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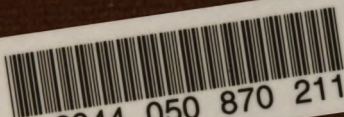
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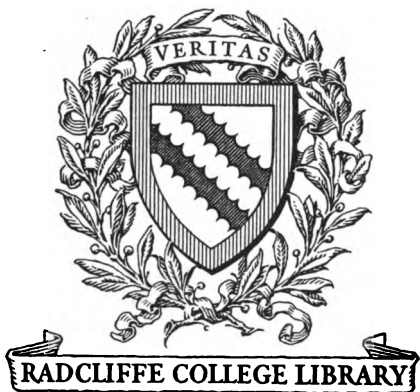


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IN MEMORY OF BESSIE HINCKS
BORN APRIL 11, 1865 · DIED JULY 5, 1885

B E L L's

BRITISH THEATRE,

Consisting of the most esteemed

ENGLISH PLAYS.

VOLUME THE SIXTEENTH.

Being the Eighth VOLUME of TRAGEDIES.

CONTAINING

ELECTRA, by LEW. THEOBALD.

AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER, by N. ROWE.

EDWARD the BLACK PRINCE, by WILLIAM
SHIRLEY, Esq.

BUSIRIS, by Dr. YOUNGE.

EURYDICE, by Mr. MALLET.

L O N D O N:

Printed for JOHN BELL, near *Exeter Exchange*,
in the *Strand*.

MDCCCLXXVII.

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J. Roberts del.

Published for Dicks Drigh Theatre Oct 6th 1777.

Thomson and Kemp

M^{rs} YATES in the Character of ELECTRA.

*O dear memorial of my dearest friend,
Ye scanty Reliques of Orestes, Oh!*

LL'S EDITION.

E C T R A.

A TRAGEDY,

from SOPHOCLES; with Notes,

By Mr. THEOBALD.

DISTINGUISHING ALSO THE

ATIONS OF THE THEATRE,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane.

Regulated from the Prompt-Book,

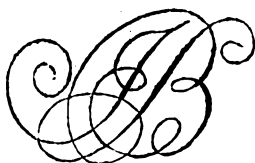
PERMISSION of the MANAGERS,

By Mr. HOPKINS, Prompter.

Ως ἐν δόλῳ κλεινὰς ἀνδρᾶ τίμιον,
Δόλῳ τε καὶ ληρωσὶν ἐν ταυτῷ βρόχῳ
Θανόντες, ἢ καὶ Δοξίας ἰφθίμοισιν,

Ἄναξ Ἀπόλλων, μάστιγ' ἀψευδῆς, τὸ πρῶτον.

Æschyl. in Cœph.



L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN BELL, near *Exeter-Exchange*, in the *Strand*.

MDCCLXXVII.



J. Roberts del.

Published for Dells British Theatre Oct. 6th 1777.

Thornthwaite Sculp^t

M^{rs} YATES in the Character of ELECTRA.
O dear memorial of my dearest friend,
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BELL'S EDITION.

ELECTRA.

A TRAGEDY,

As translated from SOPHOCLES; with Notes,

By Mr. THEOBALD.

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VARIATIONS OF THE THEATRE,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane.

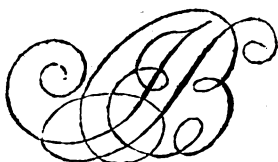
Regulated from the Prompt-Book,

By PERMISSION of the MANAGERS,

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Ὡς αἰ δόλῳ κλέιναντες ἄνδρα τίμιον,
Δόλῳ τε καὶ ληφθῶσιν ἐν ταυτῷ βρόχῳ
Θανόντες, ἧ καὶ Λοξίας ἐφήμισιν,
Ἄναξ Ἀπόλλων, μάντις ἀψευδής, τὸ πρῶν.

Æschyl. in Cœph.



L O N D O N :

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MDCCCLXVII.

T O
JOSEPH ADDISON, Esq.

S I R,

THIS poem presumes to throw itself at your feet, as a piece more wanting your protection, than worthy of your patronage. But it is as necessary for young authors, who should be conscious of their imperfections, to screen themselves under great names; as it has been always natural to criminals, to fly to a sanctuary.

Permit me then, Sir, more than to hope a shelter; to promise myself some reputation from this honour. Or, even should the world determine of my performance to my disadvantage; the satisfaction I take in being allowed the privilege of this address, yields me more pleasure than their censure could give me pain.

But I am so far from entertaining any fears of its miscarriage; that if my own partiality and the judgment of those chosen friends,

—*Quibus hæc, sint qualiacumque, arridere velim,*

have not conspired to deceive me in its favour: I may presume, that little merit they are pleased to allow it, will be my best excuse for pretending, in this public manner, to declare myself,

S I R,

Your most obedient

Humble servant,

LEW. THEOBALD.

D R A M A T I S P E R S O N Æ.

M E N.

*Drury-Lane.**Ægyshtus*, an usurper of the government of *Argos*, ———

Mr. Palmer.

Orestes, son of the late rightful king Agamemnon, by *Clytemnestra*,

Mr. Smith.

Pylades, his friend, prince of Phocis,

Mr. Packer.

The Governor of *Orestes*, ———

Mr. Aickin.

W O M E N.

Clytemnestra, queen of *Argos*, late wife of Agamemnon, now of*Ægyshtus*, ———

Mrs. Hopkins.

Electra, Agamemnon's daughter,

Mrs. Yates.

Chrysothemis, ditto, ———

Mrs. Baddeley.

Attendants of *Clytemnestra*.Chorus of young ladies of *Argos*.SCENE, before the Palace in *Mycenæ*.

T H E

E L E C T R A.

A C T I.

SCENE, *before the Royal Palace in Mycenæ.**Governor of Orestes, Orestes and Pylades.*

GOVERNOR.

OH, son of Agamemnon, (he who once,
 Supreme in power, led our victorious Greeks
 To Troy's destruction ;) hence may you survey
 The object of your long, your ardent wishes :
 Behold your native Argos ! here, the grove 5
 Of Inachus's wand'ring frantic daughter :
 And here, the fam'd Lycæan Forum stands,
 Erected to the glorious god of day :
 This, on the left, is Juno's awful temple ;
 Around the glitt'ring tow'rs of rich Mycenæ, 10
 With the dire house of bloody Pelops rise.
 Thence I receiv'd you from your sister's arms,
 Snatch'd from the fate in which your father fell ;
 I took, preserv'd, and nourish'd you till now,
 To grow the keen avenger of his blood : 15
 But now, Orestes, and you, Pylades,
 The dearest partner of his cares, betimes
 We must determine what our cause requires.
 For see, the chearful light begins to dawn ;
 The warbling birds salute the early sun ; 20
 And ev'ry star faints in his fuller glory.
 E'er then the busy search of jealous eyes
 Prevent, let's fix our counsels ; hasty time
 Cuts off all slow debate, and calls for action.
Orest. Thou truest friend that ever serv'd his prince, 25
 How does thy love to me shine out conspicuous !
 And, as the gen'rous steed when weak with age,
 Starts into rage, and scents the distant battle ;
 So you, though press'd with years, work up our souls
 To fame, and follow in the glorious chase. 30

A 3

To

To thee my purpos'd vengeance I'll disclose,
 Do thou with deep attention mark my words ;
 And where my youth shall err, with wisdom guide it.
 Know, when I went to ask the Pythian god 35
 What method I should take in my revenge,
 He thus in express terms spoke his high pleasure :
 Close be thy vengeance ; no loud force prepare ;
 But steal upon th' unguarded murderer.
 Therefore do thou, my venerable friend, 40
 As soon as kind occasion will permit,
 Enter the palace ; dive into their counsels ;
 And find out means for this our great attempt :
 For rev'rend age has plow'd thy features up,
 And bent thee to the earth, that thou shalt pass 45
 Successfully unknown, and unsuspected.
 Then form a tale like this ;—that thou art sent
 From Phocis, from Phanoteus, to relate,
 (For he's their potent friend, their dear ally)
 Nor spare an oath to back the licens'd fraud 50
 And win belief, how poor Orestes perish'd ;
 Whirl'd from his chariot in the Pythian games.
 This be the sum and subject of thy errand ;
 Mean while, as the great Lycian god injoin'd,
 We, with oblations and devoted hair, 55
 Will please my father's shade, and crown his tomb.
 That done, here let us meet ; and in our hands
 Bear to th' incestuous court the brazen urn,
 Which lies conceal'd in yonder verdant thickets ;
 Thus by an artful fraud resembling truth, 60
 We may convince them of the pleasing news
 That I am dead ; that those are the remains
 Of my burnt bones, rak'd from the fun'ral pile.
 Why should I grieve to be reported dead,
 While I rise fairer from that death-suppos'd 65
 To nobler life, to happiness and fame ?
 Nor can the tale which profits, prove disastrous.
 Oft have I heard of men, for wisdom fam'd,
 Revive and flourish from imagin'd tombs,
 To fresh renown, and more illustrious triumphs. 70
 So on my foes from death at once I'll rise,
 Glare like a meteor, and with terror blast them.
 But, Oh, my country, and ye genial gods,
 Receive me prosp'rous, and assist my purpose !

And

And thou, paternal dome, to thee I come,
 Sent from the gods to rid thee of pollution.
 Oh, drive me not dishonour'd from this land!
 But fix me happy in my father's throne,
 And make me but the scourge of usurpation,
 I ask no more!——But now, my good old friend,
 Support the task which thou hast undertook:
 We, Pylades, will hence, time presses hard;
 Time, on whose friendly call the issues hang
 Of all our mortal actions.

Elect. Oh! my fortune——

[*Groaning from within.*]

Gov. Hark! sure I heard the voice of female sorrow. 85.

Orest. Think you, 'twas not the poor Electra groan'd?
 Say, shall we stay and listen to her anguish?

Gov. Not for the world:——Begin we from the god;
 And his commands fulfil: with due oblations
 Appease, invoke the manes of your fire: 90
 From hence we shall the hop'd event derive,
 And draw a blessing on the pious work.

[*Exeunt Orestes and Pylades at one door, Governor and Attendants at another.*]

S C E N E II.

Elect. [*Alone.*] Oh, sacred light, and, Oh, thou ambient air,

How have ye witness'd to my constant sorrows!
 How have ye seen these hands, in rage of grief, 95
 Harrow and bruise my swoln and bleeding bosom!
 While each new morn was blasted with my woe:
 How have the circling nights heard my despair!
 How have my walls and hated bed been curst,
 And echo'd to my still repeated anguish! 100
 My sighs, my groans for my unhappy fire;
 Whom barb'rous climes and cruel battle spar'd;
 Whom battle spar'd, but whom my mother slew!
 She and her partner of adult'rous joys,
 Accurst Ægysthus, with a murth'ring axe 105
 Splitting his temples, cleft the hero down:
 Relentless, as the woodman does an oak.
 And none, but I, or pities or complains;
 None but Electra mourns for thee, Oh, father,

With

Without regard to shame or pity murder'd ! 110
 And I, while life remains, will cherish grief;
 Each rising morn, and each descending night
 Shall hear my moan : for with incessant sorrow,
 Like the sad nightingale robb'd of her young,
 Before my father's doors I'll plaintive stand ; 115
 And my loud wrongs proclaim to ev'ry ear.
 Ye realms of Pluto, and his gloomy consort !
 Infernal Hermes ! You, my potent curses !
 And awful furies, daughters of the gods,
 Behold the great are fallen, unjustly slain ! 120
 And vile adult'ry stains the royal couch !
 Oh, rise, assist, revenge a murder'd king.
 Send me my brother, my Orestes hither,
 To ease my sorrows, and to bear his part :
 For, Oh ! I sink beneath the dire oppression. 125

S C E N E III.

Electra and Chorus.

Cho. Thou offspring of a most unworthy mother,
 Uncomforted Electra ! wherefore still
 Dost thou with streaming eyes and piercing groans
 For ever mourn the fate of Agamemnon ?
 Indulge affliction, nor permit the space 130
 Of intervening years to wipe away
 The mem'ry of those snares and female arts
 That caught his noble life ? — Oh, may the man,
 If justice warrant my devoting prayer,
 That wrought his end, fall by the like surprise. 135

Elect. Oh, gen'rous maids, and worthy your high
 Kindly you come to soften my distress ; [births ;
 I know you do, to charm me into comfort.
 But, Oh ! I must be deaf to the enchantment ;
 Nor ever cease to mourn my wretched father. 140
 Therefore I must conjure you by our friendship ;
 By all your tender offices of love ;
 Let me indulge my tears, and be a wretch ;
 Nor urge me to remit my task of sorrow.

Cho. But yet, nor pray'rs nor tears, can soften death ; 145
 Or bribe th' un pitying Hades to unlock
 Earth's common prison, and send back your father.
 Yet, fond of woe and unavailing passion,

That

That hourly wastes and preys upon your health,
 You mourn the ills which mourning will not cure. 150
 Why do you court immod'rate sorrow thus?

Elect. They must be, sure, insensible and stupid,
 That can forget a murder'd parent's death.
 Let me be rather like the wailing bird,
 The murm'ring herald of approaching spring, 155
 Who Itys ever, murder'd Itys, mourns.
 Thee, Niobe, my heart esteems a goddess;
 Thou monument of unexampled sorrow!
 Lost to thy sex, and hardened to a stone,
 Thou still art Niobe, and weep'st for ever! 160

Cho. Have you, Electra, only cause to mourn?
 Are there not those have equal right to grieve?
 Though you surpass them in immod'rate transports.
 How does Chrysothemis suppress her anguish?
 And how Iphianassa bear her pain? 165
 Or how Orestes droop in secret exile?

Elect. Happy Orestes, when the glad Mycenæ
 Views him returning to his rightful throne;
 Sent by the sweet direction of the gods!
 Whilst I expect him with unwearied hopes, 170
 Childefs, and desolate, debarr'd of wedlock,
 Dissolv'd in tears, and worn away with anguish.
 But cruel he, regardless of my pain,
 Forgets my love and ardent invitations:
 Yet has he sooth'd me still with flatt'ring tidings; 175
 Rais'd me to hopes, in vain, of his arrival;
 Too credulous hopes; for, Oh! he will not come!—

Cho. Despair not, lady, for there reigns above
 A potent God, that overlooks mankind;
 To his directing hand submit your anger; 180
 Nor let your transports swell to wild distraction;
 Nor let your just resentments die forgotten:
 For ling'ring time knows his redressing hour.
 And he who stays on Crisa's verdant shore,
 Great Agamemnon's son, back'd with the pow'rs 185
 Of blood-avenging Erebus, will come;
 Will come with fury, and redress your wrongs.

Elect. Much of my life has been already spent,
 And fed on nought but unavailing hopes;
 I can no longer bear the uneasy state, 190
 An orphan, unsupported, weak, and friendless;

Us'd like a menial in my father's house :
 Robb'd of all rights of birth and princely state ;
 Clad in these homely weeds of wretchedness,
 And fed with offals from th' imperial table.

195

Cho. Oh, dismal was the welcome of his triumphs !
 Mournful return ! And, Oh ! that bridal room,
 To which the unsuspecting husband went,
 And met the sudden axe ! Accursed stroke !
 By fraud concerted, and by lust perform'd ;
 Adult'rous lust with treachery combin'd
 In horrid mixture for the horrid act ;
 Whether some god or man inspir'd the passion !

200

Elect. Oh, day most hated of the rolling year !
 Oh, blackest night ! And, Oh, prodigious griefs
 Which flow'd from that unutterable deed !
 When both their hands upon my father struck,
 To speak their union, and make murder sure.
 I too was struck, undone by that dire blow,
 And agonizing death lies heavy on me !
 But may the great Olympian god, may Jove,
 Repay their treason with still growing anguish !
 Let no short interval of gladness cheer them,
 But guilt and black remorse haunt them for ever !

205

210

Cho. No more such words of outrage ; call to mind
 From what a state of ease your rage has thrown you,
 And pull'd down woe by wilful provocation :
 Enough of sorrow has thy soul endur'd,
 By bearing up and buffeting the tempest.
 Believe it vain t' assail victorious vice,
 And tempt the rugged hand of tyrant pow'r.

220

Elect. Such treasons sure demand such loud complaints ;
 My heart is conscious of its swelling rage :
 Yet danger shall not scare me from this pleasure,
 But while I live, I will devote the wretches,
 From whom, ye dear companions of my grief,
 In such extremes of woe, can I endure
 The voice of consolation or advice ?

225

Cease, cease your strains of unprevailing comfort :
 For never must my labours find an end ;
 Never must I have truce with my afflictions :
 But be a faithful wretch, and weep for ever.

230

Cho. Alas !—My love, like a fond mother, pleads

To

To calm your breast ; lest your distemper'd wrath
Should be the parent of still greater troubles.

235

Elect. Oh ! Can my ills admit of an increase ?
Can piety forget a father's murder ?

What men, what barb'rous nations, say it can ?

Oh, let me not be honour'd in their thoughts !

No : were I to be match'd to some such tame

240

Forgiving soul, I would not let the soft

Unjust infection, clog my tow'ring rage ;

Nor for a moment stop my shrill-tongu'd grief,

Which flies to gratify my father's shade :

For if my noble father unreveng'd,

245

Must moulder into dust, and be forgot ;

Whilst they, triumphant in their happy guilt,

Laugh at the lame revenge that cannot reach them,

Farewel to virtue ; let religious awe

No more restrain mankind, but outrage flourish !

250

Cho. In yours and in our own behalf we came,

T' express our duty, and assuage your woes :

But if our words displease your princely mind,

You must o'ercome, and we submit in silence.

Elect. I blush to think, that my uneasy load

255

Of grief, should seem immoderate or strain'd :

Forgive my strong necessity of sorrow.

What virgin, well-descended, could behold

Her father's wrongs ; and not like me resent ?

Could see the never-fading ills I see,

260

That sprout each hour, and blossom on each other :

While from the hand of her who gave me life,

The piercing shaft is sent that wounds my soul.

And while within my father's injur'd house,

I am constrain'd to dwell with his assassins ;

265

Insulted by them, and oblig'd to take

The means of life from them, or yield to famine.

Oh ! what a life must you believe I drag ;

What tortures bear, distracted, when I see

Ægysthus seated in my father's throne ;

270

Drest in the same imperial robes of state ;

And pouring forth oblations on that spot,

Where once the blood of Agamemnon flow'd ?

But, Oh ! what daggers must divide my soul,

When I behold the last great injury ;

275

The rude assassin in my father's bed,

And

And guilty mother's arms? If virtue suffer
 To call her mother, who with rank offence
 Has injur'd nature in her sacred laws.
 But she enjoys the wretch deform'd with blood, 280
 Nor fears the furies round th' adult'rous bed;
 But with a wicked triumph at the fact,
 Searches impatient for the welcome day
 Whereon my father fell: Oh, horrid thought!
 And when it comes, in wanton revels, plays, 285
 Feasts, dances, and with impious sacrifice,
 Thanks all the gods for the successful murder.
 While I, a forc'd spectator of their riot,
 (In mock'ry call'd the feast of Agamemnon)
 In secret mourn; nor am allow'd to vent
 The anguish of my lab'ring heart in freedom: 290
 For she, with watchful and ungen'rous hate,
 Eyes my distress, and thus upbraids my pain.
 Thou scorn of Heav'n! Have none but thou been griev'd?
 Art thou the only one whose father dy'd?
 Be trebly curst, and may th' infernal pow'rs 295
 Never release thee from the woe thou'rt fond of.
 Such is her language;—but whene'er she's told
 Orestes soon will come, then, then she raves,
 And bellows loud,—Thou source of all my cares, 300
 This is thy work, who stol'st Orestes from me,
 And nurs'd him up to be thy mother's ruin:
 But thou shalt pay the price of all my fears.
 Thus does she taunt; while her illustrious spouse
 Stands by her side, pleas'd, and provokes the contest: 305
 That trifling coward, that disgrace of manhood,
 Who only wars in consort with a woman.
 But while I wait to see Orestes here,
 To end my griefs and rescue me, I die!
 His vengeance sleeps by an unkind delay; 310
 Nor leaves me present hope or future comfort,
 To flatter woe, and keep my soul alive.
 In such a state 'tis hard to be discreet;
 And not accuse the unassisting gods:
 For in such ills our passions will transgress, 315
 Rise with our suff'rings, and like them grow boundless!
Chor. Tell me, Electra, is Ægysthus nigh?
 Who might, if he o'er-heard, resent my words.

Elek.

Elect. Oh, think not I should taste these gentle freedoms
If he were nigh; but, guiltless of my joy, 320
He traverses the verdant fields of Argos.

Cho. With greater confidence I then shall speak;
Nor fear to ask the things I long to know.

Elect. Secure from danger, ask me what you please.

Cho. Then tell me of Orestes, will he come? 325
Or is there still a cause to keep him back?

Elect. He says he comes, but does not what he says.

Cho. Important actions move but slowly on.

Elect. I mov'd not slowly when I sav'd his life.

Cho. Fear not; his virtue will not fail his friends. 330

Elect. In that belief I have protracted woe.

Cho. No more—I see Chrysothemis approach;
Your sister, Madam, this way bends her steps,
And in her hands she bears sepulchral off'rings.

S C E N E IV.

Chrysothemis, Electra, and Chorus.

Chryf. Why will you, sister, at this public gate, 335
Repeat your grievance in such clam'rous accents?

Nor let experience teach you to discard

An impotent and unavailing passion?

Believe that I am conscious of our wrongs;

And would, if I had pow'r, attempt revenge, 340

And let my strong resentment stand confess'd:

But when our weakness dictates to our wrath,

'Tis wiser to submit with lower'd sails,

Than to collect the storm and tempt destruction.

Thus would I counsel you to stifle rage;

Though I confess your indignation just; 345

But if or life, or liberty be dear,

We must obey and stoop to rugged pow'r.

Elect. 'Tis base that you, from such a father sprung,
Should in neglect of his forgotten worth, 350

Side with the faction of an impious mother:

For all your counsels are by her prescrib'd,

And speak her pleasure but at second hand.

Unheeding girl, confess, and chuse thy crime,

That thou, or know'st not, or forgett'st thy duty. 355

You said but now, if you had pow'r to hate,

B

To

To-hate to purpose, you'd avow your anger ;
 Yet when I struggle to revenge my father,
 Far from assisting, you obstruct my work.
 Is not this cowardice, or something worse ? 360
 Tell me what great advantage would arise,
 Should I suspend my grief, and put on gladness ?
 Do I not live, though ill the life I lead ?
 Ill as it is, it is enough for me :

Whilst ev'ry day I interrupt their joys, 365
 Contending still to please my father's shade,
 If the deceas'd are capable of pleasure.
 While you, whose words profess such specious hate,
 Act in concurrence with the murderers.

But would they give me all my sister's gifts, 370
 And all the ornaments in which you shine ;
 I would not yield a moment to them.—No :
 Let costly banquers load your wanton table,
 And your soft life in delicacies flow ;
 Give me the meanest necessary food, 375
 The virtue which has earn'd, shall think it rich,
 And add a sweetness to the homely diet.

I scorn the guilty honours you have purchas'd,
 And so should you in wisdom : but, Oh, shame !
 You court disgrace, and when you might be stil'd 380
 'The glorious daughter of the best of fathers,
 You are the mother's, her distinguish'd darling !
 Thus at the price of censure, you betray
 Your friends, and sell the blood of Agamemnon !—

Cho. For Heav'n's sake, let not anger grow between
 you : 385

You both speak well, and both may be improv'd,
 If you will join, and by each other profit.

Chry. This language I am us'd to, friends, from her,
 Nor had I now provok'd the repetition,
 But that I heard an evil threaten her, 390
 Which would at once end these incessant wailings.

Elect. Name it ; and if you can pronounce an horror
 Greater than these I feel, I will obey you.

Chry. Take then the sum of what I can inform you :
 Unless you calm these passions, they resolve 395
 To force you hence, where you shall ne'er behold
 The chearful light of day, but lie confined

In

In some damp gloomy subterranean prison,
 Far from this country ; there to groan unheard,
 And breath your sorrows 'midst unwholesome vapours. 400
 But, Oh, be wise ; prevent the threaten'd woe ;
 Nor blame your sister, who with early care
 Would labour to divert th' unripe destruction.

Elect. And have they then determined thus against me ?

Chry. As soon as e'er Ægythus shall return. 405

Elect. Oh, may the threaten'd mischief wing him hither !

Chry. What horrid wish is this, unwary maid ?

Elect. That he would come and execute his malice.

Chry. Ha ! Are you lost to sense ? What would you aim at ?

Elect. That I might fly from all of you, as far 410
 As earth has bounds. ———

Chry. ——— Respect you not your life ?

Elect. This life is wondrous beautiful indeed,
 Fit to be car'd for !

Chry. — Were you wise it might.

Elect. Teach me not, sister, to betray my friends.

Chry. I teach you not, but to obey superiors. 415

Elect. 'Tis yours to flatter, I have no such soul.

Chry. 'Tis prudent not to throw our lives away.

Elect. But glorious to resign them for a father.

Chry. Our father would not wish us to pursue
 Revenge at that rash hazard ———

Elect. ——— Cowards only, 420

And fearful souls, applaud such tim'rous maxims.

Chry. And will you not be caution'd 'gainst affliction ?

Elect. No : for I would not quite forego my reason.

Chry. Then I have done, and will pursue my orders.

Elect. What orders ! — And to whom these fun'ral
 rites ? 425

Chry. The queen enjoins me on my father's tomb,
 From her to make libations.

Elect. ——— How ! from her ?

To make libations to that hated man ?

Chry. To him she kill'd, for so you would infer.

Elect. By whom persuaded, whose advice was this ? 430

Chry. 'Tis the result of a nocturnal fright.

Elect. Oh, all ye gods of Argos, aid me now ! —

B. 2

Chry.

Chry. What grounds for hope derive you from her fears?

Elect. Tell me the vision, and I'll then resolve you.

Chry. Alas ! I know but little——

Elect. —— Tell me then

435

That little !—— Little sentences and words

Have often rais'd, and ruin'd men as oft.

Chry. 'Tis whisper'd, that she saw our father come
Again to light, and seem'd once more his wife :

That he took in his hand the regal scepter,

440

(Which once he bore, but now Ægysthus bears)

And fix'd it in the earth ; when strait there sprang

From it a thriving branch, which flourish'd wide,

And over-shadow'd all Mycenæ's land.

This did I learn from one who was at hand,

445

When to the rising sun she told her vision,

To deprecate it's omen. More I know not,

But that these rites are owing to its horrors.

Elect. Now I conjure you, by our genial gods,

Obey me ; fall not into rash offence ;

450

But, e'er it be too late, avoid pollution.

And, dearest sister, let no part of those

Design'd oblations touch my father's tomb ;

For 'tis not just, to bring his injur'd shade

Unhallow'd off'rings from an impious hand :

But give them to the winds ; or hide them deep

455

In earth, at distance from his awful tomb.

Let the earth keep them for her fun'ral honours,

The fittest off'rings to adorn her grave.

Had she not been the vilest of her sex,

She would not sacrifice to him she slew.

460

Hew do you think his injur'd ghost will bear

To taste the off'rings which are sent by her ;

Who, not content to rob him of his life,

Mangled and hack'd him to disarm resentment ;

And strove to wipe th' abomination off.

465

Will impious off'rings satisfy for murder ?

And weak libations purge the guilt of blood ?

No ; fling th' offensive sacrifice away ;

And from our heads let each present a lock

Of supplicating hair : too mean the gift !

470

But all I have to give, except this girdle ;

Which take, however plain and unadorn'd.

Prostrate,

Prostrate, invoke him to arise from earth ;
 To come propitious and destroy our foes ;
 And send Orestes, with avenging force, 475
 To strike the hostile tyrants to the earth :
 Then shall we richer sacrifices pay,
 And crown his ashes with more grateful off'rings.
 My heart suggests, the care of our revenge
 Employs his ghost, and sent the hideous dream : 480
 Therefore, my sister, aid the gen'rous work ;
 The cause of you, and me, and that dear man,
 Our common parent, who is now no more.

Cho. The virgin speaks with piety, and you
 In wisdom should perform the dutious office. 485

Chy. I will : for 'tis a vain and senseless strife,
 For two to differ in a work that's just,
 And asks dispatch. But now that I consent,
 By Heav'n ! you must be silent, friends ; for if
 M' enraged mother should discover ought, 490
 I might have cause to mourn the bold attempt,
 [*Exit Chrysothemis.*]

S C E N E V.

C H O R U S.

Electra remains on the stage while the Chorus sings.

I.

Cho. Or my prophetic soul mistakes,
 Or I in hope from reason err ;
 Or vengeance swift advances makes,
 Upon the conscience-haunted murderer : 495
 Daughter, she comes ; she comes away
 With pow'r and justice in array ;
 I'm strong in hope, the boding dream,
 The herald of her awful terrors came.
 The king's resentments shall not cease, 500
 Nor shall he bury wrongs but in redress.
 The vengeful axe that gave the impious blow,
 Mindful of th' imperial woe,
 To hell and heav'n calls out aloud
 For retribution, and for blood. 505

II.

The brazen-footed fury shall appear
 With hundred feet, and hundred hands;
 To execute her fell commands,
 Who yet conceals her wrathful spear.
 Unseen she does her future work survey, 510
 And hovers o'er her unsuspecting prey.
 For impious acts have stain'd the royal bed;
 Acts at which Hymen stood dismay'd,
 While by concerted guile betray'd
 To give adult'ry scope, the husband bled. 515
 But I in hope, foresee some dire event,
 The threat'ning visions of the night
 Shall have their force, nor be content
 To punish guilt with bare affright.
 Let birds, dreams, divinations lose their force, 520
 And solemn oracles no more discourse;
 If this appearance passes hence
 Without an happy consequence.

III.

Oh, inauspicious chariot-race,
 Which love-instructed Pelops won; 525
 What mighty mischiefs hast thou done,
 To this ill-fated place?
 For e'er since Myrtilus was thrown
 Headlong from the chariot, down
 The promontory's horrid brow 530
 Into the suffocating furge below;
 Unnumber'd evils have befall'n the state;
 And Argos felt successive storms of fate.

END of the FIRST ACT.

ACT

A C T H. S C E N E I.

Clytemnestra, Electra *and* Chorus.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

YOU'RE free, you think, and now may walk at large,
 Because you know Ægyſthus is not here ;
 Who would confine your walks, not let you range,
 To vent your spleen, and execrate our friends.
 But in his abſence you regard not me ; 5
 I am the theme of your unmanner'd railings ;
 You brand me with injuſtice ; ſay, I'm fierce,
 And play the tyrant over you and yours.
 But I abuſe you not ; I only pay
 Your handſome compliments to me in kind ; 10
 And, firſt insulted, but return reproach.
 And ſtill your father is the ſtale pretence,
 As if I murder'd him : I did, I own it ;
 I own I did it ; and 'twas bravely done.
 Juſtice commanded, and I gave the blow ; 15
 And you, if wiſe, had help'd the glorious work :
 For he whom you ſo obſtinately mourn,
 Murder'd your ſiſter ; he, of all the Greeks
 Could find a daughter for a ſacrifice,
 And bore to ſee her butcher'd. Cruel man ! 20
 A ſtranger to the pangs of bleeding nature,
 Nor conſcious of the pains a mother feels.
 And then, for whom was this fair victim ſlain ?
 Was it for Greece ? You will not ſurely ſay it ?
 Had Greece the liberty to kill my daughter ? 25
 Or was't not for his brother Menelaus ?
 (Oh, juſtly did he die, who kill'd my child !)
 Had not his brother children of his own ?
 'Twas juſter far they both had dy'd than ſhe ;
 Both for their father and their mother dy'd, 30
 On whoſe account alone the war began.
 Or did the partial God of Hell prefer
 My daughter's blood to any ſecond victim ?
 Or had your execrable father loſt
 A parent's love, but Menelaus not ? 35
 Do not theſe acts proclaim him raſh and impious ?
 Whate'er you think, my cenſure has condemn'd him ;
And

And so would injur'd Iphigenia too;
 Could the departed speak, accuse her father.
 I do not then repent of what I did ;
 But if you think I ought, take heed you speak
 In terms of calm respect, and urge your reasons.

Elect. You cannot plead that you were now provok'd,
 And therefore did retort opprobrious language.
 But might I be permitted, I would try
 To plead my father's cause, and sister's too.

Cly. You may : and did you always thus address me,
 'Twould spare you that reproach you murmur at.

Elect. First, you confess that you my father slew ;
 And can there be a blacker crime than this ;
 The cause be just or no ? But that it was not,
 I'll shew you ; drawn by your adult'rous love,
 Not for your daughter, but your present spouse,
 You did the action. Ask Diana why,
 Why she delay'd so long the courted winds ?
 Or what the goddess will not, I will tell you.
 'Tis said, my father, sporting in her grove,
 Put up a noble-spotted branching stag ;
 And as he chas'd and slew the glorious prey,
 In triumph utter'd some unhappy word.

The goddess, to revenge th' insult, detain'd
 The fleet in Aulis, till my wretched fire
 Should make atonement with his daughter's blood.
 Thus fell she ; nor could any meaner bribe
 Purchase a wind to swell their flagging sails ;
 For which, and not for Menelaus's sake,
 With struggling sorrows and reluctant pangs,
 At last he yielded to the sacrifice.

But had he done it for his brother's sake,
 Should you have kill'd him therefore ? By what law ?
 Take heed, lest you repent the rules you make ;
 By your own laws yourself will stand condemn'd ;
 If murder must with murder be repaid,
 Justice will tell you, you are next to bleed ;
 Thus ev'n your own defence was turn'd against you.

But tell me, if you can, on what account
 You now persist in execrable guilt ?
 Why have you commerce with the bloody wretch,
 Who was th' abettor of your horrid crime ?
 Why propagate by him a lawless brood,

And banish far into another land
 The virtuous offspring of your husband's bed?
 Can this be reconcil'd? Or will you say
 These are the farther proofs of your revenge?
 'Tis base to say it; it can ne'er be good
 To wed a traitor for a daughter's sake.

85

Yet, deaf to just reproof, you spurn at counsel;
 Cry, that 'tis insolence t' upbraid a parent;
 And shoot with all the arrows of your tongue.
 I have a mistress, not a mother in you,
 Oppress'd with hardships, and condemn'd to all
 That you and your curs'd consort will impose.
 Nay, scarce my brother did escape your rage;
 Who wears out wretched life in anxious exile.
 The saving whom you oft upbraid me with;

90

And say, I nourish a revenger for you!

95

And be assur'd, I wanted not the will;
 Therefore proclaim me to the world at large;
 Brand me with impudence; call me foul railer;
 The signal characters shall make me known,
 And mark me out for Clytemnestra's daughter!

100

Cbo. I see, her fierce resentment blazes high,
 Regardless whether reason rules her anger.

Cly. And what regards can she receive from me,
 Who thus upbraids and vilifies her mother?
 Presumptuous wretch!—Believe you not, my friends,
 She has forgot to blush at any action?

105

Elect. Oh, you mistake!—I blush at what I do;
 And am too sensible the words I speak
 But ill become my station, age or fortunes;
 But your vile actions and malignant soul
 Have forc'd me to be rude against my will;
 For evils spring and flourish by example.

110

Cly. Injurious railer! do my actions teach,
 Do they instruct your tongue to grow offensive?

115

Elect. 'Tis your offence that speaks; you do the things,
 Which done, in proper language must be told.

Cly. Now, by Diana, when Ægysthus comes,
 You shall not thus insult me unreveng'd.

120

Elect. You rob me of the liberty you gave;
 You bade me speak, but will not hear with temper.

Cly. Will you not suffer me to make oblations,

But

But interrupt with inauspicious words,
Because I bade you speak?

Elect. Go on, perform

Th' intended rites; I will no longer stop
The meritorious office, but be silent.

125

Cly. Then lift thou up the suppliant fruits on high;
[To her Attendant.

Which, offer'd to the sacred God of Day,
Shall free me from the fears which now I bear.

Oh, Phœbus! thou, whose hallow'd image stands 130

Before this palace, hear my hidden sense;

I speak not among friends, nor is it safe

Here to unfold the secrets of my heart

Before thy radiant light, when she is by;

Lest with her envy, and her babbling tongue, 135

She spread the story over all the city.

But hear me thus—The vision of last night,

The doubtful dream, which sleeping I beheld,

If it be prosperous, Oh, Lycian King,

Falsify and ratify its kind intents; 140

If ill, turn all its horrors on my foes;

Nor prosper those who would disturb my state,

And plot in private to undo my pow'r.

Thus let me always live, from danger free,

And rule this kingdom and this house as now; 145

Join'd to those friends to whom I now am join'd;

Still crown'd with bliss, and with such children who

Nor hate, nor enviously disturb my joys.

Grant this, Apollo, and look down propitious;

Grant this, and in the manner which I ask: 150

The rest thou know'st, altho' I speak it not;

For gods have pow'r to read our inmost thoughts,

And nought is hid from the sons of Jove.

S C E N E II.

Governor, Clytemnestra, Electra, and Chorus.

Gov. Ye virgins, may a stranger hope to learn,
If this tall fabric be the royal palace? 155

Ebo. It is.

Gov. — And this the Queen whom I behold?
Her dress and person speak th' imperial rank.

Cho.

Cho. You're right; 'tis she.

Gov. ——— Then hail, Oh, Queen! I come
To bring you and Ægyſthus grateful news
From one who is your friend.

Cly. ——— I embrace the news—— 160
But next inform me from what friend you come.

Gov. From Phocis, from Phanoteus, to relate
A buſineſs of concern——

Cly. ——— Pronounce it, ſtranger;
The man you come from ſpeaks the errand good.

Gov. To ſum up all, Oreſtes is no more. 165

Elect. Ah, wretched maid! It brings me to the grave.

Cly. What ſaid you, ſtranger? Liſten not to her.

Gov. I ſay again, Oreſtes is no more.

Elect. I periſh with him, and am too no more!

Cly. At diſtance howl! ——— But, ſtranger, you pro-
ceed. 170

Inſtruct us in the manner of his fate.

Gov. To this was I employ'd—Know, mighty Queen,
When young Oreſtes at the plains arriv'd,
Where Grecia celebrates her Pythian games;

Soon as the herald's ſhrill-proclaiming voice 175

Summon'd each champion to the noble ſports,

He enter'd the broad liſts, bright as a god,

The admiration of the throng'd ſpectators!

'Twere endless to recount the things he did;

Thro' all the ſtated courſe of games he ran, 180

And bore in triumph ev'ry prize away.

The happy youth was hymn'd by ev'ry tongue;

Proclaim'd aloud by th' herald's voice an Argive,

By name Oreſtes, Agamemnon's ſon,

The General of Greece!—And thus he ſpurish'd. 185

But when the gods oppoſe the mightieſt man,

The mortal ſinks beneath th' unequal match!

For when the next ſucceeding morn aroſe,

Changing the nature of the luſty conteſts;

Oreſtes with the rival troop advanc'd, 190

And ſigh'd for conqueſt in the chariot-race.

But Fate decreed not ſo; for when his ſteeds,

True to his hopes, ſucceſsful wing'd their way;

And almoſt crown'd him with the promis'd prize:

Turning the goal with a miſtaken breadth, 195
He

He struck unwary on the outmost column,
 And broke his axle short—He, with the shock,
 Fell from his seat, and in the twisted harness
 Intangled hung—Him, thus precipitate,
 The frighted horses, with confusion wild, 200
 Dragg'd to the middle course. With yells and shrieks
 The pitying crowd beheld, and mourn'd the youth,
 Fall'n from renown, and lost to future conquests !
 Now dash'd against the ground, and now aloft
 Rebounding furious ; till the charioteers 205
 (But, Oh, too late !) stopp'd his unruly steeds,
 And loos'd him, with unseemly wounds deform'd,
 Torn, bruis'd, disfigur'd, and no longer known
 To be Orestes, by his dearest friends !

Some Phocian men, appointed to the task, 210
 Strait burnt his body, and have brought, inurn'd,
 His dust, the poor remains of all his greatness,
 To find a tomb in his paternal soil.

Such was his death ; how terrible to hear !
 But, Oh, how more afflicting to the sight ! 215
 The worst of spectacles these eyes have seen.

Cbo. Alas ! alas ! then all my master's race
 Are perish'd, rooted up, and quite extinguish'd.

Cly. Oh, Jove ! what news is this ? Of joy, or horror ?
 That crowns with safety, yet with sorrow wounds ;
 Whilst to assure my life, I lose my son. 220

Gov. Why does the present story make you sad ?

Cly. I feel the mother struggling in my soul.

Gov. Vain and unwelcome then is this my labour.

Cly. How vain, or how unwelcome ? Since you come 225
 To bring me certain tokens of his death,

Who, tho' my son, and nourish'd from my breast,
 Yet who forsook me, like a vagrant fled,
 And chose a stranger's for his mother's house ;
 Who never saw me since he left the land ; 230

But, branding me with parricide, he still
 With rebel menaces has stabb'd my peace.
 I scarce have slept by night, or wak'd by day,
 Secure or pleasant ; but each anxious minute
 Seem'd but a short reprieve from instant death. 235

But this kind morn disburthens me of fear,
 From him, and her ; from her, the greater plague !
 Because

Because domestic, in my bosom warm'd,
 'Th' ungrateful serpent sucks my vital blood.
 But hurt no longer by her taunting malice,
 My easy life shall flow with pleasure on.

240

Elect. Wretched Electra!—Now it's time to mourn
 Thy fate, Orestes, when thy mother triumphs
 In thy destruction thus——Gods! is it well?

Cly. With him 'tis wond'rous well, tho' not with
 thee.

245

Elect. Avenging goddess, hear her contumelies!

Cly. She has already heard, and well determin'd.

Elect. Ay, now insult; your joys indeed are full.

Cly. And can Orestes help to make them less?

Elect. No; we must drop our unperforming anger.

250

Cly. Oh, stranger, you, indeed, deserve our love,
 If you have silenc'd her malignant clamours.

Gov. My task is finish'd; I may now depart.

Cly. Not so, my friend; it would dishonour us,
 And him that sent you, thus to let you go.

255

Enter the palace, and let's leave this railer
 To howl abroad, and spread her stubborn grief.

[*Exeunt Clytemnestra, Attendants and Governor.*]

S C E N E III.

Electra and Chorus.

Elect. Had she the marks of sorrow? Did the wretch
 Confess despair, or like a mother mourn?

But with malignant pleasure stalk'd away!

260

Dearest Orestes, how hast thou undone me!

Thy fate has kill'd me, ravish'd all the hopes

On which my soul had fix'd her last support,

That thou would'st one day come, and with thy hand

Revenge my father and unhappy me!

265

Now where shall I retreat, forlorn, depriv'd

Of thee, and of my father? Now again,

I must be dragg'd to serve the cursed men

Who kill'd my father. Can sweet Heav'n permit?

No, by the gods, I will no longer dwell

270

Beneath the hated roof which covers them:

But here on earth will make my humble bed,

And mourn, till life is worn away in sadness.

C

If

If I'm a torment, let them kill me strait;
 For I am sick of life, and fain would die:
 When life is irksome, death is a relief.

275

S C E N E IV.

Electra joins in the Chorus.

I.

Cho. Does not Apollo see? Will Jove not hear?
 When will it thunder, if it now be clear?

Elect. Alas! my fate——

Cho. Why weep'st thou so?

Elect. Oh!——

Cho. Soften thy tumultuous woe.

280

Elect. You kill me if you stop my grief.

Cho. How?

Elect. ——By teaching vain relief.
 By offering comfort to restore,
 When he in whom I hop'd is now no more.

By such unavailing care
 Y' insult my griefs, and aggravate despair.

285

II.

Cho. The fate of Amphiaras know,
 By female avarice betray'd:
 A victim to his wife's persuasions made:
 But now the monarch in the shades below——

290

Elect. Oh, killing thought!

Cho. ——Immortal reigns;
 A prophet in th' Elyfian plains.

Elect. Woe on the cause!

Cho. Ay, woe, indeed,
 On th' accursed matron's head!

295

Elect. But she too late her treason rued.

Cho. I grant, revenge her crime pursued.

Elect. That injur'd monarch found a son
 His discontented shade t' appease;
 But my unhappy fire has none
 To give the plaintive phantom ease.

300

III.

III.

Cho. Oh, virgin, great is thy distress !

Elect. Too well I know

The weight of my oppressing woe ;
Of griefs successive, long, and numberless !

Cho. With justice you of misery complain. 305

Elect. Therefore no longer wound my ear
With Comfort's voice ; nor hope to cheer
My soul, that ne'er shall taste again ——

Cho. What say'st thou, maid ?

Elect. —— The sweets of peace,
Ne'er be charm'd to joy or ease : 310
Now the gen'rous youth is gone,
Hope and vengeance are undone.

IV.

Cho. Death is the portion of mankind.

Elect. But not like him, by furious coursers borne,
Bruis'd, disfigur'd, mangled, torn, 315
Shall all a death of horror find ?

Cho. Dark, unforeseen is fate's surprise.

Elect. His fate was unforeseen indeed,
In a foreign land to bleed ;
Without these hands to close his eyes. 320

Cho. Unhappy Prince !

Elect. —— No obsequies to have ;
Nor weeping friends to mourn thee to the grave.

END of the SECOND ACT.

A C T III. S C E N E I.

Chrysothemis, Electra, and Chorus.

CHRYSOTHEMIS.

FOR joy, my dearest, I forgot my sex,
Neglected decency, and ran impatient
To bring you grateful news ; whose glad surprise
Will end those ills which you so long have mourn'd.

C 2

Elect.

Elek. Where canst thou find a cure for my misfortunes, 5

On which no beam of comfort e'er can dawn?

Chry. Enlarge thy hopes: Orestes is arriv'd;
Arriv'd as surely as I live to speak it.

Elek. Or rather dost thou rave, unhappy girl!
And sport with my afflictions and thy own. 10

Chry. By all the gods, I do not trifle with you,
Or dally with your woes, but know he's come.

Elek. By what unerring arguments convinc'd,
That you so strongly bend to their report.

Chry. I owe not to report th' uncertain tale, 15
But to these eyes, that saw th' unerring signs.

Elek. What signs? What could'st thou see, too cre-
To kindle this fantastic fever up? [d'lous maid?

Chry. Hear, I conjure you, ere you quite condemn,
And judge, if reason warrant my assertion. 20

Elek. If the relation gives you pleasure, speak.

Chry. Thus, then: As I approach'd the hallow'd tomb
Wherein my father's peaceful ashes lie,
I saw the ground with streams of milk distain'd,
Fresh pour'd, and flowing from the tufted hillocks; 25
And all the flowers the genial season yields,
Strew'd in a circle round the sepulchre.

I saw, and wond'ring; and look'd all around,
Lest any one unseen should steal upon me,
And interrupt my search. But when I saw 30
All things in solitude and perfect rest,
I nearer to the tomb advanc'd, and there,
Upon the utmost pile, a lock of hair,

Fresh cut, in waves was spread; when straight my soul
Presented young Orestes to my thoughts, 35
And whisper'd me, 'twas his which I beheld:
The tokens of that dear-lov'd man's return.

I took it up, and spoke auspicious words,
And my glad eyes o'erflow'd with tears of joy.
And then my conscious soul believ'd as now, 40
Those fun'ral honours came from none but him.

To whom but me, or you, belong'd this office?
I did it not, I'm sure; nor you, I think:
How could you, who from hence are not allow'd
A moment's absence, tho' to worship Heav'n? 45
My

My mother——she delights not in such acts ;
 Nor could she do it, but we must have known.
 None but Orestes then could pay these honours.
 Have comfort, sister ; not the same harsh god
 With unremitting fury still pursues ;
 The storm o'erblown, a pleasing calm succeeds ;
 To-day, perhaps, the low'ring scene will change,
 Revive our souls, and brighten them with gladness.

50

Elect. Oh, senseless raptures ! how I pity thee !

Chry. What ! is the news ungrateful then at last ? 55

Elect. You know not where you are, nor what you speak.

Chry. Do I not know what these my eyes beheld ?

Elect. Lose not an hope in search of poor Orestes,
 Nor build thy safety there ; for he—is dead.

Chry. Oh, heav'ns ! where did you learn the fatal news ? 60

Elect. From one who stood and saw the youth expire.

Chry. I stand amaz'd ! Where is this fatal herald ?

Elect. Caress'd within, and welcome to my mother.

Chry. Oh, fatal ! Whose were all those off'rings then,
 Which grac'd my father's tomb ?

Elect. ————— We must suppose 65
 Some friend has plac'd them there, the monuments
 Of dead Orestes' love.

Chry. ————— Deceitful joy !
 I hasted, ravish'd with the strong delight,
 Nor dreamt of this disastrous turn of fate.

But now too well I find our former ills 70
 Maintain their ground, and call up fresh afflictions !

Elect. Too true th' increase ; but if you'll learn of me,
 I'll teach you how we may redeem ourselves.

Chry. Oh, can we raise the dead to life again ?

Elect. Believe not my conceits tow'r up to madness. 75

Chry. What would'st thou then prescribe, that I can

Elect. Resolve but to perform what I advise. [aid in ?

Chry. If to our honour, fear not a repulse.

Elect. Think, nothing can without some pains succeed.

Chry. I do, and will contribute to my pow'r. 80

Elect. Hear then the resolution I have form'd ;

'Twere vain to urge our want of friends to you,
 Who know that we have none ; that cruel death

Has torn them hence, and we are left alone.

While yet Orestes liv'd, my flatter'd grief

85

Encourag'd hopes that he would one day come,

And satisfy my father's crying blood :

But, now he is no more, I look on you,

To aid your sister in the pious work ;

And help to kill th' assassin, curs'd Ægysthus !

90

I'll spread the counsels of my soul before you,

And we with open bosoms will converse.

Why should you still be passive in your wrongs ?

Is there redress in hope, but from ourselves ?

Does not oppression grind us every way ?

95

Are we not spoil'd of our paternal rights ?

Debarr'd of Hymen's joys, and wasting all

Our bloom of life in virgin solitude ?

And, Oh, believe it must be ever thus !

Nor will the tyrant's caution give us room

100

To propagate a race to his destruction.

But if you'll follow the advice I give,

Your sire and brother shall conspire to praise,

And, from the grave, applaud the gen'rous action.

'Then shall you be saluted, noble, free,

105

As nature and your princely birth design'd ;

And worthy youths shall sigh for your embrace.

For virtue is a charm fires every breast.

Do you not see what glory, what applause,

You purchase to yourself and me by this ?

110

What citizen, what stranger, seeing us,

Will not with these encomiums mark us out ?——

Behold the sisters!—friends, the rival pair,

Who from destruction rais'd their father's house !

Who brav'd the fury of triumphant foes,

115

Attack'd their pomp, and struck the righteous blow ;

Of life regardless !——These should always be

'The subjects of our wonder and our love ;

'These should be honour'd, courted, and proclaim'd,

And in our feasts, assemblies and our streets,

120

Hymn'd and distinguish'd for heroic souls !——

Such language shall we hear from every tongue,

And live eternal in the voice of fame.

Follow me, then ; revenge your father's blood ;

Make dead Orestes smile, and rescue me ;

125

Rescue

Rescue yourself; shake off the guilty chain :
For gen'rous souls disdain a vile dependance.

Cbo. Prudence is useful in affairs like these,
To counsel, or embrace th' important task.

Cbry. Had she but weigh'd her words before she
spoke, 130

She would have kept what now she has not done,
A modest prudence, and an useful caution.

What prospect of success, that thus you arm,
And ask me to assist the daring work?

Regard your feeble sex and tender form, 135
In strength inferior to the foes you brave :

Behold how Fortune wooes them with her smiles,
While we are crush'd by fate, and waste to nothing.

Who then, invading one defended thus,
But must expect the death he thought to give ? 140

Take heed we do not aggravate our ills,
And purchase new distress, if overheard :

Poor is th' advantage of that vain renown,
Which, panting to obtain, we earn by death !

Tho' death, perhaps, will be esteem'd a mercy ; 145
And when 'tis courted, life shall be our doom ;

To suffer on, and taste protracted anguish.

But, I conjure you, ere we furious run
Into the gripe of Fate, and cast away

The last remains of Agamemnon's blood, 150
Restrain your rage, and what your rashness utter'd

Shall perish, and be lost to my remembrance.
Be wise at length, taught by prevailing woe ;

And, since unable to contend, submit.

Cbo. Be rul'd ; for wisdom and a prudent mind, 155
Are the two greatest goods that men enjoy.

Elect. Your answer does not disappoint my thoughts ;
For well I knew you would reject the work :

Therefore the noble task remains for me.
It must be done, and shall not want a hand. 160

Cbry. Oh, had you been of this heroic soul
When first my father fell, you'd done it then !

Elect. I had the soul, but wanted years for action.

Cbry. And want them still for desp'rate acts like these.

Elect. How full of counsel ! barren of assistance ! 165

Cbry. For rash attempts oft crush their wretched author.
Elect.

Elect. Your wisdom I admire, your fears I hate.

Chry. The time will come when I shall have your praise.

Elect. The time will never come, when you'll deserve it.

Chry. Th' event of things will best determine this. 170

Elect. Begone; for I expect no aid from thee.

Chry. You might. The fault is in your own resolves.

Elect. Go, and betray my counsels to the Queen!

Chry. I nourish not an hate that thirsts your ruin.

Elect. Yet you could brook to draw me to dishonour. 175

Chry. Not to dishonour, but to prudent care.

Elect. Must I then follow where your fancy leads?

Chry. When you think better, you shall lead——

Elect. ————— 'Tis strange,

That she who speaks so well should act so ill.

Chry. The condemnation on yourself returns. 180

Elect. But does not justice warrant my designs!

Chry. 'Tis dang'rous to be always strictly just.

Elect. Such maxims ne'er shall regulate my actions.

Chry. You would have cause to thank me if they did.

Elect. By Heav'n, I'll not be fear'd from my resolves. 185

Chry. And will you not be wrought to safer counsels?

Elect. No; evil counsel is the worst of things.

Chry. You set a wrong construction on my words.

Elect. My purpose is not new, a start of passion;
But weigh'd with reason, and confirm'd by time. 190

Chry. I'm gone, since you my reasons disapprove,
As I your actions.

Elect. ——— Wherefore go you not?

I would not load you with my secrets more,

Tho' you should kneel in tears, and beg to share them:

It argues folly to pursue a trifle. 195

Chry. Enjoy your fancied wisdom by yourself;

When ruin'd, you'll too late approve my caution.

[Exit Chrysothemis.]

SCENE

S C E N E II.

C H O R U S.

Electra remains on the Stage while the Chorus sings.

I.

Cho. Why, when th' inhabitants of air,
 With tender duty, grateful care,
 Grant their aged parents food 200
 To whom their little souls they ow'd ;
 Why do not reas'ning men the same,
 And their whole lives by those dumb patterns frame ?
 But by Jove's shafts with terror bright,
 By heav'nly Themis, and eternal right, 205
 The wretch that dares their pow'r, shall soon
 Be from his guilty triumphs thrown.
 Thou, Fame, that dost all mortal actions know,
 Thy melancholy trumpet blow ;
 Pierce the centre with the sound, 210
 The ears of the Atridæ wound ;
 Whilst thou dost a tale relate,
 Full of sorrow, full of fate !

II.

How all their house in wild disorder stands ;
 The children disunite their friendly hands ; 215
 How Electra, wretched maid !
 Forlorn, t' a thousand ills betray'd,
 For her father melts in tears,
 And a constant sorrow wears :
 As in sorrow-singing strains 220
 The mournful nightingale complains.
 Fearless of danger and of death,
 She would a victory obtain,
 Would see the two domestic furies slain,
 And in the glorious cause resign her breath. 225
 For who, of noble parents born,
 Can live a slave to guilt and impious scorn ?

III.

III.

The well-descended and the great,
 'Throw off the vile incumb'ring weight
 Of things that would obscure their fame, 230
 Assert their glory, and redeem their name.

Thou, Oh, noble, wretched fair !
 Who hast a life of irksome woes.
 Before dishonest honours chose ;
 Thou shalt double praises wear ; 235
 Stand eternally renown'd,
 With justice and with wisdom crown'd.

IV.

Oh, may'st thou live, succeed, and grow,
 In strength above the tyrants' soar ;
 As much as now thou art below, 240
 And crush'd by their injurious pow'r.
 I've seen thee struggling with thy fate,
 Inimitably shine ;
 Amidst thy sorrows resolutely great,
 Religious, constant, and divine. 245

END of the THIRD ACT.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Orestes, Pylades, Electra, Chorus, and *A'tendants on*
Orestes.

ORESTES.

YE virgins, will your goodness set me right,
 If, misinform'd by guides, I tread erroneous ?
Cho. Whom do you seek, or whither would you go ?
Orest. My search determines in Ægythus' palace.
Cho. This is the dome : accuse not your director. 5
Orest. Which of you will inform the royal house,
 Some Phocian men have business with Ægythus ?
Elect. Oh, heav'ns ! are these the messengers of fate,
 Who bring the proofs of the report we heard ?

Orest.

Orest. I know not what you heard; but aged Strophius

10

Dispatch'd me here with news about Orestes.

Elect. What is it, stranger? Oh, I shake for fear!

Orest. In that small urn we bring the small remains
Of his dead body.

Elect. ——— Oh, my wretched state!

Then is the measure of my sorrows full.

13

Orest. If these your tears are for Orestes shed,

Know, that this urn contains the man you mourn.

Elect. Oh, then, if ever pity touch'd your breast,
Permit me to receive it in these arms;

To mourn my own and his disastrous fate,

20

And wash his ashes with unfeigned tears.

Orest. Whoe'er she be, surrender her the urn;

She asks not like a foe; but all her words

Bespeak a friend's concern, or kindred love.

Elect. Oh, dear memorial of my dearest friend!

25

Ye scanty relics of Orestes!—Oh,

How different from him my hopes had form'd!

From him I sent, do I receive you now?

Dissolv'd to dust, and crumbling into nothing.

I sent you forth a glorious blooming child;

30

But, Oh, that I had dy'd an hundred times,

Ere thus condemn'd you to a luckless exile!

Stol'n from thy mother's rage, and sav'd from slaughter;

For on that day thou might'st have fall'n secure,

And had a share of Agamemnon's tomb!

35

Now far from home, stretch'd on a foreign shore

You perish'd — There no sister was at hand,

To wash thy cold and stiffen'd limbs, or bear

A torch to kindle up thy fun'ral flame.

But dress'd by strangers' hands at length you come,

40

A little body in a little urn.

Alas, my' unprofitable nursing cares,

The busy offices I paid your youth,

My pleasing labours o'er your infant years,

Are come to nought! Electra rear'd thee up,

45

And with her fondness eas'd th' attendant's task;

View'd thee with joy above thy mother's raptures,

And prov'd thy sister in distinguish'd passion.

But one curs'd day has mow'd down all my labours,

4

And,

And, like a whirlwind, swept their mem'ry hence, 50
 And thee with them. My father went before :
 Now I am dead to thee, and thou to me.
 Our foes insult ; our mother, in contempt
 Of nature, triumphs, and grows mad with pleasure :
 On whom I long have fed delusive hopes 55
 That thou would'st come, and reap the vengeance due.
 But fate has frustrated the just event,
 And mock'd my expectations with thy dust.
 Oh, weight of sorrow ! most untimely change !
 Unhappy progress, and destructive games ! 60
 How hast thou kill'd thy sister, poor Orestes !
 Receive me, therefore to thy little house,
 Like thee, a shadow : so may we converse,
 And meet below, to mourn our mutual suff'rings :
 For whilst thou wert on earth, my soul partook 65
 Of all thy pleasures, griev'd in all thy pains ;
 And therefore would I die and share thy tomb :
 For all is peace, all quiet in the grave.

Cho. Oh, think, Electra, on your mortal state !
 Think too, Orestes, like yourself, was mortal, 70
 And let that calm your sorrows. Death's a debt
 All owe to nature, all at times must pay.

Orest. What shall I say ? My bosom swells for vent,
 And I'm no longer master of my tongue.

Elect. Whence is th' oppression of your heaving
 breast ? 75

Orest. Is that Electra's celebrated face ?

Elect. This is her face ; but all its charms are dead.

Orest. Curse on the suff'rings that have spoil'd thy
 beauty !

Elect. How can my griefs from thee deserve this pity ?

Orest. Oh, beauteous form, consum'd and worn with
 sorrows ! 80

Elect. All your complaints will centre in this wretch,

Orest. To waste her youth in virgin solitude !

Elect. Why dost thou look upon me thus, and sigh ?

Orest. I was a stranger to my griefs till now.

Elect. And can you see them by reflection here ? 85

Orest. I see thee vex'd with unexampled wrongs.

Elect. You see but little of the ills I bear.

Orest. Can sorrow furnish out a scene more dreadful ?

Elect.

Elect. Yes ; to be forc'd to dwell with murderers.

Orest. Of whom ?

Elect. — My father : forc'd to be their slave. 90

Orest. Who is the author of this cruel force ?

Elect. One whose fell actions give the lie to nature ;
And say, she's not my mother. —

Orest. — But the means ?

Does she by strong compulsion bow you down,
Or savagely withdraw your life's support ? 95

Elect. By all th' extremes her impious heart can think,
She gives me woe —

Orest. — Is no protector near ?

Elect. None ; he that would have been, is here — in dust.

Orest. My heart is wounded with your helpless state.

Elect. Thou only hast with kind compassion view'd
me. 100

Orest. I only feel the sympathetic pain.

Elect. Dost thou to ties of blood owe thy compassion ?

Orest. Might I confide my fortunes with these maids,
You then should learn —

Elect. — Their faith is bound to me.

Orest. Set down the urn, and you shall hear my
story. 105

Elect. Now, by the gods, let me possess this treasure.

Orest. Be counsell'd, maid ; you will not err in this.

Elect. By all the honours of your birth, I beg,
Force not these dear remains from my embrace.

Orest. You must not keep them —

Elect. — — Oh, increase of woe ! 110

If I'm deny'd to bury thee, Orestes.

Orest. Auspicious speak ; your sorrow is not just.

Elect. Do I not justly mourn my brother's death ?

Orest. The word is out of time ; forbear these sounds.

Elect. Am I not worthy then to mourn his fate ? 115

Orest. Of nought unworthy ; but your sorrows err.

Elect. What, when I bear his ashes in my hands ?

Orest. You only carry his imagin'd dust.

Elect. Ah ! where is then the wretched youth interr'd ?

Orest. No where — the living covet not a grave. 120

Elect. Is he alive ? —

Orest. — — He is, if I am so.

Elect. And art thou he ?

D

Orest.

Orest. ——— Behold my father's signet,
And know your brother from the happy proof.

Elect. Oh, blessed day !

Orest. ——— I join to bless it with you.

Elect. And do I hear thee speak ?

Orest. ——— Distrust not, maid.

125

Elect. Do my arms hold thee ?

Orest. ——— May they ever do so.

Elect. My dear companions, do you see Orestes,
Reviving by those arts that spoke him dead ?

Cho. I see, Oh, virgin ! and the sudden joy
Trickles in tears of pleasure from my eyes.

130

Elect. Oh, thou lov'd offspring of my much-lov'd fire,
You're come, you've found a long-expecting friend !
You're come, you've seen whom long you wish'd to see !

Orest. I'm come ; but speak not with so loud a joy.

Elect. Wherefore ?

Orest. ——— Lest they within o'er-hear your tran-
sports.

135

Elect. But, by Diana, the unconquer'd maid,
Electra will not condescend to fear

What women's impotence can do against us.

Orest. Remember, women have their martial hours.

Elect. Oh, you have set before my eyes afresh,
The glaring image of my father's wrongs ;

140

An ever-living scene of villainy,
Ne'er to be expiated, ne'er forgot !

Orest. I know our wrongs, and, at a proper hour,
You shall relate the mournful tale entire.

145

Elect. It is a theme will suit with ev'ry time ;
But most with this ; for at this present hour
I have regain'd the liberty of speech.

Orest. Be studious to preserve what you've regain'd.

Elect. How ?

Orest. By restraining these extatic joys.

150

Elect. Who could be silent in a joy like mine ?
Who smother the big rapture, thus transported,
When I behold thee in a glad surprise,
As ris'n from death, and by a wonder rescu'd ?

Orest. You saw me, when the gods first bade me
come.

155

Elect.

Elek. My joys encrease with every word thou speak'st,
 And thy last accents yield superior pleasure.
 For if the gods instructed thy return,
 Kind Heav'n concerns itself in our distress,
 And sure will prosper what itself began. 160

Orest. I would indulge the transports of your joy,
 But fear they're too excessive to be safe.

Elek. Since after such a painful age of absence,
 At length you come to bless my longing eyes, 164
 That have been quench'd with sorrow, do not now——

Orest. What must I not?

Elek. —— Deprive me of the joy,
 Th' unmeasur'd joy I feel in gazing on thee.

Orest. I will not, sister; 'twould displease me much,
 Should any one attempt in that to wrong thee.

Elek. And does my fondness please thee?

Orest. —— Should it not? —— 170

Elek. Oh, friends, I heard the dreadful tale of death!
 Then my strong passion was without a voice,
 Compell'd to hear, nor suffer'd to lament:
 But now I hold thee, and thy lovely form,
 Whose image sorrow could not e'er erase, 175
 With cordial smiles revives my fainting soul.

Orest. Oh, stop this wild career of swelling pleasure!
 Nor tell me now my mother's impious deeds;
 Nor how Ægysthus drains my father's house,
 Squanders his wealth, and riots in his substance. 180
 Th' untimely speech would hinder our design.
 Rather instruct the course of my revenge:
 Shall we with open force rush boldly on them,
 Or by a licens'd fraud deceive our foes,
 And suddenly surprise them into ruin? 185

But, Oh, take heed, suppress your struggling joy,
 Nor let your mother trace its infant pleasures!
 Still wear the sorrow which you did before,
 And for my death suppos'd, dissembling sigh.
 When fate has crown'd us with th' events we wish, 190
 Then may we smile, and give a loose to joy.

Elek. Oh, brother, still your pleasure shall be mine!
 For all my pleasure takes its rise from you:
 No comforts has Elektra from herself;
 Nor would I rob you of a moment's ease, 195

To purchase to myself the grea'est joy :
 For should my transports stop your glorious aims,
 They would affront the now assisting pow'rs.
 You know th' affairs within, and have been told
 Ægysthus is not there ; my mother is. 200
 But harbour not a thought, that she shall e'er
 Behold a transport kindle on this cheek ;
 Hate shall controul and dash each rising pleasure :
 And ev'n beholding thee, my tears afresh
 Shall stream for joy : for how should I forbear, 205
 Who in the space of one short morn have seen thee
 Dead and alive, miraculous surprize !
 Should my dead father now return from earth,
 I should not wonder, but believe my sense.
 Since then so unexpected thou art come, 210
 Perform the work which else was doom'd for me :
 For ere you came, my soul had entertain'd
 Resolves of vengeance, with a glorious view
 Of noble freedom, or of noble death.
Orest. But soft : for some approach us from within ; 215
Elect. Strangers, go in ;—ye messengers of things
 None can refuse, yet none with joy receive.

S C E N E II.

Governor, Orestes, Pylades, Attendants, Electra and Chorus.

Gov. Oh, lost to wisdom, and all prudent thoughts !
 Have you abandon'd all concern for life ?
 Shook hands with reason, and bid Fate defiance ? 220
 Who stand not near, but in the midst of dangers,
 And those the greatest too, yet know it not ?
 For had not I secur'd these outward gates,
 Employ'd their ears, and guarded ev'ry sense,
 Your measures had by this, been all betray'd : 225
 But I have cover'd you as yet with care ;
 Wherefore give o'er these talkative delays ;
 And this insatiate burst of noisy joy ;
 And enter strait : for in attempts like these,
 Delays are ill, when deeds require dispatch. 230
Orest. Are all things ready to receive me there ?
Gov. All, all ; nor can they know you.

Orest.

Orest. ——— Then you told
The necessary tale of my decease.

Gov. Besure, you're dead to all the world but us.

Orest. Did they with raptures hear the news, or how?

Gov. Suspend the long recital till anon ; 236
For all looks well within, yet all's not well.

Elect. For Heav'n's sweet sake, Orestes, who is this?

Orest. Know you not him?

Elect. ——— I cannot call to mind.

Orest. Have you forgot to whom you once bequeath'd
me? 240

Elect. Whom do you mean?

Orest. ——— By whose officious hands
Your love convey'd me to the Phocian land?

Elect. Is this that only faithful man I found,
Durst aid th' afflicted when my father fell?

Orest. He is ; at present seek no farther proof. 245

Elect. Oh, blessings on thy head, thou great support
Of Agamemnon's house ! And art thou he
Redeem'd us from such ills ? Oh, let me kiss
Those hands, and kneel t' embrace those aiding feet.
How could you keep yourself so long conceal'd ? 250
Or how my eyes mistake you, though disguis'd ?
Your words were cruel, but your works were kind ;
Ill was your news, but friendly its design.
Hail, father ! (for I see my father in you,)
Hail ! Never was a man in one short day 255
So much detested, and so much ador'd !——

Gov. Enough of praise ; until the circling hours
Inform you farther how we have deserv'd ;
And teach you all the series of our fortunes.
But now I turn myself to you, my prince ; 260
'Tis time for action ; Clytemnestra's now
Alone without her guard ; if you omit
This happy moment, think you will be drove
T' encounter numbers arming in her rescue.

Orest. The present business wants no more debate ; 265
But, Oh ! my Pylades, let's haste to action :
Thus bending to these genial pow'rs for aid,
Who grace the portal, and protect the dome.

[*Exeunt Orestes, Pylades, and Governor.*]

S C E N E III.

Electra and Chorus.

Elect. O king Apollo, hear them when they pray;
 And me with them; who with a bounteous hand 270
 Have ever, to my pow'r, adorn'd thy shrine.
 And now, O Lycian god, prostrate, with awe,
 I bless thy godhead, and implore thy favour;
 Assist the righteous vengeance now in hand,
 And shew mankind with what detesting eyes 275
 The gods behold and punish guilty mortals!

S C E N E IV.

C H O R U S.

I.

Cho. See where the god of battle stalks,
 Breathing discord, foaming blood;
 Through all the guilty haunts he walks;
 Th' avenging furies at his heels provoke 280
 The destin'd stroke,
 No more to be avoided, or withstood.
 For horror now the scene does draw,
 Which my prophetic soul foresaw.

II.

Agamemnon's shade t' appease, 285
 With silent steps behold the son,
 Beneath the guilty roof is gone;
 And see! the vengeful sword he brandishes!
 Maia's son attendance pays,
 And wrapt in clouds the youth conveys; 290
 While he the task of fate obeys,
 Unknowing of delays.

END of the FOURTH ACT.

ACT

A C T V. S C E N E I.

Electra and Chorus.

ELECTRA.

WAIT with attentive silence, dearest maids;
For strait they will achieve the work of horror.

Cho. Oh! how do they proceed?

Elect. ————— While she prepares
The customary banquet, to allay
The sorrow of her son's imagin'd death;
They press around her, watchful; ———

Cho. ————— Wherefore then
Did you come forth?

Elect. ————— To guard against surprize,
And give them notice, should Ægythus come.

Cly. [*Within.*] Oh, fatal hour! some help—I am
beset;

Naked of friends, and cover'd with destroyers! 10

Elect. What shrieks are those? Did you not hear
them, friends?

Cho. I heard the frightful cry, and shake with horror.

Cly. [*Within.*] Confusion! Oh, Ægythus, Oh! where
are you?

Elect. The noise grows louder.

Cly. [*Within.*] ————— Oh, my son, my son,
Have pity on thy mother!

Elect. ————— Thou had'st none
On him, or on his bleeding father. ———

Cho. ————— Oh!

Oh, wretched city! Oh, disastrous race!

Death and destruction lay the princes waste!

Cly. [*Within.*] Oh! I am hurt.

Elect. ————— Repeat, repeat the blow.

Cly. [*Within.*] Alas! for mercy ———

Elect. ————— Oh, that curst Ægythus, 20
Caught in the toil, did groan like thee, defenceless!

Cho. The potent execrations are fulfill'd!
The long deceas'd revive; and drain the blood
Of those, whose hands were once embu'd in slaughter!

SCENE

S C E N E II.

Electra, Orestes, Pylades, *Attendants, and* Chorus.

Elect. Behold they come ! And their discolour'd hands
Drop with the crimson sacrifice of Mars ! 26

Speak, my Orestes, how succeeds our cause ?

Orest. All's well within ; unless the god deceive :
The wretch is dead ; nor need you longer fear,
Your mother's pride shall e'er insult you more. 30

Cho. No more ;—for, lo ! Ægysthus is in fight.

Elect. Oh, yet retire ; he comes as you could wish ;
He comes in triumph from his rural sports ;
And unsuspecting joy glows on his cheek.

Cho. Therefore with speed retire, ere he behold : 35
And since auspicious fate has led the way,
Complete the work you have so well begun.

Orest. Fear not ; success shall crown us——

Elect. ——But, retire.

Orest. I go——

[Orestes, Pylades, and *Attendants* retire.

Elect. ——And leave the business here to me.

Cho. 'Twere fit a while we entertain the tyrant 40
With courteous accents, and dissembled meekness,
To win him on, and sooth him into ruin.

S C E N E III.

Ægysthus, Electra, and Chorus.

Ægyst. Who can inform us where those Phocians are,
Who bring the tidings how Orestes perish'd,
Thrown from his chariot in the Pythian games ? 45
You, I suppose—whose daring insolence
Till now has lived in him : you, I suppose,
As most concern'd, can give the best account.

Elect. Too well ; I can ; for how should I but know
The dearest accident which could befall me ? 50

Ægyst. Instruct us quickly where the strangers are.

Elect. Within ; they meet a kind reception there.

Ægyst. Do they bring certain news that he is dead ?

Elect. They do not tell it, but they shew him dead.

Ægyst. May we then witness to it with our eyes ? 55

Elect. You may behold the spectacle of horror !

Ægyst. I never joy'd to hear thee speak till now!—

Elect. Be pleas'd, if things like these can give you pleasure.

Ægyst. Be silent, and set open all the gates ;

Let all Mycenæ, nay, all Argos see : 60

If any one encourag'd empty hopes,

Let him behold the carcass of this man ;

And bend him to my pow'r ; nor hence presume

With disobedient pride to wake my wrath.

Elect. I will obey your orders — for at length 65
I've learnt submission ; and must stoop to pow'r.

S C E N E IV.

SCENE opening discovers the body of Clytemnestra covered ;
Orestes, Pylades, and Attendants round it, Ægysthus,
Electra, and Chorus.

Ægyst. By Heav'n, he's fallen ; nor undeserv'd his
But, if my words transgress, I say no more. (fate!

Take from his face the veil, that I may pay
My debt of sorrow o'er my kinsman's body ! 70

Orest. Yourself unveil it ; it belongs to you,
First to behold and mourn the friend's disaster.

Ægyst. You well advise, and I'll obey your counsel ;
Let some go call my Clytemnestra forth.——

Orest. She's near you ; look not any where, but here——
[Uncovers the body.]

Ægyst. Death to my eyes !

Orest. —— Of what are you afraid ? 76

Are you a stranger to your consort's face ?

Ægyst. In whose damn'd snares am I unhappy fall'n ?

Orest. Do you but now begin to apprehend

You've parly'd with the man, imagin'd dead ? 80

Ægyst. Alas ! I understand the vaunting speech,
And fear Orestes spoke it.——

Orest. —— Boast thyself

No more a prophet, who so long hast err'd !

Ægyst. I feel, I am undone ; but give me leave
To argue for a while.——

Elect. —— Now, by the gods, 85

Permit him not to waste the time in words.

What can a short reprieve from death import,

Per-

Perplex'd with fears, and lengthen'd out with pain?
 Dispatch the villain strait; and let them throw
 His body forth, a prey to dogs and vultures?— 90
 Far from our sight! for this alone remains
 To cure my sorrows, and conclude our vengeance.

Orest. No more delay of words; but enter there;—
 You are not now to argue, but to die.

Ægyst. But wherefore enter there?—If honour
 strikes, 95
 Why should you shame to give the blow in public?

Orest. Contend not with thy doom; but strait obey:
 For where you kill'd my father, thou shalt die.

Ægyst. This house shall be the future scene of death,
 And drink the blood of all the race of Pelops.— 100

Orest. Thine it shall drink; I dare foretel thee, tyrant.

Ægyst. Your fire had no such talent of prediction!

Orest. Your speech offends; and I delay too long.

Go on——

Ægyst. But lead the way.

Orest. ———No; thou shalt lead. 104

Ægyst. Do you suspect I should escape your wrath?

Orest. Heav'n guard my vengeance from a fear like
 that!

But I would rob thee of content in death,
 And make it bitter in each circumstance.
 Did justice thus pursue the sinner close,
 Nor lag with lazy steps behind the crime; 110
 The world would then be frighted into virtue.

[*Goes in, driving Ægysthus before him.*]

Cbo. Oh, seed of Atreus, how hast thou been cross'd!

Through what varieties of anguish tost!

Till late, with stern attempts, the vengeful sword

Has peace and banish'd liberty restor'd. 115

END of the FIFTH ACT.

NOTES

N O T E S

U P O N

E L E C T R A.

THE subject of this tragedy is the return of Orestes from Phocis to Argos, and his revenge of his father's murder, in the death of Ægysthus and Clytemnestra. But the poet did not think fit to give this poem a title from that important incident; which makes its catastrophe; but rather chose to call it Electra. This lady was the elder sister of Orestes, and who (when their father Agamemnon, on his return from Troy, was inhumanly murdered by his own wife Clytemnestra, and her paramour Ægysthus) was the instrument of securing her tender brother from the rage of the murderers, by conveying him to Strophius, king of Phocis, through the care of a faithful and secret servant. Clytemnestra and Ægysthus, after Agamemnon's death, possessed themselves of the government of Argos, slipped no opportunities of expressing their resentment towards Electra for this action.

The poet in her character has laboured to express her miseries with vast variety: and given her the true features of an heroic daughter through the whole poem. All her sentiments give a fresh subject for admiration; and she is equally wonderful in her strong and implacable resentments against her father's murderers; in her impatience for Orestes to come and revenge him; in her excessive sorrows for her brother's supposed disaster; in
her

her transports, when she comes to know he is living; and in her zeal, for the performance of his revenge when once on foot.

I shall take notice of the artful constitution of this tragedy, in my following notes on the several acts; and what a natural foundation there is for the respective incidents, which are prepared without being foreseen.

The subject of *Ægysthus* and *Clytemnestra's* death employed the pens of the three great Greek tragedians; but they are all so different in the disposition of the same stories, that I believe (with *Monfieur Hedelin*, in his whole art of the stage;) they were the cause of that grand disorder and confusion, there is in story and chronology in those old times: because that they, having changed both the times and events for their own ends, have influenced some historians, who thought to pick out of them the truth of story, and so made all things uncertain. Any body that will read the *Electra* of *Euripides*, this of *Sophocles*, and the *Cœphoræ* of *Æschylus*, will easily see that they made no difficulty of contradicting one another, nor even themselves.

NOTES

NOTES upon the FIRST ACT.

Ver. 1. *Governor.*] He supports the part of a very useful protactick; and by him the poet has artfully explained to the audience the place of the scene, Mycenæ in Argos; the time when the action commences, the break of day; the manner he received Orestes from his sister Electra, to be conveyed to Phocis; and Pylades's accompanying of Orestes, from Phocis, in his return to Argos.

Ver. 6. *Of Inachus's—Daughter.*] whose name was Io: but her story having no manner of relation to the present poem, I shall refer the reader for it to my Prometheus of Æschylus, which will shortly be published, where there is ample occasion for touching her history in many circumstances.

Ver. 8. *Glorious God of day.*] The original has it τῷ λυκοδόμῳ θεῷ, of the *Wolf-destroying God*; but I was of opinion, this epithet would make no very beautiful appearance in English; and therefore was not obliged (according to Horace) *verbum verbo reddere*. Besides, that I do not remember the story of Apollo's destroying the wolves; any farther than as Mr. Lloyd, in his *Lexicon Historico-Poeticum*, says, (on the word, Lycius) that there was an oracle of the Lycian Apollo, *quidā in Lycia maximè claus fuit ob Luporum interfecionem*: or, perhaps, he obtained the epithet from the wolf's being sacrificed to him, as a beast obnoxious to his displeasure, who was the god of the shepherds. Or again, if we will learn the truth from Triclinius (one of the scholiasts,) on this passage, it will come very near my translation of it: for, he says, Apollo is to be considered allegorically as the sun; who by his presence and resulgence extinguishes the dawn, which resembles the colour of a wolf, (τῷ λύκῳ) and therefore is called in Greek, τὸ λυκάφως.

Ver. 9. *Juno's awful temple.*] The Greek says, her famous temple; and Sophocles very skilfully takes notice of a temple to her there, because Argos (as likewise Mycenæ, Sparta, Samos, &c.) was peculiarly sacred to Juno.

— *In Junonis honorem*
Aptum dicit equis Argos, dicesque Mycenæ.

says Horace; those who are curious of knowing her claim to this region, may consult Nat. Com. l. 8. cap. 22.

Ver. 16. *And you, Pylades.*] A stalking prince would make but a very odd figure on our theatre, however the mute character was relished by the Athenians. Sophocles has not given this prince leave to open his mouth; Æschylus indeed, in his *Cœphoræ*, has so far complimented his quality, as to make him speak three verses: And Euripides, who, in his *Electra*, has tied the tongue of Pylades, even when he had that lady given him by her brother, to wife; has in some measure made him amends in his *Orestes* and *Iphig. Taurica*, in both which he speaks, as well as acts, like a prince and a friend.

Ver. 54. *Mean while, as the great.*] The learned Dr. Potter, in his *Antiquities of Greece*, has inadvertently run into more than one error on this passage: for quoting it, he takes notice, “ That *Electra* in Sophocles says, “ that *Agamemnon* had commanded her and *Chrysothemis* to dedicate their hair to his tomb;” and therefore thus he translates it,

“ With drink-off’rings and locks of hair, we must,
 “ According to his will, his tomb adorn.”

Now, in the first place, this is not spoken by *Electra* to her sister, but by *Orestes* to *Pylades*. And this error betrayed him into a worse mistake in the version; for (ὡς ἐφ’ ἑαυτοῦ) which he renders (*according to his will*) meaning *Agamemnon’s*, has not the least regard to *Agamemnon*, but directly to *Apollo*; as any learned examiner may satisfy himself. *Ast opere in tanto fas est obrepere somnum.*

Ver. 68. *Oft have I heard.*] The scholiast thinks Sophocles had an eye to the story concerning *Pythagoras*, (told by *Hermippus* in *Diog. Laertius*;) “ That when he came to Italy, he made a private room under ground; and having caused a report to be spread of his

“ his death, he hid himself in that room, ordering his
“ mother to let him down meat privately from time to
“ time, with an account in writing of all affairs that
“ happened in Crotona, and the places about. After a
“ time he comes abroad, pretending to be risen from the
“ dead, and tells all the things that had happened since
“ his supposed death, as if he had learned them in the
“ other world.” Which project procured him a mighty
authority. Tertullian, in his book of the Soul, gives
the same account of this story; only adds this particular,
that he stayed under ground seven years. ’Tis not im-
probable, that Sophocles might have an eye to this story,
as a thing not very distant from his own age: but that
Orestes, who speaks, should do so too, would be to make
him guilty of an Anachronism with a vengeance. There-
fore I am inclined to suppose, it may have a reference to
Ulysses more properly; but to this the scholiast will
object, *ὡ γὰρ ἀνέπαυται τὴ τοῖσιν Ὀδυσσεύϊ*, there no such
thing happened to Ulysses: No, he did not hide under
ground for a season; but he was long supposed dead at
Ithaca, and rose upon them suddenly from obscurity to
splendor.

Ver. 90. *Appease, invoke.*] This is one mark of the
poet’s art in his scenery, that he will not permit Orestes
to stay on the stage to be satisfied in Electra’s cause of
sorrow; for then the discovery of his return would be
too early: but he clears the scene, not only to make
room for Electra’s complaints to herself; but likewise by
sending Orestes to make oblations at his father’s tomb,
prepares a remembrance which cannot be foreseen, and
which he has reserved for the opening of his third act.

Ver. 165. *And how, Iphianassa.*] Triclinius upon this
place says, that Euripides and the other poets, mean one
person by Iphigenia and Iphianassa. That the Latin
poets, as well as the Greek, confound these two names,
is plain from these lines of Lucretius,

*Aulide quo pacto Triviai Virginis aram
Iphianassai turpârunt sanguine sædè
Ductores, Danaum delicti, prima virorum.*

But then the commentators are staggered to know, why the poet should make the Chorus mention Iphianassa, or Iphigenia, who was now at Diana's shrine in Tauris: But Triclinius says, the Chorus mention her though absent from Mycenæ, with the same reason they do Orestes; who, as they thought, was at Phocis. I must confess, I do not pretend to be certain whom the poet here intends by Iphianassa; but I think, with submission to Triclinius, Sophocles did not here mean Iphigenia: for it would be very absurd to suppose Iphigenia in a living capacity of inouraing for her father, when in the first scene of the second act, Clytemnestra excuses her murder of Agamemnon, as a just reprisal upon him, for sacrificing her daughter Iphigenia on Diana's altar at Aulis.

Ver. 171. *Debarr'd of wedlock.*] The poet throughout this tragedy, in many places, insinuates the hardship upon Electra, of being denied the privilege of marrying; and makes her complain to Chrysothemis, that Ægyllus would never suffer them to propagate a race to his destruction. Euripides makes Ægyllus marry her to a person who boasts of his family, but is decayed in his fortunes. Some, who favour Sophocles's opinion, will have her derive her name from her single state, *quasi ἀλέκτρα*, i. e. *sine Thalamo*. Ælian in his Various History informs us, that Xanthus, the Lyrick poet, says her first name was Laodice; but, that after Agamemnon's murder, ἀλέκτροι ἔσαν καὶ καίσαρξ ὦσαν παρβέροντες Ἀργεῖοι ἡλέκτραν ἐκάλεσαν, διὰ τὸ ἀμοιρεῖν ἀνδρὸς, καὶ μὴ πεπεισῆσθαι λέκτρον, growing old in virginity, the Argives called her Electra, because of her living without an husband.

Ver. 184. *On Crissa's verdant shore.*] Crissa, or Crisa, was a town of Phocis near the Corinthian bay; which from its neighbourhood to that town, was called Sinus Crissæus.

Ver. 195. *And set with offals.*] The Greek is *κεναῖς ἐφισταμαι τραπέζαις*. *I am set at empty tables.*

Ver. 332. *Chrysothemis approach.*] Sophocles has partly introduced the character of Chrysothemis, a lady of a mild and condescending temper, to heighten the more manly and stubborn sentiments of Electra, as he does again the part of Ismene in his Antigone. But the entrance of Chrysothemis is likewise very artful, and necessary

cessary to the carrying on the plot of the play : for as Clytemnestra's ugly dream naturally required expiations to avert its horrors, so her sending Chrysothemis to make oblations at Agamemnon's tomb, easily prepares the first remembrance and suggestion of Orestes's return, by her finding a lock of his hair on the monument, and signs of other customary honours paid to the sepulchre.

Ver. 398. *Subterranean prison.*] It was a custom with the ancients, when they would make away with any one, and not be polluted (as they thought) with his blood ; to shut him up in a dark cavern, and there leave him to die. I will give a confirmation of this by one example out of our own author : Creon having actually condemned Antigone to the same punishment with which Electra is here threatened, washes his hands of her blood ; saying,

Ἡμεῖς γὰρ αἶσιν τῷπὶ τῇδε τὴν κόρην.

Upon which the scholiast comments thus, (τελείων ἀκοινώρητοι) τῷ φόνει τέτα, φησὶ, διὰ τὸ μὴ χεῖσιν αὐτὴν αἰσθηκέναι.

Ver. 464. *To disarm resentment.*] These words I have added in explanation of a very odd custom, alluded to by the poet. If any one killed another treacherously, he straight cut off all the extreme parts of the outmost members of the party slain, and sewing or tying them together, wore them under his arm-pits ; as an amulet or spell to prevent the furies from haunting the murderer. And they believed, that having part of the murdered body in their power, as an hostage, to do what they would with, the ghost of the party would not offer to meddle with them ; or else would spare the bearer, for love of the carriage. The pieces thus cut off, they called ἀκρωτήρια, and ἀπάξματα, or ἐξάσματα, as in Apollonius : and the action of so mutilating the person, was called ἀκρωτηριάζην : so sometimes the pieces cut off, they called μασχαλίσματα, from the action (μασχαλίζειν,) of fixing them under their arm-pits ; which last term is used here by Sophocles.

Ver. 465. *Wipe the abomination off.*] The first scholiast on this passage says, he that had killed another, wiped off the stains of blood from his sword, either on the hair

E 3. of

of his own head, or of the party slain. Triclinius says particularly on the hair of the party slain, which is undoubtedly the truest. I will go a step farther than either of the scholiasts on this place, by informing the reader, that they only thus wiped away the abomination of the fact, when they spilt the blood unjustly. But if they thought they did it in a good cause, they used to take the sword, and hold it up towards the sun with the blood on it; *ὀμβροῖον τῇ δικαίῳ πεφονευμένῳ*, says the scholiast on Euripides in *Orestes*; to shew that they feared not if Heaven were witness.

Ver. 528. *For e'er since Myrtilus.*] He was the son of Mercury by Phaëthusa; when he drove Oenomaus in a chariot-race, being corrupted by the promises of Pelops, he so ordered it, that his master's chariot broke by the way, and his master with the fall, broke his neck. Oenomaus expiring, conjured Pelops to revenge his death; who afterwards, when Myrtilus demanded the reward of his treachery, threw him from a rock into the sea, which from his name was called the Myrtoan sea.

NOTES upon the SECOND ACT:

Ver. 2. *Ægysthus is not here.*] The poet's contrivance is wonderful in making Ægysthus absent; for thereby he takes occasion to heighten Electra's distress, by saying, she could not have had the liberty of stirring out of the palace, if he were at home; and likewise by leaving Clytemnestra alone, he facilitates the catastrophe of his poem. Euripides has likewise, in his *Electra*, sent him into the fields to do sacrifice, and make a rural banquet.

Ver. 18. *Murdered your sister.*] This confirms what I have observed on the first act, that Iphianassa could not be intended for Iphigenia by Sophocles, whom he so often in Clytemnestra's speech expressly intimates to be dead; and therefore Triclinius, on one passage, notes thus, *ἦγεν ἡ Ἰφιγένεια, ἔχ' ἦν. ὑπ' Ἀλέμιδο ἀρπάζεισαν, ἀλλὰ θανῶσαν ἤγειτο*. But I designed this note of a different nature; all discourses brought on the stage, ought to have no particular reference to the diversion of the audience,

audience, unless drawn from the very ground and nature of the subject, and absolutely necessary to the same. I fear Clytemnestra's vindication of her husband's death, and Electra's condemnation of her for it, will fall under the displeasure of this rule; for however fine and affecting the discourses may be in themselves, I doubt they are introduced with regard to the spectators alone; for as Agamemnon had been killed twenty years ago, it necessarily argues, that the justice, or guilt of his death, must have been a subject already sufficiently canvassed betwixt Clytemnestra and her daughter.

Ver. 29. *They both had dy'd.*] The old authors vary mightily in regard to Helen's Children. Eustathius on Homer says, she only bore Hermione, and that she was not permitted to have any more children, because childbirth is accounted to spoil women's beauty. But some say, she bore two children to Paris. Sophocles here gives her two by Menelaus; which agrees, as the scholiast observes, with Hesiod's account,

Ἡ τέκεθ' Ἡερμιόνην θεοικλυτῶ Μενελάω,
Ὀπλόταλον δ' ἔτεκεν Νικόσταλον, ὄζον Ἀργεῶν.

But Pausanias in Corinthiac, says, Menelaus had Nicostratus and Megapenthes by a slave; but others say, her proper name was Δάλη, i. e. *Serua*.

Ver. 123. *Inauspicious words.*] 'Tis almost too well known to require a note, how superstitious the old Greeks were in point of all ominous words, and particularly in matters of religion. Before their holy ceremonies began, the cryer gave this charge to the people, *Εὐφημίτε*, which answers to the terms afterwards used by the Romans, *favete linguis*; which do not so strictly enjoin a deep silence, as an abstaining from all prophane and ominous words,

————— *Male ominatis*
Parcite verbis. Hor.

For they reckoned that such terms prophaned the sacrifice; (and therefore Plautus calls it, *obscenare*) and if these expressions were uttered by any one nearly related
to

to the person, whose business was in hand, they took the greater notice of them, and accounted them so much the worse. Or if the omen were immediately caught by the hearer, or struck upon his imagination, it was of the more force.

Ver. 129. *Shall free me from the fears.*] We have heard already in the first act, that Clytemnestra had disclosed her dream to the *Rising Sun*, to deprecate its omen: this she did conformable to the customs of the ancients; and Triclinius helps us out with their reason for it, ἡ ἐπειδὴ ἰανήϊ (nempe ἥλιῳ) ἑτός ἐστι τῇ νυκτὶ, ἀποτρόπων ἐργασίαι, &c. *because the sun being contrary to the night, might have power to avert, or expel all evils brought by the same.* And therefore they gave the sun or Apollo the epithets of ἀποτρόποι, ἐξακετήρι, &c. But this telling of dreams was not always appropriated to one particular deity, but sometimes to Hercules, Jupiter, or the Household Gods. Nor was the disclosing of their fears reckoned sufficient, but they were to offer incense, or other oblations, and pray (as Clytemnestra here does) that if good was portended, it might be brought to pass; if the contrary, that the gods would avert whatever ill was boded by them. Æschylus, in his Persians, lets us into another custom in these cases; Queen Atossa being terrified by a nocturnal vision, as soon as she rose, went to a river, and washed away the pollutions of the night, before she approached the altars of the gods;

Ἐπεὶ δ' ἀνέστη, καὶ χερσὶν καλλιζέει
Ἐψαυσα πηγῆς, ὣν θνητόλων χερσὶ
Βωμῶν προσέειπεν, ἀποτρόποισι δαίμοσιν
Θύσσει δῶσαι πέλαντον, ὥν τέλη τέδωκε.

The scholiast on this place of Æschylus gives a different reason, why the sun was looked upon as the averter of dreams, τέττε γὰρ ἐπιλάμψαντι, οἱ ὕμνοι διασκηδάζονται, *for he once shining, dreams vanish and are dissipated.*

Ver. 157. *Her dress and person.*] The original is πρέπει γὰρ ὡς τύραννον εἰσορᾶν, which Mr. Johnson's late edition renders, *Decoro enim, ut regina, videtur vultu.* But I cannot think this expresses the whole meaning of the Greek,

Greek, as if the governor knew Clytemnestra to be a queen only by her face ; but (as the scholiast says better) φοχάζειαι ἐκ τῆς σολῆς καὶ τῶν βασιλείων, he concluded her such, from her robes and regalia.

Ver. 172. *Know, mighty queen*] I have taken a liberty in this narration, for which, however I may be accused by the adorers of Sophocles, I shall be easily pardoned by every English reader : I have ventured rather to make an agreeable innovation on, than be a faithful translator of, a passage which contains too tedious and graphical a description of the Pythian games to be relished at this time of day ; and cools the passion which it should excite, and keep warm by its conciseness and distress.

Ver. 174. *Celebrates her Pythian games.*] Aristotle finds fault with this narration in the *Electra* ; upon which it may not be improper to add part of Mr. Dacier's remarks. Sophocles was not so prudent and judicious in the management of some other of his pieces, as he was in *Oedipus* ; for in his *Electra*, he was guilty of the very fault that Aristotle here mentions, by putting in something that was absurd, and which is the more vicious, because he was the author of it. In the second scene of the second act, he who brings the false news of Orestes's death, says, That that prince being at the celebrated meeting of the Grecians, to assist at the Pythian games, won all the prizes, but was killed in the race of the chariots. Aristotle thought this was absurd, and out of all reason, not because it was not probable, that Ægisthus and Clytemnestra should not hear the news before the arrival of those who brought Orestes's ashes, for there were a thousand things which might hinder that ; but because the Pythian games were not instituted till above five years after Orestes was dead, and this falshood ruined all the probability of the piece, of which it was the foundation.—Without doubt, Sophocles thought his audience did not know the rise of those games, or else he would have taken care not to have made such an alteration in the epocha ; otherwise the absurdity is admirably well hid, under the wonderful charms which are in the relation, but that don't justify him.

Ver.

Ver. 287. *The fate of Amphiaraus.*] He was a great soothsayer, who foreseeing that all who went with Adrastus to the Theban war should perish, Adrastus only excepted, refused to go along with him, and prevented several others from entering into the same league. Adrastus was told, he need only give the necklace to Eriphyla, (Amphiaraus's wife) which Polynices had brought from Thebes, and which had been dedicated to harmony, to prevail on Amphiaraus to make one in the expedition. Adrastus obeyed the advice, and Eriphyla, charmed with the beauty of the necklace, promised to engage her husband; for that depended only on her, Amphiaraus having sworn to obey his wife in every thing.

Ver. 298. *Found a son.*] Alcmeon was the son of Amphiaraus; the father, on his departure for Thebes, strictly charged his son, who was then very young, that when he came to age, he should revenge his death by killing his mother. Alcmeon obeyed these orders very punctually: several of the poets represented this story in tragedy; and this murder of Eriphyla by Alcmeon, the ancients saw with great pleasure acted on their stages.

NOTES upon the THIRD ACT.

Ver. 1. *For joy, my dearest.*] Chrysothemis having been at her father's tomb to offer her own and sister's hair thereon, meets with the libations there, which had been poured by Orestes, and by them suggests he was returned to Argos: for that Clytemnestra had not offered them, nor yet Electra, nor Chrysothemis, and therefore it must be Orestes.

Ver. 24. *With streams of milk.*] The libations which they made at a sepulchre, consisted for the most part of honey, and milk, and wine: upon which they sometimes sprinkled barley-flower. The manner of using these liquors, was to go round the monument; and pour out some, as they went, out of a bottle (λύσας ἀσκόν, as Euripides says in his *Electra*) and as they offered, they used certain speeches and prayers to the ghosts of the dead to be propitious to them: and therefore those χοαί, or libations, were usually termed ἡδυμήγιοι, and θελκήγιοι.

Ver.

Ver. 26. *And all the flowers*] The custom of strewing flowers about the grave seems rather in honour of the manes, than any ways propitiatory. They sometimes wove them into garlands before they presented them, and this was στεφανῶν τὴν τύμβον, *a crowning of the tomb*. These garlands were called ἑρῳαί, either from their expressing love; or from ἑραυόν, because composed of a collection of flowers; or lastly, because they were thrown ἐπὶ τὴν ἔραν, upon the earth. The reason of it, says the scholiast upon Euripides, was πρὸς τὸ τιμᾶν ἀπὸ μελαφορέας τῶν νεκρῶν, *to honour the dead as they used to do the living when they won the games*.

NOTES upon the FOURTH ACT.

Ver. 10. *But aged Strophius.*] He was king of Phocis, and father of Pylades. But after all, why must Orestes and his governor vary in their story? Orestes himself comes from Strophius, but he charges his governor to say, he is a Phocian, and sent from Phanoteus, παρ' ἀνδρὸς Φανολίως ἥκων, *if I do not misunderstand this passage*; for the scholiast says, πόλις δὲ ὄνομα φασὶ τὸ Φανολίως; that Phanoteus was said to be the name of a city; if this be so, I indeed have erred; but there is a second place, which, I believe, will justify my construction, ver. 672. Φανολίως δὲ Φωκίως, says the governor, Phanoteus the Phocian: for Sophocles could never mean the governor should say, the Phanotean, the Phocian, which he must do, if Phanoteus were a city.

Ver. 39. *A torch to kindle up.*] For it was customary for the pile to be lighted by some of the dead person's nearest relations or friends; who did it with their faces turned from the pile, to shew themselves averse to so mournful an office. So at Misenus's funeral in Virg.

— Subiectam more parentum
Aversi tenuère facem.

Ver. 108. *By all the honours.*] The original has it, μὴ, πρὸς γένος, &c. *Do not I conjure you by your chin or beard*: but the conjuration would seem very trivial and burlesque to us, however venerable amongst the ancients.
That

That it was the custom of old, for suppliants to take hold of the beard of the person to whom they made their entreaty, is evident from Homer,

— Διξίτεσ' ἢ δ' ἄρ' ὑπ' ἀνθεριῶντο ἰλῦσα
Λισσομένη

And this was one manner of salutation among the Hebrews, as appears by 2 Sam. 20, 9; *And Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand to kiss him.*

Ver. 122. *Behold my father's signet.*] Gr. Μου Φραγίδα πατρὸς: upon which the scholiasts have commented very variously; Triclinius thus, τὴν ἐξ ἐλέφαντος ὄμων, ὃν οἱ ἐκ Πέλοπος κληρούμενοι εἶχον. ἄλλοι δὲ φασὶ τὸ Φραγίδα ἀπὸ τοῦ δακτύλιου. *The ivory shoulder, which the descendants of Pelops bore; but others say, it is put for a seal.* The third scholiast puts a still different gloss upon it, Φραγίδα ἦγε τὴν παρακλήσιν τῷ προσώπῳ καὶ τῷ λοιπῷ σώματι, τὴν καὶ τὰ πάντα ὅμοιον τῷ ἑμῷ πατρί Ἀγαμέμνονι; that is, *the make and turn of his face and body, altogether resembling his father Agamemnon.* I have translated it signet; but am not absolutely determined, whether that was the intention of Sophocles. Aristotle takes notice of a remembrance made use of by the poet Carcinus in his Thyestes, by the means of a star; but perhaps that remembrance may be much the same as ours, and borrowed from Sophocles: for Robertellus conjectures, and not without great probability, (in Mr. Dacier's opinion,) that instead of the word ἀστὴρ, which signifies a star, Aristot'c writ ὀστία, which signifies bones, and that he means *the bone of ivory with which the gods repaired Pelops's shoulder, and which appeared in his descendants.*

NOTES upon the FIFTH ACT.

Ver. 4. *The customary banquet.*] Gr. ἐς τάφους λίσσεται κοσμεῖ, which Mr. Johnson renders, *in funus Lebetem adornat*; however I have relied on the words of two of the scholiasts; the latter of which, as containing a full explanation, I shall here transcribe. Ἰστέον ὅτι τάφους ἀλλοί δύο. τὴν τόπον μὲν τῷ μήματι ἐν ᾧ ὁ νεκρὸς

νεκρὸς καλῶνθαι, καὶ ὁ δειπνῶν ὁ ἐπὶ νεκρῷ διὰ παρεγορίαν γινόμενός. ἐπὶ αὐτῷ δὲ τὸ ὕστερον δέλοι. ἤγουν κοσμεῖ λίσσεται εἰς ταφόν. τῆλίκην κοσμεῖ δειπνόν εἰς παρεγορίαν. For after the funeral was over, (says Dr. Potter) the company met together at the house of the deceased person's nearest relations, to divert them from sorrow. Here there was an entertainment provided, which was termed *παρίδειπνον*, *νεκ. ὑδειπνον* τάφος, &c.

Ver. 26. *Crimson sacrifice of Mars.*) i. e. with the blood they had shed. *χαῖρ' ἑαυτὴν θυγατρὶς Ἀρεῖ*, says Sophocles; and I believe he certainly expresses himself thus, in allusion to the human victims which were on some occasions sacrificed to Mars. Triclinus remarks on this passage thus, ἤγουν θυσίας, ἥτοι αἵματός, ὁ θυσία δέκται Ἀρης. φιλαίματός γὰρ καλεῖται; that is, with the sacrifice, or blood which Mars receives in sacrifice, for he is termed a lover of blood.

Ver. 68. *But if my words transgress.*] The Greek has it, *εἰ δ' ἔπεισι νέμεισι*; which, I confess, gave me no small trouble to understand; and unless another passage in this play have helped me to a right conception of them, I shall as freely own myself still in the dark. Clytemnestra in the second act, triumphing on account of Orestes's disaster, Electra cries out,

* *Ἀνὰ Νέμεισι τῷ θανάτῳ ἀρτίως*

Avenging goddess, hear her contumelies!

Upon which Triclinus remarks, *Νέμεισι, διὰ μεμφομένης τοῖς θανούσιν ἰφθυρίζουσας καὶ τέττας τιμωρομένης*, i. e. *Nemesis is a goddess who resents and punishes all insults upon the dead*. So Ægysthus, triumphing on the like occasion, stops short;—*but if I err, or shall be punished for it, I say no more.*



Roberts del.

Published for Bell's British Theatre Oct: 11th 1777.

The ornamental Sc.

MISS YOUNGE in the Character of ARTEMISA
*Let them come on,
 I cannot fear.*

BELL'S EDITION.



THE
AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

A TRAGEDY,
By NICHOLAS ROWE, Esq.

DISTINGUISHING ALSO THE
VARIATIONS OF THE THEATRE,

AS PERFORMED AT THE
Theatre-Royal in Dury-Lane.

Regulated from the Prompt-Book,
By PERMISSION of the MANAGERS,
By Mr. HOPKINS, Prompter.

— *Decet hæc dare dona novercam.* Ovid. *Metam.* lib. 9.

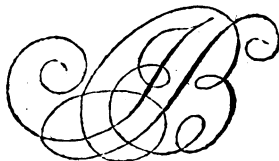
Vane Ligur, frustra que animis elate superbis,

Nequi quam ——— tentasti lubricus artes,

Advenit qui vestra dies muliebribus armis

Verba redarguet.

Virg. *Æn.* lib. 11.



L O N D O N,

Printed for JOHN BELL, near Exeter-Exchange, in the Strand.

MDCCCLXXVII.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

The EARL of JERSEY,

LORD CHAMBERLAIN OF HIS MAJESTY'S

HOUSHOLD, &c.

MY LORD,

IF any thing may atone for the liberty I take in offering this trifle to your Lordship, it is, that I will engage not to be guilty of the common vice of dedications, nor pretend to give the world an account of the many good qualities they ought to admire in your Lordship. I hope, I may reckon on it as some little piece of merit, in an age where there are so many people write panegyrics, and so few deserve them. I am sure you ought not to fit for your picture, to so ill a hand as mine. Men of your Lordship's figure and station, though useful and ornamental to the age they live in, are yet reserved for the labours of the historian, and the entertainment of posterity; nor ought to be aspersed with such pieces of flattery while living, as may render the true history suspected to those that come after. That which should take up all my care at present, is most humbly to beg your Lordship's pardon for importuning you on this account; for imagining that your Lordship (whose hours are all dedicated to the best and most important uses) can have any leisure for this piece of poetry. I beg, my Lord, that you will receive it, as it was meant, a mark of my entire respect and veneration.

I hope it may be some advantage to me, that the town has not received this play ill. To have depended merely upon your Lordship's good-nature, and have offered something without any degree of merit, would have been an unpardonable fault, especially to so good a judge.

A 2

The

The play itself, as I present it to your Lordship, is a much more perfect poem than it is in the representation on the stage. I was led into an error in the writing of it, by thinking that it would be easier to retrench than to add: but when I was at last necessitated, by reason of the extreme length, to cut off near six hundred lines, I found that it was maimed by it to a great disadvantage. The fable (which has no manner of relation to any part of true history) was left dark and intricate, for want of a great part of the narration, which was left out in the first scene; and the chain and connexion, which ought to be in the dialogue, was interrupted in many of the other places. But since what was omitted in acting is now kept in, I hope it may indifferently entertain your Lordship, at an unbending hour. The faults which are most generally found (and which I could be very proud of submitting to your Lordship's judgment, if you can have leisure for so trivial a cause) are, that the catastrophe in the fifth act is barbarous, and shocks the audience. Some people, whose judgment I ought to have a deference for, have told me, that they wished I had given the latter part of the story quite another turn; that Artaxerxes and Amestris ought to have been preserved, and made happy in the conclusion of the play; that besides the satisfaction which the spectators would have had, to have seen two virtuous (or at least innocent) characters rewarded and successful, there might have been also a more noble and instructive moral drawn that way. I must confess, if this be an error (as perhaps it may) it is a voluntary one, and an error of my judgment: since in the writing, I actually made such a sort of an objection to myself, and chose to wind up the story this way. Tragedies have been allowed, I know, to be written both ways very beautifully: but since terror and pity are laid down for the ends of tragedy, by the great master and father of criticism, I was always inclined to fancy that the last and remaining impressions, which ought to be left on the minds of an audience, should proceed from one of these two. They should be struck with terror in several parts of the play, but always conclude and go away with pity; a sort of regret proceeding from goodness, which, though an uneasiness, is not altogether disa-

disagreeable to the person who feels it. It was this passion that the famous Mr. Otway succeeded so well in touching, and must and will at all times affect people, who have any tenderness or humanity. If therefore I had saved Artaxerxes and Amestris, I believe (with submission to my judges) I had destroyed the greatest occasion for compassion in the whole play. Any body may perceive, that she is raised to some degrees of happiness, by hearing that her father and husband are living (whom she had supposed dead) and by seeing the enemy and persecutor of her family dying at her feet, purposely, that the turn of her death may be more surprising and pitiful. As for that part of the objection, which says, that innocent persons ought not to be shewn unfortunate; the success and general approbation which many of the best tragedies that have been writ, and which were built on that foundation, have met with, will be a sufficient answer for me.

That which they call the poetical justice, is, I think, strictly observed; the two principal contrivers of evil, the Statesman and Priest, are punished with death; and the Queen is deposed from her authority by her own son; which, I suppose, will be allowed as the severest mortification that could happen to a woman of her imperious temper.

If there can be any excuse for my entertaining your Lordship with this detail of criticisms, it is, that I would have this first mark of the honour I have for your Lordship, appear with as few faults as possible. Did not the prevailing character of your Lordship's excellent humanity and good-nature encourage me, what ought I not to fear from the niceness of your taste and judgment? The delicacy of your reflexions may be very fatal to so rough a draught as this is; but if I will believe (as I am sure I ought to do) all men that I have heard speak of your Lordship, they bid me hope every thing from your goodness. This is that, I must sincerely own, which made me extremely ambitious of your Lordship's patronage for this piece. I am but too sensible that there are a multitude of faults in it; but since the good-nature of the town has covered, or not taken notice of them, I must have so much discretion, as not to look with an af-

fectd nicety into them myself. With all the faults and imperfections which it may have, I must own, I shall be yet very well satisfied with it, if it gives me an opportunity of reckoning myself from this time,

Your Lordship's most obedient

and devoted humble servant,

N. R O W E.



P R O L O G U E.

*[I]f dying lovers yet deserve a tear,
 If a sad story of a maid's despair,
 Yet move compassion in the pitying fair;
 This day the poet does his arts employ,
 The soft accesses of your souls to try.
 Not let the Stoic boast his mind unmov'd;
 The brute philosopher, who ne'er has prov'd
 The joy of loving and of being lov'd;
 Who scorns his human nature to confess,
 And striving to be more than man, is left.
 Nor let the men the weeping fair accuse,
 Those kind protectors of the tragic muse,
 Whose tears did moving Otway's labours crown,
 And made the poor Monimia's grief their own:
 Those tears their art, not weakness, has consist,
 Their grief approv'd the niceness of their taste,
 And they wept most, because they judg'd the best.
 O could this age's writers hope to find
 An audience to compassion thus inclin'd,
 The stage would need no farce, nor song, nor dance,
 Nor capering Monsieur brought from active France:
 Clinch, and his organ-pipe, his dogs and bear,
 To native Barnet might again repair,
 Or breathe, with Captain Otter, Bankside air.
 Majestic Tragedy should once again
 In purple pomp adorn the swelling scene:
 Her search should ransack all the ancients store,
 The fortunes of their loves and arms explore,
 Such as might grieve you, but should please you more.
 What Shakespear durst not, this bold age should do,
 And famous Greek and Latin beauties shew:
 Shakespear, whose genius to itself a law,
 Could men in every height of nature draw,
 And copy'd all but women that he saw.
 Those ancient heroines your concern should move,
 Their grief and anger much, but most their love;
 For in the account of every age we find
 The best and fairest of that sex were kind,
 To pity always and to love inclin'd.
 Assert, ye fair ones, who in judgment sit,
 Your ancient empire over love and wit;*

Reform

*Reform our sense, and teach the men t'obey:
 They'll leave their tumbling, if you lead the way.
 Be but what those before to Otway were:
 O were you but as kind! we know you are as fair.*

D R A M A T I S P E R S O N Æ.

M E N.

	<i>Drury-Lane.</i>
<i>Artaxerxes</i> , prince of Persia, elder son to King <i>Arsaces</i> , by a former queen,	Mr. Fleetwood.
<i>Artaban</i> , son to <i>Arsaces</i> , by <i>Artemisa</i> ,	Mr. Holland.
<i>Memnon</i> , formerly general to <i>Arsaces</i> , now disgraced, a friend to <i>Artaxerxes</i> ,	Mr. Mossop.
<i>Mirza</i> , first minister of state, in the interest of <i>Artemisa</i> and <i>Artaban</i> ,	Mr. Bransby.
<i>Magas</i> , priest of the Sun, friend to <i>Mirza</i> and the Queen,	Mr. Burton.
<i>Cleantes</i> , friend to <i>Artaban</i> ,	Mr. Scrase.
<i>Orchanes</i> , captain of the guards to the Queen,	Mr. Austia.

W O M E N.

<i>Artemisa</i> , formerly the wife of <i>Tiribastus</i> , a Persian Lord, now married to the King, and Queen of Persia,	Miss Younge.
<i>Amestris</i> , daughter to <i>Memnon</i> , in love with, and beloved by, <i>Artaxerxes</i> ,	Mrs. Cibber.
<i>Cleone</i> , daughter to <i>Mirza</i> , in love with <i>Artaxerxes</i> , and beloved by <i>Artaban</i> ,	Miss Macklin.
<i>Beliza</i> , confidante to <i>Cleone</i> ,	Mrs. Simpson.

T H E
AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

* The lines marked with inverted commas, 'thus,' are omitted in the representation.

A C T I.

SCENE, *A Royal Palace.*

Enter, at several doors, Mirza and Magas.

MIRZA.

WHAT bring'st thou, Magas ? Say, how fares the King ?

' *Mag.* As one, whom when we number with the living,
We say the most we can ; tho' sure it must
Be happier far to quit a wretched being,
Than keep it on such terms : ' for as I enter'd
' The royal lodging, an universal horror
' Struck thro' my eyes, and chill'd my very heart ;
' The chearful day was every where shut out
' With care, and left a more than midnight darkness,
' Such as might even be felt : a few dim lamps,
' That feebly lifted up their sickly heads,
' Look'd faintly thro' the shade, and made it seem
' More dismal by such light ; while those that waited
' In solemn sorrow, mix'd with wild amazement,
' Observ'd a dreadful silence.

' *Mir.* Didst thou see him ?

' *Mag.* My Lord, I did : treading with gentle steps,
' I reach'd the bed, which held the poor remains
' Of great Arfaces : just as I approach'd,

' His

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' His drooping lids, that seem'd for ever clos'd,
 ' Were faintly rear'd, to tell me that he liv'd :
 ' The balls of fight, dim and depriv'd of motion,
 ' Sparkled no more with that majestic fire,
 ' At which ev'n kings have trembled : but had lost
 ' Their common useful office, and were shaded
 ' With an eternal night. Struck with the sight,
 ' That shew'd me human nature fall'n so low,
 ' I hastily retir'd.

' *Mir.* He dies too soon ;
 ' And fate, if possible, must be delay'd.
 ' The thought that labours in my forming brain,
 ' Yet crude and immature, demands more time.
 ' Have the physicians given up all their hopes ?
 ' Cannot they add a few days to a monarch,
 ' In recompence of thousand vulgar fates,
 ' Which their drugs daily hasten ?

' *Mag.* As I pass
 ' The outward rooms, I found them in consult ;
 ' I ask'd them if their art was at a stand,
 ' And could not help the king. They shook their heads,
 ' And in most grave and solemn wise unfolded
 ' Matter, which little purposed, but words
 ' Rank'd in right learned phrase ; all I could learn, was
 ' That nature's kindly warmth was quite extinct,
 ' Nor could the breath of art kindle again
 ' Th' ethereal fire.'

Mir. My royal mistress Artemisa's fate,
 And all her son young Artaban's high hopes,
 Hang on this lucky crisis ; since this day
 The haughty Artaxerxes and old Memnon
 Enter Persepolis : the yearly feast
 Devoted to our glorious god the Sun
 Hides their designs under a holy veil ;
 And thus religion is a mask for faction.
 But let their guardian Genii still be watchful,
 For if they chance to nod, my waking vengeance
 Shall surely catch that moment to destroy them.

Mag. 'Tis said the fair Amestris, Memnon's daughter,
 Comes in their company.

Mir. That fatal beauty,
 With most malignant influence, hast cross

THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

11

My first and great ambition. When my brother,
The great Cleander, fell by Memnon's hand,
(You know the story of our houses' quarrel)
I fought the king for justice on the murderer ;
And to confirm my interest in the court,
' In confidence of mighty wealth and power,
' A long descent from noble ancestors,
' And somewhat of the beauty of the maid,'
I offer'd my Cleone to the prince,
Fierce Artaxerxes ; he, with rude disdain,
Refus'd the proffer ; and to grate me more,
Publickly own'd his passion for Amestris :
And, in despite ev'n of his father's justice,
Espous'd the cause of Memnon.

Mag. Ev'n from that noted æra, I remember,
You dated all your service to the Queen,
Our common mistress.

Mir. 'Tis true, I did so : nor was it in vain ;
She did me right, and satisfy'd my vengeance :
Memnon was banish'd, and the prince, disgrac'd,
Went into exile with him. Since that time,
Since I have been admitted to her council,
And seen her, with unerring judgment, guide
The reins of empire ; I have been amaz'd,
To see her more than manly strength of soul,
' Cautious in good success, in bad unshaken ;
' Still arm'd against th' uncertain turns of chance,
' Untouch'd by any weakness of her sex,
' Their superstition, pity, or their fear ;
' And is a woman only in her cunning.'
What story tells of great Semiramis,
Or rolling time, that gathers as it goes,
Has added more, such Artemisa is.

Mag. Sure 'twas a mark of an uncommon genius,
To bend a soul like that of great Arfaces,
And charm him to her sway.

Mir. Certainly fate,
Or somewhat like the force of fate, was in it ;
And still whene'er remembrance sets that scene
Before my eyes, I view it with amazement.

Mag. I then was young, a stranger to the court,

And

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And only took the story as reported
By different fame ; you must have known it better.

Mir Indeed I did ; then favour'd by the King,
And by that means a sharer in the secret.
'Twas on a day of public festival,
When beauteous Artemisa stood to view
(Behind the covert of a golden lattice)
The King and court returning from the temple :
When just as by her stand Arsaces past,
The window by design or chance fell down,
And to his view expos'd her blushing beauties.
She seem'd surpris'd, and presently withdrew ;
But ev'n that moment was an age in love :
So was the monarch's heart for passion moulded,
So apt to take at first the soft impression.
Soon as we were alone, I found the evil
Already past a remedy, and vainly
Urg'd the resentment of her injur'd lord :
His love was deaf to all.

Mag. Was Tiribafus absent ?

Mir. He was then general of the horse,
Under old Memnon in the Median war.
But if that distant view so much had charm'd him,
Imagine how he burnt, when, by my means,
He view'd her beauties nearer ; when each action,
And every graceful sound conspir'd to charm him :
' Joy of her conquest, and the hopes of greatness,
' Gave lustre to her charms, and made her seem
' Of more than mortal excellence.' In short,
After some faint resistance, like a bride
That strives a while, tho' eager for the bliss,
The furious King enjoy'd her :
And to secure their joys, a snare was laid
For her unthinking lord, in which he fell,
Before the fame of this could reach his ears.
Since that, she still has by successful arts
Maintain'd that pow'r, which first her beauty gain'd.

Mag. With deepest foresight, wisely has she laid
A sure foundation for the future greatness
Of Artaban, her only darling son.
Each busy thought, that rolls within her breast,

Labours for him : the King, when first he sicken'd,
Declar'd he should succeed him in the throne.

Mir. That was a point well gain'd ; nor were the elder-
Of Artaxerxes worth our least of fears, [ship
If Memnon's interest did not prop his cause.
Since then they stand secur'd, by being join'd,
From reach of open force, it were a master-piece,
Worthy a thinking head, to sow division
And seeds of jealousy, to loose those bonds
Which knit and hold them up ; that so divided,
With ease they might be ruin'd.

Mag. That's a difficulty next to impossible.

Mir. Cease to think so.

' The wise and active conquer difficulties,
' By daring to attempt them : Sloth and Folly,
' Shiver and shrink at sight of Toil and Hazard,
' And make th' impossibility they fear.'
Ev'n Memnon's temper seems to give th' occasion ;
Of wrong impatient, headlong to revenge ;
Tho' bold, yet wants that faculty of thinking,
That should direct his anger. Valiant fools
Were made by Nature for the wise to work with ;
They are their tools, and 'tis the sport of statesmen,
When heroes knock their knotty heads together,
And fall by one another.

Mag. What you've said,
Has wak'd a thought in me which may be lucky :
Ere he was banish'd for your brother's murder,
There was a friendship 'twixt us ; and tho' then
I left his barren soil, to root myself
More safely under your auspicious shade,
Yet still pretending ties of ancient love,
At his arrival here I'll visit him :
Whence this advantage may at least be made,
To ford his shallow soul.

Mir. Oh ! much, much more ;
'Twas happily remember'd : ' nothing gulls
' These open unsuspecting fools, like friendship :
' Dull heavy things ! whom Nature has left honest
' In mere frugality, to save the charge
' She's at in setting out a thinking soul :
' Who, since their own short understandings reach

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' No further than the present, think even the wise,
 ' Like them, disclose the secrets of their breasts,
 ' Speak what they think, and tell tales of themselves.
 Thy function too will varnish o'er our arts,
 And sanctify dissembling.

Mag. Yet still I doubt,
 His caution may draw back, and fear a snare.

Mir. Tell him, the better to assist the fraud,
 That even I wish his friendship, and would gladly
 Forget that cause of hate, which long has held us
 At mortal distance, give up my revenge,
 A grateful off'ring to the public peace.

Mag. Could you afford him such a bribe as that,
 A brother's blood yet unaton'd?

Mir. No, *Magas*,
 It is not in the power of Fate to raze
 That thought from out my memory :
 ' Eternal night, 'tis true, may cast a shade
 ' On all my faculties, extinguish knowledge,
 ' And great revenge may with my being cease ;
 ' But whilst I am, that ever will remain,
 ' And in my latest spirits still survive.'
 Yet I would have thee promise that, and more ;
 The friendship of the Queen, the restitution
 Of his command, and honours, that his daughter
 Shall be the bride of Artaban ; say any thing :
 Thou know'st the faith of courtiers, and their oaths,
 Like those of lovers, the Gods laugh at 'em.

Mag. Doubt not my zeal to serve our royal mistress,
 And in her interest yours, my friend and patron.

Mir. My worthy Priest ! still be my friend, and
 share

The utmost of my pow'r : by greatness rais'd,
[Embracing.]

Thou, like the God thou serv'st, shalt shine aloft,
 And with thy influence rule the under world.
 But see ! the Queen appears ; ' she seems to muse ;
 ' Her thoughtful soul labours with some event
 ' Of high import, which bustles like an embryo
 ' In its dark room, and longs to be disclos'd.'
 Retire, lest we disturb her.

[They retire to the side of the Stage]

13

Enter

THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER. 15

Enter the Queen attended.

Queen. Be fix'd, my soul, fix'd on thy own firm basis:
Be constant to thyself; nor know the weakness,
The poor irresolution of my sex:

' D disdain those shews of danger, that would bar
' My way to glory. Ye diviner Pow'rs!
' By whom 'tis said we are; from whose bright beings
' Those active parts were struck which move our clay;
' I feel and I confess th' ethereal energy,
' That busy restless principle, whose appetite
' Is only pleas'd with greatness like your own:
' Why have you clogg'd it then with this dull mass,
' And shut it up in woman? Why debas'd it
' To an inferior part of the creation?
' Since your own heavenly hands mistook my lot,
' 'Tis you have err'd not I.' Could fate e'er mean
Me for a wife, a slave, to Tiribasus!
' To such a thing as he! A wretch! A husband!'—
Therefore in just assertion of myself,
I shook him off, and pass'd those narrow limits,
Which laws contrive in vain for souls born great.
There is not, must not be, a bond for greatness!
Pow'r gives a sanction, and makes all things just.
Ha! Mirza! Worthy Lord, I saw thee not,

[Seeing Mirza.]

So busy were my faculties in thought.

Mirza. The thoughts of princes dwell in sacred
privacy, *[Bowling.]*

Unknown and venerable to the vulgar;
And like a temple's innermost recesses,
None enter to behold the hallow'd mysteries,
Unbidden of the God that dwells within.

Queen. Wise Mirza! Were my soul a temple, fit
For Gods and godlike counsels to inhabit,
Thee only would I chuse of all mankind,
To be the priest, still favour'd with access;
Whose piercing wit, sway'd by unerring judgment,
Might mingle even with assembled Gods,
When they devise unchangeable decrees,
And call 'em fate.

Mirza. Whate'er I am, each faculty,
The utmost power of my exerted soul,

B. 3.

- Preserver

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Preserves a being for your service ;
And when I am not yours, I am no more.

Queen. Time shall not know an end of my acknow-
But every day of our continu'd lives [ledgements :
Be witness of my gratitude, to draw
The knot, which holds our common interest, closer :
Within six days, my son, my Artaban,
Equally dear to me as life and glory,
In public shall espouse the fair Cleone,
And be my pledge of everlasting amity.

Mirza. O, royal Lady ! you outbid my service :
And all returns are vile, but words the poorest.

Queen. Enough ! be, as thou hast been, still my
I ask no more. But I observe of late, [friend,
Your daughter grows a stranger to the court ;
Know you the cause ?

Mirza. A melancholy girl ;
Such in her infancy her temper was,
Soft, even beyond her sex's tenderness ;
' By nature pitiful, and apt to grieve
' For the mishaps of others, and so make
' The sorrows of the wretched world her own :'
Her closet and the Gods share all her time,
Except when only (by some maid attended)
She seeks some shady solitary grove,
Or by the gentle murmurs of some brook
Sits sadly listening to a tale of sorrow,
'Till with her tears she swell the narrow stream.

Queen. It is not well, these thoughts must be remov'd ;
That eating canker, grief, with wasteful spite,
Preys on the rosy bloom of youth and beauty :
But love shall chase away these clouds of sadness ;
My son shall breathe so warm a gale of sighs,
As shall dissolve those icicles that hang
Like death about her heart.

Attend us, holy Magas, to the King,
Nor cease to importune the mighty Gods
To grant him health, tho' much I fear in vain.

[*Exeunt Queen, Magas, and Attendants.*]

Mirza. This meddling Priest, longs to be found a fool ;
' Thinks he that Memnon, soldier as he is,
' Thought-

THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

17

'Thoughtless and dull, will listen to his soothing?'

Howe'er I gave his wife proposal way,
Nay, urg'd him to go on; the shallow fraud
Will ruin him for ever with my enemies,
And make him firmly mine, spite of his fears,
And natural inconsistency.

While choice remains, he will be still unsteady,
And nothing but necessity can fix him.

[Exit]

Enter Artaxerxes, Memnon, and Attendants,

Artax. Methinks, my noble father and my friend,
We enter here like strangers, and unlook'd for:
Each busy face we meet, with wonder starts,
And seems amaz'd to see us.

Mem. Well may th' ignoble herd
Start, if with heedless steps they unawares
Tread on the lion's walk: a prince's genius
Awe with superior greatness all beneath him;
With wonder they behold the great Arfaces
Reviv'd again in godlike Artaxerxes.
In you they see him, such as oft they did:
Returning from his wars, and crown'd with conquest;
When all our virgins met him on the way,
And with their songs and dances blest his triumph:
Now basely aw'd by factious priests and women,
They start at majesty, and seem surpriz'd,
As if a God had met 'em. In honour's name,
Why have we let this be? Why have we languish'd,
And suffer'd such a government as this
To waste our strength, and wear our empire low?

Artax. Curs'd be the means by which these ills arose,
Fatal alike to me as to my country;
Which my great soul, unable to revenge,
Has yet with indignation only seen,
Cut off, by arts of coward priests and statesmen,
(Whom I disdain'd with servile smiles to court,)
From the great right which God and Nature gave,
My birthright to a throne.

Mem. Nor priests, nor statesmen,
Could have compleated such an ill as that,
If women had not mingled in the mischief;

If Artemisa had not by her charms,
 And all her sex's cunning, wrought the King,
 Old, obvious to her arts, decay'd in greatness,
 Dead to the memory of what once he was,
 ' Just crawling on the verge of wretched life,
 ' A burden to himself, and his friends pity,'
 Among his other failings, to forget
 All that a father and a king could owe
 To such a son as you ; — to cut you off
 From your succession, from your hopes of empire,
 And graft her upstart offspring on to royalty.

Ariax. But if I bear it,

Oh, may I live to be my brother's slave,
 The scorn of those brave friends that own my cause ;
 May you, my father, spurn me for a coward,
 Leave me to vile despair. By heav'n, my heart
 Sits lighter in my bosom, when I think
 That I this day shall meet the boy my brother,
 Whose young ambition with aspiring wings
 Dares ev'n to mate my greatness.

Mem. Fame, that speaks

Minutely every circumstance of princes,
 Describes him bold, and fiercely fond of power,
 ' Which ev'n in spite of Nature he affects ;'
 Impatient of command, and hardly deigning
 To be controul'd by his imperious mother.
 'Tis said too ' as no means were left untry'd,
 ' Which might prepare and fit him to contend
 ' With a superior right and merit,'
 That books and the politer arts ' (which those
 ' Who know admire) ' have been his care ; already
 He mingles in their councils, and they trust
 His youth with secrets of important villainy.
 The crowd, taught by his creatures to admire him,
 Stile him a God in wisdom.

Ariax. Be that his glory :

Let him with pedants hunt for praise in books,
 Pour out his life amongst the lazy gown-men,
 Grow old and vainly proud in fancy'd knowledge,
 Unequal to the task of vast ambition ;
 Ambition ! the desire of active souls,
 That pushes 'em beyond the bounds of Nature,

And

And elevates the hero to the God.

But see! My love, your beauteous daughter, comes,
And ev'n ambition sickens at her sight.

Enter Amestris attended.

Revenge and fierce desires of glory cease
To urge my passions, master'd by her eyes;
And only gentle fires now warm my breast.

Am. I come, my father, to attend your order.

[To Memnon.]

Mem. 'Tis well; and I would have thee still be near me.
The malice of the faction which I hate,
Would vent itself ev'n on thy innocence,
Wert thou not safe under a father's care.

Artax. Oh! say a lover's too; nor can you have
An interest in her safety more than mine.
Love gives a right superior ev'n to Nature;
Or love is Nature in the noblest meaning,
The cause and the preserver of the world.
These arms, that long to press thee to my bosom,
For ever shall defend thee.

Mem. Therefore, my son,
Unto your care I leave our common charge;
Tigranes with our friends expect my orders;
Those when I have dispatch'd, upon the instant
I will return, and meet at your apartment.

[Exit Memnon.]

Artax. Come to my arms, and let me hide you there
From all those fears that vex thy beating heart;
Be safe and free from all those fancy'd dangers,
That haunt thy apprehension.

Am. Can you blame me,
If from retirement drawn, and pleasing solitude,
I fear to tempt this stormy sea, the world,
Whose ev'ry beach is strew'd with wrecks of wretches
That daily perish in it? Curst ambition!
Why dost thou come to trouble my repose,
'Who have ev'n from my infancy disclaim'd thee?'

Artax. Cease to complain, my love, and let no
thought,
But what brings peace and joy, approach thy breast.
Let me impart my manly fires to thee,
To warm thy fancy to a taste of glory;
Imperial power, and purple greatness wait thee,

And

20 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

And sue for thy acceptance ; by the Sun,
And by Arsaces' head, I will not mount.

The throne of Cyrus, but to share it with thee.

Am. Vain shews of happiness ! Deceitful pageantry !

Ah, Prince ! hadst thou but known the joys that dwell
With humbler fortunes, thou wouldst curse thy royalty,

Had fate allotted us some obscure village,

Where only blest with life's necessities,

We might have pass'd in peace our happy days,

Free from the cares which crowns and empires bring ;

There no step-mother, no ambitious brother,

No wicked statesman, would with impious arts

Have strove to wrest from us our small inheritance,

Or stir the simple hinds to noisy faction :

Our nights had all been blest with balmy slumbers,

And all our waking hours been crown'd with love.

Artax. Exquisite charmer ! Now by Orosmales,

I swear, thy each soft accent melts my soul :

The joy of conquest, and immortal triumph,

Honour and greatness, all that fires the hero

To high exploits and everlasting fame,

Grows vile in sight of thee. My haughty soul,

By Nature fierce, and panting after glory,

Could be content to live obscure with thee,

Forgotten and unknown of all but my Amestris.

Am. No, son of great Arsaces, tho' my soul

Shares in my sex's weakness, and would fly

From noise and faction, and from fatal greatness ;

Yet for thy sake, thou idol of my heart,

' (Nor will I blush to own the sacred flame

' Thy sighs and vows have kindled in my breast) ;

For thy lov'd sake, spite of my boding fears,

I'll meet the danger which ambition brings,

And tread one path with thee : ' Nor shalt thou lose

' The glorious portion which thy fate designs thee,

' For thy Amestris' fears.

Artax. Give me those fears ;

' For all things will be well.

Am. Grant it, ye Powers !

This day before your altars will I kneel,

Where all my vows shall for my prince be offer'd ;

Still let success attend him, let mankind

Adore

Adore in him your visible divinity ;
Nor will I importune you for myself,
But sum up all I ask in Artaxerxes.

Artax. And doubt not but the Gods will kindly hear
Their virgin votary, and grant her pray'r ;
Our glorious Sun, the source of light and heat,
Whose influence cheers the world he did create,
Shall smile on thee from his meridian skies,
And own the kindred beauties of thy eyes ;
Thy eyes which, should his own fair beams decay,
Might shine for him, and bless the world with day.

[*Exeunt.*]

END of the FIRST ACT.

A C T II.

SCENE, *an Apartment of the Palace.*

Enter MEMNON and MAGAS.

MEMNON.

THOSE who are wise in courts, my holy Sir,
Make friendships with the ministers of state,
Nor seek the ruins of a wretched exile,
Lest there should be contagion in misfortunes,
And make th' alliance fatal.

Magas. Friends like Memnon
Are worth being sought in danger ; ' since this age,
' Of most flagitious note, degenerates
' From the fam'd virtue of our ancestors,
' And leaves but few examples of their excellence,
Whom should we seek for friendship but those few,
Those happy few, within whose breasts alone
The footsteps of lost virtue yet remain.

Mem. I pr'ythee peace : for nothing misbecomes
The man that would be thought a friend, like flattery ;
Flattery, the meanest kind of base dissembling !
And only us'd to catch the grossest fools :
Besides, it stains the honour of thy function,
Which, like the Gods thou serv'st, should be sincere.

Mag. By that sincerity, by all the service
My friendship can express, I would approve it :

And

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And tho' I went not from Persepolis
Companion of your exile, yet my heart
Was with you still ; and what I could I did,
Beseeching ev'ry God for your return.

' Nor were those vows in vain, since once again
' 'Tis giv'n me to behold my friend ; nay more,
' Would you agree, to keep you here for ever.'

Mem. The Gods, 'tis true, are just, and have, I hope,
At length decreed an end to my misfortunes ;
At least they give me this, to die with honour,
When life grows vile or burdensome.

Mag. By me they offer all that you can ask,
And point an easy way to happiness.
Spare them the wounds our wretched country fears,
The thousand ills which civil discord brings.
Oh ! still that noise of war, whose dread alarms
Frighten repose from country villages,
And stir rude tumult up, and wild distraction
In all our peaceful cities.

Mem. Witness for me,
Ye awful Gods, who view our inmost thoughts ;
I took not arms, till urg'd by self-defence,
The eldest law of nature.
Impute not then those ills that may ensue
To me : but those who with incessant hate
Pursue my life, whose malice spreads the flame
To every part, that my devoted fabric
May in the universal ruin burn.

Mag. And yet ev'n there perhaps you judge too rashly.
Impetuous passion hurries you so fast,
You cannot mark th' advantage of your fortune.

Mem. Has not the law been urg'd to set a brand
Of foul dishonour on my hoary head ?
Ha ! Am I not proscrib'd ?

Mag. Forget that thought,
That jarring grates your soul, and turns the harmony
Of blessed peace to curst infernal discord.
Hate and its fatal causes all shall cease,
And Memnon's name be honour'd as of old ;
The bravest and the most successful warrior,
The fortunate defender of his country.

Mem. 'Tis true (nor will it seem a boast to own)
I have

THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

23

I have fought well for Persia, ' and repay'd
 ' The benefit of birth with honest service.'
 Full fifty years harness'd in rugged steel,
 I have endur'd the biting winter's blast,
 And the severer heats of parching summer:
 While they who loll'd at home on lazy couches
 Amidst a crew of harlots and soft eunuchs,
 Were at my cost secure in luxury:
 This is a justice Mirza's self must do me.

Mag. Even he, tho' fatal accidents have set
 A most unhappy bar between your friendship,
 Lamenting that there had been cause of enmity,
 And owning all the merit of your virtues,
 Will often with fate had ordain'd you friends.

Mem. Our God, the Sun, shall sooner change his
 And all th' impossibilities, which poets [course,
 Count to extravagance of loose description,
 Shall sooner be.

Mag. Yet hear me, noble Memnon:
 When by the duty of my priesthood mov'd,
 ' And in just detestation of the mischiefs
 ' Intestine jars produce,' I urg'd wife Mirza,
 By his concurrence, help, and healing counsel,
 To stop those wounds at which his country bleeds;
 Griev'd at the thought, he vow'd his whole endeavour
 Should be to close those breaches:
 That ev'n Cleander's death, and all those quarrels
 That long have nourish'd hatred in your houses,
 Should be in joy of public peace forgotten.

Mem. Oh, couldst thou charm the malice of a states-
 And make him quit his purpose of revenge, [man,
 Thy preaching might reform the guilty world,
 And vice would be no more.

Mag. Nay, ev'n the Queen
 Will bind the confirmation by her son,
 And asks the fair Amestris for prince Artaban.

Mem. Were that the only terms, it were impossible.

Mag. You wou'd not shun th' alliance of a Prince?

Mem. No, for it is the glory of my fate,
 That Artaxerxes is design'd my son,
 ' With every grace and royal virtue crown'd;
 ' Great, just, and merciful, such as mankind

' (When

24 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

‘ (When in the infant world first governments
Began by choice) would have design’d a king.

Mag. ‘ Unbounded pow’r, and height of greatness give
‘ To kings that lustre, which we think divine ;
‘ The wise who know ’em, know they are but men,
‘ Nay sometimes weak ones too: the crowd indeed,
‘ Who kneel before the image, not the God,
‘ Worship the deity their hands have made.’

The name of Artaban will be as great
As that of Cyrus, when he shall possess
(As sure he shall) his throne.

Mem. Ha ! What means he ?

This villian priest ! But hold my rage a little,
And learn dissimulation ; I’ll try him further.
You talk in riddles, when you name a throne,
And Artaban ; the Gods, ‘ who portion out
‘ The lots of princes as of private men,’
Have put a bar between his hopes and empire.

[*Aside.*

Mag. What bar ?

Mem. The best, an elder brother’s claim.

Mag. That’s easily remov’d ; the King their father,
On just and weighty reasons, has decreed
His scepter to the younger : add to this,
The joint concurrence of our Persian lords,
Who only want your voice to make it firm.

Mem. Can I, can they, can any honest hand,
Join in an act like this ? Is not the elder
By nature pointed out for preference ?

‘ Is not his right inroll’d among those laws [order ?
‘ Which keeps the world’s vast frame in beauteous
Ask those thou nam’d’st but now, what made them lords ?
What titles had they had, if merit only
Cou’d have conferr’d a right, if Nature had not
Strove hard to thrust the worst deserving first,
And stamp’d the noble mark of eldership
Upon their baser metal.

Mag. Sure there may be
Reasons of so much pow’r and cogent force,
As may ev’n set aside this right of birth ;
If sons have rights, yet fathers have ’em too.
’Twere an invidious task to enter into

The

The insolence and other faults which mov'd
 Royal Arfaces to a just displeasure
 Against his eldest son, prince Artaxerxes.

Mem. Ha! Dare not for thy life, I charge thee, dare
 To brand the spotless virtue of my prince [not
 With falshood of most base and damn'd contrivance.
 I tell thee, envious priest, should the just gods
 Require severe account of thy past life,
 And charge remembrance to dispose thy crimes
 In rank and hideous order to thy view,
 Horror and guilt of soul would make thee mad.

Mag. You take the matter further than I meant it:
 My friendship only aims at your advantage;
 ' Would point you out a way to peace and honour;
 ' And, in return of this, your rage unkindly
 ' Loads me with injuries.

Mem. Away! I cannot bear thy base dissembling,
 My honest soul disdains thee and thy friendship.
 How hast thou dar'd to think so vilely of me,
 That I would condescend to thy mean arts,
 And traffic with thee for a prince's ruin?
 ' A prince the joy and honour of mankind,
 ' As much superior to the rest of kings,
 ' As they themselves are above common men;
 ' And is the very image of the gods.'
 Wert thou not privileg'd like age and women,
 My sword should reach thee, and revenge the wrong
 Thy tongue has done his fame.

Mag. Ungrateful lord!
 Would'st thou invade my life, as a return
 For proffer'd love? But let th' event declare
 How great a good, by me sincerely offer'd,
 Thy dull romantic honour has refus'd.
 And since I have discharg'd the debt I ow'd
 To former friendship, if the gods hereafter
 Send ruin down, and plague thee with confusion,
 Remember me in vain, and curse thy folly.

[Exit Magas.

Mem. No, my remembrance treasures honest thoughts,
 And holds not things like thee; I scorn thy friendship,
 And would not owe my life to such a villain:
 But thou art hardly saint enough to prophesy.

26 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

Were all thy tribe like thee, it might well startle
Our lay unlearned faith, when through such hands
The knowledge of the gods is reach'd to man.

But thus those gods instruct us, that not all
(Who like intruders thrust into their service,
And turn the holy office to a trade)

Participate their sacred influence.

This then is your own cause ; ye awful powers,
Revenge yourselves, your violated altars,
That those who with unhallow'd hands approach,
My tremble at your justice.

[Exit.

SCENE, *the Palace.*

Enter the Queen, Artaban, Mirza, Magas, and Attendants.

Arta. My brother then is come ?

Mirza. My lord, I saw him ;

With him old haughty Memnon : as they pass'd,
With fierce disdain they view'd the gazing crowd,
And with dumb pride seem'd to neglect that worship
Which yet they wish'd to find : this way they move,
'Tis said, to ask an audience of the King.

Queen. Mirza, 'tis well, I thank thy timely care ;
Here will we face this storm of insolence,
Nor fear the noisy thunder : let it roll,
Then burst, and spend at once its idle rage.

Arta. Why meet we thus like wrangling advocates,
To urge the justice of our cause with words ?
I hate this parle, 'tis tame : if we must meet,
Give me my arms, and let us stake at once
Our rights of merit and of eldership,
And prove like men our title.

Mirza. 'I were unsafe.

They come surrounded by a crowd of friends ;
To strike thro' these were dangerous and rash.
Fate waits for them elsewhere with certain ruin :
From Mirza's hand expect it.

Queen. Be it so :

Auspicious sage, I trust thee with my fortune,
My hopes of greatness, do thou guide 'em all,
For me and for thyself. My son, give way,

Net

Nor let thy hasty youth disturb with outrage
The present necessary face of peace ;
Occasions great and glorious will remain
Worthy thy arms and courage.

Art. I obey,
And willingly resign th' unmanly task.
' Words are indeed your province.'

Mir. My royal mistress,
Prepare to meet with more than brutal fury
From the fierce Prince and Memnon.

Queen. Well I know
The insolence and native pride of each,
With scurrile taunts and blackest infamy
They load my name : but let them rail,
A woman's vengeance waits them.

Mir. They are here.

Enter Artaxerxes, Memnon, and Attendants.

Art. Ye tutelar gods, who guard this royal fabric,
And thou, O, Orosmales, the protector
Of the great Persian race, e'er yet my father,
Royal Arsaces, mingle with your godheads,
Grant me once more to lay before his feet
His eldest born, his once-lov'd Artaxerxes,
To offer my obedience to his age ;
All that a son can owe to such a father.
You, who with haggard eyes stare wildly on me,
If (as by your attendance here you seem)
You serve the King my father, lead me to him.

Queen. And dost thou wonder that mankind should stare,
When parricides and rebels, in despite
Of nature, majesty, and reverend age,
With impious force and ruffian violence,
Would rob a king and father of his life ?
Cut off his short remains—

Art. Ha ! say'st thou, woman ?
I pr'ythee peace, and urge not a reply ;
I would not hold acquaintance with thy infamy.

Queen. Ye righteous pow'rs, whose justice awes the
world,
Let not your thunders sleep, when crimes like these
Stalk in the open air.

128 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

Art. Thy priest instructs thee,
Else sure thou hadst not dar'd to tempt the gods;
And trifle with their justice. Canst thou name any
And look on me? On me, whom thy envious arts
Have strove to bar from native right to empire;
Made me a stranger to a father's love,
And broke the bands of nature, which once held me
The nearest to his heart.

Queen. Had he not reason,
When thou, with rebel insolence, didst dare
To own and to protect that hoary ruffian:

[*Pointing to Memnoch.*]

And in despite ev'n of thy father's justice,
To stir the factious rabble up to arms
For him; and make a murderer's cause thy own?

Mem. I had another name; nor shouldst thou move me,
Insulting Queen, to words, did not remembrance
With horror sting my soul for Tiribastus,
Thy murder'd lord, when by my fatal orders,
And by his own high courage urg'd, he fell,
To make thy way to guilty greatness easy.
I thought him then a traitor (for thy arts
Had taught the royal mandate so to call him)
Too big for public justice; and on that pretence
Consented to the snare that catch'd his life;
So my obedient honesty was made
The pander to thy lust and black ambition.
Except the guilt of that accursed day,
In all my iron years of wars and danger,
From blooming youth down to decaying age,
My fame ne'er knew a stain of foul dishonour;
And if that made me guilty, think what thou art,
The cause and the contriver of that mischief.

Queen. What, nam'st thou Tiribastus! Be his guilt
Forgotten with his memory. Think on Cleander,
And let the furies that enquire for blood,
Sir horror up, and bitterest remorse,
To gnaw thy anxious soul. Oh, great Cleander!
Unworthy was thy fate, thou first of warriors,
To fall beneath a base assassin's stab,
Whom all the thirsty instruments of death
Had in the field of battle fought in vain.

Mem.

THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER. 29

Mem. In fight of heaven and of the equal gods,
I will avow that my revenge was just,
My injur'd honour could not ask for less :
Since he refus'd to do a soldier's justice,
I us'd him as I ought.

Queen. Amazing boldness !
And dar'st thou call that act a soldier's justice ?
Didst thou not meet him with dissembled friendship,
Hiding the rancour of thy heart in smiles ?
When he (whose open unsuspecting nature
Thought thee a soldier honest as himself)
Came to the banquet as secure of peace,
' By mutual vows renew'd ; and in the revel
' Of that luxurious day, forgetting hate,
' And every cause of ancient animosity,
' Devoted all his thoughts to mirth and friendship :'
Then, Memnon, (at an hour when few are villains,
The sprightly juice infusing gentler thoughts,
' And kindling love ev'n in the coldest breasts)'
Unequal to him in the face of war,
Stole on Cleander with a coward's malice,
And struck him to the heart.

Mem. By the stern god,
By Mars, the patron of my honour'd wars,
'Tis basely false. In his own drunken brawl
The boaster fell. I bore his lavish tongue,
Nor thought him worth my sword, 'till (his cold temper
Warm'd with the wine) he dar'd me to the combat ;
Then pleas'd to meet him in that fit of valour,
I took him at his word, and ' (with my sword
' Drawn against his in equal opposition)'
I kill'd him while it lasted.

Art. Cease we, my friend,
This women's war of railing ; when they talk,
Men should be still, and let noise tire itself.
I came to find a father, tho' my fears
Suggest the worst of evils to my thoughts,
And make me dread to hear Arfaces' fate.
Lead, Memnon, to the presence.

Queen. Prince, you pass not.
Guards, keep the door. The King your father lives—

80 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER:

Art. Ha! if he lives, why lives he not to me?
 Why am I thus shut out and banish'd from him?
 Why are my veins rich with his royal blood?
 Why did he give me life, if not to serve him?
 Forbid me not to wait upon his bed,
 And watch his sickly slumbers, that my youth
 May with its service glad his drooping age,
 And his cold hand may bless me ere he die.
 Nay, be a queen, and rob me of his crown,
 But let me keep my right to filial piety.

Queen. Well hast thou urg'd the specious name of duty
 To hide deform'd rebellion: hast thou not
 With thy false arts poison'd his people's loyalty?
 What meant thy pompous progress thro' the empire?
 Thy vast profusion to the factious nobles,
 Whose interest sways the crowd, and stirs up mutiny?
 Why did thy haughty, fierce, disdainful soul
 Stoop to the meanest arts which catch the vulgar;
 Herd with them, fawn upon them, and caress them?
 Appeal to them, to them relate thy wrongs,
 And make them judges of thy father's justice?
 Thy cruel and unnatural lust of power
 Has sunk thy father more than all his years,
 And made him wither in a green old age.

Art. False all as hell: nor had I arm'd my friends
 But to defend that right——

Queen. Dost thou not come,
 Impatient of delay, to hasten fate?
 To bring that death, the lingering disease
 Would only for a day or two defer?

Art. I hear thee, and disdain thy little malice,
 That dares to stain my virtue with a crime
 It views with most abhorrence; but reproach
 Is lost on thee, since modesty, with all
 The virtues that adorn thy sex, is fled.

Queen. Audacious rebel!

Art. Infamous adulteress!

Stain of my father's bed, and of his throne!

Arta. Villain, thou ly'st. O, Madam, give me way,

[To the *Queen*, who holds him, drawing his sword.
 Whatever bars my fury, calls me base,
 Unworthy of the honour of your son.

Queen.

Queen. Hold, Arraban : my honour suffers not
From his lewd breath, ' nor shall thy sword profane
' With brawls of blood the reverence of this place,
' To peace and sacred majesty devoted.'

Art. Ha ! Who art thou ?

Arta. The son of great Arfaces. [contrivance.

Art. No, 'tis false ; thy forging mother's damn'd
Seek for thy father in that plotting fellow,

[Pointing to Mirza.

The hero's race disclaims thee. Why dost thou frown,
And knit thy boyish brow ? Dost thou dare ought
Worthy the rank of the divine Arfaces ?

If so, come forth ; break from that woman's arms,
And meet me with thy good-sword like a man.

Arta. Yes, Artaxerxes, yes ; thou shalt be met :
The mighty gods have held us in the balance,
And one of us is doom'd to sink for ever ;
Nor can I bear a long delay of fate,
But wish the great decision were even now :
Proud and ambitious prince, I dare like thee
All that is great and glorious. Like thine,
Immortal thirst of empire fires my soul :
My soul, which of superior power impatient,
Disdains thy eldership ; therefore in arms
(Which give the noblest right to kings) I will
To death dispute with thee the throne of Cyrus.

Art. Do this, and thou art worthy of my anger.
Oh, energy divine of great ambition,
That can inform the souls of beardless boys,
And ripen them to men, in spite of nature !
I tell thee, boy, that empire is a cause,
For which the gods might wage immortal war.
Then let my soul exert her utmost virtue,
And think at least thou art Arfaces' son,
That the idea of thy fancy'd father
May raise and animate thy lesser genius,
And make thee fit to meet my arm in battle.

Arta. Oh ! doubt not but my soul is charm'd with
greatness,
' So much it rivals ev'n the joy of knowledge
' And sacred wisdom. What makes gods divine,
' But power and science infinite ?'

Hear

32 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

Hear only this ; our father, press'd by age,
And a long train of evils which that brings,
Languishes in the last extremes of life :
Since thou wouldst blot my birth with base dishonour,
Be this my proof of filial piety ;
While yet he lives, cease we our enmity,
Nor let the hideous noise of war disturb
His parting soul.

Art. I take thee at thy word :
Let his remains of life be peace betwixt us,
And after that let all our time be war.
Remember when we meet, since one must fall,
Who conquers and survives, survives to empire.
[*Exeunt severally Queen and Artaban, Artaxerxes and
Memnon, cum suis.*]

Mir. Most fortunate event ! which gives us more
Than ev'n our wishes could have ask'd. This truce
Gives lucky opportunity for thinking ;
'Twill lull these thoughtless heroes to security.

Mag. Th' approaching festival will more confirm it :
• Of all those sacred times which heretofore
• Religion has distinguish'd from the rest,
• And to the service of the gods devoted,
• This has been still most venerably held.
• Amongst the vulgar toil and labour ceases,
• With chaplets crown'd they dance to the shrill pipe,
• And in their songs invoke those milder deities,
• That soften anxious life with peace and pleasure ;
• Slaves are enfranchis'd, and inveterate foes
• Forget, or at the least suspend their hate,
• And meet like friends. Pernicious discord seems
• Out rooted from our more than iron-age :
• The gods are worship'd with unusual reverence,
Since none, not ev'n our kings, approach their temples,
With any mark of war's destructive rage,
But sacrifice unarm'd.

Mir. A lucky thought
Is in my mind at once compleatly form'd,
Like Grecian Pallas in the head of Jove.
When Memnon, Artaxerxes, and their friends,
Shall, in obedience to the holy rites,
To-morrow at the altars bow unarm'd,

Orchanes

THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

13

Orchanes with a party of the guards,
Who in my palace shall this night be plac'd,
May at that private door which opens into
The temple, rush at once, and seize them all.
The heads once safe, the mean and heartless crowd
With ease may be dispers'd.

Mag. What you propose
Wears a successful face, were it as innocent :
An act of such outrageous profanation,
May shock the thoughts ev'n of our closest friends,
And make them start from an abhorr'd alliance,
That draws the vengeance of the gods upon them.

Mir. Art thou the first to start a doubt like that ?
Art thou (who dost inspire their oracles,
And teach them to deceive the easy crowd
In doubtful phrase) afraid of thy own gods ?
In every change they were on thy side still,
And sure they will not leave thee now for trifles.
The gods shall certainly befriend our cause,
At least not to be our foes ; nor will they leave
Their happy seats (where free from care and pain,
Bless'd in themselves alone, of mair regardless,
They loll serene in everlasting ease)
To mind the trivial business of our world.

Mag. But more I fear the superstitious vulgar,
Who, tho' unknowing what religion means,
Yet nothing moves them more than zealous rage
For its defence, when they believe it violated.

Mir. I was to blame to tax the priest with scruples,
Or think his care of interest was his conscience.

[*Aside.*]

My caution shall obviate all thy fears ;
We will give out that they themselves design'd
To fire the temple, and then kill the King.
No matter, tho' it seems not very probable ;
More inonstrous tales have oft amus'd the vulgar.

Mag. I yield to your direction ; and to strengthen
The enterprize, will secretly dispose
A party of my own within the temple,
To join with yours.

Mir. It joys my heart to think
That I shall glut my vengeance on this Memnon ;

That

34 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

That I shall see him strive in vain, and curse
 The happy fraud that caught him. ' Like a lion,
 ' Who long has reign'd the terror of the woods,
 ' And dar'd the boldest huntsmen to the combat ;
 ' 'Till catch'd at length within some hidden snare,
 ' With foaming jaws he bites the toils that hold him,
 ' And roars, and rolls his fiery eyes in vain,
 ' While the surrounding swains at pleasure wound him,
 ' And make his death their sport :
 ' Thus wit still gets the mastery over courage.
 ' Long time unmatched in war the hero shone,
 ' And mighty fame in fields of battle won ;
 ' 'Till one fine project of the statesman's brain,
 ' Bereaves him of the spoils his arms did gain,
 ' And renders all his boasted prowess vain.'

[*Exeunt.*]

END of the SECOND ACT.

A C T III.

SCENE, *A Garden belonging to Mirza's Palace.*

*Cléone is discovered lying on a bank of flowers,
 Beliza attending.*

SONG, by B. STORÉ, Esq.

UPON a shady bank repos'd,
 Philanthe, amorous, young, and fair,
 Sighing, to the groves disclos'd
 The story of her care.

The vocal groves give some relief,
 While they her notes return ;
 The waters murmur o'er her grief,
 And Echo seems to mourn.

A swain, that heard the nymph complain,
 In pity of the fair,
 Thus kindly strove to cure her pain,
 And ease her mind of care.

'Tis

'Tis just that love should give you rest,
From love your torments came ;
Take that warm cordial to your breast,
And meet a kinder flame.

How wretched must the woman prove,
(Beware, fair nymph, beware)
Whose folly scorns another's love,
And courts her own despair ?

Cle. Oh love ! thou bane of an unhappy maid !
Still art thou busy at my panting heart !
Still dost thou melt my soul with thy soft images,
And make my ruin pleasing ! Fondly I try,
By gales of sighs and floods of streaming tears,
To vent my sorrows and assuage my passions :
Still fresh supplies renew th' exhausted stores.
Love reigns my tyrant, to himself alone
He vindicates the empire of my breast,
And banishes all thoughts of joy for ever.

Bel. Why are you still thus cruel to yourself ?
Why do you feed and cherish the disease,
That preys on your dear life ? How can you hope
To find a cure for love in solitude ?
Why rather chuse you not to shine at court ;
And in a thousand gay diversions there,
To lose the memory of this wretched passion ?

Cle. Alas ! Beliza, thou hast never known
The fatal power of a resistless love :
Like that avenging guilt that haunts the impious,
In vain we hope by flying to avoid it ;
In courts and temples it pursues us still,
And in the loudest clamours will be heard :
It grows a part of us, lives in our blood,
And every beating pulse proclaims its force.
Oh ! think not then that I can shun myself ;
The grave can only hide me from my sorrows.

Bel. Allow me then at least to share your griefs ;
Companions in misfortunes make them less ;
And I could suffer much to make you easy.

Cle. Sit by me, gentle maid, and while I tell
A wretched tale of unregarded love,

96 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

If thou, in kind compassion of my woes,
Shalt sigh, or shed a tear for my mishap,
My grateful eyes shall pay it back with interest.
Help me to rail at my too easy heart,
That rashly entertain'd this fatal guest :
And you, my eyes, why were you still impatient
Of any other sight but Artaxerxes ?
Why did you make my woman's heart acquainted
With all the thousand graces and perfections,
That dress the lovely hero up for conquest ?

Bel. Had you oppos'd this passion in its infancy,
Ere time had given it strength, it might have dy'd.

Cle. That was the fatal error that undid me :
My virgin thoughts, and unexperienc'd innocence,
Found not the danger till it was too late.
And tho' when first I saw the charming prince,
I felt a pleasing motion at my heart,
Short-breathing sighs heav'd in my panting breast,
' The mounting blood flush'd in my glowing face,
' And dy'd my cheeks with more than usual blushes,
I thought him, sure, the wonder of his kind,
And wish'd my fate had giv'n me such a brother :
Yet knew not that I lov'd, but thought that all,
Like me, beheld and bless'd him for his excellence.

Bel. Sure never hopeless maid was curst before,
With such a wretched passion ; all the gods
Join to oppose your happiness ; 'tis said,
This day the Prince shall wed the fair Amestris.

Cle. No, my Beliza, I have never known
The pleasing thoughts of hope : certain despair
Was born at once, and with my love increas'd.

' *Bel.* Think you the Prince has e'er perceiv'd your thoughts ?

' *Cle.* Forbid it, all ye chaster powers, that favour
' The modesty and innocence of maids :
' No, till my death, no other breast but thine
' Shall e'er participate the fatal secret.
' Oh ! could I think that he had ever known
' My hidden flame, shame and confusion
' Wou'd force my virgin soul to leave her mansion,
' And certain death ensue.'

Thou nam'd'st the fair Amestris, didst thou not ?

Bel.

Bel. Madam, I did.

Cle. I envy not her happiness.

Tho' sure few of our sex are blessed like her
In such a godlike lord.

Wou'd I had been a man !

With honour then I might have fought his friendship ;
Perhaps from long experience of my faith,
He might have lov'd me better than the rest.

Amidst the dangers of the horrid war,
Still had I been the nearest to his side ;
In courts and triumphs still had shar'd his joys,
Or when the sportful chase had call'd us forth,
Together had we cheer'd our foaming steeds,
Together press'd the savage o'er the plain :
And when o'er-labour'd with the pleasing toil,
Stretch'd on the verdant soil had slept together.
But whither does my roving fancy wander ?
These are the sick dreams of fantastic love.

' So in the calenture the seaman fancies
' Green fields and flow'ry meadows on the ocean,
' Till leaping in, the wretch is lost for ever.

' *Bel.* Try but the common remedies of love,
' And let a second flame expel the first.

' *Cle.* Impossible : as well thou may'st imagine,
' When thou complain'st of heat at scorching noon,
' Another sun shall rise to shine more kindly.
' Believe me, my Beliza, I am grown
' So fond of the delusion that has charm'd me,
' I hate the officious hand that offers cure.'

Bel. Madam, prince Artaban.

Cle. My cruel stars !

Do you then envy me my very solitude ?
But death, the wretch's only remedy,
Shall hide me from your hated light for ever.

Enter Artaban.

Art. Ah, lovely mourner ! still, still wilt thou blast
My eager love with inauspicious tears ?
When at thy feet I kneel, and sue for pity,
Or justly of thy cold regards complain,
Still wilt thou only answer me with sighs ?

Cle. Alas ! my lord, what answer can I give ?
If still I entertain you with my grief,

D

Pity

34 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

Pity the temper of a wretched maid,
By nature sad, and born the child of sorrow :
In vain you ask for happiness from me,
Who want it for my self.

Arta. Can blooming youth,
And virgin innocence, that knows not guilt,
Know any cause for grief?

' *Cle.* Do but survey
' The miserable state of human-kind,
' Where wretches are the general increase,
' And tell me if there be not cause for grief.

' *Arta.* Such thoughts as these, my fair philosopher,
' Inhabit wrinkled cheeks and hollow eyes ;
' The marks which years set on the wither'd sage :
' The gentle goddess, Nature, wisely has
' Allotted other cares for youth and beauty.'
The god of love stands ready with his torch
To light it at thy eyes, but still in vain ;
For ere the flame can catch, 'tis drown'd in tears.

' *Cle.* Oh ! Name not love, the worst of all misfortunes,
' The common ruin of my easy sex,
' Which I have sworn for ever to avoid,
' In memory of all those hapless maids,
' That love has plung'd in unexampled woes.'

Arta. Forbear to argue with that angel face,
Against the passion thou wert form'd to raise.
' Alas ! Thy frozen heart has only known
' Love in reverse, not tasted of its joys ;
' The wishes, soft desires, and pleasing pains,
' That center all in most extatic bliss.
' Oh, lovely maid, mispend no more that treasure
' Of youth and charms, which lavish nature gives ;
The Paphian goddess frowns at thy delay ;
By her fair self, and by her son she swears,
Thy beauties are devoted to her service.

Lo ! Now she shoots her fires into my breast,
She urges my desires, and bids me seize thee,

[*Taking her hand and kissing it.*

And bear thee as a victim to her altar :
Then offer up ten thousand thousand joys,
As an amends for all thy former coldness.

Cle.

Cle. Forbear, my lord ; or I must swear to fly
For ever from your sight.

Arta. Why dost thou frown,
And damp the rising joy within my breast.
Art thou resolv'd to force thy gentle nature,
Compassionate to all the world beside,
And only to me cruel ? Shall my vows,
Thy father's intercession, all be vain.

Cle. Why do you urge my father's fatal power,
To curse you with a sad unlucky bride ?
Cast round your eyes on our gay Eastern courts,
Where smiling beauties, born to better fate,
Give joy to the beholders ;
There bless some happy princess with your vows,
And leave the poor Cleone to her sorrows.

Arta. What queens are those of most celestial form,
Whose charms can drive thy image from my heart ?
Oh ! were they cast in nature's fairest mould,
Brighter than Cynthia's shining train of stars,
Kind as the softest she that ever clasp'd
Her lover, when the bridal night was past ;
I swear I would prefer thee, O Cleone,
With all thy scorn and cold indifference,
Would choose to languish and to die for thee,
Much rather than be bless'd, and live for them.

Cle. Oh, prince ! It is too much, nor am I worthy
The honour of your passion, since 'tis fix'd
By certain and unalterable fate,
That I can never yield to a return :
My thoughts are all to chaste Diana vow'd,
And I have sworn to die a virgin votary.

Arta. Impossible ! thou canst not give away
Mine and thy father's right, ev'n to the gods :
Diana will disown th' unjust donation,
Nor favour such an injury to love.
To every power divine I will appeal,
Nor shall thy beauty bribe 'em to be partial.
Their altars now expect us ; come, fair saint ;
And if thou wilt abide their righteous doom,
Their justice must decree my happiness,
Reward my sufferings, and my flame approve,
For they themselves have felt the power of love. [Exit

40 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

SCENE, *the Temple of the Sun.*

Enter Artaxerxes, Amestris, and Attendants.

Art. 'Tis done! 'Tis done! Oh, let me find some way
To tell the mighty joy that fills my breast,
Lest I grow mad with height of furious bliss.
The holy priest has ty'd the sacred knot,
And my Amestris now is all my own.
Oh, thou soft charmer! thou excelling sweetness!
Why art thou not transported all like me?
I swear thou dost not love thy Artaxerxes,
If thou art calm in this excess of happiness.

Am. Alas! My lord, my panting heart yet trembles;
' In vast suspense between unruly joys
' And chilling fears.' Somewhat methinks there is
That checks my soul, and says I was too bold
To quit the pleasures of my virgin state,
To barter 'em for cares and anxious love.

Art. These are the fears which wait on every bride;
And only serve for preludes to her joys;
Short sighs, and all those motions of thy heart,
Are nature's call, and kindle warm desires.

Soon as the friendly goddess of the night
Shall draw her veil of darkness o'er thy blushes,
These little cold unnecessary doubts
Shall fly the circle of my folding arms:

' And when I press thee trembling to my bosom,
' Thou shalt confess (if there be room for words,
' Or ev'n for thoughts) that all those thoughts are bliss.

Am. Yet surely mine are more than common fears,
' For, Oh, my prince! when my foreboding heart
' Surveys th' uncertain state of human joys,
' How secretly the malice of our fate
' Unseen pursues, and often blasts our happiness
' In full security; I justly dread,
' Lest death or parting, or some unseen accident,
' Much worse, if possible, than each of these,
' Should curse us more than ever we were bless'd.

Art. Doubt not the gods, my fair, whose righteous
' Shall favour and protect our virtuous loves. [power
' If still thou apprehend'st approaching danger,
' Let us make haste and snatch th' uncertain joy,

' While

' While fate is in our power.
 ' Now let us start, and give a loose to love,
 ' Feast ev'ry sense, with each luxurious pleasure,
 ' Improve our minutes, make 'em more than years,
 ' Than Ages, and ev'n live the life of gods.
 ' If after this, death or ill-fortune comes,
 ' It cannot injure us, since we already
 ' Have liv'd and been before-hand with our fate.

' *Am.* Oh ! let me ease at once my tender heart;
 ' And tell my dearest lord my worst of fears.
 ' There is an ill which more than death I dread :
 ' Should you by time and long fruition fated,
 ' Grow faithless, and forget the lost Amestris ;
 ' Forget that everlasting truth you vow'd,
 ' Tho' sure I should not publicly complain,
 ' Nor to the gods accuse my perjur'd prince,
 ' Yet my soft soul would sink beneath the weight ;
 ' I should grow mad, and curse my very being,
 ' And wish I ne'er had been, or not been lov'd.

' *Art.* Dost thou—when every happier star shines for
 ' And with propitious influence gilds our fortune, [us,
 ' Dost thou invent fantastic forms of danger,
 ' And fright thy soul with things that are impossible ?
 ' Now by the potent god of love I swear,
 ' I will have ample vengeance for thy doubts.
 ' My soft complaining fair, shalt thou not pay me
 ' In joys too fierce for thought, for these suspicions ?
 ' The bands which hold our love are knit by fate,
 ' Nor shall decaying Time or Nature loose 'em.
 ' Beyond the limits of the silent grave,
 ' Love shall survive, immortal as our beings :
 ' And when at once we climb yon azure skies,
 ' We will be shown to all the blest above
 ' For the most constant pair that e'er deserv'd
 ' To mingle with their stars.

' *Am.* 'Tis true ! 'Tis true !
 ' Nor ought I to suspect thee. Oh, my hero !
 ' The gods have form'd thee for the nearest pattern
 ' Of their own excellence and perfect truth.
 ' Oh, let me sink upon thy gentle bosom,
 ' And, blushing, tell how greatly I am blest'd.
 ' Forgive me, modesty, if here I vow

42 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

- That all the pleasures of my virgin state
- Were poor and trifling to the present rapture :
- A gentle warmth invades my glowing breast,
- And while I fondly gaze upon thy face,
- Ev'n thought is lost in exquisite delight.
- *Art.* Oh, thou delicious, perfect, angel woman !
- Thou art too much for mortal sense to bear :
- The vernal bloom and fragrancy of spices,
- Wasted by gentle winds, are not like thee.
- From thee, as from the Cyprian queen of love,
- Ambrosial odours flow ; my every faculty
- Is charm'd by thee, and drinks immortal pleasure,
- Oh, glorious god of day, fly swiftly forward,
- And to thy sister's rule resign the world :
- Nor haste to rise again, but let the night
- Long bless me with her stay, that thy return
- At morn may find me happiest of my kind.'

Enter Memnon.

My father ! Is there an increase of joy ?

What can ye give, ye gods, to make it more ?

Mem. Ye blessings of my age ! Whom when I view,
The memory of former woes is lost.

Oh, prince ! Well has this glorious day repay'd

My youth and blood spent in Arfaces' service.

Nor, had the gods indulg'd my vainest wishes,

Durst I have ask'd for such a son as you are.

But I am roughly bred, in words unknowing,

Nor can I phrase my speech in apt expression,

To tell how much I love and honour you :

Might I but live to fight one battle for you,

Tho' with my life I bought the victory,

Tho' my old batter'd trunk were hew'd to pieces,

And scatter'd o'er the field, yet should I bless

My fate, and think my years wound up with honour.

Art. Doubt not, my noble father, but ev'n yet

A large remain of glory is behind,

When civil discord shall be reconcil'd,

And all the noise of faction hush'd to peace :

Rough Greece alike in arts and arms severe,

No more shall brand the Persian name with softness,

Athens and Sparta wond'ring, shall behold us,

Strict in our discipline, undaunted, patient

Of war's stern toil, and dread our hostile virtue.
Those stubborn commonwealths, that proudly dare
Disdain the glorious monarch of the East,
Shall pay their homage to the throne of Cyrus.
And when with laurels cover'd we return,
My love shall meet, and smiling bless our triumph,
While at her feet I lay the scepters of the world.

Mem. Oh, glorious theme! By heav'n, it fires my age,
And kindles youth again in my cold veins.

Art. Ha! Mirza and the Queen! retire, my fair;
Ungentle hate and brawling rage shall not
Disturb the peace, to which this happy day
Is doubly sacred. Forward to the altar.

[*Exeunt Artaxerxes, Amestris, Memnon,
and Attendants.*]

Enter at the other door, Queen, Mirza, and Attendants.

Mirza. All are dispos'd, and fate but waits our orders
For a deciding blow.

Queen. Your caution was
Both wise and faithful, not to trust my son
Too rashly with a secret of this nature:
The youth, tho' great of soul, and fond of glory,
Yet leans to the fantastic rules of honour,
Would hesitate at such an act as this,
Tho' future empire should depend upon it.

Mirza. When time shall add experience to that know-
With which his early youth is richly fraught, [ledge,
He'll be convinc'd that only fools would lose
A crown for notionary principles.
Honour is the unthinking soldier's boast,
Whose dull head cannot reach those finer arts,
By which mankind is govern'd.

Queen. And yet it gives a lustre to the great,
And makes the crowd adore 'em.

Mirza. Your son shall reap
The whole advantage, while we bear the guilt:
You, Ma'am, when the sacred hymns are finish'd,
Must with the prince retire; our foes when seiz'd,
Within the temple may be best secur'd
Till you dispose their fate.

Queen.

44 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

Queen. The rites attend us ; [Solemn Music is heard.
This day my son is monarch of the East.

Mirza. Lend us, ye gods, your temples but this day,
You shall be paid with ages of devotion;
And after this, for ever undisturb'd,
Brood o'er your smoaking altars.

[*Exeunt Queen, Mirza, and Attendants.*

The Scene opening, shews the Altar of the Sun, Magas, and several other Priests attending. Solemn Music is heard: Then enter on one Side Memnon, Artaxerxes, Amestris, and Attendants; on the other Side the Queen, Mirza, Artaban, Cleone, Cleanthes, and Attendants. They all bow towards the Altar, and then range themselves on each Side of the Stage, while the following Hymn is perform'd in Parts, and Chorus by the Priests.

H Y M N to the Sun, by W. SHIPPEN, Esq.

Hail, Light, that doubly glads our sphere,
Glory and triumph of the year !

Hail, festival, for ever blest,
By the adoring ravish'd East !

‘ Hail, Mithras, mighty deity !

‘ For fire and air, and earth and sea,

‘ From thee their origin derive,

‘ Motion and Form from thee receive.

‘ When matter yet unacted lay,

‘ No sooner thou infus'd'st thy ray,

‘ But the dull mass its power obey'd.

‘ But an harmonious world was made.

‘ Which still, when thou withdraw'st thy beams,

‘ An undistinguish'd Chaos seems,

‘ For what are objects without light ?

‘ Or vision, when involv'd in night ?

‘ Night is an universal grave,

‘ Where things but doubtful being have ;

‘ Till them thy beams illuminate,

‘ And, as it were, again create,

Chorus, &c.

Hail,

- ‘ Hail, source of immaterial fire,
- ‘ That ne’er began, can ne’er expire ;
- ‘ Whose orb, with streaming glories fraught,
- ‘ Dazzles the ken of human thought.’

All the dependent spheres above,
By thy direction shine and move :
All purer beings here below,
From thy immediate essence flow.

What is the soul of man, but light,
Drawn down from thy transcendent height ?
What but an intellectual beam ;
A spark of thy immortal flame ?

- ‘ For as thou rul’st with gladsome rays
- ‘ The greater world, so this the less :
- ‘ And like thy own diffusive soul,
- ‘ Shoots life and vigour thro’ the whole.
- ‘ Since then from thee at first it came,
- ‘ To thee, tho’ clogg’d, it points its flame ;
- ‘ And conscious of superior birth,
- ‘ Despises this unkindred earth.’

Chorus, &c.

Hail, Orosmaëdes, power divine !
Permit us to approach thy shrine ;
Permit thy votaries to raise
Their grateful voices to thy praise.

Thou art the father of our kings,
The stem whence their high lineage springs ;
‘ The sovereign lord, that does maintain
‘ Their uncontrol’d and boundless reign.

Oh, then assist thy drooping son,
Who long has grac’d our Persian throne !
Oh, may he yet extend his sway !
We yet Arsaces’ rule obey !

- ‘ Let thy vitality impart
- ‘ New spirits to his fainting heart :
- ‘ Let him, like thee (from whom he sprung)
- ‘ Be ever active, ever young.’

Chorus, &c.

[When

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[When the Music is ended, Memnon, Artaxerxes, &c. Queen, Artaban, &c. go off as they entered, severally; only Mirza comes forward, and the Scene shuts; he looks after Amestris going out, and then speaks.]

Mir. What means this foreign warmth within my breast?

Is this a time for any thought but vengeance?
That fatal beauty dazzles my weak sense,
And blasts the resolution of my soul:

‘My eyes in contradiction to my purpose,
‘Still bent to her, and drunk the poison in;
‘While I stood stupid in suspense of thought,
‘And now like oil my flaming spirits blaze;
‘My arteries, my heart, my brain is scorch’d,
‘And I am all one fury.’ Feeble Mirza!

Canst thou give way to dotage, and become
The jest of fools? No! ’tis impossible:

Revenge shall rouse, ‘and with her iron whips

‘Lash forth this lazy ague from my blood,
‘This malady of girls. Remember, statesman,
‘Thy fate and future fortunes now are forming,
‘And summon all thy counsels to their aid,’

Ev’n thy whole soul——It wo’not be: Amestris

Still rises uppermost in all my thoughts,

The master-piece of nature. The boy god

Laughs at my rage, and triumphs o’er my folly.

[A tumultuous noise is heard.]

Ha! by the gods, ’tis doing! Now, my stars,
Be kind, and make me master of my wish at once.

Enter Magas.

But see, the priest—Why dost thou stare and tremble?
Have we succeeded? say; and ease my fears.

Mag. My soul is pierc’d with horror! Every god
Seems from his shrine to threaten us with vengeance
The temple reels, and all its pond’rous roof
Nods at the profanation.

Mir. Base and fearful!

‘How can thy wretched soul conceive such monsters?
Canst thou, who wouldst be great, be superstitious?’

But ’tis the coward’s vice. Say, are our enemies secur’d?

Mag.

THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER. 47

Mag. They are; the Prince, old Memnon, and his
Are in Orchanes' hands; only Tigranes [daughter,
With some of lesser note are fled.

Mir. No matter:
These are the soul, the rest a lifeless mass,
Not worth our apprehension.

Mag. Will you stay,
To meet the furious thunder of their rage?

Mir. I will: thou may'st retire, and summon back
Thy scatter'd spirits: let not the crowd see
Thy fears; 'twill make thee vile and cheap among 'em.
[Exit Mag.

*Enter Artaxerxes, Memnon, and Amestris, prisoners,
Orchanes and Guards.*

Art. Slave! Villain! Answer—say—how hast thou
To do this insolence? [dar'd

Orub. I know my orders,
Which from the Queen my mistress I receiv'd,
Who will avow her own authority. [possible!

Art. Ha! from the Queen! She durst not, 'tis im-
'Tis sacrilege! 'tis treason! 'tis damnation!

Am I not Artaxerxes? Born to empire,
The next degree to gods? O thou bright Sun,
That roll'st above, the object of our worship,
Canst thou behold, and not avenge thy race?
Thy injur'd race? If I could ought admit

Unworthy of thy great original,
Let me be doom'd to fall this villain's slave.
If not, why am I made the scorn of wretches

' So much below me, that they hardly share
' The common privilege of kind: but are
' As beasts to men——

Mem. See where the master-villain stands! Unmov'd
And harden'd in impiety; he laughs
At the fictitious justice of the gods,
And thinks their thunder has not wings to reach him.
But know, the joy thy triumph brings is short:
My fate (if the gods govern) or at least
My mind, 's beyond thy reach, and scorns thy malice.

Mir. Dull, valiant fool, thy ruin is the least,
The most ignoble triumph of my wit.
Cleander's blood asks for substantial vengeance,

' And

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* And when the thought that labours in my breast
 * Appears in action, thou shalt know the cause
 * Why I remain to view thy hated face,
 * That blasts me with its presence. Thou shalt know it,
 And curse thyself ; curse the ill-omen'd day
 That gave thee birth ; renouncing all the gods,
 Thyself of them renounc'd, shalt sink to hell
 In bitterest pangs, and mingle with the furies.

Mem. Unhallow'd dog, thou ly'st ! The utmost force
 Of all thy study'd malice cannot move me
 * To any act that misbecomes my courage ;²

And if the gods in trial of my virtue,
 Can yield my life up to the hangman's mercy,
 I'll shew thee with what ease the brave and honest
 Can put off life, till thou shalt damn thy arts,
 Thy wretched arts, and impotence of malice.

Mir. Rest well assur'd, thou shalt have cause to try
 The philosophic force of passive virtue.

Art. Oh, death to greatness ! Can we fall so low,
 To be the slavish object of his mirth ?
 * Shall my just rage and violated honour
 * Play the buffoon, and minister to laughter ?
 * Down, down, my swelling heart, hide thy resentments,
 * Nor prostitute the ruffled majesty
 * Of injur'd princes to the gazing crowd ;
 * My face shall learn to cover the emotion
 * My wounded soul endures.' Ha ! my Amestris !
 My love ! my royal bride ! The spoiler, Grief,
 Defaces every feature : like the deluge
 That raz'd the beauties of the first creation—
 I cannot bear it—Villains, give me way—

*[He breaks from the Guards that hold him, and catches
 bold of Amestris.]*

Oh ! let me hold thee in my throbbing bosom,
 And strive to hide thy sorrows from my sight :
 I cannot see thy griefs ; and yet I want
 The power to bring relief.

Am. Ah ! no, my Prince ;
 There are no remedies for ills like ours ;
 My helpless sex by nature stands expos'd
 To all the wrongs and injuries of fortune :
 Defenceless in myself, you were my refuge,

* You

' You are my Lord ; to whom should I complain,

' Since you cannot redress me ? Were you not'

The honour, joy, and safety of Amestris ?

' For you alone I liv'd, with you alone

' I could be happy.' Oh, my Artaxerxes !

One influence guides our consenting stars,

And still together we are bless'd or curs'd.

' *Mir.* With a malignant joy my ears drink in

' Her each harmonious accent ; every glance

' Goes to my heart, and stirs alternate motions

' Of heat and cold ; a lazy pleasure now,

' Thrills all my veins, anon desire grows hot ;

' And my old sinews shrink before the flame. [*Aside.*

' *Art.* Go on, and charm me with thy angel's voice,

' Sooth and assuage the fury in my breast,

' That urges me to unbecoming passion :

' My rage grows cool amidst thy soft complainings ;

' And tho' thou talk'st of woes, of death, and ruin,

' Tis heaven to hear thee.

' *Am.* Since this is all our wretched consolation,

' Let us indulge our grief, till by long use

' It grows habitual, and we lose the pain.

' Here on the marble pavement will we sit,

' Thy head upon my breast ; and if remembrance

' Of cruel wrongs shall vex thy noble heart,

' The murmur of my sighs shall charm the tumult,

' And Fate shall find us calm : nor will the gods,

' Who here inhabit and behold our sufferings,

' Delay to end our woes in immortality.

' *Art.* Ha ! say'st thou ? Gods ! Yes, certain there
are gods,

' To whom my youth with reverence still has bow'd

' Whose care and providence are virtue's guard :

' Think then, my fair, they have not made us great,

' And like themselves, for miserable ends.'

Mir. Gods might behold her, and forget their wisdom.

[*Aside.*
But I delay too long. Orchanes, lend thy ear.

[*Mirza whispers Orchanes, and Exit.*

Mcm. My children, you are still my joy and happiness ;

E

Why

THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

Why am I made your curse? This hated head,
To death devoted, has involv'd your innocence
In my destruction.

[*Guards lay bold on Artaxerxes and Amestris.*]

Am. Alas! my father!

Art. Barbarous dogs! What mean you?

Orch. Convey the lady to Lord Mirza's palace,
'Tis the queen's will she shall be there confin'd.

Art. Thou canst not mean so damn'd a villainy!
Thou dar'st not, shalt not part us: Fate can't do it.

Mem. Cursed old age! Why have I liv'd to see this?
Oh, my children!

Orch. Force them asunder.

Art. Hew off my limbs, ye dogs, I will not loose 'em—
'Oh, devil! Death and furies!' My wife! my lov'd

Am. My Lord, my husband!—— [Amestris—

[*Orchanes and one party of the Guards force Artaxerxes
and Memnon off one way, and the other party bears
Amestris another.*]

Re-enter Mirza.

Mir. This was most noble mischief! it stung home—
'Twas luxury of vengeance—' 'Twas not ill

'To keep aloof: these boisterous beasts have paws,
'And might have scratch'd: the wife should not allow
'A possibility to Fortune's malice.'

Now to the rest; this Prince, this husband, dies:
To-morrow's dawn brings his and Memnon's fate.

This night let them despair, and ban, and rage,
And to the wooden deities within

Tell frantic tales: my hours shall pass more pleasingly,
If love (which yet I know not) can give pleasure.

'Love! What is love? The passion of a boy,

'That spends his time in laziness and sonnets:

'Lust is the appetite of man; and shall

'Be sated, till it loath the cloying banquet.

'The wise are privileg'd by human frailty

'To taste these pleasures, but not dwell upon them:

'They mar and dull the faculty of thinking.'

One night I safely may indulge in riot,

'Tis politic lewdness, and assists my vengeance.'

I will

I will grow young and surfeit on her charms,
Her luscious sweets ; then rising from her arms,
The nauseous, momentary joy forget,
And be myself again ; again be wise and great. [Exit.]

END of the THIRD ACT.

A C T IV.

SCENE, *The Palace.*

Enter Artaban and Cleanthes.

ARTABAN.

'TIS base and impious ! Where are the ties
Shall keep mankind in order, if religion
And public faith be violated ? 'Tis an injury
That beards both gods and men, and dares their justice.

Clean. The fearful croud already take th' alarm,
Break off their solemn sports, their songs and dances,
And wildly in tumultuous concert join :

Mischief and danger sit in every face,
And while they dread the anger of the gods,
The wise, who know th' effects of popular fury,
From them expect that vengeance which they fear.

Arta. The sacred power of majesty, which should
Forbid, owns and protects the violence.

It must not, shall not be : who steals a crown
By arts like these, wears it unworthily.

Clea. The Queen, your mother, Sir, she will expect
You should approve that act her power has done.

Arta. I'll meet her as I ought, and shew myself
Worthy the noble rivalry of empire.

Enter the Queen, Mirza and Attendants.

Queen. My son, I come to joy you of a crown
And glory, certain now. Your fate at length
Has master'd that malignant influence

With which it struggled long : you are a king,
The greatest that our eastern world beholds ;

And tho' my widow'd bed be cause for grief,
Yet for thy sake, my son, I joy to say

As faces is no more.

E 2

Arta.

52 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

Arta. ' 'Twere vain and foolish
 ' To mourn his death with ceremonious sorrow ;
 ' For tho' he died the greatest of our race,
 ' Yet since decaying age had sunk him low,
 ' And all the native majesty was lost,
 ' 'Twas time the soul should seek for immortality,
 ' And leave the weary body to enjoy
 ' An honourable rest from care and sickness ;'
 Peace to his ashes, and eternal fame
 Dwell with his memory ; while we who live
 Look back with emulation on his greatness,
 And with laborious steps strive to ascend
 That height where once he sat.

Queen. Thou hast already
 Attain'd the lofty summit of his glory ;
 His throne expects thee but to sit and fill it. [jects

Arta. No, Madam ; when the gods choose worthy sub-
 On whom to place such greatness, they surround
 The glorious prize with toil and thorny danger,
 And bid the man who would be great, dare greatly.
 Be it for dull elder brothers to possess
 Without deserving ; mine's a nobler claim,
 Nor will I taste the god-like joys of power,
 'Till men and gods with justice shall confess
 'Tis barely the reward of what I merit.

Queen. What means my son ?

Arta. To wrestle for a crown.

Queen. With what fantastic shadow wouldst thou strive ?
 The haughty rival of thy hopes is fall'n ;
 He lives indeed, but 'tis to grace thy triumph,
 And bow before thee ; then be swept away
 Like the remembrance of an idle dream,
 Which tho' of yesternight, is now forgotten.

Arta. It grieves me much to say, my royal mother,
 I cannot take a crown upon these terms,
 Tho' even from your hands : the conscious virtue
 That witnesses within my breast for glory,
 Points me to greatness by the paths of honour,
 And urges me to do as a king ought,
 That would not wear his purple as the gift
 Of impious treachery and base deceit.

Queen.

Queen. Amazement turns my senses ! Or, I dream !
For sure thou canst not mean so poor a folly.

‘ Hast thou been bred in the wise arts of empire ?
‘ Been early taught to know the worth of power ?
‘ And wouldst thou lose the golden opportunity,
‘ With which thy fortune courts thee, for a notion ?
‘ An empty sound of virtue ? A dry maxim,
‘ Which pedants have devis’d for boys to canvas ?’

Can my son think so meanly ? Go, set free
(Since honour bids) this lordly elder brother,
Bow like a slave before him, wait his pleasures,
And live dependent on his scanty pension ;
He may reward thy servile loyalty,
And make thee ruler of some petty province,
In recompence of royalty giv’n up.

Art. No ; (tho’ I must confess I would not hold him
Caught in a villain’s snare, ‘ nor do a murder

‘ Unworthy of a hangman’) yet to death

I still defy him as my mortal foe.

And since my father’s fate dissolves that truce
To which I stood engag’d, ’tis war again.

Amidst the steely squadrons will I seek

This haughty brother, by his friends surrounded,

And back’d with all th’ advantage of his birth ;

Then bravely prove upon him with my sword,

He falsely brands me for a bookish coward,

That Nature’s error only gave him preference,

Since Fate meant me the king.

Queen. A mother’s care is watchful for thy safety,

Else wert thou lost, thou honourable fool :

Long might’st thou vainly hunt in bloody fields

For that advantage which thy willing fortune

Now reaches to thy hands : ‘ in battles with

‘ Uncertain wings the wavering goddess flies,

‘ And oft with partial hand bestows her favour

‘ On fools and thick-skull’d heroes ;’ seize her now,

While she is thine, or she is lost for ever.

Art. No matter, let her fly ; the eagle Virtue

Shall soar beyond her, and command her flight :

Fortune is not my mistress, but my slave.

Posterity, that reads the name of Artaban.

In the records of empire, shall not blush.

54 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

To think I plotted with a knavish priest,
 The scandal of his venerable function,
 ' And mark of the gods vengeance,' to betray
 A prince my enemy ; ' as if being conscious
 ' Of lesser worth, and of unequal courage,
 ' I durst not fairly strive with him for greatness :'
 Let the abhorr'd and impious treachery
 Obscurely die unknown to future ages ;
 Or if our shame must be deliver'd down,
 By all the kingly hopes that fire my soul,
 It shall not pass without a brand of punishment.

Queen. 'Tis wond'rous well ! Young man, you king
 it rarely !

' You mean to be renown'd for early justice,
 ' And mark your ostentatious love of virtue,
 ' Ev'n in their bloods who lift you up to power :
 ' Perhaps we too ourselves must be arraign'd
 ' Before your puny bar, and feel your axe ;
 ' Twill be a noble subject for your praise,
 ' And yield much matter to declaiming flatterers.

Art. You, Madam, are my mother : Nature blinds
 And bids me see no faults in her that bore me ; [me,
 ' Those other slaves that dare——

Queen. May be immortal,
 For ought that thou canst do to cause their fate.
 ' Is not thy power the creature of my favour ?
 ' Which in precarious wise on me depending,
 ' Exists by my concurrence to its being ?'
 Mistaken youth ! ' whose giddy brain ambition
 ' Has, like the fume of drunken vapours, turn'd ;'
 Think'st thou that I, whose soul was form'd for sway,
 Would lay the golden reins of empire down ?
 Or trust them to the guidance of a boy,
 Who shall dispose of me, or those that serve me,
 According to the dictates of old morals,
 His bearded tutor gleans from musty authors ?

Art. Nay then, 'tis time I should exert myself ;
 And tho' you gave me birth, yet from the gods
 (Who made my father be as he was, royal,
 And stamp't the mark of greatness on my soul)
 I claim my right to empire : may I fall

Vile

Vile and forgotten, if I ever own
Any superior being but those gods.

Queen. Thou rav'st, and hast forgot me.

Art. No, you are

My mother, and a woman, form'd to obey ;
On that condition all the sex's privileges
Are founded : the creating hand has mix'd
Softness and beauty in your composition,
To charm and bend the mind of man, impatient
Of the ignoble pleasure ; you were made for
The weakness and necessities of Nature :
Ill are your feeble souls for greatness suited :
Desire of government is monstrous in you.

Queen. Thou mighty goddess, Nature ! dost thou hear
This rebel son ? This insolent upbraider,
Still fondly nurs'd in my indulgent bosom ?
To build whose future greatness to the skies,
My anxious soul has labour'd more than when
I felt a mother's sorrow for his birth :
Ungrateful boy !——

‘ Know, fool, that vaunt'st thyself upon thy manhood,
‘ The greatest he thy rougher kind e'er had,
‘ Must have confess'd woman's superior wit,
‘ And own'd our sex's just prerogative.’
Did not a mother's fondness plead hard for thee,
Thy head should pay the forfeit of thy insolence ;
For know, young king, that I am fate in Persia,
And life and death depend upon my pleasure.

Art. The world would be well govern'd, should the
Depute their providence to women's care, [gods
And trust them with the fate of kings and empires.

Queen. ‘ Yet thou art safe’—Away, nor tempt me further.

The patience ev'n of gods themselves has limits,
‘ Tho' they with long forbearance view man's folly ;’
Yet if thou still persist to dare my power,
Like them, I may be urg'd to loose my vengeance,
And tho' thou wert my creature, strike thee dead.

Mir. Beseech you, Sir, retire ; the Queen your mo-
Labours with wisest foresight for your good, [ther,
And is incens'd to see you thwart that purpose.

Art.

56 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

Arta. What is the good of greatness, but the power?
Madam, I leave you ; my own innate virtue
Arms me against your rage, unjust and impotent :
Wait but the great success my soul divines,
And you will own your little juggling arts
Have only serv'd to obstruct a while my glory,
And screen this elder brother from my conquest.

[*Exeunt Artaban and Cleanthes.*]

Queen. Some envious pow'r above, some hostile demon,

• Works underhand against my stronger genius,
• And countermines me with domestic jars.
• Malicious chance ! When all abroad was safe,
• To start an unseen danger from myself !
• Mirza, didst not thou mark the haughty boy,
• With what assuming pride he own'd his daring,
• And claim'd superiority of power ?
• Oh, can I live and bear to be controul'd ?
• To share the pleasure of supreme command
• With him or any one ? Oh, Artemisa !
• Didst thou disdain subjection to a husband,
• The proudest title of that tyrant man,
• And canst thou yield t' a boy, a son, by nature
• And grateful duty to obedience bound ?

Mir. Madam, let me intreat you, by the gods,
To calm your just resentments. • Meddling Fortune,
• (Whose malice labours to perplex the wise)
• If not prevented will unravel all
• Those finer arts, which we with care have wove.
The Prince led on by this pernicious honour,
May set the pris'ners free ; think, if that happen,
To what a shock of fate we stand expos'd.

Queen. 'Tis true ; this foolish honour ruins all.
• Ridiculous notion ! as if self-interest
• Were not the first and noblest law of nature.
Say then, wise Lord, and let thy ready wit,
Still present to itself, avert this blow.

Mir. One method, tho' ungente, yet remains
To remedy the fears this ill produces ;
This instant let a guard confine the Prince,
Ere he can gain the means t' affect that mischief

He

He meditates against himself and us :
 To-morrow, early as the morning dawn,
 The prisoners all shall die ; that once dispatch'd,
 This raging fit of honour will relax,
 And give him leisure to consider coolly
 Th' advantage of his fortune.

Queen. You have reason ?

And tho' I fear his haughty temper will
 But badly brook confinement, he must learn
 To bear it as he can ; perhaps 'twill bend him,
 And make his youth more pliant to my will.

Mir. Your orders cannot be dispatch'd too soon,
 Each minute of the flying hours is precious.

Queen. The eunuch Bagoas, let him attend us,
 He shall receive instructions on the instant.

[*Exeunt the Queen and Mirza, severally.*]

SCENE, Mirza's Palace.

*Enter Cleone in a Man's Habit, with a Dark-Lanthorn,
 Beliza following.*

Cle. Ye gentle powers, who view our cares with pity,
 Lend your compassion to the poor Amestris.
 Oh, my Beliza ! was not thy soul wounded,
 To hear (when now we pass by her apartment)
 The piercing accents of her loud complainings ?

By Heav'n, my aching heart bleeds for her sufferings.

Bel. 'Tis sure she feels the bitterest pangs of woe ;
 And were not all my thoughts to you devoted,
 Her grief would deeply sink into my soul.
 Why will you tempt alone ten thousand dangers ?
 Your father's and the furious Queen's resentment ;
 The cruel guards, and all those fatal accidents,
 Which in the horror of this dreadful night,
 Might shake the resolution of a man.

Cle. Pr'ythee no more, thou know'st I am resolv'd,
 And all thy kind advice is urg'd in vain ;
 Thy fond mistaking fears present the danger
 More dreadful than it is : this master-key
 Admits me thro' that passage to the temple,
 By which the guards, who seized the unhappy prince
 This morning, enter'd ; that of all the rest

Is

58 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

Is only left unguarded, and from thence,
 Assisted by the friendly veil of night,
 We may conduct him thro' my father's palace
 In safety to the street: There undistinguish'd
 Amongst the busy discontented crowd,
 That swarm in murmuring heaps, he may retire:
 Nor shall my father or the Queen e'er know
 The pious fraud my love was guilty of.

Bel. Yet still I fear——

Cle. No more, retire and leave me;
 My drooping heart sits lighter than it's wont,
 And cheerfully presages good success.

Bel. Where shall I wait you?

Cle. At my own apartment.

Bel. The mighty gods protect you.

Cle. Softly: retire.

[*Exit Beliza.*]

What noise was that?—The creature of my fears.
 In vain, fond maid, wouldst thou belie thy sex,
 Thy coward soul confesses thee a woman.

A foolish, rash, fond woman where am I going?
 To save my godlike hero. 'Oh my heart!

'It pants and trembles, sure 'tis joy not fear;
 'The thought has giv'n me courage: I shall save him,
 'That darling of my eyes.' What if I fail?
 Then death is in my reach, and ends my sorrows.

[*Shewing a dagger.*]

Why dost thou shake, my hand, and fear to grasp
 This instrument of fate? If I succeed,
 Yet Artaxerxes will not live for me;
 And my despair will want thy friendly aid.
 Death ev'ry way shuts up my gloomy prospect.
 'If then there be that Lethe and Elysium,
 'Which priests and poets tell, to that dark stream:
 'My soul, of life impatient, shall make haste,
 'One healing draught my quiet shall restore,
 'And love forgotten, ne'er disturb me more.'

[*Exit Cleone.*]

A Night-Scene of the Temple of the Sun.

Enter Memnon and Artaxerxes.

Art. Still 'tis in vain! this idle rage is vain;
 And yet my swelling passions will have way;

'And

- And rend my labouring breast 'till they find vent.
- Was it for this, ye cruel gods, you made me
- Great like yourselves, and as a king, to be
- Your sacred image? Was it but for this?
- To be cut down, and mangled by vile hands,
- Like the false object of mistaken worship?

Why rather was I not a peasant slave,
Bred from my birth a drudge to your creation,
And to my destin'd load inur'd betimes?

Mem. The malice of our fate were not compleat,
Had we not been by just degrees to happiness
Rais'd, only to be plung'd the deeper down
In an abyss of woes. Early success
Met and attended all my youthful wars;
• And when I rush'd amidst the dreadful battle,
• The weaker Genii of our Asian monarchs
• Shrunk from the force of our superior fate;
• O'er-match'd they fell, and by my sword were swept
• Like common beings from the glorious field.
Then was the day of joyous triumph, then,
My soul was lifted high, ev'n to the stars.
But now—what am I now? O, damn'd reverse of fortune!
Now, when my age would be indulg'd in ease,
And joy in pleasure of my former fame,
Now I am curs'd; held at a villain's mercy,
My foes derision, and the scorn of cowards.

Art. Oh, torture of my soul! damn'd racking thought!
Am not I too reserv'd for servile vassalage?
To be the subject of a boy's command?
• A boy by nature set beneath my sway,
• And born to be my slave! Shall he triumph,
• And bid me live or die? Shall he dispose
• His beardless visage to a scornful smile,
• And tell me that his pleasure is my fate?
No; my disdainful soul shall struggle out,
And start at once from its dishonour'd mansion.

Mem. Oh, royal thought! nor shall they keep back
Altho' its common means be not in reach. [death,
Shall my old soldier's outside, rough and hardy,
Scarr'd o'er with many an honourable mark,
Be cag'd for public scorn! Shall Mirza tell me,
Thus didst thou once, and now thou art my slave;

My

50 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

My foot shall spurn thee, tread upon thy neck,
And trample in the dust thy silver hairs?
Shall I not rather choak, hold in my breath,
Or smear some wall or pillar with my brains?

Art. Rage, or some god, shall save us from dishonour;
But Oh, my father! Can we take our flight,
Tho' to the stars, and leave my love behind;
Where is she now? Where is my queen, my bride,
My charmer, my Amestris?

Mem. Speak not of her.

Art. Not speak?

Mem. Nor think of her, if possible. [arms;

Art. Was she not snatch'd, 'torn from my helpless
' Whilst every god look'd on, and saw the wrong,
' Heard her loud cries, which vainly strove to rouse
' Their slow unready vengeance!' Was she not
Torn from my panting bosom (yet I live)
E'er on our bridal-day? 'Then when our flames
' Were kindly join'd, and made but one desire!
' Then, when she sigh'd and gaz'd, and blush'd and sigh'd!
' When every touch, when every joy grew fiercer,
' And those that were behind were more than mortal!
To lose her then! Oh! —

And yet you bid me think of her no more.

Mem. I do; for the bare mention turns my brain,
And even now I border upon madness;
So dreadful is the very apprehension
Of what may be.

' *Art.* Can we make thought go back?
' Will it not turn again, cleave to our breasts,
' And urge remembrance 'till it sting us home?
' Ha! now the ghastly scene is set before me;
' And as thou said'st, it runs me to distraction;
' Behold her beauties, form'd for kings to serve,
' Held vile, and treated like an abject slave!
' Helpless amidst her cruel foes she stands,
' Insulting Artemisa mocks her tears,
' And bids her call the gods and me in vain.

' *Mem.* Would that were all.'

Art. Ha! Whither wouldst thou drive me?

Mem. Did you like me consider that dog Mirza,
Early to hell devoted, and the furies,

THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER. 64

Born, nurs'd, and bred a villain, you would fear
The worst effects his malice could express
On virtue which he hates, when in his power.

Art. What is the worst?

Mem. What my old fault'ring tongue
Trembles to utter; goatish lust and rape.

Art. Ha! rape! if there are gods, it is impossible.

Mem. Oh! dreadful image for a father's thought!
To have his only child, her sex's boast,
The joy of sight, and comfort of his age,
Dragg'd by a villain, slave, ' his ruthless hand
' Wound in her hair,' to some remote dark cell,
A scene for horror fit, there to be blotted
By his foul lust, ' 'till appetite be gorg'd,'
Let me grow savage first, let this old hand
That oft has bless'd her, in her blood be drench'd;
Let me behold her dead, dead at my foot,
To spare a father's greater shame and sorrow.

Art. A father! What's a father's plague to mine?
A husband and a lover! if it can be,
If there is such a hoarded curse in store,
Transfix me now, ye gods, now let your thunder
Fall on my head, and strike me to the center,
' Lest, if I should survive my ruin'd honour
' And injur'd love, I should ev'n curse your godheads,
' Run banning and blaspheming thro' the world,
' And with my execrations fright your worshippers
' From kneeling at your altars.'

Enter Cleone with a Dark-Lanthorn and Key.

Cle. This way the echoing accents seem to come;
Sure 'tis the wretched prince! ' Oh, can you hear him,
' And yet refuse to lend your aid, ye gods?

Art. This gloom of horrid night suits well my soul,
' Love, sorrow, conscious worth, and indignation,
' Stir mad confusion in my lab'ring breast,
' And I am all o'er chaos,'

Cle. Is this, alas!
The state of Artaxerxes, Persia's heir?
Not one poor lamp to cheer the dismal shade
Of this huge holy dungeon! ' Slaves, murderers,
F Villains

62 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

'Villains that crosses wait for, are not us'd thus.'
I'll shew my self.

*[She turns the Light, and comes towards
Artaxerxes and Memnon.]*

Mem. Ha! whence this gleam of light?

Art. Fate is at hand, let's haste to bid it welcome,
It brings an end of wretchedness.

Cle. Speak lower;
I am a friend: long live prince Artaxerxes.

Art. What wretch art thou, that hail'st me with a curse?
Come from that cloud that muffles up thy face;
And if thou hast a dagger, shew it boldly:
We wish to die.

Cle. Think better on my errand;
I bring you blessings, liberty and life,
And come the minister of happier fate.

[Turns the Light on herself.]

Now down, my blood, down to my trembling heart,
Nor sparkle in my visage to betray me. *[Aside.]*

Art. Ha! as I live, a boy! a blushing boy!
Thou wert not form'd sure for a murderer's office;
Speak then, and tell me what and whence thou art.

Cle. Oh, seek not to unveil a trivial secret,
Which known imports you not. I am a youth
Abandon'd to misfortunes from my birth,
And never knew one cause to joy in life,
But this that puts it in my power to save
A prince like Artaxerxes. Ask no more,
But follow thro' the mazes that I tread,
Until you find your safety.

Art. Thus forbidding,
Thou giv'st me cause t' enquire: are then the guards,
That when the day went down, with strictest watch
Observ'd the temple gates, remov'd or fled?

Cle. They are not, but with numbers reinforc'd
Keep every passage; only one remains
Thro' Mirza's palace, open to our flight.

Mem. Ha! Mirza! there's damnation in his name,
Ruin, deceit, and treachery attend it;
Can life, can liberty or safety, come
From him, or ought that has an interest in him?
Rather, suspect this feigning boy his instrument,

To

To plunge us deeper yet, if possible,
 In misery ; ' perhaps some happy accident,
 ' As yet to us unknown, preserves us from
 ' The utmost malice of his hate while here,
 ' This sets his wicked wit at work to draw us
 ' Forth from this holy place ; much better be
 ' The pris'ners of the gods, than wear his fetters."

Cle. Unfortunate suspicion ! what shall I say
 To urge 'em to be safe, and yet preserve
 My wretched self unknown ?

[*Aside.*

' *Art.* Surely that face
 ' Was not design'd to hide dissembled malice.
 ' Say, youth, art thou of Mirza's house (as sure thou must,
 ' If thou pretend'st to lead us that way forth) -
 ' And canst thou be a friend to Artaxerxes,
 ' Whom that fell dog, that minister of devils,
 ' With most opprobrious injuries has loaded ?
 ' *Cle.* 'I ho' I am his, yet sure I never shad
 ' His hate——Shall I confess and own my shame ?
 ' Oh, heavens !——

[*Aside.*

' *Mem.* Mark, th' unready traitor flammers ;
 ' Half-bred, and of the mongrel strain of mischief,
 ' He has not art enough to hide the cheat,
 ' His deep-designing lord had better plotted.
 ' Away ! Thinks he so poorly of our wit,
 ' To gull us with a novice ?——If our fate
 ' Has giv'n us up, and mark'd us for destruction,
 ' Tell him, we are resolv'd to meet it here.

' *Cle.* Yet hear me, prince, since you suspect me sent
 By Mirza, to ensnare you, know I serve
 (Oh, gods ! to what am I reduc'd !) [*Aside.*]—his daugh-
 Some god compassionate of your woes has stirred [ter !
 A woman's pity in her softer breast ;
 And 'tis from her I come to give you liberty.
 I beg you to believe me.

[*She weeps.*

Art. See, he weeps !

' *Mem.* The waiting tears stood ready for command,
 ' And now they flow to varnish the false tale.'

Art. His daughter, say'st thou ? I have seen the maid.
 Dost thou serve her ; and could she send thee to me ?
 'Tis an unlikely riddle.

Mem. Perhaps 'tis meant,

F 2

That

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That she who shares his poisonous blood, shall share
The pleasure of his vengeance, ' and inure
' The woman's hands and eyes to death and mischief.'
But thou, her instrument, begone, and say,
The fate of princes is not sport for girls.

Cle. ' Some envious power blasts my pious purpose,
' And nought but death remains : O that by that
' I might persuade him to believe and trust me ;
' And fly that fate which with the morning waits him !
' [*Aside.*]

I grieve, my lord, to find your hard suspicion
Debars me from preserving your dear life,
(Which not your own Amestris wishes more.)
To-morrow's dawn (Oh ! let me yet prevail)
The cruel Queen resolves shall be your last.
Oh, fly ! let me conjure you, save yourself.
May that most awful god that here is worshipp'd
Deprive me of his chearful beams for ever,
Make me the wretched'st thing he sees while living,
' And after death the lowest of the damn'd,'
If I have any thought but for your safety.

Art. No, I have found the malice of thy mistress ;
Since I refus'd her love when she was proffer'd
By her ambitious father for my bride,
And on a worthier choice bestow'd my heart,
She vows revenge on me for slighted beauty.

Cle. My lord, you do her most unmanly wrong ;
She owns the merit of the fair Amestris,
Nor ever durst imagine she deserv'd you.
Oh ! spare that thought, nor blot her virgin fame.
In silence still she wonder'd at your virtues,
Bless'd you, nor at her own ill fate repin'd ;
This wounds her most, that you suspect unkindly
Th' officious piety that would have sav'd you.
Careless of an offended father's rage,
For you alone concern'd, she charg'd me guide you,
When midnight sleep had clos'd observing eyes,
Safe thro' her father's palace with this key——
And if I met with any that durst bar
Your passage forth, she bid me greet him thus——

[*Stabs herself.*
[*Artaxerxes catches her as she falls.*
Art.

THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER. 65

Art. What hast thou done, rash boy ?

Cle. Giv'n you the last,

And only proof remain'd, that could convince you
I held your life much dearer than my own.

Mem. Horrid amazement chills my freezing veins !

Cle. Let me conjure you with my latest breath,
Make haste to seize the means that may preserve you ;
This key, amidst the tumult of this night,

[Giving the Key]

Will open you a way thro' Mirza's palace.
May every god assist and guard your flight :
And Oh ! when all your hopes of love and glory
Are crown'd with just success, will you be good,
And think with pity on the lost Cleone ?

Art. Ten thousand dismal fancies crowd my thoughts ;
Oh ! is it possible thou canst be she,
Thou most unhappy fair one ?

Cle. Spare my shame,
Nor call the blood that flows to give me peace,
Back to my dying cheeks. Can you forget
Who was my father ; and remember only
How much I wish'd I had deserv'd your friendship ?
Nay, let my tongue grow bold, and say, your love ?
But 'twas not in my fate.

Art. What shall I say,
To witness how my grateful heart is touch'd ?
' But, Oh ! why would'st thou give this fatal instance ?'
Why hast thou stain'd me with thy virgin blood ?
I swear, sweet saint, for thee I could forgive
The malice of thy father, ' tho' he seeks
' My life and crown ; thy goodness might atone
' Ev'n for a nation's sins.' Look up, and live,
And thou shalt still be near me as my heart.

Cle. Oh, charming sounds, that gently lull my soul
To everlasting rest ! I swear 'tis more,
More joy to die thus blest'd, than to have liv'd
A monarch's bride : may every blessing wait you ;
In war and peace, still may you be the greatest,
The favourite of the gods, and joy of men —
I faint—Oh, let me lean upon your arm—

[She dies.]

Art. ' Hold up the light, my father.' Ha ! she swoons !
The iron hand of death is on her beauties.

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And see, like lilies nipp'd with frost, they languish.

Mem. My tough old soldier's heart melts at the sight;
And an unwonted pity moves my breast;
Ill-fated maid! too good for that damn'd race,
From which thou drew'st thy being! sure the gods,
Angry, ere while will be at length appeas'd
With this egregious victim: let us tempt 'em
Now while they seem to smile.

Art. A beam of hope -
Strikes thro' my soul, like the first infant light
That glanc'd upon the chaos; if we reach
The open city, fate may be ours again:
But Oh! whate'er success or happiness
Attend my life, still fair unhappy maid,
Still shall thy memory be my grief and honor;
On one fix'd day in each returning year,
Cypress and myrtle for thy sake I'll wear;
Ev'n my Amestris thy hard fate shall mourn,
And with fresh roses crown thy virgin urn,
'Till in Elysium blest'd, thy gentle shade
Shall own my vows of sorrow justly paid.

[*Exeunt*]

END of the FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE, *Mirza's Palace.*

Enter Mirza, Magas, and Attendants, with Lights.

MIRZA.

PHO! You o'er-rate the danger.
Magas. If I do,
We err in the extreme, since you esteem it
As much too lightly. Think you then 'tis nothing,
This horrid jar of tumult and confusion?
Heads white with years, and vers'd in long experience,
Who yet remember all the different changes
A rolling age produces, cannot call
To mind one instance dreadful as this night,
Infernal discord, hideous to behold,
Hangs, like its evil genius, o'er the city,

And

- ‘ And sends a snake to every vulgar breast.
- ‘ From several quarters the mad rabble swarm,
- ‘ Arm’d with the instruments of hasty rage,
- ‘ And in confus’d disorderly array
- ‘ Most formidable march : their differing clamors,
- ‘ Together join’d, compose one deafening sound;
- ‘ Arm ! Arm ! they cry, religion is no more,
- ‘ Our gods are slighted, whom if we revenge not,
- ‘ War, pestilence, and famine, will ensue,
- ‘ And universal ruin swallow all.
- ‘ *Mir.* A crew of mean, unthinking, heartless slaves,
- ‘ With ease stirr’d up to mutiny, and quell’d
- ‘ With the same ease, with like expressions shew,
- ‘ Their joy or anger : both are noise and tumult,
- ‘ And still, when holidays make labour cease,
- ‘ They meet and shout ! do these deserve our fears ?
- ‘ *Mag.* Most certainly they may ; if we consider
- ‘ Each circumstance of peril that concurs ;
- ‘ Tigranes, with the rest that ’scap’d the temple,
- ‘ Are mix’d amongst this herd, and urge the wrongs
- ‘ Which with the gods their prince and Memnon suffer.
- ‘ *Mir.* Nor need we fear ev’n that, safe in the aid
- ‘ And number of our friends, who treble theirs :
- ‘ For this mad rout, that hum and swarm together,
- ‘ For want of somewhat to employ their folly,
- ‘ Indulge ’em in their fancy for religion.
- ‘ Thou and thy holy brotherhood of priests
- ‘ Shall in procession bear the sacred fire,
- ‘ And all our golden gods ; let their friends judge
- ‘ If still they look not kindly as of old ;
- ‘ ’Tis a most apt amusement for a crowd,
- ‘ They’ll gaze and gather round the gaudy shew,
- ‘ And quite forget the thoughts of mutiny.
- ‘ A guard shall wait you.
- ‘ *Mag.* Why go not you too with us ;
- ‘ They hold your wisdom in most high regard,
- ‘ And will be greatly sway’d by your persuasion ;
- ‘ Th’ occasion is well worth your care and presence.
- ‘ *Mir.* Oh ! you’ll not need my aid : besides, my friend,
- ‘ My hours this night are destin’d to a task
- ‘ Of more import than are the fates of millions
- ‘ Such groveling souls as theirs. As yet the secret

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- ' Is immature, not worth your present knowledge :
 ' To-morrow that and all my breast is yours.
 ' I must not, dare not trust him with my weakness,
 ' 'Twill mark me for his scorn ; 'tis yet some wisdom,
 ' If we must needs be fools, to hide our folly. [Aside:
 ' *Mag.* He means the prisoners' death ; let him engross
 ' The people's hate, monopolize damnation,
 ' I will be safely ignorant of mischief. [Aside.
 ' Hereafter when your wisdom shall think fit
 ' To share those thoughts, and trust 'em with your friend,
 ' I shall be pleas'd to know ; this instant hour
 ' My cares are all employ'd on my own province,
 ' Which hastes me hence.
 ' *Mir.* May all your gods assist you.' [Exeunt.

SCENE, an Apartment in Mirza's Palace.

Enter Amestris.

Am. Will ye not hear, ye ever gracious Gods ?
 (Since sure you do not joy in our misfortunes,
 But only try the strength of our frail virtue)
 Are not my sorrows full ? can ought be added ?
 My royal lord, and father ! yet dear names
 In which my all of happiness was summ'd,
 What have the ministers of fate done with you
 Are you not dead ? Too sure ! that's past a doubt : [band !
 Oh, Memnon ! Oh, my prince ! my father ! Oh, my hus-

Enter Mirza.

Mir. Such Juno was (except alone those tears) :
 When, upon Ida's top she charm'd the god,
 That long had been a stranger to her bed ;
 Made him forget the business of the world,
 And lay aside his providence, t'employ
 The whole divinity upon her beauty.
 And sure 'twas worth the while ; had I been Jove,
 So had I too been pleas'd to be deceiv'd
 Into immortal joys. O cease thy tears !—

Am. Give 'em me back, or if the grave and thou
 Restore to none, Oh, join my fate to theirs !
 Shut us together in some silent vault,
 ' Where I may sit and weep till death's kind hand
 ' Shall lay me gently by my lord's dear side,
 And hush my sorrows in eternal slumber.

Mir. In pity to your form assuage those tears,

Sorrow

THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

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Sorrow is beauty's bane ; nor let your breast
Harbour a fear : I wage not war with fair ones ;
' But wish you would efface those ugly thoughts,
' That live in your remembrance to perplex you ;'
Let joy, the native of your soul, return,
And love's gay god sit smiling in your eyes,
As erst he did ; I bring you joy and glory,
And would so fully recompense the loss
You fondly mourn, that when you count the gains,
Yourself should own your fortunes are well chang'd.

Am. Oh, impious comforter ! talk'st thou of joy,
When nature dictates only death and horror ?
Is there a god can break the laws of fate,
And give me back the precious lives I've lost ?
What nam'st thou recompence ? Can ought atone
For blood ? A father's and a husband's blood !
Such comfort brings the hungry midnight wolf,
When having slain the shepherd, smear'd with gore,
He leaps amidst the helpless bleating flock.

Mir. Away with this perverseness of thy sex,
' These foolish tears, these peevish sighs and sobbings,'
Look up, be gay, and chear me with thy beauties,
And to thy wish I will indulge thy fancy.
Not all th' imagin'd splendor of the gods
Shall match thy pomp, sublimely shalt thou shine,
The boast and glory of our Asian world ;
Nor shall one she of all thy tow'ring sex
Out-rival thee (thou lovely fair) in power.
Oh, think on power, on power, and place supreme.

' *Am.* There is but one, one only thing to think on,
My murder'd lord, and his dark gaping grave,
That waits unclos'd impatient of my coming.

' *Mir.* Oh, listen, gentle maid, while I impart
A story of such softness to thy ear,
As (like the halcyon brooding o'er the waves)
May with its influence hush thy stormy griefs.'

Am. Begone ! and if thou bear'st one thought of pity
In that hard breast, Oh, leave me to myself,
Nor by thy presence, hideous to my soul,
And horrid consolations, strive to add
To my full woes, that swell'd without thy help,
Already rise and bubble o'er the margin.

Mir

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Mir. What if I talk'd of love ?

Am. Of love ! Oh, monster !

Mir. If love be monstrous, so is this fair frame,
This beauteous world, this canopy, the sky,
' That sparkling shines with gems of light innumerable ;
' And so art thou and I, since love made all ;
' Who kindly reconcil'd the jarring atoms
' In friendly league, and bid 'em be a world.
' Frame not thy lovely mouth then to blaspheme
' Thy great Creator ; thou art his, and made for
' His more peculiar service ; thy bright eyes,
' Thy moist red lip, thy rising snowy bosom,
' Thy every part was made to furnish joy,
' Ev'n to a riotous excess of happiness.
Oh, give me but to taste thy blissful charms,
And take my wealth, my honour, pow'r, take all,
All, all for recompence.

Am. Execrable wretch !

Thus, is it thus thou wouldst assuage my sorrows !
When thy inhuman bloody cruelty,
Now with redoubling pangs cleave my poor heart,
Com'it thou bespotted with the recent slaughter
To proffer impious love ; accursed fiend !
Horror and grief shall turn me to a fury ;
Still with my echoing cries I will pursue thee,
And halloo vengeance in thy guilty ears ;
' Vengeance for murder ! for my prince's murder !
' And for my poor old father !' Think not, villain
Who art the plague and scourge of human-kind,
That there is peace for thee, whilst I run mad
With raging sorrow. Vengeance, vengeance waits thee,
Great as my woes ! ' my dear, dear Artaxerxes !'

Mir. I am not lucky at the closing art
Of catching girls with words ; but 'tis no matter ;
Force is a sure resort : and when at last
Fierce as a tow'ring falcon from her height,
I stoop to strike the prey, it is my own.
Obstinate fool, how dar'st thou cross my wishes ?
' Since the same hand that has avenged me well
' Upon my other foes, commands thy fate ?'
Tho' mercy, in compassion of thy beauty
Reach out her hand to save thee, yet, if I urg'd,

[*Aside*—

Revenge

Revenge may still take place—think well on that.

Am. That, that is all the mercy which I ask ;
Indulge thy thirsty malice in my blood,
And hasten me to peace, ' my woman's heart
' Shall gather all its little stock of courage
' To arm me for the blow. Tho' death be terrible,
' Ghastly and pale, yet I will joy to meet him.
' My better life already is destroy'd,
' Imperfect now and wanting half myself,
' I wander here in vain, and want thy land
' To guide and re-unite me to my lord.

Mir. Alas ! thou hast not read aright thy destiny,
Matter of much import requires thy life,
And still detains thee here. Come, I'll instruct thee,
And put thee in the way of fate's design.

[*Laying hold on her.*]

Am. Unhand me, villain !

Mir. Nay, you must not struggle,
Nor frown, and look askew : fantastic sex !
That put men on the drudgery to force you
To your own satisfaction.

Am. Let me go,
Abhorr'd, detested monster ! Shall he brave you,
You awful gods ? shall not your lightning blast him ?

Mir. Oh, no ! your gods have pleasures of their own ;
Some mortal beauty charms the wanton Jove,
Within whose arms he revels, nor has leisure
To mind thy foolish raving.

Am. Hear me now, sweet heaven !
Save me, ye gods ! Oh save me ! save me ! save me !

Mir. Come, come along ! you see you strive in vain.

[*Striving with her.*]

Am. Is there no hope of aid from gods or men ?
Oh, let me turn to thee then, kneel to thee,
And with my prayers and tears implore thy pity.

Mir. Speak, for enchantment dwells upon thy tongue,
' And all the fluttering spirits in my blood
' Dance nimbly on to the celestial sound.'

Am. What shall I say to move him to compassion ?
Thus groveling, prostrate thus upon the earth,
Let me conjure you, spare my virgin honour ;
' Spare to commit a wrong to you unprofitable,

• Yet

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‘ Yet worse to me than torments, racks, and death ;
Kill me, the last of my unhappy race,
And let old Memnon’s name with me be lost.

‘ If death be not enough, let me live wretched ;
‘ Pull off these robes, and clothe me like a slave,
‘ Then send me out to labour at some village,
‘ Where I may groan beneath a cruel master,
‘ Be hardly us’d, and want e’en food and raiment,
‘ Till cold, and dirt, and poverty shall change
‘ And make me loathsome as my fellow-wretches.
‘ Oh ! let my rags claim only this one privilege,
‘ To wrap me in the grave a spotless maid.’

Mir. That tongue which pleads, makes all entreating
vain,

‘ Thy every motion, each complaining accent,
‘ Warms me afresh, and urges new desire ;
‘ Thou art, thou must be mine, nor heaven nor earth,
‘ Nor the conspiring power of hell shall save thee ;’
I long to lose my age in thy embraces,
To bask and wanton in thy warmer sun
Till a new youth shoot thro’ me.

Am. Chaste Diana,
And thou, the guardian of the marriage bed,

[*Getting loose from him,*
Thou, royal Juno, Oh, protect thy votary !

Mir. ‘ My jaded age and weak enervate limbs
‘ Falter and shrink unequal to their office.’
I pr’ythee yield ; come, yield and be a queen ;

[*Laying hold on her again,*
Yield, and be any thing. I cannot bear
These fierce convulsive starts, this raging flame
That drinks my blood.

Am. Oh, never, never, never.
‘ A cause like this will turn me to a fighter,’
To my last gasp, to death I will resist.

Mir. My coward strength, ‘ dost thou go back from
beauty ?’
Rouse, and deserve the pleasure thou wouldst taste.

Am. Unmanly traitor !—seize him, all ye fiends.

[*In the struggle she draws his own poniard, and stabs him.*

Mir. [*falling.*] Damnation ! Oh, my heart ! the
Has struck me to the earth. [curfed steel
Am.

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I heard old Memnon and the pris'ner prince
Loud as the roaring ocean in a storm,
' Echoing their rage thro' the vast sounding dome ;'
When on a sudden, ere the night had gain'd
Four hours at most, the noise was hush'd in silence.
Wond'ring, and curious of the cause, I enter'd,
And found (Oh, grief to fight !) your lovely daughter
Dress'd like a boy, then warm, and newly dead.
One wound was on her breast. Why she was there,
Or how, we know not ; to compleat the ill,
The pris'ners both are fled.

Mir. Fled ! 'tis impossible.

Ha ! Which way ? Whither ? How ? They could not fly.

Am. Oh, wond'rous turn of joy ! Are they not dead
then ? *[Aside.]*

Orch. They could not 'scape the guards ; no other pass
Remain'd but yours, and even that was fast. *[Kage]*

Upon the instant I beset each avenue
Which to your palace leads ; happily as yet
They are not pass'd from thence.

Am. Guard 'em, ye gods !

[Aside.]

Mir. Find 'em again, Orchanes, ere I die,
Or I am more than doubly damn'd ; this loss
Is worse than mine, worse than my daughter's death,
'Tis death of my revenge. ' Malicious fortune !
' She took the moment when my wisdom nodded,
' And ruin'd me at once. O doating fool !
' Thou fool of love, and of pernicious woman !'
I sicken ; nature fails me ; Oh, revenge !
Will not thy cordial keep back flying life ;
It shall ; Orchanes, drag that traitress to me.

Am. Oh, if thou art a man, I charge thee loose me,
' And scorn his bidding, scorn to be his slave,
' A devil's drudge in mischief.' Save me from death,
Have pity on my youth : Oh, spare my youth !

[Orchanes pulls Amestris down to Mirza.]

Mir. Hearken not to her, drag her, pull her down :
Shall Memnon boast of thee, while I die childless ?
No, to Cleone's ghost thou art a victim.

' O could I but have seen thee with those eyes
' I view thee now, I had been wise and safe ;
' That face shall make no more fools in this world,

Down, bear thy fatal beauties down to hell,
And try if thou canst charm among the dead.'

Die, witch ; enchantress, die. [*He flabs her.*]

Am. Ah ! mercy, heavens !

Mir. I thank thee, hand, at least for this last service.

Now fly, Orchanes, haste and tell the Queen,

My latest breath stays for her—Something I would [*Exit Orchanes.*]

Important to her service—I breathe short,

Lie stays in pain, and struggles to be gone,

I strive in vain to hold it—Ha ! what mean

These fleeting shades that dance before my sight ?

'Tis death, I sell it plain ; the dreadful change

That nature starts at, death !—Death !—What is

'Tis a vast disquisition : priests and scholars [death !]

Enquire whole ages, and are yet in doubt.

My head turns round—I cannot form one thought

That pleases me about it.—Dying —must resolve me.

[*Mirza dies.*]

Am. Oh, my hard fortune ! must I die ? die now,

When Artaxerxes calls and bids me live ?

His dear lov'd image stays my parting soul,

And makes it linger in its ruin'd house.

' Ha ! sure he's dead—'tis so, and now he stands

[*Looking on Mirza.*]

' Arraign'd before the dread impartial judges,

' To answer to a long account of crimes.'

Had I but strength, perhaps my fate may yet [*Rising.*]

Find out a way to save me.

My love and father make life worth my care,

Alas ! my blood flows fast : this way, I think.

[*Goes off faintly.*]

*Enter at the other Side Artaxerxes and Memnon, with a
Sword and Dark-Lanthorn.*

Mem. Ha ! here are lights, ' hold up thy weapon, son.'

Art. And see, blood and a body on the floor !

What means this scene of death ! what wretch art thou ?

Oh, all ye juster powers ! 'tis Mirza, see,

He seems now dead.

Mem. ' Damnation ' thy punishment then is new to him.
And if there be one deeper pit of sulphur,

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One plague above the rest in those dark regions,
He, as the most abandon'd dog, may claim it,
And vie for preference with devils themselves.

This way, my prince, let us attempt. [Exeunt and return.

Re-enter Amestris.

Mem. *We must return, we cannot pass that way.*

Am. The doors are guarded, fate has clos'd me round.

Art. Ha! art thou my Amestris?

Mem. Oh, my daughter! [They run to her.

Am. Are ye then come at last to bless my eyes,
Which could not close without one parting view?

Oh, hold me, or I sink——

Mem. Alas! my child——

Art. My cruel fears! why art thou pale and faint?
Ha! whence this blood? Oh! killing spectacle!

Am. Forth from my heart the crimson river flows,
My lavish heart, that hastily consumes
Its small remain of life. Oh, lay me gently
On my last bed the earth, whose cold hard bosom
Must shortly be the place of my long rest.

Mem. What have we done? or, Oh! if we have sinn'd,
What has thy innocence done to merit this!

Am. That villain Mirza——

Mem. Ha! 'say, what of him?

Am. Offer'd most brutal outrage to my honour.

Art. Oh, ye eternal rulers of the world,
Could you look on unmov'd? But say, instruct me,
That I may bow before the god that sav'd thee.

Am. Sure 'twas some chaster pow'r that made me bold,
And taught my trembling hand to find the way
With his own poniard to the villain's heart.

Mem. Thou art my daughter still! Oh, noble action!
That gives in death an interval of joy.

Am. Just in that hour of fate a villain enter'd,
By whose assistance the revengeful Mirza
Forc'd me to share death with him.

Art. 'Tis past, 'tis past, [Lying down,
'And all those fires that lighted up my soul,
'Glory and bright ambition languish now,
'And leave me dark and gloomy as the grave,'
Oh, thou soft dying sweetness!—shall I rage
And curse myself? curse ev'n the gods?—Oh, no;
I am the slave of fate, and bow beneath

The

The load that presses me ; am sunk to earth,
And ne'er shall rise again : here will I sit
And gaze till I am nothing.

Am. Alas ! my lord,
' Fain would I strive to bid you not be sad,'
Fain would I cheer your grief, but 'tis in vain :
I know by my own heart it is impossible ;
For we have lov'd too well. ' Oh, mournful nuptials !
' Are these the joys of brides ;' indeed 'tis hard,
'Tis very hard to part ; I cannot leave you ;
The agonizing thought distracts me ; hold me,
Oh, hold me fast, death shall not tear me from you.

Art. O could my arms fence thee from destiny,
The gods might launch their thunder on my head,
Plague me with woes treble to what I feel :
With joy I would endure it all to save thee.
What shall I say ? What shall I do to save thee ?
Grief shakes my frame, it melts my very temper,
My manly constancy and royal courage
Run gushing thro' my eyes : Oh, my Amestris !

Am. And see my father ! his white beard is wet
With the sad dew.

Mem. I try'd to man my heart,
But could not stand the buffet of this tempest.
It tears me up—my child ! ha ! art thou dying ?

Am. Indeed I'm very sick. Oh, hold me up !
My pain increases, and a cold damp dew
Hangs on my face. Is there no help ? no ease ?
Have I your arm, my love ?

Art. Thou hast ; my heart,
Dost thou yet hold ?

Am. Say, will you not forget me,
When I am laid to moulder in my tomb ?
'Tis sure you will not, still there will be room
For my remembrance in your noble heart ;
' I know you lov'd me truly.' Now I faint.
Oh, shield me, shield me from that ugly phantom,
The cave of death ! how dark and deep it is ?
I tremble at the sight——'tis hideous horror !
The gloom grows o'er me—let me not lie there.

[Amestris dies.]

Art. There life gave way, and the last rosy breath

78 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

Went in that sigh. ' Death like a brutal victor,
 ' Already enter'd, with rude haste defaces
 ' The lovely frame he'as master'd ; see how soon
 ' These starry eyes have lost their light and lustre !
 ' Stay, let me close their lids.' Now for rest ;
 Old Memnon ! ha ! grief has transfix'd his brain,
 And he perceives me not.—Now what of thee ?
 Think'st thou to live, thou wretch ? Think not of any
 Thought is damnation, 'tis the plague of devils [thing ;
 To think on what they are. And see, this weapon
 Shall shield me from it, plunge me in forgetfulness,
 Ere the dire scorpion, thought, can rouse to sting me.
 Lend me thy bosom, my cold bride : ill-fortune

[*Lying by her.*

Has done its worst, and we shall part no more ;
 Wait for me, gentle spirit, since the stars
 Together must receive us. [*Stabs himself.*] Oh, well aim'd !
 How foolish is the coward's fear of death !
 Of death, the greatest ——— surest way for peace.

[*Artaxerxes dies.*

[*Memnon stands looking on the bodies some time,
 and then speaks.*

Mem. Yet will I gaze ! yet, tho' my eyes grow stiff,
 And turn to steel or marble. Here's a sight
 To bless a father ! these, these were your gifts,
 Ye bounteous gods ! ' You'll spare my thanks for them.'
 You gave me being too, and spun me out
 To hoary wretchedness. Away, 'twas cruelty :
 Oh, cursed, cursed, cursed fourscore years,
 Ye heap of ills, ye monstrous pile of plagues !
 Sure they lov'd well, the very streams of blood,
 That flow from their pale bosoms, meet and mingle.
 Stay, let me view 'em better—' nay, 'tis thus——'
 If thou art like thy mother——she dy'd too ——
 Where is she ?—Ha ! that dog, that villain Mirza,
 He bears her from me : shall we not pursue ?——
 The whirl of battle comes across me, fly ;
 Begone ; they shall not, dare not brave me thus.
 ' Hey, 'tis a glorious sound !' rush on, my prince,
 We'll start and reach the goal of fate at once. [*Runs off.*

Enter on the other side Queen and Attendants with Lights.

Queen. Why am I summon'd with this call of death ?

This

This is no common ruin ; Artaxerxes !

And Memnon's daughter ! ' Mirza, thou art fallen

' In pompous slaughter : could not all thy arts,

' That dol'd about destruction to our enemies,

' Guard thy own life from fate ? Vain boast of wisdom,

' That with fantastic pride, like busy children,

' Builds paper towns and houses, which at once

' The hand of chance o'erturns, and loosely scatters !'

1st At. Oh, dismal sight !

[Looking]

Queen. What is it frights thy eyes ?

1st At. Old Memnon's body.

Queen. 'Tis a grateful horror.'

1st At. Upon the floor the batter'd carcase lies

Wet'ring in gore, ' whilst on the marble-wall

' A dreadful mass of brains, grey-hair, and blood,

' Is smear'd in hideous mixture.'

Queen. Fierce despair

Has forc'd a way for the impetuous soul.

'Tis well, he is in peace—What means this tumult ?

[Shout, clashing of swords.]

Enter an Officer, his sword drawn.

Offi. Fly, Madam, lest your person be not safe ;

The traitor Bagoas, to whose charge you trusted

The prince your son, has drawn the guards to join him,

And now, assisted by the furious rabble,

On every side they charge those few who keep

This palace and the temple, with loud outcries,

Proclaiming that they mean to free the pris'ners.

Orphanes, ere I fled to give you notice,

Fell by the prince's hand ; the raging torrent

Bore down our weak resistance, and pursuing

With furious haste, ev'n trod upon my flight :

This instant brings them here.

Queen. Let them come on,

I cannot fear ; this storm is rais'd too late,

I stand secure of all I wish already.

[Shout and clashing of swords again.]

Enter Artaban, Cleanthes, and Attendants, with their
swords drawn.

Art. Then virtue is in vain, since base deceit

And treachery have triumph'd o'er the mighty.

Oh,

86 THE AMBITIOUS STEP-MOTHER.

Oh, nature ! let me turn my eyes away,
Lest I am blasted by a mother's sight.

Queen. Ungrateful rebel ! do thy impious arms
Pursue me for my too indulgent fondness
And care for thee ?

Art. Well has that care been shewn ;
Have you not foully stain'd my sacred fame ?
Look on that scene of blood ; the dire effects
Of cruel female arts. But, Oh, what recompense ?
What can you give me for my murder'd love ?
Has not the labyrinth of your fatal counsels
Involv'd my fair, my lovely, lost Cleone ?
By our bright gods I swear, I will assert
The majesty of manly government,
Nor wear again your chains. ' Still as our mother
' Be honour'd ; rule amongst your maids and eunuchs,
' Nor mingle in our state, where mad confusion
' Shakes the whole frame, to boast a woman's cunning.'

Queen. Thou talk'st as if thy infant hand could grasp,
Guide, and command the fortune of the world ;
But thou art young in pow'r. Remember, boy,
Thy father, once the hero of his age,
Was proud to be the subject of my sway ;
The warrior to the woman's wit gave way,
And found it was his interest to obey. }
And dost thou hope to shake off my command ?
Dost thou, the creature of my forming hand ?
When I assert the pow'r thou dar'st invade, }
Like Heaven I will resolve to be obey'd,
And rule or ruin that which once I made. }

[*Exeunt Queen and Attendants.*]

Art. Let a guard wait the Queen : tho' nature plead
For reverence to her person, jealous power
Must watch her subtle and ambitious wit.
Hast thou secur'd the impious priest, Cleanthes ?
Magas, that wretch that prostitutes our gods.

Clean. Already he has met the fate he merited :
' This night the hypocrite in grand procession
' March'd through the city to appease the people,
' And bore the gods along to aid his purpose :
' When on a sudden, like a hurricane,
' That starts at once, and ruffles all the ocean.'

Some

Some fury more than mortal seiz'd the crowd :
 At once they rush'd, at once they cry'd, Revenge ;
 Then snatch'd and tore the trembling priest to pieces.
 What was most strange, no injury was offer'd
 To any of the brotherhood beside,
 But all their rage was ended in his death :
 Like formal justice that severely strikes,
 And in an instant is serene and calm.

Art. Oh, my Cleanthes ! do but cast thy thoughts
 Back on the recent story of this night ;
 And thou with me wilt wonder, and confess
 The gods are great and just, We'll have you mark'd,
 ' Celestial powers, your righteous detestation
 ' Of sacrilege, of base and bloody treachery.'
 May this example guide my future sway :
 Let honour, truth, and justice, crown my reign,
 Ne'er let my kingly word be given in vain,
 But ever sacred with my foes remain. }
 On these foundations shall my empire stand,
 ' The gods shall vindicate my just command,
 And guard that power they trusted to my hand. }
 [*Exeunt.*

END of the FIFTH ACT.





EPILOGUE.

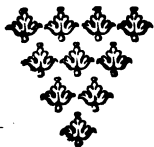
THE spleen and vapours, and this doleful play,
Have mortify'd me to that height to-day,
That I am almost in the mortal mind,
To die indeed, and leave you all behind.
Know then, since I resolve in peace to part,
I mean to leave to one alone my heart:
(Last favours will admit of no partage,
I bar all sharing, but upon the stage)
To one who can with one alone be blest,
The peaceful monarch of a single breast:
To one——But, Oh! how hard 'twill be to find
That phoenix in your fickle changing kind!
New loves, new interests, and religions new,
Still your fantastic appetites pursue.
Your sickly fancies loath what you possess,
And every restless fool would change his place.
Some weary of their peace and quiet grown,
Want to be hoisted up aloft, and shewn;
Whilst from the envy'd height, the wise get safely down. }
We find your wavering temper to our cost,
Since all our pains and care to please is lost.
Music in vain supports with friendly aid
Her sister poetry's declining head:
Shew but a mimic ape, or French buffoon, }
You to the other house in shoals are gone,
And leave us here to tune our crowds alone.
Must Shakspeare, Fletcher, and laborious Ben
Be left for Scaramouch and Harkequin?
Allow you are inconstant, yet 'tis strange,
For sense is still the same, and ne'er can change.

Tet

E P I L O G U E.

*Yet ev'n in that you vary as the rest,
 And every day new notions are profess'd.
 Nay, there's a * wit has found, as am told,
 New ways to heaven, despairing of the old:
 He swears he'll spoil the clerk and sexton's trade,
 Bells shall no more be rung, nor graves be made:
 The hearse and fix no longer be in fashion,
 Since all the faithful may expect translation.
 What think you of the project? I'm for trying,
 I'll lay aside these foolish thoughts of dying;
 Preserve my youth and vigour for the stage,
 And be translated in a good old age.*

* Asgill.





Robert del.

Published by J. B. Long, Theatre Street, No. 177.

1800

*M^r WROUGHTON in the Character of EDWARD
Give instant Orders to recall our Parties;
I will not hazard by a rash Pursuit
So vast a Victory.*

BELL'S EDITION.

E D W A R D

THE
BLACK PRINCE;
OR, THE
BATTLE OF POICTIERS.
AN HISTORICAL TRAGEDY.

As written by W. SHIRLEY, Esq.

DISTINGUISHING ALSO THE
VARIATIONS OF THE THEATRE,
AS PERFORMED AT THE
Theatre-Royal in Dury-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.

MDCCLXXVII.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

G E O R G E,

EARL OF

H A L I F A X,

Viscount SUNBURY, and Baron of HALIFAX ;
 First Lord Commissioner of Trade and Planta-
 tions, and one of his Majesty's Most Honourable
 Privy-Council.

MY LORD,

IN whatever light I consider myself, whether as an Englishman, a merchant, or a poet, I would willingly believe that an address of this sort to your Lordship, has the sanction of a peculiar propriety.

As an Englishman, and a lover of my country, where could I find a more amiable patron ? For, on your Lordship's very entrance into public life, the early promise you gave of a steady zeal and disinterested virtue, inspired a general hope, an unbounded esteem, among all ranks of people. And time (the maturer of all things) ripening your glory with your years, hath made your Lordship an allowed ornament to society, and a blessing to your country. Give me leave particularly to congratulate you, my Lord, on the enjoyment of one happiness, often wanting to the best of men, which is an universal good report. For however licentious the voice of slander is grown, especially with respect to persons of eminent character, no shaft of malice hath ever been aimed at your Lordship : a striking proof that your worth has either prevented even the worst

of men from becoming your foes, or convinced them that the worst of all practices would be impotently exerted against you.

As a merchant, I naturally look for countenance to that honourable board, at which your Lordship, with such distinguished goodness and abilities, presides : honourable it is in the strongest sense, as being (by means of your Lordship's direction) the most useful board to the public. Trade is the acknowledged source of national wealth ; and industry, the best nurse of virtue. By these Britain is become mighty ; and consequently to her, above all the kingdoms upon earth, the care and culture of commerce is of the last importance, as the only means that can give power and splendor to her throne, and plenty and happiness to her people. It is, therefore, with singular satisfaction that all good men behold in an employment of such extensive consequence, a person of your Lordship's shining abilities, application and integrity. As an interesting proof of what those qualities give us room to expect, give me leave to congratulate your Lordship and the public, on the happy prosecution of that wise scheme so steadily pursued by your Lordship ; I mean the establishment of a civil government in Nova Scotia. An undertaking, which, if well accomplished, must be productive of great and numberless blessings ; and as a truly patriot work, will heighten the reverence due from the present age to your Lordship, and make your memory precious to latest posterity.

As a poet, I must naturally aspire to the honour of addressing your Lordship in this public manner, not only as you are the inheritor of his titles who was the great *Mæcenæ*s of the last age, but also from stronger inducements ; for, besides the very high respect that all men bear towards your Lordship, I have hereby the honour of introducing to you a hero of your own illustrious family ; my brave Earl of Salisbury (whom I have endeavoured strongly to mark with that rough greatness which so gloriously distinguished our old patricians) was a noble *Montague* ! a name, that, from the Conquest, fills our annals with the most shining characters of judges, warriors, statesmen and patriots, patrons and professors of all sublime sciences, protectors and encouragers of every useful art ! Yet,

1

eminent

eminent and dignified through a long succession of ages as your ancestors have been, I should fear to point at the retrospect, if I was not convinced, that neither their vices could reflect shame, nor their virtues reproach to your Lordship.

Accept, my Lord, in token of a sincere veneration, this humble tribute of an honest heart: I have delivered my sentiments (such as they are) with an entire neglect of art, for truth requires none, and Providence has placed me in a region so distant from your Lordship, that I cannot, I think, be suspected of complimenting for favour. Prostitute praises are justly despicable; they can delight none but the weakest, and be offered by none but the basest of mankind. But our sincere and just acknowledgments for blessings received, our candid and impartial testimonies in behalf of real worth and goodness, may, and ought to be, acceptable to noble minds; since such tribute (we are told) is grateful even to Heaven itself.

May your Lordship's life be long and happy, and all your undertakings crowned with success. And (as the best external blessing I can wish you on earth) may your country's affection keep pace with your merits; and tongues and pens, disinterested as mine, be never wanting to celebrate your praise. I am,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's sincerely devoted,

Labon, And most obedient humble servant,
Nov. 10th,
 1749.

WILLIAM SHIRLEY.

P R O L O G U E.

THE sons of genius search, thro' ev'ry age,
For proper heroes to adorn the stage;

Here Greeks and Romans rise again to view,
Again fight bravely, and their fame renew.

The great, unshaken Cato here you see,
And Cæsar falls for English liberty.

No standard virtue ripen'd yet on earth,
But you behold it in a second birth;

To strike, impress, impel the vig'rous mind,
And give ye all the boasts of all mankind.

Such spurs to glory, if they glory raise,
Deserve protection—nay, demand your praise.

Our bard to-night no doubtful story brings;
Of native, genuine English feats he sings:

Here no false varnish glitters to surprise,
But just historic truths in order rise;

And sure that tale must have for Britons charms,
That shews you France subdu'd by British arms;

Our lions traversing their ravag'd plains,
Their armies broken, and their king in chains.

Our poet, fir'd by England's ancient fame,
(And humbly aiming at great Shakespeare's flame!)

On candour's judgment bids his hopes repose,
Alike disdaining partial friends and foes.

If his warm glow excites a patriot-zeal,
If from your eyes soft drops of pity steal;

If fears, hopes, sorrows, rise with vary'd art,
And by the hand of nature touch the heart,

There let him reign—be there his pow'r confess'd,
And gen'rous judges will o'erlook the rest.

With the humane and the exalted mind,
The absent and the dead indulgence find:

Know then, a parent breathing foreign air,
This night commits his darling to your care;

No faction's form'd to prostitute applause,
No art, no int'rest, to support his cause:

The public honour 'tis his pride to trust,
Nor can he think your voice will be unjust.

Attentive hear, unprejudic'd explore,
And judge like Englishmen—he asks no more.

D R A.

D R A M A T I S P E R S O N Æ.

M E N.

			<i>Drury-Lane.</i>
<i>Edward, Prince of Wales, commonly</i>			
<i>called The Black Prince,</i>			Mr. Garrick.
<i>Earl of Warwick,</i>	—	—	Mr. Usher.
<i>Earl of Salisbury,</i>	—	—	Mr. Bridges.
<i>Lord Audley,</i>	—	—	Mr. Palmer.
<i>Lord Chandos,</i>	—	—	Mr. Blakes.
<i>Arnold, an Attendant on the Prince of</i>			
<i>Wales,</i>	—	—	Mr. Havard.
<i>Cardinal Perigort, the Pope's Nuncio,</i>			Mr. Berry.
<i>John, the French King,</i>		—	Mr. Sowdon.
<i>Dauphin,</i>	} his Sons,		Mr. Simpson.
<i>Duke of Tourain,</i>			Mr. Mar.
<i>Duke of Athens, Constable of France,</i>			Mr. King.
<i>Archbishop of Sens,</i>	—	—	Mr. Burton.
<i>Lord Ribemont,</i>	} French Marshals,		Mr. Barry.
<i>Lord Charney,</i>			Mr. Winstone.

W O M E N.

<i>Mariana, Charney's Daughter, Prisoner</i>		
<i>in the English Camp,</i>		Mrs. Ward.
<i>Louisa, her Attendant,</i>		Miss Murgetroyd.

Nobles, Officers, Soldiers, and Attendants.

SCENE, the English and French Camps, on and near the
Plains of Poitiers in France.

EDWARD

EDWARD,

THE

BLACK PRINCE.

* * * *The lines distinguished by inverted comas, 'thus,' are omitted in the Representation, and those printed in Italics are the additions of the Theatre.*

A C T I.

SCENE, *the Prince of Wales's Tent.*

Prince Edward discovered seated; Warwick, Salisbury, Audley, Chandos, and others standing.

PRINCE.

MY Lords, I summon'd ye in haste to council;
 Intelligence is brought me, that our foes
 Have levied, to oppose us, such a strength
 As almost staggers credibility!
 What's to be done? To tarry longer here,
 And brave their fury in the heart of France,
 Would be a rashness that may hazard all.
 Consider therefore well, my fellow-warriors,
 And aid my judgment with your good advice.
 Speak, Warwick, your opinion.

War. Royal Sir,

It is for marching back, with speed, to Bourdeaux:
 Our little army, harass'd with fatigue,
 And heavy laden with the spoils of war,
 Should, like the careful bees, ere storms o'ertake us,
 Secure our treasures, and prepare for rest.
 Havock has wanton'd in our hard campaign,

And

And manly daring won increase of glory :
 Then let not now presumption madly risk
 Reprisals from such force. Be timely prudent :
 The voice of Wisdom urges our retreat,
 Obey it, and be happy.

Aud. Shameful thought !

What, spirit dastards by inglorious flight ?
 No, never let it, mighty Prince, be said,
 That we, who two succeeding summers chac'd
 From shore to shore of their extensive realm
 Collected armies, doubling each our own,
 Should here at length discover abject fear,
 And skulk for coward safety. What are numbers ?
 Let all their kingdom's millions arm at once,
 And crowding, clust'ring, cram the field of fight,
 Such timid throngs, with multiply'd dismay,
 Would make confusion do the task of valour,
 And work out their destruction.

Sal. Audley's thoughts

Accord with mine—While Salisbury has breath,
 His tongue shall hurl defiance at their force.
 Remember, Princely Edward, Cressy's field ;
 Remember ev'ry battle we have fought ;
 How much out-counted, yet how greatly victors !
 Loud were the calls that broke our sleep of peace,
 And bade us rouse and buckle on our arms :
 A throne usurp'd, your royal father's right ;
 A violated truce, a vile attempt
 To filch away the fruits of painful conquest,
 By basely bribing servants from their duty.
 Assaults so infamous, such rank dishonour,
 At last awoke our monarch's high resentment :
 Oh, give it glorious scope ! unhinge, destroy
 Their very power of doing future wrongs ;
 So shall the rescu'd world pour forth its blessings,
 And kings and kingdoms thank our arm for safety.

Chand. If Chandos gives his voice for our retreat,
 'Tis not from coward motives : all can witness,
 I have met danger with as firm a spirit
 As any in our host. But as success
 Hath crown'd our arms with ample spoils and glory,
 Why, when the season is so far advanc'd,

(Hopeless

(Hopeless of profit) should we longer stay,
 By soothing pride, to brave adversity?
 Consider, gracious Prince, and you, my Lords,
 What difficulties clog a winter march
 In hostile countries; parties harrassing,
 And want of all convenience and supplies.
 I do confess, the wrongs that urg'd us hither
 Were such as merited severe revenge:
 And vengeance we have had. Their burning towns
 Have lighted us on many a midnight march,
 While shrieks, and groans, and yellings echo'd round.
 Fear and Confusion were our harbingers,
 And Death and Desolation our attendants.
 'Such have their suff'rings been thro' two campaigns,
 'And that a third may rise with added horrors,
 'And carry Indignation to his goal,'
 Now homeward let us look, and wisely there
 Recruit, in time, our vigour and our numbers;
 Thence, with the chearful spring to issue forth,
 Again to labour in the field of fame.

Prince. True wisdom, Chandos, dictates to your tongue,
 And modest, manly eloquence adorns it.
 My Lords of Salisbury, and Audley, you,
 Who cherish truth and candour in your minds,
 Must yield to arguments so clear and strong.
 Believe me, friends and brothers of the war,
 A momentary ruin may involve us:
 Such mighty hosts are rais'd, and now in motion,
 As well will task our utmost skill to 'scape.
 Upon the plains of Poitiers are encamp'd,
 Th' extensive plains that our retreat must skirt,
 An army double ours.

Aud. And shall we pass.
 Go tamely by, and give them cause for vaunting
 That Englishmen avoided once a battle?
 No, never let us merit such a stain;
 But boldly seek them, dare their double numbers,
 And drive them, if a combat they decline,
 To skip and wanton at a safer distance.

Sal. Give us, my Prince, the pleasure but to spring
 This gaudy flight of prating popinjays,
 And we'll retire contented.

Chand.

Chand. There my voice
 Shall join ye, Lords: to force them from their home
 At such a juncture will be doubly glorious!
 Or should they venture battle, their discomfit
 Will render our retreat to Bourdeaux safe,
 And end our labours with a noble triumph.

Prince. Then be it so; for Poictiers we'll prepare.

[*Rising.*

Give instant orders, good my Lords, for marching:
 To-morrow's sun shall see us face our foes.

' There, if they wait our coming, we once more
 ' Will dress contention in her gorgon horrors,
 ' Drive fear and slaughter thro' their shudd'ring ranks,
 ' Stalk o'er their mangled heaps, and, bath'd in blood,
 ' Seize with red hands the wreath of victory!
 Here break we off; go each where duty calls.

[*Exeunt Lords.*

Now for an office is most grateful to me.

Who waits?—Let Arnold know that I expect him.

[*A Gentleman appears, and retires again.*

How poor the pomps and trophies of the field,
 The blaze of splendor, or that bubble, praise,
 Compar'd with what the sympathizing heart
 Feels from a gen'rous action!

Enter Arnold.

Welcome, Arnold.

I ne'er behold thy face, but pleasure springs
 From the remembrance of those sprightly days,
 Which led thro' early youth our happy friendship.
 Thou wert my brother then; familiar ease
 Season'd our sports, and doubled each delight.
 Thither my soul, from ceremonious pomp,
 ' And all the heavy toils of high command,'
 Oft backward looks, with wishes to renew
 Those lively transports, unallay'd by care,
 Our boundless happiness, our bursts of joy!

Arn. So honour'd, gracious Prince, as I have been,
 From humble fortune rais'd to envy'd greatness,
 And still with ev'ry grace each gift made precious.
 Oh, what are words in payment of such blessings!
 What ev'n my life, were life itself laid down
 In gratitude for such transcendent goodness!

Prince.

Prince. If there's a transport tow'ring to divine ;
If, in atonement for its load of cares,
One vast enjoyment is the gift of greatness,
'Tis that we can bestow where merit claims,
' And with our favours chear or charm the soul.'
Thine is the vacant military post,
By Mountford's death reverted to my gift ;
And keep thy office in my household still ;
I must not lose the servant in the soldier.
Be henceforth both, and what is more, my friend.

Arn. How shall I praise——

Prince. Arnold, I merit none.
If thou hast kindness done thee, I have pleasure.
There is no joy a gen'rous mind can know,
Like that of giving virtue its reward :
Nor ought such payment be esteem'd a bounty ;
For to deserve and give is equal favour.
But let me ask thee of thy beauteous charge :
How has the noble Mariana borne
Captive calamity ?

Arn. With resignation
Worthy her birth and dignity of spirit :
Forgetting her misfortunes, all her talk
Turns on the topic of your kind protection.

Prince. Let it extend to all that can relieve
The mind from harsh reflections on her state.
We're now preparing for the plains of Poitiers ;
Accommodate her on the wearying way
With thy best care. Remember I request it.

[*Exit.*

Arn. Rely, my royal master, on my duty.
Needless injunction ! Mariana's charms
Have giv'n her here such absolute command,
My very soul, my ev'ry pow'r, is her's.
But the cold maid, whene'er I plead my passion,
Chills me with sighs, and stifles all my flame
Of love with streaming tears. Benignant Heav'n !
Bless'd as I am with royal Edward's favour,
Add Mariana's charms—and all beyond,
Let mad ambition grapple for, and gain.

[*Exit.*

SCENE *changes to the French Camp.*

Enter Charney and the Archbishop of Sens.

Char. My Lord of Sens, I gladly give your Grace
A joyful welcome to the plains of Poitiers.
You come the happy harbinger of comfort,
Returning to old Charney's woe-worn mind.
The King's approach revives my drooping spirits,
It feeds the dying lamp of life with hope
That I shall live to riot in revenge.
Those English locusts, who devour our wealth,
Who spoil and slaughter with so wild a fury,
Grant, ye good Pow'rs, these eyes may see destroy'd,
And I shall die contented !

Sens. Ev'ry tongue
Joins that petition. Your misfortunes, Lord,
Most nearly touch the King.

Char. Oh, they are great !
The pride of ancient lineage treasur'd up,
Trophies of war and ornaments of pomp,
These won by valour, those with honour worn,
Favours of monarchs, and the gifts of Heav'n,
The relics of a glorious ancestry,
Are, with the mansion of my great forefathers,
A heap of ashes now !—A wide-spread ruin.
My age's blessing too, an only daughter,
Torn from her home to hard captivity,
The prey, the victim of a fell revenge !
Oh, matchless misery !—Oh, Mariana !

Sens. Your sorrows have been wept by ev'ry eye ;
And all have wonder'd what should mark you out
For such peculiar vengeance.

Char. Nothing but
The service done our master, when I brib'd
Their governor to give up Calais to us ;
Who, like a villain, broke his plighted faith,
And sacrific'd the gallant troops I led
To Edward's fury : slaughter'd all, or taken,
I was amongst the train who grac'd his triumph.
There the proud King insulted me with taunts ;
He call'd our undertaking vile and base ;
With low'ring brow and bitterness of speech,

Adding,

EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE.

15

Adding, he hop'd the fortune of his arms
Would give him to reward my treachery.
The father's wishes hath the son accomplish'd ;
For which, may all the rage of ev'ry curse,
Flames, famines, pestilences, slaughters, join
To root from nature the detested race ! [Athens.

Sens. Grant it, good Heav'n ! — But see, the Duke of

Enter Athens.

Char. Lord Constable, most welcome to my arms.

Ath. I thank you, noble Charney.

Char. Are the train

Of royal warriors, Sir, arriv'd ?

Ath. They are.

Char. Oh, joyful tidings ! Sir, another hour
Shall speak at large my pleasure to behold you :

The present claims my duty to the King. [Exit.

Ath. My Lord of Sens, these secret marches made
From different parts by our divided host,
May steal us on our unprepared foes,
And give our arms, at length, an ample vengeance.

Sens. I greatly hope it. As I think, to-morrow,
Or I mistook the King, they'll all be here.

Ath. With early day, the instant we arriv'd,
A numerous party, led by Ribemont,
Came up and join'd us. Those the Dauphin brings,
Our last division, are to march by night ;
We may expect them with to-morrow's dawn.

Sens. See ! Ribemont is here.

Enter Ribemont.

Rib. Why, this looks well —
Here's bustle, expedition ! — once again
We shine in arms, and wear a face of war.

Sens. Oh, may they never be again laid down,
Till England is repaid with all the plagues
Her sons have brought on France ! My eager soul,
As does the fever'd lip for moisture, longs
To see destruction overwhelm that people.

Rib. Indulge no guilty hatred, rev'rend Lord ;
For fair report, and, let me add, experience,
Picture them lovely to impartial judgment.
The world allows they're valiant, gen'rous, wise,
Endow'd with all that dignifies our nature ;

B 2

While,

16 EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE.

While, for their monarch—we'll appeal to facts,
And sure they speak him wonderful indeed !

• Did not Germania's ermin'd princes meet,
• And, as the most renown'd, the first of men,
• Elect great Edward to imperial sway ?
• While he, sublime in ever-conscious glory,
• Disdaining rule but on his native throne,
• Saw sovereigns offer vassalage in vain.
• Then, to his court, from ev'ry peopled realm,
• Ev'n from our own did not the fam'd in arms,
• The harness'd knights repair to fill his lists
• To take his judgment in all martial strife ?
• Submitting int'rest, honour, all was precious,
• And ev'n beyond appeal, owning his voice,
• Like that of Heav'n, incapable of error.'

Sens. It grates my soul to hear a Frenchman talk
Of greater glories than he finds at home.
Is not this monarch you would make a god,
Our master's enemy, our country's foe ?

Rib. A foe he is, but he's a noble foe !
I know his worth, and therefore will I speak it.
At our attack of Calais, 'twas my fortune
To meet in fight this Third King Edward's sword :
I found him all that heathens held their gods,
Artful and mighty ! (pardon the proud vaunt)
Too much for me to conquer. Long we stood,
Buckler to buckler, clashing steel to steel,
Till, by superior foldiership o'ercome,
I yielded to a monarch. But so well,
With hardy vigour, I sustain'd the combat,
That freedom, ransomless, was my reward.
The royal victor, when he bade me go,
Took from his brow this string of orient wealth,
Around my temples twin'd the glittering wreath,
And cry'd—Shine there, my token of applause.
Oh, if his valour wing'd amazement high,
Where was its flight, when his heroic soul,
Forgetting that my sword had aim'd his slaughter,
O'erlook'd all low regards, all partial ties,
And gave a vanquish'd enemy renown ?

Sens. Detested boast !—Ambition's taint, my Lord,
So warps, so biases the soldier's judgment—

Rib.

Rib. Ha, biases!—I tell thee, priest, ambition—
When was it wanting in a churchman's soul?
More odious there, and more pernicious far,
Than when it fires the warrior's breast to glory.
But, down, my rage—Your office should be peaceful—
Your habit's sacred—Let your speech be suited.

Sens. Reproving Sir, you think you rail secure,
And so secure remain; howe'er, your cause
Might bring ev'n your allegiance into question.

Rib. Sa'd'st thou allegiance?—What a vile resort!
And would thy jaundic'd malice stain my fame?
But loyalty, long prov'd, dares bid defiance
To all the base perversion of thy tongue.
I praise my foes, because they merit praise:
I'll praise them to the King, and after fight them.
My soul disdains such narrow-hearted spleen,
As owns no excellence beyond a tribe,
Or hates, from envy, all superior merit.

Atb. Forbear, my Lord; consider you're enrag'd
With one whose function does forbid revenge.

Rib. Why does the meddling priest provoke resentment?
Let him obey that function; preach repentance
To money-scraping misers, sordid slaves,
The cringing minions of corrupted courts,
The dregs of stewes and tyrants of the gown:
There let his zeal be vehement and loud;
But not come here to sap the soldier's honour,
And teach inglorious lessons in a camp. [Exit.

Atb. Forgive him, good my Lord; brave Ribemont
Is all the warrior, bold above restraint;
Of nature noble, but unpolish'd manners.

Sens. I do forgive him—Yet a time may come— [Aside.

Atb. Sir, go we to the presence?

Sens. I attend you.

Atb. There grant, ye pow'rs, our counsels may procure
This kingdom's safety, and its peace insure:
In one brave action may our arms succeed,
And in their turn the daring English bleed. [Exeunt.

END of the FIRST ACT.

B: 3

ACT

A C T II.

SCENE, *the English Camp.**Enter Salisbury and Chandos, meeting.*

CHANDOS.

GOOD-morrow, Salisbury, yon rising sun,
As was your wish, beholds us here encamp'd
Upon the plains of Poitiers.

Sal Noble Chandos,
It was my wish; a wish for England's honour.
'To Frenchmen, whom so much we've aw'd and humbled,
Methinks I would not give the least pretence
For arrogance and boasting.

Enter Warwick.

War. Valiant lords,
Wild consternation reigns! Our scouts have brought
Intelligence the enemy surrounds us!
By sudden, secret marches, they have drawn
Their troops from ev'ry fertile province hither,
And cut off our retreat.

Sal. Why then we'll fight them.

War. Most fatal was our yesterday's advice,
But 'tis his highness' will we straight to counsel:
Haste, good my Lords, for on a single hour,
Perhaps a minute, now our fate depends.

Sal. I'll not believe the French will dare attack us,
How great so'er their numbers. But with words
We will not waste the time that may be precious;
Then to the prince's tent, my Lords, away. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE *changes to a private Tent.**Enter Arnold, leading Mariana.*

Arn. Now, lovely captive, wilt thou doubly triumph!
The happier cause of France at length prevails,
And we are all undone.

Mar. What mean you, Arnold?

Arn. Encircled here by thy whole country's force,
Unable to sustain their fierce assault,
And all retreat cut off, we have no prospect
But that of total slaughter.

Mar.

Mar. Hear me, Heav'n!

Who oft hast witness'd to the silent tears,
Stream'd down in gratitude for gen'rous treatment ;
Now witness (spite of all my country suffers)
That these descend in pity for my foes.

Arn. The fatal accident again restores thee
To liberty, and safety, while from me
It cuts away all hopes of happiness.
I wish not to outlive the bloody hour
Must give thee to thy father, whose abhorrence
Of all that's English soon will interpose,
And plunge my soul for ever in despair.
Let then thy fancy image what I feel!——
Grief chokes the very passages of vent—
And I want utterance for——

Mar. There is no need.

I know thy heart, know all its tender feelings,
Know what sad tumults doubts and fears create,
' Whose mingling agonies, in wounded minds,
' Sharpen a torture poignant ev'n to madness.'
If to thy eloquence of words and looks,
My virgin modesty and captive state
Have hitherto forbid my tongue to answer,
Yet sure my eyes have told my heart was thine,
But now, away with fears and forms; distress
Bears me above restraint, and I will own
To heav'n, to earth, to thee, my father, country,
That Arnold is most dear, most precious to me!

Arn. Hold, my transported heart!—Thou heav'nly
maid——

What raptures rush at that enchanting sound!——
Happy as I am now, destruction, come,
O'erwhelm me in this moment of my bliss;
Ne'er let me pine in hopeless anguish more,
But die thus clasp'd in Mariana's arms.

Mar. And will our fate—will cruel fate divide us?

Arn. Oh, do not name it! With the very thought
Frenzy assaults me. No, we must not, cannot,
Will not be parted—No——

Mar. Alas! I fear

The choice will not be ours. A father's pow'r,
If France prevails, for ever tears thee from me.

And

20 EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE.

And must they conquer?—Oh, I find, I feel,
I've lost already all regard for France:
England's my country, any country's mine
'That gives me but my safety and my love —
Inform me—tell me—is there no escaping?

Arn. Thou wilt need none. For me and for the rest,
We have, alas! no prospect but of——

Mar. Stop!

Nor dare inflame a wild imagination,
Lest madness follow! 'midst relentless foes,
Methinks I see thee fall! Behold them strike! ——
I hear thy groans! I see thy gushing blood!
'Thy writhing body trampled in the dust!'
Oh, save me from the horror! —— Let us fly! ——
Let us away this moment! —— Let us ——

Arn. Whither?

Where can we fly? All hope of flight is lost,
There is no possibility——

Mar. There is.

Let us, while yet occasion will permit,
Fly to my father.

Arn. Father!

Mar. He'll protect us.

Arn. Protect us!—Dire protection!—at the thought
My blood runs chill! and horror quite unmans me.

Mar. Think on the dangers that you brave by slaying.

'*Arn.* Think, rather, on the hell that I should merit
'By such desertion——dire and damning guilt!
'How dreadfully it shakes me!——

'*Mar.* Dost thou tremble?

'Then what should I, a helpless woman, do?
'Imagine that! and if thou art a man,
'Feel for what I may suffer.

'*Arn.* Suffer!——Thou?

'*Mar.* Yes, Arnold; I! The woes that I may suffer,
'Amongst the deadly dealings of the field;
'Some well-aim'd weapon, through a bleeding wound,
'May set thy soul at liberty for ever:
'While I (of mortals though the most undone)
'Wanting all means of honourable death,
'Must suffer woes beyond description dreadful.
'What are my friends, my father, or my country?

Cold

' Cold are the comforts that they all can give,
 ' When thou, dear darling of my heart, art lost.
 ' Pleasure and hope, and peace will perish with thee,
 ' And this forlorn, this joyless bosom, then
 ' Become the dreary mansion of despair.
 ' Shall I not rave, blaspheme and rend my locks ?
 ' Devote the hour that gave me birth ? and curse
 ' The sun and time, the world, myself and thee ?
 ' Till frenzy prompting, 'against some dungeon wall
 ' I dash my burning brains to finish torture.'

Arn. Do not awake, thou lovely pleader, do not,
 Such tumult-working thoughts within a mind
 On madness verging.

Mar. Let us then away.

Arn. Oh, not for worlds !—Not worlds should bribe
 me to it.

Mar. And wilt thou urge thou lov'st me ?

Arn. More than life !

Mar. By Heav'n, 'tis false : the spirit that's within
 Is not of worth to harbour aught so noble. [thee,

Arn. Will daring even to die convince thee ?

Mar. No :

Death is a coward's refuge. Dare to live ;
 Dare wretchedness,—Reproach—

Arn. No more, no more—

Tempt me no more in vain—

Mar. Art thou so fix'd ?—

Arn. As fate—

Mar. I've done.

Arn. Then why that angry look ?—

Mar. It is a curse entail'd upon the sex,
 To have our counsel scorn'd, or love despis'd.
 Go to thy ruin—to my ruin go—
 I give thee up—and all my hopes for ever.

' *Arn.* Why wilt thou blast me with that baleful dew ?
 ' Each tender tear that falls in sorrow from thee,
 ' (Like melted ore fast dropping on my heart)
 ' Drives life before it with excess of pain.
 ' Come, friendly slaughter, now my only hope,
 ' Free me from sufferings not to be endur'd.
 ' *Mar.* What ! In the hour of trial would'st thou
 ' Steal to the shelter of a timeless grave. [shrink !
 ' And

‘ And leave me on the rack of dire despair ?

‘ Is this a proof of that superior spirit

‘ Asserted by the lordly boaster, man ?

‘ Oh, shame upon thee ———

‘ *Arn.* Hear me ———

‘ *Mar.* Not the winds,

‘ That hang the curling billows in the clouds—

‘ Are more impetuous than the rage of scorn

‘ That rises in my bosom !’

Arn. Let but reason

Weigh the dire consequence of such a flight.

Mar. The consequence ! Why, what do you forsake
But certain slaughter ?

Arn. Horrid,—damning thought !

Mar. I hop’d my risking wretchedness for love,
Would have provok’d some emulation —

Arn. Oh !

Mar. But thou art poor, the hero of pretence ;
And therefore thus—for ever —

Arn. Take me, lead——

No, stop !——it surely was some Siren’s voice
Would lure me to destruction—Off !—stand off !—

Thou ! thou art she that would ensnare my soul,
Ruin my peace, and sacrifice my fame.

But timely be advis’d : forbear to urge

A deed that all the earth would scorn me for,

All hell want plagues to punish.

Mar. Be undone——

Arn. Undone I am, whatever course I take——

Dreadful alternative ! Despair, or death,

Or everlasting shame !——

Mar. I did not pause :

I chose, for Arnold’s love to hazard all :

To suffer, if misfortune were our lot,

And never once reproach him or repine.

But he rejects such truth, such tenderness——

Arn. Oh, hear me, help me, save me, sacred pow’rs.

‘ *Mar.* Deserts a woman in adversity !

‘ And seeks, in death, a rescue from the woes

‘ Her fortitude encounters.

‘ *Arn.* ’Tis too much,

‘ It tears my brain !—my bosom !—Oh !’

Mar.

Mar. Thou'rt pale!——

Arn. Dizzy and sick—the objects swim before me ;
Reach out thy hand to save me ere I sink :
Oh, what a deprivation of all pow'rs !
Lead me to my tent—I beg thee lead——

Mar. I will.

Lean fearless on my arm, it can sustain thee.'

Arn. Oh, boasted manhood—how I feel thy weakness.
[*Exeunt.*]

The SCENE opening, discovers a magnificent pavilion, in which King John appears seated in state. On stools, below him, sit the Dauphin, Dukes of Berry, Anjou, Tourain and Orleans, Athens, Sens, Ribemont, Charney, Lords, Attendants and Guards all standing.

King. At length, we've caught these lions in our toils,
These English spoilers, who through all our realm
Have mark'd their way with rapine, flames and slaughters :
Now, by my sacred diadem, I swear,
Beyond a conqueror's joy my pleasure swells,
For that my foes have wrought their own confusion,
And found misfortunes where they meant to deal them:
What say you, Lords, must softening pity sway ?
Or shall we glut our vengeance with their blood ?

Char. Heav'n gives them up the victims of your wrath ;
Indulge it, then, to their destruction. Mercy
Would mark your majesty the foe of France.
Your bleeding country cries for retribution :
I join it, with a voice by woes enfeebled ;
Hear, feel and strike in such a moving cause,
The cause of wrongs, of wounds, of weeping age !
The widow'd bride, the childless father calls :
' The helpless, parentless, unshelter'd babe !
' Matrons, bewailing their whole race cut off ;
' And virgins panting from the recent rape !'
Oh, hear, redress,—revenge us, royal Sir,
For vengeance now is in your pow'r to grant.

Rib. Anger and hatred are disgraceful motives,
Calm dignity should ever counsel kings,
And govern all their actions. When they strike,
It ne'er should be to gratify resentment,
But, like the arm omnipotent of heav'n,

To

24 EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE.

To further justice : to create an awe
May terrify from evil :—better minds—
Rectify and benefit society !

Ath. The nuncio,
Who follow'd fast your majesty to Poitiers,
Hath sent to claim an audience in behalf
Of yon endanger'd English.

Sen. Do not hear him.

King. Say, Lord Archbishop, wherefore should we not ?

Sen. Knowing your godlike and forgiving nature,
I fear 'twill rob you of much martial glory :
Else might your fame in arms, for this day's action,
Rival the boasts of Macedon or Rome !
And sure your valiant soldiers will repine,
To have the laurels, now so near their grasp,
Snatch'd from their hopes for ever.

Rib. Abject minion !

How shameful to that habit are such flatteries. *[Aside.]*

King. Yes, I well know my soldiers pant, impatient
To seize this feeble quarry. But our foes,
I must remind you, are so close beset,
That famine soon will throw them on your mercy.
Princes and Lords, what cause have we to fight ?
Why should we waste a drop of Gallic blood,
When conquest may be ours on cheaper terms ?

Dauph. But will it suit the glory of your arms
To wait their inclination to surrender ?
Or ev'n to grant such parley, as might plume
Their saucy pride t' expect capitulation ?
Oh, no, my royal father, rush at once,
O'erwhelm them, crush them, finish them by slaughter.

Rib. Think not, prince Dauphin, they'll e'er stoop for
terms :

Believe me, we have rather cause to expect
A fierce attack, to cut their passage through,
Or perish in the attempt. I know them well,
In many a field have try'd their stubborn spirit ;
Have won some honour—by their king tho' vanquish'd :
And when I ponder their intrepid courage,
How much they dare to suffer and attempt,
I'm lost in wonder ! and no Cressy need
To make me tremble to provoke their fury.

Dauph. Your tongue, the herald of your vanity,
Methinks, is loud in what were better lost
To all remembrance—a disgraceful tale.
To boast of honours from a victor's bounty,
Is sloping low—is taking abject fame.
If you have valour, give it manly sway,
Busy your sword—but let your tongue be silent.

Rib. My talent never 'twas to idly vaunt—

King. No more of this—presumptuous Ribemont.
Princes and Lords, we are yet undetermin'd.
I've sent a spy, of known abilities,
To find out the condition of our foes ;
From whose report, in council, we'll resolve
On measures that may promise most success.
Mean time, do you inform the Nuncio, Athens,
His audience shall be granted. Lords, lead on :
We'll make our morning's progress through the camp.

[*Exeunt King, Prince, &c.*]

Rib. What boasts made I?—

I told the truth, and wherefore then this taunt?
Shame on such modesty! The King, just now,
Nice as he seems in breeding and in forms,
With patience heard a supple, fawning priest—
Strip all the shrines of fam'd antiquity,
Ev'n make great Cæsar and the son of Philip
Resign their laurels to his nobler claim :
'Nay, thought him sparing, doubtless, that he left
'Great Hercules and Jove unspoil'd to grace him!
'By my good sword, an oath with soldiers sacred,'
By Heav'n, 'twould make an honest stomach heave
To see a throat, so squeamish for another,
Open and gulp a potion down, enough
To poison half mankind.

Atb. Brave Ribemont,
The King's distaste was that you prais'd his foes.
To talk of Cressy and of Edward's feats,
Was to remind him of our crown's disgrace ;
'Twas to proclaim what we should wish forgotten,
Our slaughter'd armies, and our monarch's flight.

Rib. What, are our ears too delicate for truth?
If English valour has disgrac'd our arms,
Instead of mean forgetting, we should stamp

C

The

The hated image stronger on our minds ;
 For ever murmur and for ever rage,
 Till thence eras'd by nobler feats of arms.
 Such are my thoughts, and such my resolution :
 I share our country's scandal, and would join
 My sword, my blood, to purge away the stain.

Atb. Here, then, occasion meets that patriot-wish ;
 Here you may help to blanch our sully'd glory.

Rib. I differ, Athens, widely in opinion ;
 The harvest is too thin, the field too bare
 To yield the reapers honour. ' On my soul,
 ' I pity the brave handful we encircle,
 ' And almost wish myself an Englishman
 ' To share a fate so noble.

Atb. Gallant spirit !

Rib. Would our exulting King acquire renown,
 Let him reduce his numbers down to theirs.
 Then sword to sword, and shield to shield, oppose,
 In equal strife, these wond'rous sons of war ;
 There conquest would be glorious ! But, as now,
 With all our thousands and ten thousands join'd,
 By Heaven ! 'tis most infamous to fight.

Atb. I must away ; my duty calls me hence.
 I must applaud this generous regard
 For a brave people that have done you honour ;
 Convinc'd, whene'er you face these fearless foes,
 You'll fight them warmly as you've prais'd——

Rib. Farewel—*On my soul,
 I pity the brave handful we encircle,
 And almost wish myself an Englishman,
 To share a fate so noble.*

[*Exeunt severally.*]

S C E N E *changes to the English Camp.*

Enter Audley and Chandos, meeting.

Aud. You're well encounter'd, Chandos, where's the prince ?

Chan. Directing the entrenchments : ev'ry duty
 His active ardor leads him to engross.
 Such heav'nly fortitude inflames his soul,
 That all beholders catch new courage from it,
 And stifle with astonishment their fears !
 From cool unruffled thoughts his orders issue,

While

While with the meanest soldier he partakes
In ev'ry toil ! inspiring, by example,
A glorious zeal and spirit through the camp.

And. Yet feels he, as the father of our host,
Forevery man's misfortune, but his own.
Thrice have I seen him, in successive rounds,
Kindle new courage in each drooping heart,
And drive all fear, all diffidence, away.
Yet on the task would tenderness intrude,
As dangers stole and imag'd on his mind :
When, pausing, he would turn his head aside,
Heave a sad sigh, and drop a tender tear.

Enter Salisbury.

Chan. Well, what says Salisbury ?

Sal. Why, faith, but little :
It is yon Frenchmen's place to talk at present.

And. How stand the troops ?

Sal. Believe me, not so firm,
But our light-footed enemies, if dext'rous,
May trip up all their heels.

Chan. True to his humour !
My good Lord Salisbury will have his gibe,
Howe'er affliction wrings.

Sal. And wherefore not ?
Will burial faces buy us our escape ?
I wish they would : then no Hibernian hag,
Whose trade is sorrow, should out-sadden me.
But, as the business stands, to weep or laugh,
Alike is bootless ; here is our dependence.

[Touching his sword.]

And. What are their numbers ?

Chan. Full an hundred thousand.

Sal. Ours but some eight :—great odds, my friends !
No matter ;

The more will be our glory when we've beat them.

And. What swells their host so mightily's (I'm told)
The earls of Neydo, Saltzburg and Nassau,
Have join'd their troops. The earl of Douglas too
Assists them with three thousand hardy Scots,
Their old and sure allies.

Chan. I hear the same.

28 . EDWARD. THE BLACK PRINCE.

Sal. What! Scotchmen here? whose monarch is our pris'ner.

Aud. Ta'en by a priest and woman! at the head
Of such raw numbers as their haste could gather,
When all our vet'ran warriors, with their king,
Were winning laurels on the fields of France.

Chan. And hither now, perhaps, his subjects come
To fight for captives to exchange against him.

Sal. For captives! This poor carcase they may get,
When 'tis fit booty for their kites and crows:
But while this tongue can speak, I'd root it out
Ere Scot or Frenchman it should own my master.

Chan. The prince approaches, Lords!

Enter Prince, Warwick, and Attendants.

Prince. Hah! fals'dst thou, Warwick!
Arnold gone over to the foe?

War. He is.

A trusty spy brought the intelligence,
Who saw him entering the adverse camp,
Leading his captive charge.

Prince. Impossible!

War. I've search'd his quarters since, myself, and there
Nor he nor Mariana can be found.

Prince. What has a prince that can attract or bind
The faith of friends, the gratitude of servants?
Blush, greatness, blush! Thy pow'r is all but poor,
Too impotent to bind one bosom to thee——
A blow like this I was not arm'd to meet——
It pierces to my soul.

Sal. All-righteous Heav'n,
Reward the villain's guilt?—Believe not, Prince,
Throughout our host, another can be found
That worlds would buy to such a base revolt.

Prince. I hope it, will believe it, Salisbury.
Yet must lament that one has prov'd so worthless.—
I lov'd him too!—But since he has forgot
The ties of duty, gratitude, and honour,
Let us forget an Englishman could break them,
And losing his remembrance, lose the shame.
My Lords, I have dispatches in my hand,
Advising that the nuncio-cardinal,

Good Perigort, is now arriv'd at Poitiers,
And means to interpose in our behalf.

And. His interposing is a gen'rous office,
And I applaud it; but, believe me, Prince,
Our foes will rate their mercy much too high.
I'd hope as soon a tiger, tasting blood,
Can feel compassion, and release his prey,
As that a Frenchman will forego advantage.

Prince. I've by the messenger that brought my letters,
Sent him the terms on which I warrant treating.
The sum is, my consent to render back
The castles, towns, and plunder we have taken,
Since marching out of Bourdeaux: and to plight
My faith, that I, for seven succeeding years,
Will wield no hostile sword against their crown.

Sal. It is too much, my Prince, it is too much.
Give o'er such traffic for inglorious safety.
Or let us die, or conquer.

Prince. Salisbury,
Rely upon a prince and soldier's promise,
That caution shan't betray us into meanness.
Heav'n knows, for me, I value life so little,
That I would spend it as an idle breath,
To serve my king, my country, nay, my friend.
'To calls like these our honour bids us answer,
'Where ev'ry hazard challenges renown.'
But sure the voice of Heav'n and cry of Nature,
Are loud against the sacrifice of thousands
To giddy rashness. Oh! reflect, my friends,
I have a double delegated trust,
And must account to Heav'n and to my father,
For lives ignobly sav'd, or madly lost.
'Till Perigort shall therefore bring their terms,
Suspend we all resolves, but those receiv'd:
Determination must be expeditious:
For know our stock of stores will barely reach
To furnish out the present day's subsistence.

And. If so, necessity, the last sad guide
Of all misfortune's children, will command.

Chan. We must submit to what wise Heav'n decrees.

Prince. Let that great duty but direct the mind,
And men will all be happily resign'd:

30 EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE.

Accept whate'er the Almighty deigns to give,
And die contented, or contented live :
Embrace the lot his Providence ordains,
If deck'd with laurels, or deprest'd with chains,
Inur'd to labour, or indulg'd with rest,
And think each movement he decrees, the best.

[*Exeunt.*]

END of the SECOND ACT.

A C T III.

SCENE, *the French Camp.*

Enter Athens and Ribemont.

RIBEMONT.

LORD Constable, I was not in the presence
When Perigort had audience of the king,
Inform me, for I wish to know, does peace
Her olive-garland weave ? Or must the sword
Be kept unsheath'd, and blood-fed vengeance live ?

Ath. The King expecting me, I cannot tarry
To let your Lordship know particulars ;
But the good father, who ev'n now set forward,
Carries such terms as, from my soul, I wish
Young Edward may accept : for 'tis resolv'd,
If they're rejected, instant to attack them.
Yonder's the fugitive, I see, advancing,
Who left their camp this morning. If we fight,
And you have there a friend you wish to save,
This man may point you to his post. Farewel. [*Exit.*]

Rib. This man——By heav'n, there's treason in his
aspect !

That chearless gloom, those eyes that pore on earth,
That bended body, and those folded arms,
Are indications of a tortur'd mind,
And blazon equal villainy and shame.
In what a dire condition is the wretch,
Who, in the mirror of reflection, sees
The hideous stains of a polluted soul !——
To corners then, as does the loathsome toad,

He

He crawls in silence : there sequester'd lies
 ' The foamy ferment of his pois'nous gall,'
 Hating himself, and fearing fellowship.

Enter Arnold, musing.

Arn. What have I done ! And where is my reward ?
 Charney witholds his daughter from my arms,
 My flatter'd recompence for——Hold, my brain !
 Thought that by timely coming might have sav'd me,
 Is now too late, when all its office serves
 But to awaken horror !

[*Aside.*

Rib. I'll accost him.——

Are you an Englishman ?

Arn. I had that name,

(Oh, killing question) —— but have lost it now..

Rib. Lost it indeed !

Arn. Illustrious Ribemont !

(For was your person less rever'd and known
 By every son of Britain, on your brow
 That splendid token of renown you wear,
 Would be your herald) — Pity if you can,
 A wretch——the most undone of all mankind.

Rib. I much mistake your visage, or I've seen you
 In near attendance on the Prince of Wales.

Arn. I was indeed, — (Oh, scandal to confess it)
 I was his follower, was his humble friend ;
 He favour'd, cherish'd, — lov'd me ! — Heav'nly pow'rs !!
 How shall I give my guilty story utterance ! —
 Level your fiery bolts ! — Transfix me here ! —
 Or hurl me howling to the hell I merit.

Rib. Invoke no pow'r, a conscience such as thine
 Is hell enough for mortal to endure.
 But let me ask thee, for my wonder prompts me,
 What bait affords the world, that could induce thee
 To wrong so godlike and so good a master ?

Arn. True, he is all, is godlike, and is good !
 Edward, my royal master, is indeed
 A prince beyond example ! Yet your heart,
 If it has ever felt the power of beauty,
 Must mitigate the crime of raging love.

Rib. Love ! — Thou lost wretch ! — And could so frail
 a fire
 Consume whate'er was great and manly in thee ?

Blot

32 EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE.

Blot virtue out, and root each nobler passion
 Forth from thy mind? The thirst of bright renown?
 A patriot fond affection for thy country?
 Zeal for thy monarch's glory? And the tie
 Of sacred friendship—by thy prince ennobled?
 Begone, and hide thy ignominious head,
 Where human eye may never penetrate;
 Avoid society, for all mankind
 Will fly the fellowship of one like thee.

Arn. Heav'n! wherefore said'st thou that we must not
 And yet made woman? [err,

Rib. Why accuse you Heav'n?
 Curse your inglorious heart for wanting fire,
 The fire that animates the nobly brave!
 The fire that has renown'd the English name,
 And made it such as ev'ry age to come
 Shall strive to emulate—but never reach—
 There thou wert mingled in a blaze of glory,
 Great—to amazement great!—But now how fall'n!
 Ev'n to the vilest of all vassal vileness,
 The despicable state of female thraldom.

Arn. From letter'd story single out a man,
 ' However great in council or in fight,
 ' Who ne'er was vanquish'd by a woman's charms.

Rib. Let none stand forth, there is no cause they
 ' Beauty's a blessing to reward the brave; [should!]
 ' We take its transports in relief from toil,
 ' Allow its hour, and languish in its bonds:
 ' But that once ended, dignity asserts
 ' Its right in manhood, and our reason reigns.'

Arn. Untouch'd by passion, all may talk it well;
 In speculation who was e'er unwise?
 But appetites assault like furious storms,
 O'erbearing all that should resist their rage,
 'Till sinking reason's wreck'd; and then succeeds
 A gloomy calm—in which reflection arms
 Her scorpion brood—remorse, despair, and horror!

Rib. But could contrition ever yet restore
 To radiant lustre a polluted fame?
 ' Or man, however merciful, forget
 ' That justice brands offenders for his scorn?'
 Truth, the great touchstone of all human actions,

The

The fair foundation of applause or blame,
 Hast'ning'd thy honour with too foul a stain,
 For all repentant tears to wash away.
 All eyes 'twill urge to dart their keen reproaches,
 Each tongue to hiss, and ev'ry heart to heave
 With indignation at thee.

Arn. All the pride,
 That here should kindle into high resentment,
 I find is gone! My spirit's sunk, debas'd!
 My guilt unmans me—and I'm grown a coward. [*Aside.*]

Rib. The trumpets may awake, the clarions swell,
 That noble ardor thou no more canst feel,
 Disgrac'd from soldier to a renegade.
 Anon, while o'er the dreadful field we drive,
 Or dealing deaths, or daring slaughter's swords!
 Do thou at distance, like the dastard hare,
 All trembling, seek thy safety. Thence away,
 As fortune, or thy genius may direct,
 Thy conscience thy companion. But be sure,
 Whatever land you burden with your weight,
 Whatever people you hereafter join,
 Tell but your tale, and they will all, like me,
 Pronounce you abject, infamous and hateful. [*Exit.*]

Arn. Abject and hateful!—Infamous!—I'm all!—
 The world has not another monster like me:
 Nor hell in all its store of horrid evils,
 Beyond what I deserve!—Already here
 I feel the shafts, they rankle in my bosom;
 And active thought anticipates damnation.

Enter Mariana and Louisa.

Mar. He's here! I've found my heart's companion
 Rejoice, my Arnold, for my father softens; [*out!*]
 He half forgets his hatred to thy country,
 And hears with temper while I praise thy virtues.
 We soon shall conquer. Hah! what mean those tears?
 Why art thou thus?

Arn. And canst thou ask that question?
 Thou soft seducer, thou enchanting mischief,
 'Thou blaster of my virtue. But—begone—
 'By heav'n, the poison looks so tempting yet,
 'I fear to gaze myself in love with ruin.

' Away.

' Away—away : enjoy thy ill-got freedom,
 ' And leave a wretch devoted to destruction.
 ' *Mar.* Destruction !—how the image strikes my soul,
 ' As would the shaft of death, with chilling horror !—
 ' Hear me—but hear me !—'tis the cause of love !
 ' Your Mariana pleads—For Arnold's peace,
 ' For mine, for both——nay, do not turn away,
 ' And with unkindness dash the rising hope,
 ' That strives for birth, and struggles with despair !
 ' *Arn.* Oh, yes, despair !——it is most fit you should,
 ' As I must ever do.

' *Mar.* Wherefore ?——Why ?——
 ' How are you alter'd, or myself how chang'd,
 ' That all our blessings are transform'd to curses ?
 ' Have you not sworn—(you did, and I believ'd you)
 ' My flatter'd beauties and my faithful love,
 ' Were all that Arnold wish'd to make him happy ?
 ' *Arn.* Curs'd be your love, and blasted all your beauties,
 ' For they have robb'd me of my peace and honour.
 ' Looks not my form as hideous as my soul,
 ' Begrim'd like hell, and blacken'd to a fiend ?
 ' Go, get thee hence——thou blaster of my fame,
 ' Bear thy bewitching eyes where I no more
 ' May gaze my——but I've nothing now to lose,
 ' Nought but a hated life, which any hand
 ' Would be most merciful to rid me of.

' *Mar.* If I am guilty, 'tis the guilt of love,
 ' And love should pardon what himself inspir'd.
 ' Oh, smoothe the horrors of that anguish'd brow,
 ' Thy tortur'd visage fills me with affright !
 ' Look on me kindly, look as you were wont,
 ' Or ease my bursting heart, or strike me dead.*

Arn. Give me again my innocence of soul,
 Give me my forfeit honour blanch'd anew,
 Cancel my treasons to my royal master,
 Restore me to my country's lost esteem,
 To the sweet hope of mercy from above,
 And the calm comforts of a virtuous heart.

Mar. Sure kindness should not construe into guilt
 My fond endeavours to preserve thee mine,
 Life, love and freedom are before you, all,
 Embrace the blessings, and we yet are happy.

Arn.

Arn. What, with a conscience sore and gall'd like mine?
To stand the glance of scorn from ev'ry eye,
From ev'ry finger the indignant point?

' In ev'ry whilper hear my spreading shame,
' And groan and grovel a detested outcast?'
A taunting Frenchman, with opprobrious tongue,
Pronounc'd me abject, infamous and hateful!

And yet I live—and yet you counsel life——
' The damn'd beneath might find or fancy ease,
' And fear to lose existence soon as I——'
No, die I must—I will—but how, how, how?——
Nay, loose my arm; you strive in vain to hold me.

Mar. Upon my knees—See, see these speaking tears!

Arn. Be yet advis'd, nor urge me to an outrage.
Thy pow'r is lost—unhand me—then 'tis thus,
Thus I renounce thy beauties, thus thy guilt——
Life, love and treason I renounce for ever. [Exit.

Mar. Then welcome death, distraction, ev'ry curse!
Blas't me, ye lightnings! strike me, roaring thunders!
Or let me tear, with my outrageous hands,
The peaceful bosom of the earth, and find
A refuge from my woes and life together.

[Flinging herself on the ground.
Stand off! away! I will not be withheld——
I will indulge my phrenzy——Loss of reason
Is now but loss of torment——Cruel Arnold!

' Enter Charney.

' *Char.* Whence is this voice of woe, this frantic po-
' Why is my child, my Mariana, thus? [stare?

' *Mar.* Thy flinty heart can best resolve the question.
' [Rising.

' Thou that relentless saw'st my tears descend,
' And, urg'd by stubborn haughtiness and hatred,
' Hast given me up to endless agonies.
' The man that merited thy best regard,
' The man I lov'd, thy cruelty has made
' Alike implacable—He's gone, he's lost!
' Arnold is lost, and my repose for ever!

' *Char.* Why, let him go; and may th' impending
' The hov'ring mischiefs that await their arms,
' Him, them, and all of their detested race,
' Involve in one destruction.

' *Mar.*

- ' *Mar.* No, let ruin
 ' O'ertake the proud, severe and unforgiving,
 ' Crimes that are strangers to an English nature :
 ' They are all gentle ; he was mild as mercy,
 ' Soft as the smiles that mark a mother's joy,
 ' Clasping her new-born infant. Shield him, Heav'n !
 ' Protect him, comfort him——Thou cruel father !
 ' Thou cause of all my sufferings, all my woes !
 ' Give him me back, restore him to my arms,
 ' My life, my lord, my Arnold ! Give him to me,
 ' Or I will curse my country, thee, myself ;
 ' And die the victim of despairing love. [Exit.
 ' *Char.* Follow her, watch her, guard her from her
 fury. [Exit Louisa.
 ' Oh, dire misfortune ! this unhappy stroke
 ' Surpasses all the sorrows I have felt,
 ' And makes me wretched to the last extreme. [Exit.

The SCENE drawing, discovers the Prince of Wales seated in state in his Tent ; at the entrance to which his Standard stands displayed ; the device, three ostrich feathers, with the motto of ich dien. Warwick, Salisbury, Audley, Chandos, Nobles, Officers and Guards standing.

Prince. I've sent my Lords of Oxford, Suffolk, Cob-To meet the Nuncio, and conduct him hither ; [ham,
 From whom we may expect to hear the terms
 On which the French will deign to give us safety.

[Trumpets.

Chan. Those trumpets speak the Cardinal's arrival :
 And see ! the Lords conduct him to your presence.

[Trumpets.

Enter three English Lords, preceding Cardinal Perigort and his retinue. On the Nuncio's bowing, the Prince advances from his seat, and embraces him.

Prince. Lord Cardinal, most welcome to my arms :
 I greet you thus, as England's kindest friend,
 Misfortune's refuge, and affliction's hope.
 It is an office worthy of your goodness,
 To step betwixt our danger and destruction,
 Striving to ward from threat'ned thousands here,
 The blow of fate.

Per.

Per. Grant, gracious Heav'n, I may!
For, from my foul, great Prince, I with your rescue;
And have conditions from your foes to offer,
Which, if accepted, save ye.

Prince. We attend. *[Takes his seat.]*

Per. No art for mild persuasion in your cause
Have I omitted: but imperious France,
Too fond of vengeance, and too vain of numbers,
Insists on terms which only could be hop'd
From such a scanty, unprovided host;
And prudence will direct, from many evils
To chuse the lightest. Their conditions are,
That, to the castles, towns, and plunder taken,
And offer'd now by you to be restor'd,
Your royal person, with an hundred knights,
Are to be added pris'ners at discretion.

Prince. Ha! pris'ners!

Aud. Oh, insolent, detested terms!

Sal. A hundred thousand first of Frenchmen fall,
And carrion-taint the air!—I cannot hold. *[Aside.]*

Prince. *[After a pause.]* My good Lord Cardinal,
what act of mine

Could ever usher to their minds a thought,
That I would so submit?

Per. Could I prescribe,
You should yourself be umpire of the terms;
For well I know your noble nature such,
That int'rest would be made the slave of honour.
But to whate'er I urg'd, the King reply'd,
Remember Cressy's fight! to us as fatal,
As that of Cannæ to the Roman state.
There fell two mighty kings, three sovereign princes,
Full thirty thousand valiant men of arms,
With all the flower of French nobility,
And of their firm allies; for which, (he cried)
What can redeem the glory of my crown,
But to behold those victors in our chains?—
It is a bitter potion; but reflect,
That royal John is noble, and will treat
Such foes with dignity, while fortune pays
Less than the stock of fame his father lost.

Prince. Yes, Philip lost the battle with the odds

D

Qf

Of three to one. In'this, if they obtain it,
 They have our numbers more than twelve times told,
 ' If we can trust report.' And yet, my Lord,
 We'll face those numbers, fight them, bravely fall,
 Ere stoop to linger loathsome life away
 In infamy and bondage. Sir, I thank you——
 I thank you from my soul, for these—for me——
 ' That we have met your wish to do us kindness :'
 But for the terms our foes demand, we scorn
 Such vile conditions, and defy their swords——
 Tell them, my Lord, their hope's too proudly plum'd ;
 We will be conquer'd ere they call us captives.

Per. Famine or slaughter——

Prince. Let them both advance

In all their horrid, most tremendous forms !
 They'll meet, in us, with men who'll starve, bleed, die,
 Ere wrong their country, or their own renown.
 Sound, there, to arms !—My pious friend, farewell.
 Disperse, my Lords, and spirit up the troops :
 Divide the last remains of our provision——
 We shall require no more ; for who survives
 The fury of this day, will either find
 Enough from booty—or a slave's allowance.

Per. How much at once I'm melted and amaz'd !
 Stop, my Lords, and give a soul of meekness scope,
 In minutes of such peril. By the host
 That circles Heaven's high throne, my bleeding heart
 Is touch'd with so much tenderness and pity,
 I cannot yield ye to the dire decision.
 Let me, once more, with ev'ry moving art,
 Each soft persuasion, try the Gallic King :
 Perhaps he may relent—permit the trial——
 I would preserve such worth, Heaven knows I would !
 If hazard, labour, life, could buy your safety.

Prince. Lord Cardinal, your kindness quite unmans
 My mind was arm'd for every rough encounter ; [me :
 But such compassion saps my fortitude,
 And forces tears—they flow not for myself,
 But these endanger'd followers of my fortunes,
 Whom I behold as fathers, brothers, friends,
 Here link'd together by the graceful bonds
 Of amity and honour : all to me

For ever faithful and for ever dear.

'The worth that rooted when my fortune smil'd,

'You see not ev'n adversity can shake :

Think it not weakness then that I lament them.

Per. It is the loveliest mark of royal virtue ;

'Tis what demands our most exalted praise,

Is worthy of yourself, and must endear

The best of princes to the best of people.

Till my return be hope your comforter :

If 'tis within the scope of human means,

I'll ward the blow.

Prince. Good Heaven repay you, Sir :

Tho' acts like yours ~~carry~~ carry such blessings with them

As are their full reward——My Lord, farewell.

[*Exit Perigort, attended as he came in.*]

Aud. Well, Sir, how fare you now ?

Prince. Oh, never better !

'If I have frailty in me, Heaven can tell,

'It is not for myself, but for my friends.'

I've run no mean, inglorious race ; and now,

If it must end, 'tis no unlucky time.

As yon great planet, thro' its radiant course,

Shoots at his parting the most pleasing rays,

So to high characters a gallant death

Lends the best lustre, and ennobles all.

Aud. Why, there, my Prince, you reach even virtue's

For this I love you with a fonder flame, [summit :

Than proud prosperity could e'er inspire.

'Tis triumph, this, o'er death.

Prince. And what is death,

That dreadful evil to a guilty mind,

And awe of coward natures ? 'Tis but rest,

Rest that should follow every arduous toil,

Relieve the valiant, and reward the good :

Nor is there aught in death to make it dreadful,

When fame is once establish'd.

War. That secure,

Our foes, who wail its loss, can ne'er recover

The glory ravish'd from them.

'*Prince.* Who can tell ?——

'Has Fortune been so badly entertain'd

'That she should leave us ? No, my noble friends,

40 EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE.

‘ Her smiles and favours never were abus’d ;
 ‘ Then what we merit we may yet maintain.’

Chan. An hundred of us, with your royal person,
 Deliver’d up their pris’ners at discretion !
 The French have surely lost all modesty,
 Or the remembrance of themselves and us.

‘ *Aud.* But here, in my mind’s tablet, there remains
 ‘ A memorandum that might make them start,
 ‘ In this career of their presumptuous hope.
 ‘ Nine times the seasons scarce have danc’d their rounds,
 ‘ Since the vain father of their present King,
 ‘ Philip, who stil’d himself his country’s fortune,
 ‘ Gaudy and garnish’d, with a numerous host,
 ‘ Met our great Edward in the field of fight.
 ‘ I was one knight in that illustrious service,
 ‘ And urge I may, (for ’tis a modest truth)
 ‘ We made the Frenchmen tremble to behold us :
 ‘ Their King himself turn’d pale at our appearance,
 ‘ And thought his own trim troops, compar’d with ours,
 ‘ Effeminated cowards — Such they prov’d :
 ‘ And since that day, what change in them or us,
 ‘ Can ground security on wond’rous odds ?
 ‘ The same undaunted spirits dare the combat ;
 ‘ The same tough sinews and well-temper’d blades
 ‘ Again shall mow them down, like autumn corn,
 ‘ Another harvest of renown and glory.

‘ *Chan.* There the brave monarch of Bohemia strove,
 ‘ In vain, to kindle valour in their hearts :
 ‘ He fought, he fell — when our victorious Prince
 ‘ Seiz’d his gay banner, with yon boast — I SERVE —
 ‘ [*Pointing to the Prince’s Standard.*
 ‘ Which, now more suited to his princely charge,
 ‘ Triumphantly, as conqueror, he wears ;
 ‘ And, in his honour, England’s eldest hope
 ‘ Shall ever wear it to the end of time.’

Sal. Now, as I live, I wish we were at work,
 And almost fear the Nuncio may succeed.
 Methinks we should not lose the bless’d occasion,
 Or for surpassing ev’ry former conquest,
 Or gaining glorious death, immortal fame.

Prince. Then set we here ill-fortune at defiance,
 ‘ Secure, at least, of never-fading honour.’

Oh,

Oh, my brave leaders ! in this warm embrace,
[They all embrace.]

Let us infuse that fortitude of soul,
 To all but England's daring sons unknown !
 ' Firm as the stately oak, our island's boast,
 ' Which fiercest hurricanes assault in vain,
 ' We'll stand the driving tempest of their fury.
 ' And who shall shake our martial glories from us ?
 ' Yon puny Gauls ? They ne'er have done it yet,
 ' Nor shall they now — Oh, never will we wrong
 ' So far ourselves and our renown'd forefathers !
 Here part we, Lords ; attend your sev'ral duties.
 Audley, distribute thro' the camp provisions —
 Keep ev'ry soldier's spirits in a glow,
 Till from the French this final message comes :
 Then, if their pride denies us terms of honour,
 We'll rush outrageous on their vaunting numbers ;
 And teach them, that with souls resolv'd, like ours,
 Ev'n desperation points the way to conquest.
 When (in defiance of superior might)
 Plung'd in the dreadful storm of bloody fight,
 Shall ev'ry Briton do his country right.

[Exeunt.]

END of the THIRD ACT.

A C T IV.

SCENE, *the French Camp.*

Enter Ribemont.

RIBEMONT.

THE troops, array'd, stand ready to advance ;
 And this short pause, this silent interval,
 With awful horror strikes upon my soul —
 I know not whence it comes, but till this moment,
 Ne'er did I feel such heaviness of heart.
 Fear, thou art still a stranger here ; and Death
 Have I oft seen in ev'ry form he wears ;
 Defy'd him, fac'd him, never fled him yet :
 Nor has my conscience since contracted guilt,
 The parent of dismay — then whence is this ?

D 3

Perhaps.

Perhaps 'tis pity for yon hopeless host —
 Pity ! For what ? — The brave despise our pity ;
 For death, encounter'd in a noble cause,
 Comes, like the gracious lord of toiling hinds,
 To end all labours, and bestow reward.
 Then let me shake this lethargy away —
 By Heav'n, it wo' not off ! — The sweat of death
 Is on me — a cold tremor shakes my joints —
 My feet seem riveted — my blood congeals —
 Almighty Pow'rs ! — Thou ever awful form !
 Why art thou present ? — Wherefore ? — What, a sigh !
 Oh, smile of sweet relief ! — If aught from Heav'n
 A mortal ear be worthy to — Again
 That piteous action ! that dejected air ! —
 Speak out the cause — I beg thee, speak — 'tis gone ! —
 ' Yet would I gaze, by such enchantment bound —
 ' Thou pleasing, dreadful vision ! — Oh, return !
 Unfold thy errand, tho' I die with hearing —

Enter Athens.

Atb. You're well encounter'd Ribemont ; the King,
 Ere this has Edward's answer ; as I pass
 The bound'ries of our camp on yonder side,
 In this my progress to equip the field,
 I saw the Nuncio posting like the wind,
 He and his train on horses white with foam,
 Their course directed to our Monarch's tent.
 What means this, Ribemont ? — Thou'rt lost in thought !

Rib. Athens ! — I am unfoldier'd ; I'm unmann'd —
 Wonder you may, my noble friend ; for see,
 I shake, I tremble —

Atb. Say, at what ?

Rib. Why — nothing.

Atb. Should the vast host that here are rang'd for battle,
 (Warm with impatience, eager for the fray)
 Behold that Ribemont alone has fear,
 What wonder would it cause ! For thou, of all,
 Art sure deservingly the most renown'd.
 Come, be thyself — For shame ! —

Rib. Believe me, Athens,
 I am not stricken with a coward's feeling :
 Not all yon army to this sword oppos'd,
 Should damp my vigour, or depress my heart.

'Tis

' 'Tis not the soldier trembles, but the son——
 Just now a melancholy seiz'd my soul,
 A sinking ; whence I knew not ; till, at length,
 My father's image to my sight appear'd,
 And struck me motionless.

Atb. 'Twas only fancy.

Rib. Oh, no, my Athens ! plainly I beheld
 My father in the habit that he wore
 When, with paternal smiles, he hung this weapon
 Upon my youthful thigh, bidding me use it
 With honour, only in my country's cause.
 Within my mind I treasur'd up the charge,
 And sacred to the soldier's public call
 Have worn it ever. Wherefore then this visit ?
 ' Why, in that garb in which he fix'd my fortune,
 ' And charg'd me to repay his care with glory ?'
 If 'tis an omen of impending guilt,
 O, soul of him I honour, once again
 Come from thy heav'n, and tell me what it is,
 Lest erring ignorance undo my fame.

Atb. Nought but a waking dream ; a vapour'd brain.

Rib. Once his pale visage seem'd to wear a smile,
 A look of approbation, not reproof ;
 But the next moment, with uplifted hands
 And heaving bosom, sadly on the earth
 He turn'd his eyes, and sorely seem'd to weep.
 ' I heard, or fancy'd that I heard a groan,
 ' As from the ground his look was rais'd to me ;'
 Then, shaking with a mournful glance his head,
 He melted into air.

Atb. Pr'ythee, no more——

You talk'd of melancholy, that was all ;
 Some sickness of the mind, occasion'd oft
 Ev'n by the fumes of indigested meals.
 To-morrow we will laugh at this delusion.

Rib. To-morrow ! Oh, that mention of to-morrow !—
 There are opinions, Athens, that our friends
 Can pass the boundaries of nature back,
 To warn us when the hour of death is nigh.
 If that thy business was, thou awful shade !
 I thank thee, and this interval of life,
 However short, which Heaven vouchsafes me yet,
 I will endeavour as I ought to spend.

Atb.

44. EDWARD. THE BLACK PRINCE.

Alb. See, thro' yon clouds of dust, with how much
The Nuncio hastens to the English camp! [speed
Perhaps the terms for safety are agreed;
Then where's a meaning for thy fancy'd vision?

Rib. No matter where; my spirits are grown light;
• Returning vigour braces up again
• My nerves and sinews to their wonted tone.
• My heart beats freely, and, in nimble rounds,
• The streams of life pursue their ready course.
• Lead on; our duty calls us to the King.
*Again the bright'ning fires of glory blaze:
Yes, virtue calls, and Ribemont obeys.
Yes, Athens, yes, amid the fierce alarms,
Where Edward thunders in vindictive arms,
Shalt thou behold me, in my country's cause,
Rise in renown, or perish with applause.* [Exeunt.

SCENE changes to the Prince of Wales's Tent.

Enter Prince, Chandos, and Attendants, meeting Audley.

Prince. Well, Audley, are the soldiers all refresh'd?

Aud. All: and altho' perchance their last of meals,
It seem'd so chearful as surpass'd my hope;
Still joining hands, as off they drain'd the bowl,
Success to England's arms, was all the cry.
At length a hoary vet'ran rais'd his voice,
And thus address'd his fellows: Courage, brothers!
The French have never beat us, nor shall now.
Our great Third Edward's fortune waits our arms;
And his brave son, whose formidable helmet
Nods terror to our foes, directs the fight.
In his black armour, we will soon behold him
Piercing their throng'd battalions—Shall not we,
At humble distance, emulate his ardor,
And gather laurels to adorn his triumph? —
Then did they smile again, shake hand and shout;
While, quite transported at the pleasing sight,
I wept insensibly with love and joy.

Prince. I too could weep—Oh, Audley, Chandos, there,
There rest I all my hope! — My honest soldiers,
I know will do their duty.

Enter

Enter Gentleman.

Gent. Royal Sir,
A person, muffled in a close disguise,
Arriv'd this instant from the adverse camp,
As he reports, solicits to receive
An audience of your Highness, and alone.

Prince. Retire, my Lords——Conduct him straight-
way in. *[Exit Gent.]*

Chan. Your Highness will not trust yourself unguarded.
It may be dangerous. Consider, Sir——

Prince. Caution is now my slave, and fear I scorn :
This is no hour for idle apprehensions. *[Ex. Lords, &c.]*

Enter Arnold in a disguise, which he throws off.

Your business, Sir, with——Arnold !——Get thee hence.

Arn. Behold a wretch laid prostrate at your feet,
His guilty neck ev'n humbled to the earth ;
Tread on it, Sir——it is most fit you should.
I am unworthy life, nor hope compassion ——
But could not die till here I'd stream'd my tears,
In token of contrition, pain and shame.

Prince. Up, and this instant from my sight remove,
Ere indignation urges me to pay
Thy horrid treasons with a traitor's fate.

Arn. Death if I'd fear'd, I had not ventur'd hither ;
Conscious I merit all you can inflict :
' But doom'd to torture as by guilt I am,
' I hop'd some ease in begging here to die,
' That I might manifest, where most I ought,
' My own abhorrence of my hated crime.
Thus, on my knees, lay I my life before you,
Nor ask remission of the heavy sentence
Your justice must pronounce. Yet, royal Sir,
One little favour let me humbly hope :
(And may the blessings of high Heav'n repay it!)
'Tis when you shall report my crime and suffering,
Only to add——He gave himself to death,
The voluntary victim of remorse.

Prince. I shall disgrace my soldiership, and melt
To woman's weakness, at a villain's sorrow !
Oh, Justice, with thy fillet seal my eyes,
Shut out at once his tears, and hide my own !

[Aside.]
Arn.

46 EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE.

Arn. Am I rejected in my low petition
For such a boon?—Nor can I yet complain :
Your royal favours follow approbation,
And I, of all mankind, have least pretence
To hope the bounty of a word to ease me.

Prince. Rise, Arnold—Thou wert long my chosen ser-
An infant-fondness was our early tie ; [vant :
But with our years (companions as we liv'd)
Affection rooted, and esteem grew love.
' Nor was my soul a niggard to thy wishes :
' There set no sun but saw my bounty flow,
' No hour scarce past unmark'd by favour from me.
' The prince and master yet I set apart,
' And singly here arraign thee in the friend.'
Was it for thee, in fortune's first assault,
' Amidst these thousands, all by far less favour'd,'
To be the man, the only to forsake me?
Was it for thee, *in whom my heart delighted,*
Was it for thee, ' for thee to seek my foe,
' And take thy safety from the means that sunk
' The man of all the world that lov'd thee most?'——
In spite of me my eyes will overflow,
And I must weep the wrongs I should revenge.

Arn. Tears for such guilt as mine ! Oh, blasting sight !
Cover me, mountains—hide me and my shame !——
A traitor's fate would here be kind relief
From the excessive anguish I endure.

Prince. Having thus fairly stated our account,
How great's the balance that appears against thee !
And what remains?—I will not more reproach thee.
Love thee I must not, and 'twere guilt to pity.
All that with honour I can grant is this :
Live—but remove for ever from my sight.
If I escape the dangers that surround me,
I must forget that Arnold e'er had being :
I must forget, in pity to mankind,
(Lest it should freeze affection in my heart)
That e'er such friendship met with such return.

Arn. ' Oh, mercy more afflicting than ev'n rage !——
' That I could answer to with tears and pray'rs ;
' But conscious shame, with kindness, strikes me mute.'
Great Sir, (forgive intrusion on your goodness)

My

My boon you have mistaken, life I ask'd not ;
 'Twas but to witness to the deep remorse,
 That with a harpy's talons tears my bosom.
 ' Love, the pernicious pois'ner of my honour,
 ' In poor atonement's sacrific'd already ;
 ' And life, devoted as the all I've left,
 ' I'm ready now and resolute to pay.'
 But as my miseries have touch'd your soul,
 And gain'd remission of a traitor's fate,
 Oh, add one favour, and compleat my wishes !
 To the dear country that must scorn my name,
 (Tho' I still love it as I honour you)
 Permit my sword to lend its little aid,
 To pay a dying tribute—Grant but that,
 And I will weep my gratitude with blood.

Prince. Stain'd and polluted as my eyes behold thee,
 Honour no longer can endure thy fight.
 If 'tis in valour to accomplish it,
 Redeem thy reputation ; but if not,
 To fall in fight will be thy happiest hope.
 Away, nor more reply.

Arn. Exalted goodness !

[*Exit.*

Prince. If passions conquer'd are our noblest boasts,
 Misruling Anger, ever mad Revenge,
 And thou, too partial biaser, Affection,
 Confess I once have acted as I ought. [*Trumpets.*
 Ha ! by those trumpets, sure the Nuncio's come.

[*A Gentleman appears and retires.*

Who's there ?—Acquaint the Lords I wish to see them.

' Now does the medley war begin to work :
 ' A thousand hopes and fears all crowd upon me !'

Enter Warwick, Salisbury, Audley, Chandos, Lords and Attendants.

Oh, welcome, friends ! But, hark ! the Cardinal !

[*Trumpets.*

Enter Cardinal Perigort, attended.

Well, gen'rous advocâte, we wait our doom.

Per. Prêpare, prepare for an immediate battle :
 Inflexible is France in her demands,
 And all my pray'rs and tears have prov'd in vain.

Prince. Lord Cardinal, ' may righteous Heav'n reward
 ' The

48 EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE.

' The pious charity of soul you've shewn.'
 If France insists so high, it shall be try'd;
 The desp'rate chance of battle shall be try'd——
 The Fates attend, the balance is prepar'd,
 And whoso'er shall have the lot to mount,
 May Heav'n stretch wide its everlasting doors,
 And give them happy entrance all!

Per. Amen——

Illustrious Prince, and you his noble followers,
 Remains there aught that I can do to serve ye?
 My function suits not with a field of slaughter;
 In Poictiers, therefore, must I seek my safety.
 There, while the battle rages, round and round
 My beads shall drop to pray'rs, that ev'ry saint
 Will succour and support the English arms.
 But should the fortune of your foes prevail,
 And leave you victims to immortal honour,
 The pious offices I'll make my own,
 O'er ev'ry grave to breathe a thousand blessings,
 And water all your ashes with my tears. [you.]

Prince. My gentle friend, such goodness will renown

Per. Take from my hand, my heart, my very soul;
 My amplest benediction to you all. [They bow.]

I now can stifle in my tears no longer——

Oh, gallant Prince, farewell! farewell to all.

Heav'n guard your lives, and give your arms success.

[Exit with his Attendants.]

[On the Cardinal's going out, the Prince and Lords continue for some time fixed and mute.]

Aud. You loiter, Sir. Our enemies advance,
 And we're in no array.

Prince. My thoughts were absent. Away, dispatch—
 Marshal the army by the plan I gave,
 Then march it straight to yonder eminence,
 Whence I'll endeavour to inflame their zeal,
 And fit them for the toils this day demands.

Now does the medley war begin to work;

A thousand hopes and fears begin to crowd upon me.

[Exeunt severally.]

SCENE

SCENE *changes to another part of the English Camp.*

Enter Mariana and Louisa.

Lon. Thus, Madam, has obedience prov'd my duty ;
 ' The hurry and confusion of the field
 ' Giving us opportunity to 'scape,
 ' We've reach'd the English camp. But whither now ?
 ' Where would you bend your course ? Behold, around,
 ' How the arm'd soldiers, as they form in ranks,
 ' Dart from impassion'd looks ten thousand terrors !
 ' The scene is dreadful !

Mar. Then it suits my mind,
 ' The seat of horrors, terrible to bear.
 ' Oh, let me find him ! ———

Lou. Dearest Lady, think ———
 ' Nor follow one that rudely spurn'd you from him.

Mar. It was not Arnold spurn'd me, 'twas his guilt,
 ' The guilt I plung'd him in. Louisa, thou
 ' Hast ne'er experienc'd passions in extremes,
 ' Or thou would'st know that love, and hate, and scorn,
 ' All opposites, together meet, and blend
 ' In the wild whirl of a distracted soul.

Lou. Behold, he comes !

Mar. Support me, gracious Pow'rs !

Enter Arnold.

Arn. Ha ! Mariana ! — When will torture end ! [*Aside.*

Mar. How shall I stand the shock of his reproaches !

[*Aside.*

Arn. Why art thou here ! Oh, why, unhappy maid ?

Mar. Since my too fatal rashness wrought thy ruin,
 'Tis fit, at least, that I should share it with thee.
 Therefore, my friends, my father, and my country,
 I have forsook for ever, and am come
 To claim a portion here in all you suffer.

Arn. Return again, I beg thee, I conjure thee,
 By all the wond'rous love that fir'd our hearts,
 ' And wrought ——— But let not that be more remember'd.
 ' If thou hast wish for happiness or peace,
 Go to thy father back, and think no more
 Of a lost wretch, who hastens to oblivion.

Mar. Request it not ; I never will forsake thee :
 One fortune shall conduct, one fate involve us.

E

I'll

50 EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE.

I'll shew the world that my unhappy crime
Was neither child of treachery or fear ;
But love, love only : and the guilt it caus'd,
As I inspir'd, I'll share its punishment.

Arn. You cannot, nay, you must not—think not of it.
You broke no faith ; I only was to blame.

• And to engage thee to secure thy safety,
• Know the dire state of my determin'd soul.
• Heav'n and my Prince permitting, I have sworn
• To brave all dangers in the coming fight ;
• And when my sword has done its best for England,
• To lay my load of misery and shame
• Together down for ever. Death I'll hunt
• So very closely, that he shan't escape me.
Be timely, then, in thy retreat ; and Heav'n,
And all good angels guard thee ! On thy lips
I'll seal my fervent pray'rs for blessings on thee.

[*Kisses her.*]

Oh, what a treasure does my soul give up,
A sacrifice to honour——

[*Going.*]

• *Mar.* Stop a moment——

• One single moment, Arnold. Let me gather
• A little strength to bear this dreadful parting.
• And must it be—hold, hold, my heart—for ever ?
• Oh, bitter potion ! Kind physician, pour
• One drop of hope to sweeten it a little.

• *Arn.* Hope every thing ; hope all that earth can give,
• Or heav'n bestow on virtues such as thine. [Trumpet.
That trumpet summons me ! I must away.

Oh, measure by thy own the pangs I feel ! [Exit.

Mar. Then they are mighty ; not to be express'd ;
Not to be borne, nor ever to be cur'd.

My head runs round, my bursting brain divides !

• Oh, for an ocean to ingulph me quick,
• Or flames capacious as all hell's extent,
• That I might plunge, and stifle torture there !

Lou. Hence, my dear Lady ; for your peace, go hence.

Mar. I'll dig these eyes out ; these pernicious eyes,
Enslaving Arnold, have undone him—Ha ! [Trumpet.
That raven trumpet sounds the knell of death !

Behold—the dreadful, bloody work begins——

What ghastly wounds ! what piteous, piercing shrieks !

1

Oh,

Oh, stop that fatal faulchion ! if it falls,
 It kills my Arnold !—Save him, save him, save —
 [*Exit running ; Louisa follows.*]

SCENE *changes to a rural Eminence, with the distant Prospect of a Camp.*

Enter Prince.

Prince. The hour advances, the decisive hour,
 That lifts me to the summit of renown,
 Or leaves me on the earth a breathless coarſe.
 The buz and buſtle of the field before me,
 The twang of bow-ſtrings, and the claſh of ſpears,
 With ev'ry circumſtance of preparation,
 Strike with an awful horror ! Shouts are echo'd,
 To drown diſmay, and blow up reſolution
 Ev'n to its utmoſt ſwell—From hearts ſo firm,
 Whom dangers fortify, and toils inſpire,
 What has a leader not to hope ? And yet
 The weight of apprehenſion ſinks me down.
 O Soul of Nature, great, eternal Cauſe, [*Kneels.*]
 Who gave and govern'ſt all that's here below !
 'Tis by the aid of thy almighty arm
 The weak exiſt, the virtuous are ſecure.
 If to your ſacred laws obedient ever,
 My ſword, my ſoul, have own'd no other guide ;
 Oh, if your honour, if the rights of men,
 My country's happineſs, my king's renown,
 Were motives worthy of a warrior's zeal,
 Crown your poor ſervant with ſucceſs this day,
 And be the praiſe 'and glory all' thy own. [*Riſes.*]

Enter Audley.

Aud. Now, royal Edward, is the hour at hand,
 That ſhall, beyond the boſt of ancient ſtory,
 Ennoble Engliſh arms. Forgive, my hero,
 That I preſume ſo far, but I have ſworn
 To riſe your rival in the common fight :
 We'll ſtart together for the goal of glory,
 And work ſuch wonders, that our fear-ſtruck foes
 Shall call us more-than mortals. As of old,
 ' Where matchleſs vigour mark'd victorious chiefs,
 ' The baffled hoſt, to cover their diſgrace,

E 2

' Cry'd

52 EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE.

- ‘ Cry’d out the gods, assum’d commanders’ forms,
- ‘ And partial Heav’n had fought the field against them !’

Prince. Audley, thy soul is noble ; then, together,
(Safe from the prying eye of observation)

Let us unmask our hearts. Alas, my friend,
To such a dreadful precipice we’re got,
It giddies to look down ! No hold, no hope,

- ‘ But in the succour of almighty pow’r ;’

For nothing but a miracle can save us.

- ‘ *Aud.* I stifle apprehensions as they rise.

- ‘ Nor e’er allow myself to weigh our danger.

- ‘ *Prince.* ’Tis wisely done. And we’ll at least endeavour

- ‘ (Like the brave handful at Thermopylæ)

- ‘ To make such gallant sacrifice of life,

- ‘ As shall confound our enemies. Oh, think

- ‘ On the great glory of devoted heroes,

- ‘ And let us emulate the godlike flame,

- ‘ That dignified the chiefs of Greece and Rome !

- ‘ Souls greatly rais’d, above all partial bonds,

- ‘ Who knew no tie, no happiness distinct,

- ‘ But made the gen’ral weal their only care.

- ‘ That was their aim, their hope, their pride, the end

- ‘ For which they labour’d, suffer’d, conquer’d, bled.

- ‘ *Aud.* Exalted, great incitement !

Prince. What may happen,

- ‘ Since none can say, prepare we for the worst.

- ‘ Then, as a man whom I have lov’d and honour’d,

- ‘ Come to my arms, and take a kind farewell.

‘ [*They embraced*

- ‘ If we survive, we will again embrace,

- ‘ And greet each other’s everlasting fame :

- ‘ If not, with him whose justice never errs,

- ‘ Remains our fit reward.

- ‘ *Aud.* You melt me, Sir !

- ‘ I thought my nature was above such weakness ;

- ‘ But tears will out——

- ‘ *Prince.* They’re no reproach to manhood ;

- ‘ But we’ve not leisure now for their indulgence.’

Aud. True, glorious leader, to more active duties

- ‘ The several functions of our souls are summon’d ;’

Safety and honour, liberty, renown,

Hope’s precious prospect, and possession’s bliss,

All

All that are great and lovely, urg'd together,
The arm of valour in their dear defence.

Prince. And valour well shall answer the demand :
Our foes, to wear the trophies of the day,
Must wade thro' blood to win them. ' Heav'n can tell
' How many souls may pay the fatal price,
' Or whose may be the lot.' If I fall,
Say, Audley, to my father, to my country,
Living they had my service—at my death,
My pray'rs and wishes for eternal welfare.

Aud. Request not that, which, if the day be lost,
I ne'er shall execute. I have to ask
A favour, which I hope you'll not refuse.

Prince. Nothing that suits my Audley to solicit.

Aud. It is, that I may be the first to charge :
I think I can rely upon my courage
To set a good example.

Prince. Then be it so. And hark ! [Trumpets.
The troops approach. *Audley, to your station.*

Aud. Each upright form
Darting defiance, as they move, to France !
' Where is the pow'r can cope with souls like these ?
' Resolv'd on conquest, or a glorious fate,
' Unmoveable as rocks they'll stand the torrent
' Of rushing fury, and disdain to shrink ;
' But let you panting wasps discharge their stings,
' And then in clusters crush them.' [Trumpets.

Enter Warwick, Salisbury, Chandos, and other Commanders. Parties of Soldiers appear between all the Wings,
with Officers leading them, so seeming as if the whole Army
was drawn up.

Prince. Countrymen,
We're here assembled for the toughest fight
That ever strain'd the force of English arms.
See yon wide field with glistering numbers gay !
Vain of their strength, they challenge us for slaves,
And bid us yield their pris'ners at discretion.
If there's an Englishman among ye all
Whose soul can basely truckle to such bondage,
Let him depart. For me, I swear, by Heav'n,
By my great father's soul, and by my fame,

My country ne'er shall pay a ransom for me !
 Nor will I stoop to drag out life in bondage,
 And take my pittance from a Frenchman's hands :
 This I resolve, and hope, brave countrymen,
 Ye all resolve the same.

Sold. All, all ' resolve it.'

Sal. Conquest or death is ev'ry Briton's choice.

Prince. Oh, glorious choice ! And know, my gallant
 That valour is superior far to numbers. [soldiers,

There are no odds against the truly brave :

Let us resolve on conquest, and 'tis ours.

But should the worst that can befall us, death !

'Twill be a fate to envy more than pity.

And we have fathers, brothers, sons or friends,

That will revenge our slaughter.

Sal. On, lead on, my gallant Prince.

Prince. I see the gen'rous indignation rise,
 That soon will shake the boasted pow'r of France :

• ' Their monarch trembles 'midst his gaudy train,

• To think the troops he now prepares to meet,

• Are such as never fainted yet with toil.

• They're such as yet no pow'r on earth could awe,

• No army baffle, and no town withstand.

• Heav'ns, with what pleasure, with what love I gaze,

• In ev'ry face to view his father's greatness !

• Those fathers, those undaunted fathers, who

• In Gallic blood have dy'd their swords.

• Those fathers who in Cyprus wrought such feats,

• Who taught the Syracusians to submit,

• Tam'd the Calabrians, the fierce Saracens,

• And have subdu'd in many a stubborn fight

• The Palestinean warriors. Scotland's fields,

• That have so oft been drench'd with native gore,

• Bear noble record ; and the fertile isle

• Of fair Hibernia, by their swords subjected,

• An ample tribute and obedience pays.

• On her high mountains Wales receiv'd their laws,

• And the whole world has witness'd to their glory.

• *Aud.* Lead us to action, and each Briton here

• Will prove himself the son of those brave fathers.

• *Prince.* View all yon glitt'ring grandeur as your spoils,

• The sure reward of this day's victory.

• Strain

' Strain every faculty, and let your minds,
 ' Your hopes, your ardors, reach their utmost bounds ;
 Follow your standards with a fearless spirit ;
 Follow the great examples of your fires ;
 Follow the noble genius that inspires ye ;
 ' Follow this train of wise and valiant leaders,'
 Follow, in me, your brother, prince, and friend.
 Draw, fellow-soldiers, catch th' inspiring flame ;
 We fight for England, liberty, and fame.

[They draw their swords and go out ; Trumpets sounding.]

END of the FOURTH ACT.

A C T V.

SCENE, *an extensive Plain, with the distant view of a Town ; on one side a Camp on a level, on the other, another on a rising ground.*

Enter Prince, Warwick, Chandos, and Attendants ; their Swords drawn.

PRINCE.

HASTE to my Lord of Oxford, and request
 He ply his archers with redoubled vigour.

[An Attendant bows and goes out.]

I see already they've confus'd the foe ;
 Their ranks are broken, and they seem to doubt
 If they should stand or fly.

Chan. Then now's the time
 To press them with the weight of all our force ;
 For Frenchmen, if they're once dismay'd, are lost.

War. Excess of fury marks the battle yonder ;
 Lord Salisbury there sustains a heavy charge.

Prince. Warwick, away and reinforce his party,
 Or numbers may o'erbear him. Fly this instant.

[Exit Warwick.]

Oh, for an arm of iron, but to answer
 The mighty ardor that inflames my soul !

[Exeunt.]

Enter Arnold bloody.

Arn. Yet more of Gallic blood, I must have more,
 To wash my stains of infamy away.

What

56 EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE.

What are the multitudes o'erthrown already?
 Greater must down to gratify my rage,
 And in my country's vengeance crown my own.
 Ha! what, retreating! Cowards, follow me.

[*He joins an English party who were giving way, and they beat the French off.*]

SCENE *changes to another Part of the Field.*

Enter King John, Tourain, Athens, and Attendants.

King. By Heav'n, a panick seizes all my troops!
 Inform me, Athens, what's the cause of this?

Ath. Some parties that the Prince of Wales detach'd
 Round yonder mountain, have attack'd our rear;
 And the division which the Dauphin led
 Dispersing in confusion, they have pierc'd
 With fury to the centre of our host.

King. Fly, Athens, to my son, with my command,
 That he collect again his scatter'd men,
 And lead them to our succour. Shameful fight!

[*Exit Athens.*]

That such a handful should confound us thus.

Enter Archbishop of Sens with a drawn Sword.

Sens. Confusion seize!—but there's no need to wish.
 Too much it rages in our host already. [*Exit*;

*I got this weapon from a feather'd wretch,
 Who cast it down and skipp'd like any deer:
 I wish the villain had it in his heart.*

*Howe'er, I took the keen incumbrance up,
 And us'd it better than its master could;*

*For, with this arm, unpractis'd in the office,
 I clove a brawny Briton to the chine.* [*way!*

Tour. Heav'ns, how we're prest! No party but gives.

King. Perdition seize the cowards! Come, my boy,
 We'll do our duty tho' they all desert us. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE *changes.*

Enter Arnold.

Arn. My arm begins to weary with the fight.
 Death, I have cramm'd thy rav'nous jaws with offal;
 Now, turn my friend, and give me timely rescue.

Enter

EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE.

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Enter Ribemont.

Rib. Thou double traitor, must I stain my sword
With the foul streams that circle in thy veins,
Who art so base, so branded?—Infamous!
By Heav'n, it almost is a guilt to fight thee.

Arn. Here I can answer, for my cause is good:
It is my country's. And, thou haughty Lord,
Think not thou e'er again shalt awe my soul,
Or, unchastis'd, reproach me with a crime
I loath, and here am come to expiate.
The earth I've crimson'd with thy country's blood;
And if the pow'rs, to what is shed already,
Will add but Ribemont's, I ask no more:
The foe I next may meet to mine is welcome.

Rib. Can aught in valour purge thy Æthiop soul,
Expunge thy blots, and rank thee with the brave?
Dar'st thou assert the cause thou hast betray'd,
Or hope a second guilt atones the first?
No! the joint vengeance of wrong'd France and England
I send in this—[*Arnold falls.*]—There's something of
thy due;

To infamy and hell I leave the rest.

[*Exit.*]

Arn. Death I have caught: his shaft is in my heart.
It tugs with nature. When shall I get free?

Enter Prince, Chandos, and Attendants.

Prince. Slaughter hath wanton'd here! What streams
of blood!

What heaps of mangled bodies strew the ground!

Death has had able ministers at work;

A pompous tribute they have paid indeed!

Arnold! Hast thou done this?

Arn. Offended Prince,

You find my fluttering soul upon the wing.

All a poor, desp'rate, and despairing wretch

Could do, this arm hath wrought.

Prince. Thrice have I mark'd

Thy valour wonderful.

Arn. All worthless quite.

That I could pay a hundred thousand lives

In gratitude to you, and love for England;

But feeble nature fail'd my better wish.

So here I render up a loathsome life——

Prince. Talk not of dying—Live, and still be mine.

Arn.

58 EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE.

Arn. Too gen'rous Prince ! Could your benignant heart
Forgive and cherish one who was so vile ?

Prince. As Heav'n may pardon me, thy crime's forgot.

Arn. Then I am happy. Hear it, sacred pow'rs,
And give him glory great, as is his goodness.
I go—Methinks the gloomy way before me
Is stripp'd of half its horrors. Friendly death,
Receive a parting, pity'd, pardon'd—Oh ! [Dies.]

Chan. He dies !—Is gone.

Prince. Proving, my noble friend,
His soul was genuine English, and could tow'r
O'er all calamities but conscious guilt. [hold,

Chan. Heav'n's pardon greet him—Mighty Prince, be-
Where gallant Audley, like a tempest, pours
Destruction thro' the thickest ranks of foes !

Prince. Oh, Chandos, with astonishment my eye
Hath mark'd his valiant wonder-working sword !
Come, let us kindle at the great example,
And emulate the ardor we admire. [Exeunt.]

SCENE changes.

Enter King John, Tourain and Attendants.

King. [Turning back.] Rally our men, my valiant Lord
Or we are all undone. ' O gracious Heav'n, [of late,
' How has a kingdom crumbled from my grasp !

' Let us preserve ourselves by timely flight ;

' *Tour.* Our broken army is dispersing. See,
' Behold the dastards how they run in thousands !

' Oh, shame ! almost before a single foe.

' *King.* My dear Tourain, to what have I reduc'd
' A ruin now of pomp ! a royal wretch ! [thee !]

' For thee I could weep blood ; for thee I fear

' To lose a life no longer worth my care,

' Stripp'd as I am of dignity and fame.

' *Tour.* I ask of Heav'n but to partake your fortune ;

' Not wasting on myself a single care,

' I send out all attendant on my King.

' *King.* Tears will have way—O Majesty, give place,

' For nature governs now ! Almighty Pow'rs !

' Must children and must kingdoms suffer thus,

' Because my pride to reason shut my ears,

' When, dazzled with the gilded phantom, glory,
' I scorn'd

- ' I scorn'd the terms that might have blest us all? —
 ' Too late—It is the curse of giddy mortals
 ' To see their errors, and repent too late.'

Enter Archbishop of Sens.

Sens. The Dauphin, Dukes of Anjou, Berry, Orleans,
 Have led the way in flight! Earl Douglas follows,
 Fainting with many wounds, and all his Scots
 Have like our French and the auxiliar troops,
 Forsook their posts. For safety, Sir, away——

King. Dare not to urge it—I disdain the thought.
 Go, like my coward sons and brother, go:
 Though all desert me, singly will I stand
 And face my foes, 'till, cover'd o'er with wounds,
 I gain a fate becoming of a king.

' *Enter Charney, bleeding and faint, resting on his sword.*

' *Char.* Embrace this moment as your last for flight,
 ' The field is lost—I have not breath for more.
 ' This honest wound came timely to my rescue,
 ' Or I'd been curst to wail the dregs of life
 ' Away in anguish.—Parent earth, receive me.

' [*Lies down.*

' This is the goal to which all nature runs,
 ' And I rejoice to reach it.—All is lost!
 ' My country, monarch, daughter, life, and—Oh!

' [*Dies.*
 ' *King.* Thou, Charney, hast escap'd—— [*Alboud.*

' What noise is that?

' *Tour.* The sound of triumph.—Now there is no re-
 ' For, see! they have beset us all around. [*treating,*

' *King.* Come then, thou darling of thy father's soul,
 ' We'll link our wretched fortunes here together.

' And if a King's example can inspire
 ' The few yet faithful in my lost condition,
 ' Cast fear behind, and daringly come on.

' Determin'd still to conquer or to die. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE opens to a full prospect of the Field.

Enter Ribemont, solus.

Rib. Ill-fated Athens, thou hast breath'd thy last,—
 But wherefore call'd I thee ill-fated? since
 Death but prevented thee the curse of seeing

Our

60 EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE.

Our arms dishonour'd, and our country lost.
 Now, sacred soul of him who gave me life,
 The purpose of thy visit is explain'd.
 No private evil, not a fate like mine——
 That were a trivial call for thee to earth :
 It was to warn me of a heavier loss,
 Our diadem and fame. Hah!—I'm alone
 Amidst a field of foes!——let me collect
 A decent vigour, like the hunted lion,
 With an assault to dignify my fall,
 And not shrink, tamely, to a vulgar fate.

Enter Audley.

Aud. For England——

Rib. France—By heav'n, the gallant Audley!—
 Now, fortune, I forgive thy partial dealing:
 For, next to victory, my wish has been
 To fall by so renown'd an arm as Audley's.

Aud. Brave Ribemont, I will return thy praise,
 And own thee noblest of my country's foes.
 Had we been natives of one happy land,
 The gen'rous semblance of our souls had link'd us
 In friendship's dearest bonds.

Rib. But here we stand
 Determin'd champions in opposing lists,
 Each in his country's cause, the other's foe.
 Come, for I long to try this season'd blade
 Upon true metal. If I conquer thee,
 I take no portion of the foul disgrace,
 Which Heav'n this day has thrown upon our arms.
 But should my fortune, (as perhaps it may)
 Like my poor country's, bow the head to England;
 Then, Audley, wilt thou add to thy renown,
 By doing what thy king has only done,
 Baffle the warrior he pronounc'd a brave one?
 Now for determination.

Aud. Hold a moment.——

Look on the field, brave Ribemont; behold,
 Thou hast no passage for escape left open!
 Me should'st thou vanquish; from the thousands round
 Captivity or death must be thy lot. [thée,
 Then make not havock of great qualities,
 Nor to thy kingdom lose, through desperation,

The

The bravest arms and noblest heart it boasts.
 Give my fond wish the power but to protect thee :
 Re-sign thy sword—I'll prove no conqueror,
 But clasp thee with the warmth of gen'rous friendship.

Rib. Audley, I thank thee ; but my hour is come—
 You bid me look upon the field ; look thou,
 And see the glory of my country blasted !
 To lose a day like this !—and to survive it—
 Would be a wretchedness I'll ne'er endure.
 No ; in a nation's fate be mine involv'd :
 To fall with France is now the only means
 To satisfy my soul, and save my fame.

Aud. Oh, yet——

Rib. I'm fix'd.

Aud. Why then—for England this—

Rib. And this for France——

[They fight some time, then stop.]

Aud. What ! neither get the better ?

'Tis a tough task !—Again— *[They fight again, then stop.]*

Rib. Why, valiant Lord,

The balance still nods doubtful ! as the pow'rs
 Were undetermin'd which must yield the day.
 Are our fates grown of such high consequence,
 That heav'n should pause upon the great decision !
 Let us no longer worry one another,
 Where can the vulnerable spot be found ?

Aud. Why there——

*[They fight, Ribemont falls, and Audley is wounded,
 and rests upon his sword.]*

Rib. No, there.

Aud. We are companions still !

Rib. Inward I bleed : the streams of life run fast,
 And all that did invigorate deserts me.
 Audley, the palm of victory is thine ;
 I yield, I die—but glory in my fall :
 It is beneath the noblest English arm !

And that secures my fame. ' Thy bosom now
 May harbour him that is thy foe no more.

[Audley kneels and takes him in his arms.]

Why, this is kind ! thus lock'd in thy embrace,
 To let a rival warrior breath his last.

Report me truly as thy sword has found——

F

I know

62 EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE.

I know thou wilt ; and, in the long hereafter,
If we can meet, I'll thank thee for't.—Farewel. [*Dies.*]

Aud. Farewel, brave Ribemont ; thou fearless soldier.
Peace to thy ashes—to thy soul reward——
And honour crown thy name ! A foe could weep !
But pity would disgrace a death like thine. [*Trumpets.*]

Enter Prince, Chandos and Attendants.

Prince. [*Turning back.*] Give instant orders to recall
our parties ;

I will not hazard, by a rash pursuit,
So vast a victory ! And let my standard
' Be hoisted on the highest neighbouring tree,
' To guide our troops returning from the chase.'
England, my Chandos, triumphs ! For our arms
Have won the noblest field that e'er was fought !—
Hah ! Audley bleeding !—then must conquest mourn,
And I lament, amidst my spoils and trophies,
The best of nobles, warriors, and of friends.

Aud. Faint with the loss of blood—I hope no more.

Prince. Summon assistance ; all that wealth can reach
' To him who gives me but his life's assurance.
' [*Exit an Attendant.*]

' Advance that banner o'er us.—Long, Oh, long
' May'st thou survive to wear this well-won honour,
' [*He knights and embraces Audley.*]

' My bravest knight—my most lov'd of men,
Lead him away, repose him in his tent.
Soon as the hurry of the field is o'er,
I'll come in person and attend his cure.

Aud. There lifeless lies the arm that gave the wound ;
A braver soldier never press'd the earth !
On his remains let due distinction wait,
To dignify the dust that once was noble. [*He is led off.*]

Prince. The valiant Ribemont !—Take hence his corpse,
And see that every solemn rite be paid :
With honours suited to his gallant life,
Conduct the body to its peaceful grave.

[*Ribemont carried off.*]

Chen. The field is thinn'd ! And now, far off remov'd,
The dying voice of tumult faintly sounds,
' Like the hoarse thunder in a distant sky ;'

As hollow roarings of subsiding waves,
After their conflict with a furious storm.

Prince. An awful horror!—The sad scene before us,
Pompous with desolation! as declines
The glow and ardor of our martial flame
Softens the mind to mournful meditation.
How many souls have ta'en eternal flight,
Who, but this very morning, on the wing
Of expectation, look'd through years to come!
So have the bubbles of their hopes been broke;
So may it fare with us:—And such is life!

*Enter Warwick.**

War. Oh, mighty Prince, whose matchless virtues
charm

The many realms your victories have aw'd!
Lend your compassion,——' your protection lend
' To wretched, bleeding, dying penitence.'

Prince. What wouldst thou say——

War. Unhappy Mariana,
At once the victim of distressful love,
And deep remorse for treachery——

Prince. Go on.

War. Frantic and weeping, ran o'er all the field,
Till chance directed her to Arnold's corps,
That weltring lay in blood. She kiss'd it oft,
Bath'd it with tears, tore her dishevel'd locks,
Smote her poor bosom, sobb'd and sadly groan'd,
Till snatching from his clay-cold hand his sword,
She plung'd it sudden in her side!—sunk down——
And call'd on death to lock their last embrace.

' I (but too late to save her) interpos'd,
' And cry'd for help——alas! in vain. But now,
' Pluck'd by some passing soldiers from the body,
' They force her, raving and reluctant, hither.

Prince. Oh, Chandos—what a moving sight is here!
' *Enter Soldiers forcing in Mariana, distracted and bleeding.*

' *Mar.* Off! let me go—I will not be torn from him:
' Relentless monsters!—Let us mingle blood,
' And die together.——What do I behold!——

F 2

' Oh,

* In the original, *Louisa* enters here, and speaks the three following speeches of *Warwick*.

64 EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE.

' Oh, hide me, friendly earth,—for ever hide me
' From that offended face—— [Sinks down.

' *Prince.* Look up, fair mourner, [Kneeling by her.

' And gather comfort from my friendly tears.

' *Mar.* Comfort from thee?—Thou injur'd godlike
hero!

' Load me with curses!—Stab me with reproaches,—

' Thy sweetness cannot!—but the hand of Heav'n,

' That strikes for injur'd virtue, heavy falls!

' And crushes me beneath it.

' *Prince.* Weep not thus.

' *Mar.* What art thou made of, heart, to bear all this?

' That grov'ling in the dust—abandon'd ——

' *Prince.* Nay,

' Do not be so wilful——And——

' *Mar.* Indeed, great Prince,

' The dear, departed Arnold, was ensnar'd,

' Seduc'd—betray'd by me. But Heav'n can witness,

' My only motive was his preservation.

' Danger, despair, provok'd the guilty deed;

' Which horror, death and infamy reward.

' Forgive the breathless soldier that rever'd,

' And servant that ador'd you, Sir!—On me

' Heap all your indignation; scorn, detest,

' Despise and hate my memory for ever.

' *Prince.* No, both have my compassion—my for-
giveness.

' *Mar.* Forgiveness said you?—Oh, celestial sound!

' Catch it, ye angels, hov'ring on the wing,

' To waft me to the bar of Heav'n's high justice!

' Offended virtue pities and forgives!

' Chaunt it aloud! and cheer with this foretaste

' Of goodness infinite,—my drooping—Oh!— [Dies.

' *Chan.* She's breathless!

Prince. Heav'n, I hope, will think their crime
Enough was punish'd by affliction here.

Lay them together.—' Well, my Lord of Warwick,
*England triumphs.**

War. I've view'd the adverse camp, as you commanded;
Where all the wealth of France was sure collected,
To grace the ruin of that wretched people.

Each

* In the original *Warwick* enters here.

Each tent profuse ! Like those of Pompey's host,
When on Pharfalia's plain he fought great Cæsar,
And lost the world his life—and Rome her freedom.

Prince. All-righteous Heav'n ! thy hand is here conspicuous !

Pride and presumption finish thus their shame. [*Shout,*
Hark !

Chor. 'Tis a train of pris'ners bringing hither.

Enter Salisbury with Officers and Soldiers, conducting King John, the Duke of Tourain, Archbishop of Sens, and several French Noblemen, prisoners.

Prince. Brave Salisbury, you're welcome to my arms.
The field is ours !

Sal. And nobly was it fought !
Behold, my Prince, how well we have acquitted
The claims our adversaries made on us.
Your veteran swordsman, Sir John Pelham, sends
This royal trophy to adorn your triumph.

Prince. Most wise and valiant of all Christian kings,
Rever'd for virtues, and renown'd in arms !
That I beheld you thus, dissolves my heart
With tender feeling ; ' while I bend the knee
' In humble praise of that good Providence,
' Which gives so great a victory to England !
' For you, great monarch, ' let your godlike soul
Strive with adversity, and still preserve,
As well you may, your royal mind unconquer'd.
Fortune is partial in her distributions :
Could merit always challenge its reward,
In other lights we might this hour have stood,
Perhaps the victor you, and I the captive :
But fear no wrong, the good should never fear it.
' This land, from whence my ancestors have sprung,
' By me shall not be injur'd.' For yourself,
And this illustrious train ' of noble pris'ners,'
My care shall be to treat you as I ought.

King. My gracious conqueror, and kindest cousin,
This goodness more than victory renowns you !
That I'm unfortunate is no reproach,
I brav'd all dangers as became a king,
Till by my coward subjects left and lost.

Prince.

66 EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE.

Prince. Lead to my tent : when we are there arriv'd,
Prepare a banquet with all princely pomp,
At which I'll wait, and serve my royal guests.
My noble Lords, and brave companions all,
I leave your praise for the wide world to sound !
Nor can the voice of fame, however loud,
Out-speak the merit of your matchless deeds.
Oh, may Britannia's sons through ev'ry age,
As they shall read of this so great achievement,
Feel the recorded victory inspire
An emulation of our martial fire,
When future wrongs their ardor shall excite,
And future princes lead them forth to fight !
'Till by repeated conquests, they obtain
A pow'r to awe the earth and rule the main !
Each tyrant fetter gloriously unbind,
And give their liberty to all mankind.

END of the FIFTH ACT.



EPI.

E P I L O G U E.

A *AGAINST* such odds if Edward could succeed,
 Our English warriors once were great indeed:
 But, mournful thought! we surely must complain,
 They're sadly alter'd from King Edward's reign:
 Yet some there are, who merit ev'ry praise,
 Stems of that stock, and worthy of those days;
 Illustrious heroes! — How unlike to those,
 Whose valour, like their wit, lies only in their clothes;
 Such arrant beaux, so trim, so degagée,
 That ev'n French ladies would not run away.
 They'll buff, indeed, and strut, look proud, and swear,
 And all this they can do — because they dare.
 But know, poor souls, all this implies no merit,
 Ev'n women soon discern a man of spirit;
 Judges alike of warriors and of wooers:
 The mightiest talkers, are the poorest doers,
 Such to subdue, requires no martial fire,
 One Joan of Arc would make them all retire.
 But bold — I wander — Poitiers be my story,
 And warm my breast with British love of glory;
 When each bold Briton took his country's part,
 And wore her freedom blazon'd on his heart,
 Such were our fires — But now, Oh, dire disgrace!
 Lo, half their offspring lost in silk and lace.
 Ye Britons, from this lethargy arise,
 Burst forth from folly's bondage, and be wise:
 Once more let virtue, dignity, be priz'd:
 Nor copy what your ancestors despis'd.
 Each false refinement study to disdain,
 And harden into manhood back again:
 So shall our Britain's honours mount on high,
 And future fields with that of Poitiers vie.





J. Roberts del.

Published for Bell's British Theatre Oct. 24. 1777.

J. Thornthorpe sculp.

*M. BENSLEY in the Character of BUSIRIS.
Throw all my Glories open to his View.*

BELL'S EDITION.

B U S I R I S,
K I N G O F E G Y P T.

A TRAGEDY.

As written by E. YOUNG, LL.B.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

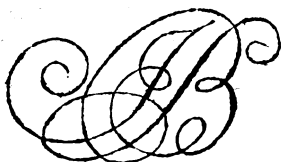
Theatre-Royal in Dury-Lane.

Regulated from the Prompt-Book,

By *PERMISSION* of the *MANAGERS*,

By Mr. HOPKINS, Prompter.

*O triste planè acerbumque funus! O morte ipsâ mortis tempus indignius!
Jam destinata erat egregio juveni, jam electus nuptiarum dies; quod
gaudium, quo mœore mutatum est?* Plin. Epist.



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TO HIS GRACE THE

DUKE OF NEWCASTLE,

Lord Chamberlain of his Majesty's Household, &c.

MY LORD,

IF a dedication carries in its nature a mark of our acknowledgment and esteem, and is there most due, where we are most obliged, the late instances I received of your Grace's undeserved and uncommon favour in an affair of some consequence (foreign to the theatre) has taken from me the privilege of choosing a patron; especially for a performance which, not only by its kind, falls immediately under your Grace's authority, but which likewise by its good fortune in a season of some danger to it, received from your Grace's free indulgence, its life and success on the stage. Thus my ambition concurs with my duty, and it is my happiness not to be able to gratify the impulse of the one, without obeying at the same time the dictates of the other.

Addressees of this nature, through a gross abuse of praise, have justly fallen under ridicule. How pleasant is it, to hear one of yesterday complimented on his illustrious ancestors? A sordid person, on his magnificence? An illiterate pretender, on his skill in arts and sciences? Or a wretch contracted with self-love on his diffusive benevolence to mankind? Yet from the frequency of such a shameful prostitution of the pen as this, one advantage results; it gives the grace of novelty and peculiarity to a dedication, that shall reclaim panegyric from its guilt, and rescue the late mentioned sublime distinctions of character from absurdity and injustice, by applying them to a Duke of Newcastle. It is a kind of compliment paid to panegyric itself, to use it on so just an occasion.

A 2

It

It is letters, my Lord, which distinguish one age from another ; each period of time shines or is cast in shades, as they flourish or decline ; and who knows not that the fate of letters is determined by the kind or cold aspect of the great ? How happy then is the present time, how fair an assurance has it of being exempted from the death of common ages, when we see the politer arts triumphing in the care and encouragement of one who has made an early and regular acquaintance with them at their own home, joining to the amplest fortune the qualifications requisite (had it been wanting) to acquire and deserve it. One, who in the flower of youth, when the imagination is warmest, and fit for such a province, presides over the labours of genius and fine taste, and has it in his power to rival those he is pleased to patronise. One, in a word, who, covetous of learning, reaches beyond his own nation for new supplies of it ; who, zealous for merit, pays honours to its very ashes ; and whose being an excellent master in polite letters himself, is one of the smallest proofs he has given of his ardent love towards them.

But I cannot turn my thought that way, without being put in mind of the imperfection of the following scenes. I own they have many faults, as many as I can allow, without reflecting on the town, for the countenance they have received : but I hope they have merit enough to entitle them to some share of your Grace's approbation, as well as errors enough to make them stand in need of all your protection. The continuance of which is humbly hoped by,

My Lord,

Your Grace's much obliged,

Most obedient, and

Most humble servant,

EDWARD YOUNG.

PRO.

P R O L O G U E.

By a FRIEND.

LONG have you seen the Greek and Roman name,
Assisted by the muse, renew their fame :
 While yet unsung those heroes sleep, from whom
 Greece form'd her Plato's, and her Caesar's Rome.
 Such, ~~Ægypt~~, were thy sons ! Divinely great
 In arts, and arms, in wisdom, and in state.
 Her early monarchs gave such glories birth,
 Their ruins are the wonders of the earth.
 Structures so vast by those great kings design'd,
 Are but ~~small specimens~~ of their boundless mind :
 Yet ne'er has Albion's scene, though long ~~renown'd~~,
 With the stern tyrants of the Nile been crown'd.
 The tragic muse in grandeur should excel,
 Her figure blazes, and her numbers swell :
 The proudest monarch of the proudest age,
 From Ægypt comes to tread the British stage :
 Old Homer's heroes moderns are to those
 Whom this night's venerable scenes disclose.
 Here pomp and splendor serve but to prepare ;
 To touch the soul is our peculiar care ;
 By just distress soft pity to impart,
 And mend your nature, while we ~~move your heart~~ ;
 Nor would these scenes in empty words abound,
 Or overlay the sentiment with sound.
 Words (when the poet would your souls engage)
 Are the mere garnish of an idle stage,
 When passion rages, eloquence is mean :
 Gestures and looks best speak the moving scene.
 Ye shining fair ! when tender woes invite
 To pleasing anguish, and severe delight,
 By your affliction you compute your gain,
 And rise in pleasure, as you rise in pain.
 If then just objects of concern are shewn,
 And your hearts heave with sorrows not your own,
 Let not the gen'rous impulse be withstood,
 Strive not with nature, blush not to be good :
 Sighs only from a noble temper rise,
 And 'tis your virtue swells into your eyes.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M E N.

<i>Bafiris</i> , king of Egypt,	Mr. Bentley.
<i>Myron</i> , the prince.	
<i>Nicanor</i> , father of <i>Mandane</i> .	
<i>Memnon</i> ,	} Conspirators.
<i>Rameses</i> ,	
<i>Syphoces</i> ,	
<i>Pberon</i> ,	
<i>Anletes</i> , a courtier.	

W O M E N.

Myris, queen of Egypt.
Mandane.

SCENE, MEMPHIS in Old Egypt.

BUCHSIS.

B U S I R I S.

A C T I.

SCENE, *a Temple in Memphis.**Enter Pheron and Syphoces.*

SYPHOCES.

IF glorious structures and immortal deeds,
 Enlarge the thought, and set our souls on fire,
 My tongue has been too cold in Egypt's praise,
 The queen of nations, and the boast of times,
 Mother of science, and the house of gods!
 Scarce can I open wide my lab'ring mind
 To comprehend the vast idea, big
 With arts and arms, so boundless in their fame.

Pher. Thrice happy land! did not her dreadful king,
 Far-fam'd Busiris, whom the world reveres,
 Lay all his shining wonders in disgrace,
 By cruelty and pride.

Syph. By pride indeed;
 He calls himself the Proud, and glories in it,
 Nor would exchange for Jupiter's Almighty.
 Have we not seen him shake his silver reins
 O'er harness'd monarchs, to his chariot yok'd?
 In sullen majesty they stalk along,
 With eyes of indignation and despair,
 While he aloft displays his impious state,
 With half their rised kingdoms o'er his brow,
 Blazing to heav'n in diamond and gold.

Pher. Nor less the tyrant's cruelty than pride;
 His horrid altars stream with human blood,
 And piety is murder in his hand.

[*A great shout.*
Syph.

Syb. There rose the voice of twice two hundred thousand,

And broke the clouds, and clear'd the face of day;
The king, who from this temple's airy height,
With heart dilated, that great work surveys,
Which shall proclaim what can be done by man,
Has struck his purple streamer, and descends.

Pher. Twice ten long years have seen that haughty
Which nations with united toil advance, [pile,
Gain on the skies, and Labour up to heaven.

Syb. The king—or prostrate fall, or disappear.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter Busiris attended.

Bus. This ancient city, Memphis the renown'd,
Almost coeval with the sun himself,
And boasting strength scarce sooner to decay,
How wanton fits she amid nature's smiles,
Nor from her highest turret has to view,
But golden landscapes, and luxuriant scenes,
A waste of wealth, the storehouse of the world:
Here, fruitful vales far stretching by the sight,
There, sails unnumber'd which all the stream;
While from the banks full twenty thousand cities
Survey their pride, and see their gilded towers
Float on the waves, and break against the shore:
To crown the whole, this rising pyramid

[*Shows the plan.*

Lengthens in air, and ends among the stars,
While every other object shrinks beneath
Its mighty shade, and lessens to the view,
As kings compar'd with me.

Enter Auletes, he falls prostrate.

Aul. Oh, live for ever,
Busiris, first of men!

Bus. Auletes, rise.

Aul. Ambassadors from various climes arrive,
To view your wonders, and to greet your fame;
Each laden with the gifts his country yields,
Of which the meanest rise to gold and pearl:
The rich Arabian fills his ample vase
With sacred incense; Ethiopia sends
A thousand couriers fleetier than the wind;

And

B U S I R I S.

And their black riders darken all the plain :
Camels and elephants from other realms,
Bending beneath a weight of luxury,
Bring the best seasons of their various years,
And leave their monarchs poor.

Buf. What from the Persian ?

Aul. He bends before your throne, and far outweighs
The rest in tribute, and out-shines in state.

Buf. Away ! He sees me not ; I know his purpose,
A spy upon my greatness, and no friend :
Take his ambassador, and shew him Egypt,
In Memphis shew him various nations met,
As in a sea, yet not confin'd in space,
But streaming freely through the spacious streets,
Which send forth millions at each brazen gate,
When e'er the trumpet calls ; high over head
On the broad walls the chariots bound along,
And leave in air a thunder of my own :
Jove too has pour'd the Nile into my hand,
The prince of rivers, ocean's eldest son :
Rich of myself, I make the fruitful year,
Nor ask precarious plenty from the sky——
Throw all my glories open to his view,
Then tell him, in return for trifles offer'd,
I give him this ; and when a Persian arm

[Gives him a bow.]

Can thus with vigour its reluctance bend,
And to the nerve its stubborn force subdue,
Then let his master think of arms—but bring
More men than yet e'er pour'd into the field ;
Mean time, thank Heaven, our tide of conquest drives
A different way, and leaves him still a king.

This to the Persian——I receive the rest,
And give the world an answer.

[Exit Busris.]

Mandane, attended by Priests and her Virgins, is seen sacrificing at a distance.

A Hymn to Isis is sung, the Priests go out.

Mandane, attended by her maids, advances.

Mand. My morning duty to the gods is o'er,
Yet still this terror hangs upon my soul,

And

And saddens every thought—I still behold
 The dreadful image, still the threatening sword
 Points at my breast, and glitters in mine eye.
 But 'twas a dream, no more. My virgins, leave me:
 And thou, great Ruler of the world, be present!
 Oh, kindly shine on this important hour!
 This hour determines all my future life,
 And gives it up to misery or joy. [*She advances.*
 These lonely walks, this deep and solemn gloom,
 Where noon-day suns but glimmer to the view,
 This house of tears, and mansion of the dead,
 For ever hides him from the hated light,
 And gives him leave to groan.

Back Scene draws, and shows Memnon leaning on his father's Tomb.

Was ever scene

So mournful! If, my Lord, the dead alone
 Be all your care, life is no more a blessing.
 How could you shun me for this dismal shade,
 And seek from love a refuge in despair?

Mem. Why hast thou brought those eyes to this sad place,

Where darkness dwells, and grief would sigh secure,
 In welcome horrors, and beloved night?
 Thy beauties drive the friendly shades before them,
 And light up day e'en here. Retire, my love;
 Each joyful moment I would share with thee,
 My virtuous maid, but I would mourn alone.

Mand. What have you found in me so mean, to hope
 That while you sigh, my soul can be at peace?
 Your sorrows flow from your Mandane's eyes.

Mem. Oh, my Mandane!—

Mand. Wherefore turn you from me?

Have I offended, or are you unkind?

Ah, me! A sight as strange, as pitiful!

From this big heart, o'ercharg'd with gen'rous sorrow,
 See the tide working upward to his eye,
 And stealing from him in large silent drops,
 Without his leave!—Can those tears flow in vain?

Mem. Why will you double my distress, and make
 My grief my crime, by discomposing you?

And yet I can't forbear! Alas! my father!
That name excuses all; what is not due
To that great name, which life or death can pay?

Mand. Speak on, and ease your lab'ring breast, it swells
And sinks again; and then it swells so high,
It looks as it would break. I know 'tis big
With something you would utter. Oft in vain
I have presum'd to ask your mournful story;
But ever have been answer'd with a frown.

Mem. Oh, my Mandane! did my tale concern
Myself alone, it would not lie conceal'd;
But 'tis wrapt up in guilt, in royal guilt,
And therefore 'tis unsafe to touch upon't.
To tell my tale, is to blow off the ashes
From sleeping embers which will rise in flames
At the least breath, and spread destruction round.
But thou art faithful, and my other self;
And, Oh! my heart this moment is so full,
It bursts with its complaints, and I must speak.
Myris, the present queen, was only sister
Of great Artaxes, our late royal lord:
Busris, who now reigns, was first of males
In lineal blood, to which this crown descends.
(Not with long circumstance to load my story)
Ambitious Myris fir'd his daring soul,
And turn'd his sword against her brother's life:
Then mounting to the tyrant's bed and throne,
Enjoy'd her shame, and triumph'd in her guilt.

Mand. So black a story well might shun the day.

Mem. Artaxes' friends (a virtuous multitude)
Were swept away by banishment, or death,
In throngs, and fated the devouring grave.
My father——Think, Mandane, on your own,
And pardon me!——

[Weeps]

The tyrant took me, then of tender years,
And rear'd me with his son (a son since dead).
He vainly hop'd, by shews of guilty kindness
To wear away the blackness of his crime,
And reconcile me to my father's fate;
Hence have I long been forc'd to stay my vengeance,
To smother my brow with smiles, and curb my tongue,
While the big woe lies throbbing at my heart.

Enter

Enter Pheron at a distance.

Pber. So close! so loving! Here I stand unseen,
And watch my rival's fate. [*Aside.*]

Mem. But thou, my fair,
Thou art my peace in tumult, life in death,
Thou yet canst make me blest.

Mand. As how, my Lord?

Mem. Ah! why wilt thou insult me?

Mand. Memnon——

Mem. Speak.

Mand. Nature forbids, and when I would begin,
She stifles all my spirits, and I faint:
My heart is breaking, but I cannot speak.
Oh, let me fly.——

Mem. You pierce me to the soul. [*Holding her.*]

Mand. Oh! spare me for a moment, till my heart
Regains its wonted force, and I will speak.
Pheron, you know, is daily urgent with me,
Breaks through restraints, and will not be refus'd.
[*Pheron shews a great concern.*]

Yet more, the prince, the young impetuous prince,
Before his father sent him forth to war,
And gave the Mede to his destructive sword,
Has often taught his tongue a filken tale,
Descended from himself, and talk'd of love.
Since last I saw thee, his licentious passion
Has haunted all my dreams——
This day the court shines forth in all its lustre,
To welcome her returning warrior home;
Alas, the malice of our stars!

Mem. To place it
Beyond the power of fate to part our loves;
Be this our bridal night, my life!——my soul!

[*Embrace.*]

Pber. Perdition seize them both! and have I lov'd
So long, to catch her in another's arms!
Another's arms for ever! Oh, the pang!——
Heart-piercing fight!——but rage shall take its turn——
It shall be so——and let the crime be his,
Who drives me to the black extremity;
I fear no farther hell than that I feel.

[*Exit.*
Mem.]

Mem. Trembling I grasp thee, and my anxious heart
Is still in doubt if I may call thee mine.
Oh, bliss too great ! Oh, painful ecstasy !
I know not what to utter.

Mand. Ay, my Lord !
What means this damp that comes athwart my joy,
Chastising thus the lightness of my heart ?
I have a father, and a father too,
Tender as nature ever fram'd. — His will
Should be consulted. — Should I touch his peace,
I should be wretched in my Memnon's arms.

Mem. Talk not of wretchedness.

Mand. Alas ! this day
First gave me birth, and (which is strange to tell)
The fates e'er since, as watching its return,
Have caught it as it flew, and mark'd it deep
With something great, extremes of good or ill.
Mem. Why should we bode misfortune to our loves ?
No, I receive thee from the gods, in lieu
Of all that happiness they ravish'd from me ;
Fame, freedom, father, all return in thee.
Had not the gods Mandane to bestow,
They never would have pour'd such vengeance on me ;
They meant me thee, and could not be severe.
Soon as night's favourable shades descend,
The holy priest shall join our hands for ever,
And life shall prove but one long bridal-day.
Till then, in scenes of pleasure lose thy grief,
Or strike the lute, or smile among the flowers,
They'll sweeter smell, and fairer bloom for thee.
Alas ! I'm torn from this dear tender side,
By weighty reasons, and important calls,
Nay, even by love itself—I quit thee now,
But to deserve thee more.

[*They embrace.*

Mand. Your friends are here, [Exit *Mand.*

Mem. Excellent creature ! how my soul pants for
But other passions now begin their claim, [thee ?
Doubt, and disdain, and sorrow, and revenge,
With mingling tumult tear up all my breast :
Oh, how unlike the softnesses of love !

Enter Syphoc.

Syph. Hail, worthy Memnon.

B.

Mem.

Mem. Welcome, my Syphoces.

And much I hope thou bring'st a bleeding heart,
A heart that bleeds for others miseries,
Bravely regardless of its own, though great,
That first of characters.

Syph. And there's a second,
Not far behind, to rescue the distress'd,
Or die.

Mem. Yes, die; and visit those brave men,
Who, from the first of time, have bath'd their hands
In tyrants' blood, and grasp'd their honest swords
As part of their own being, when the cause,
The public cause, demanded. Oh, my friend!
How long shall Egypt groan in chains? How long
Shall her sons fall in heaps without a foe?
No war, plague, famine, nothing but Busris,
His people's father! and the state's defence!
Yet but a remnant of the land survives.

Syph. What havock have I seen? Have we not known
A multitude become a morning's prey,
When troubled rest, or a debauch has sour'd
The monster's temper? then 'tis instant death;
Then fall the brave and good, like ripen'd corn
Before the sweeping scythe, not the poor mercy
To starve and pine at leisure in their chains.
But what fresh hope, that we receive your summons
To meet you here this morning?

Mem. Know, Syphoces,
'Twas on this day my warlike father's blood,
So often lavish'd in his country's cause,
And greatly sold for conquest and renown;
'Twas on this execrable day it flow'd
On his own pavement, in a peaceful hour,
Smok'd in the dust, and wash'd a ruffian's feet.
This guilty day returning, rouses all
My smother'd rage, and blows it to a flame.
Where are our friends?

Syph. At hand. Rameses,
Last night, when gentle rest o'er nature spread
Her still command, and care alone was waking,
Like a dumb, lonely, discontented ghost,
Enter'd my chamber, and approach'd my bed;

With bursts of passion, and a peal of groans,
He recollects his godlike brother's fate,
The drunken banquet, and the midnight murder,
And urges vengeance on the guilty prince.
Such was the fellness of his boiling rage,
Methought the night grew darker as he frown'd.

Mem. I know he bears the prince most deadly hate;
But this will enter deeper in his soul, [*Shews a letter.*]
And rouse up passions, which till now have slept:
Murder will look like innocence to this.

Syph. How, Memnon!

Mem. This reminds me of thy fate;
The queen has courted thee with proffer'd realms,
And fought by threats to bend thee to her will;
She languishes, she burns, she wastes away
In fruitless hopes, and dies upon thy name.

Syph. Oh, fatal love! which stung by jealousy,
Expell'd a life far dearer than my own,
By curst poison——Ah, divine Apame!
And could the murd'ers hope she should inherit
This heart, and fill thy place within these arms?—
But grief shall yield——Revenge, I'm wholly thine.

Mem. The tyrant too is wanton in his age,
He shews that all his thoughts are not in blood;
Love claims its share; he envies poor Rameses
The softness of his bed; and thinks Amelia
A mistress worthy of a monarch's arms.

Syph. But see, Rameses comes, a fullen gloom
Scowls on his brow, and marks him through the dusk.

Enter Rameses, Pheron, and other Conspirators.

Mem. To what, my friends, shall Memnon bid you
welcome?

To tombs, and melancholy scenes of death?
I have no costly banquets, such as spread
Prince Myron's table, when you brother fell.

[*To Rameses.*]

I have no gilded roof, no gay apartment,
Such as the queen prepar'd for thee, Syphoces.
Yet be not discontent, my valiant friends,
Busiris reigns, and 'tis not out of season
To look on ought may mind us of our fate:
His sword is ever drawn, and furious Myris
Thinks the day lost that is not mark'd with blood.

Ram. And have we felt a tyrant twenty years,
Felt him, as the raw wound the burning steel,
And are we murmuring out our midnight curses,
Drying our tears in corners, and complaining?
Our hands are forfeited. Gods! strike them off.
No hands we need to fasten our own chains,
Our masters will do that; and we want souls
To raise them to an use more worthy men.

Mem. Ruffles your temper at offences past?
Here then, to sting thee into madness.

[*Gives the Letter.* Rameses reads.

Ram. Oh!

Syph. See how the struggling passions shake his frame!

Ram. My bosom joy, that crowns my happy bed
With tender pledges of our mutual love,
Far dearer than my soul! and shall my wife,
The mother of my little innocents,
Be taken from us! Torn from me! from mine!
Who live but on her sight! and shall I hear
Her cries for succour, and not rush upon him?
My infant hanging at the neck upbraids me,
And struggles with his little arms to save her.
These veins have still some gen'rous blood in store,
The dregs of those rich streams his wars have drain'd;
I'll giv't in dowry with her.

Pher. Well resolv'd:

A tardy vengeance shares the tyrant's guilt.

Ram. Let me embrace thee, Pheron, thou art brave,
And dost disdain the coldness of delay.
Curse on the man that calls Rameses' friend,
And keeps his temper at a tale like this;
When rage and rancour are the proper virtues,
And loss of reason is the mark of men.

Mem. Thus I've determin'd; when the midnight hour
Lulls this proud city, and her monarch dreams
Of humbled foes, or his new mistress' love,
Then we will rush at once, let loose the terrors
Of rage pent in, and struggling twenty years
To find a vent, and at one dreadful blow
Begin and end the war.

A more auspicious juncture could not happen
The Persian, who for years has join'd our counsels,

Stirr'd

Stirr'd up the love of freedom, and in private
 Long nurs'd the glorious appetite with gold,
 This morn with transport snatch'd the wish'd occasion
 Of throwing his resentment wide, and now
 He frowns in arms, and gives th' event to fate.

Ram. This hand shall drag the tyrant from the throne,
 And stab the royal victim on this altar.

[*Pointing to the tomb.*

Mem. Oh, justly thought! Friends cast your eyes around,
 All that most awful is, or great in nature,
 This solemn scene presents; the gods are here,
 And here our fam'd forefathers' sacred tombs;
 Who never brook'd a tyrant in this land.
 Let us not act beneath the grand assembly!
 The slighted altars tremble, and these tombs
 Send forth a peal of groans to urge us on.
 Come then, surround my father's monument,
 And call his shade to witness to your vows.

Ram. Nor his alone. Oh, all ye mighty dead!
 Illustrious shades! who nightly stalk around
 The tyrant's couch, and shake his guilty soul:
 Whether already you converse with gods
 Or stray below in melancholy glooms,
 From earth, from air, from heaven, and from hell,
 Come, I conjure you, by the pris'ner's chain,
 The widow's sighing, and the orphan's tears,
 The virgin's shrieks, the hero's spouting veins,
 By gods blasphem'd, and free-born men enslav'd.

Mem. Hear, Jove, and you most injur'd heroes, hear,
 While we o'er this thrice hallow'd monument
 Thus join our hands, and kneeling to the gods,
 Fast bind our souls to great revenge!

All. We swear——

Mem. This night the tyrant and his minions bleed,
 And flames shall lay those palaces in dust,
 Whose gilded domes now glitter in the sun.

Pher. So now my foe is taken in the toil;
 And I've a second cast for this proud maid——

It is an oath well spent, a perjury
 Of good account in vengeance, and in love. [Aside.

Mem. We wrong the mighty dead, if we permit
 Our eyes alone to count this grand assembly:

A thousand unseen heroes walk among us ;
 My father rises from his tomb, his wounds
 Bleed all afresh, and consecrate the day ;
 He waves his arm, and chides our tardy vengeance ;
 More than this world shall thank us. Oh, my friends !
 Such our condition, we have nought to lose,
 And great may be our gain, if this be great,
 To crush a tyrant, and preserve a state ;
 To still the clamours of our father's blood,
 To fix the basis of the public good,
 To leave a fame eternal, then to soar,
 Mix with the gods, and bid the world adore.

END of the FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE, *the Palace.*

A magnificent Throne discovered, and several courtiers walking to and fro.

Enter Syphoces and Ramefes. Shouts at a distance.

RAMESES.

WHAT means this dust and tumult in the court,
 These streamers fooling in the wind, these shouts,
 The tyrant blazing in full insolence,
 And all his gaudy courtiers basking round him,
 Like pois'nous vermin in a dog-day sun ?

Syph. Your father and prince Myron are arriv'd,
 And with one peal of joy the nation rings.

Ram. Long has my father serv'd this tyrant king,
 With zeal well worthy of a better cause ;
 Though with his helm he hides a hoary brow,
 Long vers'd in death, the father of the field,
 At the shrill trumpet he throws off the weight
 Of fourscore years, and springs upon the foe.
 The transport danger gives him, conquers nature,
 And a short youth boils up within his veins.

Syph. Behold, this way they pass to meet the king.
 Myron

Myron and Nicanor pass the Stage with Attendants.

Ram. What pity 'tis that one so lost in guilt,
Should thus engage the fight with manly charms,
And make vice lovely? [*Looking on Myron.*]

Syph. Pardon me, Rameses :
Though to my foe, I must be ever just.
He's gen'rous, grateful, affable, and brave :
But then he knows no limit to his passion ;
The tempest-beaten bark is not so tofs'd
As is his reason, when those winds arise :
And though he draws a fatal sword in battle,
And kindles in the warm pursuit of fame,
Pleasure subdues him quite, the sparkling eye,
And gen'rous bowl bear down his graver mind,
While fiery spirits dance along his veins,
And keep a constant revel in his heart.

Ram. But here the tyrant comes !—With what excess
Of idle pride will he receive his son ?
How with big words will he swell out this conquest,
And into grandeur puff his little tales.

*Enter Busris, and ascends the Throne ; on the other side,
enter Myron and Nicanor.*

Busf. Welcome, my son, greater partner of my fame,
I thank thee for th' increase of my dominions,
That now more mountains rise, more rivers flow,
And more stars shine in my still growing empire.
The sun himself surveys it not at once,
But travels for the view, whilst far disjoint'd,
My subjects live unheard of by each other ;
These wrapp'd in shades, while those enjoy the light ;
Their day is various, but their king the same.

Myr. Here, Sir, your thanks are due ; to this old arm,
Whose nerves not threescore winter camps unbend,
You owe your victory, and I my life.
When my fierce courser, with a javelin stung,
First rear'd in air, then tearing with a bound
The trembling earth, plung'd deep amidst the foe ;
And now a thousand deaths from ev'ry side,
Had but one mark, and on my buckler rung ;
Through the throng'd legions like a tempest rush'd

This

This friend, o'er gasping heroes, rolling steeds,
And snatch'd me from my fate.

Bus. I thank thee, general,
Thou hast a heart that swells with loyalty,
And throws off the infection of these times;
But thy degenerate boy——

Nic. No more my son,
I cut him off, my guilt, my punishment.
Look not, dread Sir, on me through his offence;
Oh, let not that discolour all my service,
And ruin those who blame him for his crime

Bus. Old man, I will not wear the crown in vain,
Subjects shall work my will, or feel my pow'r,
Their disobedience shall not be my guilt;
Who is their welfare, glory, and defence?
The land that yields them food, and ev'ry stream
That slakes their thirst, the air they breathe is mine.
And is concurrence to their own enjoyment,
By due submission, a too great return?
Death and destruction are within my call——
But thou shalt flourish in thy master's smile.
A faithful minister adorns my crown,
And throws a brighter glory round my brow.

Nic. Take but one more, one small one to your favour,
And then my soul's at peace—I have a daughter,
An only daughter, now an only child,
Since her lost brother's folly; she deserves
The most a father can for so much goodness:
Her mother's dead, and we are left alone,
We two are the whole house, nor are we two,
In her I live, the comfort of my age;
And if the King extend his grace so far,
And take that tender blossom into shelter,
Then I have all my monarch can bestow,
Or heav'n itself, but this; that I may wear
My life's poor remnant out in your command;
Stretch forth my being to the last in duty,
And, when the Fates shall summon, die for you.

Bus. Nicanor, know, thy daughter is our care.

Myr. Oh, Sir, be greatly kind, exert your pow'r,
And with the monarch furnish out the friend!——
Art thou not he, that gallant-minded chief.

[To *Nic.*
Who

Who would not stoop to give me less than life?
And shall I prove ungrateful? Shocking thought!
He that's ungrateful has no guilt but one,
All other crimes may pass for virtues in him.

Nic. What joy my daughter's promis'd welfare gives me,
My lips I need not open to discover—
Thus humbly let me thank you.

Bus. Dry thy tears,
And follow us; thy daughter's near our Queen,
And longs, no doubt, to see thee; bless the maid,
And then attend us on affairs of state,
I hear there's treason near us; though the slaves
Fall off from their obedience, and deny
That I'm their monarch, I'm Busris still.
Collected in myself, I'll stand alone,
And hurl my thunder, though I shake my throne:
Like death, a solitary king I'll reign
O'er silent subjects, and a desert plain;
Ere brook their pride, I'll spread a gen'ral doom,
And ev'ry step shall be from tomb to tomb. [*Exit.*

[*Myr. and Aul. who talked aside, advance.*

Myr. Her absent beauties glow'd upon my mind,
And sparkled in each thought. She never left me—
Wouldst thou believe it? In the field of battle,
In the mid terror, and the flame of fight,
Mandane thou hast stol'n away my soul,
And left my fame in danger—My rais'd arm
Has hung in air, forgetful to descend,
And for a moment spar'd the prostrate foe—
Oh, that her birth rose equal to my own!
Then I might wed with honour, and enjoy
A lawful bliss—and why not now? Methinks
Absence has plac'd her in a fairer light,
Enrich'd the maid, and heighten'd ev'ry charm.

Aul. She comes.

Myr. That modest grace subdu'd my soul.
That chastity of look, which seems to hang
A veil of purest light o'er all her beauties,
And by forbidding most inflames desire.

Enter Mandane.

What tender force! What dignity divine!
What virtue consecrating ev'ry feature!

Around

Around that neck, what drops are gold and pearl !
 Mandane ! Powerful being, whose first sight
 Gives me a transport not to be express'd ;
 And with one moment over-pays a year
 Of danger, toil, and death, and absence from thee.

Mand. My Lord, I sought my father.

Myr. Leave me not,
 I've much to say, much more than you conceive ;
 Yes, by the gods, much more than I can utter.
 My breath is snatch'd, I tremble, I expire : [*Aside.*
 Nay, here I'll offer tender violence——

[*Takes her hand.*

May I not breathe my soul upon this hand,
 When your eyes triumph, and insult my pain ?
 Permit me here to take a small revenge.

Mand. My Lord, I am not conscious of my fault.

Myr. 'Tis false——I know the language of those eyes,
 They use me ill——see my heart beat, Mandane ;
 Believe not me, but tell yourself my passion——
 Is it in art to counterfeit within ?
 To drive the spirits, and inflame the blood ?
 Each nerve is pierc'd with light'ning from your eye,
 And every pulse is in the throbs of love.

Mand. My Lord, my duty calls, I must not stay.

Myr. Give me a moment : I have that to speak
 Will burst me if suppress——Oh, heav'nly maid !
 Thy charms are doubled, so is thy disdain——
 Who is it ? Tell me who enjoys thy smile ;
 There is a happy man, I swear there is ;
 I know it by your coldness to your friend——
 That thought has fix'd a scorpion on my heart,
 That stings to death——and is it possible
 You ever spoke of Myron in his absence,
 Or cast, at leisure, a light thought that way ?

Mand. I thought of you, my Lord, and of my father,
 And pray'd for your success ; nor must I now
 Neglect to give him joy.

Myr. Yet stay, you shall not go——Ungrateful woman !
 I would not wrong your father ; but by heav'n
 His love is hatred if compar'd with mine.
 I understand whence this unkindness flows ;
 Your heart resents some licence of my youth,

When

When love had touch'd my brain. You may forgive me,
 Because I never shall forgive myself;
 But that you live, I'd rush upon my sword.
 If you forgive me, I shall now approach,
 Not as a lover only, but a wretch
 Redeem'd from baseness to the ways of honour,
 And to my passion join my gratitude.
 Each time I kneel before you, I shall rise
 As well a better as a happier man,
 Indebted to your virtue and your love.

Mand. I must not hear you.

Myr. Oh, torment me not!

Hear me you must, and more—Your father's valour,
 In the late battle, rescu'd me from death:
 And how shall I be grateful? Thou'rt a princess—
 Think not, Mandane, this a sudden start,
 A flash of love, that kindles and expires:
 Long have I weigh'd it; since I parted hence,
 No night has pass'd but this has broke my rest,
 And mix'd with ev'ry dream. My fair, I wed thee
 In the maturest counsel of my soul.

Mand. Oh, gods, I tremble at the rising storm!
 Where can this end?

[*Aside*]

Myr. And do you then despise me?

Mand. My Lord, I want the courage to accept
 What far transcends my merit, and for ever
 Must silently upbraid my little worth.

Myr. Have I forsook myself, foregone my temper,
 Headlong to all the gay delights of youth,
 And fall'n in love with virtue most severe?
 Turn'd superstitious to make thee my friend?
 Gods! have I struggled thro' the pow'ful reasons
 That strongly combated my fond resolves?
 Was wealth o'erlook'd, and glory of no weight,
 My parent's crown forgot, and my own conquests,
 And all to be refus'd; to sooth your pride,
 And make my rival sport?

Mand. With patience hear me;
 Nor let my trust in Myron prove my ruin.

[*Kneels*]

Myr. Distraction! Art thou marry'd?

Mand. Oh!

Myr.

Myr. My heart foretold it—Ah, my soul! Auletes—
[Swoons.]

Aul. Madam, 'tis prudent in you to withdraw,
[Exit Mandane.]

Myr. I do not live—I cannot bear the light!
Where is Mandane? But I would not know.
She is not mine. Yet tho' not mine in love,
Revenge, my just revenge, may overtake her.
Oh, how I hate her! Let me know her faults.
Did the proud maid insult me in distress,
And smile to see me gasping? Speak, Auletes,
Did she not sigh? Sure she might pity me,
Though all her love is now another's right.

Aul. She sigh'd and wept; but I remov'd her from you.

Myr. It was well done. Yet I could gaze for ever.
And did she sigh, and did she drop a tear?
The tears she shed for me are surely mine;
And shall another dry them on those cheeks,
And make them an excuse for greater fondness?
Shall I assist the villain in his joys?
No, I will tear her from him.
I'd grudge her beauties to the gods that gave them.

Aul. My Lord, have temper.

Myr. And another's passion
Warm on that lip! another's burning arms
Strain'd round the lovely waist for which I die,
And she consenting, wooing, growing to him!
What golden scenes, when absent, did I feign!
What lovely pictures did I draw in air!
What luxury of thought! and see my fate!
Shall then my slave enjoy her, and I languish
In my triumphal car, my foot on purple,
And o'er my head a canopy of gold;
Fate in my nod, and monarchs in my train?
What if I stab him? No; she will not wed
His murderer. I never form'd a wish,
But full fruition taught me to forget it,
And am I lessen'd by my late success?
And have I lost my conquest? Fly, Auletes,
And tell her——

Aul. What, my Lord?

Myr. No, bid her——

Aul. Speak.

Myr. I know not what. My heart is torn asunder.

Aul. Retire, my Lord, and recompose yourself;
The Queen approaches. Ha! her bosom swells,
[*Exit Myron.*]

Her pale lip trembles, a disorder'd haste
Is in her steps; her eyes shot gloomy fires!
When Myris is in anger, happy they
She calls her friends.

Enter Queen.

Queen. Auletes, where's the King?

Aul. At council, Madam.

Queen. Let him know I want him. [Exit Aul.]

Base! to forget to whom he owes a crown!
Fool! to provoke her rage whose hand is red
In her own brother's blood!

Enter King and Pheron.

King. Horrid conspiracy!

Pher. This night was destin'd for the bloody deed:

King. Mistaken villains! if they wish my death,
They should, in prudence, lay their weapons by.
So jealous are the gods of Egypt's glory,
I cannot die while slaves are arm'd against me.
Haste, Pheron, to the dungeon, plunge them down
Far from the hopes of day; there let them lie
Banish'd this world, while yet alive, and groan
In darkness and in horror; let double chains
Consume the flesh of Memnon's loaded limbs,
Till death shall knock them off. A king's thy friend;
Nay, more, Busris. Go, let that suffice. [Exit Pher.]

Queen. My Lord, your thought's engag'd.

King. Affairs of state
Detain'd me from my Queen.

Queen. The world may wait:
I've a request, my Lord.

King. Oblige me with it.

Queen. Will you comply?

King. My Queen, my pow'r is yours.

Queen. Your Queen?

King. My Queen.

Queen. Indeed, it should be so.
Then sign these orders for Amelia's death.

C

He

He starts, turns pale, he's sinking into earth !
 Enough ; begone, and fling thee at her feet ;
 Doat on my slave, and sue to her for mercy.
 Go, pour forth all the folly of thy soul ;
 But bear in mind, thou giv'st not of thy own ;
 'Thou giv'st that kindness which I bought with blood,
 Nor shall I lose unmov'd.

King. I wish, my Queen,
 This still had slept a secret for thy sake ;
 But since thy restless jealousy of soul
 Has been so studious of its own disquiet,
 Support it as you may. I own I've felt
 Amelia's charms, and think them worth my love.

Queen. And dar'st thou bravely own it too ! Oh, insult !
 Forgetful man ! 'tis I then owe a crown !
 Thou hadst still grovelling'd in the lower world,
 And view'd a throne at distance, had not I
 Told thee thou wert a man, and (dreadful thought !)
 Thro' my own brother cut thy way to empire :
 But thou might'st well forget a crown bestow'd ;
 That gift was small ; I listen'd to thy sighs,
 And rais'd thee to my bed.

King. I thank you for it.
 The gifts you made me were not cast away ;
 I understand their worth. Husband and king
 Are names of no mean import ; they rise high
 Into dominion, and are big with pow'r.—
 Whate'er I was, I now am King of Egypt,
 And Myris' Lord.

Queen. I dream ! Art thou Busris ?
 Busris, that has trembled at my feet,
 And art thou now my Jove with clouded brow,
 Dispensing fate, and looking down on Myris ?
 Dost thou derive thy spirit from thy crimes ?
 'Cause thou hast wrong'd me, therefore dost thou threaten,
 And roll thine eye in anger ? Rather bend,
 And sue for pardon. Oh, detestable !
 Burn for a stranger's bed !——

King. And what was mine,
 When Myris first vouchsaf'd to smile on me ?

Queen. Distraction ! death ! upbraided for my love !
 Thou art not only criminal, but base.

Mine

Mine was a godlike guilt; ambition in it;
Its foot in hell, its head above the clouds;
For know, I hated when I most carefs'd:
'Twas not Bufiris, but the crown, that charm'd me,
And sent its sparkling glories to my heart.
But thou canst soil thy diadem with slaves.

King. Syphoces is a king then.

Queen. Ha!

King. Let fair Amelia know the King attends her.

[*Exit.*

Queen. Go, tyrant, go, and wisely, by thy shame,
Prepare thy way to ruin: I'll o'ertake thee,
Living or dead; if dead, my ghost shall rise,
Shriek in thy ears, and stalk before thy eyes:
In death I'll triumph o'er my rival's charms,
And chill thy blood, when clasp'd with n her arms.
Alone to suffer is beneath the great;
Tyrant, thy torments shall support my state. [*Exit.*

END of the SECOND ACT.

A C T III.

SCENE, *the General's House.*

Enter the King.

KING.

HERE dwells my stubborn fair; I'll sooth her pride,
And lay an humbled monarch at her feet.
But let her well consider, if she's slow
To welcome bliss, and dead to glory's charms,
Then my resentment rises in proportion
To this high grace extended to my slave,
And turns the force of her own charms against her.
Monarchs may court, but cannot be deny'd.

Enter the Queen veiled.

Amelia, dry thy tears, and lay aside
That melancholy veil—Ha, Myris!

Queen. Myris—

A name that should like thunder strike thine ear,
And make thee tremble in this guilty place.
But wherefore dost thou think I meet thee here?

C 2

Not

Not with mean sighs and deprecating tears
 To humble me before thee, and increase
 The number of thy slaves, in hope to break
 Thy resolution, and avert thy crime ;
 But to denounce, if thou shalt dare persist,
 The vengeance due to injur'd Heav'n and me ;
 And by this warning double thy offence.
 Think, think of vengeance, 'tis the only joy
 Which thou hast left me ; I'm no more thy wife,
 Nor Queen ; but know, I am a woman still.

Enter Auletes.

Aul. May all the gods watch o'er your life and empire,
 And render omens vain ! So fierce the storm,
 Old Memphis from her deep foundations shakes,
 And such unheard of prodigies hang o'er us,
 As make the boldest tremble. See, the moon,
 Robb'd of her light, discolour'd, without form,
 Appears a bloody sign, hung out by Jove,
 To speak peace broken with the sons of men ;
 The Nile, as frighted, shrinks within its banks ;
 And as this hour I pass'd great Isis' temple,
 A sudden flood of lightning rush'd upon it,
 And laid the shrine in ashes.

King. Oh, mighty Isis !

Why all these signs in nature ? Why this tumult
 To tell me I am guilty ? If my crown
 The Fates demand, why let them take it back.
 My crown, indeed, I may resign ; but, Oh !
 Who can awake the dead ?

'Tis hence these spectres shock my midnight thoughts,
 And nature's laws are broke to discompose me ;
 'Tis I that whirl these hurricanes in air,
 And shake the earth's foundations with my guilt.
 Oh, Myris, give me back my innocence !

Queen. I bought it with an empire.

King. Cheaply sold !

Why didst thou urge my lifted arm to strike
 The pious King, when my own heart recoil'd ?

Queen. Why did you yield when urg'd, and by a wo-
 You that are vain of your superior reason, [man ?
 And swell with the prerogative of man.
 If you succeed, our counsel is of nought,

You

You own it, not accepted, tho' enjoy'd ;
 But steal the glory, and deny the favour ;
 Yet if a fatal consequence attend,
 Then we're the authors ; then your treach'rous praise
 Allows us sense enough to be condemn'd.

King. 'Tis prudent to dissemble with her fury,
 And wait a softer season for my love. [*Aside.*

Bid Isis' priests attend their King's devotions :
 I'll sooth with sacrifice the angry pow'rs.
 Swift to my dungeons ; bid their darksome wombs
 Give up the numerous captives of my wars ;
 Ten thousand lives to Heav'n devoutly pour,
 Nor let the sacred knife grow cool from blood,
 Till sevenfold Nile, infected with the stain,
 In all his streams flows purple to the main. [*Exit.*

Queen. Thin artifice ! I know the sacrifice
 You most intend. But I will dash your joys :
 Thou, victim, and thy goddess, both shall feel me.

Aul. Madam, the Prince.

Queen. And is he still afflicted ?

Aul. It grieves your faithful servant to relate it :
 He struggles manfully, but all in vain ;
 Sometimes he calls his music to his aid,
 He strives with martial strains to fire his blood,
 And rouse his soul to battle :
 Then he relapses into love again,
 Feeds the disease, and doats upon his ruin.

Queen. Why seeks he here the cause of all his sorrows ?

Aul. He seeks not here Mandane, but her father ;
 For friendship is the balm of all our cares,
 Melts in the wound, and softens ev'ry fate.

[*Martial Music.*

Enter Myron at a distance.

Queen. Heav'ns, what a glory blazes from his eye !
 What force, what majesty in ev'ry motion !
 As at each step he trod upon a foe !

Myr. Oh, that this ardor would for ever last !
 It shall, nor will I curse my being more :
 Chain'd kings, and conquer'd kingdoms are before me ;
 I'll bend the bow, and launch the whistling spear,
 Bound o'er the mountains, plunge into the stream,
 Where thickest faulchions gleam, and helmets blaze,

Rush in, and find amusement from my pain.
I'll number my own heart among my foes,
And conquer it, or die.

[Exit

Queen. The thoughts of war
Will soon dislodge the fair one from his breast.
But this has broken in on my intent——
I would remind thee of my late commands.

Aul. Madam, 'tis needless to remind your slave:
At dead of night I set the pris'ners free.

Queen. Yes, set the pris'ners free; 'tis great revenge,
Such as my soul pants after——It becomes me.
Oh, it will gall the tyrant! stab him home!
And if one spark of gratitude survives,
Softens Syphocles to my fond desire,
The tyrant's torment is my only joy;
Ye gods! or let me perish or destroy,
Or rather both; for what has life to boast,
When vice is tasteless grown, and virtue lost?
Glory and wealth I call upon in vain,
Nor wealth nor glory can appease my pain;
My every joy upbraids me with my guilt,
And triumphs tell me sacred blood is spilt. [Exit Queen.

Enter Myron.

Myr. The shining images of war are fled,
The fainting trumpets languish in mine ear,
The banners furl'd, and all the sprightly blaze
Of burnish'd armor, like the setting sun,
Insensibly is vanish'd from my thought:
No battle, siege, or storm sustain my soul
In wonted grandeur, and fill out my breast;
But softness steals upon me, melting down
My rugged heart in languishment and sighs,
And pours it out at my Mandane's feet.
I see her e'en this moment stand before me,
Too fair for sight, and fatal to behold.
I have her here, I clasp her in my arms,
And in the madness of excessive love,
Sigh out my heart, and bleed with tenderness.

Aul. My Lord, too much you cherish this delusion.
She is another's.

Myr. Do not tell me so;
Say rather she is dead; each heav'nly charm

Turd

Turn'd into horror ! Oh, the pain of pains
Is when the fair-one whom our soul is fond of
Gives transport, and receives it from another !
How does my soul burn up with strong desire,
Now shrink into itself, now blaze again !
I'll tear and rend the strings that tie me to her :
If I stay longer here, I am undone.

As he is going, enter Nicanor.

Nic. My Prince, (and since such honours you vouchsafe)
My friend, I have presum'd upon your favour :
This is my daughter's birth-day, and this night
I dedicate to joys which ever languish,
If you refuse to crown them with your presence.

Myr. Nicanor, I was warm on other thoughts——

Nic. I am still near you in the day of danger,
In toilsome marches, and the bloody field,
When nations against nations clash in arms,
And half a people in one groan expire :
Why am I, with your helmet, thrown aside,
Cast off, and useless in the hour of peace ?

Myr. Since then you press it, I must be your guest—
Methinks I labour, as I onward move,
As under check of some controuling pow'r. [*Aside.*
What can this mean ? Wine may relieve my thoughts,
And mirth and converse lift my soul again. [*Exeunt.*

The back Scene draws, and discovers a Banquet.

Enter Mandane richly dressed.

Mand. It was this day that gave me life ; this day
Should give much more, should give me Memnon too :
But I am rival'd by his chains, they clasp
The hero round, (a cold, unkind embrace !)
And but an earnest of far worse to come.
While he, my soul, in dungeon darkness clos'd,
Breathes damp unwholesome steams, and lives on poison,
I am compell'd to suffer ornaments,
To wear the rainbow, and to blaze in gems,
To put on all the shining guilt of dress,
When 'tis almost a crime that I still live.
These eyes, which can't dissemble, pouring forth
The dreadful truth, are honest to my heart.

These

These robes, Oh, Memnon ! are Mandane's chains,
And load, and gall, and wring her bleeding heart.

[Exit Mandane.]

*Enter Myron, Nicanor, Auletes, &c. They take
their Places.*

Nic. Sound louder, found, and waft my wish to Heav'n.
Hear me, ye righteous gods, and grant my pray'r :
Forever shine propitious on my daughter,
Protect her, prosper her, and when I'm dead,
Still blest me in Mandane's happiness.

[The bowl goes round. *Mus.*

Haste, call my daughter ; none can taste of joy,
Till she, the mistress of the feast, is with us.

[A Servant brings Nicanor a letter ; he reads it.]

The King's commands at any hour are welcome.

Myr. Not leave us, General !

Nic. Ha ! the King here writes me,
The discontented populace, that held
O'er midnight bowls their desperate cabals,
Are now in bold defiance to his power.
Amid the terrors of this stormy night,
Ev'n now, they deluge all yon western vale,
And form a war, impatient for the day.
The spreading poison too has caught his troops,
And the revolting soldiers stand in arms
Mix'd with seditious citizens.

Myr. Your call is great.

Enter Mandane. Myron starts from his Seat in disorder.

Mand. Oh, Memnon ! how shall I become a banquet,
Suppress my sorrow, and comply with joy ?
Severest fate ! am I deny'd to grieve ?

[*Aside.*

Nic. Be comforted, my child, I'll soon return.
Why dost thou make me blush ? I feel my tears
Run tripping down my cheek.

Myr. I must away :

Her smiles were dreadful, but her tears are death.
I can no more. I sink beneath her charms,
And feel a deadly sickness at my heart. [*Aside to Auletes.*

Nic. Your cheek is pale, I dare not let you part.
You are not well.

Myr.

Myr. A small indisposition ;
I soon shall throw it from me. Farewel, General ;
Conquest attend your arms.

Nic. You shall not leave
Your servant's roof ; 'tis an unwholesome air
And my apartment wants a guest.

Myr. Nicanor,
If health returns, I shall not press my conch,
And hear of distant conquests ; but o'ertake thee,
And add new terror to the front of war.

Nic. Mean time, you are a guardian to my child ;
Let her not miss a father in my absence ;
She's all my soul holds dear.

Both. Farewel. Farewel. [Embrace.]

[Nicanor waits on Myron off the Stage, and returns.]

Nic. My child, I feel a tenderness at heart
I never felt before. Come near, Mandane,
Let me gaze on thee, and indulge the father.
Thy dying mother with her clay-cold hand
Press'd mine, then turning on thee her faint eye,
Let fall a tear of fondness, and expir'd.
I cannot love thee well enough ; her grace
Softens thy cheek, and lives within thine eye.
Let me embrace you both—My heart o'erflows—
If I should fall—thy mother's monument—
But I shall kill thy tenderness—No more—
Nay, do not weep, I shall return again,
And with my dearest child sit down in peace,
And long enjoy her goodness.

Mand. If the gods
Regard your daughter's fervent vows, you will.

Nic. Farewel, my only care ; my soul is with thee ;
Regard yourself, and you remember me. [Exit.]

Enter Myron and Auletes.

Myr. No place can give me ease ; my restless thought,
Like working billows in a troubled sea,
Tosses me to and fro, nor know I whither.
What am I, who, or where ? Ha ! where indeed !
But let me pause, and ask myself again
If I am well awake—Impetuous bliss !
My heart leaps up, my mounting spirits blaze !
My soul is in a tempest of delight !

Aul.

Aul. My Lord, you tremble, and your eyes betray
Strange tumults in your breast.

Myr. What hour of night ?

Aul. My Lord, the night's far spent.

Myr. The gates are barr'd,
And all the household is compos'd to rest ?

Aul. All ; and the great Nicanor's own apartment,
Proud to receive a royal guest, expects you.

Myr. Perdition on thy soul for naming him !
Nicanor ! Oh, I never shall sleep more !

Defend me ! Whither wander'd my bold thoughts !
Broke loose from reason, how did they run mad !
And now they are come home, all arm'd with stings,
And pierce my bleeding heart——

I beg the gods to disappoint my crime,
Yet almost wish them deaf to my desire :
I long, repent ; repent, and long again ;
And every moment differs from the last.

I must no longer parley with destruction.

Aul. seize me, force me to my chamber,

There chain me down, and guard me from myself :

Hell rises in each thought ; 'tis time to fly. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter Mandane and Rameses.

Ram. I hope your fears have giv'n a false alarm.

Mand. You've heard my frequent visions of the night,
You know my father's absence, Myron's passion ;
Just now I met him ; at my sight he started,
Then with such ardent eyes he wander'd o'er me,
And gaz'd with such malignity of love,
Sending his soul out to me in a look
So fiercely kind, I trembled, and retir'd.

Ram. No more ; my friends (which, as I have inform'd
The Queen, to gall the tyrant, has set free) [*you,*
Are lodg'd within your call ; th' appointed signal,
If danger threatens, brings them to your rescue.

Mand. Where are they ?

Ram. In the hall beneath your chamber.
Memnon alone is wanting ; he's providing
For your escape before the morning dawn.
The rest in vizors, fearing to be known,
Have ventur'd thro' the streets for your protection.

Mand. Auspicious turn ! then I again am happy.

Ram.

Ram. Auspicious turn indeed ! and what completes,
The happiness, the base man that betray'd us
This arm laid low : I watch'd him from the King ;
I took him warm, while he with lifted brow,
Confess'd high thought, and triumph'd in his mien ;
I thank'd him with my dagger in his heart.
'Tis late ; refresh yourself with sleep, Mandane.

[*Exit Mandane.*]

So, 'tis resolv'd, if Myron dares attempt
So black a crime, it justifies the blow :
He dies, and my poor brother's ghost shall smile.
This way he bends his steps ; I hate his sight,
And shall, till death has made it lovely to me. [Exit.]

Enter Myron and Auletes.

Myr. Oh, how this passion, like a whirlpool, drives me,
With giddy, rapid motion, round and round,
I know not where, and draws in all my soul !
I reason much, but reason about her ;
And where she is, all reason dies before her ;
And arguments but tell me I am conquer'd.——
So black the night, as if no star e'er shone
In all the wide expanse ; the lightning's flash
But shews the darkness, and the bursting clouds
With peals of thunder seem to rock the land.
Not beasts of prey dare now from shelter roam,
But howl in dens, and make the forests groan.
What then am I ? A monster yet more fell
Than haunts the wilds ?——I am, and threaten more——
My breast is darker than this dreadful night,
And feels a fiercer tempest rage within——
I must—I will—This leads me to her chamber——
Did not the raven croak ? [Starting.]

Aul. I hear her not.

Myr. By Heav'n, methinks earth trembles under me !
Awake, ye Furies ; you are wanting to me ;
Oh, finish me in ill ! Oh, take me whole !
Or, gods, confirm me good without allay,
Nor leave me thus at variance with myself !
Let me not thus be dash'd from side to side——
The old man wept at parting, kneel'd before me,
Confided in me, gave her to my care,
Nor long since sav'd my life——and doubt I still ?

I

I'm

I'm guilty of the fact; here let me lie,
 And rather groan for ever in the dust,
 And float the marble pavement with my tears,
 Than rise into a monster. *[Flings himself down,*

Mandane passing at a distance, speaks to a Servant.

Man. Well, observe me.

Before the rising sun my Lord arrives,
 To seal our vows; the holy priest is with him.
 Watch to receive them at the western gate,
 And privately conduct them to my chamber.

[Exeunt Mandane and Servant.]

Myr. *[Starting up.]* Oh, torments, racks and flames!
 then she expects him

With open arms! Am I cast out for ever,
 For ever must despair, unless I snatch
 The present moment? She is all prepar'd,
 Her wishes waking, and her heart on fire!
 That pow'rful thought sweeps heav'n and hell before it,
 And lays all open to the Prince of Egypt,
 Born to enjoy whatever he desires,
 And fling tear, anguish, and remorse behind him.
 I see her midnight dress, her flowing hair,
 Her slacken'd bosom, her relenting mien;
 All the forbidding forms of day flung off
 For yielding softness—Oh, I'm all confusion!
 I shiver in each joint!—Ah, she was made
 To justify the blackest crimes, and gild
 Ruin and death with her destructive charms!

Aul. You'll force her then?

Myr. Thou villain, but to think it—
 No, I'll solicit her with all my pow'r;
 Conquest and crowns shall sparkle in her sight.
 If she consent, thy Prince is bless'd indeed,
 Takes wing, and tow'rs above mortality!
 If she resist, I put an end to pain,
 And lay my breathless body at her feet.

*Mandane passing at a distance to her Chamber; Myron
 meets her.*

Mand. Is this well done, my Lord?

Myr. Condemn me not

Before

Before you hear me : let this posture tell you,
 I'm not so guilty as perhaps your fears,
 Your commendable, modest fears suspect.
 Nay do not go you know not what to do :
 I would receive a favour, not constrain it,
 Return, or good Nicanor, best of fathers,
 Shall charge you with the murder of his friend.

Mand. And dare you then pronounce that sacred name,
 And yet persist ? Were you his mortal foe,
 What could your malice more ?

Myr. Oh, fair Mandane !
 I know my fault, I know your virtue too ;
 But such the violence of my disorder,
 That I dare tempt e'en you. Methinks that guilt
 Has something lovely which proclaims your pow'r——
 But touch me with your hand, I die with bliss.
 Why swells your eye ? By Heav'n, I'd rather see
 All nature mourn, than you let fall a tear !
 I own I'm mad, but I am mad of love.
 You can't condemn me more than I myself ;
 In that we are agreed, agree in all.
 Condemn, but pity me ; resent, but yield ;
 For, Oh, I burn, I rave, I die with love !

Mand. Oh, Sir !——

Myr. Nay, do not weep so ; it will kill me ;
 This moment, while I speak, my eyes are darken'd ;
 I cannot see thee ; and my trembling limbs
 Refuse to bear their weight : all left of life
 Is that I love : if love was in our pow'r,
 The fault were mine ; since not, you must comply.
 How godlike to bestow more heav'nly joys
 Than you can think, and I support, and live ?

Mand. Oh, how can you abuse your sacred reason,
 That particle of Heav'n, that soul of Jove,
 To varnish o'er, and paint so black a crime !
 Oh, Prince !——

Myr. What says Mandane ?

Mand. Sir, observe me,
 My bursting sighs, and ever-streaming tears,
 Your noble nature has with pity seen ;
 But would they not work deeper in your soul,
 Were you convinc'd my sorrows flow for you ?

D

For

For you, my Lord, they flow ; for I am safe ;
 (I know you are surpris'd) they flow for you :
 Myron, my father's friend, my prince, my guest —
 Myron, my guardian god, attempts my peace.
 And need I further reason for these tears ?
 Nature affords no object of concern
 So great, as to behold a gen'rous mind
 Driv'n by a sudden gust, and dash'd on guilt.
 'Tis base, you ought not ; 'tis impracticable,
 You cannot — Make necessity your choice ;
 Nor let one moment of defeated guilt,
 Of fruitless baseness, overthrow the glory
 Your whole illustrious life has dearly bought
 In toilsome marches, and in fields of blood.

Enter Auletes and Servants.

Aul. My Lord, your life's beset ; the room beneath
 Is throng'd with ruffians, which but wait the signal
 To rush and sheath their daggers in your heart.

Myr. Betray'd ! Curs'd sorcerers ! It was a plot
 Concerted by them all to take my life,
 And this the bait to tempt me to the foil.
 She dies —

Aul. No, first enjoy, then murder her —
 Trust to my conduct, and you still are safe.
 They all are mask'd ; I have my vizor too.
 But time's short ; for once confide in me.
 You, Sir, for safety, fly to your apartment ;

[To the Prince.]

You, bear Mandane to her closet — You, *[To Servants:]*
 Speed to the southern gate, and burst it open.

[As the Servants seize Mandane, she gives the signal.]
Subira! off.

Enter Rameses and Conspirators mask'd.

Ram. The villain fled ? Perdition intercept him !
 Disperse, fly several ways, let each man bear
 A steady point well levell'd at his heart.
 If he escapes us now, success attend him ;
 May he for ever triumph.

[As they pass the stage in confusion, Auletes enters mask'd among them.]

Aul. Ha ! why halt you ?
 Pursue, pursue ! e'en now I saw the monster,

The

The villain, Myron, with these eyes I saw him
Bearing his prize swift to the western gate :

There, there it burst.

[A noise without.]

All. Away, pursue.

[Exeunt.]

Aut. [Without.] 'Tis done ;

Advance the massy bar, and all is safe :

Stand here, and with your lives defend the pass.

Enter Myron.

Myr. I shall at least have time for vengeance on her,
And then I care not if I die. Barbarians !

Their swords are pointed at my life ! 'Tis well !

But I will give them an excuse for murder ;

Such, such a cause—Off, love, and soft compassion :

Harden, each sinew of my heart, to steel.

I'll do, what, done, will shock myself, and those

Whom time sets farthest from this dreadful hour.

Enter Mandane, forc'd in by Auletes.

Mand. By all the pow'rs that can revenge a falsehood,
I'm innocent from any thoughts of blood. [false.]

Myr. Why then your champions here in arms ? 'Tis

Mand. Ah, let my life suffice you for the wrong

You charge upon me ! Oh, my royal master !

My safety from all-ill ! my great defender !

Or did my father but insult my tears,

And give me to your care to suffer wrong ?

Kill me, but not your friend, but not my father :

He loves us both, and my severe distress

Will scarce more deeply wound him than your guilt.

[Myron walks passionately at a distance.]

Myr. Slaves, are you sworn against me ? Stop her voice,
And bear her to my chamber.

Mand. Oh, Sir ! Oh, Myron !

Behold my tears—here I will fix for ever—

I'll clasp your feet, and grow into the earth—

Oh, cut me, hew me, give to ev'ry limb

A separate death !—but spare my spotless virtue ;

But spare my fame—You wound to distant ages,

And thro' all time my memory will bleed.

Myr. Distraction ! all the pains of hell are on me !

[As the Servants force in Mandane.]

Mand. Oh, Memnon !—Oh, my Lord !—my life !

where art thou ?

[She is borne off.]

D 2

[Myron]

[Myron expresses sudden passion and surprise, stands awhile fixed in astonishment, then speaks.]

Myr. As many accidents concur to work
My passions up to this unheard-of crime,
As if the gods design'd it——Be it then
Their fault, not mine——Memnon! said she not Memnon?
My heart began to stagger, but 'tis over——
Heav'n blast me, if I thought it possible
I could be still more curs'd——That hated dog
Her lord, her life!—I thank her for my cure
Of all remorse and pity: this has left me
Without a check, and thrown the loosen'd reins
On my wild passion to run headlong on,
And in her ruin quench a double fire,
The blended rage of vengeance and of love.
Destruction full of transport! Lo, I come
Swift on the wing, to meet my certain doom:
I know the danger, and I know the shame;
But, like our phoenix, in so rich a flame
I plunge triumphant my devoted head,
And doat on death in that luxurious bed.

[Exit.]

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

A C T IV.

Enter Myron in the utmost disorder, bareheaded, without light, &c. Walks disturbedly before he speaks.

MYRON.

HENCEFORTH let no man trust the first false step
Of guilt; it hangs upon a precipice,
Whose steep descent in last perdition ends!
How far am I plung'd down beyond all thought
Which I this evening fram'd!—But be it so——
Consummate horror! guilt beyond a name!
Dare not, my soul, repent: in thee repentance
Were second guilt; and thou blasphem'st just Heav'n,
By hoping mercy. Ah! my pain will cease
When gods want pow'r to punish. Ha! the dawn!—
Rise never more, O Sun! let night prevail,

Eternal

External darkness close the world's wide scene,
And hide me from Nicanor and myself.

Enter Auletes.

Who's there?

Aul. My Lord!

Myr. Auletes!

Aul. Guard your life.

The house is rous'd, the servants all alarm'd,
The gliding tapers dart from room to room;
Solemn confusion, and a trembling haste,
Mix'd with pale horror, glares on ev'ry face:
The strengthen'd foe has rush'd upon your guard,
And cut their passage thro' them to the gate.
Implacable Rameses leads them on,
Breathing revenge, and panting for your blood.

Myr. Why, let them come, let in the raging torrent;
I wish the world would rise in arms against me,
For I must die, and I would die in state.

*The Doors are burst open, Servants pass the stage in tumult,
Rameses, &c. pursue Myron and his Guards over the
stage, then Rameses and Syphoces enter meeting.*

Ram. Where's the Prince?

Syph. The monster stands at bay;
We can no more than shut him from escape,
Till further force arrive.

Ram. Oh, my Syphoces!

Syph. This is a grief, but not for words.
Does she still live?

Ram. She lives——But, Oh, how blest'd
Are they which are no more! By stealth I saw her;
Cast on the ground in mourning weeds she lies,
Her torn and loosen'd tresses shade her round,
Thro' which her face, all pale, as she were dead,
Gleams like a sickly moon. Too great her grief
For words or tears; but ever and anon,
After a dreadful, still, insidious calm,
Collecting all her breath, long, long suppress'd,
She sobs her soul out in a lengthen'd groan,
So sad, it breaks the hearts of all that hear,
And sends her maids in agonies away.

Syph. Oh, tale, too mournful to be thought on!

Ram. Hold——

No, let her virgins weep ; forbear, Syphoces,
Tear out an eye, but damp not our revenge.
Dispatch your letters ; I'll go comfort her.

[*A Servant enters and speaks aside to Ram. Exit Syp.*

And has she then commanded none approach her ?

I'm sorry for it ; but I cannot blame her :

Such is the dreadful ill, that it converts

All offer'd cure into a new disease ;

It shuns our love, and comfort gives her pain.

Re-enter Syphoces.

Sypb. Your father is return'd : redundant Nile,
Broke from its channel, overflows the pass,
And sends him back to wait the waters fall.

Ram. And is he then return'd ? I tremble for him.

I see his white head rolling in the dust.

But haste, it is our duty to receive him.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter Myron.

Myr. I feel a pain of which I am not worthy,

A pain, an anguish, which the honest man

Alone deserves. Is it not wond'rous strange

That I, who stabb'd the very heart of nature,

Should have surviving ought of man about me ?

And yet, I know not how, of gratitude

And friendship still the stubborn sparks survive,

And poor Nicanor's torments pierce my soul.

Confusion ! he's return'd.

[*Starting.*

Enter Nicanor.

Nic. My prince—— [*Advancing to embrace.*

Myr. My friend—— [*Turning aside and hiding his face.*

Nic. I interrupt you.

Myr. I had thee there.

[*Smiting his breast.*

Before thou cam'st, my thoughts were bent upon thee.

Nic. Oh, Sir, you are too kind !

Myr. Death, tortures, hell !

[*Aside.*

Nic. What says my Prince ?

Myr. A sudden pain,

To which I'm subject, struck across my heart.

'Tis past ; I'm well again.

Nic. Heav'n guard your health !

Myr. Dost thou then wish it ?

Nic. Am I then distrusted ?

Ten

Then when I sav'd your life, I did the least
I e'er would do to serve you.

Myr. Barbarous man!

Nic. What have I done, my Prince? Which way offended?
Has not my life, my soul been yours?

Myr. Oh!—Oh!

Nic. By Heav'n, I'm wrong'd! Speak, and I'll clear
myself. [*Takes him by the hand.*]

Myr. I'm poison and destruction; curse thy gods;
I'll kill thee in compassion—Oh, my brain!

Away, away, away! [*Shoves him from him; going.*]

Nic. Do, kill me, Prince.——

You shall not go. I do demand the cause
Which has put forth thy hand against thy father?
For, thus provok'd, I'll do myself the justice
To tell thee, youth, that I deserve that name;
Nor have thy parents lov'd thee more than I.

Myr. I hear them; they are on me—Loose thy hold,
Or I will plant my dagger in thy breast.

Nic. Your dagger's needless. Oh, ungrateful boy!

Myr. Forgive me, father; Oh, my soul bleeds for thee!
[*Embrace.*]

[*As he is going out Auletes meets him, and speaks to him
aside.*]

What, no escape? On ev'ry side inclos'd?
Then I resolve to perish by his hand;
'Tis just I should, and meaner death I scorn.
But how to work him to my fate, to sting
His passion up so high, will be a task
To me severe, as difficult as strange.
Support me, cruel heart; it must be done.

[*Aside.*]

Nic. Now, from my very soul, I cannot tell,
But 'tis enchantment all; for things so strange
Have happen'd, I might well distrust my sense.
But, if mine eyes are true, I plainly read
A heart in anguish, and I must confess
Your grief is just—It was inhuman in you——
But tell the cause, unravel from the bottom
The mystery that has embroil'd our loves;
(For still, my Prince, I love, since you repent.)
What accident depriv'd me of my friend,
And lost you to yourself?

Myr.

Myr. A traitor's fight!

Nic. Beneath my roof?

Myr. Beneath thy very helmet.

Thou art a traitor. Guard thyself.

[*Draws*

Nic. Distraction!

Traitor! — For standing by your father's throne,
And stemming the wild stream that roars against it,
Of rebel subjects, and of foreign foes?

For training thee to glory and to war?

For taking thee from out thy mother's arms,

A mortal child, and kindling in thy soul

The noble ardors of a future god?

Farewel, I dare not trust my temper more.

Myr. Grey-headed, venerable traitor!

Enter Ramefes.

Ram. Ha!

Turn, turn, blasphemer, and repress thy taunts;
All provocation's needless, but thy fight.

[*He assaults the Prince as he is going off; Nicanor binds him.*

Nic. Forbear, my son.

Ram. Forbear!

Nic. If I am calm,

Your rage should cease.

Ram. No, 'tis my own revenge,

Unless, Sir, you disown me for your son.

Nic. Thy sword against thy prince?

Ram. A villain.

Nic. Hold.

Ram. The worst of villains,

Nic. 'Tis too much.

Ram. Oh, father! —

Nic. What would'st thou?

Ram. Sir, your daughter —

Nic. Rightly thought;

She best can comfort me in all my sorrow.

Call, call Mandane; to behold my child

Would cheer me in the agonies of death:

Call her, Ramefes — Am I disobey'd?

Ram. Oh, Sir! —

Nic. What mean those transports of concern?

Ram. Though I'm an outcast from your love, I weep,
To open your black scene of misery.

Nic. Where will this end?—Oh, my fore-boding heart!

Ram. Should he, to whom, as to a god, at parting,
You gave, with streaming eyes, your soul's delight,
While yet your last embrace was warm about him,
Gloomy and dreadful as this stormy night,
Rush on your child, your comfort, your Mandane,
All sweet and lovely as the blushing morn,
Seize her by force, now trembling, breathless, pale,
Prostrate in anguish, tearing up the earth,
Imploring, shrieking to the gods and you.—
Oh, hold my brain!—Look there, and think the rest.

The back Scene opens. A darkened chamber, a bed, and the curtains drawn. Women pass out, weeping, &c. Nic-anor falls back on Ramefes.

Nic. Is't possible!—My child!—My only daughter!
The growth of my own life! That sweeten'd age
And pain!—Oh, nature bleeds within me!

Mand. Weep not, my virgins, cease you useless tears,
Kindness is thrown away upon despair,
And but provokes the sorrow it would ease.

Nic. Assist me forwards.

Man. Most unwelcome news!
Is he return'd? The gods support my father.
I now begin to wish he lov'd me less.

Nic. There, there she pierc'd the very tend'rest nerve:
She pities me, dear babe, she pities me:
Through all the raging tortures of her soul
She feels my pain! But hold, my heart, to thank her,
Then burst at once, and let the pangs of death
Put Myron from my thought. [Goes to her.

Mand. Severest fate
Has done its worst—I've drawn my father's tears.—

Nic. Forbear to call me by that tender name;
Since I can't help thee, I would fain forget
Thou art a part of me—it only sharpens
Those pangs, which, if a stranger, I should feel.—
Oh, spare me, my Mandane; to behold thee

In

In such excess of sorrow, quite destroys me,
And I shall die, and leave thee unreveng'd.

Mand. Oh, Sir! there are misfortunes most severe,
Which yet can bear the light, and well sustain'd
Adorn the sufferer. — But this affliction
Has made despair a virtue, and demands
Utter extinction, and eternal night,
As height of happiness. *[Scene shuts on them.]*

Enter Syphoces.

Ram. Oh, my Syphoces!

Syph. And does this move you? Does this melt you down,
And pour you out in sorrow? Then fly far,
Ere Memnon comes; he comes with flushing cheek,
And beating heart, to bear a bride away,
And bless his fate; how dreadfully deceiv'd!

Ram. The melancholy scene at length begins.

Enter Memnon.

Mem. Oh, give me leave
To yield to nature, and indulge my joy,
My friend! My brother! Oh, the ecstacy
That fires my veins, and dances at my heart!
You love me not, if you refuse to join
In all the just extravagance, and flight
Of boundless transport on this happy hour.
Where is my soul, my bliss, my lovely bride!
Call, call her forth; Oh, haste! the priest expects us,
And ev'ry moment is a crime to love.

Ram. Speak to him. — Pr'ythee speak. *[To Syph.]*

Syph. By heav'n, I cannot.

Mem. What can this mean?

Ram. Syphoces.

Syph. Nay, Ramefes.

Mem. By all the gods, they struggle with their sorrows,
And swallow down their tears to hide them from me.
By friendship's sacred name, I charge you, speak.

*[They look on him with the utmost concern, and go out
on different sides of the stage.]*

Was ever man thus left to dreadful thought,
And all the horrors of a black surmise!
What woe is this too big to be express'd?
Oh, my sad heart! Why bod'st thou so severely?
Mandane's life in danger! There indeed;

Fortune

Fortune, I fear thee still ; her beauties arm thee,
Her virtues made thee dreadful to my thought :
But for my love how I could laugh at fate !

Enter a Servant, and gives him a paper. He reads.

Enter Ramefes, Memnon swoons and falls on Ramefes.

Ram. 'Twere happy if his soul would ne'er return ;
The gods may still be merciful in this.——

His lids begin to rise.——How fares my friends ?

Mem. Did Myron feel my pangs, you'd pity him.

Enter Syphoces.

Syph. Fainting beneath th' oppression of her grief,
This way Mandane seeks the fresher air :
Let us withdraw ; 'twill pain her to be seen,
And most of all by you.

Mem. By my own heart,
I judge, and am convinc'd.——I dare not see her,
The sight would strike me dead.

[As Memnon is going, Mandane meets him ; both start back, she shrieks. Memnon recovers himself and falls at her knees, embracing them ; she tries to disengage, he not permitting, she raises him ; he takes her passionately in his arms. They continue speechless and motionless for some time.]

Ram. Was ever mournful interview like this ?
See how they writhe with anguish ! Hear them groan !
See the large silent dew run trickling down,
As from the weeping marble ; passion-choaks
Their words, and they're the statues of despair !

Mem. Oh, my Mandane !

[At this she violently breaks from him, and exit.]

But one moment more.

[As Memnon is following, Ramefes holds him.]

Ram. Brother——

Mem. Forgive me——

Ram. You're to blame.——

Mem. Look there.

[Painting after her.]

My heart is bursting.

Ram. With revenge.

Mem. And love.

Ram. Revenge.

Mem. One dear embrace, 'twill edge my sword.

Syph.

Syph. No, Memnon, if our swords now want an edge,
 They'll want for ever; to this spot I charm thee;
 By the dread words revenge and liberty!
 This is the crisis of our fates; this moment
 The guardian gods of Egypt hover o'er us,
 They watch to see us act like prudent men,
 And out of ills extract our happiness.
 My friends, these dire calamities, like poison,
 May have their wholesome use! This sad occasion,
 If manag'd artfully, revives our hopes;
 It gives Nicanor to our sinking faction,
 And still the tyrant shakes.

Ram. My father comes;
 Or snatch this moment, or despair for ever.
 While passions glow, the heart, like heated steel,
 Takes each impression, and is work'd at pleasure.

Enter Nicanor.

Nic. Why have the gods chose out my weakest hours,
 To set their terrors in array against me?
 This would beat down the vigour of my youth,
 Much more grey hairs, and life worn down so low.
 Vain man! to be so fond of breathing long,
 And spinning out a thread of misery.
 The longer life the greater choice of evil;
 The happiest man is but a wretched thing,
 That steals poor comfort from comparison;
 What then am I? Here will I sit me down,
 Brood o'er my cares, and think myself to death.
 Draw near, Rameses; I was rash ere while,
 And chid thee without cause.—How many years
 Have I been cas'd in steel?

Ram. Full threescore years
 Have chang'd the seasons o'er your crested brow,
 And seen your faulchion dy'd in hostile blood.

Nic. How many triumphs since the king has reign'd!

Ram. They number just your battles, one for one.

Nic. True, I have follow'd the rough trade of war
 With some success, and can without a blush
 Review the shaken fort, and sanguine plain.
 I have thought pain a pleasure, thirst and toil
 Blest objects of ambition; I remember,
 (Nor do my foes forget that bloody day;)

When

When the barb'd arrow from my gaping thigh
Was wrench'd with labour, I disdain'd to groan,
Because I suffer'd for Busris' sake.

Ram. The King is not to blame.

Nic. Is not the prince his son?

Ram. But in himself——

Nic. And has he lost his guilt, [Rising in passion.
'Cause he has injur'd me? Ere while thy blood
Was kindled at his name.—Didst thou not tell me
A shameful black design on poor Amelia?
Oh, Memnon! what a glorious race is this,
To make the gods a party in our cause,
And draw down blessings on us!

Mem. He that supports them
In such black crimes, is sharer of their guilt.

Nic. Point out the man, and with these wither'd hands
I'd fly upon his throat, though he were lodg'd
Within the circle of Busris' arms.

Ram. He that prevents it not when in his power,
Supports them in their course of flaming guilt,
And you are he.

Nic. Thou rav'st.

Syph. The army's yours.

I've sounded every chief; but wave your finger,
Thousands fall off the tyrant's side, and leave him
Naked of help, and open to destruction.
But sweep his minions, cut a pander's throat,
Or lop a sycophant, the work is done.

Nic. What would you have me do? [Starting.

Mem. Let not your heart
Fly off from your own thought: be truly great,
Resent your country's sufferings as your own.
A generous soul is not confin'd at home,
But spreads itself abroad o'er all the public,
And feels for every member of the land.
What have we seen for twenty rolling years,
But one long tract of blood! Or, what is worse,
Throng'd dungeons pouring forth perpetual groans,
And free-born men oppress'd! Shall half mankind
Be doom'd to curse the moment of their birth?
Shall all the mother's fondness be employ'd

To rear them up to bondage, give them strength
To bear afflictions, and support their chains?

Syb. To you the valiant youth most humbly bend,
[*Kneeling.*

And beg that nature's gifts, the vigorous nerve
And graceful port, design'd to bless the world,
And take your great example in the field,
May not be forc'd by lewdness in high place,
To other toils, to labour for disease,
To wither in a loath'd embrace, and die
At an inglorious distance from the foe.

Ram. To you Amelia lifts her hands for safety.

Mem. To you—to you—

[*Kneeling.*
[*Bursting in tears.*

Nic. By heav'n he cannot speak.—I understand thee,
Rise—rise—my son. Rise all; your work is done;
They perish all, these creatures of my sword.
Have I not seen whole armies vaulted o'er
With flying javelins, which shut out the day,
And fell in rattling storms at my command,
To slay, and bury proud Busris' foe?
He lives and reigns, for I have been his friend;
But I'll unmake him, and plough up the ground,
Where his proud palace stands.

[*Exit.*

Mem. Oh, my Mandane!

The gods by dreadful means bestow success,
And in their vengeance, most severely bless:
From thy bright streaming eyes our triumphs flow,
The tyrant falls, Mandane strikes the blow.
So the fair moon, when seas swell high, and pour
A wasteful deluge on the trembling shore,
Inspires the tumult from her clouded throne,
Where silent, pensive, pale, she sits alone,
And all the distant ruin is her own.

END of the FOURTH ACT.

ACT

A C T V.

SCENE, *the Field.*

Enter Busris and Auletes. An Alarm at a distance.

BUSIRIS.

Welcome the voice of war! though loud the sound,
It faintly speaks the language of my heart,
It whispers what I mean. But say, Auletes,
What urge these forlorn rebels in excuse
For choosing ruin?

Aul. Various their complaints;
But some are loud, that while your heavy hand
Presses whole millions with incessant toil,
(Toils fitter far for beasts than human creatures)
In building wonders for the world to gaze at,
Weeds are their food, their cup the muddy Nile.

Bus. Do they not build for me? Let that reward them.
Yes, I will build more wonders to be gaz'd at,
And temper all my cement with their blood.
Whose pains and art reform'd the puzzled year,
Thus drawing down the sun to human use,
And making him their servant? Who push'd off
With mountain dams the broad redundant Nile
Descended from the moon, and bid it wander
A stranger stream in unaccustom'd shores?
Who from the Ganges to the Danube reigns? —
But virtues are forgot! — Away — to arms!
I'll call to mind my glorious ancestry,
Which for ten thousand rolling years renown'd,
Shines up into eternity itself,
And ends among the gods, [*An alarm.*]

Enter Memnon.

Aul. The rebel braves us.

Bus. Hold, let our weapons thirst one moment longer;
And death stand still, till he receives my nod. —
Whom meet I in the midst of my own realm,
With bold defiance on his brow?

Mem. The slave
Whom dread Busris lately laid in chains,
An emblem of his country.

E. 2

Bus.

Bus. Is it thus
You thank my royal bounty?

Mem. Thus you thank'd
The good Artaxes; thus you thank'd my father.

Bus. What I have done, conclude most right and just,
For I have done it, and the gods alone
Shall ask me why. Thou liv'st, although they fell;
And if they fell unjustly, greater thanks
Are due from thee, whom ev'n injustice spar'd.

Mem. Thy kindnesses are wrongs, they mean to sooth
My injur'd soul, and steal it from revenge.

Bus. Turn back thine eye, behold thy troops are thin,
Thy men are rarely sprinkled o'er the field,
And yet thou carriest millions on thy tongue.

Mem. All thy bloody-thirsty sword has laid in dust
Are on my side, they come in bloody swarms,
And throng my banners; thy unequall'd crimes
Have made thee weak, and rob my victory.—

Bus. Ha!

Mem. Nay, stamp not, tyrant; I can stamp as loud,
And raise as many dæmons at the sound.

Bus. I wear a diadem.

Mem. And I a sword.

Bus. Yet, yet submit, I give thee life.

Mem. Secure your own:

No more, Busris—bid the sun farewell.

Bus. Busris, and the sun should set together;
If this day's angry gods ordain my fate,
Know thou, I fall like some vast pyramid,
I bury thousands in my great destruction,
And thou the first.—Slave! in the front of battle,
There thou shalt find me.

Mem. Thou shalt find me there,
And have well paid that gratitude I owe. [*Exeunt.*

A continued Alarm.

Enter Myron and Nicanor meeting.

Nic. Does not mine eye strike horror through thy soul,
And shake the weapon from thy trembling arm?
Base boy! The foulness of thy guilt secures thee
From my reproach, I dare not name thy crime.

Myr. Old man, didst thou stand up in thy own cause,
I then

I then should be afraid of fourscore years,
And tremble at grey hairs ; but since thy frenzy
Has lent those venerable locks to cast
A gloss of virtue on the blackest crime,
Accurst rebellion, this gives back my heart,
With all its rage, and I'm a man again.

Nic. Come on, and use that force in arms, I taught
I'll now resume the life I gave so late. [thee ;

Myr. I grieve thou hast but half a life to lose,
And dost defraud my vengeance——At my touch
Thou moulder'st into dust, and art forgotten.

[*Preparing to fight, Myron stops short.*

Ah, no ! I cannot fight with thee : begone
And shake elsewhere : thou canst not want a death
In such a field, though I refuse it to thee.
Rameses, Memnon, give them to my sword,
Sustain'd by thousands ; but to fly from thee,
From thee, most injur'd man, shall be my praise,
And rise above the conquest of my foes.

Nic. 'Tis not old age, th' avenging gods pursue thee !

[*He retires before Nicanor off the Stage. A loud Alarm.*

Enter Busiris and Auletes in pursuit.

Bus. 'Tis well, I like this madness of the field ;
Let heighten'd horrors, and a waste of death
Inform the world Busiris is in arms.
But then I grudge the glory of my sword
To slaves, and rebels ; while they die by me,
They cheat my vengeance, and survive in fame.

Aul. I panted after in the paths of death,
And could not but from far behold your plume
O'er-shadow slaughter'd heaps, while your bright helm
Struck a distinguish'd terror through the field,
The distant legions trembling as it blaz'd.

Bus. Think not a crown alone lights up my name,
My hand is deep in fight. Forbid it, Isis,
That whilst Busiris treads the sanguine field,
The foremost spirit of his host should conquer
But by example, and beneath the shade
Of this high-brandish'd arm. Didst thou e'er fear ?
Sure 'tis an art. I know not how to fear.
'Tis one of the few things beyond my power ;
And if death must be fear'd before 'tis felt,

Thy master is immortal, Oh, Auletes——
But while I speak, they live!

Where fall the sounding cataracts of Nile,
The mountains tremble, and the waters boil;
Like them I'll rush, like them my fury pour,
And give the future world one wonder more. [Exit.

*Enter Myron engaged with a party; his plume is smitten off.
He drives the foe, and returns.*

Myr. When death's so near, but dares not venture on
'Tis Heaven's regard, a kind of salutation, [us,
Which to ourselves our own importance shews.—
Faint as I am, and almost sick of blood,
There is one cordial would revive me still;
The sight of Memnon; place that fiend before me. [Exit.
Enter Memnon.

Mem. Where, where's the Prince? Oh, give him to
my sword!

His tall white plume, which like a high wrought form
Floated on the tempestuous stream of fight,
Shew'd where he swept the field; I follow'd swift,
But my approach has turn'd him into air——

Enter Myron.

The fight but now begins!

Myr. Why, who art thou?

Mem. Prince, I am——

Myr. Memnon.

[Disdainfully.

Mem. No——I'm Mandane.

Myr. Ha!

Mem. She's here, she's here, she's all: her wrongs
and virtues! [Striking his head and breast.

Virtues and wrongs! Thou worse than murderer!

Myr. I charge thee name her not, forbear the croak
With that ill-omen'd note.

Mem. Mandane!

Myr. Be it so.

When I reflect on her mean love for thee,
And plot against my life, my pain is less.

Mem. 'Tis false; she meant! she knew it not; Rameses,
He, only he, was conscious of the thought.

Myr. Then I'm a wretch indeed!

Mem. As such I'll use thee;

I'll crush thee like some poison on the earth,
Then haste and cleanse me in the blood of men.

Myr. I thank thee for this spirit which exalts thee
Into a foe, I need not blush to meet.
Now from my soul, it joys me thou art found,
And found alive ; by heav'n, so much I hate thee,
I fear'd that thou wast dead, and hadst escap'd me :
I'll drench my sword in thy detested blood,
Or soon make thee immortal by my own.
Villain !

Mem. Myron !

Myr. Rebel !

Mem. Myron !

Myr. Hell !

Mem. Mandane !

[*Myron falls.*]

Myr. Just the blow, and juster still,
Because imbitter'd to me by that hand
I most detest ; which gives my soul an earnest
Of vast unfathomable woes to come,
That dreadful dowry for my dreadful love.
I leave the world my misery's example,
If us'd aright, no trivial legacy.

[*Dies.*]

Enter Syphoees.

Syph. My Lord, I bring you most unwelcome news.
As poor Mandane wander'd near the field,
In hope to see her injuries reveng'd ;
Thoughtless of any suff'rings but the past,
A party of the foe, saw, seiz'd, and bore her off.

Mem. Veng'ance and conquest now are trivial things,
Love made their prize ! 'tis impious in my soul
To entertain a thought but of her rescue.
Now, now, I plunge into the thickest war,
As some bold diver from a precipice
Into mid ocean, to regain a gem,
Whose loss impoverish'd kings, to bring it back,
Or see the day no more.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter Mandane Prisoner.

Mand. A gen'rous foe will hear his captive speak ;
A benefit thus kneeling I implore :
Let one of all those swords that glitter round me,
Vouchsafe to hide its point within my breast.

Enter

Enter Memnon.

Mem. Ah, villains! Cursed atheists! Can you bear
That posture from that form? What, what are numbers,
When I behold those eyes? Not mine the glory,
That singly thus I quell a host of foes.
Inhuman robbers! Oh, bring back my soul.

[They force her off, he rushes in upon them and is taken.]
Poor comfort to mankind, that they can lose
Their lives but once—But, Oh! a thousand times
Be torn from what they love.

Enter Rameses.

Ram. Far have I waded in the bloody field,
Laborious through the stubborn ranks of war,
And trac'd thee in a labyrinth of death;
But thus to find thee!—Better find thee dead!
These slaves will use thee ill.

Mem. Of that no more;
Myron is dead, and by this arm.

Ram. I thank thee.
All my few spirits left exult with joy,
I'll chase and scourge him through the lower world.

Mem. Alas, thou bleed'st.

Ram. Curse on the tyrant's sword,
I bleed to death; but could not leave the world,
Without a last embrace. Just now I met
The poor Mandane.

Mem. Quickly speak. What said she?

Ram. Nothing of comfort. Cease to ask me further,
If you meet more, your meeting will be sad.—
Your arm, I faint—Ah, what is human life?
How like the dial's tardy-moving shade!
Day after day slides from us unperceiv'd!
The cunning fugitive is swift by stealth,
Too subtle is the movement to be seen,
Yet soon the hour is up—and we are gone.
Farewel, I pity thee.

[Diss.]

Mem. Farewel, brave friend!
Would I could bear thee company to rest,
But life in all its terrors stands before me,
And shuts the gate of peace against my wishes.—
Do I not hear a peal of distant thunder?
And see, a sudden darkness shuts the day,

And

And quite blots out the sun—But what to me,
 The colour of the sky? A death-cold dew
 Hangs on my brow, and all my slacken'd joints
 Are shook without a cause—A groan! from whence?
 Again! And no one near me? Vain delusion!
 Yet not I fear in vain! some ill is tow'rd's me,
 More dreadful sure, than all that's past. Mandane!
 I hop'd she was at peace, and past the reach
 Of this ill news, but such my wayward fate
 I cannot ask a curse, but 'tis deny'd me:
 And could I wish I ne'er should see her more?

Enter Mandane guarded.

Mand. This is my brother; a short privacy
 Is a small favour you may grant a foe.

Guard. Let it be short, we may not wait your leisure.

Mem. 'Tis wond'rous strange, there's something holds
 me from her,

And keeps this foot fast rooted to the ground.

This is the last time I shall ever pray.

To me, ye gods, confine your threat'ned vengeance,
 And I will bless your mercies while I suffer.

*[Memnon and Mandane advance slowly to the front
 of the stage.]*

Mand. What didst thou pray for?

Mem. For thy peace.

Mand. 'Twas kind:

But, Oh! those hands in bonds deny the blessing,
 For which they earnestly were rais'd to heav'n.

Mem. I fear so too; what we have yet to do
 Must be soon done; this meeting is our last.
 How shall we use it?

Mand. How? Consult thy chains,
 And my calamities.

Mem. Sad counsellors,
 And cruel their advice—Are there no other?

Mand. I look around—and find no glimpse of hope,
 A perfect night of horror and despair!

Mem. Of horror and despair, indeed, Mandane!
 Canst thou believe me? Nay, can I believe
 Myself? The last thing that I wish'd for was—'tis false.
 The weight of my misfortune hurts my mind.

Mand. Was what?

Mem.

Mem. I dare not think ; to think is to look down
A precipice ten thousand fathom deep,
That turns my brain—Oh ! Oh !

Mand. Memnon, no more :
That silence and those tears need no explaining ;
And it is kind, with such severe reluctance
To think upon my death—though necessary.

Mem. Ah, hold ! You plant a thousand daggers here—
Talk not of dying—I disown the thought ;
Right is not right, and reason is not reason,
All is distraction when I look on thee.
Oh, all ye pitying-gods ! dash out from nature
Your stars, your sun, but let Mandane live.

Mand. No : death long since was my confirm'd resolve.

Mem. Myron is dead.

Mand. What joy a heart like mine
Can feel, it feels—had he been never born,
I might have liv'd—'tis now—impossible.

Mem. This even to my miseries I owe,
That it discovers greater virtues still,
In her my soul adores—Oh, my Mandane !
Oh, glorious maid ! then thou wilt be at peace—

[*Memnon walks thoughtfully, and returns.*]

Must I survive, and change thy tenderness
For a stern master, and perpetual chains ?
Long I may groan on earth to fate their malice,
Then through slow torments linger into death,
No steel to stab, no wall to dash my brain !

Mand. Ha !

Mem. Why thus fix'd in thought ? What mighty birth
Is lab'ring in your soul ? Your eyes speak wonders.—

Mand. Will not the blood-hounds be content with
life ?

Mem. Alas, Mandane ! No ; they study nature
To find out all her secret seats of pain,
And carry killing to a dreadful art :
A simple death in Egypt is for friends.

Mand. Oh, then it must be so !—and yet it cannot.—

Mem. What means this sudden paleness ?

Mand. Heav'n assist me !

[*Feeling in her bosom she swoons.*]

Mem. My love ! Mandane ! hear me, my espous'd !

My

My dearest heart! the infant of my bosom!
Whom I would foster with my vital blood.

Mand. 'Tis well, and in return I give thee—this.

[Shows a dagger.]

Mem. Millions of thanks, thou refuge in despair.

Mand. Terrible kindness! Horrid mercy! Oh!
I cannot give it thee.

Mem. Full well I know

Thy tender soul, and I must force it from thee.

{ As he is struggling with her for the dagger, she speaks. }

Mand. My Lord! my soul! myself! You tear my heart.

Art thou not dearer to my eyes than light?
Dost thou not circulate through all my veins?
Mingle with life, and form my very soul!

Mem. Now, monsters, I defy you: fate forbids
A long farewell, my guard may interpose,
And make your favour vain—Thus, only thus. *[Embrace.]*
And now——

Mand. Ah, no! Since last I saw thee, thrice I rais'd
[Holds his arm.]

My trembling arm, and thrice I let it fall.——

If you refuse compassion to my sex,
Memnon betrays me, and is Myron's friend.——

As I a poniard, you supply an arm,
And I shall still be happy in your love.

[After a pause of astonishment, he sinks gently on the earth.]

Mem. From dreadful to more dreadful I am plung'd,
And find in deepest anguish deeper still.

I can't complain in common with mankind——

But am a wretched species all alone.

Must I not only lose thee, but be curs'd
To sprinkle my own hands with thy life-blood?

Mand. It cannot be avoided.

Mem. Nor perform'd.

Lift up my hand against thee as a foe!

I, who should save thee from thy very father,
And teach thy dearest friends to use thee well,
Make kindness kind, and soften all their smiles?
Oh, my Mandane! Think how I have lov'd!
Oh, my Mandane! Think upon thy pow'r!

How

How often hast thou seen me pale with joy,
And trembling at a smile? and shall I—

Mand. Myron—

[At that Memnon starts up suddenly.]

Mem. Ah, hold! I charge thee hold! One glance that
way

Awakes my hell, and blows up all its flames.—

The world turns round, my heart is sick to death!

Oh, my distraction! perfect loss of thought!

Mand. Why stand you like a statue? Are you dead?
What do you fold so fast within your arms?

Why with fix'd eye-balls do you pierce the ground?

Why shift your place, as if you trod on fire?

Why gnaw your lip, and groan so dreadfully?

My Lord, if I have spent whole live-long nights

In tears, and sigh'd away the day in private,

Only oppress'd with an excess of love,

Oh, turn, and speak to me!

Mem. And these, no doubt,

Are arguments that I should draw thy blood.—

No child was ever lull'd upon the breast

With half that tenderness has melted from thee,

And fell like balm upon my wounded soul.

And shall I murder thee? Yes, thus—thus—thus.

[Embracing some time.]

Mand. Alas! My Lord forgets we are to die.

[Memnon gazes with wonder on the dagger.]

Mem. By heav'n I had! my soul had took her flight
In bliss—Why, is not this our bridal-day?

Mand. That way distraction lies.

Mem. Indeed it does.

Bath. Oh! Oh!

Mand. Thy sighs and groans are sharper than thy steel.
The guard is on us.

Mem. Then it must be done.

Sun, hide thy face, and put the world in mourning,
Though blood start out for tears, 'tis done—but one,
One last embrace.

[As he embraces her, she bursts into tears.]

Let me not see a tear.—I could as soon
Stab at the face of heaven, as kill thee weeping.

Mand. 'Tis past, I am compos'd.

Mem. And now, and now.

Mand. Be not so fearful, 'tis the second blow
Will pain my heart—indeed this will not hurt me.

Mem. Oh, thou hast stung my soul quite through and
through,
With those kind words; I had just steel'd my breast;
[*Dashing down the dagger.*

And thou undo'st it all—I could not bear
To raze thy skin, to save the world from ruin.

Mand. If you're a woman, I'll be something more.

[*Stabs herself.*
I shall not taste of heav'n till you arrive. [Dies.

Mem. Struck home—and in her heart.—She's
dead already,

And now with me all nature is expir'd.—

My lovely bride; now we again are happy,
[*Stabs himself.*

And better worlds prepare our nuptial bow'r.—

Now ev'ry splendid object of ambition,

Which lately with their various glosses play'd

Upon my brain, and fool'd my idle heart,

Are taken from me by a little mist,

And all the world is vanish'd. [Dies.

A march sounded. Enter Nicanor and Syphoces victorious.

The Guard which were advancing to the bodies fly.

Nic. The day's our own, the Persian's angry pow'rs
Have well repaid this morning's insolence,
And turn'd the desp'rate fortune of the field
By fure, though late relief.

Syph. Nicanor, friend;
I from the city bring you welcome news:
My guilty letter from the amorous queen
I spread amongst the multitude; while yet
Their blood was warm with reading the black scroll,
Myris to view the fortune of the fight,
Leaving her palace for the western tow'r,
Was seiz'd, torn, scatter'd on the guilty spot
Where her great brother fell.

Nic. The gods are just.

Syph. See where Busris comes, your royal captive,

F

In

In his misfortune great ; an awful ruin !
And dreadful to the conqueror !

[Nicanor *advancing sees the bodies.*

Nic. Sad fight !——

A fight, that teaches triumph how to mourn,
And more than justifies these streaming tears,
Even on the moment that my country's sav'd
From sore oppression, and inglorious chains.

[*He falls on his Attendants.*

A great Shout. Enter Busris wounded.

Bus. Conquer'd ! 'Tis false ; I am your master still ;
Your master, though in bonds : you stand aghast
At your good fate, and trembling can't enjoy.
Now from my soul I hug these welcome chains
Which shew you all Busris, and declare
Crowns and success superfluous to my fame. ——
You think this streaming blood will low'r my thought ;
No, ye mistaken men, I smile at death ;
For living here, is living all alone,
To me a real solitude, amid
A throng of little beings, groveling round me ;
Which yet usurp one common shape and name.
I thank these wounds, these raging pains, which promise
An interview with equals soon elsewhere.

[*He sees Memnon.*

Ha ! Dead ? 'Tis well ; he rose not to my sword,
I only wish'd his fate, and there he lies.
Some when they die, die all : their mould'ring clay
Is but an emblem of their memories :
The space quite closes up through which they pass'd.
That I have liv'd, I leave a mark behind,
Shall pluck the shining age from vulgar time,
And give it whole to late posterity.
My name is writ in mighty characters,
Triumphant columns, and eternal domes,
Whose splendor heightens our Egyptian day,
Whose strength shall laugh at time, till their great basis,
Old earth itself, shall fail. In after-ages,
Who war or build, shall build or war from me,
Grow great in each, as my example fires ;
'Tis I of art the future wonders raise ;
I fight the future battles of the world.——

Great

Great Jove, I come ! Egypt, thou art forsaken : [*Sinks.*
Asia's impoverish'd by my sinking glories,
And the world lessens, when Busris falls. [*Dies.*

Syph. Bear the dead monarch to his pyramid ;
And for what use soe'er it was design'd,
By that high-minded, but mistaken man,
There let him lie magnificent in death ;
Great was his life, great be his monument :
And on Busris' nephew, young Arfaces,
Of gentler spirit, let the crown devolve.

From this day's vengeance let the nations know,
Jove lays the pride of haughtiest monarchs low ;
And they who kindled with ambitious fire,
In arts and arms with most success aspire,
If void of virtue, but provoke their doom,
Grasp at their fate, and build themselves a tomb.

END of the FIFTH Act.





E P I L O G U E.

By a FRIEND.

Spoken by MANDANE.

THE race of critics, dull judicious rogues,
To mournful plays deny brisk epilogues.
Each gentle swain and tender nymph, say they,
From a sad tale should go in tears away,
From hence quite home should streams of sorrow shed,
And drown'd in grief, steal supperless to bed.
This doctrine is so grave, the sparks won't bear it;
They love to go in humour to their claret.
The cit, who owns a little fun worth buying,
Holds half-a crown too much to pay for crying.
Besides, who knows without these healing arts,
But love might turn your heads, and break your hearts;
And the poor author, by imagin'd woes,
Might people Beth'lem with our Belles and Beaus?
Hence I, who lately bid adieu to pleasure,
Robb'd of my spouse, and my dear virgin treasure;
I, whom you saw despairing breathe my last,
Am free and easy, as if nought had past;
Again put on my airs, and play my fan,
And fear no more that dreadful creature, man.
—But whence does this malicious mirth begin!—
I know, ye beasts, you reckon it no sin.
'Tis strange that crimes the same, in diff'rent plays,
Should move our horror, and our laughter raise.
Love's joy, secure the comic actor tries,
But if he's wicked in blank verse, he dies.

The

E P I L O G U E.

*The farce, where wives prove frail, still makes the best,
And the poor cuckold is a standing jest :
But our grave bard, a virtuous son of Isis,
Counts a bold stroke in love among the vices,
In blood and wounds a guilty land he dips ye,
And wastes an empire for one ravish'd gipsy.
What musty morals fill an Oxford head,
To notions of pedantic virtue bred !
There each stiff Don at gallantry exclaims,
And calls fine men and ladies filthy names ;
They tell you rakes and jilts corrupt a nation :
—Such is the prejudice of education !
You, who know better things, will sure approve
These scenes, that shew the boundless power of love.
Let, when they will, th' Italian things appear,
This play, we trust, shall throng an audience here.
Bold Myron's passion, up to frenzy wrought,
Would ill be warbled through an eunuch's throat :
His part, at least, his part requires a man ;
Let Nicolini act it if he can.*



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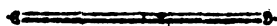
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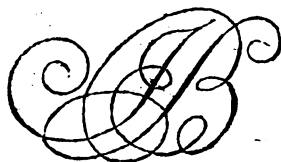
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My Lord,

Your Grace's most obliged,

And most faithful servant,

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IN youth when modesty and merit meet,
 How rare the union, and the force how sweet!
 Tho' at small praise our humble author aims,
 His friend may give him what his blush disclaims.
 Ladies—to you he makes his chief address;
 Form'd to be pray'd to, and even born to bless;
 He feels your power himself, and makes it felt;
 His scenes will teach each stubborn heart to melt;
 And each fair eye that now shines softly here,
 Anon shall shine still softer thro' a tear.

Let not constraint your gen'rous sighs repress,
 Nor veil compassion, nor repel distress.
 Your sex's strength is in such weakness found,
 And sighs and tears but help your charms to wound.

Of all the wonders taught us by the fair,
 'Tis strangest, tragedy should lose their care!
 Where Love, soft tyrant, in full glory reigns,
 And sovereign beauty holds the world in chains.
 Less polish'd, and more bold, the comic muse
 Unkings your Cupid, or obstructs his views,
 Upholds presuming wit's familiar claim,
 And blots out awe from love's diminish'd flame;
 Finds or makes faults, and sets them strong in sight,
 And dares draw woman false, or vain, or light.
 While tragedy, your servant try'd and true,
 Still to your fame devoted, and to you,
 Enslav'd to love, subdu'd ambition brings,
 Firms beauty's power, and crowns it king of kings.

Let wish'd attention grace our scene to-night,
 And mourn'd afflictions move refin'd delight.
 Each tender light of life we recommend,
 Wife, husband, subject, parent, son, and friend;
 All your impassion'd int'rests shall engage,
 And hopes, and fears, and pity, fire the stage.

Then, when soft sorrow swells the fair-one's breast,
 And sad impressions mix with nightly rest,
 Pleasing remembrance shall our scene supply,
 And the sweet saddening influence never die.

D R A M A T I S P E R S O N Æ.

M E N.

<i>Proclas</i> , Tyrant of <i>Epidaurus</i> , in Possession of the Crown of <i>Corinth</i> .	—	<i>Drury-Lane</i> . Mr. Clarke.
<i>Medon</i> , his Favourite,	—	Mr. Packer.
<i>Leonidas</i> , a Nobleman, secretly in the Queen's interest,	—	Mr. Davies.
<i>Periander</i> , King of <i>Corinth</i> ,	—	Mr. Garrick.
<i>Polydore</i> , his Son,	—	Mr. Holland.
<i>Ariston</i> ,	—	Mr. Burton.

W O M E N.

<i>Eurydice</i> , Queen of <i>Corinth</i> ,	—	Mrs. Cibber.
<i>Melissa</i> , her Confidante,	—	Miss Haughton.

Officers, Guards, Attendants.

S C E N E, C O R I N T H.

EURYDICE.

E U R Y D I C E.

* * The lines distinguished by inverted commas, 'thus,' are omitted in the Representation, and those printed in *Italics* are the additions of the Theatre.

A C T I.

Eurydice and Melissa.

[*Thunder.*

EURYDICE.

YE heavenly Powers!

What means this dreadful war of sea and sky?

Mel. Dreadful, indeed! It rose not by degrees,
But all at once, a tempest wild and loud.

Eur. Hear, from the wint'ry north how keen it howls
Thro' these lone towers, that rock with every blast,
Each moment threatening ruin on our heads!
But see——stand here, and cast thy eyes below,
O'er the broad ocean to the distant sky,
See what confusion fills the raving deep!
What mountain-waves arise!——'Tis terrible,
And suiting to the horrors of my fate,
The deep despair that desolates my soul.

Mel. Ha! look, behold, due west, where yonder rocks
O'er-hang the beating tides——Oh, sight of woe!
Four goodly ships, abandon'd to the storm,
Drive blindly with the billows, their drench'd sails
Stripp'd off, and whirl'd before the rending wind.

Eur. Assist them, all good Powers! The storm is high,
And the flood perilous.

Look, now they climb a fearful steep, and hang
On the big surge that mixes with the clouds.
Save me! it bursts, and headlong down they reel

Into

Into the yawning gulph. They cannot 'scape.
A sea rowls o'er the foremost.

Mel. Ah ! she strikes

On yonder wave-worn cliff. The fatal shock
Has doubtless shiver'd her strong side. She sinks
So swiftly down, that scarce the straining eye
Can trace her tallest mast. Where is she now ?
Hid in the wild abyfs, with all her crew,
All lost for ever !

Eur. Turn we from the sight,

Too dismal for a woman's eye to bear.

Ill-fated men ! whom, knowing not, I mourn ;
Whence, or what may they be ? Even now, perhaps,
In some far distant land, a faithful wife,
Or tender parent, offers vows to Heaven
For their return, and fondly numbers up
The ling'ring months of absence. Fruitless love !
They never more shall meet !——By my own ills
Severely taught, I pity them : yet think
Their fate, all full of horror as it seems,
Is rather to be envy'd. They are now
Beyond the hand of fate, at rest for ever ;
While I, Melissa——

Mel. Ah, Eurydice,

My royal mistress, rather think the gods
Would teach you, by this sight of mournful ruin,
Patience and gentler thought. When others too
Are miserable, not to know the worst
Is some degree of bliss.

Eur. Melissa, no.

I tell thee, no ill fate, no face of death
Can be so dreadful as a life like mine.
Call back to thy remembrance what I've been :
How happy in a husband, and a son
The rising boast of Greece ! Behold me now
Cast down to lowest infamy ; the slave,
The sport of a foul tyrant, who betray'd me,
And would destroy my honour. Gracious Heaven !
And shall this bold offender, who has broke
All bonds of holy faith, yet bids his soul
Rejoice and take her ease ; shall he long triumph
Here in the throne of Corinth, while its lord,

The

The great, unhappy Periander, roams
As unknown fugitive?

Mel. These tears, my Queen,
These faithful tears, which sympathising sorrow
Draws from my eyes, speak the sad share I take
In all your mighty ills.

Eur. Say, now, Melissa,
Is there among the daughters of affliction,
One so forlorn as poor Eurydice?
A prisoner here; subjected to the power
Of impious Procles; daily doom'd to hear,
Oh, deadly insult! his detested love.
What ill can equal this? Why did I trust
The brutal tyrant?

Mel. See, his minion's here.

Enter Medon.

Med. Hail, beauteous Queen! By me, the royal Procles
With lowly service bends him to your charms;
Bids smiling health, and gentle peace of mind
Light up your morn, and make your evening fair.
This, with the tenderest vows——

Eur. Canst thou inform me
Of those unhappy men, whom I but now
Saw perish on this coast?

Med. Not who they are;
But what their fate, these eyes with dread beheld.
The King too, from the morning's chace return'd,
At this sad sight spurr'd on with all his train,
To save, if possible, whom the wild sea
Casts forth upon the land. But first his love,
That counts each moment's absence from your eyes
An age of ling'ring torment, bade me fly
With health and greeting to the matchless fair,
Who holds his soul enslav'd.

Eur. Then bear him back,
From her whom he has wrong'd, betray'd, and ruin'd,
Horror and loathing, unrelenting scorn,
And all a woman's hate, in just return
For his detested love. The tyrant coward!
To crush the fallen and helpless, to embitter
The pangs, the miseries himself has caus'd,
With gall of mockery!

Med.

Med. Your pardon, Madam,
 If I, the humblest of your slaves, presume
 To place before your eyes in faithful prospect,
 That mournful period, full of dread and danger,
 Which late you saw. Behold then your false subjects,
 Wantonly mad, and spurning every tie
 Of sworn obedience, mix'd in one bold treason,
 Threat'ning and universal : your lost husband
 Absent, involv'd in unsuccessful war ;
 His troops averse and mutinous. From them
 Bold faction with contagious swiftness spread
 To Corinth too, where the wild herd arous'd
 Insulted you, and drove you to this fortress.
 Say, where was then your hope, when meagre Famine
 Join'd his devouring ravage, and your eyes
 Saw daily, hourly perish, those poor few
 Whose faith had kept them yours ?

Eur. Oh, would to Heaven,
 I then had perish'd too !

Med. Such was your state,
 Lost even to hope, when generous Procles flew
 Impatient to your aid, dispers'd and quell'd
 The general treason. May I dare to urge
 These services ! But what are these ; his throne,
 His heart is yours ; he lays them at your feet ;
 He bids you reign in both.

Eur. Thou base of heart !
 To slaves like thee, who flatter and inflame
 Their prince's crimes, are owing half the plagues
 That curse mankind. Has not thy cruel master,
 Whose guilt this shameful praise of thine brings home
 On thy own soul, say, has he not usurp'd,
 With perfidy avow'd, the very crown
 He swore to save ? And I too——thy bold insult
 Shews I indeed am wretched. But, away ;
 'Tis base to parle with thee, the sycophant
 Who leads him on from guilt to guilt, and swears
 He grows a god by sinning. [Exit Medon.]

Mel. Ah, my Queen !
 My heart forebodes some fatal consequence
 Will grow of this.

Eur. Why, let it come, Melissa.

I merit all that fortune can inflict,
For trusting this betrayer, this curs'd Procles.

Mel. Alas ! what could you do ?

Eur. I should have dy'd.

He was the known and mortal foe of Corinth.

Mel. Yet his fair-seeming might have won belief
From doubting age, or wary policy.

By frequent, urgent message, he conjur'd you
To save yourself. With open honour own'd

His ancient enmity ; but, by each power,
Celestial and infernal, swore 'twas past :

Nay, more, that as a king and as a man,
Just indignation at your impious subjects,
And pity of your fate, had touch'd his heart.

Eur. But Fame had spoke him faithless, bold, ambitious.

No, 'twas the coward woman in my soul,
Th' inglorious fear of dying, that betray'd
My virtue into the deceiver's power.

For this, my heart, each conscious hour upbraids me,

As faithless to my trust, weak, and unworthy
Even of the base, precarious life I held.

For this, Oh, crown of misery ! I'm doom'd,
Daily to hear the tyrant's impious passion,
His horrid vows and oaths.

Mel. That way indeed

I dread to turn my thoughts. A soul so brutal,
And flown with nightly insolence and wine,
What may he not attempt ?

Eur. Oh, curse, to know

' That I am in his power, and yet compell'd

' To suffer hated life !—— for can I die

' Unheard, unjustify'd, while yet perhaps

' Th' unhappy Periander thinks too hardly

' Of my late error ?—— King of gods and men !

' Whose universal eye beholds each thought

' Most secret in the soul, give me to clear

' My faith to him ; I ask of Heaven no more

' For my past miseries.

Mel. What shouts are these ?

[*Looking out.*

' Ah, me ! th' inhuman triumph of the croud,

' The hard-soul'd many, who have watch'd the storm,

' For driving wrecks, the spoils of perish'd wretches.

Eur.

Eur. Unfeeling beasts of prey!—Mèthinks the storm
 ' Is almost overblown. The waves subside,
 ' And fall their fiercer roarings. But, alas,
 ' Of all the four, not one remaining fail
 ' Is to be seen around.'

Mel. Either my eyes
 Deceive me, or the good Leonidas
 Bends hitherward his steps, and on his brow
 Sits some afflicting thought.

Eur. Ha! whence is this;
 What mean these secret shiverings, this dark horror
 Of some approaching ill?

Enter Leonidas.

Leon. Forgive me, Madam,
 That I appear before you to impart
 A mournful message; but by Procles' order——

Eur. Whate'er proceeds from him, Leonidas,
 Must needs be fatal to me. But say on.
 No form of ruin is so dreadful now,
 As being in his power.

Leon. Unhappy Queen!
 Your fate might melt the hardest breast, and teach
 Even Cruelty's remorseless eye to weep.
 How shall I speak the rest?

Eur. Leonidas,
 What is this fatal tale, too sad for utterance?
 Alas! why dost thou weep, why turn thy eyes
 Severe on heaven?

Leon. This ruinous storm,
 Whose sudden outrage——

Eur. Ha! what ships were these,
 Say, speak, that sunk but now before our eyes,
 In fight of shore?

Leon. The very fleet design'd
 To rescue you; to free repenting Corinth
 From this betrayer, this detested Procles.
 The King was there embark'd.

Eur. Then all is lost!

Mel. Ah, Heaven! she faints.

Leon. Behold, ye gods! this sight,
 Remember the curs'd author of this ruin.—
 My eyes, my soul's in tears to see her thus.

Eur.

Eur. Oh, Periander, my much-injur'd Lord,
Would I had dy'd for thee! — Ah, gentle maid!
Was it then he, my husband, whom these eyes
Saw perish in the storm; whose fate I wept,
Nor knew that all the cruel wreck was mine?

Mel. Unhappy day!

‘ *Eur.* Undone Eurydice!

‘ **B**ut I will die — I should have dy'd before,
 ‘ When my mean cowardice, my dread of death,
 ‘ Betray'd me to false Procles. I had then
 ‘ Dy'd innocent; I had not then deserv'd
 ‘ A ruin'd husband's curse. Oh, thought of horror!
 ‘ Perhaps his latest breath, even in the hour
 ‘ Of dreadful fate, charg'd me with all his wrongs,
 ‘ His life and honour lost, perhaps expir'd
 ‘ In imprecations on me.

‘ *Mel.* Oh, for pity,

‘ Forbear these fatal thoughts! they but inflame
 ‘ The rage of real ills, and wound you deeper.’

Leon. Would tears, my gracious mistress, aught avail us,
 Methinks these aged eyes could number drops
 With falling clouds, or the perpetual stream.
 But while we mourn our enemy rejoices,
 And sounds his cruel triumph loud to heaven.
 If I have bow'd me to his impious will,
 Tho' with that strong abhorrence nature feels
 At what she holds most mortal; 'twas to turn
 Against the traitor his own treacherous arts,
 And ruin him more surely. This may be.
 Sad Corinth looks with horror on the hand
 That scourges her each hour with whips of scorpions.
 She waits but some fair chance, at once to rise
 And drive him from her throne. [A Flourish.

Mel. These trumpets speak
 His near approach.

Eur. Father of human kind,
 Eternal Justice, hear these guilty sounds,
 Behold this tyrant's revel, while a king,
 Thy great resemblance, floats a cold pale corse,
 Or on the naked beach cast vilely out,
 Unknown, unhonour'd lies! — Leonidas,
 By all my griefs, I beg thee, search these shores,

B

Each

Each cliff and cavern where the wild wave beats,
 For my lov'd Lord, and to these widow'd arms
 Give back his dear remains. ' But Procles comes.'

[*Exeunt Eur. and Mel.*]

Enter Procles, Medon, and Attendants.

Proc. Hail, glorious Day ! auspicious Fortune, hail !
 From this triumphant hour my future life
 Runs fair and smiling on. The bold attempt,
 Laid dark and deep by my most dreaded foe,
 Is perish'd with its author. From on high
 Heaven arm'd his winds and seas to fight for me ;
 And victory is mine without my care,
 Almost without my knowledge. Yes, the gods,
 The gods themselves, espouse my happy cause !
 For this, let flowery garlands wreath their shrines ;
 Let hecatombs before their altars bleed,
 And triumph reign thro' Corinth. [*Attendants withdraw.*]
 Is the Queen
 Inform'd of all, Leonidas ?

Leon. She is.

Proc. And she receiv'd the news ———

Leon. With sad surprise,
 And many tears, my Lord.

Proc. Just the fond sex.
 Such their vain grief ; a moment's passing storm,
 Then all is calm. Be it thy farther care,
 As the receding flood forsakes the shore,
 To make strict search thro' all this coast around
 For Periander's corpse. I would, methinks,
 A while indulge my eyes, a while peruse
 The features of a rival once so fam'd,
 So terrible in arms ; whose partial fortune
 Soar'd high above, and ever thwarted mine
 In all the dearer aims that swell my thought,
 Love and ambition.

Leon. Mark this, righteous Heaven ! [*Aside. Exit.*]

Med. At length, Sir, all the gods declare for you,
 And fortune is your own. Your native realm,
 Fair Epidaurus, peaceful and resign'd,
 Acknowledges her Lord. Your rival's fate
 Confirms his kingdom yours.

Proc. Yet I am still

Unblest'd

Unblest'd amid this flow of prosp'rous fortune.
 Not all the charms ambition's shoreless wish.
 Empire and kneeling homage, can bestow
 The better joy I long for.

Med. Ah, my Prince!

Forget, or scorn that proud, ill-natur'd fair-one!

Proc. Impossible. By Heaven, my soul can form
 No wish, no thought but her. I tell thee, Medon,
 With blushes tell thee, this proud charmer reigns
 Unbounded o'er my reason. I have try'd
 Each shape, each art of varied love, to win her;
 • Alternate prayers and threats, the soothing skill
 • Of passionate sincerity, the fire
 • Of rapturous vows; but all these arts were vain:
 • Her rooted hate is not to be remov'd.

And 'twas my soul's first aim, the towering point
 Of all my wishes, to prevail in this,
 To triumph o'er my rival too in love.
 That had been great revenge! but baffled here,
 I'm disappointed still.

Med. Believe me, Sir,
 When once the fit of wilfulness is o'er,
 The burst of tears discharg'd, she'll quickly soften,
 Stoop to your wishes, and forget a husband
 Who is no more.

Proc. Perdition on his name!
 I dread his memory as my rival still.
 But if I have not won her to be mine,
 At least, the hated husband reap'd no joy
 From her fantastic honour. Stung to madness,
 For ill-requited love, I darkly spread
 Surmises of her truth. He thought her false;
 And, as he doated on her, the dire tale
 Was poison to his quiet. Jealousy,
 In all its horrors, must have seiz'd his soul.
 I triumph'd there!

Med. 'Twas exquisite revenge.
 I too, my Lord, who live but for your pleasure,
 Your ever-faithful slave, I too combin'd
 To aid your vengeance. You can still remember,
 When in a dungeon's depth Ariston lay,
 Ariston, Periander's factious friend.

With looks of seeming pity, I oft mourn'd
 His hard imprisonment, complain'd of you,
 Nay, curs'd your cruelty, 'till I had brought
 His unsuspecting honesty to credit
 My fiction of the Queen. I told him then,
 With well-dissembled hatred of her crime,
 Embittering every circumstance, that she,
 Forgerful of her better fame, had heard
 Your secret passion, and with equal ardor
 Return'd its warmth. Nay, that she often urg'd you
 'To wreak your rage on him, the hated friend
 Of Periander. Having thus alarm'd him,
 After a long pause, I let him 'scape at last,
 To find his master out.

Proc. I thank thee, Medon.

But this avails not much. My soul burns in me,
 With furious longings to subdue that woman ;
 To bend her pride of virtue to my passion.
 I fancy, in her arms transcendent joys,
 A heaven of higher blifs, not to be found
 In unresisting beauty, woo'd and won
 At idle leisure. Yet once more I mean
 To try the fortune of my wishes with her ;
 And if I am repuls'd, away, at once,
 All little arts of love.

Med. Mean while, the banquet,
 Which pleasure's curious hand hath furnish'd out
 With splendid choice, awaits you, and invites
 To laughing thought and triumph. There the god,
 Th' inspiring god of wine, with rose-buds crown'd,
 Mirth in his look, and at his side the band
 Of little playful loves, fills high the bowl,
 And bids it flow unbounded. Music too
 Joins her enchanting voice, and wooes the soul
 With all her powerful skill of moving strains,
 Till the gay hour is quite dissolv'd in blifs,
 In ecstasy of revel, all unknown
 To lean-look'd Temperance, and his peevish train.

Proc. Come on then, Medon. Life is vainly short,
 A very dream of being : and when death
 Has quench'd this finer flame that moves the heart,
 Beyond is all oblivion, and waste night,

That

That knows no following dawn ; where we shall be
 As we had never been. The present then
 Is only ours : and shall we let it pass,
 Untasted, unenjoy'd ? No, let us on.
 Hail we the rising shade ! and now, while night
 Leads on the secret hour of free delight,
 With wanton gaiety, in naked state,
 Let music, mirth and love around us wait.

[*Exeunt.*]

END of the FIRST ACT.

A C T II.

SCENE, *a rocky Coast, terminated by a view of the Ocean.**Enter Periander.*

PERIANDER.

• **B**Y the pale glimmering of the falling moon,
 • Amid the broken windings of these rocks
 • I wander on forlorn, and find no place
 • To trust my head, or rest my weary steps.
 • Horror pursues me close. In each low blast,
 • And murmur of the main, methinks I hear
 • The murderous spies of Procles at my heels.
 • Thou mournful Queen of heaven ! and you, dread gods,
 • Who rule the fearful secrecy of night,
 • Behold me here, the sport of human chance,
 • A nameless wretch, a ruin hardly sav'd
 • From the devouring deep. There my last hopes,
 • My great revenge, lies buried. Is there more ?
 • Away, away ! a traitor fills my throne,
 • Triumphant in his crimes ; and I, the while,
 • Roam here a midnight fugitive. Yet this,
 • All this I could have borne. He was my foe,
 • The jealous rival of my power — But thou,
 • In whom my soul had treasur'd up her heaven,
 • Friendship, and faith, and love, Eurydice !
 • Thou to betray me !

• [*Letting himself fall against the Rock.*]

• Ha ! by the moon's sad beam, I can descry
 • The towers that hold this author of my shame.

B 3

Nay,

' Nay, Procles too, perhaps — and may not he,
 ' Even now — confusion ! death ! he may, he does
 ' Invade my bed ! — Oh, hell ! she smiles to hear
 ' The story of my fate ! — And now they give
 ' A loose to impious joys. All-seeing Powers !
 ' And does your vengeance slumber ? Are your bolts
 ' Reserv'd for me alone ? — Ha ! — yet 'tis just.
 ' Conscience, that in the day of fortune's favour
 ' Securely slept, now rouses into strong
 ' And dread conviction of her crime. I broke
 ' The sacred oath sworn to a dying father,
 ' To free my country from her chains. My soul
 ' Shakes as I roll this thought. Oh, Providence,
 ' Awfully just, tho' guilt may shut her eye,
 ' Thine ever wakes to mark, to trace, to punish !'

Enter Leonidas.

Leon. This way a distant sound alarm'd my ear ;
 Broken it seem'd to be ; the voice of mourning
 And deep distress. Methought it rose just here,
 From these deaf-sounding cliffs. But all is still,
 Save the hoarse deep yet working from the storm.
 Some Power direct my steps where I may find,
 By this faint moon-light, my lov'd master's corpse,
 ' To save his sacred reliques from the rage
 Of brutish tyranny — Ha ! what art thou ?
 A man, or fear-form'd shadow of the night ?

Per. Leonidas !

Leon. The same. But speak again.

Per. Leonidas !

Leon. Ha ! can it be, ye Powers,
 My royal Lord ?

Per. [*Coming forward.*] A wretch that has no name.

Leon. Oh, all ye gods ! may I believe my senses ?
 'Tis he ! my Prince ! — Just Heaven, to thee I kneel,
 And thus adore thy gracious providence :
 'Tis most amazing !

Per. Rise, Leonidas.

I am beneath thy care. Thou seest me here
 The last of men, cast off by all good Powers ;
 Sav'd from the deep to be more lost on shore.

Leon. My king and master, tho' my heart bleeds in me,
 With all your mighty ills, I must again

Bless that good Heaven whose providence has fav'd you.
'Tis great! 'tis wond'rous all! But how, Oh, how
Have you escap'd the tyrant's jealous search?
His guards with strict survey rang'd every cliff
And hollow of these rocks.

Per. I'll tell thee then.

We were in sight of Corinth, when at once
Broad darkness hid the sky; at once the winds
Roar'd with mad bluster o'er us, and the seas
In rowling mountains rose. A storm so fierce,
So big with ruin, baffled our best skill.
Despair struck every heart. The ship ran round
In giddy whirls, and bulg'd on some hid rock.
Oh, dismal moment! still methinks I hear
The general, dying scream of multitudes,
Just drowning in th' abyfs. How poor a thing
Is a king then, Leonidas!—I grasp'd
A floating wreck, the big sea roaring round me,
And bursting o'er my head: 'but bury'd deep
'Beneath the whelming tide,' at once I lost
The light of heaven and life. A wave, it seems,
Lodg'd me within a cavern's secret depth,
Near yon tall mountain.

Leon. Miracle of fate!

Sure God's immediate hand conducted it,
Severely merciful—How shall I tell
What pangs, what agonies of soul I felt
At sight of your sad wreck?—But, Sir, the Prince,
What of his fate?

Per. I know not what to think:

But to be mine, it seems, is to be wretched.
Half of my fleet, yet riding in the port,
I left to his command, but with strict charge
To sail a few hours after. 'Twere in vain
'To tell thee now the reason of my order.'
This storm, I fear, may have surpris'd him too,
Unhappy boy!

Leon. Your own escape, my Lord,
So full of wonder, and beyond all hope,
Inclines me to strong faith, that Heaven is still
Concern'd for your affairs. But to behold 'you,
'So late the first and happiest of mankind,

' Alone

' Alone and wandering here at the dead hour ;'
 No roof but heaven's high cope to shelter you ;
 No couch but this unhoſpitable earth,
 To reſt your brine-drench'd limbs—it kills my heart.
 Curſe on the tyrant !

Per. Pr'ythee, think me not
 So poorly foul'd to ſtoop beneath the preſſure
 Of Fortune's hand. That were to merit it.
 But there is ſtill behind——Oh, death to honour !
 One cruſhing blow, that lays me low indeed !
 That ſinks me in the duſt !

Leon. What do I hear ?
 Your words amaze me !

Per. How, Leonidas !
 Surely thou art no ſtranger to my thought.
 Procles—Eurydice—Wilt thou not ſpeak,
 To ſave my ſhame ? Say, tell me what thou know'ſt
 Of that bad woman.

Leon. With ſuch watchful care
 The tyrant's truſted ſpies obſerve her ſteps,
 That, till this fatal evening, when, by order
 Of Procles, I inform'd her of your death,
 I have not ſeen her once.

Per. Juſt what I fear'd.
 That guilty ſecrecy was well contriv'd
 To cover crimes too foul for honeſt eyes,
 And heaven's fair light to ſee. None, none but Procles
 Could gain admittance ; and to him my gates,
 My fortrefs, nay, my bed itſelf was open !

Leon. Oh, wrong her not, my Lord ! Had you but ſeen
 With what convulſive pangs of heart-felt anguiſh,
 What bleeding agonies, ſhe heard the tale
 Of your imagin'd death, your ſoul would melt,
 In pity of her woes. This Procles too,
 Call'd down each power of heaven to witneſs for him,
 He meant her fair. Hers was the common cauſe
 Of kings, he ſaid, whoſe place and honour bound them
 To ſcourge rebellion, in whatever ſhape,
 Wherever found. And then what was her ſtate ?
 Death, in his ghastlieſt form, devouring famine,
 Hung inſtant o'er her head. Oh, think of this,
 And add not to her wrongs !

Per.

Per. Ha! wrong her, say'st thou?

Answer me: has she not entail'd disgrace,
And vileness on my name? Has she not made me
The laughter of my foe, the scoff of Procles?
Oh, curse! is there in all the wrath of heaven
A plague, a ruin, like that infamy!

' Wrong her—I am too well inform'd of all;
' Too certain of the blushful stain that cleaves
' To me and mine for ever!'

Leon. Ah, my Lord,
By all good powers, by your eternal quiet,
I beg you hear me——

Per. I have heard too much,
Too much, just gods! to hope for quiet more.
Those fates inexorable, that pursue
My life with utmost rigor, would not spare me
The knowledge of my shame. From my best friend
Blushing I learnt it—But hast thou e'er felt
That heart of anguish stabb'd by murderous fears,
And shuddering with ten thousand mortal thoughts!
That tempest of the soul that knows no calm;
Tossing from love to hate, from doubt to rage,
To raving agony!

Leon. Alas! my Lord,
' Trust me, I weep to hear so sad a tale.

Per. I'll tell thee all! for, Oh! my soul is full,
And must have vent. ' My aking memory,
' Still fruitful to my torture, brings again
' Those days, those months of horror I have known.
' Abandon'd to distraction, I renounc'd
' The commerce of mankind. I sought to vent
' My ravings in the wildness of the woods;
' To hide my shame in their profoundest night.
' The morn still brought it back: the midnight-shade
' Could not conceal it. Her lone echoes groan'd
' Unceasing with my pangs; and her sad ghosts,
' Forbid to rest even in the grave, in me
' Beheld a soul more lost, more curst, than they.'

' *Leon.* Oh, Sir, no more——

' *Per.* When I call'd back past time,
Life's vernal season, the soft hours of peace
And unsuspecting love; our growing joys

In

In rearing one lov'd son ; that heaven of bliss
Which princes seldom find, and was all ours,
My soul dy'd in me. ' Solitary, wild,
' I wept, I groan'd, in bitterness of heart.
' But when curst Procles flash'd on my remembrance,
' My known, my deadly foe — that he of all,
' That he had made her vile ! 'twas then, 'tis now
' Rage, fury, madness.' — You at last arrous'd it
To thoughts of vengeance. With all speed I sail'd,
Feeding my frenzy with the gloomy joy
Of stabbing the betrayer in her arms ;
Of plunging both to hell — but this curst storm !
These treacherous waves !

Leon. Ye gods, what have I heard !
Alas, alas ! all waves, all storms, are calms
To jealousy. Oh, my lov'd Lord, beware
Of that destroyer, that self-torturing fiend,
Who loves his pain, and feeds the cruel cares
That prey upon his life ; whose frantic eye
Is ever open, ever prying round
For what he dreads to find. ' By all most dear
' And inward to my soul, I think the Queen
' As pure as Truth herself.' This is, by heaven,
Some dark-laid treachery, the crime of Procles.

Per. Of Procles, say'st thou ?

Leon. Oh, you know him not.
Lust and ambition are not all his guilt.
But now's no time, my Lord,
For farther talk. I tremble for your life.
This place is hostile ground ; and danger here
May find us out, though shrouded round with night.
Hence let us fly, where I may lodge you safe
In some obscure retreat ; till pitying heaven
Unravel this perplexity of ills,
And point us what to do.

Per. Thou good old man !
By heaven, thy matchless honesty and truth
Half reconcile me to disgrace and ruin.
Yet blushing let me tell thee all my folly —
Might I but see Eurydice. — Nay, start not :
I know 'tis base. I know she is beneath
My coolest scorn. I hate and curse this weakness.

Yet

Yet let me see her—If she still has kept
Her faith inviolate ; fallen as I am,
My ruin will be light. If otherwise,
To know the worst will be soft soothing ease
To this hot hell of doubt.

Leon. I wish you, Sir,
To weigh the certain peril that attends
This rash adventure. Should, which Heav'n avert,
Should Procles' guards discover you, Oh, think
What must ensue ! Think, in your fate, the Queen
And Prince both ruin'd !

Per. But my genius prompts.
Fate calls ; and I must on. No face of danger
Can be so dreadful as the vultur-thoughts
That gnaw my heart-strings. But we both are safe.
The moon withdraws her light : and who will dream
Of finding Periander in this ruffet ?
This, when the storm grew big, I threw around me ;
In hopes my vulgar fate, if then I perish'd,
Might ever rest unknown ; and Procles still
Sit trembling on his throne—But hark, what sounds ?

Leon. The tyrant thus dishonours fortune's favour
By this mean pomp and triumph—Yet 'tis well.
Now riot rules the hour, and watchful order
Relinquishes his post to dissolute security.
We now may pass unquestion'd. Come, my Lord,
This way our path lies. May some friendly god
Walk with us, and throw tenfold darkness round. [*Exit.*

Enter Eurydice alone.

Eur. Oh, night of ruin, horror, and despair !
Walks there beneath thy universal shade
A wretch like me undone ? All-ruling gods !
Why have I liv'd to this ? Why was my crime
Visited on the guiltless head ? on him
For whom my soul would have met death with joy ?
Where shall I turn my eyes ? What hope remains
To misery like mine ? Oh ! I am lost
Beyond the hand of Heav'n to save me now.
Leonidas returns not——

Enter Melissa.

Mel. Gracious gods,
Defend my royal mistress ! As I watch'd
Without for good Leonidas, this moment

I saw

I saw the tyrant cross the lower court,
 Preceded by his minion : as new risen
 From the mad midnight's feast ; his wanton robe
 Loose-flowing from behind, and on his head
 A festal wreath of roses—Ah ! he's here.

Enter Procles and Medon.

Proc. Hail, young-ey'd god of wine ! parent of joys !
 Frolic, and full of thee (while the cold sons
 Of temperance, the fools of thought and care,
 Lie stretch'd in sober slumbers) we, the few
 Of purer flame, exalt each living hour
 With pleasures ever new.—*Eurydice !*
 Thou queen of souls ! thou rapture of my vows !
 What means this pensive mood ? Oh, quench not thus
 In fruitless tears those eyes, that wont to smile
 With all love's sweetness, all his dewy beams,
 Diffusing life around thee.

Eur. Hence, thou tyrant,
 And leave me to my sorrows. Ills like mine
 Would draw remoré and reverence from the savage,
 Who howls with midnight wolves amid the desert
 In quest of horrid prey. What then art thou ?
 Whose brutal rage adds bitterness to woe,
 And anguish to the breaking heart ?

' Proc. 'Tis well.

*' Yet have a care : my temper but ill brooks
 ' Upbraiding now. Be wise, and timely seize
 ' The minute of good fortune, that by me
 ' Invites thee to be blest.*

' Eur. Talk'it thou of bliss ?

*' Thou bane of all my happiness ! Cast back,
 ' Cast back thy guilty eyes, and view the crimes
 ' Thy soul stands charg'd with : view my bleeding wrongs,
 ' Insult, imprisonment, dishonour, ruin !
 ' All, all this guilt is thine—but Heaven will find thee.
 ' Those gods whom thou hast proudly set at nought,
 ' Will call thee to a dreadful reckoning.*

' Proc. No.

*' The gods and I are friends : they crown my cause
 ' With their best favour. Come, be thou too mine,
 ' And imitate the great example set thee.*

' Eur.

' *Eur.* Thou vain and blind in soul! The righteous
 ' Oft, in their anger, cloath the worst of men [gods,
 ' With all the pride of fond prosperity,
 ' To make his fall more terrible.'

Proc. ' Confusion !'

Still wayward and perverse!—Off then this tameness,
 These supple, fawning arts. By all th' impatience
 That goads my soul, I will not flatter more.
 Know thou art in my power, and——

Eur. Tyrant, no.

I scorn thy base, unmanly threats—Ah, Heaven!
 Dost thou look calmly on?—But be it so.
 This friendly dagger sets me free.

[*Attempting to stab herself.*]

Proc. Ha! what,

What means thy frantic passion? This is wildness,
 Th' extravagance of female wilfulness;
 It must not be; you shall be gently forc'd
 To live, and to be happy.

Enter an Officer.

Off. Sir, forgive

This rude intrusion. What I bring imports
 Your present ear. As now I walk'd the round
 Of this wide fort, where the steep-winding path
 Ends at the northern gate, I spy'd a stranger,
 Who sought to lie conceal'd. Forthwith I rous'd
 The nearest watch; and, ere he was aware,
 Surrounded him at once. His sudden silence,
 And hands oft rais'd to heaven with earnest action,
 Convince me he is of no common note.

Eur. My soul! what dost thou hear?

[*Aside.*]

Proc. 'Tis well. I thank thee.

Haste, see him brought before us.

Enter Periander guarded.

Eur. Oh, ye powers!

[*Aside.*]

Per. Ha! poison to my eyes!

[*Aside.*]

Proc. I know him not.

His dress is poor, and speaks him of the vulgar.
 He seems to labour with some stormy thought,
 That deeply shakes his frame. What art thou? say,
 Why at this hour of silence ling'ring here?

C

Ha!

* E U R Y D I C E .

Ha ! speak, resolve me ; or the rack shall tear
Confession from thy pangs.

Per. Fate, thou hast caught me !

But all is equal now.

[*Aside.*

[*To him.*] Then see before thee

The man on earth whom thou hast injur'd most.

If guilt can know remorse, what must thou feel
At sight of Periander ?

Proc. Periander !

Eur. Now, now, we both are ruin'd.

Proc. Heaven, I thank thee.

I form'd but one supreme, one crowning wish,
And thou hast heard it ! This is more than triumph !

Eur. Oh, my lov'd Lord——

Per. Thou canst no more betray me.

For thee, my soul still unsubdu'd and free,
Disdains to parle with thine.

Proc. Yet thou art fallen

Beneath my wrath, the vassal of my nod,
To be chastis'd for mirth—Guards, drag him hence,
And plunge him in the dungeon's depth.

Eur. Oh, heav'n !

Per. Away,

Unkingly boaster. Can prosperity
Debase thee to the cowardice of insult ?

Thy brutal manners well revenge me on thee :

They shew thee as thou art—' My nobler part,

' Th' immortal mind, thy madness cannot reach :

' Thy whips and racks can there impress no wound.'

As for this weary carcass in thy power,

It is beneath my care. Lead to my dungeon.

Chains, scourges, torture, all that nature feels,

Or fears abhorrent, cannot shock my thought

Like thy loath'd sight, and that vile woman's. On.

[*Exit guarded.*

Eur. My Lord, my husband, stay—Oh, hear me !
hear me——

Shame ! rage ! distraction !——Cruel tyrant, off.
I'll follow him to death.

Proc. No. By the joys

That swell my soaring thought, you shall not 'scape me,
Re-

Revenge and love combine to crown this night
With matchless bliss.

Eur. Inhuman ! hast thou eyes ?
Hast thou a heart ? and cannot all this wreck
Of ruin'd majesty, ruin'd by thee,
Move one relenting thought, and wake thy pity ?
He feels not what I say : repeated crimes
Have savag'd his remorseless soul.—Hear then,
Almighty Jove ! behold, and judge the cause
Of Periander ! number all his wrongs
In plagues, in horrors——

Proc. Ha ! by hell, this raving
But wings his fate. Since thy fond folly weds thee
To ruin with this rival, know he dies ;
This very night he dies. Through him I mean
To wound thy heart indeed. Thou shalt behold him
When the rack stretches strong his rending joints,
Bursts all his veins, and hunts the flying soul
Through every limb. Then, when convulsive agony
Grins hideous in his face, mangled and bleeding,
In the last throes of death, thou shalt behold him.

Eur. It is not to be borne ! My life dies in me
At the destroying thought—Ah, stay thee, Procles——
Assist me, pitying Heaven !—See then, behold me
Thus prostrate at thy feet. If yet thou hast not
Renounc'd all manhood, feeling, and remorse,
Spare me his life ; save only that : all else,
His crown, his throne be thine.

Proc. Off ! let me go :

Thy words are lost in air.

Eur. Nay, hear me, Procles,

As is thy hope in Heaven's forgiving goodness,

Shut not thy heart against the cry of misery.

Banish us any whither ; drive us out

To shame, want, beggary, to every woe

That most embitters life — I yet will bless thee,

Forget my crying wrongs, and own thee merciful.

Procles aside, and pausing.

This woman fools my rage—but to resolve.

No—yes ; it shall be so. Rise then, and learn

Thy triumph o'er my soul. Yes, he shall live,

This Periander whom I deadly hate.

Nay more, he shall be free. Leonidas,
 With such safe conduct as thyself shalt name,
 Attends him to our kingdom's farthest limit.
 This, in the sight of Jove the supreme lord,
 I swear to do; so thou at last consent
 To meet my love—Ha! what! and dost thou frow
 Weigh well what I propose; for on my soul,
 His life or death awaits thy next resolve.

[*Exeunt Procles and Medon.*]

Eur. Then kill me first—He's gone! and now, ye gods,
 Is there among the wretched one so lost,
 So curst as I? Oh, scene of matchless woes!
 Oh, Periander! wert thou sav'd for this?
 Ye holy powers in heaven, to whom belongs
 The fate of virtue, and redress of wrongs,
 Assist, inspire me how to save his life;
 Or to th' unhappy husband join the wife.

[*Exeunt.*]

END of the SECOND ACT.

A C T III.

Eurydice and Melissa.

MELISSA.

THIS cheerless morning rises slow and sad.
 The frowning heavens are black with stormy clouds;
 And, o'er the deep, a hovering night of fogs
 Lies dark and motionless.

Eur. That mournful face
 Of Nature is less gloomy than my soul:
 All there is darkness and dismay. Ah, me!
 Was ever night, Melissa, like the last?
 A night of many terrors, many deaths!
 How has my soul out-liv'd it? But, great gods!
 Can mortal-strength, can human virtue bear
 What Periander feels? In one day's course,
 Wreck'd, made a captive, sunk into a dungeon,
 To die or live as his curst foe decrees!
 Distraction's in the thought. And what can I
 To save his sacred life?

Ha! is it Heaven

That darts this sudden light into my soul? [After a pause.]

This

This glimpse of dawning hope?—It shall be try'd.
Yes, yes, ye powers! my life and fame shall both
Be offer'd up to save his dearer life.

Mel. Alas, what mean you, Madam?

Eur. Mean, Melissa!

To do a noble justice on myself;
A deed for which, in nations yet unborn,
Chaste wives and matrons shall renown my name.
I've wrong'd my husband greatly, and I mean
Ample atonement of my guilty weakness.
Go then, Melissa——

Mel. Whither must I go?

I tremble at your words.

Eur. Yet it sticks here,

This fatal purpose. Can I leave behind me
A doubtful name, insulted, wounded, torn
By cruel calumny? I can; I dare

‘ Throw off the woman, and be deaf to all
‘ Those nicer female fears that call so loud,
‘ Importunate, and urging me to live
‘ Till I may clear my truth from all surmise.’

Go then, and in my name—’Tis worse than death
To utter it—but go, inform the tyrant,
So Periander lives, and is set free,
I yield me to his wish.

Mel. Forbid it, Heaven!

Eur. Thou faithful, virtuous maid! Know then, my last,
My fix'd resolve. By this I mean to amuse
His brutal hopes, and save me from his violence,
Till Periander is beyond his reach.

Then, if he still dare urge his impious purpose,
A dagger sets me free. This arm at last
Shall do me right on him, myself, or both.

Enter Leonidas.

Eur. Leonidas!

Leon. Ah, Madam!

Eur. Dare I ask

Where Periander is——Ah, where indeed?
Chain'd in a dungeon's airless depth, amid
Foul damps, and lonesome darkness! Oh, that thought
Draws blood from my torn heart.

Leon. Justice divine!

E U R Y D I C E.

In thy great day of visitation, mark
This man of blood. Oh, let him feel the hand
He dares to disbelieve. To all his counsels
Send forth, in thy just wrath, that fatal spirit
Of error and illusion, that foreruns
The fall of guilty kings.

Ere morning dawn,
Soft to the dismal dungeon's mouth I stole,
Where, by the glimmerings of a dying lamp,
I saw my great unhappy master laid
On the cold earth along——

Eur. Oh, hide the sad,
The fatal image from me. ' The dire thought
Will run me into madness.

' *Leon.* Yet even there,
' Where pale dismay, the prisoner's drear associate,
' Sits ever sad and sleepless, he could rest.
' Superior to the cruel fate that crush'd him,
' He slept as deep as indolence on down.
' These eyes beheld it; and I would not break
' His wish'd repose, but fix'd in silent wonder,
' Stood weeping o'er the sight.'

' *Eur.* Ah, me! my life
Flows out at every word——What's to be done?

Leon. Madam, I set my all at stake for him.
Old as I am, and broken with the load
Of threescore years, what is a life like mine,
But as it may be useful to my master?
Already the sad people know his fate:
And I, by faithful hands, will try to rouse
Their pity first, and next their rage. No hour,
No moment shall be lost.

Eur. Thou good old man!
What words can speak thy worth? Fair loyalty
And faith inviolate, which seem'd quite lost
Among mankind, live in thy virtuous bosom.

Leon. No more of this, my Queen. Might I but see
This haughty tyrant, in some guilty hour
Of insolence and riot, when his pride
Plumes all her vainest wishes, hurl'd at once
To ruin unforeseen; my labours then,
My services, were greatly over-paid.

Eur.

Eur. Heaven hear thy pious wish. I too the while,
To save my husband's life, have been contriving—

Leon. Madam, the tyrant—I will find another
More favourable moment. [*Exeunt Eur. and Mel.*]

Enter Procles and Medon.

Proc. Hold thyself
Prepar'd, Leonidas : I must employ thee
In an affair of weight. [*Leonidas withdraws.*]
Methinks I droop

With more than wonted heaviness of heart.
But I will shake it off, and to the winds
Give every thought of care. 'Tis only fondness,
And fancy sick with hope. Eurydice
Bends to my wishes : and, in her, I hope
That heaven imagin'd that sole bliss, which yet
My search could never meet.

Med. It moves my wonder
To see your love thus wedded to one bosom :
While all around bright crouds of rival beauties
Practise each art of charming, look, and talk,
And live for you alone.

Proc. Alas, my friend !
Poor is the triumph over hearts like these :
This hour they please us, and the next they pass.
But to subdue the pride that scorns to yield ;
To fill th' unwilling breast with sighs and longings,
With all the soft distraction of fond love,
Even while it strives against th' invading victor,
And wonders at the change ; that, that is conquest !
The plume of pleasure ! and from her alone
A glory to be won.

Med. Well, may you find
In this proud fair-one that enchants you thus,
Whate'er imagination's fondest eye
Beholds in rapturous vision, or young love
In all his wantonness of power can give.
But yet, forgive your servant's forward-zeal,
Mean you to keep the promise you have made her ?

Pro. I do.

Med. How, Sir ! what set her husband free ?

Proc. I mean no less.

Med. Your pardon, Sir : 'tis well.

But

But have you calmly weigh'd, in reason's scale,
The certain consequence? Set free your rival!
A soul made furious with his mighty wrongs;
Boiling with hate, rage, jealousy, revenge;
With the full-gather'd storm of deadly passions!
The gods forbid it, Sir——And all to dry
A froward woman's tears!

Proc. No, no, my friend;
Nor liberty nor life shall long be his:
I never meant him either; but my faith
Is pass'd to set him free. By that alone
The haughty Queen was overcome; and I
Will keep th' illusive promise to her ear,
But break it to her hope.

Med. As how, my Lord?

Proc. Such inbred enmity my soul bears his
As Nature does to ruin, to the grave,
Where the whole man descends to rise no more.
Hear then what I intend. Thou know'st the fortress,
That guards our frontier on the Theban side.
That way our foe must pass; but thou shalt first
Post thither on the spur with wary speed:
And with a chosen band, drawn from the fort,
Way-lay him on the farther hill, close couch'd
In the deep covert of those pendant woods,
That shade the path below.

Med. Conclude it done.
Sleep shall not know my eyes, till his are clos'd
In everlasting night. As to his prison
I waited him, he call'd me minion, slave,
A traitor's parasite, the base-soul'd minister
Of his loose pleasures; and I will repay him,
For each opprobrious name, a mortal stab.
Yes, he shall feel his fate. Insult and taunt,
Embittering every blow, shall mock his pangs,
And give him sevenfold death.

Proc. So, now to try
This Periander thoroughly. Go, Medon,
Command him hither. [*Exit Medon.*]
No, I cannot bear
His last night's haughty look and untam'd spirit.
It baffles my revenge, and I still miss.

My.

My noblest triumph ; for I meant to bend him
 To base dejection, and to feast my scorn
 With his pale cheek and supplicating eye.
 But I will hunt this pride through each recess,
 Each closer folding of the soul, till I
 Have sunk him to my wish.—Thou, jealousy !
 Almighty tyrant of the human mind,
 Who canst at will unsettle the calm brain,
 O'erturn the seated heart, and shake the man
 Through all his frame with tempest and distraction ;
 Rise to my present aid ; call up thy powers,
 Thy furious fears, thy blasts of dreadful passion,
 Thy whips, snakes, mortal stings, thy host of horrors ;
 Rouse thy whole war against him, and complete
 My purpos'd vengeance.—But he comes to prove it.

Enter Periander, Medon, and Guards.

[*Advancing.*] I have to talk with thee. Thy life, thou
 Depends upon my will—— [know'st,

Per. And therefore I
 Am weary of the load. But let the gods,
 Who thus dispense our fates, account for them,
 And vindicate their justice.

Proc. Be more calm.
 The noble mind meets every chance of fortune,
 Unruffled and serene. I, though thy foe,
 Perhaps may mean thee good.

Per. Such good the tiger,
 Hungry for death and slaughter, means his prey.
 But know, my soul receives with equal scorn
 Thy hate and hollow love. I am not fallen
 By thy superior sword, or nobler deed ;
 It was the guilt of fate !

Proc. Call we it so.
 At least 'tis well thou must of force acknowledge
 Thy crown, thy liberty, thy life and death,
 Hang on my nod. I can dispose of all
 As likes me best.

Per. Ha ! dost thou boast of that ?
 But thou wilt never know how poor a purchase
 Is power and empire gain'd for virtue lost.

Proc. And yet, methinks, I read the difference plain
 In thee and me, Thy virtue and these bonds

I weigh

I weigh in equal scale against the crown
 And sceptre of fair Corinth : and while these,
 The glorious aim of each great heart that dares
 Beyond the narrow sphere of earth-born spirits ;
 While these are mine, I envy not thy tribe,
 A sound, an empty name.

Per. It joys my soul
 To find the man, who bears me mortal hate,
 At war too with the gods. 'Tis great revenge !
 Had not vain fortune made thee blind, the thought
 Would change thy purple to the mourner's sack-cloth.
 What are thy glorious acts ?—Thou hast undone
 A woman, weak and worthless.—Yes, ye powers !
 This hero, this fair warrior, well deserv'd
 To fill my vacant seat : he won it nobly !
 Dissembling, perjury, the coward's arms——
 With these he fought his virtuous way to empire.
 Thou seest I know thee.

Proc. Dost thou preach to me

- The pedant maxims of those sons of earth,
- Whom the gross vulgar fondly title wise ?
- Slaves, who to shades and solitude condemn'd,
- Pine there with all-shunn'd penury and scorn.
- A monarch is above them, and takes counsel
- Of his unbounded will, and high ambition,
- That counts the world his own. I ever held thee
- My foe, my deadly bane ; and against such,
- Force, fraud, all arts, are lawful. I have won
- And mean to wear thy crown. Thou may'st the while
- Seek some vile cell out, and grow poorly old
- Amid the talking tribe of moralists.

Per. Through this false face of arrogance, I read

- Thy heart of real terror and dismay.
- Hence all these coward-boasts. The truly brave,
- Invincible to pride and fortune's flattery,
- Know neither fear nor insult.—But I would not,
- As thou surmisedst, dream out useless life
- In sloth's unactive couch. Nay, I could tell thee,
- That though I shun thy shameful ways of conquest ;
- Still heaven-born glory, won by virtuous deeds,
- Has been my fair pursuit : still would I seek her

- * In toils of war, and in the nobler field
- * Of justice, peace, and mercy.'

Proc. My soul longs

To prove thy highest daring, and to meet thee
Amid the din and peril of the battle.

Thy life is in thy hand: thou art no longer
Our prisoner. This moment sets thee free.

Per. How!—but thou dar'st not—Could I find thee
In open day, and honourable arms, [there,
Opposing war to war, as monarchs should,
I would forgive thee all, my crown usurp'd,
These slave-like bonds—But that fair hope is vain.
The fears that haunt thy soul—

Proc. Strike off his fetters.

[To Medon]

Haste, find Leonidas. Bid him prepare
To guard the prisoner to our kingdom's frontier.
There he shall leave him free to chuse what course
His fancy most affects.

Per. What means all this?

Dares guilt then be so brave? and dost thou free
The man whom act of thine shall never win
To owe thee aught but deep and deadly hate?

Proc. Go, see my orders instantly perform'd.

[Medon and Guards retire.]

- * *Per.* And is it so—I shudder with my fears. [Aside,
- * Say, tell me first to what is Periander
- * Indebted for this freedom?'

Proc. Well it may

Surprize thy hope: 'twas what I never meant thee.
But that fond woman who enslaves my soul
To all her wishes, and still pities thee,
With idle blandishments extorted from me
A solemn vow to set thee free.

Per. Confusion!

Proc. Thus I, against my better mind, release
My mortal enemy. But let it speak
The greatness of my love; and what dull husband,
Through all recorded time, e'er gave such proof
Of matchless fondness?

Per. Plagues! perdition! hell!

Damn'd, damn'd adulterers!—Villain, slave, 'tis false:
Thou ly'st—What thee! Oh, curse—

Proc. At last 'tis done.

{Exit.
Per.

Per. Have I then liv'd to this? to this confusion?
 My foe, the man on earth my soul most loaths,
 Rejoices over me; and she---even she
 Hath join'd his triumph!---Off, away, begone,
 Love, manhood, reason---Come, ye sister-furies,
 Daughters of hate and hell! arise, inflame
 My murderous purpose; pour into my veins
 Your gall, your scorpion-fellness, your keen horrors
 That sting to madness; till my burning vengeance
 Hath her full draught of blood-----

[Walking with a disturbed motion.]

But how! where am I?
 Oh, this poor brain! ten thousand shapes of fury
 Are whirling there, and reason is no more.
 Him! him! a caitif black with every vice!
 Debase herself to him!---the thought is hell!
 Well, well---and I, how have I doated on her
 Whole years of fondness! cherish'd, pleas'd, adorn'd her
 With all that love can give---Yet she has done this!
 Confusion on my folly---Ha! she comes.
 Down, down, tempestuous soul: let me be dumb,
 And hide this shameful conflict that unmans me.

Enter Eurydice.

Eur. He must not know my secret fatal purpose,
 That I am fix'd to die; lest his great soul
 Refuse a life so dearly sav'd---And now,
 All powers that pity human kind, assist me
 In this important hour!
 Oh, Periander-----
 And is it thus we meet again!

*[Aside.
To him.]*

Per. Ha! see,
 She comes prepar'd. By hell, she weeps a lie.
 My rage will leap all bounds.

[Aside.]

Eur. My Lord, my love,
 I know you look on me as on the cause,
 The fatal cause of all your ills; too true:
 That guilt is mine---Oh, would to heaven, this head
 Had been laid low in earth ere that sad hour!
 Why did I shrink at ruin? Why not bear
 All pangs, all horrors of besieging famine?
 Alas! my love---But your false faithless subjects,
 To what have they reduc'd us?

Per.

Per. No; not they:

Betrayer! thou alone hast made me wretched.
Oh, death to a king's honour! thou hast sunk me
Into a proverb of reproach; a word
For low contempt, for ribbald scorn to mock at.

‘ *Eur.* Just gods! what means my Lord?

‘ *Per.* Mean!—dost thou ask?

‘ *Eur.* Heaven! has the traitor then——

‘ *Per.* Ha! does that gaul thee?

‘ Perdition!—Woman! Woman!—Yes, thy minion,
‘ The vile one, has repaid thy broken oath
‘ With well-match’d perjury: has loudly boasted
‘ To heaven, and earth, and me, that thou art—Hell!
‘ The hated word would choak me!’

Eur. Oh, dire error!

[*Aside.*

My Lord, my only love, by holy faith
I never was disloyal. Rags and penury,
Disease and death, shock not my apprehension
Like that detested crime—I dare no more.
Oh, fly, my love; haste from this fatal place,
And leave me to my fate. Oh, save your life,
While yet ’tis in your power.

[*To him.*

Per. My life! Away.

And hast thou vilely barter’d for that life
Thy truth, and my fair fame? By yon blest heaven,
I could have borne all woes that wretchedness
Groans under; age, affliction, pining anguish:
And borne them like a man. I could have smil’d
At fortune’s keenest rancor—But to know
Myself deceiv’d in thee! there, there I sink!
There manhood, reason die.

Eur. Oh, ye just powers!

Were ever woes like mine? What are the whips,
Rack, engines, all that murderous cruelty
Hath yet contriv’d—What are they all to this?
This infamy that kills the soul itself?
Yet I will bear even this.

Then here, by weeping, bleeding love I beg you,
With streaming eyes, haste from this fatal place.
The tyrant may recall his word; and then ——
I cannot utter more.

Per. And thou canst weep!

D

Thou

Thou crocodile ! These false, these lying tears
Are daggers here. I go—but dost thou hope
Thy mean dissimulation hides thee from me ?
Thou hast dishonour'd, ruin'd me ; and now
My fight is hateful to thee.

But say, tell me,

[*Returning.*

How have I merited these wrongs of thee ?
What was my crime ? Can all-bestowing love
Do more than mine for thee ?—When I call back
The days that are no more—Thou wert my all
Of happiness ; my soul ne'er knew a joy
That was not thine ; my doating fondness lull'd
Its hopes, its fears, its wishes, in thy bosom.
O heaven and earth !—and yet—Eurydice—
Thou could'st forsake me !

[*Weeps.*

Eur. Oh, this is too much !

Heaven knows, I would have dy'd to save thy life :
But we will perish both, both die together.
Thy tears distract me. I will tell thee all.

Per. Curse on this weakness ! I could tear these eyes
From forth their orbs—Thou exquisite deceiver !
Hence, lest this arm should do a deed of shame,
And stain me with thy blood.

Eur. Oh, but one moment !

For mercy's sake, allow me one short moment.

Per. No ; in the sight of all-beholding Jove,
Here I renounce thee. What a slave to folly,
To thy curs'd arts has Periander liv'd !

Eur. Oh, cruel, cruel ! hast thou cast me out,
For ever from thy heart ? By all our loves,
By the dear pledge of our unspotted flames,
Grant me one moment.

[*Kneels.*

Here will I hang, grow to thy knees—Yes, spurn me,
Drag this bare bleeding bosom on the ground ;
Yes, use me as the vilest slave—but hear me.

Per. Away, away.

Eur. Then strike me dead at once.

Look here, my love ; I shrink not from the blow.

Per. That were poor vengeance. No, I meditate
A nobler sacrifice—

[*Alarm of Trumpets.*

Ha ! what's this ?

[*Alarm again.*

Th' alarm

Th' alarm is urgent, big with war and dread.
I am the sport of fortune.

Enter Melissa.

Mel. Oh, my Lord,
 Some wonderous birth of fate is sure disclosing!
Procles calls out to arms; his guards swarm round him,
 Haste in each step, and fear in every eye.
 This way too **Medon** speeds, and in his train
 A gloomy band of soldiers.

Per. Let him come.

Death has no terrors, when to live is shame.

*Enter Medon at the head of one party, who hurry the Queen
 off the Stage; Leonidas at the head of another, who re-
 move the King.*

Med. Be quick, secure the Queen.

Eur. What mean'st thou, ruffian?

Must we then part?—Farewel, my Lord, for ever.

Per. Thou too, Leonidas!—Nay, then—

[Exit all but Leonidas.]

Leon. O, Jove!

Eternal and supreme, whose nod controuls
 The fate of empires, whose almighty hand
 Sustains the weak, and raises virtue fallen,
 Now to this royal sufferer deal thy mercy;
 Aid his just arms, and teach mankind to know,
 Thy sovereign justice sways the world below. *[Exit.]*

END of the THIRD ACT.

A C T IV.

Enter Eurydice and Melissa.

EURYDICE.

WHAT may this mean? The gloomy band of ruffians,
 That bore me hence, vanish'd I know not how.
 And hark! no sound, no breath of human voice;
 But all around the depth of solitude!
 A dumb and death-like stillness! My soul trembles;
 And apprehension peoples the lone void,
 With fears of horrid form—But what can fate?

D 2

What

What can the wrath of all the gods inflict,
Beyond what I have known?

Mel. My gracious mistress,
This awful moment is perhaps the crisis
Of all your future life. Your guards fled sudden,
And late the neighbouring courts were loud with tumult,
Which dy'd away in flow and sullen murmurs.
Some turn of fate is near. Leonidas
In haste bore hence the King, doubtless to save him
From his dire foe; or at the people's head
Once more to place their sovereign, and restore
You to your former state.

Eur. All otherwise
My thoughts forebode. There is one deadly ill,
Which, Oh, too sure, no time, no chance can heal!
And at the dawn of day, just as these lids
Reluctant clos'd to rest, Arpasia's shade,
My much-lov'd mother, stood confess'd before me,
Pale as the shroud that wound her clay-cold limbs;
Her eyes fix'd on me, still and motionless,
Streaming unreal tears. She groan'd, and thrice,
In low sad murmurs, bade me to her tomb,
To meet her there—And there, in death alone,
In the dark grave, can poor Eurydice
Expect repose.

Mel. Oh, no! just Heaven, I hope,
That sees your innocence, has yet in store
Much bliss, and many days of peace for you.

Eur. I know his heart is quite estrang'd, and shut,
For ever shut against the voice of love.
And can my heart survive it? Shall I live
With public infamy? A theme of scorn
To all licentious tongues? Oh, in that thought,
Death's keenest dart has stabb'd my soul already!
And what comes after is not worth my fear.

Mel. Ha! Madam, this way cast your eyes, and see
What swarms of men; these flying, those pursuing.

Eur. Now, Lord of battles! join thy powerful arm;
Assert the cause of righteousness—But hark!
The thunder of their shouts grows near and loud.
This way the combat turns. By all my hopes,

The

The tyrant's party flies ! Look, look, Melissa,
Their broken numbers to the fortress bend.

Mel. And now with eager speed they climb th' ascent
That leads to us.

Eur. But who is he, Melissa,
That, like the God of War, flames foremost yonder ?
See his sword lighten, and the foe fly scattering
From his tempestuous arm !—Ha !—yes—Oh, Heaven !
'Tis he, 'tis he himself, 'tis Periander !
Oh, miracle !——He looks again a monarch,
Dreadfully glorious. Throw, all ye Powers, your shield
Of providence before him ; think on all
His causeless wrongs, and do him justice now.

Mel. Ah ! Procles comes.

Enter Procles, followed by a party of his Guards.

Proc. Confusion ! all is lost.

That traitor has undone me ; and those slaves,
The false Corinthians, in a moment's flight,
Threw all their gates wide open to the foe.
Of hope abandon'd, and the gods against me,
What now remains ?—The Queen ! By Heaven, 'tis well !
Their boasted triumph is not yet compleat——
She's mine, she's mine, and I am conqueror still !——
You, bear this woman thro' the postern gate,

[To one party.]

Down to the southern shore. I sail this moment
For Epidaurus—You, the while, make head *[To another.]*
Against the near pursuit, ' and bar its progress,
' Till she's secur'd. ' This is my last great stake ;
' Of dearer price than victory.' Away.

Eur. No, tyrant ; I will die first. Off, base slaves.
Dare ye, dare earth-born peasants violate,
With your rude touch, the majesty of kings ?
Ah, Heaven——

Proc. Be quick ; nor listen to her raving.

Enter Medon.

Med. Undone, undone ! the postern gate is seiz'd.
That curs'd Leonidas——

Proc. Ha ! say'st thou, Medon ?

Med. By hell, our foes surround us on each hand :
We're taken in the toil.

Proc. Unequal Powers !

And have you then deceiv'd me ? Rais'd me high
 With traiterous kindness, but to plunge me deeper
 In howling desperation ? ' Does the man,
 ' Whom late my foot could spurn, behold my fall ?
 ' And fall I thus ; my great ambition dash'd ;
 ' My love unsatisfy'd ? Shall he yet revel
 ' In her fond arms, and hear her curse my name ?
 ' No ; spite of Heaven, my ruin shall be glorious,
 ' A pomp of horrors. I will make this day
 ' For ever mournful to his aking heart.
 ' Yes, he shall weep in blood amid the shouts
 ' Of victory.' One blow destroys his triumph,
 And levels him at once to my destruction.

[*He draws a dagger.*]

Eur. Strike, tyrant, and complete thy monstrous crimes.
 See, thou pale coward ; see, a woman braves
 Thy guilty dagger.

Proc. ' Ha ! what's this I feel ?

' A shivering dew of horror sweats all o'er me !'
 Some Power invifible arrests my arm !
 ' It is Heaven's fecret hand.'—But fhall I lofe
 This only moment ? No ; be ftrong, my heart ;
 Be fhut againft all human thoughts, and fcorn
 ' Thefe warrings of thy hostile gods—'Tis done.

*Enter Polydore, Leonidas, and Soldiers ; Polydore pushes
 Procles back with his Lance.*

Pol. No, traitor ! murderer ! no : Heaven is more juft,
 Than to permit a life fo much its care
 To fall by thy vile hand. Secure the tyrant.

[*To his Soldiers.*]

My mother !

Eur. Oh, my fon !

Pol. Transporting joy !

Eur. Oh, ecftacy ! And do I fee thy face ?
 And do I hold thee in my trembling arms ?—
 Thou darling of my love ! thou early hero !
 Oh, thou haft fav'd us all !

Pgl. This, this is triumph !
 And I can afk of bounteous Heaven no more.
 Was ever joy fo full ? 'Tis feeble arm,

Oh,

Oh, pride to think ! has sav'd the sacred lives
From whom I drew my own.

Eur. And is this possible ?

What shall I say ?—But language all is poor
To speak the tender yearnings of my soul.
O Polydore ! did ever parents know
Such transports as do thine ? Did ever son
Deserve so well of parents ?—Good Leonidas,
I saw thee not before ; indeed I could not,
My eyes, my soul were so close fix'd on him.
But say, redouble this day's bliss, and say,
Whence this amazing change ?

Leon. My royal mistress,
The gods have done this. One half of the fleet,
As led by their peculiar hand, escap'd
Yesterday's ruinous storm, and with the dawn
Enter'd the port unseen ; their secret landing
Befriended by the morn's wide-hovering mists.
Instant, inform'd of his great father's fate,
Your Polydore, this gallant, royal youth,
Pour'd forth his eager troops, and at their head,
Swift as heaven's darted fire, flew towards Corinth,
Which open'd wide her arms to take him in.
His fortune speaks the rest.

Eur. O sovereign goodness,
Be thine the praise ; this is thy wond'rous work.
The King, how was he sav'd ?

Leon. Struck with his danger,
The tyrant had to present death devoted
His sacred head. I counsell'd, and prevail'd
(Procles still thought me his) in bonds to hold him,
As our sure pledge of safety, should success
Desert our arms. The following moment saw him
Free from his chains, and foremost in the fight—
And hark ! these joyous strains proclaim his triumph.

Eur. Retire, my son ; I would not meet him here.

[*Exeunt Eurydice, Polydore, and Melissa.*]

Enter Periander, Ariston, and Attendants.

Per. [*Aside.*] She flies—Thou coward, Guilt !—But
hence that thought— [*Advances towards Proc.*]
At length the measure of thy crimes is full :
Thy high-plum'd pride lies humbled in the dust ;

And

And awful Justice comes, array'd in terrors,
To make enquiry for the guilt that swells
Thy black account. But I will check my heart,
Nor learn of thee to triumph o'er the fallen,
Bear him to prison.

Proc. Yet, I will be free,
And soon beyond thy power. Knowing the worst,
I laugh at all to come.

Per. [To Med.] For thee, thou vile one,
Thou pandar to thy master's lusts, thou sycophant,
(The most pernicious present angry Heaven
Can make to princes whom it means to blind,
And ruin beyond mercy) thy just doom
Is instant. Spurn this slave into the streets.
The furious people, whom his earth-born pride
Has tramp'd on, and numerous rapines beggar'd,
Will find th' oppressor out, and as they tear
His guilty limbs, think all their wrongs o'erpaid.

[*Excunt Procles and Medon guarded.*]

Leonidas, my father and preserver,
Rise to my arms. By heaven, 'the joy that smiles
' Upon thy brow, adds brightness to the morn !'
This wondrous revolution of my fate,
This change, that gives me back my crown and name,
Rejoices me yet less, than that I owe
The gift to thee.

Leon. Oh, sacred Sir, forbear !
The transport to behold you thus again,
Is great reward. Now your old man can say
He has not liv'd in vain. Ye bounteous Powers,
Dismiss me now in peace ; for I have seen
My master bless'd !

Per. No recompence can equal
Such matchless goodness. But I will repay thee
A way more pleasing to a soul like thine,
By running still in debt to all thy virtues.
Thou know'st th' unhappy, envy'd state of kings ;
How perilous the height so near to heaven :
All round is precipice ; and on each hand,
Foremost in place and trust, their deadliest foes,
Power, passion, pleasure, wait to push them headlong.
Thy life has roll'd thro' all the various round

Of human chance ; and years of hoary thought,
Cool and unpassionate, have taught thee wisdom.
Be still my guide, and save me from the snares
That thus beset me ; save me from myself.

Leon. My heart can only answer to this goodness
By silent gratitude and joy — But, Sir,
Forgive me, if I say, another care
Demands your present thought.

Per. [*Aside.*] Fatal remembrance !
At once inflam'd my smother'd rage burns up
With fiercer blaze. He must not know the purpose
With which my bosom labours — Yes, my friend,
Of that we'll talk anon ; but now I wish
An hour of privacy. — Ariston, stay. [*Exit Leon.*]
Thus far have I repress'd the storm within me,
Held down its furious heavings ; but they now
Shall have full flow. I am once more a king.
My foe is in my hand, and breathes this air
But till I doom him dead ; yet is not he
So curs'd, so ruin'd as his conqueror !

Arist. What do I hear, my Lord ?

Per. Ah, good Ariston,
The horrors of thy tale were true ! She has,
She has betray'd me.

Arist. Since the Queen is fallen,
There is no trust in woman —

Per. Nor no hope
For wretched Periander. Not the grave
Can hide me now from scorn ; not length of days
Will wear out this. Oh, never-dying shame !
Worlds yet unfound will hear it ; and where'er
The guilty tale is told, my fate will raise
Base mirth, or baser pity.

Arist. Could the Queen
Stoop to a thought of Procles ? False, fond sex !
Unfix'd by reason, ever wandering wild,
As fancy whirls, from folly on to folly,
From vanity to vice. My gracious Lord,
She is beneath your anger. Cast her out
From all your soul, and be yourself again.
Resume that reason, Sir —

Per. Away ! Can reason

Arrest

Arrest the whirlwind's wing, or quench the forest,
 Struck by the hand of Jove, when all its woods
 In one broad conflagration blaze to heaven?
 'Tis reason makes me wretched; for it tells me
 How shameful this mad conflict of my passions:
 But does that still their uproar? Here, Ariston,
 Works the wild storm that reason cannot calm.
 I must, I will have ease.

Arist. You may; but, Oh,
 The remedy is dreadful, and will give you
 Swoonings and mortal agonies! I tremble
 To mention it; but such your soul's deep malady,
 No gentler cure can bring the health you want.
 Her death, my Lord——

Per. Ha! death—My soul shrinks back
 From the dread image. How! for ever lose her!
 My queen, my wife!—Behold those eyes no more,
 That were the light of mine! no longer hear
 That voice, whose every sound was harmony!
 Of power to sooth tumultuous rage, and heal
 The wounded heart of anguish—Can it be!
 Oh, misery! Why, why is this!

Arist. Alas,
 You love her still, my Lord, and know it not!
Per. Ye gods, why am I thus driven to and fro
 By every blast that blows?—It is too true.
 A traiterous softness steals o'er my just rage,
 And melts me to the dorage of low pity.
 Oh, thou mean heart! Is she not false? And I,
 Shall I sit down with tame dishonour? Take
 Pollution to my arms? Grow vilely old,
 A tale for drunkards in their wine? The mirth
 Of midnight libertines, when they recount
 Their triumphs o'er base women? No! she dies;
 I tear her from my breast, tho' the life-stream
 Should issue with her. Hear me, then, Ariston,
 Do thou prepare a secret draught of death,
 Of power most swift and baneful, and be ready
 Upon my fatal summons.

Arist. Spare me, Sir;
 I like not this employ.

Per. It must be thine.

I have

I have no friend in whom to trust but thee ;
And she shall die—But think'st thou, good Ariston,
I should not hear her first ?

' Arist. Hear her, my Lord !

' Would you then have her live ?

' Per. No ; were my fate

' Involv'd in hers, she should not live. But still,'
Something within me cries that I should hear her.

It is not, can't be love. 'Tis my revenge,
All direful now, that would enjoy her tears,

Her lying oaths of innocence, her new

And added perjuries ; then sink her down

To the dark world, with all her crimes upon her.

' Arist. You see not, Sir, the danger of that meeting.

' Is your heart proof against the powerful charm

' Of beauty soften'd into sighs, and melting

' With the mild languor of imploring eyes,

' More winning now, and shedding gentler beams

' Thro' showers of sorrow. 'Think you here behold her,

' The kneeling charmer, lovely in her tears,

' Pleading for pity, sinking at your feet,

' And dying by your frown.

' Per. Art thou my friend ?

' Oh, merciless ! why dost thou raise before me

' This dangerous image ? 'Tis not to be borne.

' My brain turns round with madness. Oh, ye Powers !

' Why am I not at quiet ? Why is life

' Forc'd on the wretch who strongly begs to die,

' In bitterness of soul ? Who asks no more

' But the grave's shade and silence, there at last

' To sleep for ever, nameless and forgotten ?'

Arist. ' Alas, for pity !'—I will talk no more
On this distressful theme.

Per. Ariston, stay.

Spite of these tears, spite of this fond distraction,
It shall be done. A king may live unhappy,
But not with loss of honour unreveng'd.

' 'Twas mad to think of this. I will not trust

' My eyes against the witchcraft of her charms.'

Then summon all thy firmness, Oh, my soul !

And dare to be accurs'd, since thy sad choice

Is shame or misery. I am resolv'd.

Ye gods who watch o'er the chaste marriage-bed,
 Thou Stygian Jove, and all ye powers infernal !
 Behold, I kneel, as in your awful presence :
 By that invisable, that dreaded lake,
 Th' irrevocable oath that binds even you,
 Here I pronounce, and seal her doom of death.

Enter Eurydice ; she kneels to P'eriander, who, after looking at her some time with emotion, flings away without speaking.

Eur. Not hear me ! not vouchsafe me one poor word !
 'Tis hard indeed—The wretch of many crimes, [*Rising.*
 Whom mercy dares not save, is gentlier us'd.
 His rigid judge is less severe than mine.
 Ye Powers, have I deserved this ! Did my heart
 Ere harbour one loose wish ? Yourselves can tell,
 The morning's orient beam is not more pure,
 More stainless than my truth. Was ever fate,
 Were ever woes like mine ? Even in the hour
 Of general joy to all, while pleasing hope
 Sprung fast within my heart, I find myself
 Undone for ever ; sunk to rise no more.
 Not hear me !—then I know my doom is fix'd.
 And shall I stay to hear the foul surmises,
 The scurril taunts, the false upbraiding pity,
 The keen revilings, that must usher in
 My public sentence ? Can there be in death
 Such pangs, such piercing agonies ? Impossible !
 Death is repose and calm, is soft Elysium
 To thoughts like these. I will prevent their triumph,
 And save myself this shame. 'Tis but to lose
 A few unhappy moments ; 'tis to rest
 The sooner from my cares ; to feel no more
 The bitterness of misery and insult
 That bait my weary soul. Then it is fix'd.
 Spite of the woman, no fond tear shall flow,
 No sigh arise, the coward sex to shew.
 When life is shame, and glorious freedom nigh,
 A Grecian and a queen must dare to die.

[*Exit.*

END of the FOURTH ACT.

ACT

A C T V.

Periander walking disordered, Leonidas following.

LEONIDAS.

O My lov'd master ! have I liv'd to see
This sight of woe ? Alas ! is this to conquer ?
Are these the fruits of victory ?

Per. Away !

Why nam'st thou victory to me, a slave
Subdu'd and tyranniz'd by his worst foes,
His unrelenting passions ? Talk of ruin,
And I will hear thee ; talk of hopeless misery ;
No other strain befits thy master's triumph.

Leon. This is the language of supreme distress,
Impatient of itself. My gracious Lord,
Forgive an old man's talk, who would this moment,
Might his poor life bring back your peace of mind,
With joy resign it.

Per. That were to bring back
The darted sun-beam, ' or recall the flight
' Of unreturning time.' Oh, no ! my soul
Has bid the last farewell to happiness,
To hope itself. And yet I thank thy love,
Indeed I do—But leave me for a while.
I would be private.

Leon. Sir, I dare not leave you——
Forgive these tears——I dare not leave you thus
At variance with yourself. I read too plain
The fatal thought that wakens in your bosom.

Per. And wouldst thou have me live this abject thing ?
This slave of folly ? For I tell thee, blushing
With shame and strong abhorrence of myself,
I cannot tear that woman from my soul,
False, faithless as she is—Then I will die :
That just revenge is still within my power.

Leon. O Jealousy, thou merciless destroyer,
' More cruel than the grave ! what ravages
' Does thy wild war make in the noblest bosoms !'
Too long, my Lord, you listen to the whispers
Of that domestic foe, that bosom traitor.
For mercy's sake, throw not away so rashly

E

The

The jewel of your soul. Some unseen error
Misleads you from the truth, and ruins her.
Grant her a moment's audience.

Per. I have sworn
That she shall die.

Leon. Is then her sacred life
Of so small price, to cast her thus away
With blind precipitance? Your Queen, my Lord,
The fairest form, the most exalted mind,
Once so ador'd and lov'd, to whom your soul
Still cleaves with fondness! Can you give her up,
The mother of your darling, Polydore,
Unheard, untry'd, to death and infamy?
Can you do this?

‘ *Per.* Oh, thou, whose eye beholds
‘ And pities the frail heart of erring man!
‘ Ruler of heaven and earth! or still these passions,
‘ That rage in tempest here, or strike in mercy,
‘ And free me from my pain—What can I do?
‘ My solemn vow is gone up to high heaven,
‘ And wouldst thou have me break it?

‘ *Leon.* That rash oath
‘ Nor does, nor ought to bind. The gods refuse it.
‘ Should you, too late, discover she is wrong'd—
‘ Think on it well—Oh, what a life of horrors
‘ Remains for you! I tremble but to name them.
‘ The sad and silent meltings of vain sorrow;
‘ The thorn of keen remorse; the sting of love,
‘ Inflam'd by fond reflection, hourly fighting
‘ For what he never, never hopes to find;
‘ With these, late-coming, but no more to leave you,
‘ Despair accurs'd. Dreadful society!
‘ Yet such will share your day and night, and haunt
‘ Your court, your throne, your solitude, your couch.
‘ Alas, my Lord!’

Per. Oh, by my soul's strong anguish,
I would most gladly blot out from my thoughts
All memory of past time! I yet would question
The waking evidence of every sense,
To give her back that virtue, those fair beams
That shone on our first loves. Then was I blest'd
Beyond the race of men, belov'd and loving,

Honour'd and happy ; and my name as odour
Pour'd forth, and breathing freshness all around.
Oh, days of dear delight ! That I could fix
For ever there, and think no farther on !
I will, if possible.

Leon. Oh, happy change !
Confirm this gentle purpose, favouring Heaven !
I fly to bring her hither.

Per. Stay thee yet.
I would resolve, but cannot. Love and rage
By turns assail me ; melt me now to mercy,
Now rouse me to distraction——Oh, my heart !

Leon. Then punish the sole cause of all your pangs :
On the great criminal, on Procles' head
Discharge the fulness of a righteous vengeance,
And justify the gods. Let the rack tear
The traitor's limbs ; and as he howls with anguish,
Exort confession from him of the lies,
The dark aspersions, that have well nigh ruin'd
Your injur'd, virtuous Queen, and tortur'd you.

Per. What hast thou done ? Oh, that detested name !
Thou know'st not half my madness—that curs'd name
Has set my brain on blaze, and call'd up there
Ten thousand furies. Hell ! hast thou not heard
What shame and scorn, what vileness and confusion
He heap'd upon my head—and she the cause ?

Leon. Oh, Heaven ! and is this retribution thine ?
Must virtue know what vice alone should feel ?

Per. Forbear, fond man. That Heaven thou dar'st
Just, tho' mysterious, leads us on unerring, [accuse, ^
Thro' ways unmark'd, from guilt to punishment.
I vow'd, alas ! and with strong adjurations
Bound that just vow, to set my country free.
This, to my father, on his bed of death,
Solemn I swore—But, Oh, blind lust of greatness !
Thro' wantonness of will I lightly weigh'd it,
Nor fear'd the hour of terrible account.
That hour is come : and what avails it now
That I with equal hand and gentle rule
Have sway'd my people ? I am punish'd most,
Where I had bid my soul be most secure
Of happiness for years——Ha ! Polydore !

E 2

Enter

Enter Polydore.

I said I would be private.

Pol. Oh, my father!

Here let me kneel for ever, weep these eyes
To blindness, and ne'er know a thought of comfort.

Per. What would my Polydore?

Pol. Alas! what means

This common face of woe that meets my sight
Where'er I turn? Even now, while happy Corinth
Blazes with triumph; while the neighbouring shores
Resound to heaven her voice of general joy,
The palace is in tears. Her silent courts
Are dark with mourning, as if Death and Ruin,
Not Victory, had fix'd their mansion here.

Per. There is a cause, my son, a dreadful one.
But leave me to myself.

Pol. Am I then grown

A horror to your eyes? What is my crime,
That thus, with alienated look, you turn
As from some baleful object? Yet, my father,
Oft have you sworn, that in this face you saw,
And lov'd your darling Queen.

Per. Away, thy looks,
Thy words distract me.

Pol. Whither shall I fly?

Where hide this hated head? My mother too,
As now I left her, pressing full her eyes
With fix'd and earnest mournfulness on mine,
Stream'd into tears; then clasp'd me to her bosom
With such sad passion, such transported tremblings,
As parting lovers that must meet no more.
I begg'd to know the cause: again she press'd me
With fonder eagerness, and sighing cry'd,
Say to the King, my heart has never err'd.

Per. By Heaven, my soul melts at the piteous tale.
O Polydore——

Enter an Officer.

Off. My Lord, the prisoner, Medon,
Attends, and prays admittance to your presence.

Per. Ha! Medon! Dost thou dream? Medon alive!
Did I not charge thee strict to cast him forth

That

That moment to the fury of the people?
How hast thou dar'd to disobey?

Off. Dread Sir,

As to his fate I led him, pale and trembling,
At sight of the tumultuous crowd around,
With utmost instance he requested of me
To save him yet a moment; for he had
Secrets of prime concernment that requir'd
The King's immediate ear. We hardly 'scap'd
Into the southern tower; th' unnumber'd rabble,
With cries and threats, demanded forth their foe.
At hazard of my life I ventur'd down,
Sooth'd, flatter'd, promis'd them they should have justice.
They are but now dispers'd.

Per. Leonidas,

My heart misgives me at that miscreant's name.
But let him enter.

Enter Medon.

Med. O King, renown'd for gentleness and mercy!
The noblest praise! see prostrate at your feet
A criminal, who comes to merit pardon,
By fair discovery of some weighty truths,
That much import your soul's repose and health.

Per. Say on; and if thy heart has form'd a hope
Of one hour's after-life, take heed thy tale
Be strictly just to truth.

Med. Thus groveling here.

With shame and sharp remorse I own my crime.
Misled by that usurper, who, with me,
Now shares the due reward of guilt like ours,
To pleasure him, unhappy that I was!
I told, I know not what of your good Queen.
Would I had perish'd first! for all was false,
And she most innocent.

Per. Perdition on thee!

What do I hear?

Med. I fill'd Ariston's ears

With monstrous tales, which his plain honesty,
Alas! too rashly credited——

Per. Ye gods!

And could your thunder sleep? Pernicious slave!
Hadst thou as many lives as crimes, not one

Should 'scape my justice——' Ah, Leonidas!
 ' Was ever such black treachery?'—Forgive thee!
 ' Thy doom shall be of signal dread and warning
 ' To all succeeding minions.' Drag him hence,

[*To the Guards.*

And guard him at the peril of your heads.

[*Exit Medon guarded.*

Leon. Amazing villainy!

Per. Oh, fly, my son!

Find the poor mourner out, and in my name
 Say all that weeping penitence can plead,
 Or love returning promise. My full heart
 Will more than make it good. And may the power
 Of soft persuasion wait upon thy lips. [*Exit Polydore.*
 As from enchantment freed, the mists disperse
 By which my eyes were held——That injur'd fair!
 How shall I meet her soft forgiving look,
 Whom I so much have wrong'd!

Leon. Thrice happy turn
 Of unexpected fate!

Per. But let me fly
 Into her gentle arms; there lose the horrors
 That have distracted me; there lose myself
 In love's ecstatic joys.

Enter Ariston.

In happy time
 Thou com'st, Ariston. We were both deceiv'd,
 And I revoke my order. But curs'd Procles
 Shall pay me dear for all.

Arist. He has, my Lord,
 And the sad tale is terrible. I shrink
 But to recount it. Slumbering conscience rous'd,
 And flashing in his face the startling prospect
 Of his past life, furious he dash'd his head
 Against his prison walls. I found him fallen;
 A piteous spectacle; rolling in blood,
 Deform'd with pain: for agonizing death
 Sat hideous on his brow. Faintly he drew
 His parting breath; yet all that breath went forth
 In blasphemies, assailing Heaven with curses,
 The ravings of despair, for frustrating
 His impious purpose on the Queen.

Ptr.

Per. How dreadful

' This period to a life like his !' The hand
Of Heaven is greatly just——But, Oh, my friends,
These strange events have well nigh overturn'd
This tottering brain. I feel I know not what
Of joy and terror, high amaze and transport,
All blended here, and working in wild tumult.

' *Leon.* 'Tis but the motion of a troubled sea,
' After fore tempest sinking to a calm.
' All will be well, my Lord. Repose and health
' Await you in her arms. What bliss is yours !
' A second union of your meeting souls !
' A better nuptial morn, with love new-rising,
' To shine for ever !'

Enter Melissa.

Per. *Melissa !—Ha ! speak——*

Mel. Oh, my royal mistress !

The dews of death are cold upon her brow.

Per. What mean thy fatal words ?

Mel. Falsely accus'd

Of what her soul most loaths, and to despair
By your unkindness urg'd, the Queen, alas !
Has drunk a deadly draught.

Per. Oh, heaven and earth !

Are these at last my hopes ? 'Tis I—Oh, horror !

'Tis I have murder'd her——

SCENE *opening, discovers Eurydice sitting, Polydore
kneeling by her.*

Ye righteous gods !

Oh, give her back to life, and to your justice

I bow this guilty head ?——What's to be done ?

Leonidas, Ariston, fly, my friends,

' Call, gather all our sages ; bid them try

' Their sovereign skill.' My crown to him that saves her.

Eur. It cannot be. Already death invades
My shivering bosom. Yet a little moment,

And I shall be with those that rest for ever.

But here, in this last awful hour, I swear,

By that dread world, whither my soul is parting,

I never knew pollution. I am still

Your true and loyal wife.

Per.

Per. I know thou art,
Thou dying innocence. My fatal blindness,
Destruction on my head! has ruin'd thee.
My life! my soul's best joy! and must I lose thee?
Lose thee for ever?—Wretch! rash fool!—Oh, yet
Forgive my madness!

Eur. Thus, in thy lov'd arms
Each unkind thought is lost. Now I die pleas'd:
Now all is well—Death! thou art here— [Dies.]

Mel. Ah, she expires! The last dim mist swims o'er
Her closing eyes!

Per. One moment, thou fair spirit,
One moment tarry for me—Thus we join,
To part no more— [He draws his sword to stab himself.]

Arist. Ah! Sir—

Leon. My Lord, what means
This fatal fury?

Per. Cruel men, away.
And would you then detain me longer here
On this loath'd spot, to linger out old age
With darkness and despair? To curse the hour
That gave a murderer birth? Would you, my friends,
Have me live thus?

Arist. Ye gods, assuage his grief!

Per. These righteous gods have cast me off for ever.
My broken vow—Oh, terrible! it hangs,
A bursting thunder, o'er my head. 'I see,
' And tremble at the sight, th' enquiring judge,
' Beyond these heavens, high on his throne of terrors,
' His fix'd and dread regard turn'd full upon me!
' And look, behold, the minister of vengeance
' But waits his nod to strike me thro' the centre!'

Pol. Alas, my father!—

Per. O my son, my son!

I have undone thee too. How dare I look
On that dear face, where thy lost mother's sweetness
Smiles strong reproach, and charms me into madness?
Then farewell, reason; farewell, human converse;
Sun, day, and time, farewell!—All hail, despair!
Eternal darkness, hail!—Say'st thou I've lost her?
No, no; we will not part. Thus let me press
Her clay-cold lips, thus weep my soul away

On her chaste bosom here. Oh, yet, my love!
My better life! Oh, yet lift up thy eyes!
Oh, speak to me!

Leon. Alas, she hears you not!
The soul is fled for ever.

Per. O my Queen!

[He throws himself by the body; the rest stand weeping and silent.]

Arist. Gently raise him.

Per. *[Raising himself up.]* Ha! there—save me! 'tis he! the King of terrors!

Lo, how the ghastly vision glares upon me
With his fix'd beamless eyes!—What path is this,
Dreary and deep, thro' which he drags me on?
' Bless me!—look there—what shivering forms are these,
' Thin as the passing air, that skim around me?
' And now th' infernal world hath shut me in.'——
But see the Furies arm'd! see their fell serpents,
' That rouse themselves to sting me! Is there none,
No power, to screen them from me?

Leon. Gracious Sir,
Where is that patience——

Per. Soft—I see her plain.
Yonder on high she sits amid the gods,
Who wonder at her charms—And dost thou smile
Upon thy murderer?—Thus let me kneel,
And, weeping, worship thee—Ha! seest thou there
Yon flaming pool? And what damn'd soul is that,
Rising from the mid deeps, that beckons me?
He wafts me still—By hell, 'tis hated Procles,
' The cause of all my ruin!—Traitor, yes,
I come, I fly, to plunge thee deeper still
In this red sea of tortures——Oh!——

Arist. He dies!

Pol. Oh, matchless horror!

Leon. Bear him gently hence.
Was ever sight like this?—O Jealousy,
This is thy dreadful work. May future times
Learn here thy power, and mark, with heedful eyes,
From thy blind rage what mighty mischiefs rise.

END of the FIFTH ACT.

EPI.

E P I L O G U E.

Written by AARON HILL, Esq.

Spoken by a Girl in Boy's cloaths, tripping in hastily.

OH, gentlemen!—I'm come, but was not sent ye:

A voluntier—Pray, does my size content ye?

Man, I am yours; sex, blest'd as Heaven can make ye;

And from this time, weak woman, I forsake ye.

Who'd be a wife, when each new play can teach us,

To what fine ends these lords of ours beseech us?

At first, whate'er they do, they do—so charming!

But mark what follows; frightful, and alarming!

They feed too fast on love, then sick'ning tell us,

They can't, forsooth, be kind—because they're jealous.

Who would be woman, then, to sigh and suffer,

And wish, and wait—for the slow-coming proffer?

Not I—farewel to petticoats and stitching,

And welcome dear, dear breeches, more bewitching.

Henceforth, new-moulded, I'll rove, love, and wander,

And fight, and storm, and charm—like Periander.

Born for this dapper age, pert, short, and clever;

If e'er I grow a man, 'tis now, or never.

Well, but what conduct suits this transformation?

I'll copy some smart soul of conversation.

Should there be war, I'd talk of fields and trenches;

Should there be peace, I'd toast ten favourite wenches.

Should I be lov'd—Gadso! how then? No matter;

I'll bow, as you do, and look foolish at her.

And so, who knows, that never means to prove ye,

But I'm as good a man as any of ye?

Well, 'tis a charming frolic, and I'll do't:

Sirs, have I your consent? What say ye to't?

Yet hold—Perhaps they'll dread a rival beau;

I may be what I seem, for aught they know.

Ladies, farewel—I should be loth to leave ye,

Could an increase of pretty fellows grieve ye:

Each, like myself, devoted ne'er to harm ye,

And full as fit, no doubt, to serve and charm ye.



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