicious world will still be guessing,
Who oft dines out, dislikes her own cook's dressing.*

*Fourth, and lastly,---to conclude my lecture,
If you wou'd fix th' inconstant wife---respect her.
She who perceives her virtues over-rated,
Will fear to have th' account more justly stated:
And borrowing, from her pride, the good wife's seeming,
Grow really such---to merit your esteeming.*



ERVED.

Scene



Theatre de la 1776.

Gilbert sculp.

ter of JAFFIER & BELVIDERA.
Tells out for Death.

BELL'S EDITION.

VENICE PRESERV'D;

O R,

A Plot Discover'd.

A TRAGEDY, by Mr. THOMAS OTWAY.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane.

Regulated from the Prompt-Book,

By PERMISSION of the MANAGERS,

By Mr. HOPKINS, Prompter.



L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN BELL, near Exeter-Exchange, in the Strand,
and C. ETHERINGTON, at York.

MDCCLXXVI.

To FR GRACE the
D U C H E S S of *Portsmouth*.

MADAM,

WERE it possible for me to let the world know, how entirely your Grace's goodness has devoted a poor man to your service : were there words enough in speech to express the mighty sense I have of your great bounty towards me ; surely I should write and talk of it for ever : but your Grace has given me so large a theme, and laid so very vast a foundation, that Imagination wants stock to build upon it. I am as one dumb, when I would speak of it ; and, when I strive to write, I want a scale of thought sufficient to comprehend the height of it. Forgive me then, madam, if (as a poor peasant once made a present of an apple to an Emperor) I bring this small tribute, the humble growth of my little garden, and lay it at your feet. Believe it is paid you with the utmost gratitude : believe, that, so long as I have thought to remember how very much I owe your generous nature, I will ever have a heart that shall be grateful for it too. Your Grace, next heaven, deserves it amply from me : that gave me life, but on a hard condition, till your extended favour taught me to prize the gift, and took the heavy burthen it was clogged with from me, I mean hard fortune. When I had enemies, that with malicious power kept back and shaded me from those royal beams, whose warmth is all I have, or hope to live by ; your noble pity and compassion found me, where I was cast backward from my blessing, down in the rear of fortune, called me up, placed me in the shine, and I have felt its comfort. You have

in

in that restored me to my native right : for a steady faith, and loyalty to my Prince, was all the inheritance my father left me ; and, however hardly my ill fortune deal with me, 'tis what I prize so well, that I never pawn'd it yet, and hope I shall never part with it. Nature and Fortune were certainly in league, when you were born ; and as the first took care to give you beauty enough to enslave the hearts of all the world ; so the other resolv'd to do its merit justice, that none but a monarch fit to rule the world should e'er possess it ; and in it he had an empire. The young prince you have given him, by his blooming virtues, early declares the mighty stock he came from : and as you have taken all the pious care of a dear mother, and a prudent guardian, to give him a noble and generous education ; may it succeed according to his merits and your wishes : may he grow up to be a bulwark to his illustrious father, and a patron to his loyal subjects ; with wisdom and learning to assist him, whenever called to his councils ; to defend his right against the incroachments of republicans in his senates ; to cherish such men as shall be able to vindicate the royal cause ; that good and fit servants to the crown may never be lost, for want of a protector. May he have courage and conduct fit to fight his battles abroad, and terrify his rebels at home : and, that all these may be yet more sure, may he never, during the spring-time of his years, when those growing virtues ought with care to be cherished in order to their ripening, may he never meet with vicious natures, or the tongues of faithless, sordid, insipid flatterers, to blast 'em. To conclude, may he be as great as the hand of Fortune (with his honour) shall be able to make him ; and may your Grace, who are so good a mistress, and so noble a patroness, never meet with a less grateful servant, than,

Madam,

Your Grace's

Intirely devoted Creature,

THO. OTWAY.

P R O L O G U E.

IN these distracted times, when each man dreads
 The bloody stratagems of busy heads :
 When we had fear'd three years we know not what,
 'Till witnesses began to die o' th' rot ;
 What made our poet meddle with a plot ?
 Was't that he fancy'd for the very sake
 And name of plot, his trifling play might take ?
 For there's not in't one inch-board evidence ;
 But 'tis' he says, to reason plain and sense ;
 And that he thinks a plausible defence.
 Were truth by sense and reason to be try'd,
 Sure all our swearers might be laid aside.
 No ; of such tools our author has no need,
 To make his plot, or make his play succeed ;
 He of Black Bills has no prodigious tales,
 Or Spanish pilgrims cast ashore in Wales :
 Here's not one murder'd magistrate, at least,
 Kept rank, like ven'son for a city feast,
 Grown four days stiff, the better to prepare
 And fit his pliant limbs to ride in chair.
 Yet here's an army rais'd, tho' under ground,
 But no man seen, nor one commission found :
 Here is a trypster too, that's very old,
 Turbulent, subtle, mischievous, and bold,
 Bloody, revengful, and—to crown his part,
 Loves fumbling with a wench with' all his heart :
 'Till, after having many changes past,
 In spite of age (thanks t' heav'n) is hang'd at last ;
 Next is a senator that keeps a whore,
 In Venice none a higher office bore,
 To lewdness ev'ry night the leacher ran ;
 Shew me, all London, such another man ;
 Match him at Mother Creswell's, if you can.
 O Poland ! Poland ! had it been thy lot
 T' have heard in time of this Venetian plot,
 Thou surely chosen hadst one king from thence,
 And honour'd them, as thou hast England since.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M E N.

	<i>Covent-garden.</i>	<i>Drury-lane.</i>
Duke of Venice	Mr. Mahon.	Mr. Bransby.
Priuli, father of <i>Belvidera</i> -	Mr. Hull.	Mr. Aickin.
Bedamar, the <i>Spa-</i> <i>nish ambassador</i> -	Mr. L'Estrange.	Mr. Packer.
Jaffier, married to <i>Belvidera</i> -	Mr. Barry.	Mr. Reddish.
Pierre, friend to <i>Jaffier</i> -	Mr. Sheridan.	Mr. Bensley.
Conspirators. {	Renault -	Mr. Clarke.
	Elliott -	Mr. Fox.
	Spinosa -	Mr. Thompson.
	Theodore -	Mr. Young.
		Mr. Jefferson.
		Mr. Wrighten.
		Mr. Wright.
		Mr. Griffith.

W O M E N.

Belvidera, daugh- ter to Priuli, married to Jaffier	} Mrs. Barry.	Miss Young.
---	---------------	-------------

Two women, attendants on Belvidera.

The council of ten.

Officer, guard, friar, executioner, and rabble.

VENICE

VENICE PRESERV'D:

OR,

A PLOT DISCOVER'D.

A C T I.

SCENE, *a Street in Venice.*

Enter Priuli and Jaffier.

P R I U L I.

NO more! I'll hear no more! Begone and leave me.

Jaff. Not hear me! By my sufferings but you shall!
My lord, my lord! I'm not that abject wretch
You think me. Patience! where's the distance throw
Me back so far, but I may boldly speak
In right, tho' proud oppression will not hear me?

Pri. Have you not wrong'd me?

Jaff. Could my nature e'er
Have brook'd injustice, or the doing wrong,
I need not now thus low have bent myself
To gain a hearing from a cruel father.
Wrong'd you!

Pri. Yes, wrong'd me! In the nicest point,
The honour of my house, you've done me wrong.
You may remember (for I now will speak,

And

And urge its baseness) when you first came home
 From travel, with such hopes as made you look'd on,
 By all men's eyes, a youth of expectation;
 Pleas'd with your growing virtue, I receiv'd you;
 Courted, and sought to raise you to your merits:
 My house, my table, nay, my fortune too,
 My very self was yours; you might have us'd me
 To your best service; like an open friend
 I treated, trusted you, and thought you mine:
 When, in requital of my best endeavours,
 You treacherously practis'd to undo me;
 Seduc'd the weakness of my age's darling,
 My only child, and stole her from my bosom.
 Oh! Belvidera!

Jaff. 'Tis to me you owe her:
 Childless you had been else, and in the grave
 Your name extinct; no more Priuli heard of.
 You may remember, scarce five years are past,
 Since in your brigantine you sail'd to see
 The Adriatick wedded by our Duke;
 And I was with you: your unskilful pilot
 Dash'd us upon a rock; when to your boat
 You made for safety: enter'd first your self;
 Th' affrighted Belvidera, following next,
 As she stood trembling on the vessel's side,
 Was by a wave wash'd off into the deep:
 When instantly I plung'd into the sea,
 And buffeting the billows to her rescue,
 Redeem'd her life with half the loss of mine.
 Like a rich conquest, in one hand I bore her,
 And with the other dash'd the saucy waves,
 That throng'd and press'd to rob me of my prize.
 I brought her, gave her to your despairing arms:
 Indeed you thank'd me; but a nobler gratitude
 'Rose in her soul: for from that hour she lov'd me,
 'Till for her life she paid me with herself.

Pri. You stole her from me; like a thief you stole
 At dead of night; that cursed hour you chose [her,
 To rife me of all my heart held dear.
 May all your joys in her prove false, like mine;

A ste-

A sterile fortune, and a barren bed,
Attend you both; continual discord make
Your days and nights bitter and grievous still:
May the hard hand of a vexatious need
Oppress and grind you; till at last you find
The curse of disobedience all your portion.

Jaff. Half of your curse you have bestow'd in vain;
Heav'n has already crown'd our faithful loves
With a young boy, sweet as his mother's beauty:
May he live to prove more gentle than his grandfire,
And happier than his father.

Pri. Rather live
To bate thee for his bread, and din your ears
With hungry cries; whilst his unhappy mother
Sits down and weeps in bitterness of want.

Jaff. You talk as if 'twould please you.

Pri. 'Twould, by heav'n!
' Once she was dear indeed; the drops that fell
' From my sad heart, when she forgot her duty,
' The fountain of my life was not so precious—
' But she is gone, and, if I am a man,
' I will forget her.

Jaff. Would I were in my grave!

Pri. And she too with thee:
For, living here, you're but my curs'd remembrancer,
I once was happy.

Jaff. You use me thus, because you know my soul
Is fond of Belvidera. You perceive
My life feeds on her, therefore thus you treat me.
Oh! could my soul ever have found satiety;
Were I that thief, the doer of such wrongs
As you upbraid me with, what hinders me
But I might send her back to you with contumely,
And court my fortune where she would be kinder?

Pri. You dare not do't.

Jaff. Indeed, my Lord, I dare not.
My heart, that awes me, is too much my master:
Three years are past, since first our vows were plighted,
During which time, the world must bear me witness,
I've treated Belvidera like your daughter,

The

The daughter of a senator of Venice :
 Distinction, place, attendance, and observance,
 Due to her birth, she always has commanded.
 Out of my little fortune I've done this ;
 Because (tho' hopeless e'er to win your nature)
 The world might see I lov'd her for herself ;
 Not as the heiress of the great Priuli.

Pri. No more.

Jaff. Yes, all, and then adieu for ever.
 There's not a wretch, that lives on common charity,
 But's happier than me : for I have known
 The luscious sweets of plenty ; every night
 Have slept with soft content about my head,
 And never wak'd, but to a joyful morning :
 Yet now must fall, like a full ear of corn,
 Whose blossom 'scap'd, yet's wither'd in the ripening.

Pri. Home, and be humble ; study to retrench ;
 Discharge the lazy vermin of thy hall,
 Those pageants of thy folly :
 Reduce the glitt'ring trappings of thy wife
 To humble weeds, fit for thy little state :
 Then, to some suburb cottage both retire ;
 Drudge to feed loathsome life ; get brats and starve—
 Home, home, I say.— [Exit.

Jaff. Yes, if my heart would let me——
 This proud, this swelling heart : home I would go,
 But that my doors are hateful to my eyes,
 Fill'd and damm'd up with gaping creditors.
 I've now not fifty ducats in the world,
 Yet still I am in love, and pleas'd with ruin.
 Oh ! Belvidera ! Oh ! she is my wife——
 And we will bear our wayward fate together,
 But ne'er know comfort more.

Enter Pierre.

Pier. My friend, good-morrow.
 How fares the honest partner of my heart ?
 What, melancholy ! not a word to spare me !

Jaff. I'm thinking, Pierre, how that damn'd starving
 Call'd honesty, got footing in the world. [quality,
Pier.

Pier. Why, powerful villany first set it up,
For its own ease and safety. Honest men
Are the soft easy cushions on which knaves
Repose and fatten. Were all mankind villains,
They'd starve each other; lawyers would want practice,
Cut-throats rewards: each man would kill his brother
Himself; none would be paid or hang'd for murder.
Honesty! 'twas a cheat invented first
To bind the hands of bold deserving rogues,
That fools and cowards might sit safe in power,
And lord it uncontroll'd above their betters.

Jaff. Then honesty is but a notion?

Pier. Nothing else:

Like wit, much talk'd of, not to be defin'd:
He that pretends to most, too, has least share in't.
'Tis a ragged virtue. Honesty! no more on't.

Jaff. Sure thou art honest?

Pier. So, indeed, men think me;
But they are mistaken, Jaffier: I am a rogue
As well as they;
A fine, gay, bold-fac'd villain as thou seest me.
'Tis true, I pay my debts, when they're contracted;
I steal from no man; would not cut a throat
To gain admission to a great man's purse,
Or a whore's bed; I'd not betray my friend
To get his place or fortune; I scorn to flatter
A blown-up fool above, to crush the wretch beneath
Yet, Jaffier, for all this I am a villain. [me;

Jaff. A villain!

Pier. Yes, and a most notorious villain;
To see the sufferings of my fellow-creatures,
And own myself a man: to see our senators
Cheat the deluded people with a shew
Of liberty, which yet they ne'er must taste of.
'They say, by them our hands are free from fetters;
Yet whom they please they lay in basest bonds;
Bring whom they please to infamy and sorrow;
Drive us, like wrecks, down the rough tide of power,
Whilst no hold is to save us from destruction.
All that bear this are villains, and I one,
Not to rouse up at that great call of nature,

And

And check the growth of these domestic spoilers,
That make us slaves, and tell us, 'tis our charter.

Jaff. ' Oh, Aquilina! Friend, to lose such beauty,
' The dearest purchase of thy noble labours!
' She was thy right by conquest, as by love.

Pier. ' Oh! Jaffier! I had so fix'd my heart upon
' That, wheresoe'er I fram'd a scheme of life, [her,
' For time to come, she was my only joy,
' With which I wish'd to sweeten future cares:
' I fancy'd pleasures, none, but one that loves
' And doats as I did, can imagine like 'em:
' When in the extremity of all these hopes,
' In the most charming hour of expectation,
' Then, when our eager wishes soar the highest,
' Ready to stoop and grasp the lovely game,
' A haggard owl, a worthless kite of prey,
' With his foul wings, sail'd in, and spoil'd my quarry.

Jaff. ' I know the wretch, and scorn him as thou
hat'st him.

Pier. ' Curse on the common good that's so pro-
tected,

' Where every slave, that heaps up wealth enough
' To do much wrong, becomes the lord of right!
' I, who believ'd no ill could e'er come near me,
' Found in the embraces of my Aquilina
' A wretched, old, but itching senator;
' A wealthy fool, that had bought out my title:
' A rogue that uses beauty like a lamb-skin,
' Barely to keep him warm; that filthy cuckow too
' Was, in my absence, crept into my nest,
' And spoiling all my brood of noble pleasure.

Jaff. ' Did'st thou not chace him thence?

Pier. ' I did, and drove

' The rank old bearded Hirco stinking home.
' The matter was complain'd of in the senate,
' I summon'd to appear, and censur'd basely,
' For violating something they call'd privilege—
' This was the recompence of all my service:
' Would I'd been rather beaten by a coward.
' A soldier's mistress, Jaffier, is his religion;

Whe

‘ When that’s profan’d, all other ties are broken :
 ‘ That even dissolves all former bonds of service ;
 ‘ And from that hour I think myself as free
 ‘ To be the foe, as e’er the friend of Venice—
 ‘ Nay, dear revenge, whene’er thou call’st, I’m ready.

Jaff. I think no safety can be here for virtue,
 And grieve, my friend, as much as thou, to live
 In such a wretched state as this of Venice,
 Where all agree to spoil the public good ;
 And villains fatten with the brave man’s labours.

Pier. We’ve neither safety, unity nor peace, my
 For the foundation’s lost of common good ; [friend,
 Justice is lame, as well as blind, amongst us ;
 The laws (corrupted to their ends that make ’em)
 Serve but for instruments of some new tyranny,
 That every day starts up, t’ enslave us deeper.
 Now could this glorious cause but find out friends
 To do it right, Oh, Jaffier ! then might’st thou
 Not wear those seals of woe upon thy face ;
 The proud Priuli should be taught humanity,
 And learn to value such a son as thou art.
 I dare not speak, but my heart bleeds this moment.

Jaff. Curs’d be the cause, tho’ I, thy friend, be part
 Let me partake the troubles of thy bosom, [on’t :
 For I am us’d to mis’ry, and perhaps
 May find a way to sweeten’t to thy spirit.

Pier. Too soon ’twill reach thy knowledge——

Jaff. Then from thee
 Let it proceed. There’s virtue in thy friendship,
 Would make the saddest tale of sorrow pleasing,
 Strengthen my constancy, and welcome ruin.

Pier. Then, thou art ruin’d !

Jaff. That I long since knew ;
 I and ill-fortune have been long acquainted.

Pier. I pass’d this very moment by thy doors,
 And found them guarded by a troop of villains ;
 The sons of public rapine were destroying.
 They told me, by the sentence of the law,
 They had commission to seize all thy fortune :
 Nay more, Priuli’s cruel hand had sign’d it.

14 VENICE PRESERV'D.

Here stood a ruffian with an horrid face,
 Lording it o'er a pile of massy plate,
 Tumbled into a heap for public sale;
 There was another making villanous jests
 At thy undoing: he had ta'en possession
 Of all thy ancient most domestic ornaments,
 Rich hangings intermix'd and wrought with gold;
 The very bed, which on thy wedding-night
 Receiv'd thee to the arms of Belvidera,
 The scene of all thy joys was violated,
 By the coarse hands of filthy dungeon villains,
 And thrown amongst the common lumber.

Jaff. Now thank heaven——

Pier. Thank heaven! for what?

Jaff. That I'm not worth a ducat. [Venice,

Pier. Curse thy dull stars, and the worst fate of
 Where brothers, friends and fathers are all false;
 Where there's no truth, no trust; where innocence
 Stoops under vile oppression, and vice lords it.
 Hadst thou but seen, as I did, how at last
 Thy beauteous Belvidera, like a wretch
 That's doom'd to banishment, came weeping forth,
 ' Shining thro' tears, like April-suns in showers,
 ' That labour to o'ercome the cloud that loads 'em;
 Whilst two young virgins, on whose arms she lean'd
 Kindly look'd up, and at her grief grew sad,
 As if they catch'd the sorrows that fell from her;
 Ev'n the lewd rabble, that were gather'd round
 To see the sight, stood mute when they beheld her;
 Govern'd their roaring throats, and grumbled pity;
 I could have hugg'd the greasy rogues: they pleas'd me.

Jaff. I thank thee for this story, from my soul;
 Since now I know the worst that can befall me.
 Ah, Pierre! I have a heart that could have borne
 The roughest wrong my fortune could have done me;
 But when I think what Belvidera feels,
 The bitterness her tender spirits taste of,
 I own myself a coward: bear my weakness;
 If, throwing thus my arms about thy neck,
 I play the boy, and blubber in thy bosom.

Oh!

Oh ! I shall drown thee with my sorrows.

Pier. Burn,

First, burn and level Venice to thy ruin.

What ! starve, like beggars brats, in frosty weather,
Under a hedge, and whine ourselves to death !

Thou, or thy cause, shall never want assistance,
Whilst I have blood or fortune fit to serve thee :

Command my heart, thou'rt every way its master.

Jaff. No, there's a secret pride in bravely dying.

Pier. Rats die in holes and corners, dogs run mad ;
Man knows a braver remedy for sorrow ;

Revenge, the attribute of gods ; they stamp'd it,
With their great image, on our natures. Die !

Consider well the cause, that calls upon thee :

And, if thou'rt base enough, die then. Remember,
Thy Belvidera suffers ; Belvidera !

Die——damn first——What ! be decently interr'd

In a church-yard, and mingle thy brave dust

With stinking rogues, that rot in dirty winding-sheets,
Surfeit-slain fools, the common dung o'th' soil !

Jaff. Oh !

Pier. Well said, out with't, swear a little——

Jaff. Swear ! By sea and air ; by earth, by Heav'n
I will revenge my Belvidera's tears. [and hell,
Hark thee, my friend—Priuli—is—a senator.

Pier. A dog.

Jaff. Agreed.

Pier. Shoot him.

Jaff. With all my heart.

No more ; where shall we meet at night ?

Pier. I'll tell thee ;

On the Rialto, every night at twelve,

I take my evening's walk of meditation ;

There we two'll meet, and talk of precious

Mischief——

Jaff. Farewel.

Pier. At twelve.

Jaff. At any hour ; my plagues
Will keep me waking.

Tell me why, good Heaven,

[Exit Pier.

Thou

Thou mad'st me what I am, with all the spirit,
 Aspiring thoughts and elegant desires,
 That fill the happiest man? Ah rather why
 Didst thou not form me sordid as my fate,
 Base-minded, dull, and fit to carry burthens?
 Why have I sense to know the curse that's on me?
 Is this just dealing, Nature? Belvidera!

Enter Belvidera.

Poor Belvidera!

Bel. Lead me, lead me, my virgins,
 To that kind voice. My lord, my love, my refuge!
 Happy my eyes, when they behold thy face!
 My heavy heart will leave its doleful beating
 At sight of thee, and bound with sprightful joys.
 Oh smile! as when our loves were in their spring,
 And cheer my fainting soul.

Jaff. As when our loves
 Were in their spring! Has then our fortune chang'd?
 Art thou not, Belvidera, still the same,
 Kind, good, and tender, as my arms first found thee?
 If thou art alter'd, where shall I have harbour?

Where ease my loaded heart? Oh! where complain?
Bel. Does this appear like change, or love decay-
 When thus I throw myself into thy bosom, [ing,
 With all the resolution of strong truth!
 Beats not my heart, as 'twould alarum thine
 To a new charge of blifs? I joy more in thee,
 Than did thy mother, when she hugg'd thee first,
 And blest'd the Gods for all her travel past.

Jaff. Can there in woman be such glorious faith?
 Sure all ill stories of thy sex are false!
 Oh woman! lovely woman! Nature made thee
 To temper man: we had been brutes without you!
 Angels are painted fair, to look like you:
 There's in you all that we believe of Heaven;
 Amazing brightness, purity and truth;
 Eternal joy, and everlasting love.

Bel. If love be treasure, we'll be wond'rous rich;
 I have so much, my heart will surely break with't:

Vows

Vows can't express it. When I would declare
 How great's the joy, I'm dumb with the big thought;
 I swell, I sigh, and labour with my longing.
 O! lead me to some desert wide and wild,
 Barren as our misfortunes, where my soul
 May have its vent, where I may tell aloud
 To the high Heavens, and ev'ry list'ning planet,
 With what a boundless shock my bosom's fraught;
 Where I may throw my eager arms about thee,
 Give loose to love, with kisses kindling joy,
 And let off all the fire that's in my heart.

Jaff. Oh, Belvidera! doubly I'm a beggar:
 Undone by fortune, and in debt to thee.
 Want, wordly want, that hungry meagre fiend,
 Is at my heels, and chases me in view.
 Can'st thou bear cold and hunger? Can these limbs,
 Fram'd for the tender offices of love,
 Endure the bitter gripes of smarting poverty?
 When banish'd by our miseries abroad
 (As suddenly we shall be) to seek out
 In some far climate, where our names are strangers,
 For charitable succour; wilt thou then,
 When in a bed of straw we shrink together,
 And the bleak winds shall whistle round our heads;
 Wilt thou then talk thus to me? Wilt thou then
 Hush my cares thus, and shelter me with love?

Bel. Oh! I will love thee, even in madness love
 Tho' my distracted senses should forsake me, {thee;
 I'd find some intervals, when my poor heart
 Should 'swage itself, and be let loose to thine.
 Tho' the bare earth be all our resting-place,
 Its roots our food, some cleft our habitation,
 I'll make this arm a pillow for thine head;
 And as thou sighing ly'st, and swell'd with sorrow,
 Creep to thy bosom, pour the balm of love
 Into thy soul, and kiss thee to thy rest;
 Then praise our Gods, and watch thee till the morning.

Jaff. Hear this, you Heav'ns! and wonder how
 you made her:

Reign, reign, ye monarchs that divide the world,

18 VENICE PRESERV'D.

Busy religion ne'er will let you know
 Tranquility and happiness like mine;
 Like quady ships, the obsequious billows fall,
 And rise again, to lift you in your pride;
 They wait but for a storm, and then devour you:
 I in my private bark already wreck'd,
 Like a poor merchant driven to unknown land,
 That had by chance pack'd up his choicest treasure
 In one dear casket, and sav'd only that;
 Since I must wander farther on the shore,
 Thus hug my little, but my precious store,
 Resolv'd to scorn, and trust my fate no more. [Ex. }

END of the FIRST ACT.

A C T II.

‘ *Enter Pierre and Aquilina.*

‘ A Q U I L I N A.

‘ **B**Y all thy wrongs, thou’rt dearer to my arms
 ‘ Than all the wealth of Venice. Prithee stay,
 ‘ And let us love to night.

‘ *Pier.* No: there’s fool,
 ‘ There’s fool about thee. When a woman sells
 ‘ Her flesh to fools, her beauty’s lost to me;
 ‘ They leave a tainted sully, where they’ve pass’d;
 ‘ There’s such a baneful quality about ’em,
 ‘ E’en spoils complexions with their nauseousness;
 ‘ They infect all they touch: I cannot think
 ‘ Of tasting any thing that a fool has pall’d. [much
 ‘ *Aqui.* I loath and scorn that fool thou mean’st, as
 ‘ Or more than thou can’st; but the beast has gold,
 ‘ That makes him necessary: power too,
 ‘ To qualify my character, and poise me

‘ Equal

' Equal with peevish virtue, that beholds
 ' My liberty with envy. In their hearts
 ' They're loose as I am; but an ugly power
 ' Sits in their faces, and frights pleasures from them.
 ' *Pier.* Much good may't do you, madam, with
 your senator.

' *Aqui.* My senator! Why, can't thou think that
 wretch

' E're fill'd thy Aquilina's arms with pleasure?
 ' Think'st thou, because I sometimes give him leave
 ' To foil himself at what he is unfit for;
 ' Because I force myself t'endure and suffer him,
 ' Think'st thou I love him? No, by all the joys
 ' Thou ever gav'st me, his presence is my penance.
 ' The worst thing an old man can be's a lover,
 ' A mere *memento mori* to poor woman.
 ' I never lay by his decrepid side,
 ' But all that night I ponder on my grave.

' *Pier.* Would he were well sent thither.

' *Aqui.* That's my wish too : [sure,
 ' For then, my Pierre, I might have cause, with plea-
 ' To play the hypocrite. Oh! how I could weep
 ' Over the dying dotard, and kiss him too,
 ' In hopes to smother him quite; then, when the
 ' Was come to pay my sorrows at his funeral, [time
 ' (For he has already made me heir to treasures
 ' Would make me out-act a real widow's whining)
 ' How could I frame my face to fit my mourning!
 ' With wringing hands attend him to his grave;
 ' Fall swooning on his hearse; take mad possession
 ' E'en of the dismal vault, where he lay buried;
 ' There, like th' Ephesian matron, dwell, till thou,
 ' My lovely soldier, com'st to my deliverance;
 ' Then, throwing up my veil, with open arms
 ' And laughing eyes, run to new dawning joy.

' *Pier.* No more: I've friends to meet me here to-
 night,

' And must be private. As you prize my friendship,
 ' Keep up your coxcomb; let him not pry, nor listen,
 ' Nor frisk about the house, as I have seen him,

' Like

- ' Like a tame mumping squirrel with a bell on ;
 ' Curs will be abroad to bite him, if you do,
 ' *Aqui.* What friends to meet ! Main't I be of
 your council ?
 ' *Pier.* How ! a woman ask questions out of bed !
 ' Go to your senator ; ask him what passes
 ' Amongst his brethren : he'll hide nothing from
 ' But pump not me for politicks. No more ! [you :
 ' Give order, that whoever in my name
 ' Comes here, receive admittance. So good night.
 ' *Aqui.* Must we ne'er meet again ! embrace no
 ' Is love so soon and utterly forgotten ? [more ?
 ' *Pier.* As you henceforward treat your fool, I'll
 think on't.
 ' *Aqui.* Curs'd be all fools, and doubly curs'd my-
 ' The worst of fools—I die if he forsake me ; [self,
 ' And how to keep him, Heaven or hell instruct me.
 [*Exit.*

SCENE, the Rialto.

Enter Jaffier.

Jaff. I'm here ; and thus, the shades of night around
 I look as if all hell were in my heart, [me,
 And I in hell. Nay, surely 'tis so with me !——
 For every step I tread ; methinks some fiend
 Knocks at my breast, and bids it not be quiet.
 I've heard how desperate wretches, like myself,
 Have wander'd out at this dead time of night,
 To meet the foe of mankind in his walk.
 Sure I'm so curs'd, that, tho' of Heav'n forsaken,
 No minister of darkness cares to tempt me.
 Hell, hell ! why sleep'st thou ?

Enter Pierre.

Pier. Sure I've staid too long :
 The clock has struck, and I may lose my proselyte.
 Speak, who goes there ?

Jaff. A dog, that comes to howl
 At yonder moon. What's he, that asks the question ?
 Pier.

Pier. A friend to dogs, for they are honest creatures,
And ne'er betray their masters; never fawn [tures,
On any that they love not. Well met, friend
Jaffier!

Jaff. The same. 'O Pierre, thou'rt come in season
'I was just going to pray. [son

Pier. 'Ah; that's mechanic;
'Priests make a trade on't, and yet starve by't, too.
'No praying; it spoils business, and time's precious.
Where's *Belvidera*? ———

Jaff. For a day or too
I've lodg'd her privately, till I see farther
What fortune will do with me. Prithee, friend,
If thou would'st have me fit to hear good counsel,
Speak not of *Belvidera* ———

Pier. Speak not of her!

Jaff. Oh, no!

Pier. Nor name her? May be I wish her well.

Jaff. Whom well?

Pier. Thy wife; thy lovely *Belvidera*.
I hope a man may wish his friend's wife well,
And no harm done.

Jaff. Y' are merry, Pierre.

Pier. I am so:

Thou shalt smile too, and *Belvidera* smile:
We'll all rejoice. Here's something to buy pins;
Marriage is chargeable. [Gives him a purse.

Jaff. I but half wish'd
To see the devil, and he's here already. Well!
What must this buy? Rebellion, murder, treason?
Tell me, which way I must be damn'd for this.

Pier. When last we parted, we'd no qualms like
these,

But entertain'd each other's thoughts like men
Whose souls were well acquainted. Is the world
Reform'd since our last meeting? What new miracles
Have happen'd? Has *Priuli's* heart relented?
Can he be honest?

Jaff. Kind Heav'n, let heavy curses
Gall his old age; cramps, aches rack his bones,
And

And bitterest disquiet ring his heart.

' Oh! let him live, till life become his burden ;

' Let him groan under't long, linger an age

' In the worst agonies and pangs of death,

' And find its ease, but late.

Pier. Nay, could'st thou not

As well, my friend, have stretch'd the curse to all

The senate round, as to one single villain?

Jaff. But curses stick not: Could I kill with curse-
By Heaven I know not thirty heads in Venice [ing,

Should not be blasted. Senators should rot

Like dogs on dunghills: ' But their wives and daugh-

' Die of their own diseases.' Oh! for a curse [ters
To kill with!

Pier. Daggers, daggers are much better.

Jaff. Ha!

Pier. Daggers.

Jaff. But where are they?

Pier. Oh! A thousand

May be dispos'd of, in honest hands, in Venice.

Jaff. Thou talk'st in clouds.

Pier. But yet a heart, half wrong'd

As thine has been, would find the meaning, Jaffier.

Jaff. A thousand daggers, all in honest hands!

And have I not a friend will stick one here!

Pier. Yes, if I thought thou wert not to be cho-
T'a nobler purpose, I would be that friend; [rish'd
But thou hast better friends; friends whom thy
wrongs

Have made thy friends; friends worthy to be call'd so.

I'll trust thee with a secret: There are spirits

This hour at work.—But as thou'rt a man,

Whom I have pick'd and chosen from the world,

Swear that thou wilt be true to what I utter;

And when I've told thee that which only gods,

And men like gods, are privy to, then swear

No chance or change shall wrest it from thy bosom.

Jaff. When thou would'st bind me, is there need
of oaths? [counters.

' Green-sickness girls lose maidenheads with such
For

For thou'rt so near my heart, that thou may'st see
Its bottom, sound its strength and firmness to thee.
Is coward, fool, or villain in my face?
If I seem none of these, I dare believe
Thou would'st not use me in a little cause;
For I am fit for honour's roughest task;
Nor ever yet found fooling was my province:
And for a villanous, inglorious enterprize,
I know thy heart so well, I dare lay mine
Before thee, set it to what point thou wilt.

Pitr. Nay, 'tis a cause thou wilt be fond of, *Jaffier*;
For it is founded on the noblest basis;
Our liberties, our natural inheritance.
There's no religion, no hypocrisy in't;
We'll do the business, and ne'er fast and pray for't;
Openly act a deed the world may gaze
With wonder at, and envy when 'tis done.

Jaff. For liberty!

Pier. For liberty, my friend.

Thou shalt be freed from base Priuli's tyranny,
And thy sequester'd fortunes heal'd again:
I shall be free from those opprobrious wrongs,
That press me now, and bend my spirit downward;
All Venice free, and every growing merit
Succeed to its just right: fools shall be pull'd
From wisdom's seat; those baleful unclean birds,
Those lazy owls, who perch'd near fortune's top
Sit only watchful with their heavy wings
To cuff down new-fledg'd virtues, that would rise
To nobler heights, and make the grove harmonious.

Jaff. What can I do?

Pier. Can'st thou not kill a senator?

Jaff. Were there one wise or honest, I could kill
For herding with that nest of fools or knaves. [him,
By all my wrongs, thou talk'st as if revenge
Were to be had; and the brave story warms me.

Pier. Swear then!

Jaff. I do, by all those glittering stars,
And yon great ruling planet of the night;
By all good powers above, and ill below;

By

24 VENICE PRESERV'D.

By love and friendship, dearer than my life,
No pow'r or death shall make me false to thee.

Pier. Here we embrace, and I'll unlock my heart.
A council's held hard by, where the destruction
Of this great empire's hatching : there I'll lead thee.
But be a man ! for thou'rt to mix with men
Fit to disturb the peace of all the world,
And rule it when 'tis wildest——

Jaff. I give thee thanks
For this kind warning. Yes, I'll be a man ;
And charge thee, Pierre, whene'er thou see'st my fears
Betray me less, to rip this heart of mine
Out of my breast, and shew it for a coward's.
Come, let's be gone, for from this hour I chace
All little thoughts, all tender human follies
Out of my bosom : Vengeance shall have room :
Revenge !

Pier. And liberty !

Jaff. Revenge !

Pier. And liberty !

Jaff. Revenge ! revenge—— [*Exeunt.*

*The SCENE changes to Aquilina's house, the Greek
courtesan.*

Enter Renault.

Ren. Why was my choice ambition ? the worst
ground

A wretch can build on ! 'Tis, indeed, at distance,
A goodly prospect, tempting to the view ;
The height delights us, and the mountain-top
Looks beautiful, because 'tis nigh to Heav'n ;
But we ne'er think how sandy's the foundation,
What storms will batter, and what tempests shake us.
Who's there ?

Enter Spinosa.

Spin. Renault, good-morrow, for by this time
I think the scale of night has turn'd the balance,
And

And weighs up morning? Has the clock struck twelve?

Ren. Yes; Clocks will go as they are set: but man, Irregular man's ne'er constant, never certain: I've spent at least three precious hours of darkness In waiting dull attendance; 'tis the curse Of diligent virtue to be mix'd, like mine, With giddy tempers, souls but half resolv'd.

Spin. Hell seize that soul amongst us it can frighten.

Ren. What's then the cause that I am here alone? Why are we not together?

Enter Eliot.

O, Sir, welcome!

You are an Englishman: when treason's hatching, One might have thought you'd not have been behind- In what whore's lap have you been lolling? [hand. Give but an Englishman his whore and ease, Beef and a sea-coal fire, he's yours for ever.

Eli. Frenchman, you are saucy.

Ren. How!

Enter Bedamar the Ambassador, Theodore, Bramveil, Durand, Brabe, Revillido, Mezzano, Ternon, Retrosi, Conspirators.

Bed. At difference; fie!

Is this a time for quarrels? Thieves and rogues Fall out and brawl: should men of your high calling, Men separated by the choice of Providence From the gross heap of mankind, and set here In this assembly as in one great jewel, T' adorn the bravest purpose it e'er smil'd on; Should you, like boys, wrangle for trifles?

Ren. Boys!

Bed. Renault, thy hand.

Ren. I thought I'd given my heart Long since to every man that mingles here; But grieve to find it trusted with such tempers, That can't forgive my forward age its weakness.

Bed. Eliot, thou once had'st virtue. I have seen

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C

Thy

'Thy stubborn temper bend with god-like goodness,
 Not half thus courted : 'Tis thy nation's glory
 To hug the foe that offers brave alliance.
 One more embrace, my friends—we'll all take hands.
 United thus, we are the mighty engine
 Must twist the rooted empire from its basis.
 Totters it not already ?

Eli. Would 'twere tumbling.

Bed. Nay, it shall down : this night we seal its ruin.

Enter Pierre.

Oh, Pierre ! thou art welcome.
 Come to my breast, for by its hopes thou look'st
 Lovelily dreadful ; and the fate of Venice
 Seems on thy sword already. Oh, my Mars !
 The poets that first feign'd a god of war,
 Sure prophesy'd of thee.

Pier. Friend, was not Brutus,
 (I mean that Brutus, who in open senate
 Stabb'd the first Cæsar that usurp'd the world)
 A gallant man ?

Ren. Yes, and Cataline too ;
 Tho' story wrong his fame : for he conspir'd
 To prop the reeling glory of his country :
 His cause was good.

Bed. And our's as much above it,
 As, Renault, thou'rt superior to Cethegus,
 Or Pierre to Cassius.

Pier. Then to what we aim at.
 When do we start ? or must we talk for ever ?

Bed. No, Pierre, the deed's near birth ; fate seems
 to have set

The business up, and given it to our care ;
 I hope there's not a heart or hand amongst us,
 But what is firm and ready.

All. All.

We'll die with Bédamar.

Bed. O men
 Matchless ! as will your glory be hereafter :
 The game is for a matchless prize, if won :

If

If lost, disgraceful ruin.

Ren. ' Who can lose it?

- ' The public stock's a beggar; one Venetian
- ' Traits not another. Look into their stores
- ' Of general safety; empty magazines,
- ' A tatter'd fleet, a murmuring unpaid army,
- ' Bankrupt nobility, a harrafs'd commonality,
- ' A factious, giddy, and divided senate,
- ' Is all the strength of Venice: let's destroy it;
- ' Let's fill their magazines with arms to awe them;
- ' Man out their fleet, and make their trade maintain it;
- ' Let loose their murmuring army on their masters
- ' To pay themselves with plunder; lop their nobles
- ' To the base roots whence most of them first sprung;
- ' Enslave the rout, whom smarting will make humble;
- ' Turn out their droning senate and possess
- ' That seat of empire which our souls were fram'd for.

Pier. Ten thousand men are armed at your nod,
Commanded all by leaders fit to guide

A battle for the freedom of the world:

This wretched state has starv'd them in its service;
And, by your bounty quicken'd, they're resolv'd
To serve your glory, and revenge their own:
They've all their different quarters in this city,
Watch for the alarm, and grumble 'tis so tardy.

Bed. I doubt not, friend, but thy unwearied diligence
Has still kept waking, and it shall have ease;
After this night it is resolv'd we meet
No more, till Venice owns us for her lords.

Pier. How lovely the Adriatic whore,
Dress'd in her flames, will shine? Devouring flames!
Such as shall burn her to the watery bottom,
And hiss in her foundation.

Bed. Now if any
Amongst us, that owns this glorious cause,
Have friends or interest he'd wish to save,
Let it be told: the general doom is seal'd
But I'd forego the hopes of a world's empire,
Rather than wound the bowels of my friend.

C 2

Pier.

Pier. I must confess, you there have touch'd my
 I have a friend; hear it! such a friend, [weakness.
 My heart was ne'er shut to him. Nay, I tell you:
 He knows the very business of this hour;
 But he rejoices in the cause, and loves it:
 We've chang'd a vow to live and die together,
 And he's at hand to ratify it here.

Ren. How! all betray'd!

Pier. No—I've dealt nobly with you,
 I've brought my all into the public stock:
 I'd but one friend, and him I'll share amongst you:
 Receive and cherish him; or if, when seen
 And search'd, you find him worthless; as my tongue
 Has lodg'd this secret in his faithful breast,
 To ease your fears, I wear a dagger here
 Shall rip it out again, and give you rest.
 Come forth, thou only good I e'er could boast of.

Enter Jaffier, with a Dagger.

Bed. His presence bears the shew of manly virtue.

Jaff. I know you'll wonder all, that thus uncall'd
 I dare approach this place of fatal councils;
 But I'm amongst you, and by heav'n it glads me
 To see so many virtues thus united
 To restore justice, and dethrone oppression.
 Command this sword, if you would have it quiet,
 Into this breast; but, if you think it worthy
 To cut the throats of reverend rogues in robes
 Send me into the curs'd assembled senate:
 It shrinks not, tho' I meet a father there.
 Would you behold this city flaming? here's
 A hand shall bear a lighted torch at noon
 To th' arsenal, and set its gates on fire.

Ren. You talk this well, Sir.

Jaff. Nay ——— by Heaven I'll do this.
 Come, come, I read distrust in all your faces:
 You fear me villain, and indeed it's odd
 To hear a stranger talk thus, at first meeting,
 Of matters that have been so well debated;
 But I come ripe with wrongs, as you with councils.

I hate

I hate this senate, am a foe to Venice ;
A friend to none, but men resolv'd like me
To push on mischief. Oh ! did you but know me,
I need not talk thus !

Bed. Pierre, I must embrace him,
My heart beats to this man, as if it knew him ;

Ren. I never lov'd these huggers.

Jaff. Still I see
The cause delights me not. Your friends survey me
As I were dangerous——But I come arm'd
Against all doubts, and to your trusts will give
A pledge, worth more than all the world can pay for.
My Belvidera. Hoa ! my Belvidera !

Bed. What wonder next ?

Jaff. Let me intreat you,
As I have henceforth hope to call you friends,
That all but the ambassador, and this
Grave guide of councils, with my friend that owns
Withdraw a while, to spare a woman's blushes. [me,
[*Exeunt all but Bed. Ren. Jaff. Pier.*

Bed. Pierre, whither will this ceremony lead us ?

Jaff. My Belvidera ! Belvidera !

Enter Belvidera !

Belv. Who,
Who calls so loud at this late peaceful hour ?
That voice was wont to come in gentle whispers,
And fill my ears with the soft breath of love.
Thou hourly image of my thoughts, where art thou ?

Jaff. Indeed 'tis late.

Belv. ' Oh ! I have slept and dreamt,
' And dreamt again. Where hast thou been, thou
loiterer ?

' Tho' my eyes clos'd, my arms have still been
open'd :

' Stretch'd every way betwixt my broken slumbers,

' To search if thou wer't come to crown my rest :

' There's no repose without thee : Oh ! the day

' Too soon will break, and wake us to our sorrow.

' Come, come to bed, and bid thy cares good night.

C 3.

Jaff.

Jaff. ' Oh! Belvidera! we must change the scene,
 ' In which the past delights of love were tasted:
 ' The poor sleep little; we must learn to watch
 ' Our labours late, and early every morning;
 ' 'Midst winter frosts, thin clad and fed with sparing,
 ' Rise to our toils, and drudge away the day.

Belv. Alas! where am I! whither is't you lead
 Methinks I read distraction in your face, [me?
 Something less gentle than the fate you tell me.
 You shake and tremble too! your blood runs cold!
 Heav'n's guard my love, and bless his heart with patience.

Jaff. That I have patience, let our fate bear witness,
 Who has ordain'd it so, that thou and I, [ness,
 (Thou, the divinest good man e'er possess'd,
 And I, the wretched'st of the race of man)
 This very hour, without one tear, must part.

Belv. Part! must we part? Oh, am I then forsaken?
 Why drag you from me; Whither are you going?
 My dear! my life! my love!

Jaff. Oh, friend!

Belv. Speak to me.

Jaff. Take her from my heart,
 She'll gain such hold else, I shall ne'er get loose.
 I charge thee take her, but with tender'st care
 Relieve her troubles, and assuage her sorrows.

Ren. Rise, Madam, and command amongst your servants.

Jaff. To you, Sir, and your honour, I bequeath
 And with her this; when I prove unworthy— [her,
 [Gives a dagger:

You know the rest——Then strike it to her heart;
 And tell her, he who three whole happy years
 Lay in her arms, and every night repeated
 The passionate vows still of increasing love,
 Sent that reward for all her truth and sufferings.

Belv. ' Nay, take my life, since he has sold it
 ' Or send me to some distant clime your slave [cheaply;
 ' But let it be far off, lest my complainings
 ' Should reach his guilty ears, and shake his peace.

Jaff.

Jaff. ' No, Belvidera, I've contriv'd thy honour.
' Trust to my faith, and be but fortune kind
' To me, as I'll preserve that faith unbroken ;
' When next we meet, I'll lift thee to a height
' Shall gather all the gazing world about thee,
' To wonder what strange virtue plac'd thee there.
' But, if we ne'er meet more ———

Bel. O ! thou unkind one ;
Ne'er meet more ! have I deserv'd this from you ;
Look on me, tell me, speak, thou dear deceiver.
Why am I separated from thy love ?
If I am false, accuse me, but if true,
Don't, prithee don't, in poverty forsake me,
But pity the sad heart that's torn with parting.
Yet hear me ? yet recall me — [*Ex. Ren. Bed. and Belv.*]

Jaff. Oh ! ' my eyes, my heart-strings !
' Look not that way, but turn yourselves a while
' Into my heart, and be wean'd altogether.
My friend, where art thou ?

Pier. Here, my honour's brother.

Jaff. Is Belvidera gone ?

Pier. Renault has led her

Back to her own apartment ; but, by Heav'n,
Thou must not see her more, till our work's over.

Jaff. Not see her !

Pier. Not for your life.

Jaff. Oh, Pierre, were she but here,
How I would pull her down into my heart,
Gaze on her, till my eye-strings crack'd with love ;
' Till all my sinews, with its fire extended ;
' Fix'd me upon the rack of ardent longing :
Then, swelling, sighing, raging to be blest,
Come, like a panting turtle, to her breast ;
On her soft bosom hovering, bill and play,
Confess the cause why last I fled away ;
Own 'twas a fault, but swear to give it o'er,
And never follow false ambition more. [*Exeunt.*]

END of the SECOND ACT.

A-C-T

A C T III.

‘ *Enter Aquilina and her Maid.*

‘ *AQUILINA.*

‘ **T**ELL him I am gone to bed; tell him I am
 ‘ not at home; tell him I’ve better company
 ‘ with me, or any thing; tell him, in short, I will
 ‘ not see him, the eternal troublesome vexatious fool:
 ‘ He’s worse company than an ignorant physician
 ‘ ——— I’ll not be disturb’d at these unreasonable
 ‘ hours.

‘ *Maid.* But, madam! He’s here already, just enter’d the door.

‘ *Aqui.* Turn him out again, you unnecessary, useless, giddy-brain’d afs: If he will not be gone, set the house a fire, and burn us both: I’d rather meet a toad in my dish, than an old hideous animal in my chamber to night.

‘ *Enter Antonio.*

‘ *Ant.* Nacky, Nacky, Nacky——how dost do, Nacky? Hurry, durry. I am come, little Nacky; past eleven o’clock, a late hour; time in all conscience to go to bed, Nacky——Nacky, did I say? Ah, Nacky, Aquilina, lina, lina, quilina, quilina, quilina, Aquilina, Naquilina, Naquilina, Acky, Acky, Nacky, Nacky, queen Nacky——come, let’s to bed——you Fubbs, you Pug you——you little Pufs——Purre, Tuzzy—I am a senator.

‘ *Aqui.* You are fool, I am sure.

‘ *Ant.* May be so too, sweetheart: Never the worse senator for all that. Come, Nacky, Nacky, let’s have a game at romps, Nacky.

‘ *Aqui.* You would do well, Signor, to be troublesome here no longer, but leave me to myself; be sober and go home, Sir.

‘ *Ant.* Home, Madona!

‘ *Aqui.* Ay, home, Sir. Who am I?

‘ *Ant.* Madona, as I take it, you are my—you are —thou art my little, Nicky, Nacky——that’s all.

‘ *Aqui.*

' *Aqui.* I find, you are resolv'd to be troublesome;
' and so, to make short of the matter in few words,
' I hate you, detest you, loath you, I am weary of
' you, sick of you—hang you, you are an old, silly,
' impertinent, impotent, solicitous coxcomb; crazy
' in your head, and lazy in your body; love to be
' meddling with every thing, and, if you had no mo-
' ney, you are good for nothing.

' *Ant.* Good for nothing! Hurry durry, I'll try
' that presently. Sixty-one years old, and good for
' nothing! that's brave: [*To the Maid*] Come,
' come, come Mrs. Fiddle-faddle, turn you out for
' a season: Go, turn out, I say, it is our will and
' pleasure to be private some moments—out, out,
' when you are bid to——[*Puts her out and locks the*
' *door*] Good for nothing you say?

' *Aqui.* Why, what are you good for?

' *Ant.* In the first place, Madam, I am old, and
' consequently very wise, very wise, Madona, d'ye
' mark that? In the second place, take notice if you
' please, that I am a senator; and, when I think
' fit, can make speeches, Madona. Hurry durry, I
' I can make a speech in the senate-house, now and
' then—would make you hair stand an end, Madona.

' *Aqui.* What care I for your speeches in the se-
' nate-house; if you would but be silent here, I
' should thank you.

' *Ant.* Why I can make speeches to thee too, my
' lovely Madona; for example—My cruel fair one,
' [*Takes out a purse, and at every pause shakes it*] since
' it is my fate, that you should, with your servant,
' angry prove; tho' late at night—I hope 'tis not
' too late with this, to gain reception for my love—
' There's for thee, my little Nicky Nacky—take it,
' here take it—I say take it, or I'll throw it at your
' head—how now rebel?

' *Aqui.* Truly, my illustrious senator, I must con-
' fess, your honour is at present, most profoundly
' eloquent indeed.

' *Ant.* Very well: Come, now let's sit down, and
' think

' think upon't a little—come, sit, I say—sit down by
' me a little, my Nicky Nacky. A——[*sits down.*]

' Hurry durry—good for nothing—

' *Aqui.* No, Sir, if you please, I can know my
' distance, and stand.

' *Ant.* Stand! How, Nacky up, and I down?

' Nay then, let me exclaim with the poet,

' Shew me a case more pitiful who can,

' A standing woman and a falling man.

' Hurry durry—not sit down—see this, ye gods!

' You won't sit down?

' *Aqui.* No, Sir.

' *Ant.* Then look, you now; suppose me a bull,
' a Basan-bull, the bull of bulls, or any bull. Thus
' up I get, and with my brows, thus bent—I broo,
' I say, I broo, I broo, I broo. You won't sit down,
' will you—I broo——

' [*Bellows like a bull, and drives her about.*]

' *Aqui.* Well, Sir, I must endure this. [*She sits
' down*] Now your honour has been a bull, pray
' what beast will your worship please to be next?

' *Ant.* Now, I'll be a senator again, and thy lover,
' little Nicky Nacky. [*He sits by her.*] Ah! toad,
' toad, toad, toad! Spit in my face a little, Nac-
' ky, spit in my face prithee, spit in my face ne-
' ver so little: Spit but a little bit——spit, spit,
' spit, spit, when you are bid, I say; do prithee spit
' —now, now, now, spit; what you won't spit, will
' you? then I'll be a dog.

' *Aqui.* A dog, my Lord!

' *Ant.* Ay a dog—and I'll give thee, this t'other
' purse, to let me be a dog—and use me like a dog a
' little. Hurry durry—I will—here 'tis——

[*Gives the purse.*]

' *Aqui.* Well, with all my heart. But let me be-
' seech your dogship, to play your tricks over as fast
' as you can, that you may come to stinking the
' sooner, and be turn'd out of doors, as you deserve.

' *Ant.* Ay, ay——no matter for that—that shan't
' move——[*He gets under the table.*] Now, bough,
' waugh,

' waugh, waugh, bough, waugh,—[*Barks like a dog.*

' *Aqui.* Hold, hold, hold, Sir, I beseech you:

' What is't you do? If curs bite, they must be

' kick'd, Sir: Do you see, kick'd thus.

' *Ant.* Ay, with all my heart: Do, kick, kick

' on; now I am under the table, kick again—kick

' harder—harder yet, bough, waugh, waugh, waugh,

' bough—odd, I'll have a snap at thy shins—bough,

' waugh, waugh waugh, bough—odd, she kicks

' bravely——

' *Aqui.* Nay, then I'll go another way to work

' with you: And I think here's an instrument fit

' for the purpose? [*Fetches a whip and a bell.*

' What, bite your mistress, firrah? out of door you

' dog, to kennel, and be hang'd—bite your mis-

' tress by the legs, you rogue— [*She whips him.*

' *Ant.* Nay, prithee Nacky, now thou art too lo-

' ving: Hurry durry, odd, I'll be a dog no longer.

' *Aqui.* Nay, none of your fawning and grin-

' ning: But be gone, or here's the discipline.

' What, bite your mistress by the leg, you mungrel?

' Out of doors—hout, hout, to kennel, firrah, go.

' *Ant.* This is very barbarous usage, Nacky, very

' barbarous; look you, I will not go—I will not stir

' from the door, that I resolve—hurry durry,

' what, shut me out? [*She whips him out.*

' *Aqui.* Ay, if you come here any more to-night,

' I'll have my footman lug you, you cur? What

' bite your poor mistress Nacky, firrah?

' *Enter Maid.*

' *Maid.* Heav'ns! Madam, what's the matter?

[*He howls at the door like a dog.*

' *Aqui.* Call my footmen hither presently.

' *Enter two Footmen.*

' *Maid.* They're here already, Madam; all the

' house is alarm'd with a strange noise, that no-body

' know's what to make of.

' *Aqui.* Go, all of you, and turn that trouble-

' some beast in the next room out of my house—If

' ever I see him within these walls again, without

' my

' my leave for his admittance, you sneaking rogues
 ' —I'll have you poison'd, all poison'd like rats ;
 ' every corner of the house shall stink of one of
 ' you ; go, and learn hereafter to know my pleasure.
 ' So ; now for my Pierre.
 ' Thus, when the god-like lover is displeas'd,
 ' We sacrifice our fool, and he's appeas'd. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE *a Chamber.**Enter Belvidera.*

Bel. I'm sacrific'd ! I'm sold ! betray'd to shame !
 Inevitable ruin has inclos'd me !
 ' No sooner was I to my bed repair'd,
 ' To weigh and (weeping) ponder my condition ;
 ' But the old hoary wretch, to whose false care
 ' My peace and honour was entrusted, came,
 ' (Like Tarquin) ghastly, with infernal lust.
 ' Oh, thou Roman Lucrece !
 ' Thou could'st find friends, to vindicate thy wrong !
 ' I never had but one, and he's prov'd false :
 He that should guard my virtue, has betray'd it ;
 Left me ! Undone me ! Oh, that I could hate him !
 Where shall I go ? Oh, whither, whither wander ?

Enter Jaffier.

Jaff. Can Belvidera want a resting-place,
 When these poor arms are ready to receive her ?
 ' Oh ! 'tis in vain to struggle with desires,
 ' Strong is my love to thee ; for, every moment
 ' I'm from thy sight, the heart within my bosom,
 ' Mourns like a tender infant in its cradle,
 ' Whose nurse has left it. Come, and with the songs
 ' Of gentle love, persuade it to its peace.

' *Bel.* I fear the stubborn wanderer will not own
 ' 'Tis grown a rebel, to be rul'd no longer ; [*He* ;
 ' Scorns the indulgent bosom, that first lull'd it ;
 ' And, like a disobedient child, disdains
 ' The soft authority of Belvidera.

Jaff. There was a time——*Bel.*

Bel. Yes, yes, there was a time,
When Belvidera's tears, her cries, and sorrows,
Were not despis'd ; when, if she chanc'd to sigh,
Or look but sad——there was indeed a time,
When Jaffier would have ta'en her in his arms,
Eas'd her declining head upon his breast,
And never left her, till he found the cause.

‘ But let her now weep seas ;
‘ Cry, till she rend the earth ; sigh, till she burst
‘ Her heart asunder ; still he bears it all,
‘ Deaf as the wind, and as the rocks unshaken.

‘ *Jaff.* Have I been deaf? Am I that rock unmov'd,
‘ Against whose root, tears beat, and sighs are sent ?
‘ In vain have I beheld thy sorrows calmly !
‘ Witness against me, Heavens, have I done this ?
‘ Then bear me in a whirlwind back again,
‘ And let that angry dear one, ne'er forgive me.
‘ Oh ! thou too rashly censur'st of my love ;
‘ Could'st thou but think, how I have spent this
‘ Dark, and alone, no pillow to my head, [night,
‘ Rest in my eyes, nor quiet in my heart,
‘ Thou would'st not, Belvidera, sure thou would'st
‘ Talk to me thus ; but like a pitying angel, [not
‘ Spreading thy wings, come settle on my breast,
‘ And hatch warm comforts there, e're sorrows
freeze it.

‘ *Bel.* Why then, poor mourner, in what baleful
corner

‘ Hast thou been talking with that witch, the night ?
‘ On what cold stone hast thou been stretch'd along,
‘ Gathering the grumbling winds about thy head,
‘ To mix with theirs, the accent of thy woes ?
‘ Oh ! now I find the cause my love forsakes me :
‘ I am no longer fit to bear a share
‘ In his concerns. My weak female virtue
‘ Must not be trusted : 'Tis too frail and tender.

Jaff. Oh, Portia, Portia ! What a soul was thine ?

Bel. That Portia was a woman ; and when Brutus,
Big with the fate of Rome, (Heav'n guard thy safety !)

VOL. I.

D

Conceal'd

Conceal'd from her the labours of his mind ;
 She let him see her blood was great as his,
 Flow'd from a spring as noble, and a heart
 Fit to partake his troubles as his love.
 Fetch, fetch that dagger back, the dreadful dower,
 Thou gav'st last night in parting with me ; strike it
 Here to my heart ; and, as the blood flows from it,
 Judge if it run not pure, as Cato's daughter's.

Jaff. Thou art too good, and I indeed unworthy,
 ' Unworthy so much virtue. Teach me how
 ' I may deserve such matchless love as thine,
 ' And see with what attention I'll obey thee.

Bel. Do not despise me : that's the all I ask.

Jaff. Despise thee ! Hear me——

Bel. Oh ! Thy charming tongue,
 ' Is but too well acquainted with my weakness ;
 ' Knows, let it name but love, my melting heart
 ' Dissolves within my breast ; till with clos'd eyes
 ' I reel into thy arms, and all's forgotten.

Jaff. What shall I do ?

Bel. Tell me ; be just, and tell me,
 ' Why dwells that busy cloud upon thy face ?
 ' Why am I made a stranger ? Why that sigh,
 ' And I not know the cause ? Why, when the world
 ' Is wrapp'd in rest, why chuses then my love
 ' To wander up and down, in horrid darkness,
 ' Loathing his bed, and these desiring arms ?
 ' Why are these eyes blood-shot with tedious watch-
 ing ?

Why starts he now, and looks as if he wish'd
 ' His fate were finish'd ? Tell me, ease my fear ;
 ' Lest, when we next time meet, I want the power
 ' To search into the sickness of thy mind,
 ' But talk as wildly then, as thou look'st now.

Jaff. Oh, Belvidera !

Bel. Why was I last night deliver'd to a villain ?

Jaff. Ha ! a villain ?

Bel. Yes, to a villain ! Why at such an hour
 Meets that assembly, all made up of wretches,
 ' That look as hell had drawn them into league ?

Why

Why, I in this hand, and in that a dagger,
Was I deliver'd with such dreadful ceremonies ?
To you, Sir, and to your honour I bequeath her,
And with her this : When'er I prove unworthy—
You know the rest—then strike it to her heart.

Oh ! why's that rest conceal'd from me ? Must I
Be made the hostage of a hellish trust ?

For such I know I am ; that's all my value.
But, by the love and loyalty I owe thee,
I'll free thee from the bondage of these slaves ;
Straight to the senate, tell 'em all I know,
All that I think, all that my fears inform me.

Jaff. Is this the Roman virtue ; this the blood
That boasts its purity with Cato's daughter ?
Would she have e'er betray'd her Brutus ?

Bel. No :

For Brutus trusted her. Wert thou so kind,
What would not Belvidera suffer for thee ?

Jaff. I shall undo myself, and tell thee all.

Bel. Look not upon me as I am, a woman,
• But as a bone, thy wife, thy friend ; who long
• Has had admission to thy heart, and there
• Study'd the virtues of thy gallant nature.
• Thy constancy, thy courage, and thy truth,
• Have been my daily lesson : I have learn'd 'em
• And, bold as thou, can suffer or despise
• The worst of fates for thee, and with thee share 'em.

Jaff. Oh, thou divinest Power ! look down and
hear

• My prayers ! instruct me to reward this virtue !
Yet think a little, e're thou tempt me further ;
Think I've a tale to tell will shake thy nature,
Melt all this boasted constancy thou talk'st of,
Into vile tears, and despicable sorrows :
Then if thou should'st betray me !——

Bel. Shall I swear ?

Jaff. No, do not swear : I would not violate
Thy tender nature, with so rude a bond :
But as thou hop'st to see me live my days,
And love thee long, lock this within my breast :

D 2

I've

I've bound myself, by all the strictest sacraments,
Divine and human——

Bel. Speak !

Jaff. To kill thy father——

Bel. My father !

Jaff. Nay, the throats of the whole senate
Shall bleed, my Belvidera. He, amongst us,
That spares his father, brother, or his friend,
Is damn'd. ' How rich and beauteous will the face
' Of ruin look, when these wide streets run blood !
' I, and the glorious partners of my fortune,
' Shouting, and striding o'er the prostrate dead,
' Still to new waste ; whilst thou, far off in safety,
' Smiling, shalt see the wonders of our daring ;
' And, when night comes, with praise and love receive me.

Bel. Oh !

Jaff. Have a care, and shrink not even in thought :
For if thou do'st——

Bel. I know it ; thou wilt kill me.
Do, strike thy sword into this bosom : lay me
Dead on the earth, and then thou wilt be safe.
Murder my father ! Tho' his cruel nature
Has persecuted me to my undoing ;
Driven me to basest wants ; can I behold him,
With smiles of vengeance, butcher'd in his age ?
The sacred founrain of my life destroy'd ?
And can'st thou shed the blood, that gave me being ?
Nay, be a traitor too, and sell thy country ?
Can thy great heart, descend so vilely low,
Mix with hir'd slaves, bravoës, and common stabbers,
' Nose-flitters, alley-lurking villains !' join
With such a crew, and take a ruffian's wages,
To cut the throats of wretches as they sleep ?

Jaff. Thou wrong'st me, Belvidera ! I've engag'd
With men of souls ; fit to reform the ills
Of all mankind : there's not a heart amongst them
But's stout as death, yet honest as the nature
Of man first made, ere fraud and vice were fashions.

Bel.

Bel. What's he, to whose curs'd hands last night
thou gav'st me ?

Was that well done ? Oh ! I could tell a story,
Would rouse thy lion heart out of its den,
And make it rage with terrifying fury.

Jaff. Speak on, I charge thee.

Bel. Oh, my love ! if e'er
Thy Belvidera's peace deserv'd thy care,
Remove me from this place. Last night, last night !

Jaff. Distract me not, but give me all the truth.

Bel. No sooner wert thou gone, and I alone,
Left in the power of that old son of mischief ;
No sooner was I laid on my sad bed, [ton'd,
But that vile wretch approach'd me, ' loose, unbut-
' Ready for violation : ' Then my heart
Throbb'd with its fears : Oh, how I wept and sigh'd !
And shrunk and trembled ! wish'd in vain for him
That should protect me ! Thou, alas ! wert gone.

Jaff. Patience, sweet Heav'n, till I make ven-
geance sure.

Bel. He drew the hideous dagger forth, thou gav'st
him,

And, with upbraiding smiles, he said, *Behold it :*

This is the pledge of a false husband's love :

And in my arms then press'd, and would have clasp'd
But with my cries, I scar'd his coward heart, [me ;
Till he withdrew, and mutter'd vows to hell.

These are thy friends ! with these thy life, thy ho-
Thy love, all stak'd, and all will go to ruin. [nour,

Jaff. No more : I charge thee keep this secret
Clear up thy sorrows ; look as if thy wrongs [close.
Were all forgot, and treat him like a friend,
As no complaint were made. No more ; retire,
Retire, my life, and doubt not of my honour ;
I'll heal his failings, and deserve thy love.

Bel. Oh ! should I part with thee, I fear thou wilt
In anger leave me, and return no more.

Jaff. Return no more ! I would not live without
Another night, to purchase the creation. [thee

Bel. When shall we meet again ?

D 3

Jaff.

42 VENICE PRESERV'D.

Jaff. Anon, at twelve
I'll steal myself to thy expecting arms :
Come like a travell'd dove and bring thee peace.

Belw. Indeed !

Jaff. By all our loves.

Belw. 'Tis hard to part :

But sure no falsehood ever look'd so fairly.

Farewel ; remember twelve.

[*Exit.*

Jaff. Let Heav'n forget me,
When I remember not thy truth, thy love.

• How curs'd is my condition, toss'd and jostled

• From every corner ; fortune's common fool,

• The jest of rogues, an instrumental ass,

• For villains to lay loads of shame upon,

• And drive about just for their ease and scorn.

Enter Pierre.

Pier. Jaffier.

Jaff. Who calls ?

Pier. A friend, that could have wish'd
T' have found thee otherwise employ'd. What, hunt
A wife on the dull soil ! Sure a staunch husband
Of all hounds is the dullest. Wilt thou never,
Never be wean'd from caudles and confections ?
What feminine tales hast thou been list'ning to,
Of unair'd shirts, catarrhs and tooth-ach, got
By thin-sol'd shoes ? Damnation ! that a fellow,
Chosen to be a sharer in the destruction
Of a whole people, should sneak thus into corners
To waste his time, and fool his mind with love.

Jaff. May not a man then trifle out an hour
With a kind woman, and not wrong his calling ?

Pier. Not in a cause like ours.

Jaff. Then, friend, our cause
Is in a damn'd condition : for I'll tell thee,
That canker-worm, call'd Leachery, has touch'd it ;
'Tis tainted vilely. Would'st thou think it ? Renault
(That mortify'd old wither'd winter rogue)
Loves simple fornication like a priest ;
I found him out for watering at my wife ;
He visited her last night, like a kind guardian :

Faith,

Faith, she has some temptation, that's the truth oft.

Pier. He durst not wrong his trust.

Jaff. 'Twas something late though,
To take the freedom of a lady's chamber.

Pier. Was she in bed?

Jaff. Yes, faith! in virgin sheets,
White as her bosom, Pierre, dish'd neatly up,
Might tempt a weaker appetite to taste.
Oh! how the old fox stunk, I warrant thee,
When the rank fit was on him.

Pier. Patience guide me!
He's us'd no violence?

Jaff. No, no; out on't, violence!
Play'd with her neck; brush'd her with his grey beard;
Struggl'd and touz'd; tickl'd her till she squeak'd a
May be, or so—but not a jot of violence— [little,

Pier. Damn him.

Jaff. Ay, so say I: but hush, no more on't,
All hitherto is well, and I believe
Myself no monster yet: 'tho' no man knows
'What fate he's born to. Sure it is near the hour
We all should meet for our concluding orders:
Will the ambassador be here in person?

Pier. No, he has sent commission to that villain
To give the executing charge: [Renault.
I'd have thee be a man, if possible,
And keep thy temper; for a brave revenge
Ne'er comes too late.

Jaff. Fear not, I am as cool as patience.
'Had he compleated my dishonour, rather
'Than hazard the success our hopes are ripe for,
'I'd bear it all with mortifying virtue.

Pier. He's yonder, coming this way thro' the hall;
His thoughts seem full.

Jaff. Prithee retire and leave me
With him alone: I'll put him to some trial;
See how his rotten part will bear the touching.

Pier. Be careful then. [Exit.

Jaff. Nay, never doubt, but trust me.
What be a devil, take a damning oath

For

44 VENICE PRESERV'D.

For shedding native blood ! Can there be a sin
In merciful repentance ? Oh, this villain !

Enter Renault.

Ren. Perverse and peevish : What a slave is man
To let his itching flesh thus get the better of him !
Dispatch the fool her husband—that were well.
Who's there ?

Jaff. A man,

Ren. My friend, my near ally,
The hostage of your faith, my beauteous charge, is
Jaff. Sir, are you sure of that ? {very well.
Stands she in perfect health ? Beats her pulse even ;
Neither too hot nor cold ?

Ren. What means that question ?

Jaff. Oh ! women have fantastic constitutions,
Inconstant in their wishes, always wavering,
And never fix'd. Was it not boldly done
Even at first sight, to trust the thing I lov'd
(A tempting treasure too) with youth so fierce
And vigorous as thine ? but thou art honest.

Ren. Who dare accuse me ?

Jaff. Curs'd be he that doubts
Thy virtue ! I have try'd it, and declare,
Were I to chuse a guardian of my honour,
I'd put it in thy keeping : for I know thee.

Ren. Know me !

Jaff. Ay, know thee. There's no falshood in thee ;
Thou look'st just as thou art. Let us embrace.
Now would'st thou cut my throat, or I cut thine.

Ren. You dare not do't.

Jaff. You lie, Sir.

Ren. How !

Jaff. No more,

'Tis a base world, and must reform, that's all.

*Enter Spinosa, Theodore, Eliot, Revillido, Durand,
Bromveil, and the rest of the Conspirators.*

Ren. Spinosa, Theodore, you are welcome.

Spin. You are trembling, Sir.

Ren. 'Tis a cold night, indeed ; I am aged ;
Full of decay and natural infirmities ? {*Pier. re-enters.*

We

We shall be warm, my friends, I hope, to morrow.

Pier. 'Twas not well done ; thou should'st have
And not have gaul'd him. [stroak'd him,

Jaff. Damn him, let him chew on't.

Heav'n ! Where am I ? beset with cursed fiends,
That wait to damn me ! What a devil's man,
When he forgets his nature——hush, my heart.

Ren. My friends, 'tis late : are we assembled all ?
' Where's Theodore ?

Theod. ' At hand.

Ren. ' Spinosa.

Spin. ' Here.

Ren. ' Bromveil.

Bram. ' I am ready.

Ren. ' Durand and Brabe.

Dur. ' Command us.

We are both prepar'd

Omnes. All ; all.

Ren. ' Mezzano, Revillido,
' Ternon, Retrofi : Oh ! your're brave men I find,
Fit to behold your fate, and meet her summons.
To morrow's rising sun must see you all
Deck'd in your honours. Are the soldiers ready ?

Pier. All, all

Ren. You, Durand, with your thousand must possess
St. Mark's ; you, Captain, know your charge already ;
'Tis to secure the ducal palace : ' You,
' Brabe, with an hundred more, must gain the Secque :
' With the like number, Bramveil, to the Procurale.
Be all this done with the least tumult possible,
'Till in each place you post sufficient guards :
Then sheathe your swords in every breast you meet.

Jaff. Oh, reverend cruelty ! damn'd bloody villain !

Ren. During this execution, Durand, you
Must in the midst keep your battalia fast ;
And, Theodore, be sure to plant the cannon
That may command the street ; ' whilst Revillido,
' Mezzano, Ternon, and Retrofi guard you.
This done, we'll give the general alarm,
Apply petards, and force the ars'nal gates ;
Then fire the city round in several places,

Or

Or with our cannon (if it dare resist)
 Batter to ruin. But above all I charge you,
 Shed blood enough ; spare neither sex nor age,
 Name nor condition ; if there lives a senator
 After to-morrow, though the dullest rogue
 That e'er said nothing , we have lost our ends.
 If possible, let's kill the very name
 Of senator, and bury it in blood,

Jaff. Merciless, horrid slave—Ay, blood enough !
 Shed blood enough, old Renault ! how thou charm'st
 me !

Ren. But one thing more, and then farewell, till
 Join us again or sep'rate us for ever : [fate
 First let's embrace. Heav'n knows who next shall thus
 Wing ye together : but let us all remember,
 We wear no common cause upon our sword.
 Let each man think, that on his single virtue
 Depends the good and fame of all the rest ;
 Eternal honour, or perpetual infamy.

' Let us remember, through what dreadful hazards
 ' Propitious fortune hitherto has led us :
 ' How often on the brink of some discovery
 ' Have we stood tottering, yet still kept our ground
 ' So well, that the busiest searchers ne'er could follow
 ' Those subtle tracks, which puzzled all suspicion ?
 You droop, Sir.

Jaff. No ; with most profound attention
 I've hear it all, and wonder at thy virtue.

Ren. ' Tho' there be yet few hours'twixt them and
 ' Are not the senate lull'd in full security, [ruin,
 ' Quiet and satisfy'd, as fools are always ?
 ' Never did so profound repose fore-run
 ' Calamity so great. Nay, our good fortune
 ' Has blinded the most piercing of mankind,
 ' Strengthen'd the fearfullest, charm'd the most sus-
 ' Confounded the most subtle : for we live, [perfect,
 ' We live, my friends, and quickly shall our lives
 ' Prove fatal to these tyrants. Let's consider,
 That we destroy oppression, avarice,
 A people nurs'd up equally with vices

And

And loathsome lusts, which nature most abhors,
And such as without shame she cannot suffer.

Jaff. Oh, Belvidera! take me to thy arms,
And shew me where's my peace, for I have lost it. [*Exit.*]

Ren. Without the least remorse then, let's resolve
With fire and sword t' exterminate these tyrants;
' And when we shall behold these curs'd tribunals
' Stain'd by the tears and sufferings of the innocent,
' Burning with flames rather from Heav'n than ours,
' The raging, furious, and un pitying soldier
' Pulling his reeking dagger from the bosoms
' Of gasping wretches; death in every quarter;
' With all that sad disorder can produce
' To make a spectacle of horror; then,
' Then let us call to mind, my dearest friends,
' That there is nothing pure upon the earth;
' That the most valu'd things have most alloys,
' And that in change of all those vile enormities,
Under whose weight this wretched country labours,
The means are only in our hands to crown them.

Pier. And may those Powers above, that are propitious
To gallant minds, record this cause and bless it. [*ous*]

Ren. Thus happy, thus secure of all we wish for,
Should there, my friends, be found among us one
False to this glorious enterprize, what fate,
What vengeance, were enough for such a villain?

Elo. Death here without repentance, Hell hereafter.

Ren. Let that be my lot, if as here I stand,
Lifted by fate among her darling sons,
Tho' I had one only brother, dear by all
The strictest ties of nature; ' tho' one hour
' Had given us birth, one fortune fed our wants,
' One only love, and that but of each other,
' Still fill'd our minds: ' could I have such a friend
Join'd in this cause, and had but ground for fear
He meant foul play; may this right hand drop from
If I'd not hazard all my future peace, [*me,*]
And stab him to the heart before you. Who,
Who would do less? Would'st thou not, Pierre, the
same?

Pier.

Pier. You've singled me, Sir, out for this hard quest-
As if 'twere started only for my sake? [tion,
Am I the thing you fear? Here, here's my bosom,
Search it with all your swords. Am I a traitor?

Ren. No: but I fear your late commended friend
Is little less. Come, Sirs, 'tis now no time
To trifle with our safety. Where's this Jaffier?

Spin. He left the room just now, in strange disorder.

Ren. Nay, there is danger in him: I observ'd him;
During the time I took for explanation,
He was transported from most deep attention
To a confusion which he could not smother.
' His looks grew full of sadness and surprise,
' All which betray'd a wavering spirit in him,
' That labour'd with reluctancy and sorrow.
What's requisite for safety must be done
With speedy execution; he remains
Yet in our power: I, for my own part, wear
A dagger——

Pier. Well.

Ren. And I could wish it——

Pier. Where?

Ren. Bury'd in his heart.

Pier. Away! we're yet all friends.

No more of this! 'twill breed ill blood among us.

Spin. Let us all draw our swords, and search the
house,

Pull him from the dark hole where he sits brooding
O'er his cold fears, and each man kill his share of him.

Pier. Who talks of killing? Who's he'll shed the blood
That's dear to me? Is't you? or you, Sir?

What, not one speak! how you stand gaping all
On your grave oracle, your wooden god there!

Yet not a word! Then, Sir, I'll tell you a secret;
Suspicion's but at best a coward's virtue. [To *Ren.*

Ren. A coward!—— [Handles his sword.

Pier. Put up thy sword, old man;
Thy hand shakes at it. Come let's heal this breach;
I am too hot: we yet may all live friends.

Spin. Till we are safe, our friendship cannot be so.

Pier. Again! Who's that?

Spin.

Spin. 'Twas I.

Theod. And I.

Ren. And I

Om. And all.

Ren. ' Who are on my side?

Spin. ' Every honest sword.

Let's die like men, and not be sold like slaves.

Pier. One such word more, by Heav'n, I'll to the se-
And hang ye all, like dogs, in clusters. [nate,

Why weep your coward swords half out their shells?

Why do you not all brandish them like mine?

You fear to die, and yet dare talk of killing.

Ren. Go to the senate, and betray us! haste!

Secure thy wretched life; we fear to die

Less than thou dar'st be honest.

Pier. That's rank falsehood.

Fear'st thou not death? Fie, there's a knavish itch

In that salt blood, an utter foe to smarting.

Had Jaffier's wife prov'd kind, he'd still been true.

Faugh— how that stinks!

Thou die! thou kill my friend! or thou! or thou,

' With that lean, wither'd face!

Away, disperse all to your several charges,

And meet to-morrow where your honour calls you.

I'll bring that man, whose blood you so much thirst

And you shall see him venture for you fairly— [for,

Hence! hence, I say. [Exit Renault angrily.

Spin. I fear we have been to blame,

And done too much. [lov'd.

Theod. ' 'Twas too far urg'd against the man you

Rev. ' Here take our swords and crush them with

Spin. Forgive us, gallant friend. [your feet.

Pier. Nay, now you've found

The way to melt, and cast me as you will.

' I'll fetch this friend, and give him to your mercy:

' Nay, he shall die, if you will take him from me.

' For your repose, I'll quit my heart's best jewel;

' But would not have him torn away by villains,

' A spiteful villany.

Spin. ' No, may you both

' For ever live, and fill the world with fame.

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Pier.

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Pier. 'Now ye're too kind.' Whence arose all this discord?

Oh, what a dangerous precipice have we 'scap'd !
 How near a fall was all we'd long been building !
 What an eternal blot had stain'd our glories,
 If one, the bravest and the best of men,
 Had fall'n a sacrifice to rash suspicion,
 Butcher'd by those, whose cause he came to cherish !
 ' O ! could you know him all, as I have known him ;
 ' How good he is, how just, how true, how brave,
 ' You would not leave this place till you had seen him ;
 ' Humbled yourselves before him, kiss'd his feet,
 ' And gain'd remission for the worst of follies.
 Come but to-morrow, all your doubts shall end,
 And to your loves, me better recommend,
 That I've preserv'd your fame, and sav'd my friend. }

[*Exeunt.*]

END of the THIRD ACT.

A C T IV.

S C E N E *the* Rialto.

Enter Jaffier and Belvidera.

JAFFIER.

WHERE dost thou lead me ? Ev'ry step I move,
 Methinks I tread upon some mangled limb
 Of a rack'd friend. Oh, my charming ruin !
 Where are we wandering ?

Bel. To eternal honour.

You do a deed shall chronicle thy name
 Among the glorious legends of those few
 That have sav'd sinking nations. Thy renown
 Shall be the future song of all the virgins,
 Who by thy piety have been preserv'd
 From horrid violation. Every street
 Shall be adorn'd with statues to thy honour ;
 And at thy feet this great inscription written,
Remember him that propp'd the fall of Venice.

Jaff. Rather, remember him, who, after all
 The sacred bonds of oaths, and holier friendship,

In

In fond compassion to a woman's tears,
Forgot his manhood, virtue, truth, and honour,
To sacrifice the bosom that reliev'd him.
Why wilt thou damn me ?

Rel. Oh, inconstant man !

How will you promise ; how will you deceive !
Do, return back, replace me in my bondage,
Tell all thy friends how dangerously thou lov'st me,
And let thy dagger do its bloody office.

' Oh ! that kind dagger, Jaffier, how't will look
' Struck thro' my heart, drench'd in my blood to
th'hilt ;

' Whilst these poor dying eyes, shall with their tears

' No more torment thee ; then thou wilt be free :

Or, if thou think'st it nobler, let me live,

Till I'm a victim to the hateful lust

Of that infernal devil, ' that old fiend,

' That's damn'd himself, and would undo mankind.

Last night, my love !

Jaff. Name it not again :

It shews a beastly image to my fancy,

Will wake me into madness. ' Oh, the villain !

' That durst approach such purity as thine

' On terms so vile : ' Destruction, swift destruction,

Fall on my coward head, ' and make my name

' The common scorn of fools, ' if I forgive him :

' If I forgive him ! If I not revenge

' With utmost rage, and most unstaying fury,

' Thy sufferings, thou dear darling of my life.

Bel. Delay no longer then, but to the senate,

And tell the dismal'st story ever utter'd :

Tell'em what bloodshed, rapines, desolations,

Have been prepar'd : how near's the fatal hour.

Save thy poor country, save the reverend blood

Of all its nobles, which to-morrow's dawn

Must else see dead. ' Save the poor tender lives

' Of all those little infants, which the swords

' Of murderers are whetting for, this moment.

' Think thou already hear'st their dying screams ;

' Think that thou see'st their sad distracted mothers,

' Kneeling before thy feet, and begging pity :
 ' With torn dishevel'd hair, and streaming eyes,
 ' Their naked mangl'd breasts, besmear'd with
 blood ;
 ' And even the milk, with which their fondled babes
 ' Softly they hush'd, dropping in anguish from 'em :
 ' Think thou seest this, and then consult thy heart.
 Jaff. Oh !

Bel. Think too, if you lose this present minute,
 ' What miseries the next day brings upon thee :
 ' Imagine all the horrors of that night ;
 ' Murder and rapine, waste and desolation,
 ' Confus'dly raging : ' Think what then may prove
 My lot ; the ravisher may then come safe,
 And, 'midst the terror of the public ruin,
 Do a damn'd deed ; ' perhaps may lay a train
 ' To catch thy life : Then where will be revenge,
 ' The dear revenge that's due to such a wrong ?

Jaff. By all Heav'n's powers, prophetic truth
 dwells in thee ;
 For every word thou speak'st strikes thro' my heart,
 ' Like a new light, and shews it, how't has wander'd,
 Just what thou'st made me, take me, Belvidera,
 And lead me to the place where I'm to say
 ' This bitter lesson ; where I must betray
 My truth, my virtue, constancy, and friends.
 Must I betray my friend ? Ah ! take me quickly ;
 Secure me well before that thought's renew'd ;
 If I relapse once more, all's lost for ever.

Bel. Hast thou a friend more dear than Belvidera ?

Jaff. No ; thou'rt my soul itself ; wealth, friend-
 ship, honour.

All present joys, and earnest of all future,
 ' Are summ'd in thee. ' Methinks when in thy arms,
 ' Thus leaning on thy breast, one minute's more
 ' Than a long thousand years of vulgar hours.
 ' Why was such happiness not given me pure ?
 Why dash'd with cruel wrongs, and bitter warn-
 ings ?

Come, lead me forward, now, like a tame lamb
 To sacrifice. Thus, in his fatal garlands

Deck'd

Deck'd fine and pleas'd, the wanton skips and plays,
Trots by th' enticing flatt'ring priestess' side,
And much transported with its little pride,
Forgets his dear companions of the plain;
Till, by her bound, he's on the altar lain,
Yet then too hardly bleats, such pleasure's in the }
pain.

Enter Officer and six Guards.

Off. Stand ! who goes there ?

Bel. Friends.

Jaff. Friends, Belvidera ! Hide me from my friends :

By Heav'n, I'd rather see the face of hell,

Than meet the man I love.

Off. But what friends are you ?

Bel. Friends to the senate, and the state of Venice.

Off. My orders are to seize on all I find
At this late hour, and bring 'em to the council,
Who are now sitting.

Jaff. Sir, you shall be obey'd.

*' Hold, brute, stand off ! none of your paws upon me.
Now the lot's cast, and, fate, do what thou wilt.*

[Exeunt guarded.]

SCENE, the Senate-House,

*Where appear sitting the Duke of Venice, Priuli,
Antonio, and eight other Senators.*

Duke. Antony, Priuli, senators of Venice,
Speak, why are we assembled here this night ?
What have you to inform us of, concerns
The state of Venice' honour, or its safety ?

Pri. Could words express the story I've to tell you,
Fathers, these tears were useless, these sad tears
That fall from my old eyes ; but there is cause
We all should weep, tear off these purple robes,
And wrap ourselves in sackcloth, sitting down
On the sad earth, and cry aloud to Heav'n :
Heav'n knows, if yet there be an hour to come
E're Venice be no more.

All Sen. How !

E 3

Pri.

Pri. Nay, we stand
 Upon the very brink of gaping ruin.
 Within this city's form'd a dark conspiracy
 To massacre us all, our wives and children,
 Kindred and friends, our palaces and temples
 To lay in ashes: nay, the hour too fix'd; [ment,
 The swords, for ought I know, drawn e'en this mo-
 And the wild waste begun. From unknown hands
 I had this warning; but, if we are men,
 Let's not be tamely butcher'd, but do something
 That may inform the world, in after-ages,
 Our virtue was not ruin'd, tho' we were.

[A noise without.

Room, room, make room for some prisoners——

Sen. Let's raise the city.

Enter Officer and Guards.

Duke. Speak, there. What disturbance? [street,

Off. Two prisoners have the guards seiz'd in the
 Who say, they come to inform this reverend senate
 About the present danger.

Enter Jaffier and Officer.

All. Give 'em entrance—Well, who are you?

Jaff. A villain.

Ant. Short and pithy;

The man speaks well.

Jaff. Would every man, that hears me,
 Would deal so honestly, and own his title.

Duke. 'Tis rumour'd, that a plot has been contriv'd
 Against this state; and you've a share in't too.
 If you are a villain, to redeem your honour
 Unfold the truth, and be restor'd with mercy.

Jaff. Think not, that I to save my life came hi-
 I know its value better; but in pity [ther;
 To all those wretches, whose unhappy dooms
 Are fix'd and seal'd. You see me here before you,
 The sworn and covenanted foe of Venice:
 But use me as my dealings may deserve,
 And I may prove a friend.

Duke. The slave capitulates;
 Give him the tortures.

Jaff.

Jaff. That you dare not do :
Your fear won't let you, nor the longing itch
To hear a story which you dread the truth of :
Truth, which the fear of smart shall ne'er get from
me.

Cowards are scar'd with threat'nings; boys are whipt
Into confessions : but a steady mind

Acts of itself, ne'er asks the body counsel.

Give him the tortures! Name but such a thing

Again, by Heav'n I'll shut these lips for ever.

Not all your racks, your engines, or your wheels,
Shall force a groan away, that you may guess at.

' *Ant.* A bloody-minded fellow, I'll warrant ;

' A damn'd bloody-minded fellow.

Duke. Name your conditions.

Jaff. For myself full pardon,
Besides the lives of two and twenty friends,
Whose names are here enroll'd—Nay let their crimes
Be ne'er so monstrous, I must have the oaths
And sacred promise of this reverend council,
That in a full assembly of the senate
The thing I swear be ratify'd. Swear this,
And I'll unfold the secret of your danger.

' *All.* We'll swear.

Duke. Propose the oath.

Jaff. By all the hopes
You have of peace and happiness hereafter,
Swear.

' *All.* We all swear.

' *Jaff.* To grant me what I've ask'd,
Ye swear ?

All. We swear.

Jaff. And, as ye keep the oath,
May you, and your posterity be bless'd,
Or curs'd for ever.

All. Else be curs'd for ever.

Jaff. Then here's the list, and with't the full dis-
close
Of all that threatens you. [*Delivers a paper.*
Now, fate, thou hast caught me.

Ant.

Ant. Why, what a dreadful catalogue of cut-throats is here ! I'll warrant you, not one of these fellows but has a face like a lion. I dare not so much as read their names over.

Duke. Give order that all diligent search be made To seize these men, their characters are public. The paper intimates their rendezvous To be at the house of the fam'd Grecian courtesan, Call'd Aquilina ; see the place secur'd.

Ant. What, my Nicky Nacky ! Hurry, durry ! Nicky Nacky, in the plot—I'll make a speech. Most noble senators, What headlong apprehensions drive you on, Right, noble, wise, and truly solid senators, To violate the laws and rights of nations ? The lady is a lady of renown ; 'Tis true, she holds a house of fair reception, And, tho' I say't myself, as many more Can say, as well as I.

2 Sen. My lord, long speeches Are frivolous here, when dangers are so near us. We all well know your interest in that lady ; The world talks loud on't.

Ant. Verily I have done ; I say no more.

Duke. But, since he has declar'd [tion Himself concern'd, pray, Captain, take great care To treat the fair-one as becomes her character ; And let her bed-chamber be search'd with decency. You, Jaffier, must with patience bear till morning To be our prisoner.

Jaff. Would the chains of death Had bound me safe, e'er I had known this minute.

I've done a deed will make my story hereafter Quoted in competition with all ill ones : The story of my wickedness shall run Down thro' the low traditions of the vulgar, And boys be taught to tell the tale of Jaffier.

Duke. Captain, withdraw you prisoner.

Jaff. Sir, if possible, [lose me ; Lead me where my own thoughts themselves may Where

Where I may doze out what I've left of life,
Forget myself, and this day's guilt and falsehood.
Cruel remembrance, how shall I appease thee?

[Exit guarded.

Offi. [without.] More traitors; room, room, make

Duke. How's this, guards? [room there.

Where are our guards? Shut up the gates, the trea-
Already at the doors. [son's

Enter Officer.

Offi. My lords, more traitors,
Seiz'd in the very act of consultation;
Furnish'd with arms and instruments of mischief.
Bring in the prisoners.

Enter Pierre, Renault, Theodore, Eliot, Revellido,
and other Conspirators, in fetters.

Pier. You, my lords, and fathers,
(As you are pleas'd to call yourselves) of Venice;
If you sit here to guide the course of justice,
Why these disgraceful chains, upon the limbs
That have so often labour'd in your service?
Are these the wreaths of triumph ye bestow
On those, that bring you conquest home, and honours?

Duke. Go on; you shall be heard, Sir.

Ant. And be hang'd too, I hope.

Pier. Are these the trophies I've deserv'd, for
Your battles with confederated powers? [fighting
When winds and seas conspir'd to overthrow you;
And brought the fleets of Spain to your own harbours;
And you, great Duke, shrunk trembling in your palace,
And saw your wife, the Adriatic, plough'd,
Like a lewd whore, by bolder prows than yours.
Stepp'd not I forth, and taught your loose Venetians
The task of honour, and the way of greatness?
Rais'd you from your capitulating fears
To stipulate the terms of su'd-for peace?
And this my recompence! If I'm a traitor,
Produce my charge; or shew the wretch that's base
And brave enough, to tell me I'm a traitor.

Duke. Know you one Jaffier? [Consp. murmur.

Pier, Yes, and know his virtue.

His

His justice, truth, his general worth, and sufferings
From a hard father, taught me first to love him.

Enter Jaffier guarded.

Duke. See him brought forth.

Pier. My friend too bound ! nay then
Our fate has conquer'd us, and we must fall.
Why droops the man whose welfare's so much mine,
They're rebut one thing ? These reverend tyrants, Jaffier,
Call us traitors. Art thou one, my brother ?

Jaff. To thee, I am the falsest, veriest slave,
That e'er betray'd a generous, trusting friend,
And gave up honour to be sure of ruin.
All our fair hopes, which morning was t'have crown'd,
Has this curs'd tongue o'erthrown.

Pier. So, then all's over :
Venice has lost her freedom, I my life.
No more !

Duke. Say ; will you make confession
Of your vile deeds, and trust the senate's mercy ?

Pier. Curs'd be your senate : curs'd your constitu-
The curse of growing factions and divisions, [tion :
Still vex your councils, shake your public safety,
And make the robes of government you wear
Hateful to you, as these base chains to me.

Duke. Pardon, or death ?

Pier. Death ! honourable death !

Ren. Death's the best thing we ask, or you can give.
No shameful bonds, but honourable death.

Duke. Break up the council. Captain, guard your
prisoners.

Jaffier, you're free, but these must wait for judgment.

[*Ex. all the senators.*

Pier. Come, where's my dungeon ? Lead me to my
It will not be the first time I've lodg'd hard [straw :
To do the senate service.

Jaff. Hold one moment.

Pier. Who's he disputes the judgment of the senate ?
Presumptuous rebel—on— [Strikes Jaff.

Jaff. By Heav'n, you stir not !
I must be heard ; I must have leave to speak.
Thou hast disgrac'd me, Pierre, by a vile blow :

Had

Had not a dagger done thee nobler justice ?
 But use me as thou wilt, thou can'st not wrong me,
 For I am fallen beneath the basest injuries :
 Yet look upon me with an eye of mercy,
 With pity and with charity behold me ;
 ' Shut not thy heart against a friend's repentance ;
 But, as there dwells a godlike nature in thee,
 Listen with mildness to my supplications.

Pier. What whining monk art thou ? what holy cheat,
 That would'st inroach upon my credulous ears,
 And cant'st thus vilely ? Hence ! I know thee not ;
 ' Dissemble and be nasty. Leave, hypocrite.

Jaff. Not know me, Pierre !

Pier. No, know thee not ! What art thou ?

Jaff. Jaffier, thy friend, thy once lov'd valu'd friend !
 Tho' now deserv'dly scorn'd, and us'd most hardly.

Pier. Thou, Jaffier ! thou, my once lov'd valu'd friend !
 By Heav'ns, thou ly'st ; the man so call'd, my friend,
 Was generous, honest, faithful, just, and valiant ;
 Noble in mind, and in his person lovely ;
 Dear to my eyes, and tender to my heart :
 But thou, a wretched, base, false, worthless coward,
 Poor, even in soul, and loathsome in thy aspect ;
 All eyes must shun thee, and all hearts detest thee.
 Prithce avoid ; nor longer cling thus round me,
 Like something baneful, that my nature's chill'd at.

Jaff. I have not wrong'd thee, by these tears I have
 not,

- ' But still am honest, true, and, hope too, valiant ;
 - ' My mind still full of thee, therefore still noble.
 - ' Let not thy eyes then shun me, nor thy heart
 - ' Detest me utterly. Oh ! look upon me,
 - ' Look back, and see my sad, sincere submission !
 - ' How my heart swells, as e'en 'twould burst my bosom ;
 - ' Fond of its goal, and labouring to be at thee.
 - ' What shall I do ? what say, to make thee hear me ?
- Pier.* Hast thou not wrong'd me ? Dars't thou call
 That once lov'd, valu'd friend of mine, [thyself
 And swear thou hast not wrong'd me ? Whence
 these chains ?

Whence

Whence the vile death which I may meet this moment?

Whence this dishonour, but from thee, thou false one?

Jaff. All's true; yet grant one thing, and I've

Pier. What's that? [done asking.

Jaff. To take thy life, on such conditions

The council have propos'd: thou, and thy friends,
May yet live long, and to be better treated.

Pier. Life! ask my life! Confess! record myself

A villain, for the privilege to breathe,

And carry up and down this cursed city,

A discontented and repining spirit,

Burthensome to itself, a few years longer;

To lose it, may be, at last, in a lewd quarrel [art!

For some new friend, treacherous and false as thou

No, this vile world and I, have long been jangling,

And cannot part on better terms than now,

When only men, like thee, are fit to live in't.

Jaff. By all that's just——

Pier. Swear by some other powers,

For thou hast broke that sacred oath too lately.

Jaff. Then, by that hell I merit, I'll not leave thee,

Till, to thyself, at least, thou'rt reconcil'd,

However thy resentment deal with me.

Pier. Not leave me!

Jaff. No; thou shalt not force me from thee.

Use me reproachfully, and like a slave;

Tread on me, buffet me, heap wrongs on wrongs

On my poor head; I'll bear it all with patience

Shall weary out thy most unfriendly cruelty:

Lie at thy feet, and kiss 'em, tho' they spurn me;

Till wounded by my sufferings, thou relent,

And raise me to thy arms, with dear forgiveness.

Pier. Art thou not——

Jaff. What?

Pier. A traitor?

Jaff. Yes.

Pier. A villain?

Jaff. Granted.

Pier. A coward, a most scandalous coward;
Spiritless, void of honour; one who I as sold

Thy

Thy everlasting fame, for shameless life !

Jaff. All, all, and more, much more : my faults
are numberless.

Pier. And would'st thou have me live on terms
Base, as thou'rt false ——— [like thine ?

Jaff. No ; 'tis to me that's granted :
The safety of thy life was all I aim'd at,
In recompence for faith and trust so broken.

Pier. I scorn it more, because preserv'd by thee ;
And, as when first my foolish heart took pity
On thy misfortunes, sought thee in thy miseries,
Reliev'd thy wants, and rais'd thee from the state
Of wretchedness, in which thy fate had plung'd thee,
To rank thee in my list of noble friends ;
All I receiv'd, in surety for thy truth,
Were unregarded oaths, and this, this dagger,
Given with a worthless pledge, thou since hast stol'n :
So I restore it back to thee again ;
Swearing by all those powers which thou hast violated,
Never from this curs'd hour, to hold communion,
Friendship, or interest, with thee, tho' our years
Where to exceed those limited the world.
Take it—farewel—for now I owe thee nothing.

Jaff. Say, thou wilt live then.

Pier. For my life, dispose it
Just as thou wilt, because 'tis what I'm tir'd with.

Jaff. Oh, Pierre !

Pier. No more.

Jaff. My eyes, won't lose the sight of thee,
But languish after thine, and ache with gazing.

Pier. Leave me—Nay, then thus, thus I throw
thee, from me ;

And curses, great as is thy falshood, catch thee. [*Exit*

Jaff. Amen.

He's gone, my father, friend, preserver,
And here's the portion, he has left me :

[*Holds the dagger up.*

This dagger. Well remember'd ! with this dagger,
I gave a solemn vow, of dire importance ;
Parted with this, and Belvidera together.

Have a care, mem'ry, drive that thought no farther,
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No, I'll esteem it, as a friend's last legacy ;
 Treasure it up, within this wretched bosom,
 Where it may grow acquainted with my heart,
 That, when they meet, they start not from each other.
 So, now for thinking— A blow, call'd traitor, villain,
 Coward, dishonourable coward ; fough !
 ' Oh ! for a long sound sleep, and so forget it.
 Down, busy devil.

Enter Belvidera.

Bel. Whither shall I fly ?
 Where hide me and my miseries together ?
 Where's now the Roman constancy I boasted ?
 Sunk into trembling fears and desperation,
 Not daring to look up to that dear face
 Which us'd to smile, even on my faults ; but, down,
 Bending these miserable eyes to earth,
 Must move in penance, and implore much mercy.

Jaff. Mercy ! kind Heav'n has surely endless stores
 Hoarded for thee, of blessings yet untasted :

' Let wretches, loaded hard with guilt, as I am,
 ' Bow with the weight, and groan beneath the bur-
 then,
 ' Creep with a remnant of that strength they've left
 ' Before the footstool of that Heav'n they've injur'd.
 Oh, Belvidera ! I'm the wretched'st creature [me ;
 E'er crawl'd on earth. ' Now, if thou'ast virtue help
 ' Take me into thy arms, and speak the words of peace
 ' To my divided soul, that wars within me,
 ' And raises every sense to my confusion :
 ' By Heav'n, I'm tottering on the very brink
 ' Of peace ; and thou art all the hold I've left.

' *Bel.* Alas ! I know thy sorrows are most mighty :
 ' I know thou'ast cause to mourn, to mourn, my Jaffi-
 ' With endless cries, and never-ceasing wailing : [er,
 ' Thou'ast lost——

' *Jaff.* Oh ! I have lost what can't be counted ;
 My friend too, Belvidera, that dear friend,
 Who, next to thee, was all my health rejoic'd in,
 Has us'd me like a slave, shamefully us'd me :
 'Twould break thy pitying heart to hear the story.

' What

- ‘ What shall I do? Resentment, indignation, [him,
- ‘ Love, pity, fear, and mem’ry how I’ve wrong’d
- ‘ Distract my quiet, with the very thought on’t.
- ‘ And tear my heart to pieces in my bosom.

Bel. What has he done?

‘ *Jaff.* Thou’dst hate me, should I tell thee.

‘ *Bel.* Why? [bear it;

- ‘ *Jaff.* Oh! he has us’d me! yet, by Heav’n, I
- ‘ He has us’d me, Belvidera! But first swear, [terly,
- ‘ That when I’ve told thee, thou wilt not loath me ut-
- ‘ Tho’ vilest blots and stains appear upon me;
- ‘ But still, at least with charitable goodness,
- ‘ Be near me, in the pangs of my affliction;
- ‘ Nor scorn me, Belvidera, as he has done.

‘ *Bel.* Have I then e’er been false, that now I’m doubted?

- ‘ Speak, what’s the cause I’m grown into distrust?
- ‘ Why thought unfit to hear my love’s complaining?

‘ *Jaff.* Oh!

‘ *Bel.* Tell me.

‘ *Jaff.* Bear my failings, for they’re many.

- ‘ Oh, my dear angel! in that friend, I’ve lost
- ‘ All my soul’s peace; for every thought of him,
- ‘ Strikes my sense hard, and deads it in my brains!
- ‘ Would’st thou believe it?

‘ *Bel.* Speak.

Jaff. Before we parted,

E’re yet his guards had led him to his prison,
 Full of severest sorrows for his sufferings,
 With eyes o’erflowing, and a bleeding heart,
 ‘ Humbling myself, almost beneath my nature,
 As at his feet I kneel’d, and su’d for mercy,
 ‘ Forgetting all our friendship, all the dearness,
 ‘ In which we’ve liv’d so many years together,
 With a reproachful hand, he dash’d a blow:
 He struck me, Belvidera! by Heav’n, he struck me!
 Buffeted, call’d me traitor, villain, coward.
 Am I a coward? Am I a villain? Tell me:
 Thou’rt the best judge, and mad’st me, if I am so?
 Damnation! Coward!

Bel. Oh! forgive him, Jaffier;

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And, if his sufferings wound thy heart already,
What will they do to-morrow?

Jaff. Ah!

Bel. To-morrow,

When thou shalt see him stretch'd in all the agonies
Of a tormenting and a shameful death;
His bleeding bowels, and his broken limbs,
Insulted o'er, by a vile butchering villain;
What will thy heart do then? Oh! sure 'twill stream,
Like my eyes now.

Jaff. What means thy dreadful story?
Death, and to-morrow! Broken limbs and bowels!
' Insulted o'er by a vile butchering villain!
' By all my fears, I shall start out to madness
' With bravely guessing, if the truth's hid longer.

Bel. The faithless senators, 'tis they've decreed it:
They say, according to our friend's request,
They shall have death, and no ignoble bondage:
Declare their promis'd mercy all as forfeited:
False to their oaths, and deaf to intercession,
Warrants are pass'd for public death to-morrow.

Jaff. Death! doom'd to die! condemn'd unheard!
unpleaded!

Bel. Nay, cruel! 'st racks and torments are preparing
To force confession from their dying pangs.
Oh! do not look so terribly upon me!
How your lips shake, and all your face disorder'd!
What means my love?

Jaff. Leave me, I charge thee, leave me——Strong
Wake in my heart. [temptations]

Bel. For what?

Jaff. No more, but leave me.

Bel. Why?

Jaff. Oh! by Heav'n, I love thee with that fond-
I would not have thee stay a moment longer [ness,
Near these curs'd hands: Are they not cold upon
thee? [*Pulls the dagger half out of his bosom, and puts it back again.*]

Bel. No, everlasting comfort's in thy arms.
To lean thus on thy breast, is softer ease
Than downy pillows, deck'd on leaves of roses.

Jaff.

Jaff. Alas! thou think'st not of the thorns 'tis
fill'd with :

Fly, e'er they gall thee. There's a lurking serpent
Ready to leap, and sting thee to the heart :
Art thou not terrify'd ?

Bel. No.

Jaff. Call to mind

What thou hast done, and whither thou hast brought me.

Bel. Hah ! [mischief !]

Jaff. Where's my friend? my friend, thou smiling
Nay, shrink not, now 'tis too late; 'thou should'st
have fled

' When thy guilt first had cause; ' for dire revenge
Is up, and raging for my friend. He groans !
Hark, how he groans ! his screams are in my ears.
Already ; see, they've fix'd him on the wheel,
And now they tear him—Murder ! Perjur'd senate !
Murder—Oh !—Hark thee, traitress, thou hast done
Thanks to thy tears, and false persuading love. [this !
How her eyes speak ! Oh, thou bewitching creature !

[Fumbling for his dagger.

Madness can't hurt thee. Come, thou little trembler,
Creep even into my heart, and there lie safe ;

'Tis thy own citadel—Hah—yet stand off.

Heav'n must have justice, ' and my broken vows

' Will sink me else beneath its reaching mercy.

I'll wink, and then 'tis done——

Bel. What means the lord

Of me, my life, and love ? What's in thy bosom,
Thou grasp'st it at so ? ' Nay, why am I thus treated ?

[Draws the dagger, and offers to stab her.

' What wilt thou do ? ' Ah ! do not kill me, Jaffier :

' Pity these panting breasts, and trembling limbs,

' That us'd to clasp thee when thy looks were milder,

' That yet hang heavy on my unpurg'd soul ;

' And plunge it not into eternal darkness.

Jaff. Know, Belvidera, when we parted last,

I gave this dagger with thee, as in trust,

To be thy portion if I e'er prov'd false.

On such condition, was my truth believ'd :

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But now 'tis forfeited, and must be paid for.

[Offers to stab her again.

Bel. Oh! Mercy!

[Kneeling.

Jaff. Nay, no struggling.

Bel. Now then, kill me,

[Leaps on his neck, and kisses him.

While thus, I cling about thy cruel neck,
Kiss thy revengful lips, and die in joys
Greater than any I can guess hereafter.

Jaff. I am, I am a coward, witness't, Heav'n,
Witness it, earth, and every being witness:
'Tis but one blow! yet, by immortal love,
I cannot longer bear a thought to harm thee.

[He throws away the dagger, and embraces her.

The seal of Providence is sure upon thee;
And thou wert born for yet unheard-of wonders.
Oh! thou wert either born to save or damn me.
By all the power that's given thee o'er my soul,
By thy resistless tears and conquering smiles,
'By the victorious love, that still waits on thee;
Fly, to thy cruel father, save my friend,
Or all our future quiet's, lost for ever.
Fall at his feet, cling round his rev'rend limbs,
Speak to him with thy eyes, and with thy tears,
Melt his hard heart, and wake dead nature in him,
Crush him, in th' arms, torture him, with thy softness;
Nor, till thy prayers are granted, set him free,
But conquer him, as thou hast conquer'd me. [Exit.

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

A C T V.

SCENE, *an Apartment in Priuli's House.*

Enter Priuli solus.

PRIULI.

WHY, cruel Heav'n, have my unhappy days
Been lengthen'd to this sad one? Oh! dis-
And deathless infamy have fall'n upon me. [honour.
Was it my fault? Am I a traitor? No.
But then, my only child, my daughter wedded:

There

There my best blood runs foul, and a disease
 Incurable has seiz'd upon my memory,
 To make it rot and stink to after-ages.
 'Curst be the fatal minute when I got her ;
 'Or wou'd that I'd been any thing but man,
 'And rais'd an issue which would ne'er have wrong'd.
 'The miserablest creatures (man excepted) [me.
 'Are not the less esteem'd, tho' their posterity
 'Degenerate from the virtues of their fathers :
 'The vilest beasts are happy in their offspring,
 'While only man gets traitors, whores, and villains.
 'Curs'd be the name, and some swift blow from fate
 'Lay this head deep, where mine may be forgotten.

Enter Belvidera, in a long mourning veil.

Belv. He's there, my father, my inhuman father,
 That for three years has left an only child
 Expos'd to all the outrages of fate,
 And cruel ruin !—oh——

Pri. What child of sorrow
 Art thou, that com'st wrapt up in weeds of sadness,
 And mov'st as if thy steps were tow'rd's a grave ?

Belv. A wretch who from the very top of happiness
 Am fallen into the lowest depths of misery,
 And want your pitying hand to raise me up again.

'*Pri.* Indeed thou talk'st as thou hadst tasted sor-
 'Would I could help thee ! [rows ;

'*Belv.* 'Tis greatly in your power :
 'The world too speaks you charitable ; and I,
 'Who ne'er ask'd alms before, in that dear hope,
 'Am come a begging to you, Sir.

'*Pri.* For what ?
 'Belv. Oh ! well regard me, is this voice a strange
 'Consider too, when beggars once pretend [one ?
 'A case like mine, no little will content 'em.

Pri. What would'st thou beg for ?
Belv. Pity and forgiveness. [*Throws up her veil.*
 By the kind tender names of child and father,
 Hear my complaints, and take me to your love.

Pri. My daughter !
Belv. Yes, your daughter, ' by a mother
 'Virtuous and noble, faithful to your honour,
 'Obe-

' Obedient to your will, kind to your wishes,
 ' Dear to your arms. By all the joys she gave you,
 ' When in her blooming years she was your treasure,
 ' Look kindly on me? In my face behold
 ' The lineaments of her's you've kiss'd so often,
 ' Pleading the cause of your poor cast off-child.

' *Pri.* Thou art my daughter.

' *Belv.* Yes'—and you've oft told me,
 With smiles of love and chaste paternal kisses,
 I'd much resemblance of my mother.

' *Pri.* Oh!

' Hadst thou inherited her matchless virtues,
 ' I'd too been bless'd.

' *Belv.* Nay, do not call to memory

' My disobedience; but let pity enter
 ' Into your heart, and quite deface th' impression.
 ' For could you think how mine's perplex'd, what sad-
 ' Fears and despairs distract the peace within me. [ness,
 ' Oh! you would take me into your dear, dear arms,
 ' Hover with strong compassion o'er your young one,
 ' To shelter me with a protecting wing
 ' From the black gather'd storm, that's just, just
Pri. Don't talk thus. [breaking.

Belv. Yes, I must; and you must hear too.

I have a husband.

Pri. Damn him.

Belv. Oh! do not curse him;

He would not speak so hard a word towards you
 On any terms, howe'er he deal with me.

Pri. Ah! what means my child?

' *Belv.* Oh! there's but this short moment

' 'Twixt me and fate: yet send me not with curses
 ' Down to my grave; afford me one kind blessing
 ' Before we part: just take me in your arms,
 ' And recommend me with a prayer to Heav'n,
 ' That I may die in peace; and when I'm dead—

' *Pri.* How my soul's catch'd!

' *Belv.* Lay me, I beg you, lay me

By the dear ashes of my tender mother.

' She would have pity'd me, had fate yet spar'd her.

' *Pri.* By Heav'n, my aking heart forebodes much
 mischief!

' Tell

' Tell me thy story, for I'm still thy father.

' *Belv.* No: I'm still contented.

' *Pri.* Speak.

' *Belv.* No matter.

' *Pri.* Tell me:

' By yon blest'd Heav'n, my heart runs o'er with

' *Belv.* Oh! [fondness.

' *Pri.* Utter't.

Belv. Oh! my husband, my dear husband,

Carries a dagger in his once kind bosom,

To pierce the heart of your-poor Belvidera.

' *Pri.* Kill thee!

Belv. Yes, kill me. When he pass'd his faith

And covenant against your state and senate,

He gave me up a hostage for his truth:

With me a dagger and a dire commission,

Whenever he fail'd, to plunge it thro' this bosom.

I learnt the danger, chose the hour of love.

T' attempt his heart, and bring it back to honour.

Great love prevail'd, and blest'd me with success:

He came, confess'd, betray'd his dearest friends

For promis'd mercy. Now they're doom'd to suffer,

Gall'd with remembrance of what then was sworn,

If they are lost, he vows t' appease the gods

With this poor life, and make my blood th' atone-

Pri. Heav'n's! [ment.

' *Belv.* Think you saw what pass'd at our last part-

' Think you beheld him like a raging lion, [sing

' Pacing the earth, and tearing up his steps,

' Fare in his eyes, and roaring with the pain

' Of burning fury: think you saw his one hand

' Fix'd on my throat, while the extended other

' Grasp'd a keen threat'ning dagger: Oh! twas 'thus

' We last embrac'd, when, trembling with revenge,

' He dragg'd me to the ground, and at my bosom

' Presented horrid death. Cry'd out, my friends,

' Where are my friends? swore, wept, rag'd, threat-
en'd, lov'd,

' For he yet lov'd, and that dear love preserv'd me

' To this last trial of a father's pity.

' I fear not death; but cannot bear a thought

That

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' That that dear hand should do th' unfriendly office.
If I was ever then your care, now hear me ;
Fly to the senate, save the promis'd lives
Of his dear friends, e'er mine be made the sacrifice.

Pri. Oh, my heart's comfort !

Belv. Will you not, my father ?

Weep not, but answer me.

Pri. By Heav'n I will.

Not one of them but what shall be immortal.

Canst thou forgive me all my follies past.

I'll henceforth be indeed a father ; never,

Never more thus expose, but cherish thee,

Dear as the vital warmth that feeds my life,

Dear as these eyes that weep in fondness o'er thee :

Peace to thy heart. Farewel.

Belv. Go, and remember,

Tis Belvidera's life her father pleads for. [*Ex. severally.*]

Enter Antonio.

' Hum, hum, ha !

' Signor Priuli, my lord Priuli, my lord, my lord, my

' lord. Now we lords love to call one another by our

' titles. My lord, my lord, my lord,—Pox on him, I

' am a lord as well as he. And so let him fiddle—I'll

' warrant him he's gone to the senate-house, and I'll

' be there too, soon enough for somebody. Odd—

' here's a tickling speech about the plot ; I'll prove

' there's a plot with a vengeance,—would I had it

' without book ; let me see—

' Most reverend senators,

' That there is a plot, surely by this time no man that

' hath eyes or understanding in his head will presume

' to doubt ; 'tis as plain as the light in the cucumber—

' no—hold there—cucumber does not come in yet—

' 'tis as plain as the light in the sun, or as the man in

' the moon, even at noon day. It is indeed a pump-

' kin-plot, which just as it was mellow, we have ga-

' ther'd and now we have gather'd it, prepar'd and

' dress'd it, shall we throw it like a pickled cucumber out

' of the window ? No : that it is not only a bloody, hor-

' rid, execrable, damnable, and audacious plot : but it

' is as I may so say, a saucy plot : and we all know, most

re-

‘ reverend fathers, that what is sauce for a goose is
 ‘ sauce for a gander: therefore, I say, as those
 ‘ blood thirsty ganders of the conspiracy would have
 ‘ destroy’d us geese of the senate, let us make haste to
 ‘ destroy them; so I humbly move for hanging—Hail!
 ‘ hurry durry,—I think this will do; though I was
 ‘ something out at first, about the fun and the cucum-
 ‘ ber.

‘ *Enter Aquilina.*

‘ *Aqui.* Good morrow, senator.

‘ *Ant.* Nacky, my dear Nacky; morrow, Nacky, odd
 ‘ I am very brisk, very merry, very pert, very jovial—
 ‘ ha a a a—kiss me, Nacky! how dost thou do, my little
 ‘ terry rory strumpet? Kiss me, I say, hussy, kiss me.

‘ *Aqui.* Kiss me, Nacky! hang you, Sir coxcomb;
 ‘ hang you, Sir.

‘ *Ant.* Haity taity, is it To indeed? With all my
 ‘ heart, faith—*Hey, then up go we.* Faith, *bey—then*
 ‘ *up go we,* dum dum derum dump. [*sings,*

‘ *Aqui.* Signor.

‘ *Ant.* Madona.

‘ *Aqui.* Do you intend to die in your bed?

‘ *Ant.* About threescore years hence much may be
 ‘ done, my dear.

‘ *Aqui.* You’ll be hang’d, Signor.

‘ *Ant.* Hang’d, sweet-heart, prithee be quiet;
 ‘ hang’d quoth-a; that’s a merry conceit with all my
 ‘ heart; why thou jok’st, Nacky; thou art given to
 ‘ joking, I’ll swear. Well, I protest, Nacky, nay I
 ‘ must protest, and will protest, that I love joking
 ‘ dearly, man. And I love thee for joking, and I’ll
 ‘ kiss thee for joking, and towse thee for joking; and
 ‘ odd, I have a devilish mind to take thee aside about
 ‘ that business for joking too, odd I have; and *Hey,*
 ‘ *then up we go,* dum dum derum dump. [*sings.*

‘ *Aqui.* See you this, Sir? [*Draws a dagger.*

‘ *Ant.* O laud, a dagger! Oh, laud! it is natu-
 ‘ rally my aversion, I cannot endure the sight on’t;
 ‘ hide it for Heaven’s sake; I cannot look that way till
 ‘ it be gone—hide it, hide it, oh! oh! hide it.

‘ *Aqui.* Yes, in your heart I’ll hide it.

Ant

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' *Ant.* My heart ! what hide a dagger in my heart's blood !

' *Aqui.* Yes, in thy heart, thy throat, thou pamper'd devil ;

' Thou hast help'd to spoil my peace, and I'll have vengeance

' On thy curs'd life, for all the bloody senate ;

' The perjur'd faithless senate. Where's my lord,

' My happiness, my love, my god, my hero,

' Doom'd by thy accursed tongue, among the rest,

' T' a shameful rack ? By all the rage that's in me,

' I'll be whole years in murdering thee.

' *Ant.* Why, Nacky,

' Wherefore so passionate ? What have I done ? What's

' the matter, my dear Nacky ? Am not I thy love,

' thy happiness, thy lord, thy hero, thy senator,

' and every thing in the world, Nacky.

' *Aqui.* Thou ! think'it thou, thou art fit to meet

' To bear the eager clasp of my embraces ? [my joys :

' Give me Pierre, or—

' *Ant.* Why, he's to be hang'd, little Nacky ;

' Truss'd up for treason and so forth, child.

' *Aqui.* Thou ly'st ; stop down thy throat that hellish sentence,

' Or 'tis thy last : swear that my love shall live,

' Or thou art dead.

' *Ant.* Ah ! h h h.

' *Aqui.* Swear to recall his doom ;

' Swear at my feet, and tremble at my fury.

' *Ant.* I do ! Now if she would but kick a little bit ;

' one kick now, Ah ! h h h.

' *Aqui.* Swear or—

' *Ant.* I do by these dear fragrant foots and little

' toes, sweet as e e e, my Nacky, Nacky, Nacky :

' faith and troth.

' *Aqui.* How !

' *Ant.* Nothing but untie thy shoe-strings a little,

' that's all, that's all, as I hope to live Nacky ; that's all,

' all.

' *Aqui.* Nay, then—

' *Ant.* Hold ; hold ; thy love, thy lord, thy hero,

' shall be preserv'd and safe.

Aqui.

- ‘ *Aqui.* Or may this poniard
 ‘ Rust in thy heart.
 ‘ *Ant.* With all my soul.
 ‘ *Aqui.* Farewel. [Exit.
 ‘ *Ant.* Adieu. Why, what a bloody-minded in-
 ‘ terate, termagant strumpet, have I been plagu’d
 ‘ with! Oh! h h! Yet no more! nay, then I die, I
 ‘ die—I’m dead already. [Stretches himself out.

SCENE, a Garden.

Enter Jaffier.

- Jaff.* Final destruction seize on all the world.
 Bend down, ye Heav’ns, and shutting round this earth,
 Crush the vile globe into its first confusion;
 ‘ Scorch it with elemental flames, to one curs’d cin-
 ‘ And all us little creepers in’t, call’d men, [der,
 ‘ Burn, burn to nothing: but let Venice burn,
 ‘ Hotter than all the rest: Here kindle hell,
 ‘ Ne’er to extinguish; and let souls hereafter
 ‘ Groan here, in all those pains which mine feels now.

Enter Belvidera.

Bel. My life—— [Meeting him.

Jaff. My plague—— [Turning from her.

Bel. Nay, then I see my ruin.
 If I must die!

- ‘ *Jaff.* No, death’s this day too busy;
 ‘ Thy father’s ill-tim’d mercy came too late.
 ‘ I thank thee for thy labours though; and him too:
 ‘ But all my poor, betray’d, unhappy friends,
 ‘ Have summons to prepare for fate’s black hour;
 ‘ And yet I live.

- ‘ *Bel.* Then be the next my doom:
 ‘ I see, thou hast pass’d my sentence in thy heart,
 ‘ And I’ll no longer weep, or plead against it,
 ‘ But with the humblest, most obedient patience,
 ‘ Meet thy dear hands, and kiss’em when they wound
 ‘ Indeed I am willing, but I beg thee do it [me.
 ‘ With some remorse; and when thou giv’st the blow,
 ‘ View me with eyes of a relenting love,
 ‘ And shew me pity, for ’twill sweeten justice.

‘ *Jaff.* Shew pity to thee!

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‘ *Bel.*

Bel. Yes ; and when thy hands,
 ' Charg'd with my fate, come trembling to the deed,
 ' As thou hast done a thousand thousand times
 ' To this poor breast, when kinder rage hath brought
 thee,

' When our stung hearts have leap'd to meet each
 ' And melting kisses seal'd our lips together ; [other,
 ' When joys have left me gasping in thy arms :
 ' So let my death comenow, and I'll not shrink from't.

Jaff. Nay, Belvidera, do not fear my cruelty,
 Nor let the thoughts of death perplex thy fancy ;
 But answer me to what I shall demand,
 With a firm temper and unshaken spirit.

Bel. I will, when I've done weeping—

Jaff. Fie, no more on't——
 How long is't since that miserable day
 We wedded first ?

Bel. Oh ! h h !

Jaff. Nay, keep in thy tears,
 Lest they unman me too.

Bel. Heav'n knows I cannot ;
 The words you utter sound so very sadly,
 The streams will follow—

Jaff. Come, I'll kiss 'em dry then.

Bel. But was't a miserable day ?

Jaff. A curs'd one.

Bel. I thought it otherwise ; and you've often
 ' In the transporting hours of warmest love, [sworn,
 ' When sure you spoke the truth, you've sworn, ' you

Jaff. 'Twas a rash oath. [blest'd it.

Bel. Then why am I not curs'd too ?

Jaff. No, Belvidera ; by th' eternal truth,
 I doat with too much fondness.

Bel. Still so kind !

Still then do you love me ?

Jaff. ' Nature in her workings,
 ' Inclines not with more ardour to creation,
 ' Than I do now towards thee : ' Man ne'er was blest'd,
 Since the first pair met, as I have been.

Bel. Then sure you will not curse me ?

Jaff. No, I'll bless thee.

I came

I came on purpose, Belvidera, to bless thee.

'Tis now, I think, three years, we've liv'd together.

Bel. And may no fatal minute ever part us,
Till, reverend grown for age and love, we go
Down to one grave, as our last bed, together;
There sleep in peace, till an eternal morning.

Jaff. When will that be? [*Sighing.*]

Bel. I hope, long ages hence.

Jaff. Have I not hitherto (I beg thee tell me
'Thy very fears) us'd thee with tender'st love?
'Did e'er my soul rise up in wrath against thee?
'Did I e'er frown, when Belvidera smil'd?
'Or by the least unfriendly word, betray
'Abating passion? Have I ever wrong'd thee?

Bel. No.

Jaff. Has my heart, or have my eyes, e'er wan-
'To any other woman? [*der'd*]

Bel. Never, never—I were the worst of false
ones, should I accuse thee.

'I own, I've been too happy; bless'd above

'My sex's charter.

Jaff. Did I not say, I came to bless thee?

Bel. You did.

Jaff. Then hear me, bounteous Heav'n:
Pour down your blessings on this beauteous head,
Where everlasting sweets are always springing,
With a continual giving hand: let peace,
Honour, and safety, always hover round her;
Feed her with plenty; let her eyes ne'er see
A sight of sorrow, nor her heart know mourning:
Crown all her days with joy, her nights with rest,
Harmless as her own thoughts; and prop her virtue,
To bear the loss of one that too much lov'd;
And comfort her with patience in our parting.

Bel. How! Parting, parting!

Jaff. Yes, for ever parting;
I have sworn, Belvidera, by yon Heav'n,
That best can tell how much I lose to leave thee,
We part this hour for ever.

Bel. Oh! call back
Your cruel blessing; stay with me and curse me.

Jaff. No, 'tis resolv'd.

Bel. Then hear me too, just Heav'n :

‘ Pour down your curses on this wretched head,
 ‘ With never-ceasing vengeance ; let despair,
 ‘ Danger, and infamy, nay all, surround me ;
 ‘ Starve me with wantings ; let my eyes ne'er see
 ‘ A sight of comfort, nor my heart know peace ;
 ‘ But dash my days with sorrow, nights with horrors,
 ‘ Wild as my own thoughts now, and let loose fury,
 ‘ To make me mad enough for what I lose,
 ‘ If I must lose him. If I must ? I will not.
 ‘ Oh ! turn and hear me ?

Jaff. Now hold, heart, or never.

Bel. By all the tender days we've liv'd together,
 ‘ By all our charming nights, and joys that crown'd
 Pity my sad condition ; speak, but speak. [em,

Jaff. Oh ! h h !

Bel. By these arms, that now cling round thy neck,
 ‘ By this dear kiss, and by ten thousand more,
 By these poor streaming eyes—

Jaff. Murder ! unhold me :
 By th' immortal destiny that doom'd me

[*Draws his dagger.*

To this curs'd minute, I'll not live one longer ;
 Resolve to let me go, or see me fall——

Bel. Hold, Sir, be patient.

Jaff. Hark, the dismal bell [Passing bell tolls.
 Tolls out for death ! I must attend its call too ;
 For my poor friend, my dying Pierre, expects me :
 He sent a message to require I'd see him
 Before he dy'd, and take his last forgiveness.
 Farewel, for ever.

Bel. Leave thy dagger with me,¹⁷
 Bequeath me something—Not one kiss at parting ;
 Oh ! my poor heart, when wilt thou break ?

[*Going out, looks back at him.*

Jaff. Yet stay :

We have a child, as yet a tender infant ;
 Be a kind mother to him when I'm gone ;
 Breed him in virtue, and the paths of honour,
 But never let him know his father's story ;

I charge

I charge thee guard him from the wrongs my fate
May do his future fortune, or his name.

Now—nearer yet— [Approaching each other.

Oh ! that my arms were riveted

Thus round thee ever ! But my friends ! my oath !

This, and no more. [Kisses her.

Bel. Another, sure another,

For that poor little one you've ta'en such care of,

I'll give't him truly.

Jaff. So now farewell.

Bel. For ever ?

Jaff. Heav'n knows for ever ; all good angels
guard thee. [Exit.

Bel. All ill ones sure had charge of me this moment.

Curs'd be my days, and doubly curs'd my nights,

' Which I must now mourn out in widow'd tears ;

' Blasted be every herb, and fruit, and tree ;

' Curs'd be the rain that falls upon the earth,

' And may the general curse, reach man and beast.

Oh ! give me daggers, fire or water :

How I could bleed, how burn, how drown, the waves

Huzzing and foaming round my sinking head,

Till I descended to the peaceful bottom !

Oh ! there's all quiet, here all rage and fury :

The air's too thin, and pierces my weak brain ;

I long for thick substantial sleep : Hell ! hell !

Bur'd from the centre, rage and roar aloud,

If thou art half so hot, so mad as I am.

' Enter Priuli, and Servants.

' Who's there ? [They seize her.

' *Pri.* Run, seize, and bring her safely home ;

' Guard her as you would life : Alas, poor creature !

' *Bel.* What to my husband ! then conduct me
quickly ;

' Are all things ready ? Shall we die most gloriously

' Say not a word of this to my old father :

' Murmuring streams, soft shades, and springing flowers !

' Lutes, laurels, seas of milk, and ships of amber.

[Exeunt.

SCENE

SCENE *opening, discovers a Scaffold, and a Wheel prepar'd for the Execution of Pierre ; then enter Officer, Pierre and Guards, 'a Friar,' Executioner, and a great Rabble.*

' *Offi.* Room, room there—stand all by, make room for the prisoner.

Pier. My friend not yet come ?

' *Fri.* Why are you so obstinate ?

' *Pier.* Why you so troublesome, that a poor wretch can't die in peace,

' But you, like ravens, will be croaking round him—

' *Fri.* Yet Heav'n—

' *Pier.* I tell thee, Heav'n and I are friends :

' I ne'er broke peace with't yet, by cruel murders,

' Rapine, or perjury, or vile deceiving :

' But liv'd in moral justice towards all men :

' Nor am a foe to the most strong believers,

' Howe'er my own short-sighted faith confines me.

' *Fri.* But an all-seeing judge—

' *Pier.* You say my conscience [science,

' Must be my accuser ; I have search'd that con-

' And find no records there of crimes that scare me.

' *Fri.* 'Tis strange, you should want faith.

' *Pier.* You want to lead

' My reason blind-fold, like a hamper'd lion,

' Check'd of its nobler vigour ; then when bated

' Down, to obedient tameness, make it couch

' And shew strange tricks, which you call you signs of faith :

' So silly souls are gull'd, and you get money.

' Away ; no more. ~~But~~ I'd have hereafter

' This fellow, write no lies of my conversion,

' Because he has crept upon my troubled hours.

Enter Jaffier.

Jaff. Hold : eyes be dry ;

Heart, strengthen me to bear

This hideous sight, and humble me. Take

The last forgiveness of a dying friend,

Betray'd by my vile falshood, to his ruin.

Oh, Pierre !

Pier. Yet nearer.

Jaff.

Jaff. Crawling on my knees,
And prostrate on the earth, let me approach thee :
How shall I look up to thy injur'd face,
That always us'd to smile with friendship on me ?
It darts an air of so much manly virtue,
That I, methinks, look little in thy sight,
And stripes are fitter for me, than embraces.

Pier. Dear to my arms, tho' thou'st undone my
I can't forget to love thee. Prithee, *Jaffier*, [*same*,
Forgive that filthy blow my passion dealt thee ;
I am now preparing for the land of peace,
And fain would have the charitable wishes
Of all good men, like thee, to bless my journey. [*e'er*

Jaff. Good ! I am the vilest creature, worse than
Suffer'd the shameful fate thou'rt going to taste of.

' Why was I sent for to be us'd thus kindly ?
' Call, call me villain, as I am ! describe
' The foul complexion of my hateful deeds :
' Lead me to th' rack, and stretch me in thy stead,
' I've crimes enough to give it its full load,
' And do it credit : thou wilt but spoil the use on't.
' And honest men hereafter bear its figure
' About them, as a charm for treacherous friendship.

Off. The time grows short, your friends are dead
already.

Jaff. Dead !

Pier. Yes, dead, *Jaffier* ; they've all dy'd like men.
Worthy their character. [*too*,

Jaff. And what must I do ?

Pier. Oh, *Jaffier* !

Jaff. Speak aloud thy burthen'd soul,
And tell thy troubles to thy tortur'd friend.

Pier. Friend ! Could'st thou yet be a friend, a ge-
nerous friend,

I might hope comfort from thy noble sorrows.
Heav'n knows, I want a friend.

Jaff. And a kind one,
That would not thus scorn my repenting virtue,
Or think, when he's to die, my thoughts are idle.

Pier. No ! live, I charge thee, *Jaffier*.

Jaff. Yes, I will live :

But

But it shall be to see thy fall reveng'd,
At such a rate, as Venice shall long groan for.

Pier. Wilt thou ?

Jaff. I will, by Heav'n.

Pier. Then still thou'rt noble,

And I forgive thee. Oh !—yet—shall I trust thee ?

Jaff. No ; I've been false already.

Pier. Do'st thou love me ?

Jaff. Rip up my heart, and satisfy thy doubtings.

Pier. Curse on this weakness. [*He weeps.*]

Jaff. Tears ! Amazement ! Tears !

I never saw thee melted thus before ;

And know there's something labouring in thy bosom,
That must have vent : Tho' I'm a villain, tell me.

Pier. See'st thou that engine ? [*Pointing to the*

Jaff. Why ? [*Wheel.*]

Pier. Is't fit a soldier, who has liv'd with honour,
Fought nations quarrels, and been crown'd with con-
Be expos'd a common carcase on a wheel ? [*quest.*]

Jaff. Hah !

Pier. Speak ! Is't fitting ?

Jaff. Fitting !

Pier. Yes ; is't fitting ?

Jaff. What's to be done ?

Pier. I'd have thee undertake

Something that's noble, to preserve my memory
From the disgrace that's ready to attain it.

Off. The day grows late, Sir.

Pier. I'll make haste. Oh, Jaffier !

Tho' thou'st betray'd me, do me some way justice.

Jaff. No more of that : thy wishes shall be satisfy'd ;
I have a wife, and she shall bleed : my child too,
Yield up his little throat, and all

T' appease thee——

[*Going away, Pierre holds him..*]

Pier. No—this—no more. [*He whispers Jaffier..*]

Jaff. Hah ! Is't then so ?

Pier. Most certainly.

Jaff. I'll do't.

Pier. Remember..

Off. Sir.

Pier.

Pier. Come, now I'm ready.

[He and Jaffier ascend the scaffold.

Captain, you should be a gentleman of honour ;
Keep off the rabble, that I may have room
To entertain my fate, and die with decency.

Come. [Takes off his gown, Executioner prepares to
' Fri. Son. bind him.

' Pier. Hence, tempter.

' Off. Stand off, priest.

' Pier. I thank you, Sir.

You'll think on't ? [To Jaffier.

' Jaff. 'Twon't grow stale before to-morrow.

Pier. Now, Jaffier ! now I'm going. Now—
[Executioner having bound him.

Jaff. Have at thee,
Thou honest heart, then—here— [Stabs him.
And this is well too. [Stabs himself.

' Fri. Damnable deed !

Pier. Now thou hast indeed been faithful.
This was done nobly—We have deceiv'd the senate.

Jaff. Bravely.

Pier. Ha, ha, ha——oh ! oh ! [Dies.

Jaff. Now, ye curs'd rulers,
Thus of the blood y've shed, I make libation,
And sprinkle it mingling. May it rest upon you,
And all your race. Be henceforth peace a stranger
Within your walls ; let plagues and famine waste
Your generations—Oh, poor Belvidera !

Sir, I have a wife, bear this in safety to her,
A token that with my dying breath I bless'd her,
And the dear little infant left behind me.
I'm sick—I'm quiet. [Dies.

' Off. Bear this news to the senate,
' And guard their bodies, till there's further orders.
' Heav'n grant I die so well.' [Scene shuts upon them.

Soft Music. Enter Belvidera distracted, led by two
of her Women, Priuli and Servants.

Pri. Strengthen her heart with patience, pitying
Heav'n,

Bel. Come, come, come, come, come, nay, come
to bed,

Pri. hee,

82 VENICE PRESERV'D.

Prithee, my love. The winds; hark how they whistle;

And the rain beats: Oh! how the weather shrinks me!

You are angry now, who cares? Pish, no indeed,

Chuse then, I say you shall not go, you shall not,

Whip your ill-nature; get you gone then; Oh!

Are you return'd? See, father, here he's come again:

Am I to blame to love him? O, thou dear one.

Why do you fly me? Are you angry still then?

Jaffier, where art thou? father why do you do thus?

Stand off, don't hide him from me. He's there somewhere.

Stand off, I say: What gone? Remember't, tyrant:

I may revenge myself for this trick, one day.

I'll do't—I'll do't. 'Renault's a nasty fellow;

' Hang him, hang him, hang him.

Enter Officer.

Pri. News, what news? [*Officer whispers Priuli.*

Off. Most sad, Sir;

Jaffier, upon the scaffold, to prevent

A shameful death, stabb'd Pierre, and next himself:

Both fell together.

Pri. Daughter.

Bel. Ha! look there!

My husband bloody and his friend too! Murder!

Who has done this? Speak to me, thou sad vision;

On these poor trembling knees I beg it. Vanish'd—

Here they went down—Oh, I'll dig, dig the den up!

You shan't delude me thus. Hoa, Jaffier, Jaffier.

Peep up, and give me but a look. I have him!

I've got him, father: Oh! 'now how I'll smuggle him!

My love! my dear! my blessing! help me! help me!

They have hold on me, and drag me to the bottom.

Nay—now they pull so hard—farewel— [*Dies.*

' *Maid.* She's dead;

' Breathless and dead.

Pri. Oh! guard me from the sight on't.

Lead me into some place that's fit for mourning;

Where

Where the free air, light, and the chearful sun,
 May never enter: hang it round with black;
 Set up one taper, that may light a day,
 As long as I've to live: and there all leave me:
 Sparing no tears, when you this tale relate,
 But bid all cruel fathers dread my fate.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

END of the FIFTH ACT.

EPI.

E P I L O G U E.

THE Text is done, and now for application,
 And when that's ended, pass your approbation.
 Though the Conspiracy's prevented here,
 Methinks I see another hatching there :
 And there's a certain faction fain would sway,
 If they had strength enough, and damn this play :
 But this the author bid me boldly say,
 If any take this plainness in ill part,
 He's glad on't from the bottom of his heart.
 Poets in honour of the truth should write,
 With the same spirit brave men for it fight.
 And though against him causeless hatreds rise,
 And daily where he goes of late he spies
 The frowns of sullen and revengful eyes ;
 'Tis what he knows, with much contempt, to bear.
 And serves a cause too good to let him fear.
 He fears no poison from an incens'd drab,
 No ruffian's five-foot sword, nor rascal's stab ;
 Nor any other snares of mischief laid,
 Not a Rose-Alley cudgel ambuscade,
 From any private cause where malice reigns,
 Or general pique all blockheads have to brains ;
 Nothing shall damn his pen, when truth does call,
 No, not the * picture mangler at Guildhall.
 The rebel-tribe, of which that vermin's one,
 Have now set forward, and their course begun ;
 And while that prince's figure they deface,
 As they before had massacred his name,
 Durst their base fears but look him in the face,
 They'd use his person as they've us'd his fame :
 A face in which such lineaments they read
 Of that great martyr's, whose rich blood they shed,
 That their rebellious hate they still retain,
 And in his son would murder him again.
 With indignation then let each brave heart
 Rouze and unite, to take his injur'd part ;
 'Till royal love and goodness call him home,
 And songs of triumph melt him as he come :
 'Till Heav'n his honour and our peace restore,
 And villains never wrong his virtue more.

* He that cut the duke of York's picture.



Act.

JANE SHORE.

Scene



Roberts del.

Engraved for Wells Street Theatre April 1776.

*W^m HARTLEY in the Character of JANE SHORE.
Exit: Go to— You'll teach your Tongue another Tale.*

BELL'S EDITION.

JANE SHORE.

A TRAGEDY, by N. ROWE, Esq.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane.

Regulated from the Prompt-Book,

By PERMISSION of the MANAGERS,

By Mr. HOPKINS, Prompter.

— Conjux ubi pristinus illi
Responder Curis.

VIRG.



LONDON:

Printed for JOHN BELL, near Exeter-Exchange, in the Strand,
and C. ETHERINGTON, at York.

MDCCCLXXVI.

TO HIS GRACE the
 DUKE of *Queensberry* and *Dover*,
 MARQUIS of *Beverley*, &c.

MY LORD,

I Have long lain under the greatest obligation to your Grace's family, and nothing has been more in my wishes, than that I might be able to discharge some part, at least, of so large a debt. But your noble birth and fortune, the power, number, and goodness of those friends you have already, have placed you in such an independency on the rest of the world, that the services I am able to render to your Grace, can never be advantageous, I am sure not necessary, to you in any part of your life. However, the next piece of gratitude, and the only one I am capable of, is the acknowledgment of what I owe: and as this is the most public, and indeed the only way I have of doing it, your Grace will pardon me, if I take this opportunity, to let the world know the duty and honour I had for your illustrious father. It is, I must confess, a very tender point to touch upon; and at the first sight, may seem an ill-chosen compliment, to renew the memory of such a loss, especially to a disposition so sweet and gentle, and to a heart so sensible of filial piety, as your Grace's has been, even from your earliest childhood. But perhaps, this is one of those griefs, by which the heart may be made better; and if the remembrance of his death, bring heaviness along with it, the honour that

is paid to his memory by all good men, shall wipe away those tears, and the example of his life, set before your eyes, shall be of the greatest advantage to your Grace, in the conduct and future disposition of your own.

In a character so amiable, as that of the duke of Queensberry was, there can be no part so proper to begin with, as that which was in him, and is in all good men, the foundation of all other virtues, either religious or civil, I mean good-nature: Good-nature, which is friendship between man and man, good-breeding in courts, charity in religion, and the true spring of all beneficence in general. This was a quality he possessed in as great a measure, as any gentleman I ever had the honour to know. It was this natural sweetness of temper, which made him the best man in the world to live with, in any kind of relation. It was this made him a good master to his servants, a good friend to his friends, and the tenderest father to his children. For the last, I can have no better voucher than your Grace; and for the rest, I may appeal to all that have had the honour to know him. There was a spirit and pleasure in his conversation, which always enlivened the company he was in; which, together with a certain easiness and frankness in his disposition, that did not at all derogate from the dignity of his birth and character, rendered him infinitely agreeable. And as no man had a more delicate taste of natural wit, his conversation always abounded in good-humour.

For those parts of his character which related to the public, as he was a nobleman of the first rank, and a minister of state, they will be best known by the great employments he passed through; all which he discharged worthily as to himself, justly to the princes who employed him, and advantageously for his country. There is no occasion to enumerate his several employments, as secretary of state, for Scotland in particular, for Britain in general, or lord high commissioner of Scotland; which last office he bore more than once; but at no time more honourably,

honourably, and (as I hope) more happily, both for the present age and for posterity, than when he laid the foundation for the British Union. The constancy and address which he manifested, on that occasion, are still fresh in every body's memory; and perhaps when our children shall reap those benefits from that work, which some people do not foresee and hope for now, they may remember the duke of Queensberry with that gratitude, which such a piece of service done to his country deserves.

He shewed, upon all occasions, a strict and immediate attachment to the crown, in the legal service of which, no man could exert himself more dutifully nor more strenuously: and at the same time, no man gave more bold and more generous evidences of the love he bore to his country. Of the latter, there can be no better proof, than the share he had in the late happy Revolution; nor of the former, than that dutiful respect, and unshaken fidelity, which he preserved for her present majesty, even to his last moments.

With so many good and great qualities, it is not at all strange that he possessed so large a share, as he was known to have, in the esteem of the queen, and her immediate predecessor; nor that those great princes should repose the highest confidence in him: And at the same time, what a pattern has he left behind him for the nobility in general, and for your Grace in particular, to copy after!

Your Grace will forgive me, if my zeal for your welfare and honour (which nobody has more at heart than myself) shall press you with some more than ordinary warmth to the imitation of your noble father's virtues. You have, my Lord, many great advantages, which may encourage you to go on in pursuit of this reputation: It has pleased God to give you naturally, that sweetness of temper, which, as I have before hinted, is the foundation of all good inclinations. You have the honour to be born, not only of the greatest, but of the best parents; of a

A 3

gentleman

gentleman generally beloved, and generally lamented; and of a lady adorned with all virtues that enter into the character of a good wife, an admirable friend, and a most indulgent mother. The natural advantages of your mind, have been cultivated by the most proper arts and manners of education. You have the care of many noble friends, and especially of an excellent uncle, to watch over you in the tenderness of your youth. You set out amongst the first of mankind, and I doubt not but your virtues will be equal to the dignity of your rank.

That I may live to see your Grace eminent for the love of your country, for your service and duty to your prince, and, in convenient time, adorned with all the honours that have ever been conferred upon your noble family: that you may be distinguished to posterity, as the bravest, greatest, and best man of the age you live in, is the hearty wish and prayer of,

My Lord,

Your Grace's most obedient, and

most faithful, humble servant,

N. ROWE.

PROLOGUE.

P R O L O G U E.

*T*O-night, if you have brought your good old taste,
 We'll treat you with a downright English feast :
 A tale, which told long since in homely wise,
 Hath never fail'd of melting gentle eyes.
 Let no nice Sir, despise our hapless dame,
 Because recording ballads chaunt her name ;
 Those venerable ancient song-enditers
 Soar'd many a pitch above our modern writers :
 They caterwaul'd in no romantic ditty,
 Sighing for Phillis's, or Chole's pity.
 Justly they drew the fair, and spoke her plain,
 And sung her by her christian name—'twas Jane.
 Our numbers may be more refin'd than those,
 But what we've gain'd in verse, we've lost in prose.
 Their words no shuffling, double-meaning knew,
 Their speech was homely, but their hearts were true.
 In such an age, immortal Shakespear wrote,
 By no quaint rules, nor hampering criticks taught ;
 With rough majestic force he mov'd the heart,
 And strength and nature made amends for art.
 Our humble author does his steps pursue,
 He owns he had the mighty bard in view ;
 And in these scenes has made it more his care,
 To rouse the passions, than to charm the ear.
 Yet for those gentle beaux, who love the chime,
 The ends of acts still jingle into rhyme.
 The ladies too, he hopes, will not complain,
 Here are some subjects for a softer strain,
 A nymph forsaken, and a perjur'd swain.
 What most he fears, is, lest the dames should frown,
 The dames of wit and pleasure about town,
 To see our picture drawn unlike their own.
 But lest that error should provoke to fury
 The hospitable hundreds of old Drury,
 He bid me say, in our Jane Shore's defence,
 She dol'd about the charitable pence,
 Built hospitals, turn'd saint, and dy'd long since.

}
 }
 }
 For

*For her example, whatsoe'er we make it,
 They have their choice to let alone or take it.
 Tho' few, as I conceive, will think it meet,
 To weep so sorely, for a sin so sweet :
 Or mourn and mortify the pleasant sense,
 To rise in tragedy two ages hence.*

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M E N.

	<i>Covent-garden.</i>	<i>Drury-lane.</i>
Duke of Gloster	Mr. Clarke.	Mr. Jefferson.
Lord Hastings - -	Mr. Barry.	Mr. Garrick.
Catesby - - - -	Mr. Thompson.	Mr. Wright.
Sir Richard Rat-		
cliffe - - - - -	Mr. Davis.	Mr. Griffith.
Belmour - - - -	Mr. Hull.	Mr. Packer.
Dumont - - - - -		Mr. Reddish.

W O M E N.

Alicia - - - - -	Mrs. Barry.	Miss Younge.
Jane Shore - - -	Mrs. Hartley.	Mrs. Yates.

Several lords of the council, guards, and attendants.

S C E N E, L O N D O N.

J. A. N. E.

JANE SHORE.

A C T I.

SCENE, *the Tower.*

*Enter the Duke of Gloucester, Sir Richard Ratcliffe,
and Catesby.*

GLOUCESTER.

THUS far success attends upon our councils,
And each event has answer'd to my wish;
The queen and all her upstart race are quell'd;
Dorset is banish'd, and her brother Rivers,
Ere this, lies shorter by the head at Pomfret.
The nobles have, with joint concurrence, nam'd me
Protector of the realm. My brother's children,
Young Edward and the little York, are lodg'd
Here, safe within the Tower. How say you, Sirs,
Does not this business wear a lucky face?
The sceptre and the golden wreath of royalty
Seem hung within my reach.

Rat. Then take 'em to you,
And wear 'em long and worthily. You are
The last remaining male of princely York,
(For Edward's boys, the state esteems not of them,)
And therefore on your sov'reignty and rule,

The

The common-weal does her dependance make,
And leans upon your highness' able hand.

Cat. And yet to-morrow does the council meet,
To fix a day for Edward's coronation.
Who can expound this riddle?

Gloſt. That can I.

Those lords are each one my approv'd good friends,
Of special trust and nearness to my bosom;
And howsoever busy they may seem,
And diligent to baffle in the state,
Their zeal goes on no further than we lead,
And at our bidding stays.

Cat. Yet there is one,
And he amongst the foremost in his power,
Of whom I wish your highness were assur'd.
For me, perhaps it is my nature's fault,
I own, I doubt of his inclining, much.

Gloſt. I guess the man at whom your words wou'd
point :

Hastings——

Cat. The same.

Gloſt. He bears me great good-will,

Cat. 'Tis true, to you, as to the lord protector,
And Gloster's duke, he bows with lowly service:
But were he bid to cry, "God save king Richard,"
Then tell me in what terms he would reply?
Believe me, I have prov'd the man, and found him:
I know he bears a most religious reverence
To his dead master Edward's royal memory,
And whither that may lead him is most plain.
Yet more—One of that stubborn sort he is,
Who, if they once grow fond of an opinion,
They call it honour, honesty, and faith,
And sooner part with life than let it go.

Gloſt. And yet this tough impracticable heart,
Is govern'd by a dainty-finger'd girl;
Such flaws are found in the most worthy natures;
A laughing, toying, wheedling, whimpering the
Shall make him amble on a gossip's message,
And take the distaff with a hand as patient
As e'er did Hercules.

Rat.

Rat. The fair Alicia,
Of noble birth and exquisite of feature,
Has held him long a vassal to her beauty.

Cat. I fear, he fails in his allegiance there ;
Or my intelligence is false, or else
The dame has been too lavish of her feast,
And fed him till he loaths.

Gloft. No more, he comes.

Enter Lord Hastings.

Hast. Health, and the happiness of many days,
Attend upon your grace.

Gloft. My good lord chamberlain,
We're much beholden to your gentle friendship.

Hast. My lord, I come an humble suitor to you.

Gloft. In right good time. Speak out your pleasure freely.

Hast. I am to move your highness in behalf
Of Shore's unhappy wife.

Gloft. Say you, of Shore ?

Hast. Once a bright star, that held her place on
high :

The first and fairest of our English dames,
While royal Edward held the sov'reign rule.
Now sunk in grief, and pining with despair,
Her waning form no longer shall incite
Envy in woman, or desire in man.

She never sees the sun, but thro' her tears,
And wakes to sigh the live-long night away.

Gloft. Marry! the times are badly chang'd with
her,

From Edward's days to these. Then all was jollity,
Feasting and mirth, light wantonness and laughter,
Piping and playing, minstrelsy and masquing ;
'Till life fled from us like an idle dream,
A shew of mommery without a meaning.
My brother, rest and pardon to his soul,
Is gone to his account ; for this his minion,
The revel-rout is done—But you were speaking

Concern-

Concerning her—I have been told, that you
Are frequent in your visitation to her.

Hast. No farther, my good lord, than friendly
pity.

And tender-hearted charity allow.

Gloft. Go to; I did not mean to chide you for it.
For, sooth to say, I hold it noble in you
To cherish the distress'd—On with your tale.

Hast. Thus it is, gracious Sir, that certain officers,
Using the warrant of your mighty name,
With insolence unjust, and lawless power,
Have seiz'd upon the lands which late she held
By grant, from her great master Edward's bounty.

Gloft. Somewhat of this, but slightly, have I heard;
And tho' some counsellors of forward zeal,
Some of most ceremonious sanctity,
And bearded wisdom, often have provok'd
The hand of justice to fall heavy on her;
Yet still, in kind compassion of her weakness,
And tender memory of Edward's love,
I have withheld the merciless stern law
From doing outrage on her helpless beauty.

Hast. Good Heav'n, who renders mercy back for
mercy,
With open-handed bounty shall repay you:
This gentle deed shall fairly be set foremost,
To screen the wild escapes of lawless passion,
And the long train of frailties flesh is heir to.

Gloft. Thus far, the voice of pity pleaded only:
Our farther and more full extent of grace
Is given to your request. Let her attend,
And to ourself deliver up her griefs.
She shall be heard with patience, and each wrong
At full redress'd. But I have other news;
Which much import us both; for still my fortunes
Go hand in hand with yours: our common foes,
The queen's relations, our new-fangled gentry,
Have fall'n their haughty crests—That for your pri-
vacy.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE

SCENE, *an Apartment in Jane Shore's House.*

Enter Belmour and Dumont.

Bel. How she has liv'd you have heard my tale already,

The rest your own attendance in her family,
Where I have found the means this day to place you,
And nearer observation, best will tell you.
See, with what sad and sober cheer she comes.

Enter Jane Shore.

Sure, or I read her visage much amiss,
Or grief besets her hard. Save you, fair lady,
The blessings of the chearful morn be on you.
And greet your beauty with its opening sweets.

J. Sh. My gentle neighbour, your good wishes still
Pursue my hapless fortunes! Ah, good Belmour!
How few, like thee, enquire the wretched out,
And court the offices of soft humanity?
Like thee reserve their raiment for the naked,
Reach out their bread to feed the crying orphan,
Or mix their pitying tears with those that weep?
Thy praise deserves a better tongue than mine,
To speak and bless thy name. Is this the gentleman,
Whose friendly service you commended to me?

Bel. Madam it is.

J. Sh. A venerable aspect.

[*Aside.*

Age sits with decent grace upon his visage,
And worthily becomes his silver locks;
He wears the marks of many years well spent,
Of virtue, truth well try'd, and wise experience;
A friend like this would suit my sorrows well.
Fortune, I fear me, Sir, has meant you ill, [*To Dum.*
Who pays your merit with that scanty pittance
Which my poor hand and humble roof can give.
But to supply these golden vantages,
Which elsewhere you might find, expect to meet
A just regard and value for your worth,

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B

The

The welome of a friend, and the free partnership
Of all that little good the world allows me.

Dum. You over-rate me much ; and all my answer
Must be my future truth ; let them speak for me,
And make up my deserving.

J. Sh. Are you of England ?

Dum. No, gracious lady, Flanders claims my birth ;
At Antwerp has my constant bidding been,
Where sometimes I have known more plenteous
days

Than these which now my failing age affords.

J. Sh. Alas ! at Antwerp !—Oh forgive my tears !
[Weeping.

They fall for my offences—and must fall
Long, long ere they shall wash my stains away.
You knew perhaps—Oh grief ! Oh shame !—my husband.

Dum. I knew him well—but stay this flood of anguish,

The senseless grave feels not your pious sorrows :
Three years and more are past, since I was bid,
With many of our common friends, to wait him
To his last peaceful mansion. I attended,
Sprinkled his clay-cold corse with holy drops,
According to our church's rev'rend rite,
And saw him laid in hallow'd ground, to rest.

J. Sh. Oh, that my soul had known no joy but him !
That I had liv'd within his guiltless arms,
And dying slept in innocence beside him !
But now his dust abhors the fellowship,
And scorns to mix with mine.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. The lady Alicia
Attends your leisure.

J. Sh. Say I wish to see her. [Exit Servant,
Please, gentle Sir, one moment to retire,
I'll wait you on the instant, and inform you
Of each unhappy circumstance, in which

Your

Your friendly aid and counsel much may stead me.
[Exit Belmour and Dumont.]

Enter Alicia.

Alic. Still, my fair friend, still shall I find you thus ?
 Still shall these sighs heave after one another,
 These trickling drops chase one another still,
 As if the posting messengers of grief
 Could overtake the hours fled far away,
 And make old Time come back ?

J. Sh. No, my Alicia,
 Heaven and his saints be witnesses to my thoughts,
 There is no hour of all my life o'er past,
 That I could wish should take its turn again.

Alic. And yet some of those days my friend has
 known,
 Some of those years, might pass for golden ones,
 At least if womankind can judge of happiness.
 What could we wish, we who delight in empire,
 Whose beauty is our sov'reign good, and gives us
 Our reasons to rebel, and pow'r to reign,
 What could we more than to behold a monarch,
 Lovely, renown'd, a conqueror, and young;
 Bound in our chains, and fighting at our feet ?

J. Sh. 'Tis true, the royal Edward was a wonder,
 The goodly pride of all our English youth ;
 He was the very joy of all that saw him.
 Form'd to delight, to love and to persuade.

• Impassive spirits and angelic natures
 • Might have been charm'd, like yielding human
 weakness,
 • Stoop'd from their Heav'n, and listen'd to his talk-
 But what had I to do with kings and courts ? *[sing.]*
 My humble lot had cast me far beneath him ;
 And that he was the first of all mankind,
 The bravest, and most lovely, was my curse.

Alic. Sure, something more than fortune join'd
 your loves :

Nor could his greatness, and his gracious form,
 Be elsewhere match'd so well, as to the sweetness

And beauty of my friend.

J. Sb. Name him no more :

He was the bane and ruin of my peace.

This anguish and these tears, these are the legacies

His fatal love has left me. Thou wilt see me,

Believe me, my Alicia, thou wilt see me,

E'er yet a few short days pass o'er my head,

Abandon'd to the very utmost wretchedness.

The hand of pow'r has seiz'd almost the whole

Of what was left for needy life's support ;

Shortly thou wilt behold me poor, and kneeling

Before thy charitable door for bread.

Alic. Joy of my life, my dearest Shore, forbear

To wound my heart with thy foreboding sorrows ;

Raise thy sad soul to better hopes than these,

Lift up thy eyes, and let them shine once more,

Bright as the morning sun above the mist.

Exert thy charms, seek out the stern Protector,

And sooth his savage temper with thy beauty :

Spite of his deadly, unrelenting nature,

He shall be mov'd to pity and redress thee.

J. Sb. My form, alas ! has long forgot to please ;

The scene of beauty and delight is chang'd ;

No roses bloom upon my fading cheek,

Nor laughing graces wanton in my eyes ;

But haggard grief, lean-looking fallow care,

And pining discontent, a rueful train,

Dwell on my brow, all hideous and forlorn.

One only shadow of a hope is left me ;

The noble minded Hastings, of his goodness,

Has kindly underta'en to be my advocate,

And move my humble suit to angry Gloster.

Alic. Does Hastings undertake to plead your cause ?

But wherefore should he not ? Hastings has eyes ;

The gentle lord has a right tender heart,

Melting and easy, yielding to impression,

And catching the soft flame from each new beauty ;

But yours shall charm him long.

J. Sb. Away, you flatterer !

Nor charge his gen'rous meaning with a weakness,

Which

Which his great soul and virtue must disdain.
 Too much of love thy hapless friend has provid,
 Too many giddy foolish hours are gone,
 And in fantastic measures danc'd away :
 May the remaining few know only friendship.
 So thou, my dearest, truest, best Alicia,
 Vouchsafe to lodge me in thy gentle heart,
 A partner there ; I will give up mankind,
 Forget the transports of encreasing passion,
 And all the pangs we feel for its decay.

Alic. Live ! live and reign for ever in my bosom ;
 [Embracing.]

Safe and unrivall'd there possess thy own ;
 And you, the brightest of the stars above,
 Ye saints that once were women here below,
 Be witness of the truth, the holy friendship,
 Which here to this my other self I vow.
 If I not hold her nearer to my soul,
 Than every other joy the world can give ;
 Let poverty, deformity, and shame,
 Distraction and despair seize me on earth,
 Let not my faithless ghost have peace hereafter ;
 Nor taste the bliss of your celestial fellowship.

J. S. Yes, thou art true, and only thou art true ;
 Therefore these jewels, once the lavish bounty
 Of royal Edward's love, I trust to thee ;

[Giving a casket.]

Receive this, all that I can call my own,
 And let it rest unknown, and safe with thee :
 That if the state's injustice should oppress me,
 Strip me of all, and turn me out a wanderer,
 My wretchedness may find relief from thee,
 And shelter from the storm.

Alic. My all is thine ;
 One common hazard shall attend us both,
 And both be fortunate, or both be wretched.
 But let thy fearful doubting heart be still ;
 The saints and angels have thee in their charge,
 And all things shall be well. Think not, the good,
 The gentle deeds of mercy thou hast done,

Shall die forgotten all; ' the poor, the pris'ner,
 ' The fatherless, the friendless, and the widow,
 ' Who daily own the bounty of thy hand,
 ' Shall cry to Heav'n and pull a blessing on thee;
 Ev'n man, the merciless insulter man,
 Man, who rejoices in our sex's weakness,
 Shall pity thee, and with unwonted goodness
 Forget thy failings, and record thy praise.

J. Sb. Why should I think that man will do for me,
 What yet he never did for wretches like me?
 Mark by what partial justice we are judg'd:
 Such is the fate unhappy women find,
 And such the curse intail'd upon our kind,
 That man, the lawless libertine, may rove,
 Free and unquestion'd through the wilds of love;
 While woman, sense and nature's easy fool,
 If poor weak woman swerve from virtue's rule,
 If, strongly charm'd, she leave the thorny way,
 And in the softer paths of pleasure stray,
 Ruin ensues, reproach and endless shame,
 And one false step entirely damns her fame:
 In vain with tears the loss she may deplore,
 In vain look back on what she was before;
 She sets, like stars that fall, to rise no more. [*Ex.*]

END of the FIRST ACT.

ACT.

A C T II.

S C E N E *continues.*

Enter Alicia, speaking to Jane Shore as entering.

A L I C I A.

NO farther, gentle friend; good angels guard
 you,
 And spread their gracious wings about your slumbers.
 The drowsy night grows on the world, and now
 The busy craftsmen and the o'er-labour'd hind
 Forget the travail of the day in sleep:
 Care only wakes, and moping pensiveness;
 With meagre discontented looks they fit,
 And watch the wasting of the midnight taper.
 Such vigils must I keep, so wakes my soul,
 Restless and self-tormented! Oh, false Hastings!
 Thou hast destroy'd my peace. [*Knocking without.*]
 What noise is that?
 What visitor is this, who with bold freedom,
 Breaks in upon the peaceful night and rest,
 With such a rude approach?

Enter a Servant.

Ser. One from the court,
 Lord Hastings (as I think) demands my lady. [*him*]
Ali. Hastings! Be still my heart, and try to meet
 With his own arts: with falsehood—But he comes.

Enter Lord Hastings, speaks to a servant as entering.

Hast. Dismiss my train, and wait alone without.
 Alicia here! Unfortunate encounter!
 But be it as it may.

Ali. When humbly, thus,
 The great descend to visit the afflicted,
 When thus, unmindful of their rest, they come
 To sooth the sorrows of the midnight mourner,
 Comfort comes with them; like the golden sun,
 Dispers

Dispels the fullen shades with her sweet influence,
And cheers the melancholy house of care.

Hast. 'Tis true, I would not over-rate a courtesy,
Nor let the coldness of delay hang on it,
To nip and blast its favour, like a frost ;
But rather chose, at this late hour, to come,
That your fair friend may know I have prevail'd ;
The lord protector has receiv'd her suit,
And means to shew her grace.

Ali. My friend ! my lord.

Hast. Yes, lady, yours : none has a right more am-
To task my pow'r than you. [ple

Ali. I want the words,
To pay you back a compliment so courtly ;
But my heart guesses at the friendly meaning,
And wo't not die your debtor,

Hast. 'Tis well, madam.
But I would see your friend.

Ali. Oh, thou false lord !
I would be mistress of my heaving heart,
Stifle this rising rage, and learn from thee
To dress my face in easy dull indiff'rence :
But two'not be ; my wrongs will tear their way,
And rush at once upon thee.

Hast. Are you wise ?
Have you the use of reason ? Do you wake ?
What means this raving, this transporting passion ?

Ali. Oh, thou cool traitor ! thou insulting tyrant.
Dost thou behold my poor distracted heart,
Thus rent with agonizing love and rage,
And ask me what it means ? Art thou not false ?
Am I not scorn'd, forsaken, and abandon'd,
Left, like a common wretch, to shame and infamy,
Giv'n up to be the sport of villains-tongues,
Of laughing parasites, and lewd buffoons ;
And all because my soul has doated on thee
With love, with truth, and tenderness unutterable !

Hast. Are these the proofs of tenderness and love ?
These endless quarrels, discontents, and jealousies,
These never-ceasing wailings and complainings,
These

These furious starts, these whirlwinds of the soul,
Which every other moment rise to madness?

Ali. What proof, alas! have I not giv'n of love?
What have I not abandon'd to thy arms?
Have I not set at nought my noble birth,
A spotless fame, and an unblemish'd race,
The peace of innocence, and pride of virtue?
My prodigality has giv'n thee all;
And now, I've nothing left me to bestow,
You hate the wretched bankrupt you have made.

Hast. Why am I thus pursu'd from place to place,
Kept in the view, and cross'd at every turn?
In vain I fly, and, like a hunted deer,
Scud o'er the lawns, and hasten to the covert;
E'er I can reach my safety, you o'ertake me
With the swift malice of some keen reproach,
And drive the winged shaft deep in my heart.

Ali. Hither you fly, and here you seek repose;
Spite of the poor deceit, your arts are known,
Your pious, charitable midnight visits.

Hast. If you are wise, and prize your peace of
mind,

Yet take the friendly counsel of my love;
Believe me true, nor listen to your jealousy.
Let not that devil, which undoes your sex,
That cursed curiosity seduce you,
To hunt for needless secrets, which, neglected,
Shall never hurt your quiet; but once known,
Shall sit upon your heart, pinch it with pain,
And banish the sweet sleep for ever from you.
Go to—be yet advis'd—

Ali. Dost thou in scorn,
Preach patience to my rage, and bid me tamely
Sit like a poor contented idiot down,
Nor dare to think thou'st wrong'd me? Ruin seize
And swift perdition overtake thy treachery. [thee,
Have I the least remaining cause to doubt?
Hast thou endeavour'd once to hide thy falshood?
To hide it might have spoke some little tenderness,
And shewn thee half unwilling to undo me:

But

But thou disdain'st the weakness of humanity,
Thy words, and all thy actions, have confess'd it ;
Ev'n now thy eyes avow it, now they speak,
And insolently own the glorious villainy.

Hast. Well, then, I own my heart has broke your chains.

Patient I bore the painful bondage long,
At length my gen'rous love disdains your tyranny ;
The bitterness and stings of taunting jealousy,
Vexatious days, and jarring, joyless nights,
Have driv'n him forth to seek some safer shelter,
Where he may rest his weary wings in peace.

Ali. You triumph ! do ! and with gigantic pride
Defy impending vengeance. Heav'n shall wink ;
No more his arm shall roll the dreadful thunder,
Nor send his lightnings forth : no more his justice
Shall visit the presuming sons of men,
But perjury, like thine, shall dwell in safety.

Hast. Whate'er my fate decrees for me hereafter,
Be present to me now, my better angel !
Preserve me from the storm that threatens now,
And if I have beyond atonement sinn'd,
Let any other kind of plague o'ertake me,
So I escape the fury of that tongue.

Ali. Thy pray'r is heard—I go—but know, proud lord,

Howe'er thou scorn'st the weakness of my sex,
This feeble hand may find the means to reach thee,
Howe'er sublime in pow'r and greatness plac'd,
With royal favour guarded round and grac'd ;
On eagle's wings my rage shall urge her flight,
And hurl thee headlong from thy topmost height ;
Then, like thy fate, superior will I sit,
And view thee fall'n, and grov'ling at my feet ;
See thy last breath with indignation go,
And tread thee sinking to the shades below. [*Exit.*

Hast. How fierce a fiend is passion ! With what wildness,

What tyranny untam'd it reigns in woman !
Unhappy sex ! whose easy yielding temper

Gives

Gives way to ev'ry appetite alike :

' Each gust of inclination, uncontroul'd,
' Sweeps thro' their souls and sets them in an uproar ;
' Each motion of the heart rises to fury,
And love in their weak bosoms is a rage
As terrible as hate, and as destructive.
' So the wind roars, o'er the wide, fenceless ocean,
' And heaves the billows of the boiling deep,
' Alike from north, from south, from east, from west ;
' With equal force the tempest blows by turns
' From ev'ry corner of the seaman's compass.
But soft ye now — for here comes one, disclaims
Strife and her wrangling train ; of equal elements,
Without one jarring atom was she form'd,
And gentleness and joy make up her being.

Enter Jane Shore.

Forgive me, fair-one, if officious friendship
Intrudes on your repose, and comes thus late,
To greet you with the tidings of success.
The princely Gloster has vouchsaf'd your hearing,
To-morrow he expects you at the court ;
There plead your cause, with never-failing beauty,
Speak all your griefs, and find a full redress.

J. Sh. Thus humbly let your lowly servant bend.

[Kneeling.]

Thus let me bow my grateful knee to earth,
And bless your noble nature for this goodness.

Hast. Rise, gentle dame, you wrong my meaning
much,

Think me not guilty of a thought so vain,
To sell my courtesy for thanks like these.

J. Sh. 'Tis true, your bounty is beyond my speak-
ing :

But tho' my mouth be dumb, my heart shall thank you ;
And when it melts before the throne of mercy,
Mourning and bleeding for my past offences,
My fervent soul shall breathe one pray'r for you,
If pray'rs of such a wretch are heard on high,

That

That Heav'n will pay you back, when most you need,
The grace and goodness you have shewn to me.

Hast. If there be ought of merit in my service,
Impute it there, where most 'tis due, to love ;
Be kind, my gentle mistress, to my wishes,
And satisfy my panting heart with beauty.

J. Sb. Alas ! my lord ——

Hast. Why bend thy eyes to earth ?
Wherefore these looks of heaviness and sorrow ?
Why breathes that sigh, my love ? And wherefore falls
This trickling show'r of tears, to stain thy sweetness ?

J. Sb. If pity dwells within your noble breast,
(As sure it does) Oh, speak not to me thus.

Hast. Can I behold thee, and not speak of love ?
Ev'n now, thus sadly as thou stand'st before me,
Thus desolate, dejected, and forlorn,
Thy softness steals upon my yielding senses,
Till my soul faints, and sickens with desire ;
How canst thou give this motion to my heart,
And bid my tongue be still ?

J. Sb. Cast round your eyes
Upon the high-born beauties of the court ;
Behold, like opening roses, where they bloom,
Sweet to the sense, unfully'd all, and spotless ;
There choose some worthy partner of your heart,
To fill your arms, and bless your virtuous bed ;
Nor turn your eyes this way, ' where sin and misery,
' Like loathsome weeds, have over-run the soil,
' And the destroyer, Shame, has laid all waste.

Hast. What means this peevish, this fantastic change ?
Where is thy wonted pleasantness of face,
Thy wonted graces, and thy dimpled smiles ?
Where hast thou lost thy wit, and sportive mirth ?
That chearful heart, which us'd to dance for ever,
And cast a day of gladness all around thee ?

J. Sb. Yes, I will own I merit the reproach ;
And for those foolish days of wanton pride,
My soul is justly humbled to the dust :
All tongues, like yours, are licens'd to upbraid me,
Still to repeat my guilt, to urge my infamy,

And

And treat me like that abject thing I have been.

- Yet let the saints be witness to this truth,
- That now, tho' late, I look with horror back,
- That I detest my wretched self, and curse
- My past polluted life. All-judging Heav'n,
- Who knows my crimes, has seen my sorrow for them.

Haft. No more of this dull stuff. 'Tis time enough
To whine and mortify thyself with penance,
• When the decaying sense is pall'd with pleasure,
• And weary nature tires in her last stage;
• Then weep and tell thy beads, when alt'ring
rheums

- Have stain'd the lustre of thy starry eyes,
 - And failing palsies shake thy wither'd hand.
- The present moments claim more gen'rous use;
Thy beauty, night and solitude, reproach me,
For having talk'd thus long—come let me press thee,
[*Laying hold on her.*

Pant on thy bosom, sink into thy arms,
And lose myself in the luxurious flood.

- *J. Sb.* Never! by those chaste lights above, I swear,
 - My soul shall never know pollution more;
- Forbear, my lord!—here let me rather die: [*Kneeling.*
• Let quick destruction overtake me here,
And end my sorrows and my shame for ever.

Haft. Away with this perverseness,——'tis too much.

Nay, if you strive——'tis monstrous affectation!

[*Striving.*

J. Sb. Retire! I beg you leave me—

Haft. Thus to coy at!——

With one who knows you too,——

J. Sb. For mercy's sake——

Haft. Ungrateful woman! Is it thus you pay
My services?——

J. Sb. Abandon me to ruin——
Rather than urge me——

Haft. This way to your chamber; [Pulling her.
There if you struggle——

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And a damned ed helw bib gund re J. Sb.

J. Sh. Help, Oh, gracious Heaven!
Help! Save me! Help!

[*Exit.*

Enter Dumont, he interposes.

Dum. My lord! for honour's sake——

Hast. Hah! What art thou?—Be gone!

Dum. My duty calls me

To my attendance on my mistress here,

J. Sh. For pity, let me go——

Hast. Avaunt! base groom——

At distance wait, and know thy office better.

Dum. Forego your hold, my lord! 'tis most un-
This violence—— [manly

Hast. Avoid the room this moment,

Or I will tread thy soul out.

Dum. No, my lord——

The common ties of manhood call me now,

And bid me thus stand up in the defence

Of an oppress'd, unhappy, helpless woman.

Hast. And dost thou know me, slave?

Dum. Yes, thou proud lord!

I know thee well; know thee with each advantage

Which wealth, or power, or noble birth can give thee.

I know thee, too, for one who stains those honours,

And blots a long illustrious line of ancestry,

By poorly daring thus to wrong a woman.

Hast. 'Tis wond'rous well! I see, my saint-like
dame,

You stand provided of your braves and ruffians,

To man your cause, and bluster in your brothel.

Dum. Take back the foul reproach, unmanner'd
raiser!

Nor urge my rage too far, lest thou should find

I have as daring spirits in my blood

As thou or any of thy race e'er boasted;

And tho' no gaudy titles grac'd my birth,

'Titles, the servile courtier's lean reward,

'Sometimes the pay of virtue, but more oft

'The hire which greatness gives to slaves and sycophants,

Yet Heav'n that made me honest, made me more

Than ever king did, when he made a lord.

Hast.

Hast. Insolent villain! henceforth let this teach thee [Draws and strikes him.

The distance 'twixt a peasant and a prince.

Dum. Nay, then, my lord, (*drawing*) learn you by this, how well

An arm resolv'd can guard its master's life. [*They fight.*

J. Sb. Oh my distracting fears! hold, for sweet Heav'n.

[*They fight, Dumont disarms Lord Hastings.*

Hast. Confusion! baffled by a base-born hind!

Dum. Now, haughty Sir, where is our difference Your life is in my hand, and did not honour, [now?

The gentleness of blood, and inborn virtue (Howe'er unworthy I may seem to you)

Plead in my bosom, I should take the forfeit.

But wear your sword again; and know, a lord

Oppos'd against a man, is but a man.

Hast. Curse on my failing hand! Your better fortune Has given you vantage o'er me; but perhaps

Your triumph may be bought with dear repentance.

[*Exit Hastings.*

Enter Jane Shore.

J. Sb. Alas! what have you done? Know ye the The mightiness, that waits upon this lord? [pow'r,

Dum. Fear not, my worthiest mistress; 'tis a cause In which Heaven's guards shall wait you. O pursue,

Pursue the sacred counsels of your soul,

Which urge you on to virtue; let not danger,

Nor the incumbring world, make faint your purpose.

Assisting angels shall conduct your steps,

Bring you to bliss, and crown your days with peace.

J. Sb. Oh, that my head were laid, my sad eyes clos'd,

And my cold corse wound in my shroud to rest!

My painful heart will never cease to beat,

Will never know a moment's peace till then.

Dum. Would you be happy, leave this fatal place;

Fly from the court's pernicious neighbourhood;

Where innocence is sham'd, and blushing modesty

Is made the scorner's jest; where hate, deceit,
And deadly ruin, wear the masques of beauty,
And draw deluded fools with shews of pleasure.

J. Sh. Where should I fly, thus helpless and forlorn,
Of friends, and all the means of life bereft?

Dum. Belmour, whose friendly care still wakes to
serve you,

Has found you out a little peaceful refuge,
Far from the court and the tumultuous city.
Within an ancient forest's ample verge,
There stands a lonely but a healthful dwelling,
Built for convenience and the use of life:
Around it fallows, meads, and pastures fair,
A little garden, and a limpid brook,
By nature's own contrivance seem'd dispos'd;
No neighbours, but a few poor simple clowns,
Honest and true, with a well meaning priest:
No faction, or domestic fury's rage,
Did e'er disturb the quiet of that place,
When the contending nobles shook the land
With York and Lancaster's disputed sway.
Your virtue there may find a safe retreat
From the insulting pow'rs of wicked greatness.

J. Sh. Can there be so much happiness in store?
A cell like that is all my hopes aspire to.
Haste, then, and thither let us take our flight,
E'er the clouds gather, and the wint'ry sky
Descends in storms to intercept our passage.

Dum. Will you then go! You glad my very soul.
Banish your fears, cast all your cares on me;
Plenty and ease, and peace of mind shall wait you,
And make your latter days of life most happy.
Oh, lady! but I must not, cannot tell you,
How anxious I have been for all your dangers,
And how my heart rejoices at your safety.
So when the spring renews the flow'ry field,
And warns the pregnant nightingale to build,
She seeks the safest shelter of the wood,
Where she may trust her little tuneful brood;
Where no rude swains her shady cell may know,
No serpents climb, nor blasting winds may blow;

Fond

Fond of the chosen place, she views it o'er,
Sits there, and wanders thro' the grove no more;
Warbling the charms it each returning night,
And loves it with a mother's dear delight. [Exeunt.

END of the SECOND ACT.

A C T. III.

S C E N E, *the Court.*

Enter Alicia, with a paper.

Alic. **T**HIS paper to the great protector's hand,
With care and secrecy, must be convey'd;
His bold ambition now avows its aim,
To pluck the crown from Edward's infant brow,
And fix it on his own. I know he holds
My faithless Hastings adverse to his hopes,
And much devoted to the orphan king;
On that I build: this paper meets his doubts,
And marks my hated rival as the cause
Of Hastings' zeal for his dead master's sons.
Oh, jealousy! thou bane of pleasing friendship,
Thou worst invader of our tender bosoms,
How does thy rancour poison all our softness,
And turn our gentle natures into bitterness?
See where she comes! once my heart's dearest blessing
Now my chang'd eyes are blasted with her beauty,
Loath that known face, and sicken to behold her.

Enter Jane Shore.

J. Sh. Now whither shall I fly to find relief?
What charitable hand will aid me now?
Will stay my falling steps, support my ruins,
And heal my wounded mind with balmy comfort?
Oh, my Alicia!

Alic. What new grief is this?

C 3

What

What unforeseen misfortune has surpriz'd thee,
That racks thy tender heart thus?

J. Sh. Oh, Dumont!

Alic. Say what of him?

J. Sh. That friendly, honest man,
Whom Belmour brought of late to my assistance,
On whose kind care, whose diligence and faith,
My surest trust was built, this very morn
Was seiz'd on by the cruel hand of power,
Forc'd from my house, and born away to prison.

Alic. To prison, said you! Can you guess the cause?

J. Sh. Too well, I fear. His bold defence of me
Has drawn the vengeance of Lord Hastings on him.

Alic. Lord Hastings! Ha!

J. Sh. Some fitter time must tell thee
The tale of my hard hap. Upon the present
Hang all my poor, my last remaining hopes.
Within this paper is my suit contain'd;
Here as the princely Gloster passes forth,
I wait to give it on my humble knees,
And move him for redress.

[*She gives the paper to Alicia, who opens and seems to read it.*]

Alic. [*Aside.*] Now for a while,
To sting my thoughtless rival to the heart;
To blast her fatal beauties, and divide her
For ever from my perjur'd Hastings, eyes:
‘The wanderer may then look back to me,
‘And turn to his forsaken home again;
Their fashions are the same, it cannot fail.

[*Pulling out the other paper.*]

J. Sh. But see the great protector comes this way,
‘Attended by a train of waiting courtiers.
Give me the paper, friend.

Alic. [*Aside.*] For love and vengeance!

[*She gives her the other paper.*]

*Enter the Duke of Gloster, Sir Richard Ratcliff, Catesby,
Courtiers, and other attendants.*

J. Sh. [*Kneeling.*] Oh, noble Gloster, turn thy gra-
cious eye,

Incline

Incline thy pitying ear to my complaint,
 A poor, undone, forsaken, helpless woman,
 Intreats a little bread for charity,
 To feed her wants, and save her life from perishing;
Gloſt. Arise, fair dame, and dry your wat'ry eyes.

[*Receiving the paper, and raising her,*
 Beshrew me, but 'twere pity of his heart
 That could refuse a boon to such a suitor.
 Y'have got a noble friend to be your advocate;
 A worthy and right gentle lord he is,
 And to his trust most true. This present Now
 Some matters of the state detain our leisure;
 Those once dispatch'd, we'll call for you anon,
 And give your griefs redress. Go to! be comforted,
J. Sh. Good Heav'n's repay your highness for this
 pity,

And show'r down blessings on your princely head.
 Come, my Alicia, reach thy friendly arm,
 And help me to support this feeble frame,
 That nodding totters with oppressive woe,
 And sinks beneath its load. [*Exeunt J. Sh. and Alic.*
Gloſt. Now by my holidame!

Heavy of heart she seems, and sore afflicted.
 But thus it is when rude calamity
 Lays its strong gripe upon these mincing minions;
 The dainty gew-gaw forms dissolve at once,
 And shiver at the shock. What says her paper?
 [*Seeming to read.*

Ha! What is this? Come nearer, Ratcliffe! Catesby!
 Mark the contents, and then divine the meaning.

[*He reads.*

*Wonder not, princely Gloſter, at the notice
 This paper brings you from a friend unknown;
 Lord Hastings is inclin'd to call you master,
 And kneel to Richard, as to England's King;
 But Shore's bewitching wife misleads his heart,
 And draws his service to King Edward's sons:
 Drive her away, you break the charm that holds him,
 And he, and all his powers, attend on you.*

Rat. 'Tis wonderful!

Cat. The means by which it came

Yet

Yet stranger too !

Gloft. You saw it given, but now.

Rat. She could not know the purport.

Gloft. No, 'tis plain——

She knows it not, 'it levels at her life ;
Should she presume to prate of such high matters,
The meddling harlot, dear she should abide it.

Cat. What hand be'er it comes from, be assur'd,
It means your highness well——

Gloft. Upon the instant,
Lord Hastings will be here ; this morn I mean
To prove him to the quick ; then if he flinch,
No more but this—away with him at once,
He must be mine or nothing——But he comes !
Draw nearer this way, and observe me well.

[*They whisper.*]

Enter Lord Hastings.

L. Haft. This foolish woman hangs about my heart,
Lingers and wanders in my fancy still ;
This coyness is put on, 'tis art and cunning,
And worn to urge desire——I must possess her.
The groom, who lift his saucy hand against me,
E'er this, is humbled, and repents his daring.
Perhaps, ev'n she may profit by th' example,
And teach her beauty not to scorn my pow'r.

Gloft. This do, and wait me e'er the council sits.

[*Exeunt Rat. and Cat.*]

My Lord, y'are well encountred ; here has been
A fair petitioner this morning with us ;
Believe me, she has won me much to pity her :
Alas !—her gentle nature was not made
To buffet with adversity. I told her
How worthily her cause you had befriended ;
How much for your good sake we meant to do,
That you had spoke, and all things should be well.

Haft. Your highness binds me ever to your service..

Gloft. You know your friendship is most potent
with us,

And shares our power. But of this enough,
For we have other matters for your ear ;

The

The state is out of tune : distracting fears,
 And jealous doubts, jar in our public counsels ;
 Amidst the wealthy city, murmurs rise,
 Lewd railings, and reproach on those that rule,
 With open scorn of government ; hence credit,
 And public trust 'twixt man and man, are broke.
 The golden streams of commerce are withheld,
 Which fed the wants of needy hinds and artizans,
 Who therefore curse the great, and threat rebellion.

Hast. The resty knaves are over-run with ease,
 As plenty ever is the nurse of faction ;
 If in good days, like these, the headstrong herd
 Grow madly wanton and repine ; it is
 Because the reins of power are held too slack,
 And reverend authority of late
 Has worn a face of mercy more than justice.

Gloft. Beshrew my heart ! but you have well divin'd
 The source of these disorders. Who can wonder
 If riot and misrule o'erturn the realm,
 When the crown sits upon a baby brow ?
 Plainly to speak ; hence comes the gen'ral cry,
 And sum of all complaint : 'twill ne'er be well
 With England (thus they talk) while children go-
 vern.

Hast. 'Tis true, the King is young ; but what of
 that ?

We feel no want of Edward's riper years,
 While Gloster's valour and most princely wisdom
 So well supply our infant sov'reign's place,
 His youth's support, and guardian to his throne.

Gloft. The council (much I'm bound to thank 'em
 for't)

Have plac'd a pageant sceptre in my hand,
 Barren of power, and subject to controul ;
 Scorn'd by my foes, and useles to my friends.
 Oh, worthy Lord ! were mine the rule indeed,
 I think I should not suffer rank offence

At large to lord it in the common-weal ;
 Nor would the realm be rent by discord thus,
 Thus fear and doubt, betwixt disputed titles.

Hast. Of this I am to learn ; as not supposing
 A doubt

A doubt like this———

Gloft. Ay, marry, but there is——

And that of much concern. Have you not heard
How, on a late occasion, Doctor Shaw
Has mov'd the people much about the lawfulness
Of Edward's issue? By right grave authority
Of learning and religion, plainly proving,
A bastard scion never should be grafted
Upon a royal stock; from thence, at full
Discourfing on my brother's former contract
To Lady Elizabeth Lucy, long before
His jolly match with that faine buxom widow
The queen he left behind him——

Hast. Ill befall

Such meddling priests, who kindle up confusion,
And vex the quiet world with their vain scruples!
By Heav'n 'tis done in perfect spite to peace.
Did not the King,
Our royal master, Edward, in concurrence
With his estates assembled, well determine
What course the sov'reign rule should take hencefor-
ward?

When shall the deadly hate of faction cease,
When shall our long-divided land have rest,
If every peevish, moody malecontent
Shall set the senseless rabble in an uproar,
Fright them with dangers, and perplex their brains,
Each day with some fantastic giddy change?

Gloft. What if some patriot, for the public good,
Should vary from your scheme, new-mould the state?

Hast. Curse on the innovating hand attempts it!
Remember him, the villain, righteous Heaven,
In thy great day of vengeance! Blast the traitor
And his pernicious counsels; who for wealth,
For pow'r, the pride of greatness, or revenge,
Would plunge his native land in civil wars!

Gloft. You go too far, my lord.

Hast. Your highness' pardon———

Have we so soon forgot those days of ruin,
When York and Lancaster drew forth the battles:
When,

When, like a matron butcher'd by her sons,
 " And cast beside some common way, a spectacle
 " Of horror and affright to passers by,
 Our groaning country bléd at ev'ry vein ;
 When murders, rapes, and massacres prevail'd ;
 When churches, palaces, and cities blaz'd ;
 When insolence and barbarism triumph'd,
 And swept away distinction ; peasants trod
 Upon the necks of nobles : low were laid
 The révérend crosier, and the holy mitre,
 And desolation cover'd all the land ;
 Who can remember this, and not, like me,
 Here vow to sheath a dagger in his heart
 Whose damn'd ambition would renew those horrors,
 And set once more that scene of blood before us ?

Gloft. How now ! so hot !

Hast. So brave, and so resolv'd.

Gloft. Is then our friendship of so little moment,
 That you could arm your hand against my life ?

Hast. I hope your highness does not think I mean
 it ;

No, Heav'n forefend that e'er your princely person
 Should come within the scope of my resentment.

Gloft. Oh, noble Hastings ! Nay, I must embrace
 you ;

[*Embraces him,*

By holy Paul, y'are a right honest man !
 The time is full of danger and distrust,
 And warns us to be wary. Hold me not
 Too apt for jealousy and light surmise,
 If when I meant to lodge you next my heart.
 I put your truth to trial. Keep your loyalty,
 And live, your king and country's best support :
 For me, I ask no more than honour gives,
 To think me yours, and rank me with your friends.

Hast. Accept what thanks a grateful heart should
 pay,

• Oh, princely Gloster ! judge me not ungente,
 • Of manners rude, and insolent of speech,
 • If, when the public safety is in question,
 • My zeal flows warm and eager from my tongue.

Gloft. Enough of this : to deal in wordy compliment

• Is

- ‘ Is much against the plainness of my nature :
- ‘ I judge you by myself, a clear true spirit,
- ‘ And, as such, once more join you to my bosom.
- ‘ Farewel, and be my friend. [Exit Glost.]

Haſt. I am not read,
Nor ſkill’d and practis’d in the arts of greatness,
To kindle thus, and give a ſcope to paſſion.
The Duke is ſurely noble ; but he touch’d me
Ev’n on the tend’reſt point ; the maſter-ſtring
That makes moſt harmony or diſcord to me.
I own the glorious ſubject fires my breaſt,
And my ſoul’s darling paſſion ſtands confeſs’d ;
Beyond or love’s or friendſhip’s ſacred band,
Beyond myſelf, I prize my native land :
On this foundation would I build my fame,
And emulate the Greek and Roman name ;
Think England’s peace bought cheaply with my blood,
And die with pleaſure for my country’s good. [Exit.]

END of the THIRD ACT.

A C T IV.

SCENE *continues.*

Enter Duke of Gloſter, Ratcliffe, and Cateſby.

Gloſt. **T**HIS was the ſum of all ; that he would
brook
No alteration in the preſent ſtate.
Marry, at laſt, the teſty gentleman
Was almoſt mov’d to bid us bold defiance ;
But there I dropt the argument, and changing
The firſt deſign and purpoſe of my ſpeech,
I prais’d his good affection to young Edward,
And left him to believe my thoughts like his.
Proceed we then in this foremention’d matter,
As nothing bound or truſting to his friendſhip.

Rat. Ill does it thus befall. I could have wish'd
 This Lord had stood with us. 'His friends are wealthy;
 ' Thereto, his own possessions large and mighty;
 ' The vassals and dependants on his power
 ' Firm in adherence, ready, bold, and many;
 His name had been of vantage to your Highness,
 And stood our present purpose much in stead.

Gloft. This wayward and perverse declining from us,
 Has warranted at full the friendly notice,
 Which we this morn receiv'd. I hold it certain,
 This puling whining harlot rules his reason,
 And prompts his zeal for Edward's bastard brood.

Cat. If she have such dominion o'er his heart,
 And turn it at her will, you rule her fate;
 And should, by inference and apt deduction,
 Be arbiter of his. Is not her bread,
 The very means immediate to her being,
 The bounty of your hand? Why does she live,
 If not to yield obedience to your pleasure,
 To speak, to act, to think as you command?

Rat. Let her instruct her tongue to bear your mes-
 sage;

Teach every grace to smile in your behalf,
 And her deluded eyes to gloat for you;
 His ductile reason will be wound about,
 Be led and turn'd again, say and unsay,
 Receive the yoke, and yield exact obedience.

Gloft. Your counsel likes me well, it shall be fol-
 She waits without, attending on her suit. [low'd.
 Go, call her in, and leave us here alone.

[*Exeunt Ratcliff and Catesby.*

How poor a thing is he, how worthy scorn,
 Who leaves the guidance of imperial manhood
 To such a paltry piece of stuff as this is!
 A moppet made of prettiness and pride;
 That oftener does her giddy fancies change,
 Than glittering dew-drops in the sun do colours—
 Now, shame upon it! was our reason given
 For such a use! 'To be thus puff'd about
 ' Like a dry leaf, an idle straw, a feather,

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' The

‘ The sport of every whiffing blast that blows ?
 ‘ Beshrew my heart, but it is wond’rous strange ;
 Sure there is something more than witchcraft in them,
 That masters ev’n the wisest of us all.

Enter Jane Shore.

Oh ! you are come most fitly. We have ponder’d
 On this your grievance : and tho’ some there are,
 Nay, and those great ones too, who wou’d enforce
 The rigour of our power to afflict you,
 And bear a heavy hand ; yet fear not you :
 We’ve ta’en you to our favour ; our protection
 Shall stand between, and shield you from mishap.

J. Sh. The blessings of a heart with anguish broken,
 And rescu’d from despair, attend your highness.
 Alas ! my gracious Lord, what have I done
 To kindle such relentless wrath against me ?

‘ If in the days of all my past offences,
 ‘ When most my heart was lifted with delight,
 ‘ If I withheld my morsel from the hungry,
 ‘ Forgot the widow’s want, and orphan’s cry ;
 ‘ If I have known a good I have not shar’d,
 ‘ Nor call’d the poor to take his portion with me,
 ‘ Let my worst enemies stand forth, and now
 ‘ Deny the succour, which I gave not then.

Gloft. Marry there are, tho’ I believe them not,
 Who say you meddle in affairs of state :
 That you presume to prattle, like a busy-body,
 Give your advice, and teach the Lords o’th’ council
 What fits the order of the common-weal.

J. Sh. Oh, that the busy world, at least in this,
 Would take example from a wretch like me !
 Nonethen would waste their hours in foreign thoughts,
 Forget themselves, and what concerns their peace,
 ‘ To tread the mazes of fantastic falsehood,
 ‘ To haunt their idle sounds and flying tales,
 ‘ Thro’ all the giddy noisy courts of rumour ;
 ‘ Malicious slander never would have leisure
 To search, with prying eyes, for faults abroad,
 If all, like me, consider’d their own hearts,
 And wept the sorrows which they found at home.

Gloft.

Gloft. Go to ! I know your pow'r ; and tho' I trust
 To ev'ry breath of fame, I'm not to learn (not
 That Hastings is profess'd your loving vassal.
 But fair befall your beauty : use it wisely,
 And it may stand your fortunes much in stead,
 Give back your forfeit land with large increase,
 And place you high in safety and in honour.
 Nay, I could point a way, the which pursuing,
 You shall not only bring yourself advantage,
 But give the realm much worthy cause to thank you.

J. Sh. Oh ! where or how—Can my unworthy hand
 Become an instrument of good to any ?
 Instruct your lowly slave, and let me fly
 To yield obedience to your dread command.

Gloft. Why, that's well said—Thus then—Observe
 me well,

The state, for many high and potent reasons,
 Deeming my brother Edward's sons unfit
 For the imperial weight of England's crown—

J. Sh. Alas ! for pity.

Gloft. Therefore have resolv'd
 To set aside their unavailing infancy,
 And vest the sov'reign rule in abler hands.
 This, tho' of great importance to the public,
 Hastings, for very peevishness and spleen,
 Does stubbornly oppose.

J. Sh. Does he ? Does Hastings ?

Gloft. Ay, Hastings.

J. Sh. Reward him for the noble deed, just Heav'n's :
 For this one action, guard him and distinguish him
 With signal mercies, and with great deliverance,
 Save him from wrong, adversity, and shame.
 Let never fading honours flourish round him,
 And consecrate his name, ev'n to time's end :
 ' Let him know nothing else but good on earth,
 ' And everlasting blessedness hereafter.

Gloft. How now !

J. Sh. The poor, forsaken, royal little ones !
 Shall they be left a prey to savage power ?
 Can they lift up their harmless hands in vain,

Or cry to Heaven for help, and not be heard?
 Impossible! Oh, gallant generous Hastings,
 Go on, pursue! assert the sacred cause:
 Stand forth, thou proxy of all-ruling Providence,
 And save the friendless infants from oppression.
 Saints shall assist thee with prevailing prayers,
 And warring angels combat on thy side.

Gloft. You're passing rich in this same heav'nly
 speech,

And spend it at your pleasure. Nay, but mark me!
 My favour is not bought with words like these.
 Go to—you'll teach your tongue another tale.

J. Sb. No, tho' the royal Edward has undone me,
 He was my king, my gracious master still;
 ' He lov'd me too, tho' 'twas a guilty flame,
 ' And fatal to my peace, yet still he lov'd me;
 ' With fondness, and with tenderness he doated,
 ' Dwelt in my eyes, and liv'd but in my smiles:
 And can I—O my heart abhors the thought!
 Stand by, and see his children robb'd of right?

Gloft. Dare not, ev'n for thy soul, to thwart me
 further!

None of your arts, your feigning and your foolery;
 Your dainty squeamish coying it to me;
 Go—to your lord, your paramour, begone!
 Lisp in his ear, hang wanton on his neck,
 And play your monkey gambols o'er to him.
 You know my purpose, look that you pursue it,
 And make him yield obedience to my will.
 Do it—or woe upon thy harlot's head.

J. Sb. Oh, that my tongue had ev'ry grace of speech,
 Great and commanding as the breath of kings,
 ' Sweet as the poet's numbers, and prevailing
 ' As soft persuasion to a love sick maid;
 That I had art and eloquence divine,
 To pay my duty to my master's ashes,
 And plead, till death, the cause of injur'd innocence.

Gloft. Ha! Dost thou brave me, minion! Dost
 thou know

How vile, how very a wretch, my pow'r can make
 thee?

' That

‘ That I can let loose fear, distress, and famine,
 ‘ To hunt thy heels, like hell-hounds, thro’ the world;
 That I can place thee in such abject state,
 As help shall never find thee; where, repining,
 Thou shalt sit down, and gnaw the earth for anguish;
 Groan to the pitiless winds without return;
 Howl, like the midnight wolf amidst the desert,
 And curse thy life, in bitterness and misery?

J. Sh. Let me be branded for the public scorn,
 Turn’d forth and driven to wander like a vagabond,
 Be friendless and forsaken, seek my bread
 Upon the barren wild, and desolate waste,
 Feed on my sighs, and drink my falling tears,
 E’er I content to teach my lips injustice,
 Or wrong the orphan, who has none to save him.

Gloft. ‘Tis well—we’ll try the temper of your heart.
 What ho! Who waits without?

Enter Ratcliffe, Catesby, and attendants.

Rat. Your highness’ pleasure—

Gloft. Go, some of you, and turn this strumpet forth!
 Spurn her into the street; there let her perish,
 And rot upon a dunghill. Thro’ the city
 See it proclaim’d, that none, on pain of death,
 Presume to give her comfort, food, or harbour;
 Who ministers the smallest comfort, dies.
 Her house, her costly furniture and wealth,
 ‘ The purchase of her loose luxurious life,
 We seize on, for the profit of the state.
 Away! Be gone!

J. Sh. Oh, thou most righteous judge—
 Humbly behold, I bow myself to thee,
 And own thy justice in this hard decree:
 No longer, then, my ripe offences spare;
 But what I merit, let me learn to bear.
 Yet since ’tis all my wretchedness can give,
 For my past crimes my forfeit life receive;
 No pity for my sufferings here I crave,
 And only hope forgiveness in the grave.

[*Exit J. Shore, guarded by Catesby and others.*

D 3

Gloft.

Gloſt. So much for this. Your project's at an end.
[To Rat.]

This idle toy, this hilding ſcorns my power,
And ſets us all at naught. See that a guard
Be ready at my call.—

Rat. The council waits
Upon your highneſs' leiſure.—

Gloſt. Bid them enter.

*Enter the Duke of Buckingham, Earl of Derby, Biſhop
of Ely, Lord Haſtings, and others as to the council.
The Duke of Gloſter takes his place at the upper end,
then the reſt ſit.*

Derb. In happy times we are aſſembled here,
To point the day, and fix the ſolemn pomp,
For placing England's crown, with all due rites,
Upon our lov'reign Edward's youthful brow.

Haſt. Some buſy meddling knaves, 'tis ſaid, there are,
As ſuch will ſtill be prating, who preſume
To carp and cavil at his royal right;
Therefore, I hold it fitting, with the ſoonest,
T'appoint the order of the coronation;
So to approve our duty to the king,
And ſtay the babbling of ſuch vain gainſayers.

Derb. We all attend to know your highneſs' pleaſure.
[To Gloſter.]

Gloſt. My lords, a ſet of worthy men you are,
Prudent and juſt, and careful for the ſtate;
Therefore, to your moſt grave determination
I yield myſelf in all things; and demand
What puniſhment your wiſdom ſhall think meet
T'inſlict upon thoſe damnable contrivers,
Who ſhall with potions, charms, and witching drugs,
Practiſe againſt our perſon and our life?

Haſt. So much I hold the king your highneſs' debtor,
So precious are you to the common-weal,
That I preſume, not only for myſelf,
But in behalf of theſe my noble brothers,
To ſay, whoe'er they be, they merit death.

Gloſt. Then judge yourſelves, convince your eyes of
truth;

Be-

Behold my arm, thus blasted, dry, and wither'd,
[Pulling up his sleeves.]

Shrunk, like a foul abortion, and decay'd,
 Like some untimely product of the seasons,
 Robb'd of its properties of strength and office:
 This is the forcery of Edward's wife,
 Who, in conjunction with that harlot Shore,
 And other like confed'rate midnight hags,
 By force of potent spells, of bloody characters,
 And conjurations horrible to hear,
 Call fiends and spectres from the yawning deep,
 And set the ministers of hell at work,
 To torture and despoil me of my life.

Hast. If they have done this deed—

Gloster. If they have done it!

Talk'st thou to me of If's, audacious traitor!
 Thou art that strumpet witch's chief abettor,
 The patron and comploter of her mischiefs,
 And join'd in this contrivance for my death.
 Nay start not, lords—What ho! a guard there, Sirs!

Enter guards.

Lord Hastings, I arrest thee of high treason.
 Seize him, and bear him instantly away.
 He sha' not live an hour. By holy Paul,
 I will not dine before his head be brought me.
 Ratcliffe, stay you, and see that it be done:
 The rest that love me, rise and follow me.

[Exeunt Gloster, and Lords following.]

Manent Lord Hastings, Ratcliffe, and guards.

Hast. What! and no more but this—How! to the scaffold:

Oh, gentle Ratcliffe! tell me, do I hold thee?
 Or if I dream, what shall I do to wake,
 To break, to struggle thro' this dread confusion?
 For surely death itself is not so painful
 As is this sudden horror and surprize.

Rat. You heard the duke's commands to me were absolute.

Therefore, my lord, address you to your shrift,
 With all good speed you may. Summon your courage,
 And

And be yourself; for you must die this instant.

Hast. Yes, Ratcliffe, I will take thy friendly counsel,
And die as a man should; 'tis somewhat hard,
To call my scatter'd spirits home at once :
But since what must be, must be—let necessity
Supply the place of time and preparation,
And arm me for the blow. 'Tis but to die,
'Tis but to venture on that common hazard,
Which many a time in battle I have run ;
'Tis but to do, what at that very moment,
' In many nations of the peopled earth,
' A thousand and a thousand shall do with me ;
'Tis but to close my eyes and shut out day-light,
To view no more the wicked ways of men,
No longer to behold the tyrant Gloster,
And be a weeping witness of the woes,
The desolation, slaughter, and calamities,
Which he shall bring on this unhappy land.

Enter Alicia.

Alic. Stand off, and let me pass—I will I must
Catch him once more in these despairing arms,
And hold him to my heart—O Hastings, Hastings!

Hast. Alas ! why com'st thou at this dreadful moment,
To fill me with new terrors, new distractions;
To turn me wild with thy distemper'd rage,
And shock the peace of my departing soul ?
Away, I prithee leave me !

Ali. Stop a minute——
Till my full griefs find passage—Oh, the tyrant !
Perdition fall on Gloster's head and mine.

Hast. What means thy frantic grief ?

Ali. I cannot speak——
But I have murder'd thee—Oh, I could tell thee !
Hast. Speak, and give ease to thy conflicting passion !
Be quick, nor keep me longer in suspense,
Time presses, and a thousand crowding thoughts
Break in at once ! this way and that they snatch,
They tear my hurry'd soul : All claim attention.

And

And yet not one is heard. Oh! speak, and leave me,
For I have business would employ an age,
And but a minute's time to get it done in.

Ali. That, that's my grief—'tis I that urge thee on,
Thus haunt thee to the toil, sweep thee from earth,
And drive thee down this precipice of fate.

Hast. Thy reason is grown wild. Could thy weak
hand

Bring on this mighty ruin? If it could,
What have I done so grievous to thy foul,
So deadly, so beyond the reach of pardon,
That nothing but my life can make atonement?

Ali. Thy cruel scorn hath stung me to the heart,
And set my burning bosom all in flames:
Raving and mad I flew to my revenge,
And writ I know not what—told the protector,
That Shore's detested wife, by wiles, had won thee
To plot against his greatness—He believ'd it,
(Oh, dire event of my pernicious counsel!)
And, while I meant destruction on her head,
H' has turn'd it all on thine.

Hast. Accursed jealousy!

Oh, merciless, wild, and unforgiving fiend!
Blindfold it runs to undistinguish'd mischief,
And murders all its meets. Curst be its rage,
For there is none so deadly; doubly curs'd
Be all those easy fools who give it harbour;
Who turn a monster loose among mankind,
Fiercer than famine, war, or spotted pestilence;
Baneful as death, and horrible as hell.

Ali. If thou wilt curse, curse rather thine own
falseness;

Curse the lewd maxims of thy perjur'd sex,
Which taught thee first to laugh at faith and justice;
To scorn the solemn sanctity of oaths,
And make a jest of a poor woman's ruin:
Curse thy proud heart, and thy insulting tongue,
That rais'd this fatal fury in my soul,
And urg'd my vengeance to undo us both.

Hast. Oh, thou inhuman! Turn thy eyes away,
And blast me not with their destructive beams:

Why

Why should I curse thee with my dying breath ?
Be gone ! and let me die in peace.

Ali. Can'st thou—Oh, cruel Hastings, leave me
thus !

Hear me, I beg thee—I conjure thee, hear me !
While with an agonizing heart, I swear,
By all the pangs I feel, by all the sorrows,
The terrors and despair thy loss shall give me,
My hate was on my rival bent alone.
Oh ! had I once divin'd, false as thou art,
A danger to thy life, I would have dy'd,
I would have met it for thee, and made bare
My ready faithful breast to save thee from it.

Hast. Now mark ! and tremble at Heaven's just
award :

While thy insatiate wrath and fell revenge,
Pursu'd the innocence which never wrong'd thee,
Behold, the mischief falls on thee and me :
Remorse and heaviness of heart shall wait thee,
And everlasting anguish be thy portion :
For me, the snares of death are wound about me,
And now, in one poor moment, I am gone.
Oh ! if thou hast one tender thought remaining,
Fly to thy closet, fall upon thy knees,
And recommend my parting soul to mercy.

Ali. Oh ! yet, before I go from ever from thee,
Turn thee in gentleness and pity to me, [Kneeling.
And, in compassion of my strong affliction,
Say, is it possible you can forgive
The fatal rashness of ungovern'd love ?
For, Oh ! 'tis certain, if I had not lov'd thee
Beyond my peace, my reason, fame, and life,
' Desir'd to death, and doated to distraction,
This day of horror never should have known us.

Hast. Oh, rise, and let me hush thy stormy sor-
rows. [Raising her.

Assuage thy tears, for I will chide no more,
No more upbraid thee, thou unhappy fair-one.
I see the hand of Heav'n is arm'd against me ;
And, in mysterious Providence, decrees

T.

To punish me by thy mistaken hand.
 Most righteous doom ! for, Oh, while I behold thee,
 Thy wrongs rise up in terrible array,
 And charge thy ruin on me ; thy fair fame,
 Thy spotless beauty, innocence, and youth,
 Dishonour'd, blasted, and betray'd by me.

Ali. And does thy heart relent for my undoing ?
 Oh, that inhuman Gloster could be mov'd,
 But half so easily as I can pardon !

Hast. Here then exchange we mutually forgive-
 So may the guilt of all my broken vows, [ness :
 My perjuries to thee, be all forgotten,
 As here my soul acquits thee of my death,
 As here I part without one angry thought,
 As here I leave thee with the softest tenderness,
 Mourning the chance of our disastrous loves,
 And begging Heav'n to bless and to support thee.

Rat. My lord, dispatch ; the duke has sent to chide
 For loitering in my duty — [me,

Hast. I obey.

Ali. Infatiate, savage monster ! 'Tis a moment
 So tedious to thy malice ? Oh, repay him,
 'Thou great avenger ! Give him blood for blood :
 Guilt haunt him ! fiends pursue him ! lightnings
 blast him !

' Some horrid, cursed kind of death o'ertake him,
 ' Sudden, and in the fulness of his sins !
 That he may know how terrible it is,
 To want that moment he denies thee now.

Hast. This rage is all in vain, ' that tears thy bosom ;
 ' Like a poor bird that flutters in its cage,
 ' Thou beat'st thyself to death.' Retire, I beg thee ;
 To see thee thus, thou know'st not how it wounds me ;
 Thy agonies are added to my own,
 And make the burthen more than I can bear.
 Farewel—Good angels visit thy afflictions,
 And bring thee peace and comfort from above.

Ali. Oh ! stab me to the heart, some pitying hand.
 Now strike me dead————

Hast.

A C T V.

SCENE, *the Street.**Enter Belmour and Dumont.*

DUMONT.

YOU saw her, then?

Bel. I met her, as returning,
 In solemn penance from the public cross.
 Before her, certain rascal officers,
 Slaves in authority, the knaves of justice,
 Proclaim'd the tyrant Gloster's cruel orders.
 ' On either side her march'd an ill-look'd priest,
 ' Who with severe, with horrid haggard eyes,
 ' Did, ever and anon, by turns, upbraid her,
 ' And thunder in her trembling ear damnation.
 Around her, numberless, the rabble flow'd,
 Should'ring each other, crowding for a view,
 Gaping and gazing, taunting and reviling;
 Some pitying—but those, alas! how few!
 The most, such iron hearts we are, and such
 The base barbarity of human kind,
 With insolence and lewd reproach pursu'd her,
 Hooting and railing, and with villanous hands
 Gath'ring the filth from out the common ways,
 To hurl upon her head.

Dum. Inhuman dogs!
 How did she bear it?

Bel. With the gentlest patience;
 Submissive, sad, and lowly was her look;
 A burning taper in her hand she bore,
 And on her shoulders carelessly confus'd,
 With loose neglect, her lovely tresses hung;
 Upon her cheek a faintish flush was spread;
 Feeble she seem'd, and sorely smit with pain.
 While bare-foot as she trod the stony pavement,
 Her footsteps all along were mark'd with blood.

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Yet

Yet, silent still she pass'd and unrepining ;
 Her streaming eyes bent ever on the earth,
 Except when in some bitter pang of sorrow,
 To Heav'n she seem'd in fervent zeal to raise,
 And beg that mercy man deny'd her here.

Dum. When was this piteous sight ?

Bel. These last two days.

You know my care was wholly bent on you,
 To find the happy means of your deliverance,
 Which but for Hastings' death I had not gain'd.
 During that time, altho' I have not seen her,
 Yet divers trusty messengers I've sent,
 To wait about, and watch a fit convenience
 To give her some relief, but all in vain ;
 A churlish guard attends upon her steps,
 Who menace those with death, that bring her com-
 And drive all succour from her. [fort,

Dum. Let 'em threaten ;

Let proud oppression prove its fiercest malice ;
 So Heav'n befriend my soul, as here I vow
 To give her help, and share one fortune with her.

Bel. Mean you to see her, thus, in your own form ?

Dum. I do.

Bel. And have you thought upon the consequence ?

Dum. What is there I should fear ?

Bel. Have you examin'd

Into your inmost heart, and try'd at leisure
 The sev'ral secret springs that move the passions ?
 Has mercy fix'd her empire there so sure,
 That wrath and vengeance never may return ?
 Can you resume a husband's name, and bid
 That wakeful dragon, fierce resentment, sleep ?

Dum. Why dost thou search so deep, and urge
 my memory,

- To conjure up my wrongs to life again ?
- I have long labour'd to forget myself,
- To think on all time backward, like a space
- Idle and void, where nothing e'er had being ;
- But thou hast peopled it again : Revenge

• And

- ' And jealousy renew their horrid forms,
- ' Shoot all their fires, and drive me to distraction.
- ' *Bel.* Far be the thought from me! My care was
- ' To arm you for the meeting: better were it [only
- ' Never to see her, than to let that name
- ' Recall forgotten rage, and make the husband
- ' Destroy the gen'rous pity of Dumont.

Dum. O thou hast set my busy brain at work,
 And now she musters up a train of images,
 Which, to preserve my peace, I had cast aside,
 And sunk in deep oblivion—Oh, that form!
 That angel face on which my dotage hung!
 How I have gaz'd upon her, till my soul
 With very eagerness went forth towards her,
 And issu'd at my eyes—Was there a gem
 Which the sun ripens in the Indian mine,
 Or the rich bosom of the ocean yields;
 What was there art could make, or wealth could buy,
 Which I have left unsought to deck her beauty?
 What could her king do more?—And yet she fled.

Bel. Away with that sad fancy——

Dum. Oh, that day!

The thought of it must live for ever with me.
 I met her, Belmour, when the royal spoiler
 Bore her in triumph from my widow'd home!
 Within his chariot, by his side she sat,
 And listen'd to his talk with downward looks,
 'Till sudden as she chanc'd aside to glance,
 Her eyes encounter'd mine—Oh! then my friend!
 Oh! who can paint my grief and her amazement!
 As at the stroke of death, twice turn'd she pale;
 And twice a burning crimson blush'd all o'er her;
 Then, with a shriek, heart-wounding, loud she cry'd,
 While down her cheeks two gushing torrents ran
 Fast falling on her hands, which thus she wrung——
 Mov'd at her grief, the tyrant ravisher,
 With courteous action woo'd her oft to turn;
 Earnest he seem'd to plead, but all in vain;
 Ev'n to the last she bent her sight towards me,
 And follow'd me——till I had lost myself.

Bel. Alas, for pity ! Oh ! those speaking tears !
 Could they be false ? did she not suffer with you ?
 For though the king by force possess'd her person,
 Her unconsenting heart dwelt still with you ;
 If all her former woes were not enough,
 Look on her now ; behold her where she wanders,
 Hunted to death, distress'd on every side,
 With no one hand to help ; and tell me then,
 If ever misery were known like hers ?

Dum. And can she bear it ? Can that delicate frame
 Endure the beating of a storm so rude ?
 Can she, for whom the various seasons chang'd
 To court her appetite and crown her board,
 For whom the foreign vintages were press'd,
 For whom the merchant spread his silken stores,
 Can she——

Intreat for bread, and want the needful raiment,
 To wrap her shiv'ring bosom from the weather ?
 When she was mine, no care came ever nigh her ;
 I thought the gentlest breeze that wakes the spring,
 Too rough to breath upon her ; cheerfulness
 Danc'd all the day before her, and at night
 Soft slumbers waited on her downy pillow—
 Now sad and shelterless, perhaps, she lies,
 Where piercing winds blow sharp, and the chill rain
 Drops from some pent-house on her wretched head,
 Drenches her locks, and kills her with the cold.
 It is too much——Hence with her past offences,
 They are atton'd at full——Why stay we, then ?
 Oh ! let us haste, my friend, and find her out.

Bel. Somewhere about this quarter of the town,
 I hear the poor abandon'd creature lingers :
 Her guard, tho' set with strictest watch to keep
 All food and friendship from her, yet permit her
 To wander in the streets, there choose her bed,
 And rest her head on what cold stone she pleases.

Dum. Here let us then divide ; each in his round
 To search her sorrows out ; whose hap it is
 First to behold her, this way let him lead
 Her fainting steps, and meet we here together. [*Exe.*
En-

Enter Jane Shore, her hair hanging loose on her shoulders, and bare-footed.

J. Sh. Yet, yet endure, nor murmur, Oh, my soul!

For are not thy transgressions great and numberless?

Do they not cover thee like rising floods,

And press thee like a weight of waters down?

Does not the hand of righteousness afflict thee?

And who shall plead against it? Who shall say

To pow'r almighty, thou hast done enough;

Or bid his dreadful rod of vengeance stay?

Wait then with patience, till the circling hours

Shall bring the time of thy appointed rest,

And lay thee down in death. 'The hireling thus

'With labour drudges out the painful day,

'And often looks with long expecting eyes

'To see the shadows rise, and be dismiss'd.

And, hark, methinks the roar that late pursu'd me,

Sinks like the murmurs of a falling wind,

And softens into silence. Does revenge

And malice then grow weary, and forsake me?

My guard, too, that observ'd me still so close,

Tire in the task of their inhuman office,

And loiter far behind. Alas! I faint,

My spirits fail at once—This is the door

Of my Alicia—Blessed opportunity!

I'll steal a little succour from her goodness,

Now while no eye observes me. [*She knocks at the door.*

Enter Servant.

Is your lady,

My gentle friend, at home! Oh! bring me to her.

[*Going in.*

Ser. Hold, mistress, whither would you?

[*Putting her back.*

J. Sh. Do you not know me?

Ser. I know you well, and know my orders, too:
You must not enter here—

J. Sh. Tell my Alicia,

E 3

'Tis

'Tis I would see her.

Ser. She is ill at ease,
And will admit no visitor.

J. Sh. But tell her

'Tis I, her friend, the partner of her heart,
Wait at the door and beg——

Ser. 'Tis all in vain,—

Go hence, and howl to those that will regard you.

[Shuts the door and Exit.]

J. Sh. It was not always thus; the time has been,
When this unfriendly door, that bars my passage,
Flew wide, and almost leap'd from off its hinges,
To give me entrance here; ' when this good house
' Has pour'd forth all its dwellers to receive me;
When my approaches made a little holiday;
And every face was dress'd in smiles to meet me:
But now 'tis otherwise; and those who bless'd me;
Now curse me to my face. Why should I wander,
Stray further on, for I can die ev'n here!

[She sits down at the door.]

Enter Alicia in disorder, two Servants following

Alic. What wretch art thou, whose misery and
baseness

Hangs on my door; whose hateful whine of woe
Breaks in upon my sorrows, and distracts
My jarring senses with thy beggar's cry?

J. Sh. A very beggar, and a wretch, indeed;
One driv'n by strong calamity to seek
For succours here; one perishing for want,
Whose hunger has not tasted food these three days;
And humbly asks, for charity's dear sake,
A draught of water and a little bread.

Alic. And dost thou come to me, to me for bread?
I know thee not—Go—hunt for it abroad,
Where wanton hands upon the earth have scatter'd it,
Or cast it on the waters—Mark the eagle,
And hungry vulture, where they wind the prey;
Watch where the ravens of the valley feed,
And seek thy food with them—I know thee not.

J. Sh. And yet there was a time, when my Alicia
Has

Has thought unhappy Shores her dearest blessing,
 And mourn'd the live-long day she pass'd without me ;
 ' When pair'd like turtles, we were still together ;
 ' When often as we prattled arm in arm,
 Inclining fondly to me she has sworn,
 She lov'd me more than all the world besides.

Alic. Ha ! say'st thou ! Let me look upon thee
 well—

'Tis true— I know thee now— A mischief on thee !
 Thou art that fatal fair, that cursed she,
 That set my brain a madding. Thou hast robb'd me ;
 Thou hast undone me— Murder ! Oh my Hastings !
 See his pale bloody head shoots glaring by me !
 ' Give me him back again, thou soft deluder,
 ' Thou beauteous witch.

J. Sb. Alas ! I never wrong'd you—
 ' Oh ! then be good to me ; have pity on me ;
 ' Thou never knew'st the bitterness of want,
 ' And may'st thou never know it. Oh ! bestow
 ' Some poor remain, the voiding of thy table,
 ' A morsel to support my famish'd soul.

Alic. Avaunt ! and come not near me—

J. Sb. To thy hand
 I trusted all ; gave my whole store to thee,
 Nor do I ask it back ; allow me but
 The smallest pittance, give me but to eat,
 Lest I fall down and perish here before thee.

Alic. Nay ! tell not me ! Where is thy king, thy
 Edward,
 And all the smiling cringing train of courtiers,
 That bent the knee before thee ?

J. Sb. Oh ! for mercy !

Alic. Mercy ! I know it not—for I am miserable.
 I'll give thee misery, for here she dwells ?
 This is her house, where the sun never dawns,
 The bird of night sits screaming o'er the roof,
 Grim spectres sweep along the horrid gloom,
 And nought is heard but wailings and lamentings.
 Hark ! something cracks above ! it shakes, it totters !
 And see, the nodding ruin falls to crush me !

'Tis

'Tis fall'n, 'tis here! I felt it on my brain!

1 *Serv.* This fight disorders her—

2 *Serv.* Retire, dear lady—

And leave this woman—

Alic. Let her take my counsel:

Why should'st thou be a wretch? Stab, tear thy heart,

And rid thyself of this detested being,

I wo'not linger long behind thee here.

A waving flood of bluish fire swells o'er me;

And now 'tis out, and I am drown'd in blood.

Ha! what art thou! thou horrid headless trunk?

It is my Hastings! see he wafts me on!

Away! I go, I fly! I follow thee!

But come not thou with mischief-making beauty:

To interpose between us, look not on him,

Give thy fond arts and thy delusions o'er,

For thou shalt never, never part us more.

[*She runs off, her Servants following.*]

J. Sh. Alas! she raves; her brain, I fear is turn'd.

In mercy look upon her, gracious Heav'n,

Nor visit her for any wrong to me.

Sure I am near upon my journey's end;

My head runs round, my eyes begin to fail,

And dancing shadows swim before my sight.

I can no more, [*lies down* ;] receive me, thou old

Thou common parent, take me to thy bosom, [*earth*,

And let me rest with thee.

Enter Belmour.

Bel. Upon the ground!

Thy miseries can never lay thee lower,

Look up, thou poor afflicted one! thou mourner;

Whom none has comforted! Where are thy friends,

The dear companions of thy joyful days,

Whose hearts thy warm prosperity made glad,

Whose arms were taught to grow like ivy round thee,

And bind thee to their bosoms?—Thus with thee,

Thus let us live, and let us die, they said,

For sure thou art the sister of our loves,

And nothing shall divide us!—Now where are they?

J. Sh. Ah, Belmour! where indeed? They stand

a'loof,

And

And view my desolation from afar ?

' When they pass by, they shake their heads in scorn,

' And cry, behold the harlot and her end !

And yet thy goodness turns aside to pity me.

Alas ! there may be danger ; get thee gone ?

Let me not pull a ruin on thy head.

Leave me to die alone, for I am fall'n

Never to rise, and all relief is vain.

Bel. Yet raise thy drooping head ; for I am come

To chase away despair. Behold ! where yonder

That honest man, that faithful, brave, Dumont,

Is hastening to thy aid——

J. Sh. Dumont ! Ha ! where !

[Raising herself, and looking about.]

Then Heav'n has heard my pray'r ; his very name

Renews the springs of life, and cheers my soul.

Has he then 'scap'd the snare ?

Bel. He has ; but see——

He comes unlike to that Dumont you knew,

For now he wears your better angel's form,

And comes to visit you with peace and pardon.

Enter Shore.

J. Sh. Speak, tell me ! Which is he ? And ho !

what would

This dreadful vision ! See it comes upon me——

It is my husband——Ah ! *[She swoons.]*

Sh. She faints ! support her !

' Sustain her head, while I infuse this cordial

' Into her dying lips—from spicy drugs,

' Rich herbs and flow'rs, the potent juice is drawn ;

' With wond'rous force it strikes the lazy spirits,

' Drives them around, and wakens life anew.

Bel. Her weakness could not bear the strong sur-
prize.

But see, she stirs ! And the returning blood

Faintly begins to blush again, and kindle

Upon her ashy cheek——

Sh. So—gently raise her—— *[Raising her up.]*

J. Sh. Ha ! What art thou ? Belmour !

Bel. How fare you, lady ?

J. Sh.

J. Sb. My heart is thrill'd with horror—

Bel. Be of courage—

Your husband lives! 'tis he, my worthiest friend—

J. Sb. Still art thou there!—Still dost thou hover round me!

Oh, save me, Belmour, from his angry shade!

Bel. 'Tis he himself!—he lives! look up—

J. Sb. I dare not!

Oh! that my eyes could shut him out for ever—

Sb. Am I so hateful, then, so deadly to thee,
To blast thy eyes with horror? Since I'm grown
A burthen to the world, myself, and thee,
Wou'd I had ne'er surviv'd to see thee more.

J. Sb. Oh! thou most injur'd—dost thou live, indeed!

Fall then, ye mountains, on my guilty head;
Hide me, ye rocks, within your secret caverns;
Cast thy black veil upon my shame, O night!
And shield me with thy sable wing for ever.

Sb. Why dost thou turn away?—Why tremble thus?

Why thus indulge thy fears? and in despair,
Abandon thy distracted soul to horror?
Cast every black and guilty thought behind thee,
And let 'em never vex thy quiet more.
My arms, my heart, are open to receive thee,
To bring thee back to thy forsaken home,
With tender joy, with fond forgiving love,
And all the longings of my first desires.

J. Sb. No, arm thy brow with vengeance; and appear

- The minister of Heaven's inquiring justice.
- Array thyself all terrible for judgment,
- Wrath in thy eyes, and thunder in thy voice;
- Pronounce my sentence, and if yet there be
- A woe I have not felt, inflict it on me.
- *Sb.* The measure of my sorrows is compleat;
- And I am come to snatch thee from injustice.
- The hand of pow'r no more shall crush thy weakness,
- Nor proud oppression grieve thy humble soul.

J. Sb.

• *J. Sb.* Art thou not risen by miracle from death?
 • Thy shroud is fall'n from off thee, and the grave
 • Was bid to give thee up, that thou might'st come,
 • The messenger of grace and goodness to me,
 • To seal my peace, and bleſs me 'ere I go.
 • Oh ! let me then fall down beneath thy feet,
 • And weep my gratitude for ever there ;
 • Give me your drops, ye ſoft deſcending rains,
 • Give me your ſtreams, ye never ceaſing ſprings,
 • That my ſad eyes may ſtill ſupply my duty,
 • And feed an everlaſting flood of ſorrow.

• *Sb.* Waſte not thy feeble ſpirits—I have long
 • Beheld, unknown, thy mourning, and repentance ;
 • Therefore my heart has ſet aſide the paſt,
 • And holds thee white, as unoffending innocence :
 • Therefore in ſpite of cruel Gloſter's rage,
 • Soon as my friend had broke my priſon doors,
 • I flew to thy aſſiſtance.' Let us haſte,
 • Now while occaſion ſeems to ſmile upon us,
 • Forſake this place of ſhame, and find a ſhelter.

J. Sb. What ſhall I ſay to you ? But I obey—

Sb. Lean on my arm——

• *J. Sb.* Alas ! I'm wond'rous faint :
 • But that's not ſtrange, I have not eat theſe three
 • days.

Sb. Oh, mercileſs ! ' Look here, my love, I've brought thee

• Some rich conſerves——

• *J. Sb.* How can you be ſo good ?
 • But you were ever thus. I well remember
 • With what fond care, what diligence of love,
 • You lavish'd out your wealth to buy me pleaſures,
 • Preventing every wiſh : Have you forgot
 • The coſtly ſtring of pearl you brought me home,
 • And ty'd about my neck ?——How could I leave
 • you ?

• *Sb.* Taſte ſome of this, or this——

• *J. Sb.* You're ſtrangely alter'd——
 • Say, gentle Behmour, is he not ? How pale

• Your

‘ Your visage is become ? Your eyes are hollow ;

‘ Nay, you are wrinkled too——Alas the day !

‘ My wretchedness has cost you many a tear,

‘ And many a bitter pang, since last we parted.

‘ *Sb.* No more of that——Thou talk’st, but do’st not eat.

‘ *J. Sb.* My feeble jaws forget their common office,

‘ My tasteless tongue cleaves to the clammy roof,

‘ And now a gen’ral loathing grows upon me.

Oh ! I am sick at heart !——

Sb. Thou murd’rous sorrow !

Wo’t thou still drink her blood, pursue her still !

Must she then die ! Oh, my poor penitent !

Speak peace to thy sad heart : She hears me not ;

Grief masters ev’ry sense——‘ help me to hold her——

Enter Catesby, with a guard.

Cat. Seize on’em both, as traitors to the state——

Bel. What means this violence ?——

[Guards lay bold on Shore and Belmour.]

Cat. Have we not found you,

In scorn of the protector’s strict command,

Affixing this base woman, and abetting

Her infamy ?

Sb. Infamy on thy head !

Thou tool of power, thou pander to authority !

I tell thee, knave, thou know’st of none so virtuous,

And she that bore thee was an Æthiop to her.

Cat. You’ll answer this at full——Away with ’em.

Sb. Is charity grown treason to your court ?

What honest man would live beneath such rulers ?

I am content that we should die together——

Cat. Convey the men to prison ; but for her,

Leave her to hunt her fortune as she may.

J. Sb. I will not part with him——for me !——
for me !

Oh ! must he die for me !

[Following him as he is carried off.—She falls.]

Sb.

Sb. Inhuman villains ! *[Breaks from the guards.*
Stand off ! The agonies of death are on her——
She pulls, she gripes me hard with her cold hand.

J. Sb. Was this blow wanting to compleat my ruin ?

Oh ! let him go, ye ministers of terror.
He shall offend no more, for I will die,
And yield obedience to your cruel master.
Tarry a little, but a little longer,
And take my last breath with you.

Sb. Oh, my love !

‘ Why have I liv’d to see this bitter moment,
‘ This grief by far surpassing all my former ?
Why dost thou fix thy dying eyes upon me,
With such an earnest, such a piteous look,
As if thy heart were full of some sad meaning
Thou could’st not speak ?——

J. Sb. Forgive me !——but forgive me !

Sb. Be witness for me, ye celestial host,
Such mercy and such pardon as my soul
Accords to thee, and begs of Heav’n to shew thee ;
May such befall me at my latest hour,
And make my portion blest or curs’d for ever.

J. Sb. Then all is well, and I shall sleep in peace——
’Tis very dark, and I have lost you now——
Was there not something I would have bequeath’d
you ?

But I have nothing left me to bestow,
Nothing but one sad sigh. Oh ! mercy, Heav’n !

[Dies.

Bel. There fled the soul,
And left her load of misery behind.

Sb. Oh, my heart’s treasure ! Is this pale sad vi-
sage

All that remains of thee ? ‘ are these dead eyes
‘ The light that cheer’d my soul ?’ Oh, heavy hour !
But I will fix my trembling lips to thine,
’Till I am cold and senseless quite, as thou art.
What, must we part, then ?——will you——

[To the guards taking him away.

Fare

Fare thee well——

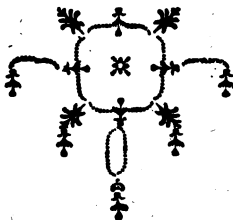
[*Kissing her.*

Now execute your tyrant's will, and lead me
To bonds, or death, 'tis equally indifferent.

Bel. Let those, who view this sad example, know,
What fate attends the broken marriage vow;
And teach their children, in succeeding times,
No common vengeance waits upon these crimes,
When such severe repentance could not save
From want, from shame, and an untimely grave.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

END of the FIFTH ACT.



EPI.

E P I L O G U E.

*YE modest matrons all, ye virtuous wives,
 Who lead with horrid husbands, decent lives ;
 You, who, for all you are in such a taking,
 To see your spouses drinking, gaming, raking,
 Yet make a conscience still of cuckold-making ;
 What can we say your pardon to obtain ?
 This matter here was prov'd against poor Jane :
 She never once deny'd it ; but, in short,
 Whimper'd—and cry'd—" Sweet Sir, I'm sorry for't."
 'Twas well he met a kind, good natur'd-soul,
 We are not all so easy to controul :
 If fancy one might find in this good town,
 Some wou'd ha' told the gentleman his own ;
 Have answer'd smart—" To what do you pretend,
 " Blockhead ?—As if I must not see a friend :
 " Tell me of hackney coaches—Jaunts to th' city—
 " Where should I buy my china ?—Faith, I'll fit ye—
 Our wife was of a milder, meeker spirit ;
 You !—lords and masters !—was not that some merit ?
 Don't you allow it to be virtuous bearing,
 When we submit thus to your domineering ?
 Well, peace be with her, she did wrong most surely ;
 But so do many more who look demurely.
 Nor shou'd our mourning madam weep alone,
 There are more ways of wickedness than one.
 If the reforming stage should fall to shaming
 Ill-nature, pride, hypocrisy, and gaming ;
 The poets frequently might move compassion,
 And with she-tragedies o'er-run the nation.
 Then judge the fair offender with good-nature,
 And let your fellow-feeling curb your satire.
 What if our neighbours have some little failing,
 Must we needs fall to damning and to railing ?
 For her excuse too, be it understood,
 That if the woman was not quite so good,
 Her lover was a king, she flesh and blood.
 And since sh' has dearly paid the sinful score,
 Be kind at last, and pity poor Jane Shore.*



Act I.

The SIEGE of DAMASCUS. *Scene last*



Roberts del.

Published for J. B. S. of Bath Theatre May 6th 1776.

*M^{rs} SMITH in the Character of PHOCAS.
Now to the field to gain the glorious prize*

BELL'S EDITION.

THE
SIEGE of DAMASCUS.

A TRAGEDY, by JOHN HUGHES, Esq.

AS PERFORMED AT THE
Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane.

Regulated from the Prompt-Book,

By PERMISSION of the MANAGERS,

By Mr. HOPKINS, Prompter.



L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN BELL, near *Exeter-Exchange*, in the *Strand*,
and C. ETHERINGTON, at *York*.

MDCCLXXVI.

TO the RIGHT HONOURABLE

E A R L C O W P E R.

MY LORD,

MY obligations to your Lordship are so great and singular, so much exceeding all acknowledgment, and yet so highly demanding all that I can ever make, that nothing has been a greater uneasiness to me than to think that I have not publicly owned them sooner. The honour of having been admitted to your Lordship's acquaintance and conversation, and the pleasure I have sometimes had of sharing in your private hours and retirement from the town, were a happiness sufficient of itself to require from me the utmost returns of gratitude. But your Lordship was soon pleas'd to add to this, your generous care of providing for one who had given you no solicitation; and before I could ask, or even expect it, to honour me with an employment, which, though valued on other accounts, became most so to me, by the single circumstance of its placing me near your Lordship. But I am not to bound my acknowledgments here: when your Lordship withdrew from public business, your care of me did not cease, till you had recommended me to your successor, the present Lord Chancellor. So that my having since had the felicity to be continued in the same employment, under

der a patron to whom I have many obligations, and who has particularly shewn a pleasure in encouraging the lovers of learning and arts, is an additional obligation, for which I am originally indebted to your Lordship.

And yet I have said nothing as I ought of your Lordship's favours, unless I could describe a thousand agreeable circumstances which attend and heighten them. To give, is an act of power common to the great; but to double any gift by the manner of bestowing it, is an art known only to the most elegant minds, and a pleasure tasted by none but persons of the most refined humanity.

As for the tragedy I now humbly dedicate to your Lordship, part of it was written in the neighbourhood of your Lordship's pleasant seat in the country; where it had the good fortune to grow up under your early approbation and encouragement; and I persuade myself it will now be received by your Lordship with that indulgence, the exercise of is natural to you, and is not the least of those distinguishing virtues by which you have gained an unsought popularity, and without either study or design have made yourself one of the most beloved persons of the age in which you live. Here, my Lord, I have a large subject before me, if I were capable of pursuing it, and if I were not acquainted with your Lordship's particular delicacy, by which you are not more careful to deserve the greatest praises, than you are nice in receiving even the least. I shall therefore only presume to add, that I am, with the greatest zeal,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obliged,

Most dutiful, and

Devoted humble Servant,

Feb. 6, 1719-20.

JOHN HUGHES.

I N T R O D U C T I O N.

THE time of the following action is about two years after Mahomet's death, under the next succeeding caliph, Abubeker. The Saracen caliphs were supreme both in spiritual and temporal affairs; and Abubeker, following the steps of Mahomet, had made a considerable progress in propagating his new superstitions by the sword. He had sent a numerous army into Syria, under the command of Caled, a bold and bloody Arabian, who had conquered several towns. The spirit of enthusiasm, newly poured forth among them, acted in its utmost vigour; and the persuasion, that they who turned their backs in fight were accursed of God, and that they who fell in battle passed immediately into Paradise, made them an overmatch for all the forces, which the Grecian emperor Heraclius could send against them. It was a very important time, and the eyes of the whole world were fixed with terror on these successful savages, who committed all their barbarities under the name of religion; and soon after, by extending their conquests over the Grecian empire, and thro' Persia and Egypt, laid the foundation of that mighty empire of the Saracens, which lasted for several centuries; to which the Turks of latter years succeeded.

The Saracens were now set down before Damascus, the capital city of Syria, when the action of this tragedy begins. This was about the year of our Lord 634. All who have written of those times represent the state of christianity in great confusion, very much corrupted, and divided with controversies and disputes, which, together with an universal depravity of manners, and the decay of good policy and ancient discipline in the empire, gave a mighty advantage to Mahomet and his followers, and prepared the way for their amazing success.

P R O L O G U E.

OFT has the muse bere try'd her magic arts,
 To raise your fancies, and engage your hearts.
 When o'er this little spot she shakes her wand,
 Towns, cities, nations, rise at her command.
 And armies march obedient to her call,
 New states are form'd, and ancient empires fall.
 To vary your instruction and delight,
 Past ages roll renew'd before your sight.
 His awful form the Greek and Roman wears,
 Wak'd from his slumber of two thousand years:
 And man's whole race, restor'd to joy and pain,
 Act all their little greatness o'er again.

No common woes to-night we set to view;
 Important in the time, the story new.
 Our opening scenes shall to your sight disclose
 How spiritual dragooning first arose;
 Claims drawn from Heav'n by a barbarian Lord,
 And faith first propagated by the sword.
 In rocky Araby this post began,
 And swiftly o'er the neighbouring country ran:
 By faction weaken'd, and disunion broke,
 Degenerate provinces admit the yoke,
 Nor stopp'd their progress, till resistless grown.
 Th' enthusiasts made all Asia's world their own.
 Britains, be warn'd; let e'en your pleasures here
 Convey some moral to th' attentive ear.
 Beware lest blessings long possess'd displease;
 Nor grow supine with liberty and ease.
 Your country's glory be your constant aim,
 Her safety all is yours; think yours her fame.
 Unite at home—forego intestine jars;
 Then scorn the rumours of religious wars;
 Speak loud in thunder from your guarded shores
 And tell the Continent, the sea is yours.

Speak

*Speak on,—and say, by war, you'll peace maintain,
 Till brightest years, reserv'd for George's reign,
 Advance, and shine in their appointed round :
 Arts then shall flourish, plenteous joys abound,
 And, cheer'd by him, each loyal muse shall sing,
 The happiest island, and the greatest King.*

Drania-

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

CHRISTIANS.

- Eumenes, *governor of Damascus* - - - Mr. Hurst.
 Herbis, *his friend, one of the chiefs of the*
city - - - - - Mr. Wright.
 Phocyas, *a noble and valiant Syrian,*
privately in love with Eudocia - - - Mr. Barry.
 Artamon, *an officer of the guards* - - - Mr. J. Aickin.
 Sergius, *an express from the emperor He-*
raclius - - - - - Mr. Ackman.
 Eudocia, *daughter to Eumenes* - - - - Mrs. Barry.

Officers, soldiers, citizens and attendants.

SARACENS.

- Caled, *general of the Saracen army* - - Mr. Aickin.
 Abudah, *the next in command under*
Caled - - - - - Mr. Parker.
 Daran, *a wild Arabian, professing Ma-*
hometanism for the sake of the spoil - Mr. Branfby.
 Serjabil, }
 Raphan, &c. } *Saracen captains.*

Officers, soldiers, and attendants.

SCENE, the city of Damascus, in Syria, and the Saracen camp before it. And in the last act, a valley adjacent.

THE

THE SIEGE of DAMASCUS.

A C T I. S C E N E, *the City.*

Enter Eumenes, followed by a crowd of people.

EUMENES.

I'LL hear no more. Begone !
Or stop your clamorous mouths, that still are open
To bawl sedition, and consume our corn.
If you will follow me, send home your women,
And follow to the walls ; there earn your safety,
As brave men shou'd—Pity your wives and children !
Yes, I do pity them, Heav'n knows I do,
E'en more than you ; nor will I yield 'em up,
Tho' at your own request, a prey to ruffians—
Herbis, what news ?

Enter Herbis.

Herb. News !—We're betray'd, deserted ;
The works are but half mann'd ; the Saracens
Perceive it, and pour on such crouds, they blunt
Our weapons, and have drain'd our stores of death.
What will you next ?

Eum. I've sent a fresh recruit ;
The valiant Phocæas leads 'em on—whose deeds,
In early youth assert his noble race ;
A more than common ardor seems to warm
His breast, as if he lov'd and courted danger.

Herb. I fear 'twill be too late.

Eum.

Eum. [*Aside.*] I fear it, too :
And tho' I brav'd it to the trembling croud,
I've caught th' infection, and I dread th' event.
Wou'd I had treated—but 'tis now too late.—
Come, Herbis. [*Exeunt.*]

[A noise is heard without, of Officers giving orders.

1st Off. Help there! more help! all to the eastern gate!

2d Off. Look where they cling aloft, like cluster'd
Here, archers, ply your bows. [bees !

1st *Off.* Down with the ladders.

What, will you let them mount ?

2d Off. Aloft there! give the signal, you that wait
In St. Mark's tower.

1st *Offi.* Is the town asleep?
Ring out th' alarum bell!

[Bell rings, and the citizens run to and fro in confusion. A great shout. Enter Herbis.]

Herb. So—the tide turns ; Phocyas has driven it
back.

The gate once more is ours.

Enter Eumenes, Phocyas, Artamon, &c.

Eum. Brave Phocyas, thanks ! mine and the people's thanks ! [*People shout, and cry, A Phocyas ! &c.*]

Yet, that we may not lose this breathing space,
Hang out the flag of truce. You, Artamon,
Haste with a trumpet to th' Arabian chiefs,
And let them know, that, hostages exchange'd,
I'd meet them now upon the eastern plain.

[*Exit Artamon.*

Pho. What means, Eumenes?

Eum. Phocyas, I wou'd try
By friendly treaty, if on terms of peace
'They'll yet withdraw their powers.

Pho. On terms of peace !

What peace can you expect from bands of robbers?

What

What terms from slaves, but slav'ry?—You know
 These wretches fight not at the call of honour;
 For injur'd rights, or birth, or jealous greatness,
 That sets the princes of the world in arms.
 Base-born, and starv'd amidst their stony deserts,
 Long have they view'd from far, with wishing eyes,
 Our fruitful vales, our fig-trees, olives, vines,
 Our cedars, palms, and all the verdant wealth
 That crowns fair Lebanon's aspiring brows.
 Here have the locusts pitch'd, nor will they leave
 These tasted sweets, these blooming fields of plenty,
 For barren sands, and native poverty,
 'Till driv'n away by force.

Eum. What can we do?

Our people in despair, our soldiers harrass'd
 With daily toil, and constant nightly watch;
 Our hope of succours from the emperor
 Uncertain; Eutyches not yet return'd,
 That went to ask them; one brave army beaten;
 Th' Arabians numerous, cruel, flush'd with conquest.

Herb. Besides, you know what frenzy fires their
 minds

Of their new faith, and drives them on to danger.

Eum. True;—they pretend the gates of Paradise
 Stand ever open to receive the souls
 Of all that die in fighting for their cause.

Pbo. Then wou'd I send their souls to Paradise,
 And give their bodies to our Syrian eagles.

Our ebb of fortune is not yet so low
 To leave us desperate. Aids may soon arrive;

Mean time, in spite of their late bold attack,

The city still is ours; their force repell'd,

And therefore weaker; proud of this success,

Our soldiers too have gain'd redoubled courage,

And long to meet them on the open plain.

What hinders, then, but we repay this outrage,

And fall on their camp?

Eum. No—let us first

Believe th' occasion fair, by this advantage,

To purchase their retreat on easy terms:

That

12 *The SIEGE of DAMASCUS.*

That failing, we the better stand acquitted
To our own citizens. Howe'er, brave Phocyas,
Cherish this ardor in the soldiery,
And in our absence form what force thou canst.
Then, if these hungry blood-hounds of the war
Shou'd still be deaf to peace, at our return
Our widen'd gates shall pour a sudden flood
Of vengeance on them, and chastise their scorn.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE changes to a plain before the city.

A prospect of tents at a distance.

Caled, Abudah, Daran.

Dar. To treat, my chiefs?—What! are we merchants, then,

That only come to traffic with these Syrians,
And poorly cheapen conquest on conditions?
No; we were sent to fight the caliph's battles,
Till ev'ry iron neck bend to obedience.
Another storm makes this proud city ours;
What need to treat?—I am for war and plunder.

Cal. Why, so am I—and, but to save the lives
Of musfulmans, not christians, I wou'd not treat.
I hate these christian dogs; and 'tis our task,
As thou observ'st, to fight; our law enjoins it:
Heav'n too, is promis'd only to the valiant.
Oft' has our prophet said, the happy plains
Above, lie stretch'd beneath the blaze of swords.

Abu. Yet, Daran's loth to trust that Heav'n for pay;

This earth, it seems, has gifts that please him more.

Cal. Check not his zeal, Abudah.

Abu. No; I praise it.

Yet, I cou'd wish that zeal had better motives.
Has victory no fruits but blood and plunder?
That we were sent to fight, 'tis true; but wherefore?
For conquest, not destruction. That obtain'd,
The more we spare, the caliph has more subjects,
And Heav'n is better serv'd.—But see, they come.

Enter

The SIEGE of DAMASCUS. 13

Enter Eumenes, Herbis, Artamon.

Cal. Well, christians, we are met—and war a while,
At your request, has still'd its angry voice,
To hear what you'll propose.

Eum. We come to know,
After so many troops you've lost in vain,
If you'll draw off in peace, and save the rest.

Herb. Or rather to know first—for yet we know
not—

Why on your heads, you call our pointed arrows,
In our own just defence? What means this visit?
And why we see so many thousand tents
Rise in the air, and whiten all our fields?

Cal. Is that a question now?—you had our summons,
When first we march'd against you, to surrender.
Two moons have wasted since, and now the third
Is in its wane. 'Tis true, drawn off a while,
At Aiznadin we met and fought the powers
Sent by your emperor to raise our siege.
Vainly you thought us gone; we gain'd a conquest.
You see we are return'd; our hearts, our cause,
Our swords the same.

Herb. But why those swords were drawn,
And what's the cause, inform us.

Eum. Speak your wrongs,
If wrongs you have received, and by what means .
They may be now repair'd.

Aba. Then, christians, hear!
And Heav'n inspire you to embrace its truth!
Not wrongs t'avenge, but to establish right
Our swords were drawn: For such is Heav'n's com-
Immutable. By us great Mahomet, [mand
And his successor, holy Abubeker,
Invite you to the faith.

Art. [*Aside.*] So—then, it seems
There's no harm meant; we're only to be beaten
Into a new religion—If that's all,
I find I am already half a convert. [this,

Eum. Now, in the name of Heaven, what faith is
That stalks gigantic forth thus arm'd with terrors,

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B

As

14 *The* SIEGE of DAMASCUS.

As if it meant to ruin, not to save?
 That leads embattled legions to the field,
 And marks its progress out with blood and slaughter?
Herb. Bold, frontless men! that impudently dare
 To blend religion with the worst of crimes!
 And sacrilegiously usurp that name,
 To cover frauds and justify oppression!

Eum. Where are your priests? What doctors of
 your law
 Have you e'er sent, t'instruct us in its precepts?
 To solve our doubts, and satisfy our reason,
 And kindly lead us thro' the wilds of error
 To these new tracks of truth?—This wou'd be friend-
 And well might claim our thanks. [ship,

Cal. Friendship like this
 With scorn had been received; your numerous vices,
 Your clashing sects, your mutual rage and strife,
 Have driv'n religion, and her angel-guards,
 Like out-casts, from among you. In her stead,
 Usurping superstition bears the sway,
 And reigns in mimic state, 'midst idol shews,
 And pageantry of pow'r. Who does not mark
 Your lives? Rebellious to your own great prophet
 Who mildly taught you—therefore Mahomet
 Has brought the sword to govern you by force,
 Nor will accept obedience so precarious.

Eum. O solemn truths! tho' from an impious
 tongue! [Aside.

That we're unworthy of our holy faith,
 To Heav'n, with grief and conscious shame, we own.
 But what are you, that thus arraign our vices,
 And consecrate your own? Vile hypocrites!
 Are you not sons of rapine, foes to peace,
 Base robbers, murderers—

Cal. Christian, no—

Eum. Then say,
 Why have you ravag'd all our peaceful borders?
 Plunder'd our towns? and by what claim e'en now
 You tread this ground?

Herb. What claim, but that of hunger?

The SIEGE of DAMASCUS. 13

The claim of ravenous wolves, that leave their dens
To prowl at midnight round some sleeping village,
Or watch the shepherd's folded flock for prey ?

Cal. Blasphemers, know, your fields and towns are
ours ;

Our prophet has bestow'd 'em on the faithful,
And Heav'n itself has ratify'd the grant.

Eum. Oh ! now indeed you boast a noble title !
What cou'd your prophet grant ? A hireling slave !
Not e'en the mules and camels which he drove
Were his to give ; and yet the bold impostor
Has canton'd out the kingdoms of the earth,
In frantic fits of visionary power,
To sooth his pride, and bribe his fellow-madmen !

Cal. Was it for this you sent to ask a parley,
T'affront our faith, and to traduce our prophet ?
Well might we answer you with quick revenge
For such indignities.—Yet hear, once more,
Hear this our last demand ; and this accepted,
We yet withdraw our war. Be christians still,
But swear to live with us in firm alliance,
To yield us aids, and pay us annual tribute.

Eum. No ;—Should we grant you aid, we must be
rebels ;

And tribute is the slavish badge of conquest.
Yet since, on just and honourable terms,
We ask but for our own—Ten silken vests,
Weighty with pearl and gems, we'll send your caliph ;
Two, Caled, shall be thine ; two thine, Abudah.
To each inferior captain we decree
A turbant spun from our Damascus' flax,
White as the snows of Heav'n ; to every soldier
A scimitar. This, and of solid gold
Ten ingots, be the price to buy your absence.

Cal. This, and much more, e'en all your shining
wealth,

Will soon be ours ; look round your Syrian frontiers !
See, in how many towns our hoisted flags
Are waving in the wind ; Sachna, and Hawran,
Proud Tadmor, Aracah, and stubborn Bosra

16 *The SIEGE of DAMASCUS.*

Have bow'd beneath the yoke ;—behold our march
O'er half your land, like flame thro' fields of harvest.
And last view Aiznadin, that vale of blood !
There seek the souls of forty thousand Greeks
That, fresh from life, yet hover o'er their bodies.
Then think, and then resolve.

Herb. Presumptuous men !

What tho' you yet can boast successful guilt,
Is conquest only yours ? Or dare you hope
That you shall still pour on the swelling tide,
Like some proud river that has left its banks,
Nor ever know repulse ?

Eum. Have you forgot !

Not twice seven years are past since e'en your prophet,
Bold as he was, and boasting aid divine,
Was by the tribe of Coresh forc'd to fly,
Poorly to fly, to save his wretched life,
From Mecca to Medina ?

Abu. No ;—forgot !

We well remember how Medina screen'd.
That holy head, preserv'd for better days,
And ripening years of glory !

Dar. Why, my chiefs,

Will you waste time, in offering terms despis'd
To these idolaters ?—Words are but air,
Blows wou'd plead better.

Cal. Daran, thou say'st true.

Christians, here end our truce. Behold once more
The sword of Heav'n is drawn ! nor shall be sheath'd
But in the bowels of Damascus.

Eum. That,

Or speedy vengeance, and destruction due
To the proud menacers, as Heav'n sees fit !

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE *changes to a Garden.*

Eudocia. All's hush'd around !—No more the
shout of soldiers
And clash of arms tumultuous fill the air.

Methinks

Methinks this interval of terror seems
Like that, when the loud thunder just has roll'd
O'er our affrighted heads, and in the heavens
A momentary silence but prepares
A second and a louder clap to follow.

Enter Phocyas.

O no—my hero comes, with better omens,
And every gloomy thought is now no more.

Pho. Where is the treasure of my soul?—Eudocia,
Behold me here impatient, like the miser
That often steals in secret to his gold,
And counts with trembling joy, and jealous transport,
The shining heaps which he still fears to lose.

Eud. Welcome, thou brave, thou best deserving lo-
How do I doubly share the common safety; [ver!
Since 'tis a debt to thee!—but tell me, Phocyas,
Dost thou bring peace?—Thou dost, and I am happy!

Pho. Not yet, Eudocia; 'tis decreed by Heav'n
I must do more to merit thy esteem.
Peace, like a frightened dove, has wing'd her flight
To distant hills, beyond these hostile tents;
And thro' 'em we must thither force our way,
If we would call the lovely wanderer back
To her forsaken home.

Eud. False flattering hope!
Vanish'd so soon!—alas, my faithful fears
Return, and tell me, we must still be wretched!

Pho. Not so, my fair; if thou but gently smile,
Inspiring valour, and presaging conquest,
These barbarous foes to peace and love shall soon
Be chas'd, like fiends before the morning light,
And all be calm again.

Eud. Is the truce ended?
Must war, alas! renew its bloody rage?
And Phocyas ever be expos'd to danger?

Pho. Think for whose sake danger itself has charms.
Dismiss thy fears; the lucky hour comes on,
Full fraught with joys, when my big soul no more
Shall labour with this secret of my passion,

18 *The SIEGE of DAMASCUS.*

To hide it from thy jealous father's eyes.
 Just now, by signals from the plain, I've learn'd
 That the proud foe refuse us terms of honour;
 A sally is resolv'd; the citizens
 And soldiers, kindled into sudden fury,
 Press all in crowds, and beg I'll lead 'em on.
 Oh, my Eudocia! if I now succeed—
 Did I say *if*—I must, I will; the cause
 Is love, 'tis liberty, it is Eudocia!—
 What then shall hinder, since our mutual faith
 Is pledg'd and thou consenting to my bliss,
 But I may boldly ask thee of Eumenes,
 Nor fear a rival's more prevailing claim?

Eud. May blessings still attend thy arms!—Me-
 thinks

I've caught the flame of thy heroic ardor!
 And now I see thee crown'd with palm and olive;
 The soldiers bring thee back with songs of triumph
 And loud applauding shouts; thy rescu'd country
 Resounds thy praise; our emperor Heraclius
 Decrees thee honours for a city sav'd,
 And pillars rise of monumental brass,
 Inscrib'd—To Phocias the deliverer.

Pho. The honours and rewards which thou hast
 nam'd

Are bribes too little for my vast ambition.
 My soul is full of thee!—Thou art my all
 Of fame, of triumph, and of future fortune.
 'Twas love of thee first sent me forth in arms,
 My service is all thine, to thee devoted,
 And thou alone canst make e'en conquest pleasing.

Eud. O, do not wrong thy merit, nor restrain it
 To narrow bounds; but know, I best am pleas'd
 To share thee with thy country. Oh, my Phocyas!
 With conscious blushes oft I've heard thy vows,
 And strove to hide, yet more reveal'd my heart;
 But 'tis thy virtue justifies my choice,
 And what at first was weakness, now is glory.

Pho. Forgive me, thou fair pattern of all goodness!
 If in the transport of unbounded passion,

I still

I still am left to ev'ry thought but thee.
Yet sure to love thee thus is ev'ry virtue ;
Nor need I more perfection—Hark ! I'm call'd.

[Trumpet sounds.

End. Then go—and Heav'n with all its angels
guard thee.

Pho. Farewel !—for thee once more I draw the
sword.

Now to the field to gain the glorious prize ;
'Tis victory—the word ; Eudocia's eyes ! [Exeunt.

END of the FIRST ACT.

A C T II.

SCENE, *the Governor's Palace.*

Eumenes, Herbis.

HERBIS.

STILL I must say, 'twas wrong, 'twas wrong, Eu-
menes,
And mark th' event !

Eum. What could I less ? You saw
'Twas vain to oppose it, whilst his eager valour,
Impatient of restraint—

Herb. His eager valour !
His rashness, his hot youth, his valour's fever !
Must we, whose business is to keep our walls,
And manage warily our little strength,
Must we at once lavish away our blood,
Because his pulse beats high, and his mad courage
Wants to be breath'd in some new enterprize ?—
You shou'd not have consented.

Eum. You forgot.
'Twas not my voice alone ; you saw the people (And

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(And sure such sudden instincts are from Heav'n !)
Rose all at once to follow him, as if
One soul inspir'd 'em, and that soul were Phocyas.

Herb. I had indeed forgot ; and ask your pardon.
I took you for Eumenes, and I thought
That in Damascus you had chief command.

Eum. What dost thou mean ?

Herb. Nay, who's forgetful now ?
You say, the people — Yes, that very people,
That coward tribe that prefs'd you to surrender !
Well may they spurn at lost authority ;
Whom they like better, better they'll obey.

Eum. O I cou'd curse the giddy changeful slaves,
But that the thought of this hour's great event
Possesses all my soul.—If we are beaten !—

Herb. The poison works ; 'tis well— I'll give him
more. *[Aside.]*

True, if we're beaten, who shall answer that ?
Shall you, or I ?—Are you the governor ?—
Or say we conquer, whose is then the praise ?

Eum. I know thy friendly fears ; that thou and I
Must stoop beneath a beardless rising hero ;
And in Heraclius' court it shall be said,
Damascus, nay perhaps the empire too,
Ow'd its deliverance to a boy.—Why be it,
So that he now return with victory ;
'Tis honour greatly won, and let him wear it.
Yet I cou'd wish I needed less his service.
Were Euryches return'd—

Herb. *[Aside.]* That, that's my torture.
I sent my son to th' emperor's court, in hopes
His merit at this time might raise his fortunes ;
But Phocyas—curse upon his forward virtues !—
Is reaping all this field of fame alone,
Or leaves him scarce the gleanings of a harvest.

Eum. See, Artamon with hasty strides returning.
He comes alone !—O friend, thy fears were just.
What are we now, and what is lost Damascus ?

Enter Artamon.

Art. Joy to Eumenes !

Eum.

Eum. Joy? —is't possible?
Dost thou bring news of victory?

Art. The sun
Is set in blood, and from the western skies
Has seen three thousand slaughter'd Arabs fall.

Herb. Is Phocyas safe?

Art. He is, and crown'd with triumph.

Herb. [*Afide.*] My fears indeed were just.

[*Shout, A Phocyas, a Phocyas!*

Eum. What noise is that?

Herb. The people worshipping their new divinity,
Shortly they'll build him temples.

Eum. Tell us, soldier,
Since thou hast shar'd the glory of this action,
Tell us how it began.

Art. At first the foe
Seem'd much surpriz'd; but taking soon the alarm
Gather'd some hasty troops, and march'd to meet us.
The captain of these bands look'd wild and fierce,
His head unarm'd, as if in scorn of danger,
And naked to the waist; as he drew near
He rais'd his arm and shook a pond'rous lance;
When all at once, as at a signal giv'n,
We heard the Tecbir, so these Arabs call
Their shouts of onset, when with loud appeal
They challenge Heav'n, as if demanding conquest.
The battle join'd, and thro' the barbarous host
Fight, fight, and Paradise, was all the cry.
At last our leaders met; and gallant Phocyas—
But what are words to tell the mighty wonders
We saw him then perform?—Their chief unhors'd,
The Saracens soon broke their ranks and fled;
And had not a thick evening fog arose
(Which sure the devil rais'd up to save his friends!)
The slaughter had been double—But, behold!
The hero comes.

Enter Phocyas, Eumenes meeting him.

Eum. Joy to brave Phocyas!
Eumenes gives him back the joy he sent.
The welcome news has reach'd this place before thee.
How

How shall thy country pay the debt she owes thee?

Pho. By taking this as earnest of a debt
Which I owe her, and fain wou'd better pay.

Her. In spite of envy, I must praise him too. [*Aside.*
Phocyas, thou hast done bravely, and 'tis fit
Successful virtue take a time to rest.

Fortune is fickle, and may change; besides,
What shall we gain, if from a mighty ocean
By sluices we draw off some little streams?
If thousands fall, ten thousands more remain.

Nor ought we hazard worth so great as thine.
Against such odds. Suffice what's done already:
And let us now, in hope of better days,
Keep wary watch, and wait th' expected succours.

Pho. What!—to be coop'd whole months within
our walls?

To rust at home, and sicken with inaction?
The courage of our men will droop and die,
If not kept up by daily exercise.

Again the beaten foe may force our gates;
And victory, if slighted thus, take wing,
And fly where she may find a better welcome.

Art. [*Aside.*] It must be so—he hates him! on my
soul,

This Herbis is a foul old envious knave.
Methinks Eumenes too might better thank him.

Eum. [*to Herbis, aside.*] Urge him no more;—
I'll think of thy late warning;
And thou shalt see I'll yet be governor.

A letter brought in.

Pho. [*looking on it.*] 'Tis to Eumenes.

Eum. Ha! from Eutyches.

[*Reads.*] The emperor, awaken'd with the danger
That threatens his dominions, and the loss
At Aiznadin, has drain'd his garrisons
To raise a second army. In few hours
We will begin our march. Sergius brings this,
And will inform you further.—

Her. [*Aside.*] Heav'n, I thank thee!
'Twas e'en beyond my hopes.

Eum.

Eum. But where is Sergius ?

Mess. The letter, fasten'd to an arrow's head,
Was shot into to the town.

Eum. I fear he's taken——

O Pocyas, Herbis, Artamon ! my friends !
You all are sharers in this news: the storm
Is blowing o'er, that hung like night upon us,
And threaten'd deadly ruin—Haste, proclaim
'The welcome tidings loud thro' all the city.
Let sparkling lights be seen from every turret
To tell our joy, and spread their blaze to Heav'n
Prepare for feasts ; danger shall wait at distance,
And fear be now no more. The jolly foldier
And citizen shall meet o'er their full bowls,
Forget their toils, and laugh their cares away,
And mirth and triumphs close this happy day.

[*Exeunt Herb. and Art.*

Pho. And may succeeding days prove yet more
happy !

Well dost thou bid the voice of triumph sound
Thro' all our streets ; our city calls thee father ;
And say, Eumenes, dost thou not perceive
A father's transport rise within thy breast,
Whilst in this act thou art the hand of Heav'n
To deal forth blessings, and distribute joy ?

Eum. The blessings Heav'n bestows are freely sent,
And should be freely shar'd.

Pho. True—Generous minds
Redoubled feel the pleasure they impart.
For me, if I've deserv'd by arms or counsels,
By hazards gladly sought, and greatly prosper'd,
Whate'er I've added to the public stock,
With joy I see it in Eumenes' hands,
And wish but to receive my share from thee.

Eum. I cannot, if I wou'd, withhold thy share.
What thou hast done is thine ; the same thy own ;
And virtuous actions will reward themselves.

Pho. Fame—what is that, if courted for herself ?
Less than a vision ; a mere sound, an echo,

That

That calls with mimic voice thro' woods and labyrinths

Her cheated lovers ; lost and heard by fits,
But never fix'd ; a seeming nymph, yet nothing.
Virtue indeed is a substantial good,
A real beauty ; yet with weary steps
Thro' rugged ways, by long laborious service,
When we have trac'd, and woo'd, and won the dame,
May we not then expect the dower she brings ?

Eum. Well—ask that dowry ; say, can Damascus pay it ?

Her riches shall be tax'd : name but the sum,
Her merchants with some costly gems shall grace thee ;
Nor can Heraclius fail to grant thee honours,
Proportion'd to thy birth and thy desert.

Pho. And can Eumenes think I wou'd be brib'd
By trash, by fordid gold, to venal virtue ?
What ! serve my country for the same mean hire,
That can corrupt each villain to betray her ?
Why is she fav'd from these Arabian spoilers,
If to be stripp'd by her own sons ?—Forgive me
If the thought glows on my cheeks ? I know
'Twas mention'd, but to prove how much I scorn it.
As for Heraclius, if he own my conduct,
I shall indulge an honest pride in honours
Which I have strove to merit. Yes, Eumenes,
I have ambition—yet the vast reward
That swells my hopes, and equals all my wishes
Is in thy gift alone—it is Eudocia.

Eum. Eudocia ! Phocyas, I am yet thy friend,
And therefore will not hold thee long in doubt.
Thou must not think of her.

Pho. Not think of her ?
Impossible !—She's ever present to me,
My life, my soul ! She animates my being,
And kindles up my thoughts to worthy actions
And why, Eumenes, why not think of her ?
Is not my rank——

Eum. Forbear—what need a herald
To tell me who thou art ?—Yet once again—

Since

Since thou wilt force me to a repetition,
I say, thou must not think of her.

Pho. Yet hear me ;

Why wilt thou judge, ere I can plead my cause ?

Eum. Why wilt thou plead in vain ; hast thou not
heard

My choice has destin'd her to Eutyches ?

Pho. And has she then consented to that choice ?

Eum. Has she consented !—What is her consent ?

Is she not mine ?

Pho. She is—and in that title

E'en kings with envy may behold thy wealth,
And think their kingdoms poor !—and yet, Eumenes,
Shall she, by being thine, be barr'd a privilege
Which e'en the meanest of her sex my claim ?
Thou wilt not force her !

Eum. Who has told thee so ?

I'd force her to be happy.

Pho. That thou canst not.

What happiness subsists in loss of freedom ?

The guest constrain'd, but murmurs at the banquet,
Nor thanks his host, but starves amidst abundance.

Eum. 'Tis well, young man—Why then, I'll learn
from thee

To be a very tame obedient father.

Thou hast already taught my child her duty.

I find the source of all her disobedience,

Her hate of me, her scorn of Eutyches ;

Ha ! Is't not so ?—come, tell me ; I'll forgive thee.

Hast thou not found her a most ready scholar ?

I know thou hast—Why, what a dull old dotard

Was I, to think I ever had a daughter !

Pho. I'm sorry that Eumenes thinks—

Eum. No—sorry !

Sorry for what ? Then thou dost own thou'st wrong'd
me !

That's somewhat yet—Curse on my stupid blindness !

For had I eyes I might have seen it sooner.

Was this the spring of thy romantic bravery,

Thy boastful merit, thy officious service ?

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C

Pho.

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Pbo. It was—with pride I own it—'twas Eudocia.
I have serv'd thee in serving her, thou know'st it,
And thought I might have found a better treatment.
Why wilt thou force me thus to be a braggart,
And tell thee that which thou shou'dst tell thyself?
It grates my soul—I am not wont to talk thus.
But I recall my words—I have done nothing,
And wou'd disclaim all merit, but my love.

Eum. O no—say on, that thou hast sav'd Damascus;
Is it not so?—Look o'er her battlements,
See if the flying foe have left their camp!
Why are our gates yet clos'd, if thou hast freed us?
'Tis true, thou fought'st a skirmish—What of that?
Had Eutyches been present——

Pbo. Eutyches!
Why wilt thou urge my temper with that trifler?
O let him come! that in yon spacious plain
We may together charge the thickest ranks,
Rush on to battle, wounds, and glorious death,
And prove who 'twas that best deserv'd Eudocia.

Eum. That will be seen ere long—But since I find
Thou arrogantly wou'dst usurp dominion,
Believ'st thyself the guardian genius here,
And that our fortunes hang upon thy sword;
Be that first try'd—for know, that from this moment
Thou here hast no command—Farewel!—So stay,
Or hence and join the foe—thou hast thy choice.

[*Exit.* Eumenes.]

Pbo. Spurn'd and degraded!—Proud, ungrateful
man!

Am I a bubble then, blown up by thee,
And tofs'd into the air to make thee sport?
Hence to the foe! 'Tis well—Eudocia,
Oh, I will see thee, thou wrong'd excellence!
But now to speak thy wrongs, or my disgrace;
Impossible—Oh, rather let me walk
Like a dumb ghost, and burst my heart in silence.

SCENE,

SCENE, *the Garden.*

Enter Eudocia.

Eud. Why must we meet by stealth, like guilty lovers!

But 'twill not long be so— What joy 'twill be
To own my hero in his ripen'd honours,
And hear applauding crowds pronounce me blest!
Sure he'll be here—See! the fair rising moon,
Ere day's remaining twilight scarce is spent,
Hangs up her ready lamp, and with mild lustre
Drives back the hovering shades! Come, Phocyas,
This gentle season is a friend to love, [come;
And now methinks I cou'd with equal passion,
Meet thine, and tell thee all my secret soul.

Enter Phocyas.

He hears me—O my Phocyas!—What—not answer!—
Art thou not he; or art some shadow?—Speak.

Pho. I am indeed a shadow—I am nothing—

Eud. What dost thou mean?—for now I know thee,
Phocyas.

Pho. And never can be thine.

It will have vent—O barbarous, curst—but hold——
I had forgot,—it was Eudocia's father!——
O, cou'd I too forget how he has us'd me!

Eud. I fear to ask thee——

Pho. Dost thou fear?—Alas!

Then thou wilt pity me—O generous maid!
Thou hast charm'd down the rage that swell'd my
heart,

And choak'd my voice——now I can speak to thee.
And yet 'tis worse than death what I have suffer'd;
It is the death of honour!—Yet that's little;
'Tis more, Eudocia, 'tis the loss of thee!

Eud. Hast thou not conquer'd?—What are all these
shouts,

This voice of general joy, heard far around?
What are these fires, that cast their glimmering light
C 2 Against

Against the sky ? Are not all these thy triumphs ?

Pbo. O name not triumph! Talk no more of con-
It is indeed a night of general joy, [quest!

But not to me? Eudora, I am come

To take a last farewell of thee for ever,

End. A last farewell!

Pho. Yes ;—How wilt thou hereafter
Look on a wretch despis'd, revil'd, cashier'd,
Stript of command, like a base beaten coward ?
Thy cruel father—I have told too much ;—
I shou'd not but for this have felt the wounds
I got in fight for him——now, now they bleed.
But I have done——and now thou hast my story,
Is there a creature so accurst a Phocyas ?

Eud. And can it be?—Is this then thy reward?
O Phocyas! never wou'dst thou tell me yet
That thou hadst wounds; now I must feel them too.
For is it not for me thou hast borne this?
What else cou'd be thy crime?—Wert thou a traitor,
Hadst thou betray'd us, fold us to the foe——

Pho. Wou'd I be yet a traitor, I have leave ;
Nay, I am dar'd to it, with mocking scorn.
My crime indeed was asking thee ; that only
Has cancell'd all, if I had any merit ;
The city now is safe, my service slighted,
And I discarded, like an useless thing,
Nay, bid begone——and, if I like that better,
Seek out new friends, and join yon barbarous host.

Eud. Hold—let me think a while--- [*Walks aside.*
—Tho' my heart bleed,

I wou'd not have him see these dropping tears—
And wilt thou go, then, Phocyas?

Pho. To my grave;
Where can I bury else this foul disgrace;
Alas! that question shews how poor I am,
How very much a wretch; for if I go,
It is from thee, thou only joy of life:
And death will then be welcome.

End. Art thou fare

Thou hast been us'd thus? Art thou quite undone?

Pb.

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Pho. Yes, very sure—What dost thou mean?

Eud. That then, it is a time for me—O Heaven!
that I

Alone am grateful to this wondrous man!

To own thee Phocyas, thus---[*Giving her hand.*] nay,
glory in thee,

And shew, without a blush, how much I love.

We must not part---

Pho. Then I am rich again! [*Embracing her.*

O, no---we will not part! Confirm it, Heav'n!

Now thou shalt see how I will bend my spirit,

With what soft patience I will bear my wrongs,

Till I have wearied out thy father's scorn.

Yet I have worse to tell thee—Eutyches—

Eud. Why wilt thou name him?

Pho. Now, e'en now, he's coming!

Just hov'ring o'er thee, like a bird of prey.

Thy father vows—for I must tell thee all—

'Twas this that wrung my heart, and rack'd my brain,

E'en to distraction!—vows thee to his bed;

Nay, threaten'd force, if thou refuse obedience.

Eud. Force!—threaten'd force!—my father—

Where is nature?

Is that, too, banished from his heart?—O then

I have no father—How have I deserved this?—

[*Weeping.*

No home, but am henceforth an out-cast orphan;

For I will wander to earth's utmost bounds,

Ere give my hand to that detested contract.

O save me, Phocyas! thou hast sav'd my father—

Must I yet call him so, this cruel father—

How wilt thou now deliver poor Eudocia?

Pho. See, how we're join'd in exile! How our fate
Conspires to warn us both to leave this city!

Thou know'st the emperor is now at Antioch;

I have an uncle there, who, when the Persian,

As now the Saracen, had nigh o'er-run

The ravag'd empire, did him signal service,

And nobly was rewarded. There, Eudocia,

Thou might'st be safe, and I may meet with justice.

Eud. There—any where, so we may fly this place,

C 3

See

30 *The* SIEGE of DAMASCUS.

See, Phocyas, what thy wrongs and mine have wrought
In a weak woman's frame ! for I have courage
To share thy exile now thro' ev'ry danger.
Danger is only here, and dwells with guilt,
With base ingratitude, and hard oppression.

Pho. Then let us lose no time, but hence this night.
The gates I can command, and will provide
The means of our escape. Some five hours hence
('Twill then be turn'd of midnight) we may meet
In the piazza of Honoria's convent.

Eud. I know it well ; the place is most secure,
And near adjoining to this garden wall.
There thou shalt find me—O protect us, Heav'n !

Pho. Fear not ;—thy innocence will be our guard.
I've thought already how to shape our course ;
Some pitying angel will attend thy steps,
Guide thee unseen, and charm the sleeping foe,
'Till thou art safe !—O, I have suffer'd nothing ;
Thus gaining thee, and this great generous proof,
How blest I am in my Eudocia's love !
My only joy, farewell !—

Eud. Farewel, my Phocyas !
I've now no friend but thee—yet thee I'll call
Friend, father, lover, guardian !—Thou art all.

[*Exeunt.*]

END of the SECOND ACT.

A C T. III.

S C E N E, Caled's Tent.

Caled *attended*, Sergius *brought in, bound with cords.*

C A L E D.

MERCY ! What's that ?—Look yonder on the
field
Of our late fight !—Go, talk of mercy there.

4

Will

Will the dead hear thy voice?

Serg. O spare me yet!

Cal. Thou wretch!—Spare thee; to what? To live in torture?

Are not thy limbs all bruise'd, thy bones disjointed;
To force thee to confess? and wou'dst thou drag,
Like a crush'd serpent, a vile mangled being?
My eyes *abhor* a coward—Hence, and die!

Serg. Oh, I have told thee all—When first pursu'd
I fix'd my letters on an arrow's point,
And shot them o'er the walls——

Cal. Hast thou told all?

Well, then thou shalt have mercy to requite thee;
Behold, I'll send thee forward on thy errand.
Strike off his head; then cast it o'er the gates;
There let thy tongue tell o'er its tale again.

Serg. O bloody Saracen!—

[*Exit Sergius, dragg'd away by guards.*]

Enter Abudah.

Cal. Abudah, welcome!

Abu. O Caled, what an evening was the last!

Cal. Name it no more; remembrance sickens withit,
And therefore sleep is banished from this night;
Nor shall to-morrow's sun open his eye
Upon our shame, ere doubly we've redeem'd it.
Have all the captains notice?

Abu. I have walk'd

The rounds to-night, ere the last hour of prayer,
From tent to tent, and warn'd them to be ready.
What must be done?

Cal. Thou know'st th' important news,
Which we have intercepted by this slave,
Of a new army's march. The time now calls,
While these soft Syrians are dissolv'd in riot,
Fool'd with success, and not suspecting danger,
Neglectful of their watch, or else fast bound
In chains of sleep, companion of debauches,
To form a new attack ere break of day.
So, like the wounded leopard, shall we rush

From

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From out our covert on these drowsy hunters,
And seize 'em, unprepar'd to 'scape our vengeance.

Abu. Great captain of the armies of the faithful!
I know thy mighty and unconquer'd spirit.
Yet hear me, Caled; hear, and weigh my doubts.
Our angry prophet frowns upon our vices,
And visits us in blood. Why else did terrors,
Unknown before, seize all our stoutest bands?
The angel of destruction was abroad;
The archers of the tribe of 'Thoal fled,
So long renown'd, or spent their shafts in vain;
The feather'd flights err'd thro' the boundless air,
Or the death turn'd on him that drew the bow!
What can this bode?—Let me speak plainer yet;
Is it to propagate th' unspotted law
We fight? 'Tis well; it is a noble cause;
But much I fear infection is among us;
A boundless lust of rapine guides our troops.
We learn the christian vices we chastise,
And, tempted with the pleasures of the soil,
More than with distant hopes of paradise,
I fear, may soon—but, Oh, avert it Heav'n!
Fall e'en a prey to our own spoils and conquests.

Cal. No—thou mistak'st; thy pious zeal deceives
thee.

Our prophet only chides our sluggard valour.
Thou saw'st how in the vale of Honan once
The troops, as now defeated, fled confus'd
E'en to the gates of Mecca's holy city;
'Till Mahomet himself there stop'd their entrance,
A javelin in his hand, and turn'd them back
Upon the foe; they fought again, and conquer'd.
Behold how we may best appease his wrath!
His own example points us out the way.

Abu. Well—be it then resolv'd. Th' indulgent
hour

Of better fortune is, I hope, at hand.
And yet, since Phocyas has appear'd its champion,
How has this city rais'd its drooping head!
As if some charm prevail'd where'er he fought;

Our

Our strength seems wither'd, and our feeble weapons
Forgot their wonted triumph—were he absent—

Cal. I would have fought him out in the last action
To single fight, and put that charm to proof,
Had not a foul and sudden mist arose
Ere I arriv'd, to have restor'd the combat.
But let it be—'tis past. We yet may meet,
And 'twill be known whose arm is then the stronger.

Enter Daran.

Dar. Health to the race of Ismael! and days
More prosp'rous than the last;—a christian captive
Is fall'n within my watch, and waits his doom.

Cal. Bring forth the slave!—O thou keen vulture,
Death!
Do we then feed thee only thus by morsels?
Whole armies never can suffice thy anger.

Daran goes out, and re-enters with Phocyas.

Cal. Whence, and what art thou?—Of Damascus?
—Daran,
Where didst thou find this dumb and sullen thing,
That seems to lour defiance on our anger?

Dar. Marching in circuit, with the horse thou
gav'st me,
T'observe the city gates, I saw from far
Two persons issue forth; the one advance'd,
And ere he could retreat, my horsemen seiz'd him;
The other was a woman, and had fled,
Upon a signal giv'n at our approach,
And got within the gate. Wou'dst thou know more,
Himself, if he will speak, can best inform thee.

Cal. Have I not seen thy face?

Abu. [To Caled.] He hears thee not;
His eyes are fix'd on earth; some deep distress
Is at his heart. This is no common captive.

Cal. A lion in the toils! We soon shall tame him.
Still art thou dumb?—Nay, 'tis in vain to cast
Thy gloomy looks so oft around this place,
Or frown upon thy bonds—thou canst not 'scape.

Pho.

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Pbo. Then be it so—the worst is past already,
And life is now not worth a moment's pause.
Do you not know me yet—think of the man
You have most cause to curse, and I am he.

Cal. Ha! Phocyas?

Abu. Phocyas!—Mahomet, we thank thee!
Now thou dost smile again.

Dar. [*Aside.*] O devil, devil!
And I not know him!—'twas but yesterday
He kill'd my horse, and drove me from the field.
Now I'm reveng'd! No; hold you there, not yet,
Not while he lives.

Cal. [*Aside.*] This is indeed a prize!
Is it because thou know'st what slaughter'd heaps
There yet unbury'd lie without the camp,
Whose ghosts have all this night, passing the Zorat,
Call'd from that bridge of death to thee to follow,
That now thou'rt here to answer to their cry?
Howe're it be, thou know'st thy welcome—

Pbo. Yes,
Thou proud, blood-thirsty Arab!—Well I know
What to expect from thee: I know ye all.
How should the author of distress and ruin
Be mov'd to pity? That's a human passion.
No—in your hungry eyes, that look revenge,
I read my doom. Where are your racks, your tor-
tures?

I'm ready—lead me to 'em; I can bear
The worst of ills from you. You're not my friends,
My countrymen.—Yet were you men, I cou'd
Unfold a story—But no more—Eumenes,
Thou hast thy wish, and I am now—a worm!

Abu. [*to Cal.* *aside.*] Leaders of armies, hear him!
for my mind

Prefages good accruing to our cause
By this event.

Cal. I tell thee then, thou wrong'st us,
To think our hearts thus steel'd, or our ears deaf
To all that thou may'st utter. Speak, disclose
The secret woe that throbs within thy breast.

Now,

Now, by the silent hours of night! we'll hear thee,
And mute attention shall await thy words.

Pbo. This is not then the palace in Damascus!
If ye will hear, then I indeed have wrong'd you.
How can this be?—When he for whom I've fought,
Fought against you, has yet refus'd to hear me!
You seem surpriz'd.—It was ingratitude
That drove me out an exile from those walls,
Which I so late defended.

Abu. Can it be?
Are these thy christian friends?

Cal. 'Tis well—we thank 'em:
They help us to subdue themselves—But who
Was the companion of thy flight?—A woman,
So Daran said——

Pbo. 'Tis there I am most wretched——
Oh, I am torn from all my soul held dear,
And my life's blood flows out upon the wound!
That woman—'twas for her—How shall I speak it?—
Eudocia, O farewell!—I'll tell you, then,
As fast as these heart-rending sighs will let me;
I lov'd the daughter of the proud Eumenes,
And long in secret woo'd her; not unwelcome
To her my visits; but I fear'd her father,
Who oft had press'd her to detested nuptials,
And therefore durst not, till this night of joy,
Avow to him my courtship. Now I thought her
Mine, by a double claim, of mutual vows,
And service yielded at his greatest need.
When, as I mov'd my suit, with sour disdain
He mock'd my service, and forbade my love;
Degraded me from the command I bore,
And with defiance bade me seek the foe.
How has his curse prevail'd!—The generous maid
Was won by my distress to leave the city;
And cruel fortune made me thus your prey.

Abu. [*Aside.*] My soul is mov'd.—Thou wert a man,
O, prophet!
Forgive, if 'tis a crime, a human sorrow,
For injur'd worth, tho' in an enemy!

Pbo

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Pho. Now—since you've heard my story, set me free.

That I may save her yet, dearer than life,
From a tyrannic father's threaten'd force;
Gold, gems and purple vests shall pay my ransom;
Nor shall my peaceful sword henceforth be drawn
In fight nor break its truce with you for ever.

Cal. No ;—there's one way, a better, and but one,
To save thyself, and make some reparation
For all the numbers thy bold hand has slain.

Pho. O, name it quickly, and my soul will bless thee!

Cal. Embrace our faith, and share with us our fortunes.

Pho. Then I am lost again!

Cal. What! when we offer
Not freedom only, but to raise thee high
To greatness, conquest, glory, Heav'nly bliss!

Pho. To sink me down to infamy, perdition,
Here and hereafter! Make my name a curse
To present times! to ev'ry future age
A proverb and a scorn!—take back thy mercy,
And know, I now disdain it.

Cal. As thou wilt.
The time's too precious to be wasted longer
In words with thee. Thou know'st thy doom—fare-
wel.

Abu. [*to Calad aside.*] Hear me yet, Calad! grant
him some short space;

Perhaps he will at length accept thy bounty.
Try him, at least—

Cal. Well—be it so, then. Daran,
Guard well thy charge.—Thou hast an hour to live;
If thou art wise, thou may'st prolong that term;
If not—why—Fare thee well and think of death.

[*Exeunt Calad and Abudah.*]

Pho. [*Daran waiting at a distance.*]
Farewel, and think of death! Was it not so?
Do murderers then preach morality?—
But how to think of what the living know not,
And the dead cannot, or else may not tell?—

What

What art thou, O thou great mysterious terror!
 The way to thee we know; diseases, famine,
 Sword, fire, and all thy ever-open gates
 That day and night stand ready to receive us.
 But what's beyond them?—Who will draw that veil?
 Yet death's not there—No; 'tis a point of time;
 The verge 'twixt mortal and immortal being.
 It mocks our thought! On this side all is life;
 And when we have reach'd it, in that very instant
 'Tis past the thinking of!—O! if it be
 The pangs, the throes, the agonizing struggle
 When soul and body part, sure I have felt it,
 And there's no more to fear.

Dar. [*Aside.*] Suppose I now
 Dispatch him?—Right—What need to stay for orders?
 I wish I durst!—Yet what I dare I'll do.
 Your jewels, christian—You'll not need these trifles—

[*Searching him.*

Pho. I pray thee, slave, stand off—My soul's too
 To lose a thought on thee. [busy]

Enter Abudah.

Abu. What's this!—forbear!
 Who gave thee leave to use this insolence?
 [*Takes the jewels from him, and lays 'em on a table.*
Dar. [*Aside.*] Deny'd my booty?—Curse on his
 Was not the founder of our law a robber? [head!
 Why 'twas for that I left my country's gods,
 Menaph and Uzza. Better still be pagan,
 Than starve with a new faith.

Abu. What!—Dost thou muster?
 Daran, withdraw; and better learn thy duty.
 [*Exit Daran.*

Phocyas, perhaps thou know'st me not—

Pho. I know
 Thy name Abudah, and thy office here;
 The second in command. What more thou art
 Indeed I cannot tell.

Abu. True, for thou yet
 Know'st not I am thy friend.

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Pho.

The SIEGE of DAMASCUS.

Pbo. It's possible?—

Thou speak'st me fair.

Abu. What dost thou think of life?

Pbo. I think not of it; death was in my thoughts.
On hard conditions, life were but a load,
And I would lay it down.

Abu. Art thou resolv'd?

Pbo. I am, unless thou bring'st me better terms
Than those I have rejected.

Abu. Think again.

Caled, by me, once more renews that offer.

Pbo. Thou say'st thou art my friend? Why dost
thou try

To shake the settled temper of my breast?
My soul hath just discharg'd her cumb'rous train
Of hopes and fears, prepar'd to take her voyage
To other seats, where she may rest in peace;
And now thou call'st me back, to beat again
The painful road of life.—Tempt me no more
To be a wretch, for I despise the offer.

Abu. The general knows thee brave, and 'tis for that
He seeks alliance with thy noble virtues.

Pbo. He knows me brave!—Why does he then thus
treat me!

No; he believes I am so poor of soul,
That barely for the privilege to live,
I would be bought his slave. But go tell him,
The little space of life his scorn bequeath'd me
Was lent in vain, and he may take the forfeit.

Abu. Why wilt thou wed thyself to misery,
When our faith courts thee to eternal blessings!
When truth itself is, like a seraph, come
To loose thy bonds?—The light divine, whose beams
Pierc'd thro' the gloom of Hera's sacred cave,
And there illumined the great Mahomet,
Arabia's morning-star, now shines on thee.
Arise, salute with joy the guest from Heav'n,
Follow her steps, and be no more a captive.

Pbo. But whither must I follow?—answer that.
Is she a guest from Heav'n? What marks divine,

What

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What signs, what wonders vouch her boasted mission ?

Abu. What wonders—turn thy eyes to Mecca ! mark
How from Caaba first, that hallow'd temple,
Her glory dawn'd !— then look how swift its course,
As when the sun-beams shooting thro' a cloud
Drive o'er the meadow's face the flying shades !
Have not the nations bent before our swords,
Like ripen'd corn before the reaper's steel ?
Why is all this ? Why does success still wait
Upon our law, if not to shew that Heav'n
First sent it forth, and owns it still by conquest ?

Pho. Dost thou ask why is this !—O why, indeed ?
Where is the man can read Heav'n's secret counsels ?—
Why did I conquer in another cause,
Yet now am here—

Abu. I'll tell thee—thy good angel
Has seiz'd thy hand unseen, and snatch'd thee out
From swift destruction ; know, ere day shall dawn,
Damascus will in blood lament its fall ?
We've heard what army is design'd to march
Too late to save her. Now, e'en now, our force
Is just preparing for a fresh assault.
Now too thou might'st revenge thy wrongs---so Caled
Charg'd me to say ? and more, that he invites thee ;
Thou know'st the terms—to share with him the con-
quest.

Pho. Conquest ?—Revenge— Hold, let me think—
O horror !

Revenge !—O what revenge ? Bleed on, my wounds,
For thus to be reveng'd, were it not worse
Than all that I can suffer ?—But Eudocia—
Where will she then—Shield her, ye pitying pow'rs,
And let me die in peace !

Abu. Hear me once more,
'Tis all I have to offer ; mark me now !
Caled has sworn Eudocia shall be safe.

Pho. Ha ! safe—but how ? A wretched captive too !

Abu. He swears she shall be free, she shall be thine.

Pho. Then I am lost, indeed—O cruel bounty !

D 2 How

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How can I be at once both curs'd and happy?

Abu. The time draws near, and I must quickly leave thee;

But first reflect, that in this fatal night
Slaughter and rapine may be loos'd abroad,
And while they roam with undistinguish'd rage,
Shou'dst thou lov'st--well mayst thou start--be made,
Perhaps unknown, some barb'rous soldier's prey;
Shou'dst thou then fall a sacrifice to lust,
Or brutal fury--

Pho. O--this pulls my heart-strings! [*Falls.*
Earth open--save me, save me from that thought;
There's ruin in it, 'twill, it will undo me.

Abu. Nay, do not plunge thyself in black despair;
Look up, poor wretch, thou art no shipwreck'd yet,
Behold an anchor; am not I thy friend?
Yes, hear me, and be blest--

Pho. [*rising.*] Ha! Who, what art thou? [*Raving.*
My friend? that's well; but hold--are all friends
honest?

What's to be done?--Hush, hark! what voice is that?

Abu. There is no voice; 'tis yet the dead of night,
The guards, without, keep silent watch around us.

Pho. Again--it calls--'tis she--O lead me to her--

Abu. Thy passion mock thee with imagin'd sounds.

Pho. Sure 'twas Eudocia's voice cry'd out--Forbear.
What shall I do?--O Heav'n!

Abu. Heav'n shews thee what.
Nay, now it is too late; see, Caled comes
With anger on his brow? Quickly withdraw
To the next tent, and there--

Pho. [*Raving.*] What do I see?
Damascus! conquest! ruin! rapes and murder!
Villains!--Is there no way--O save her, save her!
[*Exit with Abudah.*

Enter Caled and Daran.

Dar. Behold, on thy approach, they shift their
ground.

Cal. 'Tis as thou say'st, he trifles with my mercy.
Dar.

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Dar. Speak, shall I fetch his head?

Cal. No, stay thou here,
I cannot spare thee yet. Raphan, go thou.

[To an Officer.]

But hold---I've thought again---he shall not die.
Go, tell him he shall live, till he has seen
Damascus sink in flame, 'till he behold
That slave, the woman-idol he adores,
Or giv'n a prize to some brave Mussulman,
Or slain before his face; then if he sue
For death as for a boon---perhaps we'll grant it.

[Exit Raphan.]

Dar. The captains wait thy orders.

Cal. Are the troops
Ready to march?

Dar. They are.

[The captains pass by, as they are named.]

Cal. Where's Abu-Taleb?

Alcorash?---O your valiant tribes, I thank 'em,
Fled from their standard! Will they now redeem it?
Qmar and Serjabil?---'tis well, I see 'em,
You know your duty. You, Abdorraman,
Must charge with Raphan. Mourn, thou haughty city!
The bow is bent, nor canst thou 'scape thy doom.
Who turns his back henceforth, our prophet curse him!

Dar. But who commands the trusty bands of Mecca?
Thou know'st their leader fell in the last fight.

Cal. 'Tis true; thou, Daran, well deserv'st that
charge;

I've mark'd what a keen hatred, like my own,
Dwells in thy breast against these christian dogs.

Dar. Thou dost me right.

Cal. And therefore I'll reward it.

Be that command now thine. And here---this sabre,
Bless'd in the field by Mahomet himself,
At Chaibar's prosp'rous fight, shall aid thy arm.

Dar. Thanks, my good chief; with this I'll better
thank thee.

[Taking the Scimitar.]

Cal. Myself will lead the troops of the black stan-
And at the eastern gate begin the storm.

*[dard,
Dar.]*

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Dar. But why do we not move ? 'twill soon be day :
Methinks I'm cold, and wou'd grow warm with action.

Cal. Then haste, and tell Abudah—O thou'rt welcome.

Enter Abudah.

Thy charge awaits thee. Where's the stubborn captive ?

Abu. Indeed he's brave. I left him for a moment
In the next tent. He's scarcely yet himself.

Cal. But is he ours ?

Abu. The threats of death are nothing ;
Tho' thy last message shook his soul, as winds
On the bleak hills bend down some lofty pine ;
Yet still he held his root ; till I found means,
Abating somewhat of thy first demand,
If not to make him wholly ours, at least
To gain sufficient to our end.

Cal. Say how ?

Abu. Oft he inclin'd, oft started back ; at last,
When just consenting, for a while he paus'd,
Stood fix'd in thought, and lift his eyes to Heav'n ;
Then, as with fresh recover'd force, cry'd out,
~~Renounce my faith !~~ Never—I answer'd, No,
That now he should not do it.

Cal. How !

Abu. Yet hear,
For since I saw him now so lost in passion,
That must be left to his more temperate thoughts.
Mean time I urg'd, conjur'd, at last constrain'd him
By all he held most dear, nay, by the voice
Of Providence, that call'd him now to save,
With her he lov'd, perhaps the lives of thousands,
No longer to resist his better fate,
But join his arms in present action with us,
And swear he would be faithful.

Cal. What, no more ?

Then he's a christian still !

Abu. Have patience yet :

For if by him we can surprise the city—

Cal. Say'st thou ?

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Abu. Hear what's agreed ; but on the terms
That ev'ry unresisting life be spar'd.
I shall command some chosen faithful bands,
Phocyas will guide us to the gate, from whence
He late escap'd, nor do we doubt but there
With ease to gain admittance.

Cal. This is something.
And yet I do not like this half-ally—
Is he not still a christian ? — But no matter—
Mean time I will attack the eastern gate ;
Who first succeeds gives entrance to the rest.
Hear, all ? — Prepare ye now for boldest deeds,
And know, the prophet will reward your valour.
Think that ye all to certain triumph move ;
Who falls in fight yet meets the prize above.
There, in the gardens of eternal spring,
While birds of Paradise around you sing,
Each, with his blooming beauty by his side,
Shall drink rich wines, that in full rivers glide,
Breathe fragrant gales o'er fields of spice that blow,
And gather fruits immortal as they grow ;
Ecstatic bliss shall your whole powers employ,
And ev'ry sense be lost in ev'ry joy. [Exeunt.]

END of the THIRD ACT.

ACT

A C T IV.

SCENE, *A great square in the city, before the governor's palace.*

Enter Abudah, Saracen captains and soldiers; with Eumenes, Herbis, and other of the christians unarm'd.

EUMENES.

IT must be so—farewel, devoted walls!—
To be surpris'd thus!—Hell, and all ye fiends,
How did ye watch this minute for destruction!

Herb: We've been betray'd by riot and debauch;
Curse on the traitor guard!

Eum. The guard above,
Did that sleep, too?

Abu. Christians, complain no more.
What you have ask'd is granted. Are ye men,
And dare ye question thus, with bold impatience,
Eternal justice!—Know, the doom from Heav'n
Falls on your towers, resistless as the bolt
That fires the cedars on your mountain tops.
Be meek, and learn with humble awe to bear
The mitigated ruin. Worse had follow'd,
Had ye oppos'd our numbers. Now you're safe;
Quarter and liberty are giv'n to all;
And little do you think how much ye owe
To one brave enemy, whom yet ye know not.

Enter Artamon hastily.

Art. All's lost!—Ha!—Who are these?

Eum. All's lost, indeed.
Yield up thy sword, if thou would'st share our safety.
Thou com'st too late to bring us news.

Art. O—no.
The news I bring is from the eastern guard.
Caled has forc'd the gate, and—but he's here.

[*A cry*

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[A cry without.] Fly, fly; they follow—Quarter, mercy, quarter!

[Several persons as pursued run over the stage.

Cal. [without.] No quarter! Kill, I say. Are they not christians?

More blood! our prophet asks it.—

He enters with Daran, &c.

What, Abudah!

Well met!—but wherefore are these looks of peace?

Why sleeps thy sword?

Abu. Cal, our task is over.

Behold the chiefs; they have resign'd the palace.

Cal. And sworn t'obey our law?

Abu. No.

Cal. Then fall on.

Abu. Hold yet, and hear me—Heav'n by me has spar'd

The sword its cruel task. On easy terms

We've gain'd a bloodless conquest.

Cal. I renounce it.

Curse on those terms! The city's mine by storm.

Fall on, I say—

Abu. Nay then, I swear ye shall not.

Cal. Ha!—Who am I?

Abu. The general, and I know

What reverence is your due.

[Cal gives signs to his men to fall on.

—Nay, he who first,

First makes his way thro' me. My honour's pledg'd;

Rob me of that who dares. [They stop.] I know thee,

Cal.

Chief in command; bold, valiant, wise, and faithful;

But yet, remember, I'm a Mussulman;

Nay, more, thou know'st, companion of the prophet,

And what we vow is sacred.

Cal. Thou'rt a christian,

I swear thou art, and hast betray'd the faith.

Curse on thy new allies!

Abu. No more—this I will

But

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But ill beseems the servants of the caliph,
And casts reproach—Christians, withdraw a while ;
I pledge my life to answer the conditions—

[*Exeunt Eumenes, Herbis, &c.*]

Why, Caled, do we thus expose ourselves
A scorn to nations that despise our law ?
Thou call'st me christian—What ! Is it because
I prize my plighted faith, that I'm a christian ?
Come, 'tis not well, and if——

Cal. What terms are yielded ?

Abu. Leave to depart, to all that will ; an oath
First giv'n, no more to aid the war against us,
An unmolested march. Each citizen
To take his goods, not more than a mule's burthen ;
The chiefs six mules, and ten the governor.
Besides some few slight arms for their defence
Against the mountain robbers.

Cal. Now, by Mahomet,
Thou hast equip'd an army.

Abu. Canst thou doubt
The greater part by far will chuse to stay,
Receive our law, or pay th' accustom'd tribute ?
What fear we then from a few wretched bands
Of scatter'd fugitives ?—Besides, thou know'st
What towns of strength remain yet unsubdu'd.
Let us appear this once like generous victors,
So future conquests shall repay this bounty,
And willing provinces e'en court subjection.

Cal. Well—be it on thy head, if worse befall !
This once I yield—but see it then proclaim'd
Thro' all Damascus, that who will depart
Must leave the place this instant—Pass, move on.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, *the outside of aunnery.*

Eudocia. Darkness is fled ; and yet the morning
light

Gives me more fears than did night's deadly gloom.
Within, without, all, all are foes—Oh, Phocyas,
Thou art perhaps at rest ; wou'd I were too !

[*After*

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[After a pause.]
 'This place has holy charms; rapine and murder
 Dare not approach it, but are aw'd to distance.
 I've heard that e'en these infidels have spar'd
 Walls sacred to devotion—World, farewell!
 Here will I hide me, 'till the friendly grave
 Opens its arms, and shelters me for ever. [Exit.]

Enter Phocyas.

Pbo. Did not I hear the murmurs of a voice,
 'This way?—a woman's, too?—and seem'd com-
 plaining?
 Hark!—No—O torture! Whither shall I turn me?
 I've search'd the palace rooms in vain; and now,
 I know not why, some instinct brought me hither—
 'Twas here last night we met, Dear, dear Eudocia!
 Might I once more— [Going out he meets her entering.]

Eud. Who calls the lost Eudocia?

Sure 'tis a friendly voice.

Pbo. 'Tis she—O rapture!

Eud. Is't possible——my Phocyas!

Pbo. My Eudocia!

Do I yet call thee mine?

Eud. Do I yet see thee?

Yet hear thee speak?—O how hast thou escap'd
 From barbarous swords, and men that know not
 mercy?

Pbo. I've born a thousand deaths since our last
 parting.

But wherefore do I talk of death?—for now,
 Methinks, I'm rais'd almost to life immortal,
 And feel I'm blest beyond the pow'r of change.

Eud. O yet beware---lest some event unknown
 Again should part us.

Pbo. [Aside.] Heav'n avert the omen!
 None can, my fair, none shall.

Eud. Alas! thy transport
 Makes thee forget; is not the city taken?

Pbo. It is.

Eud. And are we not beset with foes?

Pbo.

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Pho. There are no foes—or none to thee—No danger.

Eud. No foes?

Pho. I know not how to tell thee yet—
But think, Eudocia, that my matchless love
And wondrous causes pre-ordain'd, conspiring,
For thee have triumph'd o'er the fiercest foes,
And turn'd 'em friends.

Eud. Amazement! Friends!—
O all ye guardian powers!—Say on—O lead me,
Lead me thro' this dark maze of Providence
Which thou hast trod, that I may trace thy steps
With silent awe, and worship as I pass.

Pho. Enquire no more—thou shalt know all here—
Let me conduct thee hence— [after—

Eud. O whither next?
To what far distant home?—But 'tis enough,
That favour'd thus of Heav'n, thou art my guide.
And as we journey on the painful way,
Say, wilt thou then beguile the passing hours,
And open all the wonders of thy story?

Pho. Indulge no more thy melancholy thoughts,
Damascus is thy home.

Eud. And yet thou sayst
It is no longer ours!—Where is my father?

Pho. To shew thee too, how fate seems ev'ry way
To guard thy safety, e'en thy father now,
Wert thou within his pow'r, would stand defeated
Of his tyrannic vow. Thou know'st last night
What hope of aids flatter'd this foolish city;
At break of day th' Arabian scouts had seiz'd
A second courier, and from him 'tis learn'd
That on their march the army mutiny'd,
And Eutyches was slain.

Eud. And yet, that now
Is of the least importance to my peace,
But answer me; say, where is now my father?

Pho. Or gone, or just preparing to depart.

Eud. What! is our doom revers'd? And is he then
The wretched fugitive?

Pho.

Pbo. Thou heav'nly maid!
To free thee, then, from ev'ry anxious thought,
Know, I've once more, wrong'd as I am, e'en sav'd
Thy father's threaten'd life; nay, sav'd Damascus
From blood and slaughter, and from total ruin.
Terms are obtain'd, and general freedom granted
To all that will, to leave in peace the city.

Eud. Is't possible—now trust me I could chide thee:
'Tis much unkind to hold me thus in doubt;
I pr'ythee clear these wonders.

Pbo. 'Twill surprize thee,
When thou shalt know——

Eud. What?

Pbo. To what deadly gulphs
Of horror and despair, what cruel straits
Of agonizing thought I have been driv'n.
This night, ere my perplex'd bewilder'd soul
Could find its way——thou saidst that thou wou'dst
I fear thou wilt; indeed I have done that [chide;
I could have wish'd t' avoid——but for a cause
So lovely, so belov'd——

Eud. What dost thou mean?
I'll not indulge a thought that thou could'st do
One act unworthy of thyself, thy honour,
And that firm zeal against these foes of Heav'n,
Which won my heart at first to share in all
Thy dangers and thy fame, and wish thee mine.
Thou couldst not save thy life by means inglorious.

Pbo. Alas! thou know'st me not—I'm man, frail
man,
To error born; and who, that's man, is perfect?
To save my life! O no, well was it risk'd
For thee! had it been lost, 'twere not too much,
And thou but safe;—O what wou'dst thou have said,
If I had risk'd my soul to save Eudocia?

Eud. Ha! speak—Oh, no, be dumb—it cannot
be!
And yet thy looks are chang'd, thy lips grow pale.
Why dost thou shake?—Alas! I tremble too!
Thou couldst not, hast not sworn to Mahomet?

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Pbo.

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Pho. No—I should first have dy'd—nay, giv'n up thee.

Eud. O Phocyas ! Was it well to try me thus ?—
And yet another deadly fear succeeds.
How came these wretches hither ? Who reviv'd
Their fainting arms to unexpected triumph ?
For while thou fought'st, and fought'st the christian
cause,

These batter'd walls were rocks impregnable,
Their towers of adamant. But O, I fear
Some act of thine——

Pho. No more——I'll tell thee all ;
But pr'ythee do not frown on me, Eudocia !
I found the wakeful foe in midnight council
Resolv'd ere day to make a fresh attack,
Keen for revenge, and hungry after slaughter.
Could my rack'd soul bear that, and think of thee !
Nay, think of thee expos'd a helpless prey
To some fierce ruffian's violating arms ?
O, had the world been mine in that extreme
I should have giv'n whole provinces away,
Nay all——and thought it little for thy ransom !

Eud. For this then—Oh—thou hast betray'd the
Distrustful in the righteous pow'rs above, [city !
That still protect the chaste and innocent :
And to avert a feign'd uncertain danger,
Thou hast brought certain ruin on thy country !

Pho. No, thou forget'st the friendly terms——the
sword,
Which threaten'd to have fill'd the streets with blood,
Is sheath'd in peace ; thy father, thou, and all
The citizens are safe, uncaptiv'd, free.

Eud. Safe ! free ! O no——life, freedom, ev'ry
good,
Turns to a curse, if fought by wicked means.
Yet sure it cannot be ! Are these the terms
On which we meet ?—No—we can never meet
On terms like these ; the hand of death itself
Could not have torn us from each other's arms
Like this dire act, this more than fatal blow !
In death, the soul and body only part

To

To meet again, and be divorc'd no more ;
But now——

Pho. Ha ! lightning blast me ! strike me,
Ye vengeful bolts ! if this is my reward !
Are these my hop'd for joys ! Is this the welcome
The wretched Phocyas meets, from her he lov'd
More than life, fame---e'en to his soul's distraction !

Eud. Hadst thou not help'd the slaves of Mahomet,

To spread their impious conquests o'er thy country,
What welcome was there in Eudocia's power
She had withheld from Phocyas ? But alas !
'Tis thou hast blasted all our joys for ever,
And cut down hope, like a poor short-liv'd flower,
Never to grow again !

Pho. Cruel Eudocia !

If in my heart's deep anguish I've been forc'd
A while from what I was——dost thou reject me ?
Think of the cause——

Eud. The cause ! There is no cause !
Not universal nature could afford
A cause for this. What were dominion, pomp,
The wealth of nations, nay of all the world,
The world itself, or what a thousand worlds,
If weigh'd with faith unspotted, heav'nly truth,
Thoughts free from guilt, the empire of the mind,
And all the triumphs of a godlike breast
Firm and unmov'd in the great cause of virtue ?

Pho. How shall I answer thee ?---My soul is aw'd,
And trembling owns th' eternal force of reason !
But oh ! can nothing then atone, or plead
For pity from thee ?

Eud. Canst thou yet undo
The deed that's done ; recall the time that's past ?
O, call back yesterday ; call back last night,
Tho' with its fears, its dangers, its distress ;
Bid the fair hours of innocence return,
When, in the lowest ebb of changeeful fortune,
Thou wert more glorious in Eudocia's eyes
Than all the pride of monarchs !--- But that deed---

52 *The SIEGE of DAMASCUS.*

Pho. No more——thou waken'st in my tortur'd heart

The cruel, conscious worm, that flings to madness.
Oh, I'm undone!——I know it, and can bear
To be undone for thee, but not to lose thee.

End. Poor wretch!---I pity thee!---but art thou
Phocyas,

The man I lov'd?——I could have dy'd with thee
Ere thou didst this; then we had gone together,
A glorious pair, and soar'd above the stars,
Bright as the stars themselves; and as we pass'd
The heav'nly roads and milky ways of light,
Had heard the blest inhabitants with wonder
Applaud our spotless love. But never, never
Will I be made the curst reward of treason,
To seal thy doom, to bind a hellish league,
And to insure thy everlasting woe.

Pho. What league?---'tis ended—I renounce it—
thus——

[*Kneels.*

I bend to Heav'n and thee——O thou divine,
Thou matchless image of all perfect goodness!
Do thou but pity yet the wretched Phocias,
Heav'n will relent, and all may yet be well.

End. No—we must part. 'Twill ask whole years
of sorrow

To purge away this guilt. Then do not think
Thy loss in me is worth one dropping tear;
But, if thou wouldst be reconcil'd to Heav'n,
First sacrifice to Heav'n that fatal passion
Which caus'd thy fall—Farewel: forget the lost---
But how shall I ask that?——I would have said,
For thy soul's peace, forget the lost Eudocia.
Canst thou forget her?—Oh! the killing torture
To think 'twas love, excess of love, divorc'd us!
Farewel for—still I cannot speak that word,

These tears speak for me---O farewell——

[*Exit.*

Pho. [*Raving.*] For ever!

Return, return and speak it; say, for ever!

She's gone——and now she joins the fugitives.

And yet she did not quite pronounce my doom——

O hear, all gracious Heav'n! wilt thou at once

For-

Forgive, and O inspire me to some act
This day, that may in part redeem what's past !
Prosper this day, or let it be my last. [Exit.

END of the THIRD ACT.

A C T V.

S C E N E, *an open place in the City.*

Enter Caled and Daran Meeting.

C A L E D.

SOLDIER, what news? thou look'st as thou wert
angry.

Dar. And durst I say it, so my chief I am.
I've spoke——if it offends, my head is thine,
Take it, and I am silent.

Cal. No; say on.

I know thee honest, and perhaps I guess
What knits thy brow in frowns——

Dar. Is this, my leader,
A conquer'd city?——View yon vale of palms:
Behold the vanquish'd Christian triumphs still,
Rich in his flight, and mocks thy barren war.

Cal. The vale of palms!

Dar. Beyond those hills, the place
Where they agreed this day to meet and halt,
To gather all their forces; there disguis'd,
Just now I've view'd their camp---O, I could curse
My eyes for what they've seen.

Cal. What hast thou seen?

Dar. Why all Damascus;—All its souls, its life,
Its heart's blood, all its treasure, piles of plate,
E 3 Clot.

54 *The SIEGE of DAMASCUS.*

Crosses enrich'd with gems, arras and filks,
And vests of gold, unfolded to the sun,
That rival all his lustre.

Cal. How !

Dar. 'Tis true.

The bees are wisely bearing off their honey,
And soon the empty hive will be our own.

Cal. So forward too ! Curse on this foolish treaty.

Dar. Forward——it looks as they had been fore-
warn'd.

By Mahomet, the land wears not the face
Of war, but trade ? and thou wou'dst swear its mer-
Were sending forth their loaded caravans [chants
To all the neighbouring countries.

Cal. [*Aside.*] Ha ! this starts

A lucky thought of Mahomet's first exploit,
When he puriu'd the caravan of Corash,
And from a thousand misbelieving slaves
Wrested their ill-heap'd goods, transferr'd to thrive
In holier hands, and propagate the faith.—
[*To Daran.*] 'Tis said, the emperor had a wardrobe
Of costly filks. [here

Dar. That too they have remov'd.

Cal. Dogs ! infidels ! 'tis more than was allow'd.

Dar. And shall we not pursue 'em——Robbers !
thieves !

That steal away themselves, and all they're worth,
And wrong the valiant soldier of his due.

Cal. [*Aside.*] The caliph shall know this—he shall.
Abudah,

'This is thy coward bargain——I renounce it.
Daran, we'll stop their march, and search.

Dar. And strip !

Cal. And kill.

Dar. That's well. And yet I fear
Abudah's christian friend——

Cal. If possible,
He should not know of this. No, nor Abudah.
By the seven heav'ns ! his soul's a christian too,
And 'tis by kindred instinct he thus saves

Their

Their cursed lives, and taints our cause with mercy.

Dar. I knew my general would not suffer this,
Therefore I've troops prepar'd without the gate;
Just mounted for pursuit. Our Arab horse
Will in few minutes reach the place; yet still
I must repeat my doubts---that devil Phocyas
Will know it soon---I met him near the gate,
My nature sickens at him, and forebodes
I know not what of ill.

Cal. No more; away
With thy cold fears---we'll march this very instant,
And quickly make this thriftless conquest good:
The sword too has been wrong'd and thirsts for blood.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, a valley full of tents; baggage and barnes
lying up and down amongst them. The prospect ter-
minating with palm-trees and hills at a distance.

Eumenes, with Officers, Attendants, and Crowds of
the People of Damascus.

Eum. [*Entering.*] Sleep on---and angels be thy
guard!--soft slumber

Has gently stole her from her griefs a while.

Let none approach the tent.---Are out-guards plac'd
On yonder hills:

[*To an Officer.*]

Off. They are.

Eum. [*Striking his breast.*] Damascus! O---
Still art thou here?---Let me entreat you, friends,
To keep strict order: I have no command,
And can but now advise you.

1 *Cit.* You are still
Our head and leader.

2 *Cit.* We resolve t' obey you.

3 *Cit.* We're all prepar'd to follow you.

Eum. I thank you.

The sun will soon go down upon our sorrows,
And 'till to-morrow's dawn this is our home:
Mean while, each as he can, forget his loss,
And bear the present lot.---

Off. Sir, I have mark'd

56. *The* SIEGE of DAMASCUS.

The camp's extent : 'tis stretch'd quite thro' the valley.
I think that more than half the city's here.

Eum. The prospect gives me much relief. I'm pleas'd,
My honest countrymen, t' observe your numbers ;
And yet it fills my eyes with tears---'Tis said
The mighty Persian wept, when he survey'd
His numerous army, but to think them mortal ;
Yet he then flourish'd in prosperity.
Alas ! what's that ?---Prosperity ! a harlot,
That smiles but to betray ! O shining ruin !
Thou nurse of passions, and thou bane of virtue !
O self-destroying monster ! that art blind.
Yet putt'st out reason's eyes, that still should guide thee,
Then plungest down some precipice unseen,
And art no more !---Hear me, all-gracious heav'n !
Let me wear out my small remains of life
Obscure, content with humble poverty,
Or in affliction's hard but wholesome school,
If it must be---I'll learn to know myself,
And that's more worth than empire. But, O heav'n,
Curse me no more with proud prosperity !
It has undone me !---Herbis, where, my friend,
Hast thou been this long hour ?

Enter Herbis.

Herb. On yonder summit,
To take a farewell prospect of Damascus.

Eum. And is it worth a look ?

Herb. No---I've forgot it.
All our possessions are a grasp of air :
We're cheated whilst we think we hold them fast,
And when they're gone, we know that they were no-
But I've a deeper wound. [thing.

Eum. Poor good old man !
'Tis true ;---thy son---there thou'rt indeed unhappy.

Enter Artamon.

What Artamon !---art thou here, too ?

Art. Yes, Sir.

I never boasted much of my religion,

Yet

Yet I've some honour and a soldier's pride ;
I like not these new lords.

Eum. Thou'rt brave and honest.
Nay, we'll not yet despair A time may come
When from these brute barbarians we may wrest
Once more our pleasant seats.---Alas ! how soon
The flatterer hope is ready with his song
To charm us to forgetfulness !---No more---
Let that be left to heav'n ;---See, Herbis, see,
Methinks we've here a goodly city yet !
Was it not thus our great forefathers liv'd,
In better Times---in humble fields and tents,
With all their flocks and herds, their moving wealth ?
See too ! where our own Pharphar winds his stream
Thro' the long vale, as if to follow us,
And kindly offers his cool wholesome draughts,
To ease us in our march ! Why this is plenty.

Enter Eudocia.

Eum. My daughter !---wherefore hast thou left thy
What breaks so soon thy rest ? [tent,

Eud. Rest is not there,
Or I have sought in vain, and cannot find it.
Oh no---we're wanderers, it is our doom !
There is no rest for us.

Eum. Thou art not well.

Eud. I would, if possible, avoid myself.
I'm better now, near you.

Eum. Near me !---alas,
The tender vine so wreaths its folded arms
Around some falling elm !---It wounds my heart
To think thou followest but to share my ruin.
I have lost all but thee.

Eud. O say not so.
You have lost nothing ; no---you have preserv'd,
Immortal wealth, your faith inviolate
To heav'n and to your country. Have you not
Refus'd to join with prosp'rous wicked men,
And hold from them a false inglorious greatness ?
Ruin is yonder, in Damascus now

The

58 *The SIEGE of DAMASCUS.*

The feat abhorr'd of cursed infidels.
Infernal error, like a plague, has spread
Contagion thro' its guilty palaces,
And we are fled from death.

Eum. Heroic maid !

Thy words are balsam to my griefs. Eudocia,
I never knew thee till this day ; I knew not
How many virtues I had wrong'd in thee.

Eud. If you talk thus you have not yet forgiv'n me.

Eum. Forgiv'n thee !---Why, for thee it is, thee
only,

I think, heav'n yet may look with pity on us ;
Yes, we must all forgive each other now.
Poor Herbis, too---we both have been to blame.
O Phocyas---but it cannot be recall'd.
Yet were he here, we'd ask him pardon too,
My child !---I meant not to provoke thy tears.

Eud. [*Afide.*] O why is he not here ? Why do I see
Thousands of happy wretches, that but seem
Undone, yet still are blest in innocence,
And why was he not one ?

Enter an Officer.

i Off. Where is Eumenes ?

Eum. What means thy breathless haste ?

i Off. I fear there's danger :

For as I kept my watch, I spy'd afar
Thick clouds of dust, and on a nearer view
Perceiv'd a body of Arabian horse
Moving this way. I saw them wind the hill,
And then lost sight of 'em.

Herb. I saw 'em, too,

Where the roads meet on t'other side these hills,
But took them for some band of christian Arabs
Crossing the country.—This way did they move ?

i Off. With utmost speed.

Eum. If they are christian Arabs,
They come as friends ; if other, we're secure
By the late terms. Retire a while, Eudocia,
Till I return. [*Exit Eudocia.*]

I'll

I'll to the guard myself.
Soldier, lead on the way.

Enter another Officer.

2 Off. Arm, arm ! we're ruin'd !
The foe is in the camp.

Eum. So soon !

2 Off. They've quitted
Their horses, and with sword in hand have forc'd
Our guard ; they say they come for plunder.

Eum. Villains !

Sure Caled knows not of this treachery.
Come on—we can fight still. We'll make 'em know
What 'tis to urge the wretched to despair. [*Exeunt.*

[*A noise of fighting is heard for some time.*]

Enter Daran with a party of Saracen soldiers.

Dar. Let the fools fight at distance—Here's the
harvest.

Reap, reap, my countrymen !—Ay, there—first clear
Those further tents——

[*Exeunt Soldiers bearing off baggage, &c.*

[*Looking between the tents.*] What's here, a woman—
fair

She seems, and well attir'd !—It shall be so,
I'll strip her first, and then——

[*Exit, and returns with Eudocia.*

Eud. [*Struggling.*] Mercy ! O spare me !
Help, save me !—What, no help !—Barbarian !
Monster !

Heav'n hear my cries.

Dar. Woman, thy cries are vain,
No help is near.

Enter Phocyas.

Pho. Villain, thou ly'st ! take that
To loose thy hold— [*Pushing at him with his spear.*

Dar. What, thou ? my evil spirit !
Is't thou that haunt'st me still ?—but thus I thank thee,

[*Offering to strike with his scimitar.*

It

60 *The SIEGE of DAMASCUS.*

It will not be—Lightning for ever blast
This coward arm that fails me!—O, vile Syrian, [*Falls.*
I'm kill'd—O curse—— [*Dies.*

Pho. Die then ; thy curses choak thee!——
Eudocia !

Eud. Phocyas !——O astonishment !
Then is it thus that heav'n has heard my pray'rs ?
I tremble still—and scarce have power to ask thee
How thou art here, or whence this sudden outrage ?

Pho. [*Walking aside.*] The blood ebbs back that
fill'd my heart, and now

Again her parting farewell awes my soul,
As if 'twere fate, and not to be revok'd.
Will she not now upbraid me ? See thy friends !
Are these, are these the villains thou hast trusted ?

Eud. What means this murmur'd sorrow to thyself ?
Is it in vain that thou hast rescu'd me
From savage hands?—Say, what's th' approaching
danger ?

Pho. Sure ev'ry angel watches o'er thy safety !
Thou see'st 'tis death t' approach thee without awe,
And barbarism itself cannot profane thee.

Eud. Thou dost not answer, whence are these alarms ?

Pho. Some stores remov'd, and not allow'd by
treaty,
Have drawn the Saracens to make a search.
Perhaps 'twill quickly be agreed—But Oh !
Thou know'st, Eudocia, I'm a banish'd man,
And 'tis a crime I'm here once more before thee ;
Else, might I speak, 'twere better for the present
If thou wouldst leave this place.

Eud. No——I've a father,
(And shall I leave him ?) whom we both have wrong'd,
Or he had not been thus driv'n out, expos'd
The humble tenant of this shelt'ring vale
For one poor night's repose.—And yet, alas !
For this last act how would I thank thee, Phocyas !—
I've nothing now but pray'rs and tears to give,
Cold fruitless thanks—But 'tis some comfort yet
That fate allows this short reprieve, that thus

We

We may behold each other, and once more
May mourn our woes, ere yet we part——

Pbo. Forever!

'Tis then resolv'd——it was thy cruel sentence,
And I am here to execute that doom.

Eud. What dost thou mean?

Pbo. [*Kneeling.*] Thus at thy feet——

Eud. O rise!

Pbo. Never—No, here I'll lay my burthen down;
I've try'd its weight, nor can support it longer.
Take thy last look; if yet thy eyes can bear
To look upon a wretch accurit, cast off
By Heav'n and thee—A little longer yet,
And I am mingled with my kindred dust,
By thee forgotten and the world——

Eud. Forbear,

O cruel man! Why wilt thou rack me thus?
Didst thou not mark—thou didst, when last we parted,
The pangs, the strugglings of my suffering soul;
That nothing but the hand of Heav'n itself
Could e'er divide me from thee?—Dost thou now
Reproach me thus! or can'st thou have a thought
That I can e'er forget thee?

Pbo. [*Rising.*] Have a care!

I'll not be tortur'd more with thy false pity?
No, I renounce it. See I am prepar'd.

[*Shewing a Dagger.*]

Thy cruelty is mercy now——Farewel.
And death is now but a release from torment.

Eud. Hold—Stay thee yet—O madness of despair!
And wou'dst thou die? Think, ere thou leap the gulph,
When thou hast trod that dark, that unknown way,
Canst thou return? What if the change prove worse,
O think, if then——

Pbo. No——thought's my deadliest foe;
'Tis lingering racks, and slow consuming fires,
And therefore to the grave I'd fly to shun it.

Eud. O fatal error——Like a restless ghost,
It will pursue and haunt thee still; e'en there,
Perhaps in forms more frightful. Death's a name

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By

62 *The SIEGE of DAMASCUS.*

By which poor guessing mortals are deceiv'd,
'Tis no where to be found. Thou fly'st in vain
From life, to meet again with that thou fly'st.
How wilt thou curse thy rashness then ? How start,
And shudder, and shrink back ? yet how avoid
To put on thy new being ?

Pbo. So——— I thank thee !

For now I'm quite undone—I gave up all
For thee before, but this ; this bosom friend,
My last reserve—There— [*Throws away the Dagger.*]
Tell me now, Eudocia,
Cut off from hope, deny'd the food of life,
And yet forbid to die, what am I now ?
Or what will fate do with me ?

Eud. Oh —— [*Turns away weeping.*]

Pbo. Thou weep'st !

Canst thou shed tears, and yet not melt to mercy ?
O say, ere yet returning madness seize me,
Is there in all futurity no prospect,
No distant comfort ? Not a glimmering of light
'To guide me thro' this maze ? Or must I now
Sit down in darkness and despair for ever ?

[*Here they both continue silent for some time.*]

Still thou art silent ?—Speak, disclose my doom,
That's now suspended in this awful moment !
O speak——for now my passions wait thy voice :
My beating heart grows calm, my blood stands still,
Scarcely I live, or only live to hear thee.

Eud. If yet,—but can it be ?—I fear—O Phocyas,
Let me be silent still !

Pbo. Hear then this last,
This only prayer !——Heav'n will consent to this.
Let me but follow thee, where-e'er thou goest,
But see thee, hear thy voice ; be thou my angel,
'To guide and govern my returning steps,
'Till long contrition and unweary'd duty
Shall expiate my guilt. Then say, Eudocia,
If like a soul anneal'd in purging fires,
After whole years thou see'st me white again,
When thou, ev'n thou shalt think———

End.

Eud. No more---This shakes
My firmest thoughts, and if---

[*Here a cry is heard of persons slaughtered in the camp.*
---What shrieks of death!

I fear the treacherous foe---Again! and louder!
Then they've begun a fatal harvest!---Haste,
Prevent--O wouldst thou see me more with comfort,
Fly, save 'em, save the threaten'd lives of christians,
My father and his friends!--I dare not stay---
Heav'n be my guide to shun this gathering ruin.

[*Exit Eudocia.*

Enter Caled.

Cal. [*Entering.*] So--Slaughter, do thy work!
---These hands look well. [*Looking on his hands.*
The jovial hunter, ere he quits the field,
First signs him in the stag's warm vital stream
With stains like these, to shew 'twas gallant sport.
Phocyas! Thou'rt met--But whether thou art here

[*Comes forward.*

A friend or foe I know not; if a friend,
Which is Eumenes' tent?

Pbo. Hold,---pafs no further.

Cal. Say'st thou, not pafs?

Pbo. No---on thy life no further.

Cal. What, dost thou frown too!--sure thou know'st
me not!

Pbo. Not know thee!--Yes, too well I know thee
now,

O murd'rous fiend! Why all this waste of blood?
Didst thou not promise---

Cal. Promise!--Insolence!

'Tis well, 'tis well--for now I know thee too.
Perfidious mungrel slave! Thou double traitor!
False to thy first and to thy latter vows!
Villain!-----

Pbo. That's well--go on--I swear I thank thee.
Speak it again, and strike it thro' my ear!
A villain! Yes, thou mad'st me so, thou devil!
And mind'st me now what to demand from thee.
Give, give me back my former self, my honour,

F 2

My

64 *The SIEGE of DAMASCUS.*

My country's fair esteem, my friends, my all—
Thou canst not—O thou robber!—Give me then
Revenge, or death! The last I well deserve,
That yielded up my soul's best wealth to thee,
For which accurst be thou, and curst thy prophet!

Cal. Hear'st thou this, Mahomet?—Blaspheming
mouth!

For this thou soon shalt chew the bitter fruit
Of Zacon's tree, the food of fiends below.

Go—speed thee thither—

*[Pushing at him with his Lance, which Phocyas
puts by, and kills him.]*

Pbo. Go thou first thyself.

Cal. *[Falling.]* O dog! Thou gnaw'st my heart!—
false Mahomet!

Is this, is this then my reward for—O— *[Dies.]*
[Exit Phocyas.]

*Several parties of Christians and Saracens pass over the
further end of the Stage fighting. The former are
beaten. At last Eumenes rallies them, and makes a
stand. Then enter Abudah attended.*

Abu. Forbear, forbear, and sheath the bloody sword!

Eum. Abudah! is this well?

Abu. No—I must own
You've cause.—O Mussulmans, look here! Behold
Where, like a broken spear, your arm of war
Is thrown to earth;

End. Ha! Caled?

Abu. Dumb and breathless.

Then thus has Heav'n chastis'd us in thy fall,
And thee for violated faith. Farewell,
Thou great, but cruel man!

Eum. This thirst of blood
In his own blood is quench'd.

Abu. Bear hence his clay
Back to Damascus. Cast a mantle first
O'er this sad fight: so should we hide his faults.—
Now hear, ye servants of the prophet, hear!
A greater death than this demands your tears,

For

For know, your lord the caliph is no more !
 Good Abubeker has breath'd out his spirit
 To him that gave it. Yet your Caliph lives,
 Lives now in Omar. See, behold his signet,
 Appointing me, such is his will, to lead
 His faithful armies warring here in Syria.
 Alas !—foreknowledge sure of this event
 Guided his choice !—Obey me then your chief.
 For you, O christians ! know, with speed I came,
 On the first notice of this foul design,
 Or to prevent it, or repair your wrongs.
 Your goods shall be untouch'd, your persons safe,
 Nor shall our troops, henceforth, on pain of death.
 Molest your march.—If more you ask, 'tis granted.

Eum. Still just and brave ! thy virtues would adorn
 A purer faith ! Thou, better than thy sect,
 That dar'st decline from that to acts of mercy !
 Pardon, Abudah, if thy honest heart
 Makes us e'en wish thee ours.

Abu. [*Aside.*] O Power Supreme,
 That mad'st my heart, and know'st its inmost frame !
 If yet I err, O lead me into truth,
 Or pardon unknown error !—Now, Eumenes,
 Friends as we may be, let us part in peace.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

Enter Eudocia and Artamon.

Eud. Alas ! but is my father safe ?

Art. Heav'n knows.

I left him just preparing to engage ;
 When doubtful of th' event he bade me haste
 To warn his dearest daughter of the danger,
 And aid your speedy flight.

Eud. My flight ! but whither ?
 O no—if he is lost——

Art. I hope not so.
 The noise is ceas'd. Perhaps they're beaten off.
 We soon shall know ;—here's one that can inform us.

Enter first Officer.

Soldier, thy looks speak well. What says thy tongue ?

66 *The SIEGE of DAMASCUS.*

1 Off. The foe's withdrawn; Abudah has been here,
And has renew'd the terms. Caled is kill'd——

Art. Hold—first, thank heav'n for that!

Eud. Where is Eumenes?

1 Off. I left him well; by his command I came
To search you out; and let you know this news.
I've more; but that——

Art. Is bad, perhaps, so says
This sudden pause. Well, be it so; let's know it.
'Tis but life's checquer'd lot.

1 Off. Eumenes mourns
A friend's unhappy fall; Herbis is slain;
A settled gloom seem'd to hang heavy on him,
Th' effect of grief, 'tis thought, for his lost son.
When, on the first attack, like one that fought
The welcome means of death, with desperate valour
He press'd the foe, and met the fate he wish'd.

Art. See, where Eumenes comes!—What's this?
He seems

To lead some wounded friend---Alas! 'tis---

[*They withdraw to one side of the stage.*]

*Enter Eumenes leading in Phocyas with an arrow in
his breast.*

Eum. Give me thy wound! O I could bear it for
thee,

This goodness melts my heart. What, in a moment,
Forgetting all thy wrongs, in kind embraces
T'exchange forgiveness thus!

Pho. Moments are few,
And must not now be wasted. O Eumenes,
Lend me thy helping hand a little farther;
O where, where is she? [*They advance.*]

Eum. Look, look here, Eudocia!
Behold a fight that calls for all our tears.

Eud. Phocyas, and wounded!---O what cruel hand---

Pho. No, 'twas a kind one---Spare thy tears,
Eudocia!

For mine are tears of joy---

End. Is't possible?

Pho.

Pho. 'Tis done--the pow'rs supreme Have heard
my pray'r,

And prosper'd me with some fair deeds this day.
I've fought once more, and for my friends, my country.
By me the treacherous chiefs are slain; a while
I stopp'd the foe, till, warn'd by me before
Of this their sudden march, Abudah came;
But first this random shaft had reach'd my breast.
Life's mingled scene is o'er--'tis thus that Heav'n
At once chastises, and I hope, accepts me;
And now I wake as from the sleep of death.

Eud. What shall I say to thee to give thee comfort?

Pho. Say only thou forgiv'st me--O Eudocia!
No longer now my dazzled eyes behold thee
Thro' passion's mists; my soul now gazes on thee,
And sees thee lovelier in unfading charms,
Bright as the shining angel host that stood!
Whilst I--but there it smarts--

Eud. Look down, look down,
Ye pitying pow'rs! and help his pious sorrow!

Eum. 'Tis not too late, we hope, to give thee help!
See! yonder is my tent: we'll lead thee thither;
Come, enter there, and let thy wound be dress'd.
Perhaps it is not mortal.

Pho. No! not mortal!
No flattery now. By all my hopes hereafter,
For the world's empire I'd not lose this death!
Alas! I but keep in my fleeting breath
A few short moments, till I have conjur'd you
That to the world you witness my remorse
For my past errors, and defend my fame.
For know--soon as this pointed steel's drawn out
Life follows thro' the wound.

Eud. What dost thou say?
O touch not yet the broken springs of life!
A thousand tender thoughts rise in my soul.
How shall I give them words? Oh, till this hour
I scarce have tasted woe!--this is indeed
To part--but Oh--

Pho. No more--death is now painful!
But say, my friends, whilst I have breath to ask,
(For

68 *The SIEGE of DAMASCUS.*

(For still methinks all your concerns are mine)
Whither have you design'd to bend your journey?

Eum. Constantinople is my last retreat,
If Heav'n indulge my wish; there I've resolv'd
To wear out the dark winter of my life,
An old man's stock of days, I hope not many.

End. There will I dedicate myself to Heav'n.
O Phocyas, for thy sake, no rival else
Shall e'er possess my heart. My father too
Consents to this my vow. My vital flame
There, like a taper on the holy altar,
Shall waste away; till Heav'n relenting hears
Incessant pray'rs for thee and for myself,
And wing my soul to meet with thine in bliss.
For in that thought I find a sudden hope,
As if inspir'd, springs in my breast, and tells me
That thy repenting frailty is forgiv'n,
And we shall meet again, to part no more.

Pbo. [*Plucking out the Arrow.*] Then all is done—
'twas the last pang—at length
I've giv'n up thee, and the world now is—nothing.

Eum. Alas! he falls. Help, Artamon, support him.
Look how he bleeds! Let's lay him gently down;
Night gathers fast upon him---so---look up,
Or speak, if thou hast life---Nay then---my daughter!
She faints---Help there, and bear to her tent.

[*Eudocia is carry'd off.*]

Art. [*Weeping aside.*] I thank ye, eyes! This is but
decent tribute.

My heart was full before.

Eum. O Phocyas, Phocyas!

Alas! he hears not now, nor sees my sorrows!
Yet will I mourn for thee, thou gallant youth!
As for a son---so let me call thee now!
A much-wrong'd friend! and an unhappy hero!
A fruitless zeal, yet all I now can shew!
Tears vainly flow for errors learnt too late,
When timely caution should prevent our fate.

[*Exeunt Omnes.*]

END of the FIFTH ACT.

E P I L O G U E

WELL, Sirs ; you've seen, his passion to approve,
 A desperate lover give up all for love,
 All but his faith,—Methinks now I can 'spy,
 Among you airy sparks, some who would cry,
 Phoo, pox,—for that what need of such a pother ?
 For one faith left, he would have got another. —
 True : 'twas your very case. Just what you say,
 Our rebel fools were ripe for, i' other day ;
 Tho' disappointed now, they're wiser grown,
 And with much grief—are forc'd to keep their own.
 These generous madmen gratis sought their ruin,
 And set no price, not they ! on their undoing.
 For gain, indeed, we've others would not dally,
 Or with stale principles stand shilli—shall I—
 You'll find all their religion in Change-Ally,
 There all pursue, by better means or worse,
 Iago's rule, " Put money in thy purse." }
 For tho' you differ still in speculation,
 For why—each head is wiser than the nation,
 Tho' points of faith for ever will divide you,
 And bravely you declare—none e'er shall ride you.
 In practice all agree, and every man,
 Devoutly strives to get what wealth he can :
 All parties at this golden altar bow,
 Gain, pow'rful gain's the new religion now.
 But leave we this—Since in this circle smile
 So many shining beauties of our isle,
 Who to more generous ends direct their aim,
 And shew us virtue in its fairest frame ;
 To these with pride the author bid me say,
 'Twas for your sex he chiefly wrote this play ;
 And if in one bright character you find
 Superior honour, and a noble mind,
 Know from the life Eudocia's charms he drew,
 And hopes the piece shall live, that copies you.
 Sure of success, he cannot miss his end,
 If e'er'y British heroine prove his friend.





MISS YOUNGE in the Character of HERMION
"Be gone! the Priest expects you at the Altar
"But, Tyrant, have a Care I come not thither

BELL'S EDITION.

DISTREST MOTHER.

A TRAGEDY, by Mr. AMBROSE PHILIPS.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane.

Regulated from the Prompt-Book,

By PERMISSION of the MANAGERS,

By Mr. HOPKINS, Prompter.



L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN BELL, near *Exeter-Exchange*, in the *Strand*,
and C. ETHERINGTON, at *York*.

MDCCLXXVI.

TO HER GRACE the

D U C H E S S of *Montague.*

MADAM,

THIS tragedy, which I do myself the honour to dedicate to your Grace, is formed upon an original, which passes for the most finished piece, in this kind of writing, that has ever been produced in the French language. The principal action and main distress of the play is of such a nature, as seems more immediately to claim the patronage of a lady : And, when I consider the great and shining characters of antiquity, that are celebrated in it, I am naturally directed to inscribe it to a person, whose illustrious father has, by a long series of glorious actions, (for the service of his country, and in defence of the liberties of Europe,) not only surpassed the generals of his own time, but equalled the greatest heroes of former ages. The name of Hector could not be more terrible among the Greeks, than that of the duke of Marlborough has been to the French.

The refined taste you are known to have in all entertainments for the diversion of the public, and the peculiar life and ornament your presence gives to all assemblies, was no small motive to determine me in the choice of my patroness. The charms that shine out in the person of your Grace, may convince every one, that there is nothing unnatural in the power which is ascribed to the beauty of Andromache.

A 2

The

The strict regard I have had to decency and good-manners throughout this work, is the greatest merit I pretend to plead in favour of my presumption ; and is, I am sensible, the only argument that can recommend it most effectually to your protection.

I am,

with the greatest respect,

Madam,

your Grace's most humble,

and most obedient servant,

AMBROSE PHILIPS.

PRE-

P R E F A C E.

IN all the works of genius and invention, whether in verse or prose, there are in general but three manners of style; the one sublime, and full of majesty; the other simple, natural, and easy; and the third, swelling, forced, and unnatural. An injudicious affectation and sublimity is what has betrayed a great many authors into the latter; not considering that real greatness in writing, as well as in manners, consists in an unaffected simplicity. The true sublime does not lie in strained metaphors and the pomp of words, but rises out of noble sentiments and strong images of nature; which will always appear the more conspicuous, when the language does not swell to hide and overshadow them.

These are the considerations that have induced me to write this tragedy in a style very different from what has been usually practised amongst us in poems of this nature. I have had the advantage to copy after a very great master, whose writings are deservedly admired in all parts of Europe, and whose excellencies are too well known to the men of letters in this nation, to stand in need of any farther discovery of them here. If I have been able to keep up to the beauties of Monsieur Racine in my attempts, and to do him no prejudice in the liberties I have taken frequently to vary from so great a poet, I shall have no reason to be dissatisfied with the labour it has cost me to bring the completest of his works upon the English stage.

I shall trouble my reader no farther, than to give him some short hints relating to this play, from the preface of the French author. The following lines of Virgil mark out the scene, the action, and the four principal actors in this tragedy, together with their distinct characters; excepting that of Hermione, whose rage and jealousy is sufficiently painted in the Andromache of Euripides.

*Littoraque Epiri legimus, portuque subimus
 Chaonia, et celsam Buthroti ascendimus urbem—
 Solemnes cum forte dapes, et tristia dona
 Libabat cineri Andromache, manesque vocabat
 Hectoreum ad tumulum, viridi quem cespitem inanem,
 Et geminas, causam lacrimis, sacraverat aras—
 Defecit vultum, et demissa voce locuta est :
 O felix una ante alias Priameia virgo,
 Hostilem ad tumulum, Trojæ sub mœnibus altis
 Justa mori ! quæ sortitas non pertulit ullos,
 Nec victoris heri tetigit captiva cubile.
 Nos patria incensa, diversa per æquora vestræ,
 Stirpis Achilleæ fastus, juvenumque superbum,
 Servitio enixæ tulimus, qui deinde secutus
 Ladaam Hermionen, Lacedæmoniosque bymenæos—
 Ast illum ereptæ magno inflammatus amore
 Conjugis, et scelerum furiis agitatus Orestes
 Excipit incautum patriasque obtruncat ad aras.*

VIRG. ÆN. Lib. iii.

The great concern of Andromache, in the Greek poet, is for the life of Molossus, a son she had by Pyrrhus. But it is more conformable to the general notion we form of that princess, at this great distance of time, to represent her as the disconsolate widow of Hector, and to suppose her the mother only of Astyanax. Considered in this light, no doubt, she moves our compassion much more effectually, than she could be imagined to do in any distress for a son by a second husband.

In order to bring about this beautiful incident, so necessary to heighten in Andromache the character of a tender mother, an affectionate wife, and a widow full of veneration for the memory of her deceased husband, the life of Astyanax is indeed a little prolonged beyond the term fixed to it by the general consent of the ancient authors. But so long as there is nothing improbable in the supposition, a judicious critic will always be pleased when he finds a matter of fact (especially so far removed in the dark and fabulous ages) falsified, for the embellishment of a whole poem.

P R O-

PROLOGUE, written by Mr. STEELE.

SINCE fancy by itself is loose and vain,
The wise, by rules, that airy power restrain:
They think those writers mad, who at their ease
Convey this house and audience where they please:
Who Nature's stated distances confound,
And make this spot all soils the sun goes round:
'Tis nothing, when a fancy'd scene's in view,
To skip from Covent-Garden to Peru.

But Shakespeare's self transgress'd; and shall each elf,
Each pigmy genius, quote great Shakespeare's self!
What critic dares prescribe what's just and fit,
Or mark out limits for such boundless wit!
Shakespeare could travel thro' earth, sea, and air,
And paint out all the powers and wonders there.
In barren deserts he makes Nature smile,
And gives us feasts in his Enchanted Isle.
Our author does his feeble force confess,
Nor dares pretend such merit to transgress;
Does not such shining gifts of genius share,
And therefore makes propriety his care.
Your treat with studied decency he serves;
Not only rules of time and place preserves,
But strives to keep his character intire,
With French correctness, and with British fire.

This piece, presented in a foreign tongue,
When France was glorious, and her monarch young,
An hundred times a crowded audience drew,
An hundred times repeated, still 'twas new.

Pyrrhus provok'd, to no wild rants betray'd,
Resents his generous love so ill repay'd;
Does like a man resent, a prince upbraid.
His sentiments disclose a royal mind,
Nor is he known a king from guards behind.

Injur'd Hermione demands relief;
But not from heavy narratives of grief:
In conscious majesty her pride is shewn;
Born to avenge her wrongs, but not bemoan.

Andromache—If in our author's lines,
As in the great original she shines,
Nothing but from barbarity she fears;
Attend with silence, you'll applaud with tears.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M E N.

	<i>Covent-garden.</i>	<i>Drury-lane.</i>
Pyrrhus, son of		
<i>Achilles</i> - - -	Mr. Aickin.	Mr. Palmer.
Phoenix, counsellor		
<i>to Pyrrhus</i> - -	Mr. L'Estrange.	Mr. Usher.
Orestes, son of		
<i>Agamemnon</i> - -	Mr. Barry.	Mr. Smith.
Pylades, friend to		
<i>Orestes</i> - - -	Mr. Clinch.	Mr. Packer.

W O M E N.

Andromache,		
<i>Hector's widow</i>	Mrs. Hartley.	Mrs. Yates.
Cephisa, confidante		
<i>to Andromache</i>	Miss Dayes.	Mrs. Johnston.
Hermione, daughter		
<i>to Menelaus</i>	Mrs. Barry.	Miss Younge.
Cleone, confidante		
<i>to Hermione</i> - -	Miss Pearce.	Miss Platt.

Attendants on Pyrrhus and Orestes, &c.

The SCENE, a great hall in the court of Pyrrhus,
at Buthrotos, the capital city of Epirus.

THE

T H E

DISTREST MOTHER.

A C T I.

SCENE, *the Palace of Pyrrhus.*

Enter Orestes, Pylades, and attendants.

ORESTES.

O Pylades ! what's life without a friend !
 At sight of thee my gloomy soul cheers up ;
 My hopes revive, and gladness dawns within me.
 After an absence of six tedious moons,
 How could I hope to find my Pylades,
 My joy, my comfort, on this fatal shore ?
 Even the court of Pyrrhus ? in these realms,
 These hated realms, so cross to all my wishes.
 Oh, my brave friend ! may no blind stroke of fate
 Divide us more, and tear me from myself.

Pyl. O prince ! O my Orestes ! O my friend !—
 Thus let me speak the welcome of my heart.

[*Embracing.*

Since I have gain'd this unexpected meeting,
 Blest be the powers who barr'd my way to Greece,
 And kept me here ! ever since the unhappy day
 When warring winds (Epirus full in view)
 Sunder'd our barks on the loud, stormy main.

Orest. It was, indeed, a morning full of horror !

Pyl.

10 *The DISTREST MOTHER.*

Pyl. A thousand boding cares have rack'd my soul
In your behalf. Often, with tears, I mourn'd
The fatal ills, in which your life's involv'd ;
And grudg'd you dangers which I could not share.
I fear'd to what extremities the black despair
That prey'd upon your mind, might have betray'd
And lest the gods, in pity to your woes, [you,
Should hear your pray'rs, and take the life you
loath'd.

But now with joy I see you !—The retinue,
And numerous followers that surround you here,
Speak better fortunes, and a mind dispos'd
To relish life.

Orest. Alas ! my friend, who knows
The destiny to which I stand reserv'd !
I come in search of an inhuman fair ;
And live or die, as she decrees my fate.

Pyl. You much surprize me, prince !—I thought
you cur'd
Of your unpity'd, unsuccessful passion.
Why, in Epirus, should you hope to find
Hermione less cruel, than at Sparta ?
I thought her pride, and the disdainful manner
In which she treated all your constant suff'rings,
Had broke your fetters, and assur'd your freedom :
Aham'd of your repulse, and flighted vows,
You hated her ; you talk'd of her no more :
Prince, you deceiv'd me.

Orest. I deceiv'd myself.
Do not upbraid the unhappy man, that loves thee.
Thou know'st, I never hid my passion from thee ;
Thou saw'st it in its birth, and in its progress :
And when at last the hoary king, her father,
Great Menelaus, gave away his daughter,
His lovely daughter, to the happy Pyrrhus,
Th'avenger of his wrongs ; thou saw'st my grief,
My torture, my despair ; ' and how I dragg'd,
' From sea to sea, a heavy chain of woes.
O Pylades ! my heart has bled within me,
To see thee, prest with sorrows not thy own,
Still wand'ring with me, like a banish'd man !

Watchful,

Watchful, and anxious for thy wretched friend,
To temper the wild transports of my mind,
And save me from myself.

Pyl. Why thus unkind?

Why will you envy me the pleasing task
Of generous love, and sympathizing friendship?

Orest. Thou miracle of truth—but hear me on.

When in the midst of my disastrous fate,
I thought how the divine Hermione,
Deaf to my vows, regardless of my plaints,
Gave up herself, in all her charms, to Pyrrhus;
Thou may'st remember, I abhor'd her name,
Strove to forget her, and repay her scorn.
I made my friends, and even myself, believe
My soul was freed. Alas! I did not see,
That all the malice of my heart was love.
Triumphing thus, and yet a captive still,
In Greece I landed: and in Greece I found
The assembled princes all alarm'd with fears,
In which their common safety seem'd concern'd,
I join'd them: For I hop'd that war and glory
Might fill my mind, and take up all my thoughts:
And, that my shatter'd soul, impair'd with grief,
Once more would resume its wonted vigour,
And ev'ry idle passion quit my breast.

Pyl. The thought was worthy Agamemnon's son.

Orest. But see the strange perverseness of my stars,
Which throws me on the rock I strove to shun!
The jealous chiefs, and all the states of Greece,
With one united voice complain of Pyrrhus;
That now, forgetful of the promise giv'n,
And mindless of his godlike father's fate,
Astyanax he nurses in his court;
Astyanax, the young, surviving hope
Of ruin'd Troy; Astyanax, descended
From a long race of kings; great Hector's son.

Pyl. A name still dreadful in the ears of Greece!
But, prince, you'll cease to wonder why the child
Lives thus protected in the court of Pyrrhus,
When you shall hear, the bright Andromache,

His

12 *The* DISTREST MOTHER.

His lovely captive, charms him from his purpose :
The mother's beauty guards the helpless son.

Orest. Your tale confirms what I have heard ; and
hence

Spring all my hopes. Since my proud rival wooes
Another partner to his throne and bed,
Hermione may still be mine. Her father,
The injur'd Menelaus, thinks already
His daughter slighted, and th' intended nuptials
Too long delay'd. I heard his loud complaints
With secret pleasure ; and was glad to find
Th' ungrateful maid neglected in her turn,
And all my wrongs aveng'd in her disgrace.

Pyl. Oh, may you keep your just resentments
warm !

Orest. Resentments ! Oh, my friend, too soon I
found

They grew not out of hatred ! I am betray'd :
I practise on myself ; and fondly plot
My own undoing. Goaded on by love,
I canvass'd all the suffrages of Greece ;
And here I come their sworn ambassador,
To speak their jealousies, and claim this boy.

Pyl. Pyrrhus will treat your embassy with scorn.
Full of Achilles, his redoubted fire,
Pyrrhus is proud, impetuous, headstrong, fierce ;
Made up of passions : Will he then be sway'd,
And give to death the son of her he loves ?

Orest. Oh, would he render up Hermione,
And keep Aftyanax, I should be blest !
He must ; he shall. Hermione is my life,
My soul, my rapture ! — I'll no longer curb
The strong desire, that hurries me to madness :
I'll give a loose to love ; I'll bear her hence ;
I'll tear her from his arms ; I'll — O, ye gods !
Give me Hermione, or let me die ! —
But tell me, Pylades ; how stand my hopes ?
Is Pyrrhus still enamour'd with her charms ?
Or dost thou think he'll yield me up the prize,
The dear, dear prize, which he has ravish'd from me ?

Pyl.

Pyl. I dare not flattter your fond hopes so far ;
The king, indeed, cold to the Spartan Princess,
Turns all his passion to Andromache,
Hector's afflicted widow. But in vain,
With interwoven love and rage, he sues
The charming captive, obstinately cruel.
Oft he alarms her for her child confin'd
Apart ; and, when her tears begin to flow,
As soon he stops them, and recalls his threats.
Hermione a thousand times has seen
His ill-requited vows return to her ;
And takes his indignation all for love.
What can be gather'd from a man so various ?
He may, in the disorder of his soul,
Wed her he hates ; and punish her he loves.

Orest. But tell me how the wrong'd Hermione
Brooks her slow nuptials, and dishonour'd charms ?

Pyl. Hermione would fain be thought to scorn
Her wavering lover, and disdain his falshood ;
But, spite of all her pride and conscious beauty,
She mourns in secret her neglected charms ;
And oft has made me privy to her tears :
Sill threatens to be gone ; yet still she stays ;
And sometimes sighs, and wishes for Orestes.

Orest. Ah, were those wishes from her heart, my
friend,
I'd fly in transport—— [Flourish within.

Pyl. Hear !—the king approaches
To give you audience. Speak your embassy
Without reserve : urge the demands of Greece ;
And, in the name of all her kings, require,
That Hector's son be given into your hands.
Pyrrhus, instead of granting what they ask,
To speed his love, and win the Trojan dame,
Will make it merit to preserve her son.
But, see, he comes.

Orest. Mean while, my Pylades,
Go, and dispose Hermione to see
Her lover, who is come thus far, to throw
Himself, in all his sorrows, at her feet.

24 *The* DISTREST MOTHER.

Enter Pyrrhus, Phoenix, and attendants.

Orest. Before I speak the message of the Greeks,
 Permit me, Sir, to glory in the title
 Of their ambassador; since I behold
 Troy's vanquisher, and great Achilles' son.
 Nor does the son rise short of such a father:
 If Hector fell by him, Troy fell by you.
 But, what your father never would have done,
 You do. You cherish the remains of Troy;
 And, by an ill-tim'd pity, keep alive
 The dying embers of a ten-years war.
 Have you so soon forgot the mighty Hector?
 The Greeks remember his high brandish'd sword,
 That fill'd their states with widows and with orphans;
 For which they call for vengeance on his son.
 Who knows what he may one day prove? Who knows
 But he may brave us in our ports; and, fill'd
 With Hector's fury, set our fleets on blaze.
 You may, yourself, live to repent your mercy..
 Comply, then, with the Grecians just demands:
 Sate their vengeance, and preserve yourself.
Pyrr. The Greeks are for my safety more concern'd
 Than I desire. I thought your kings were met
 On more important counsel. When I heard
 The name of their ambassador, I hop'd
 Some glorious enterprize was taking birth.
 Is Agamemnon's son dispatched for this?
 And do the Grecian chiefs, renown'd in war,
 A race of heroes, join in close debate,
 To plot an infant's death?—What right has Greece
 To ask his life? Must I, must I alone,
 Of all her scepter'd warriors, be deny'd
 To treat my captive as I please? Know, prince,
 When Troy lay smoking on the ground, and each
 Proud victor shar'd the harvest of the war,
 Andromache and this her son were mine;
 Were mine by lot; and who shall wrest them from me?
 Ulysses bore away old Priam's queen;
 Cassandra was your own great father's prize;

Did

Did I concern myself in what they won?
Did I send embassies to claim their captives?

Orest. But, Sir, we fear for you, and for ourselves.
Troy may again revive, and a new Hector
Rise in Astyanax. Then think betimes—

Pyr. Let dastard souls be timorously wise:
But tell them, Pyrrhus knows not how to form
Far-fancy'd ills, and dangers out of fight.

Orest. Sir, call to mind the unrival'd strength of
Troy;

Her walls, her bulwarks, and her gates of brass;
Her kings, her heroes, and embattled armies!

Pyr. I call them all to mind; and see them all
Confus'd in dust; all mixt in one wide ruin;
All but a child, and he in bondage held.
What vengeance can we fear from such a Troy?
If they have sworn to extinguish Hector's race,
Why was their vow for twelve long months defer'd?
Why was he not in Priam's bosom slain?

He should have fall'n among the slaughter'd heaps,
Whelm'd under Troy. His death had then been just,
• When age and infancy, alike in vain,
• Pleaded their weakness; when the heat of conquest,
• And horrors of the fight, rous'd all our rage,
• And blindly hurry'd us, thro' scenes of death.
My fury then was without bounds: but now,
My wrath appeas'd, must I be cruel still?
And, deaf to all the tender calls of pity,
Like a cool murderer, bathe my hands in blood;
An infant's blood?—No, prince—Go, bid the Greeks
Mark out some other victim; my revenge
Has had its fill. What has escap'd from Troy
Shall not be sav'd to perish in Epirus.

Orest. I need not tell you, Sir, Astyanax
Was doom'd to death in Troy; nor mention how
The crafty mother sav'd her darling son:
The Greeks do now but urge their former sentence;
Nor is't the boy, but Hector, they pursue;
The father draws their vengeance on the son:

16 *The* DISTREST MOTHER.

The father, who so oft in Grecian blood
Has drench'd his sword: the father, whom the Greeks
May seek even here.—Prevent them, Sir, in time.

Pyr. No! let them come; since I was born to wage
Eternal wars. Let them now turn their arms
On him, who conquer'd for them: let them come,
And in Epirus seek another Troy.

'Twas thus they recompens'd my godlike fire;
Thus was Achilles thank'd. But, prince, remember,
Their black ingratitude then cost them dear.

Orest. Shall Greece then find a rebel son in Pyrrhus?

Pyr. Have I then conquer'd to depend on Greece?

Orest. Hermione will sway your soul to peace,
And mediate 'twixt her father and yourself:
Her beauty will enforce my embassy.

Pyr. Hermione may have her charms; and I
May love her still, tho' not her father's slave.

I may in time give proofs, that I'm a lover;
But never must forget, that I'm a king.

Meanwhile, Sir, you may see fair Hellen's daughter:
I know how near in blood you stand ally'd.

That done, you have my answer, prince. The Greeks,
No doubt, expect your quick return. [*Ex. Orest. &c.*]

Phan. Sir, do you send your rival to the princess?

Pyr. I am told, that he has lov'd her long.

Phan. If so,

Have you not cause to fear the smother'd flame
May kindle at her sight, and blaze a-new?
And she be brought to listen to his passion.

Pyr. Ay, let them, Phoenix, let them love their
fill!

Let them go hence; let them depart together:
Together let them sail for Sparta: all my ports
Are open to them both. From what constraint,
What irksome thoughts, should I be then reliev'd!

Phan. But, Sir—

Pyr. I shall another time, good Phoenix,
Unbosom to thee all my thoughts—for, see,
Andromache appears.

Enter

The DISTREST MOTHER. 17

Enter Andromache, and Cephisa.

Pyr. May I, Madam,
Flatter my hopes so far, as to believe
You come to seek me here?

And. This way, Sir, leads
To those apartments where you guard my son.
Since you permit me, once a day, to visit
All I have left of Hector and of Troy,
I go to weep a few sad moments with him.
I have not yet, to-day, embrac'd my child;
I have not held him in my widow'd arms. [*prevail,*

Pyr. Ah, Madam! should the threats of Greece
You'll have occasion for your tears, indeed!

And. Alas, what threats! What can alarm the
There are no Trojans left! Greeks?

Pyr. Their hate to Hector
Can never die: the terror of his name
Still shakes their souls; and makes them dread his son.

And. A mighty honour for victorious Greece,
To fear an infant, a poor friendless child!
Who smiles in bondage; nor yet knows himself
The son of Hector, and the slave of Pyrrhus.

Pyr. Weak as he is, the Greeks demand his life?
And send no less than Agamemnon's son,
To fetch him hence.

And. And, Sir, do you comply
With such demands!—This blow is aim'd at me:
How should the child avenge his slaughter'd fire?
But, cruel men! they will not have him live
To cheer my heavy heart, and ease my bonds.
I promis'd to myself in him a son,
In him a friend, a husband, and a father.
But I must suffer sorrow heap'd on sorrow;
And still the fatal stroke must come from you.

Pyr. Dry up those tears, I must not see you weep,
And know, I have rejected their demands.
The Greeks already threaten me with war:
But, should they arm, as once they did for Helen,
And hide the Adriatic with their fleets;

B 3

Should

18 *The* DISTREST MOTHER.

Should they prepare a second ten years siege,
And lay my towers and palaces in dust;
I am determin'd to defend your son;
And rather die myself than give him up.
But, Madam, in the midst of all these dangers,
Will you refuse me a propitious smile?
Hated of Greece, and prest on every side,
Let me not, Madam, while I fight your cause,
Let me not combat with your cruelties,
And count Andromache amongst my foes.

Andr. Consider, Sir, how this will sound in Greece!
How can so great a soul betray such weakness?
Let not men say, so generous a design
Was but the transport of a heart in love.

Pyr. Your charms will justify me to the world.

Andr. How can Andromache, a captive queen,
O'erwhelm'd with grief, a burthen to herself,
Harbour a thought of love Alas! what charms
Have these unhappy eyes, by you condemn'd
To weep for ever?—talk of it no more.
To reverence the misfortunes of a foe;
To succour the distress, to give the son
To an afflicted mother; to repel
Confederate nations, leagu'd against his life;
Unbrib'd by love, untterrify'd by threats,
To pity, to protect him: these are cares,
These are exploits worthy Achilles' son.

Pyr. Will your resentments, then, endure for ever!
Must Pyrrhus never be forgiven?—'Tis true,
My sword has often reek'd in Phrygian blood,
And carried havock through your royal kindred;
But you, fair princess, amply have aveng'd
Old Priam's vanquish'd house: and all the woes
I brought on them, fall short of what I suffer.
We both have suffer'd in our turns: and now
Our common foe should teach us to unite.

Andr. Where does the captive not behold a foe?

Pyr. Forget the term of hatred; and behold
A friend in Pyrrhus! Give me but to hope,
I'll free your son; I'll be a father to him:

My-

The DISTREST MOTHER. 29

Myself will teach him to avenge the Trojans.
 I'll go in person to chastise the Greeks,
 Both for your wrongs and mine. Inspir'd by you,
 What would I not achieve? Again shall Troy
 Rise from its ashes: this right arm shall fix
 Her seat of empire; and your son shall reign.

Andr. Such dreams of greatness suit not my condition:

His hopes of empire perish'd with his father.
 No; thou imperial city, ancient Troy,
 Thou pride of Asia, founded by the gods!
 Never, oh, never must we hope to see
 Those bulwarks rise, which Hector could not guard!
 Sir, all I wish for, is some quiet exile,
 Where, far from Greece remov'd, and far from you,
 I may conceal my son, and mourn my husband.
 Your love creates me envy. Oh, return!
 Return to your betroth'd Hermione.

Pyr. Why do you mock me thus? you know, I cannot.

You know my heart is yours: my soul hangs on you:
 You take up every wish: my waking thoughts,
 And nightly dreams are all employ'd on you.
 'Tis true, Hermione was sent to share
 My throne and bed; and would with transport hear
 The vows which you neglect.

Andr. She has no Troy,
 No Hector to lament: she has not lost
 A husband by your conquests. Such a husband!
 (Tormenting thought!) whose death alone has made
 Your fire immortal: Pyrrhus and Achilles
 Are both grown great by my calamities.

Pyr. Madam, 'tis well! 'Tis very well! I find,
 Your will must be obey'd. Imperious captive,
 It shall. Henceforth I blot you from my mind:
 You teach me to forget your charms; to hate you:
 For know, inhuman beauty, I have lov'd
 Too well to treat you with indifference.
 Think well upon it: my disorder'd soul
 Wavers between th' extreams of love and rage;

I've

20 *The* DISTREST MOTHER.

I've been too tame ; I will awake to vengeance !
The son shall answer for the mother's scorn.
The Greeks demand him : nor will I endanger
My realms, to pleasure an ungrateful woman.

Andr. Then he must die ! Alas, my son must die !
He has no friend, no succour left, beside
His mother's tears, and his own innocence.

Pyr. Go, Madam ; visit this unhappy son.
The sight of him may bend your stubborn heart ;
And turn to softness your unjust disdain.
I shall once more expect your answer. Go,
And think, while you embrace the captive boy,
Think that his life depends on your resolves.

[*Ex. Pyrrhus, &c.*]

Andr. I'll go ; and in the anguish of my heart,
Weep o'er my child—If he must die, my life
Is wrapt in his ; I shall not long survive.
'Tis for his sake that I have suffer'd life,
Groan'd in captivity, and out-liv'd Hector.
Yes, my Aftyanax, we'll go together !
Together to the realms of night we'll go !
There to thy ravish'd eyes thy fire I'll show,
And point him out among the shades below.

END of the FIRST ACT.

A C T II.

Hermione and Cleone.

HERMIONE.

WELL, I'll be rul'd, Cleone : I will see him ;
I have told Pylades that he may bring him ;
But trust me, were I left to my own thoughts,
I should

I should forbid him yet.

Cleo. And why forbid him ?
Is he not, Madam, still the same Orestes ?
Orestes, whose return you oft have wish'd ?
The man whose sufferings you so oft lamented,
And often prais'd his constancy and love ?

Her. That love, that constancy, so ill requited,
Upbraids me to myself ! I blush to think
How I have us'd him ; and would shun his presence.
What will be my confusion when he sees me
Neglected, and forsaken, like himself ?
Will he not say, is this the scornful maid,
The proud Hermione, that tyranniz'd
In Sparta's court, and triumph'd in her charms ?
Her insolence at last is well repaid ;
I cannot bear the thought !

Cleo. You wrong yourself
With unbecoming fears. He knows too well
Your beauty and your worth. Your lover comes not
To offer insults ; but to repeat his vows,
And breathe his ardent passion at your feet.
But, Madam, what's your royal father's will ?
What orders do your letters bring from Sparta ?

Her. His orders are, if Pyrrhus still delay
The nuptials, and refuse to sacrifice
This Trojan boy, I should with speed embark,
And with their embassy return to Greece.

Cleo. What would you more ? Orestes comes in time
To save your honour. Pyrrhus cools apace :
Prevent his falsehood, and forsake him first.
I know you hate him ; you have told me so.

Her. Hate him ! My injur'd honour bids me hate
The ungrateful man, to whom I fondly gave [him.
My virgin heart ; the man I lov'd so dearly ;
The man I doted on ! Oh, my Cleone !
How is it possible I should not hate him ?

Cleo. Then give him over, Madam. Quit his court ;
And with Orestes —

Her. No ! I must have time
To work up all my rage ! To meditate

A parting

22 *The DISTREST MOTHER.*

A parting full of horror ! My revenge
Will be but too much quicken'd by the traitor.

Cleo. Do you then wait new insults, new affronts ?
To draw you from your father ! Then to leave you !
In his own court to leave you—for a captive !
If Pyrrhus can provoke you, he has done it.

Her. Why dost thou heighten my distress ? I fear
To search out my own thoughts, and sound my heart.
Be blind to what thou seest : believe me cur'd :
Flatter my weakness ; tell me I have conquer'd ;
Think that my injur'd soul is set against him ;
And do thy best to make me think so too.

Cleo. Why would you loiter here, then ?

Her. Let us fly !

Let us begone ! I leave him to his captive :
Let him go kneel, and supplicate his slave.
Let us begone !—But what if he repent ?
What if the perjur'd prince again submit,
And sue for pardon ; What if he renew
His former vows ?—But, oh, the faithless man !
He slights me ! drives me to extremities !—However,
I'll stay, Cleone, to perplex their loves ;
I'll stay, till, by an open breach of contract,
I make him hateful to the Greeks. Already
Their vengeance have I drawn upon the son,
Their second embassy shall claim the mother :
I will redouble all my griefs upon her !

Cleo. Ah, Madam, whither does your rage transport
Andromache, alas ! is innocent. [you ?
A woman plung'd in sorrow ; dead to love :
And when she thinks of Pyrrhus, 'tis with horror.

Her. Would I had done so too !—He had not then
Betray'd my easy faith.—But I, alas !
Discover'd all the fondness of my soul ;
I made no secret of my passion to him,
Nor thought it dangerous to be sincere :
My eyes, my tongue, my actions spoke my heart.

Cleo. Well might you speak, without reserve, to
one
Engaged to you by solemn oaths and treaties.

Her. His ardour too was an excuse to mine :

With

With other eyes he saw me then !—Cleone,
 Thou may'st remember, every thing conspir'd
 To favour him : my father's wrongs aveng'd ;
 The Greeks triumphant ; fleets of Trojan spoils ;
 His mighty fire's, his own immortal fame ;
 His eager love ;— all, all conspir'd against me !
 —But I have done : I'll think no more of Pyrrhus.
 Orestes wants not merit ; and he loves me.
 My gratitude, my honour, both plead for him :
 And if I've power o'er my own heart, 'tis his.

Cleo. Madam, he comes—

Her. Alas, I did not think
 He was so near !—I wish I might not see him.

Enter Orestes.

Her. How am I to interpret, Sir, this visit !
 Is it a compliment of form, or love ?

Orest. Madam, you know my weakness. 'Tis my
 To love unpity'd : to desire to see you ; [fate
 And still to swear each time shall be the last.
 My passion breaks thro' my repeated oaths :
 And every time I visit you I'm perjurd.
 Even now, I find my wounds all bleed afresh :
 I blush to own it ; but I know no cure.
 I call the gods to witness, I have try'd
 Whatever man could do, (but try'd in vain,)
 To wear you from my mind. Thro' stormy seas,
 And savage climes, in a whole year of absence,
 I courted dangers, and I long'd for death.

Her. Why will you, prince, indulge this mournful
 It ill becomes the ambassador of Greece [tale?
 To talk of dying, and of love. Remember
 The kings you represent : Shall their revenge
 Be disappointed by your ill-tim'd passion ?
 Discharge your embassy : 'tis not Orestes
 The Greeks desire should die.

Orest. My embassy
 Is at an end, for Pyrrhus has refus'd
 To give up Hector's son. Some hidden power
 Protects the boy.

24 *The* DISTREST MOTHER.

Her. Faithless, ungrateful man! [*Aside.*]

Orest. I now prepare for Greece. But e'er I go,
Would hear my final doom pronounc'd by you—
What do I say—I do already hear it!
My doom is fixt: I read it in your eyes.

Her. Will you then still despair? be still suspicious?
What have I done? Wherein have I been cruel?
'Tis true, you find me in the court of Pyrrhus;
But 'twas my royal father sent me hither.
And who can tell, but I have shar'd your griefs?
Have I ne'er wept in secret? Never wish'd
To see Orestes?

Orest. Wish'd to see Orestes!—
Oh joy! Oh ecstasy? My soul's intranc'd?
Oh, charming princess! Oh, transcendent maid!
My utmost wish!—Thus, thus let me express
My boundless thanks!—I never was unhappy—
Am I Orestes?—

Her. You are Orestes,
The same unalter'd, generous, faithful lover:
The prince whom I esteem; whom I lament;
And whom I fain would teach my heart to love!

Orest. Ay, there it is!—I have but your esteem,
While Pyrrhus, has your heart!

Her. Believe me, prince,
Were you as Pyrrhus, I should hate you!

Orest. No!—
I should be blest! I should be lov'd as he is!—
Yet all this while I die by your disdain,
While he neglects your charms, and courts another.

Her. And who has told you, prince, that I'm neglected?

Has Pyrrhus said—(O I shall go distracted!)
Has Pyrrhus told you so?—Or is it you,
Who think thus meanly of me?—Sir, perhaps,
All do not judge like you!—

Orest. Madam, go on!
Insult me still: I'm us'd to bear your scorn.

Her. Why am I told how Pyrrhus loves or hates?
—Go, prince, and arm the Greeks against the rebel;
Let

Let them lay waste his country ; raze his towns ;
 Destroy his fleets ; his palaces ;—himself !—
 Go, prince, and tell me then how much I love him.

Orest. To hasten his destruction, come yourself ;
 And work your royal father to his ruin.

Her. Mean while he weds Andromache !

Orest. Ah, princess !

What is't I hear ?

Her. What infamy for Greece,
 If he should wed a Phrygian, and a captive !

Orest. Is this your hatred, Madam ?—'Tis in vain
 To hide your passion ; every thing betrays it :
 Your looks, your speech, your anger : nay, your
 silence ;

Your love appears in all ; your secret flame
 Breaks out the more, the more you would conceal it.

Her. Your jealousy perverts my meaning still,
 And wrests each circumstance to your disquiet ;
 My very hate is constru'd into fondness.

Orest. Impute my fears, if groundless, to my love.

Her. Then hear me, prince. Obedience to a fa-
 ther

First brought me hither ; and the same obedience
 Detains me here, till Pyrrhus drive me hence,
 Or my offended father shall recall me.

Tell this proud king, that Menelaus scorns
 To match his daughter with a foe of Greece :
 Bid him resign Astyanax, or me.

If he persists to guard the hostile boy,
 Hermione embarks with you for Sparta.

[*Ex. Her. and Cleone.*

Orestes alone.

Then is Orestes blest ! My griefs are fled !
 Fled like a dream !—Methinks I tread in air !

• Pyrrhus, enamour'd of his captive queen,
 • Will thank me, if I take her rival hence :
 • He looks not on the princess with my eyes !
 • Surprizing happiness !—Unlook'd for joy !
 Never let love despair !— the prize is mine !

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D

Be

26 *The DISTREST MOTHER.*

Be smooth, ye seas ; and ye, propitious winds,
Breathe from Epirus to the Spartan coasts !
I long to view the sails unfurl'd !—But, see !
Pyrrhus approaches in an happy hour.

Enter Pyrrhus, and Phoenix.

Pyr. I was in pain to find you, prince. My warm
Ungovern'd temper would not let me weigh
The importance of your embassy, and hear
You argue for my good.—I was to blame,
I since have pois'd your reasons ; and I thank
My good allies : their care deserves my thanks.
You have convinc'd me, that the weal of Greece,
My father's honour, and my own repose,
Demand that Hector's race should be destroy'd.
I shall deliver up Astyanax ;
And you, yourself, shall bear the victim hence.

Orest. If you approve it, Sir, and are content
To spill the blood of a defenceless child ;
The offended Greeks, no doubt, will be pleas'd.

Pyr. Closer to strain the knot of our alliance,
I have determin'd to espouse Hermione.
You come in time to grace our nuptial rites :
In you the kings of Greece will all be present ;
And you have right to personate her father,
As his ambassador, and brother's son.
Go, prince, renew your visit ; tell Hermione,
To-morrow I receive her from your hands.

Orest. [*Aside.*] Oh, change of fortune ! Oh, undone
Orestes ! *[Ex. Orestes.]*

Pyrrhus and Phoenix.

Pyr. Well, Phoenix ! Am I still a slave to love ?
What think'st thou now ? Am I myself again ?

Phæn. 'Tis as it should be : this discovers Pyrrhus ;
Shews all the hero. Now you are yourself !
The son, the rival of the great Achilles !
Greece will applaud you ; and the world confess,
Pyrrhus has conquer'd Troy a second time !

Pyr. Nay, Phoenix, now I but begin to triumph :
I

I never was a conqueror 'till now !
Believe me, a whole host, a war of foes,
May sooner be subdu'd, than love. Oh, Phoenix,
What ruin have I shunn'd ; The Greeks enrag'd,
Hung o'er me, like a gathering storm, and soon
Had burst in thunder on my head ; while I
Abandon'd duty, empire, honour, all,
To please a thankless woman !—One kind look
Had quite undone me !

Phæn. O, my royal master !

The gods, in favour to you, made her cruel.

Pyr. Thou saw'st with how much scorn she treated
When I permitted her to see her son, [me !
I hop'd it might have work'd her to my wishes.

I went to see the mournful interview,
And found her bath'd in tears, and lost in passion.
Wild with distress, a thousand times she call'd
On Hector's name : and when I spoke in comfort,
And promis'd my protection to her son,

She kiss'd the boy ; and call'd again on Hector :

' Then strain'd him in her arms ; and cry'd, 'Tis he !

' 'Tis he himself ! his eyes, his every feature !

' His very frown, and his stern look already !

' 'Tis he : 'Tis my lov'd lord whom I embrace !

Does she then think, that I preserve the boy.

To sooth and keep alive her flame for Hector ?

Phæn. No doubt, she does ; and thinks you favour'd
But let her go, for an ungrateful woman ! [in it ;

Pyr. I know the thoughts of her proud, stubborn
heart :

Vain of her charms, and insolent in beauty,
She mocks my rage ; and when it threatens loudest,
Expects 'twill soon be humbled into love.

But we shall change our parts ; and she shall find,

I can be deaf, like her ; and steel my heart !

She's Hector's widow ; I Achilles' son !

Pyrhus is born to hate Andromache.

Phæn. My royal master, talk of her no more ;
I do not like this anger. Your Hermione

28 *The* DISTREST MOTHER.

Should now engross your thoughts. 'Tis time to see her;

'Tis time you should prepare the nuptial rites;
And not rely upon a rival's care:
It may be dangerous.

Pyr. But tell me, Phœnix,
Dost thou not think, the proud Andromache
Will be enrag'd, when I shall wed the princess?

Phæn. Why does Andromache still haunt your thoughts?

What is't to you, be she enrag'd or pleas'd?
Let her name perish: think of her no more!

Pyr. No, Phœnix!—I have been too gentle with her,

I've check'd my wrath, and stifled my resentment:
She knows not yet to what degree I hate her.

Let us return:—I'll brave her to her face:
I'll give my anger its free course against her.

Thou shalt see, Phœnix, how I'll break her pride!

Phæn. Oh, go not, Sir!—There's ruin in her eyes!
You do not know your strength: you'll fall before her,
Adore her beauty, and revive her scorn.

Pyr. That were indeed a most unmanly weakness!
Thou dost not know me, Phœnix!

Phæn. Ah, my prince!
You are still struggling in the toils of love.

Pyr. Canst thou then think I love this woman still!
One who repays my passion with disdain!
A stranger, captive, friendless and forlorn;
She and her darling son within my power;
His life a forfeit to the Greeks: Yet I
Preserve her son; would take her to my throne;
Would fight her battles, and avenge her wrongs;
And all this while she treats me as her foe!

Phæn. You have it in your power to be reveng'd.

Pyr. Yes;—and I'll shew my power! I'll give her
To hate me! her Astyanax shall die— [cause
What tears will then be shed! How will she then,
In bitterness of heart, reproach my name!
Then, to compleat her woes, will I espouse

Her-

Hermione:—'Twill stab her to the heart!

Phæn. Alas, you threaten like a lover still!

Pyr. Phœnix, excuse this struggle of my soul:
'Tis the last effort of expiring love.

Phæn. Then hasten, Sir, to see the Spartan princess;
And turn the bent of your desires on her.

Pyr. Oh! 'tis a heavy task to conquer love.
And wean the soul from her accustom'd fondness.
But, come:—A long farewell to Hector's widow.

'Tis with a secret pleasure I look back,
And see the many dangers I have pass'd.
The merchant thus, in dreadful tempests tost,
Thrown by the waves on some unlook'd-for coast,
Oft turns, and sees, with a delighted eye,
Midst rocks and shelves the broken billows fly!
And while the outrageous winds the deep deform,
Smiles on the tumult, and enjoys the storm.

[*Exeunt.*]

END of the SECOND ACT.

A C T III.

Pylades and Orestes.

P Y L A D E S.

FOR Heav'n's sake, Sir, compose your ruffled
And moderate your rage! [mind,

Orest. No, Pylades!

This is no time for counsel.—I am deaf.

Talk not of reason! I have been too patient:

Life is not worth my care. My soul grows desperate.
I'll bear her off, or perish in the attempt.

I'll force her from his arms:—By Heav'n I will!

Pyl. Well, 'tis agreed, my friend:—We'll force
But still consider, we are in Epirus. [her hence,

D 3

The

30 *The DISTREST MOTHER.*

The court, the guards, Hermione herself,
The very air we breathe, belongs to Pyrrhus.
Good gods! what tempted you to seek her here?

Orest. Lost to myself, I knew not what I did!
My purposes were wild. Perhaps I came
To menace Pyrrhus, and upbraid the woman.

Pyl. This violence of temper may prove fatal.

Orest. It must be more than man to bear these shocks,
These outrages of fate, with temper!

He tells me, that he weds Hermione;
And will to-morrow take her from my hand! —
My hand shall sooner tear the tyrant's heart. —

Pyl. Your passion blinds you, Sir; he's not to blame.
Could you but look into the soul of Pyrrhus,
Perhaps you'd find it tortur'd, like your own.

Orest. No, Pylades! 'Tis all design—His pride,
To triumph over me, has chang'd his love,
The fair Hermione, before I came,
In all her bloom of beauty, was neglected.
Ah, cruel Gods! I thought her all my own!
She was consenting to return to Sparta:
Her heart, divided betwixt rage and love.
Was on the wing to take its leave of Pyrrhus.
She heard my sighs; she pitied my complaints;
She prais'd my constancy;—The least indifference
From this proud king, had made Orestes happy.

Pyl. So your fond heart believes!

Orest. did I not see

Her hate, her rage, her indignation rise
Against the ungrateful man?

Pyl. Believe me, prince,

'Twas then she lov'd him most! Had Pyrrhus left
her,

She would have form'd some new pretext to stay.
Take my advice:—Think not to force her hence;
But fly yourself from her destructive charms.

Her soul is link'd to Pyrrhus: 'were she yours,

She would reproach you still, and still regret

Her disappointed nuptials. —

Orest. Talk no more!

I can-

I cannot bear the thought! She must be mine!
 Did Pyrrhus carry thunder in his hand,
 I'd stand the bolt, and challenge all his fury,
 Ere I resign'd Hermione.—By force
 I'll snatch her hence, and bear her to my ships;
 Have we forgot her mother Helen's rape?

Pyl. Will then Orestes turn a ravisher!
 And blot his embassy?

Orest. Oh, Pylades!
 My grief weighs heavy on me:—'Twill distract me!
 'O leave me to myself!—Let not thy friendship
 'Involve thee in my woes. Too long already,
 'Too long hast thou been punish'd for my crimes.
 'It is enough, my friend!—It is enough!
 'Let not thy generous love betray thee farther.
 The gods have set me as their mark, to empty
 Their quivers on me.—Leave me to myself.
 Mine be the danger; mine the enterprize.
 All I request of thee is, to return,
 And in my place convey Astyanax
 (As Pyrrhus has consented) into Greece.
 Go, Pylades—

Pyl. Lead on, my friend, lead on!
 Let us bear off Hermione! No toil,
 No danger can deter a friend:—Lead on!
 Draw up the Greeks; summon your num'rous train:
 The ships are ready, and the wind fits fair:
 There eastward lies the sea; the rolling waves
 Break on those palace-stairs. I know each pass,
 Each avenue and outlet of the court.
 This very night we'll carry her on board.

Orest. Thou art too good!——I trespass on thy
 friendship:

But, oh! excuse a wretch, whom no man pities,
 Except thyself: one just about to lose
 The treasure of his soul: 'whom all mankind
 'Conspire to hate, and one who hates himself.
 When will my friendship be of use to thee?

Pyl. The question is unkind.—But now remember
 To keep your counsels close, and hide your thoughts;
 Let

32 *The DISTREST MOTHER.*

Let not Hermione suspect—No more——

I see her coming, Sir——

Orest. Away, my friend;
I am advis'd; my all depends upon it. [*Ex. Pylades.*]

Enter Hermione, and Cleone.

Orest. Madam, your orders are obey'd; I have seen
Pyrrhus, my rival; and have gain'd him for you.
The king resolves to wed you.

Her. So I am told:

And farther, I'm inform'd that you, Orestes,
Are to dispose me for the intended marriage.

Orest. And are you, Madam, willing to comply?

Her. Could I imagine Pyrrhus lov'd me still?
'After so long delays, who would have thought
'His hidden flames would shew themselves at last,
'And kindle in his breast, when mine expir'd?
'I can suppose, with you, he fears the Greeks;
'That it is interest, and not love, directs him;
'And that my eyes had greater power o'er you.

Orest. No, princess, no! it is too plain he loves you.
'Your eyes do what they will, and cannot fail
'To gain a conquest, where you wish they should.

Her. What can I do? alas! my faith is promis'd:
Can I refuse what is not mine to give?

A princess is not at her choice to love;

All we have left us is a blind obedience:

And yet, you see, how far I had comply'd,

And made my duty yield to your intreaties.

Orest. Ah, cruel maid! you knew—but I have done.

All have a right to please themselves in love:

I blame not you. 'Tis true, I hop'd;—but you

Are mistress of your heart, and I'm content.

'Tis fortune is my enemy, not you.

But, Madam, I shall spare you farther pain

On this uneasy theme, and take my leave.

[*Ex. Orestes.*]

Her. Cleone, could'st thou think he'd be so calm!

Cleo. Madam, his silent grief sits heavy on him.

He is to be pittied. His too eager love

Has made him busy to his own destruction.

His

His threats have wrought this change of mind in
Pyrrhus.

Her. Dost thou think Pyrrhus capable of fear !
Whom should the intrepid Pyrrhus fear ? The Greeks ?
Did he not lead their harrafs'd troops to conquest
When they despair'd, when they retir'd from Troy,
And fought for shelter in their burning fleets ?
Did he not then supply his father's place ?
No, my Cleone, he is above constraint ;
He acts unforc'd ; and where he weds he loves.

Cleo. Oh, that Orestes had remain'd in Greece !
I fear to-morrow will prove fatal to him.

Her. Wilt thou discourse of nothing but Orestes ?
Pyrrhus is mine again !—Is mine for ever !
Oh, my Cleone ! I am wild with joy !
Pyrrhus, the bold ! the brave ! the godlike Pyrrhus !
—Oh, I could tell thee numberless exploits,
And tire thee with his battles—Oh, Cleone—

Cleo. Madam, conceal your joy—I see Andromache :
She weeps, and comes to speak her sorrows to you.

Her. I would indulge the gladness of my heart !
Let us retire : her grief is out of season.

Enter Andromache, and Cephisa.

Andr. Ah, Madam, whither, whither do you fly ?
Where can your eyes behold a sight more pleasing
Than Hector's widow suppliant and in tears ?
I come not an alarm'd, a jealous foe,
To envy you the heart your charms have won :
The only man I fought to please, is gone ;
Kill'd in my fight, by an inhuman hand.
' Hector first taught me love ; which my fond heart
' Shall ever cherish, till we meet in death.
But, Oh, I have a son !—And you, one day,
Will be no stranger to a mother's fondness :
But Heav'n forbid that you should ever know
A mother's sorrow for an only son.
Her joy, her bliss, her last surviving comfort !
When every hour she trembles for his life !
Your power o'er Pyrrhus may relieve my fears.
Alas, what danger is there in a child,

Sav'd

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Sav'd from the wreck of a whole ruin'd empire ?
 Let me go hide him in some desert isle :
 You may rely upon my tender care
 To keep him far from perils of ambition :
 All he can learn of me, will be to weep !

Her. Madam, 'tis easy to conceive your grief :
 But, it would ill become me, to solicit
 In contradiction to my father's will :
 'Tis he who urges to destroy your son.
 Madam, if Pyrrhus must be wrought to pity,
 No woman does it better than yourself ;
 If you gain him, I shall comply of course.

[*Ex. Her. and Cleone.*]

Andr. Didst thou not mind, with what disdain she
 spoke ?

Youth and prosperity have made her vain ;
 She has not seen the fickle turns of life.

Ceph. Madam, were I as you, I'd take her counsel ?
 I'd speak my own distress : one look from you
 Will vanquish Pyrrhus, and confound the Greeks—
 See, where he comes—Lay hold on this occasion.

Enter Pyrrhus and Phoenix.

Pyr. Where is the princess ?—Did you not in-
 form me

Hermione was here ?

[*To Phoenix.*]

Phœn. I thought so, Sir.

Andr. Thou see'st, what mighty power my eyes have
 on him !

[*To Ceph.*]

Pyr. What says she, Phoenix ?

Andr. I have no hope left !

Phœn. Let us begone :—Hermione expects you.

Ceph. For Heav'n's sake, Madam, break this full
 silence.

Andr. My child's already promis'd !—

Ceph. But not given.

Andr. No, no !—my tears are vain ! His doom
 is fixt !

Pyr. See, if she deigns to cast one look upon us !
 Proud woman !

Andr.

Andr. I provoke him by my presence.
Let us retire.

Pyr. Come let us satisfy
The Greeks; and give them up this Phrygian boy,

Andr. Ah, Sir, recall those words—What have
you said!

If you give up my son, Oh give up me!—
You, who so many times have sworn me friendship:
Oh, Heav'ns!—will you not look with pity on me?
Is there no hope? Is there no room for pardon?

Pyr. Phoenix will answer you: my word is past.

Andr. You, who would brave so many dangers for
me.

Pyr. I was your lover then:—I now am free.
To favour you, I might have spar'd his life:
But you would ne'er vouchsafe to ask it of me.
Now 'tis too late.

Andr. Ah, Sir, you understood
My tears, my wishes, which I durst not utter,
'Afraid of a repulse.' Oh, Sir, excuse
The pride of royal blood, that checks my soul,
You know, alas! I was not born to kneel,
To sue for pity, and to own a master.

Pyr. No! in your heart you curse me! you disdain
My generous flame, and scorn to be oblig'd!

'This very son, this darling of your soul,
'Would be less dear, did I preserve him for you.
'Your anger, your aversion fall on me!
'You hate me more than the whole league of Greece:
But I shall leave you to your great resentments.
Let us go, Phoenix, and appease the Greeks.

Andr. Then, let me die! and let me go to Hector.

Ceph. But, Madam—

Andr. What can I do more? The tyrant
Sees my distraction, and insults my tears. [To Ceph.
—Behold how low you have reduced a queen!
These eyes have seen my country laid in ashes;
My kindred fall in war; my father slain;
My husband dragg'd in his own blood; my son
Condemn'd to bondage, and myself a slave;

Yet,

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Yet, in the midst of those unheard-of woes,
 'Twas some relief to find myself your captive;
 And that my son, deriv'd from ancient kings,
 Since he must serve, had Pyrrhus for his master.
 When Priam kneel'd, the great Achilles wept :
 I hop'd I should not find his son less noble.
 I thought the brave were still the most compassionate.
 Oh, do not, Sir, divide me from my child!
 If he must die——

Pyr. Phoenix, withdraw a while. [*Ex. Phoenix.*
 Rise, Madam—Yet you may preserve your son.
 I find whenever I provoke your tears,
 I furnish you with arms against myself.
 I thought my hatred fixt, before I saw you.
 Oh, turn your eyes upon me, while I speak !
 And see, if you discover in my looks
 An angry judge, or an obdurate foe.
 Why will you force me to desert your cause?
 In your son's name I beg we may be friends ;
 ' Let me entreat you to secure his life !
 ' Must I turn suppliant for him ?' Think, Oh think,
 'Tis the last time, you both may yet be happy !
 I know the ties I break ; the foes I arm :
 I wrong Hermione ; I send her hence ;
 And with her diadem I bind your brows.
 Consider well ; for 'tis of moment to you !
 Choose to be wretched, Madam, or a queen.
 ' My soul, consum'd with a whole year's despair,
 ' Can bear no longer these perplexing doubts ;
 ' Enough of sighs, and tears, and threats I've try'd ;
 ' I know if I'm depriv'd of you, I die :
 ' But Oh, I die, if I wait longer for you !
 I leave you to your thoughts. When I return,
 We'll to the temple : there you'll find your son ;
 And there be crown'd, or give him up for ever.

[*Ex. Pyrrhus.*
Ceph. I told you, Madam, that, in spite of Greece,
 You would o'er-rule the malice of your fortune.

Andr. Alas ! Cephisa, what have I obtain'd !
 Only a poor, short respite for my son.

Ceph.

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Ceph. You have enough approv'd your faith to
To be reluctant still would be a crime. [Hector;
He would himself persuade you to comply.

Andr. How——wouldst thou give me Pyrrhus for
a husband?

Ceph. Think you, 'twill please the ghost of your
dead husband,

That you should sacrifice his son? Consider,
Pyrrhus once more invites you to a throne;
Turns all his power against the foes of Troy;
Remembers not Achilles was his father;
Retracts his conquest, and forgets his hatred.

Andr. But how can I forget it! How can I
Forget my Hector treated with dishonour;
Depriv'd of funeral rites; and vilely dragg'd,
A bloody corse, about the walls of Troy?
Can I forget the good old king his father,
Slain in my presence; at the altar slain!
Which vainly, for protection, he embrac'd?
Hast thou forgot that dreadful night, Cephisa,
When a whole people fell? Methinks I see
Pyrrhus enrag'd, and breathing vengeance, enter
Amidst the glare of burning palaces:
I see him hew his passage through my brothers;
And, bath'd in blood, lay all my kindred waste.
Think, in this scene of horror, what I suffer'd!
This is the courtship I receiv'd from Pyrrhus;
And this the husband thou would'st give me! No,
We both will perish first! I'll ne'er consent.

Ceph. Since you resolve Astyanax shall die,
Haste to the temple, bid your son farewell.
Why do you tremble, Madam?

Andr. O Cephisa!
Thou hast awaken'd all the mother in me.
How can I bid farewell to the dear child,
The pledge, the image of my much-lov'd lord!
' Alas, I call to mind the fatal day,
' When his too forward courage led him forth
' To seek Achilles.

' *Ceph.* Oh, the unhappy hour!

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' 'Twas

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' 'Twas then Troy fell, and all her gods forsook her.

' *Andr.* That morn, Cephisa, that ill-fated morn,

' My husband bid thee bring Astyanax ;

' He took him in his arms ; and, as I wept,

' My wife, my dear Andromache, said he,

' (Heaving with stifled sighs to see me weep)

' What fortune may attend my arms, the gods

' Alone can tell. To thee I give the boy ;

' Preserve him, as the token of our loves ;

' If I should fall, let him not miss his fire

' While thou surviv'st ; but by thy tender care

' Let the son see, that thou didst love his father.

' *Ceph.* And will you throw away a life so precious ?

' *Andr.* Inhuman king ! What has he done to suffer ?

' If I neglect your vows, is he to blame ?

' Has he reproach'd you with his slaughter'd kindred ?

' Can he resent those ills he does not know ?

But, Oh ! while I deliberate he dies.

No, on, thou must not die, while I can save thee :

Oh ! let me find out Pyrrhus—Oh, Cephisa !

Do thou go find him.

Ceph. What must I say to him ?

Andr. Tell him I love my son to such excess—

But dost thou think he means the child shall die ?

Can love rejected turn to so much rage ?

Ceph. Madam, he'll soon be here—Resolve on something.

Andr. Well then, assure him—

Ceph. Madam, of your love ?

Andr. Alas, thou know'st that is not in my power.

Oh, my dead lord ! Oh, Priam's royal house !

Oh, my Astyanax ! at what a price

Thy mother buys thee !—Let us go.

Ceph. But whither ?

And what does your unsettled heart resolve ?

Andr. Come, my Cephisa, let us go together,

To the sad monument which I have rais'd

To Hector's shade ; where in their sacred urn

The ashes of my hero lie inclos'd ;

The

The dear remains, which I have sav'd from Troy;
 There let me weep, there summon to my aid,
 With pious rites, my Hector's awful shade;
 Let him be witness to my doubts, my fears:
 My agonizing heart, my flowing tears:
 Oh! may he rise in pity from his tomb,
 And fix his wretched son's uncertain doom.

END of the THIRD ACT.

A C T IV.

Andromache, Cephisa.

CEPHISA

- B**EST be the tomb of Hector, that inspires
 ' These pious thoughts : or is it Hector's self,
 ' That prompts you to preserve your son ! 'Tis he
 ' Who still presides o'er ruin'd Troy ; 'tis he
 ' Who urges Pyrrhus to restore Astyanax.
 ' *Andr.* Pyrrhus has said he will ; and thou hast
 heard him
 ' Just now renew the oft-repeated promise.
 ' *Ceph.* Already in the transports of his heart,
 ' He gives you up his kingdom, his allies,
 ' And thinks himself o'erpaid for all in you.
 ' *Andr.* I think I may rely upon his promise :
 ' And yet my heart is over-charg'd with grief.
 ' *Ceph.* Why should you grieve ! You see he bids
 defiance
 ' To all the Greeks ; and to protect your son
 ' Against their rage, has plac'd his guards about him ;
 ' Leaving himself defenceless for his sake :
 ' But, Madam, think, the coronation pomp
 ' Will soon demand your presence in the temple :
 ' 'Tis time you lay aside these mourning weeds.

E 2

' *Andr.*

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‘ *Andr.* I will be there ; but first would see my son.

‘ *Ceph.* Madam, you need not now be anxious for him,

‘ He will be always with you, all your own,

‘ To lavish the whole mother’s fondness on him.

‘ What a delight to train beneath your eye,

‘ A son, who grows no longer up in bondage ?

‘ A son, in whom a race of kings revive :

‘ But, Madam, you are sad, and wrapt in thought,

‘ As if you relish’d not your happiness.

‘ *Andr.* Oh, I must see my son once more, Cephisa !

‘ *Ceph.* Madam, he now will be no more a captive ;

‘ Your visits may be frequent as you please.

‘ To-morrow you may pass the live-long day——

‘ *And.* To-morrow ! Oh, Cephisa !—But, no more !

‘ Cephisa, I have always found thee faithful :

‘ A load of care weighs down my drooping heart.

‘ *Ceph.* Oh ! that ’twere possible for me to ease you.

‘ *Andr.* I soon shall exercise thy long try’d faith.—

‘ Mean while I do conjure thee, my Cephisa,

‘ Thou take no notice of my present trouble :

‘ And when I shall disclose my secret purpose,

‘ That thou be punctual to perform my will.

‘ *Ceph.* Madam, I have no will but yours. My life

‘ Is nothing, balanc’d with my love to you.

‘ *Andr.* I thank thee good Cephisa, my Astyanax

‘ Will recompense thy friendship to his mother.

‘ But, come ; my heart’s at ease : assist me now

‘ To change this sable habit.—Yonder comes

Hermione ; I would not meet her rage.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter Hermione, Cleone.

Cleo. This unexpected silence, this reserve,
This outward calm, this settled frame of mind,
After such wrongs and insults, much surprize me !
You, who before could not command your rage,
When Pyrrhus look’d but kindly on his captive ;
How can you bear unmov’d, that he should wed her ?
And

And seat her on a throne which you should fill?
I fear this dreadful stillness in your soul!

'Twere better, Madam—

Her. Have you call'd Orestes?

Cleo. Madam, I have; his love is too impatient
Not to obey with speed the welcome summons.
His love-sick heart o'erlooks his unkind usage:
His ardour's still the same—Madam, he's here.

Enter Orestes.

Ah, Madam, is it true? Does, then, Orestes
At length attend you by your own commands?
What can I do—

Her. Orestes, do you love me?

Orest. What means that question, princess? Do I
love you?

My oaths, my perjuries, my hopes, my fears,
My farwel, my return, all speak my love.

Her. Avenge my wrongs, and I believe them all.

Orest. It shall be done—my soul has catch'd the
alarm,

We'll spirit up the Greeks—I'll lead them on—
Your cause shall animate our fleets and armies,
Let us return: let us not lose a moment,
But urge the fate of this devoted land:
Let us depart:

Her. No prince, let us stay here!
I will have vengeance here—I will not carry
This load of infamy to Greece, nor trust
The chance of war to vindicate my wrongs.
Ere I depart I'll make Epirus mourn.
If you avenge me, let it be this instant;
My rage brooks no delay—haste to the temple,
Haste, prince, and sacrifice him.

Orest. Whom!

Her. Why Pyrrhus.

Orest. Pyrrhus! Did you say, Pyrrhus!

Her. You demur!

Oh fly, begone! give me no time to think!
Talk not of laws—he tramples on all laws—
Let me not hear him justify'd—away.

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Orest. You cannot think I'll justify my rival.
 Madam, your love has made him criminal.
 You shall have vengeance ; I'll have vengeance too :
 But let our hatred be profest and open :
 Let us alarm all Greece, denounce a war ;
 Let us attack him in his strength, and hunt him down
 By conquest : should I turn base assassin,
 'Twould sully all the kings I represent.

Her. Have I not been dishonour'd ! set at nought !
 Expos'd to public scorn !——and will you suffer
 The tyrant, who dares to use me thus, to live ?
 Know, prince, I hate him more than once I lov'd him.
 The gods alone can tell how once I lov'd him ;
 Yes, the false perjur'd man, I once did love him ;
 And spite of all his crimes and broken vows,
 If he should live, I may relapse—who knows
 But I to-morrow may forgive his wrongs ?

Orest. First let me tear him piece-meal—he shall die.
 But, Madam, give me leisure to contrive
 The place, the time, the manner of his death ;
 Yet I'm a stranger in the court of Pyrrhus ;
 Scarce have I set my foot within Epirus,
 When you enjoin me to destroy the prince.
 It shall be done this very night.

Her. But now,
 This very hour, he weds Andromache ;
 The temple shines with pomp ; the golden throne
 Is now prepar'd ; the joyful rites begin ;
 My shame is public—Oh, be speedy, prince !
 My wrath's impatient—Pyrrhus lives too long !
 Intent on love, and heedless of his person,
 He covers with his guards the Trojan boy.
 Now is the time ; assemble all your Greeks ;
 Mine shall assist them ; let their fury loose :
 Already they regard him as a foe.
 Begone, Orestes—kill the faithless tyrant :
 My love shall recompense the glorious deed.

Orest. Consider, Madam——

Her. You but mock my rage !
 I was contriving how to make you happy.

Think

Think you to merit by your idle sighs,
And not attest your love by one brave action ?
Go, with your boasted constancy ! and leave
Hermione to execute her own revenge !
I blush to think how my too easy faith
Has twice been baffled in one shameful hour !

Orest. Hear me but speak !——you know I'll die to
serve you !

Her. I'll go myself : I'll stab him at the altar ;
Then drive the poniard, reeking with his blood,
Through my own heart. In death we shall unite :
Better to die with him, than live with you !

Orest. That were to make him blest ; and me more
wretched :

Madam, he dies by me :—Have you a foe,
And shall I let him live ? My rival, too ?
Ere yon meridian sun declines, he dies :
And you shall say, that I deserve your love.

Her. Go prince ; strike home ! and leave the rest
to me ;

Let all your ships stand ready for our flight.

[*Ex. Orestes.*]

Cleo. Madam, you'll perish in this bold attempt.

Her. Give me my vengeance, I'm content to perish,
I was to blame to trust it with another ;
In my own hands it had been more secure.
Orestes hates not *Pyrrhus*, as I hate him :

‘ I should have thrust the dagger home ; have seen
‘ The tyrant curse me with his parting breath,
‘ And roll about his dying eyes, in vain,
‘ To find *Andromache*, whom I would hide.

Oh, would *Orestes*, when he gives the blow,
Tell him he dies my victim !—Haste, *Cleone* ;
Charge him to say, *Hermione's* resentments,
Not those of Greece, have sentenc'd him to death.
Haste, my *Cleone* ! My revenge is lost,
If *Pyrrhus* knows not that he dies by me !

Cleo. I shall obey your orders——But see
The King approach !—Who could expect him here.

Her. O fly ! *Cleone*, fly ! and bid *Orestes*

Not

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Not to proceed a step before I see him.

[*Ex.* Cleone.

Enter Pyrrhus.

Pyr. Madam, I ought to shun an injur'd princess:
Your distant looks reproach me: and I come
Not to defend, but to avow my guilt.
Pyrrhus will ne'er approve his own injustice;
Nor form excuses, while his heart condemns him.
• I might perhaps alledge, our warlike fires,
• Unknown to us, engag'd us to each other,
• And join'd our hearts by contract, not by love;
• But I detest such cobweb arts, I own
• My father's treaty, and allow its force.
• I sent ambassadors to call you hither;
• Receiv'd you as my queen; and hop'd my oaths
• So oft renew'd might ripen into love.
• The gods can witness, Madam, how I fought
• Against Andromache's too fatal charms!
• And still I wish I had the power to leave
• This Trojan beauty, and be just to you.
Discharge your anger on this perjur'd man!
For I abhor my crime! and should be pleas'd
To hear you speak your wrongs aloud: no terms,
No bitterness of wrath, nor keen reproach,
Will equal half the upbraidings of my heart.

Her. I find, Sir, you can be sincere: you scorn
To act your crimes with fear, like other men.
A hero should be bold; above all laws;
Be bravely false; and laugh at solemn ties.
To be perfidious shews a daring mind!
And you have nobly triumph'd o'er a maid!
To court me; to reject me; to return;
Then to forsake me for a Phrygian slave:
To lay proud Troy in ashes; then to raise
The son of Hector, and renounce the Greeks,
Are actions worthy the great soul of Pyrrhus.

Pyr. Madam, go on: give your resentments birth;
And pour forth all your indignation on me.

Her.

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Her. 'Twould please your queen, should I upbraid
your falshood ;

Call you perfidious, traitor, all the names
That injur'd virgins lavish on your sex ;
I should o'erflow with tears, and die with grief,
And furnish out a tale to soothe her pride ;
But, Sir, I would not over-charge her joys.
If you would charm Andromache, recount
Your bloody battles, your exploits, your slaughters,
Your great achievements, in her father's palace.
She needs must love the man, who fought so bravely,
And in her fight slew half her royal kindred.

Pyr. With horror I look back on my past deeds !
I punish'd Helen's wrongs too far ; I shed
Too much of blood : but, Madam, Helen's daughter
Should not object those ills the mother caus'd.
However I am pleas'd to find you hate me :
I was too forward to accuse myself :
The man who ne'er was lov'd, can ne'er be false.
Obedience to a father brought you hither ;
And I stood bound by promise to receive you :
But our desires were different ways inclin'd ;
And you, I own were not oblig'd to love me.

Her. Have I not lov'd you, then ! perfidious man !
For you I slighted all the Grecian princes ;
Forsook my father's house ; conceal'd my wrongs,
When most provok'd : would not return to Sparta,
In hopes that time might fix your wavering heart,
I loved you when inconstant : and even now,
Inhuman king, that you pronounce my death,
My heart still doubts, if I should love, or hate you ;
But, Oh, since you resolve to wed another,
Defer your cruel purpose till to-morrow !
That I may not be here to grace your triumph !
This is the last request I e'er shall make you——
See if the barbarous prince vouchsafes an answer !
Go, then, to the lov'd Phrygian ! hence ! begone !
And bear to her those vows, that once were mine :
Go, in defiance to the avenging gods !

B.

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Begone! the priest expects you at the altar—
But, tyrant, have a care I come not thither.

[*Ex. Her.*

Enter Phœnix.

Pbæ. Sir, did you mind her threats? your life's in danger;

There is no trifling with a woman's rage.
The Greeks that swarm about the court, all hate you;
Will treat you as their country's enemy,
And join in her revenge: besides, Orestes
Still loves her to distraction: Sir I beg—

Pyr. How, Phœnix, should I fear a woman's threats?
A nobler passion takes up all my thought:
I must prepare to meet Andromache.
Do thou place all my guards about her son:
If he be safe, Pyrrhus is free from fear.

[*Ex. Pyrrhus.*

Phœnix, alone.

Oh, Pyrrhus! oh what pity 'tis, the gods,
Who fill'd thy soul with every kingly virtue,
Form'd thee for empire and consummate greatness,
Should leave thee so expos'd to wild desires,
That hurry thee beyond the bounds of reason!

[*A flourish of Trumpets.*

' Such was Achilles; generous, fierce, and brave;
' Open and undesigning: but impatient,
' Undisciplin'd, and not to be controul'd:
' I fear this whirl of passion, this career,
' That over-bears reflection and cool thought;
' I tremble for the event!'—But see, the queen,
Magnificent in royal pride, appears.
I must obey, and guard her son from danger.

[*Ex. Phœ.*

Enter Andromache, and Cephisæ.

Ceph. Madam, once more you look and move a queen!
Your sorrows are dispers'd, your charms revive,
And

And every faded beauty blooms anew.

Andr. Yet all is not as I could wish, Cephisa.

Ceph. You see the king so watchful o'er your son;
Decks him with princely robes, with guards surrounds
Astyanax begins to reign already. [him.

Andr. Pyrrhus is nobly minded: and I fain
Would live to thank him for Astyanax:
'Tis a vain thought—However, since my child
Has such a friend, I ought not to repine.

' *Ceph.* These dark unfoldings of your soul perplex me.

' What meant those floods of tears, those warm em-
' As if you bid your son adieu for ever? [braces,
For Heav'n's sake, Madam, let me know your griefs!
If you mistrust my faith—

Andr. That were to wrong thee.

Oh, my Cephisa! this gay, borrow'd air,
This blaze of jewels, and this bridal dress,
Are but mock-trappings to conceal my woe:
My heart still mourns; I still am Hector's widow.

Ceph. Will you then break the promise giv'n to Pyrrhus;

Blow up his rage afresh, and blast your hopes?

Andr. I thought, Cephisa, thou hadst known thy mistress.

Could'st thou believe I would be false to Hector?

Fall off from such a husband! break his rest,

And call him to this hated light again,

To see Andromache in Pyrrhus' arms?

' Would Hector, were he living, and I dead,

' Forget Andromache, and wed her foe?

Ceph. I cannot guess what drift your thoughts pursue;

But, oh, I fear there's something dreadful in it!

Must then Astyanax be doom'd to die;

And you to linger out a life in bondage?

' *Andr.* Nor this, nor that, Cephisa, will I bear;

' My word is past to Pyrrhus, his to me;

' And I rely upon his promis'd faith.

' Unequal as he is, I know him well:

' Pyrrhus is violent, but he's sincere,

' And

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- And will perform beyond what he has sworn,
- The Greeks will but incense him more ; their rage
- Will make him cherish Hector's son.
- *Ceph.* Ah, Madam !
- Explain these riddles to my boding heart!
- *Andr.* Thou may'st remember, for thou oft hast heard me

- Relate the dreadful vision, which I saw,
- When first I landed captive in Epirus.
- That very night, as in a dream I lay,
- A ghastly figure, full of gaping wounds,
- His eyes aglare, his hair all stiff with blood,
- Full in my sight thrice shook his head, and groan'd
- I soon discern'd my slaughter'd Hector's shade ;
- But, Oh, how chang'd ! Ye gods, how much unlike
- The living Hector !——Loud he bid me fly !
- Fly from Achilles' son ! then sternly frown'd,
- And disappear'd: struck with the dreadful sound,
- I started and awak'd.

- *Ceph.* But did he bid you
- Destroy Astyanax ?

• *Andr.* Cephisa, I'll preserve him ;
 With my own life, Cephisa, I'll preserve him.

- *Ceph.* What may these words, so full of horror,
 mean ?

Andr. Know then the secret purpose of my soul :
 Andromache will not be false to Pyrrhus,
 Nor violate her sacred love to Hector.
 This hour I'll meet the king ; the holy priest
 Shall join us, and confirm our mutual vows :
 This will secure a father to my child :
 That done, I have no further use for life :
 This pointed dagger, this determin'd hand,
 Shall save my virtue, and conclude my woes.

- *Ceph.* Ah, Madam ! recollect your scatter'd reason ;

- This fell despair ill suits your present fortunes.
- *And.* No other stratagem can serve my purpose :
- This is the sole expedient to be just
- To Hector, to Astyanx, to Pyrrhus,
- I shall soon visit Hector, and the shades

Of

Wilt lend a hand to close thy mistress' eyes.

Ceph. Oh, never think that I will stay behind you!

Andr. No, my Cephisa; I must have thee live.

- Remember, thou didst promise to obey,
- And to be secret; wilt thou now betray me?
- After thy long, thy faithful service, wilt thou
- Refuse my last commands, my dying wish?
- Once more I do conjure thee live for me.

• *Ceph.* Life is not worth my care when you are

Andr. I must commit into thy faithful hands [gone.

All that is dear and precious to my soul:

Live, and supply my absence to my child;

All that remains of Troy; a future progeny

Of heroes, and a distant line of kings,

In him, is all intrusted to thy care.

• *Ceph.* But, Madam, what will be the rage of Pyr-

- Defrauded of his promis'd happiness? [rhus,

• *Andr.* That will require thy utmost skill: Ob-

- The first impetuous onsets of his grief; [serve

• Use ev'ry artifice to keep him stedfast.

• Sometimes with tears thou mayst discourse of me;

• Speak of our marriage; let him think I lov'd him;

• Tell him my soul repos'd itself on him,

• When I resign'd my son to his protection.

Ceph. Oh, for a spirit to support my grief!

Is there ought more before you go for ever?

Andr. Oh, my Cephisa! my sworn heart is full!

I have a thousand farewells to my son:

But tears break in!—Grief interrupts my speech—

My soul o'erflows in fondness—Let him know

I dy'd to save him:—'And would die again.'

Season his mind with early hints of glory;

Make him acquainted with his ancestors;

Trace out their shining story in his thoughts;

Dwell on th' exploits of his immortal father,

And sometimes let him hear his mother's name.

• Let him reflect upon his royal birth,

• With modest pride; Pyrrhus will prove a friend:

• But let him know he has a conqueror's right.

He must be taught to stifle his resentments,

And sacrifice his vengeance to his safety.

50 *The* DISTREST MOTHER.

Should he prove headstrong, rash, or unadvis'd,
He then will frustrate all his mother's virtue,
Provoke his fate, and I shall die in vain.

Ceph. Alas, I fear I never shall outlive you !

Andr. No more :—thy tears, Cephisa, will betray
Assume a chearful look : but still remember— [me ;
[*Flourish within.*

Hark how the trumpet, with its sprightly notes,
Proclaims the appointed hour, and calls us hence.
Hector, I come, once more a queen, to join thee !
Thus the gay victim, with fresh garlands crown'd.
Pleas'd with the sacred fife's enliv'ning sound,
Through gazing crouds in solemn state proceeds,
Andrest in fatal pomp magnificently bleeds. [*Exeunt.*

END of the FOURTH ACT.

A C T V.

Hermione alone.

WHAT have I done? Where am I? Where is
Pyrrhus?

Ye Gods! what mean these horrors?—I'm undone!

My soul is on the rack!—I cannot bear it!—

Why do I wander like some guilty ghost?

What brought me to this place? What keeps me here?

The court of Pyrrhus has no room for me!

Do I still doubt if I should love or hate him?

Hard hearted man! how unconcern'd he left me!

Did he once sigh? Bestow one pitying look?

Once shed a tear? or speak one soft kind word?

Did he so much as feign one moment's sorrow,

To calm my griefs, and mitigate his falsehood?—

Why am I still thus anxious for his life?

Why do I start at his impending fate?

Shall he then live? Shall the base traitor live

To laugh at my distress? No, let him perish!

Be quick, Orestes?—Execute my orders!

Alas! my orders! Oh, preposterous guilt!

Can I decree the death of him I love ?
Was it for this my soul delighted in him ?
Was it for this I left my father's court ?
Have I then cross'd so many realms and seas
To murder Pyrrhus ?

Enter Cleone.

Her. Oh, Cleone, help me !
What have I done ? Is Pyrrhus yet alive ?
What say'st thou ?—Answer me : Where is the king ?

Cleo. Madam ! I saw the cruel prince set forward,
Triumphant in his looks, and full of joy.
Still as he walk'd his ravish'd eyes were fixt
On the fair captive ; while through shouting crowds
She pass'd along with a dejected air,
And seem'd to mourn her Hector to the last.

Her. Insulting tyrant ! I shall burst with rage !—
But say, Cleone, didst thou mark him well ?
Was his brow smooth ? Say, did there not appear
Some shade of grief ; some little cloud of sorrow ?
Did he not stop ? Did he not once look back ?
Didst thou approach him ? Was he not confounded ?
Did he not——Oh, be quick and tell me all !

Cleo. Madam, the tumult of his joy admits
No thought but love. Unguarded he march'd on,
'Midst a promiscuous throng of friends and foes.
His cares all turn upon Astyanax,
Whom he has lodg'd within the citadel,
Defended by the strength of all his guards. [*Orestes* ?

Her. Enough !—he dies !—the traitor ?—Where's

Cleo. He's in the temple with his whole retinue.

Her. Is he still resolute ? Is he still determin'd ?

Cleo. Madam, I fear——

Her. How !—Is Orestes false ?
Does he betray me too ?

Cleo. A thousand doubts
Perplex his soul and wound him with remorse :
His virtue and his love prevail by turns.
He told me Pyrrhus should not fall ignobly :
Pyrrhus, the warlike son of great Achilles.
He dreads the censure of the Grecian states ;
Of all mankind ; and fears to stain his honour.

Her.

52 *The DISTREST MOTHER.*

Her. Poor tim'rous wretch ! 'tis false ! he basely
To cope with dangers, and encounter death : [fears
'Tis that he fears :—Am I bright Helen's daughter ?
To vindicate her wrongs all Greece conspir'd ;
For her confederate nations fought, and kings were
Troy was o'erthrown, and a whole empire fell. [slain ;
My eyes want force to raise a lover's arm
Against a tyrant that has dar'd to wrong me.

Cleo. Madam, like Helen, trust your cause to Greece.

Her. No ; I'll avenge myself ; I'll to the temple ;
I'll overturn the altar, stab the priest :
I'll hurl destruction like a whirlwind round me !
They must not wed ! they must not live ! they shall
Let me be gone ! I have no time to lose ! [not !
Stand off ! hold me not ! I am all distraction !
Oh, Pyrrhus ! Tyrant ! Traitor ! Thou shalt bleed.

Enter Orestes.

Orest. Madam, 'tis done ; your orders are obey'd :
The tyrant lies expiring at the altar.

Her. Is Pyrrhus slain ?

Orest. Even now he gasps in death.
Our Greeks all undistinguish'd in the crowd,
Flock'd to the temple, and dispers'd themselves
On every side the altar : I was there ;
Pyrrhus observ'd me with a haughty eye,
And, proud to triumph over Greece in me,
From his own brows he took the diadem
And bound it on the temples of his captive :
Receive, said he, my crown ; receive my faith ;
Mine and my people's sovereign reign for ever.
From this blest hour, a father to your son ;
I'll scourge his foes : henceforward be he styl'd
The Trojan king ; ' I swear it at the altar,
' And call the gods to ratify my vows.
His subjects with loud acclamations shook
The spacious dome. Our Greeks, enrag'd, cried out,
Revenge ! Revenge ! broke thro' the thronging press,
And rush'd tumultuous on the unguarded king.
' Their eager fury left no work for me.
Pyrrhus a-while oppos'd their clashing swords,
And dealt his fatal blows on ev'ry side

With

The DISTREST MOTHER. 53

With manly fierceness; till oppress'd by numbers,
Streaming with blood, all over gash'd with wounds,
He reel'd, he groan'd, and at the altar fell —
Haste, Madam; let us fly! Haste to our ships!
They lie unmoor'd: our friends attend us there.

Her. What have they done!

Orest. Madam, forgive their rage.

I own your vengeance had been more compleat,
Had Pyrrhus fall'n by me, and had he known
Hermione chastis'd him by my arm

Her. Peace, monster, peace! Go tell thy horrid
To savages, and howl it in the deserts. [tale

Would'st thou impute to me thy barb'rous guilt?
Me would'st thou make th' accomplice of thy crimes?
Hence to thy Greeks, and boast thy foul exploits!
My soul abhors them! I disclaim the deed!

Begone! I know thee not! Thou fell barbarian!
What had he done? What could provoke thy madness
To assassinate so great, so brave a man?
Who set thee on?

Orest. Oh, grant me patience, heav'n!
With your own lips did you not curse the tyrant,
Pronounce his death, and urge me to destroy him?

Her. What if, transported by my boundless passion,
I could not bear to see him wed another?
Were you to obey a jealous woman's phrenzy?
You shou'd have div'd into my inmost thoughts:
My heart, tho' full of rage, was free from malice;
And all my anger was excess of love.

Why did you take me at my word? You saw
The struggles of my soul; you heard me rave;
You should have question'd me a thousand times;
Yet still have doubted, and still question'd on,
Before you ventur'd on a life so precious. [my will—

Orest. Hear me but speak: Heaven knows, against

Her. Why did you not return? Why not consult
A second time? And, undetermin'd still, [me,
Again return, and still find new delays? [hounds!
What had your rash officious Greeks, dire blood-
To do with my revenge? What drew you hither?
To bring on me the vengeful woes that haunt you?

54 *The* DISTREST MOTHER.

Are these the fruits of your detested love ?
Your fatal embassy, your hateful presence,
Drove Pyrrhus to my rival ; and destroys
Both him and me. He might have lov'd me still,
Had you ne'er interpos'd——Avaunt ! Be gone !
And leave me in Epirus. I renounce
My friends, my country, Greece, and all mankind :
But chiefly I renounce thee ! monster, thee : [*Exit.*

Orest. Am I awake ? Where am I ? Soft, my soul ;
Be not too rash.—Was that Hermione ?
Why should her anger thunder against me ?
Was not this blood shed all by her command ?—
I am, indeed, a most outrageous monster !
A ruffian, murderer, a base assassin !
And all to please a false, ungrateful woman.
Henceforward let the laws of nations cease ;
And let the pale, that severs right and wrong,
Things sacred and profane, be broken down ;
Gods in their temples, kings upon their thrones,
Are not in safety, while Orestes lives.
Oh, never more shall my torn mind be heal'd,
Nor taste the gentle comforts of repose !
A dreadful band of gloomy cares surround me,
And lay strong siege to my distracted soul.

Enter Pylades, attended by Greeks.

Pyl. Haste, prince ; let us be gone : 'tis death to
Andromache reigns queen : she gives the alarm, [*stay.*
And vows revenge upon the foes of Pyrrhus.
The people arm and muster in the streets :
Our Greeks will not be able long to guard
The palace gates, and to secure our flight.
We must be speedy, Sir.

Orest. You may depart,
My friends——Hermione and I remain——
Her cruelty has quite undone me !——' Go

• And leave me to myself——I'll find her out.

Pyl. Alas, unhappy princess ! she's no more ;

• Forget her, Sir, and save yourself with us.

Orest. Hermione no more !—Oh, all ye powers !

Pyl. Full of disorder, wildness in her looks,
With hands expanded, and dishevell'd hair,

Breath-

Breathless and pale, with shrieks she fought the tem-
In the mid-way she met the corps of Pyrrhus; [ple;
She startled at the sight; then, stiff with horror,
Gaz'd frightful: waken'd from the dire amaze,
She rais'd her eyes to heav'n with such a look
As spoke her sorrows, and reproach'd the gods:
Then plung'd a poniard deep within her breast,
And fell on Pyrrhus, grasping him in death.

Orest. I thank you, gods—I never could expect
To be so wretched—You have been industrious
To finish your decrees; to make Orestes
A dreadful instance of your power to punish;
I'm singled out to bear the wrath of heav'n.

Pyl. You hazard your retreat by these delays.
The guards will soon beset us. Your complaints
Are vain, and may be fatal.

Orest. True, my friend:
And therefore 'twas I thank'd the bounteous gods.
My fate's accomplish'd—I shall die content.
Oh, bear me hence—blow, winds!—

Pyl. Let us be gone. [call !

Orest. The murder'd lovers wait me—Hark, they
Nay, if your blood still reeks, I'll mingle mine:
One tomb will hold us all,

Pyl. Alas! I fear
His ravings will return with his misfortunes.

Orest. I am dizzy!—Clouds!—Quite lost in utter
darkness!

Guide me, some friendly pilot, through the storm.
I shiver! Oh, I freeze!—So:—Light returns;
'Tis the grey dawn—See, Pylades!—Behold!—
I am encompass'd with a sea of blood!—
The crimson billows!—Oh! my brain's on fire!

Pyl. How is it, Sir?—Repose yourself on me.

Orest. Pyrrhus, stand off!—What would'st thou?—
How he glares!

What envious hand has clos'd thy wounds?—Have at
It is Hermione that strikes—Confusion! [thee.
She catches Pyrrhus in her arms.—Oh, save me!
How terrible she looks! She knits her brow!

She

56 *The* DISTREST MOTHER.

She frowns me dead ! She frights me into madness !
Where am I ?—Who are you ?

Pyl. Alas, poor prince !

‘ Help to support him.—How he pants for breath !

Orest. This is most kind, my Pylades—Oh, why,
Why was I born to give thee endless trouble ?

Pyl. All will go well ; he settles into reason.

Orest. Who talks of reason ? Better to have none
Than not enough.—Run, some one, tell my Greeks,
I will not have them touch the king.—Now—now
I blaze again !—See there !—Look where they come ;
A shoal of furies—How they swarm about me !—
My terror !—Hide me !—Oh, their snaky locks !
Hark, how they hiss !—See, see their flaming brands !
Now they let drive full at me !—How they grin,
And shake their iron whips !—My ears ! what yelling !
And see, Hermione !—she sets them on—
Thrust not your scorpions thus into my bosom !
Oh !—I am stung to death !—Dispatch me soon !
There—Take my heart, Hermione !—Tear it out !
Disjoint me ! kill me ! Oh, my tortur’d soul !—

Pyl. Kind heav’n restore him to his wonted calm !
Oft have I seen him rave : but never thus :
Quite spent !—Assist me, friends, to bear him off.
Our time is short : should his strong rage return,
’Twould be beyond our power to force him hence.
Away, my friends ! I hear the portal open. [*Ex.*

Enter Phoenix, attended by Guards.

Phæn. All, all are fled !—Orestes is not here—
Triumphant villains !—The base, giddy rabble,
Whose hands should all have been employ’d with fire,
To waste the steer, flock’d round the dying princess ;
And, while they stand agaze, the Greeks embark.
Oh, ’tis too plain !—this sacrilegious murder
Was authoriz’d.—Th’ ambassador’s escape
Declares his guilt.—Most bloody embassy !
Most unexampled deed !—Where, where, ye gods,
Is majesty secure, if in your temples
You give it no protection !—See the queen.

[*A Flourish of Trumpets.*
Enter

The DISTREST MOTHER. 57

Enter Andromache and Cephisa.

Andr. Yes, ye inhuman Greeks ! the time will come
When you shall dearly pay your bloody deeds !
How should the Trojans hope for mercy from you,
When thus you turn your impious rage on Pyrrhus ;
Pyrrhus, the bravest man in all your league ;
The man whose single valour made you triumph.

[A dead March behind.]

Is my child there ?——

Ceph. It is the corps of Pyrrhus.
The weeping soldiers bear him on their shields.

Andr. Ill-fated prince ! too negligent of life :
And too unwary of the faithless Greeks !
Cut off in the fresh rip'ning prime of manhood,
Even in the pride of life : thy triumphs new,
And all thy glories in full blossom round thee !
The very Trojans would bewail thy fate.

Ceph. Alas, then, will your sorrows never end !

Andr. Oh, never, never !—While I live, my tears
Will never cease ; for I was born to grieve.——
Give present orders for the fun'ral pomp : *[To Phœn.]*
Let him be rob'd in all his regal state ;
Place round him ev'ry shining mark of honour :
And let the pile, that consecrates his ashes,
Rise like his fame, and blaze above the clouds.

[A Flourish of Trumpets.]

Ceph. That sound proclaims th' arrival of the prince,
The guards conduct him from the citadel.

Andr. With open arms I'll meet him !—Oh, Ce-
A springing joy, mixt with a soft concern, *[phisa !]*
A pleasure which no language can express,
An extacy that mothers only feel,
Plays round my heart, and brightens up my sorrow,
Like gleams of sunshine in a low'ring sky.

Though plung'd in ills, and exercis'd in care,
Yet never let the noble mind despair :
When prest by dangers and beset with foes,
The gods their timely succour interpose ;
And when our virtue sinks, o'erwhelm'd with grief,
By unforeseen expedients brings relief.

END of the FIFTH ACT.

E P I L O G U E.

Written by Mr. Budgell of the Inner Temple.

Spoken by ANDROMACHE.

I Hope you'll own, that with becoming art,
I've play'd my game, and topp'd the widow's part.
My spouse, poor man, could not live out the play,
But dy'd commodiously on wedding-day;
While I, his reliēt, made at one bold sting,
Myself a princess, and young Sty a king.

You, ladies, who protract a lover's pain,
And bear your servants sigh whole years in vain;
Which of you all would not on marriage venture,
Might she so soon upon her jointure enter?

'Twas a strange scape! had Pyrrhus liv'd till now,
I had been finely hamper'd in my vow.

To die by one's own hand, and fly the charms
Of love and life in a young monarch's arms!

'Twere an hard fate——ere I had undergone it,
I might have took one night——to think upon it.

But why, you'll say, was all this grief express'd
For a first husband, laid long since at rest?

Why so much coldness to my kind protector?

—Ah, ladies! had you known the good man Hector!

Homer will tell you, (or I'm misinform'd,)

That, when enrag'd, the Grecian camp he storm'd;

To break the ten-fold barriers of the gate,

He threw a stone of such prodigious weight

As no two men could lift, not even of those,

Who in that age of thund'ring mortals rose:

—It would have sprain'd a dozen modern beaux.

At length, however, I laid my weeds aside,
And sunk the widow in the well-dress'd bride.

In you it still remains to grace the play,

And bless with joy my coronation day;

Take, then, ye circles of the brave and fair,

The fatherless and widow to your care.

F I N I S.

The Binder

Is desired to take Notice that
there is no Signature C to this
Play ; but the Sheets follow
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