

BERENICE
...
A TRAGEDY
ADAPTED FROM THE FRENCH
OF JEAN RACINE
BY
JOHN MASEFIELD

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BERENICE

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ST. GEORGE AND THE DRAGON

London: WILLIAM HEINEMANN.

BERENICE

A Tragedy

*Translated from the French of
Jean Racine*

By

JOHN MASEFIELD



LONDON: WILLIAM HEINEMANN

CHARACTERS.

TITUS

BERENICE

ANTIOCHUS

PAULINUS

ARSACES

PHENICE

RUTILIUS

This play was translated for the use of the Hill Players and was produced by them on November 24th, 1921, with the following cast:—

TITUS	...	Mr. John Lanyon.
BERENICE	...	Mrs. Keatinge.
ANTIOCHUS	...	Mr. R. G. Carritt.
PAULINUS	...	Mr. W. H. Nurse.
ARSACES	...	Mr. R. B. B. Tollinton.
PHENICE	...	Miss J. Masefield.
RUTILIUS	...	Mr. R. Harris.

ACT I.

ANTIOCHUS.

Let us stay here a moment. I can see
That all this stately palace is unknown
To you, Arsaces.
This lonely room is where the Emperor comes
To find some quiet from the cares of Court.
Here sometimes, too, he comes to see the Queen :
The Queen's apartments lie beyond that door.
And now, Arsaces, go to see the Queen,
And tell her that I beg that she will grant
What I dare ask, some secret words with me.
Say I regret to be importunate.

ARSACES.

You, Lord, importunate? You, her faithful
friend ;
You, generously careful of her interests ;
You, that Antiochus who loved her once,
One of the greatest Kings in all the East !
Even if she be about to marry Titus,
Does that put such a distance 'twixt you two ?

ANTIOCHUS.

No. Go, my friend. Mind not those other
matters ;

See if I may but speak with her alone.

[*Exit* ARSACES.]

Alas, Antiochus! Can I ever dare
To tell the Queen I love her? Why, I tremble
Already, and my agitated heart
Now fears the moment it so much desired.
Queen Berenice has left me without hope;
She ordered me never to speak of love.
Five years I have been silent; five long years,
Hiding my love under a veil of friendship.
And now to-day I *have* to speak with her.
Titus, they say, is marrying her to-day.
But can I think that she whom Titus plans
To make his Empress, will be kind to me
More than she was of old in Palestine?
Titus is marrying her, and at the altar
I come to tell her that I love her too.
What good can come to me from telling her?
Ah! I must go and not displease her thus.
I will withdraw, and go, and without speaking
Pass far away from her—forget her—die.

[*Pause.*]

I cannot always suffer from such torment,
Nor shed these secret tears unknown to her
And lose her, through the fearing her displeasure.
Oh, lovely Queen, and why should you be vexed?
I do not come to beg you not to marry;
I do not come to beg that you should love me;
Ah! woe is me! I only come to say
That now, even now,
After so long being certain that my rival

Would find some fatal drawback to his marriage,
I find that I was wrong; that all can be,
And that your marriage now is being prepared.
Oh, sad example of long constancy!
After five years of love and empty hope
I am still faithful, though I hope no longer.
She could not blame me, she will pity me.
Whatever happens I will speak to her.
Alas! what can a hopeless lover fear,
Having resolved to see her face no more?

[*Enter ARSACES.*]

Can I go in, Arsaces?

ARSACES.

Lord, I have seen the Queen—
I only pierced the crowd with difficulty;
She is surrounded with adoring people
Drawn to her palace by her coming greatness.
Titus has ceased his mourning for his father
And takes to wooing, and the rumour goes
That before night the happy Berenice
Will change the title "Queen" for that of
"Empress."

ANTIOCHUS.

Alas!

ARSACES.

But how can such news trouble you?

ANTIOCHUS.

So, then, I cannot speak alone with her?

ARSACES.

Lord, you will see her. She has been informed
That you would see her here at once alone.
She granted your desire with a look,
And doubtless waits a favourable moment
To escape the crowds of courtiers that surround
her.

ANTIOCHUS.

Enough. And those important orders given—
Have you fulfilled them?

ARSACES.

Lord, you know my zeal.
There are some ships prepared in Ostia harbour
Ready to sail the instant you command;
But whom do you intend to send in them?

ANTIOCHUS.

One can but go when I have seen the Queen.

ARSACES.

Who can but go?

ANTIOCHUS.

Myself.

ARSACES.

You, King Antiochus?

ANTIOCHUS.

Yes, when I leave this palace,
I shall leave Rome, Arsaces, and for ever.

ARSACES.

I am surprised, and justly. What, great King,
After Queen Berenice has kept you here
For three long years, far from your State, in
Rome ;
Now, when she needs your presence at her
marriage,
When her great lover, Titus, marrying her,
Prepares such glory for her !

ANTIOCHUS.

Arsaces, leave this talk, it troubles me :
Let her enjoy her fortune.

ARSACES.

Ah, my Lord,
Her coming glory makes the Queen forget you,
And enmity succeeds friendship betrayed ?

ANTIOCHUS.

Not so. I never hated the Queen less.

ARSACES.

What then? Has the new Emperor grown
proud
Since his accession, and been cold to you ?
Does any feeling of his change of mind
Drive you to go from Rome ?

ANTIOCHUS.

Titus has never seemed the colder to me.
I should be wrong to make complaint.

ARSACES.

Why go, then?

What fancy makes you your own enemy?
Heaven raises to the throne a Prince who loves
you,

A Prince who saw you in the war seek death
Or glory, in his steps; whose princely courage,
Helped by yourself, subdued the rebel Jews.

The Prince remembers well the famous day
Which ended the long siege. Do you remember?

The enemy quiet in their triple rampart,
Watching unharmed our impotent attacks,
And you advancing with the scaling ladders,
Carrying death among them up the walls?

That was the day, the day you were near
death,

The day when Titus found you almost dead,
Bleeding from many wounds, and kissed you
there

As the most gallant man in the forlorn.

Now, sir, you ought to wait for your reward
For all your blood shed then. If you must go
Back to your kingdom, go not unrewarded,
Wait till Imperial Caesar sends you back
Laden with honours as the friend of Rome.

Can nothing change your mind? You do not
answer.

ANTIOCHUS.

What would you have me say?

I want one moment's speech with Berenice.

ARSACES.

Well, Lord ?

ANTIOCHUS.

Her fate will settle mine.

ARSACES.

And how ?

ANTIOCHUS.

If it be true that she will marry Caesar,
If Titus makes her Empress, I shall go.

ARSACES.

What makes this marriage so distasteful to you?

ANTIOCHUS.

When we have gone, I'll tell you.

ARSACES.

I am troubled.

ANTIOCHUS.

Here is the Queen. Good-bye ; do as I bade.

[*Enter BERENICE and PHENICE.*]

BERENICE

At last I can escape the importunity
Of all the crowds of friends whom fortune makes
me.

I come from all their tedious acclamation
To find a friend who speaks out of his heart ;

And I have been impatient, for I thought
You had neglected me.
I said of old that good Antiochus
Was constant in his loving care for me ;
He was my friend in good or evil fortune ;
And now to-day, when the gods seem to give me
Honours which I would gladly share with him,
This same Antiochus hides from my sight
And leaves me to an unknown crowd alone.

ANTIOCHUS.

Then it is true, this that the rumour says,
That marriage is to end the long, long courtship ?

BERENICE.

Lord, these last days have been most sorrowful ;
For this long mourning that the Emperor kept,
Had kept him from me, and his love seemed
changed
From those old days when he was always with
me.
Now he is silent, troubled, ever weeping,
His only speeches seem like sad farewells ;
So you can judge of my anxiety.

ANTIOCHUS.

Now his first tenderness has come again ?

BERENICE.

You saw last night how his religious cares
Were backed by solemn vote, when in full house
The Senate ranked his father with the gods ?

His pious mourning now gives place to love,
And thought for her he loves. At the same
time,
Not even telling me of his intention,
He called the Senate, and by proud decree
Enlarged the frontiers of my Palestine,
Joining to it Arabia and Syria.
And if I can believe the voice of friends
And his own promises so often given,
He means to crown me Queen of that expanse,
To add to all my titles that of Empress ;
And he is coming here to tell me this.

ANTIOCHUS.

And I come here to say good-bye for ever.

BERENICE.

What are you saying ? Good-bye ?
And your face changes.

ANTIOCHUS.

Madam, I have to go.

BERENICE.

And not say why ?

ANTIOCHUS.

No ; I must go and see her face no more.

BERENICE.

Speak, Lord ! What is the mystery of your
going ?

ANTIOCHUS.

Then listen to me for the last, last time.

Lady, if in your high degree of glory
You ever think about your childhood's home,
You may remember that I saw you there
And loved you.

You may remember, too, how once your brother,
Agrippa, spoke for me, and it may be,
Perhaps, you were not vexed to hear I loved
you.

Then, to my sorrow, Titus came: he saw you,
He pleased you, for of course he came before
you

In all the splendour of a man who bears
The vengeance of Rome in his two hands,
Making Judæa pale.

I think that I was one of those first conquered;
And then it came to pass that your own lips
Told me to speak no more of love to you.
And yet I hoped; a long, long time I hoped,
Following like your shadow in the palace.
And then you made me promise, made me swear
Never to speak again of love to you.
But when you made me swear, my heart knew
well

That I could only love you till I die.

BERENICE.

You must not say this.

ANTIOCHUS.

It is five years since I said anything;

And after this I shall be silent always.
And then I went with Titus to the wars,
Hoping to die, or hoping at the least
That deeds of mine might make you hear my
name.

And we were at the war, Titus and I ;
All that I did was far surpassed by him.
I came behind in war, even as in love.
Then, when the war and the long siege were
over,

And the last pale and bloody-featured rebels
Came from their burnt-out ruins and their
hunger,

He came in triumph home, and you with him,
I stayed behind, and went from place to place,
Where you had been, where I had worshipped
you ;

But my despair drove me to follow you,
And Titus welcomed me and brought me here.
And then I hoped—always I had some hope—
That something here might make a way for me.
But now my fate's fulfilled ; your glory comes.
There will be plenty here to pray for you,
To watch your glorious crowning, without me.
I could not bring rejoicing, only tears,
So I shall go, loving you more than ever.

BERENICE.

I did not think that on my marriage day
Any man's son would dare make love to me.
I will forget all that. I'll say farewell,

God knows that in the honours coming to me
 I hoped that you would watch my happiness,
 Because, like all the world, I honoured you,
 And Titus loved you, and you admired Titus.
 You are like Titus, and a hundred times
 I have been pleased to see your likeness to him.

ANTIOCHUS.

Yes, that is why I go. I go too late.
 Would I had gone before, and spared myself
 This news of Titus and the grief it causes,
 Then I should not have heard you speak his
 name
 Nor known your love for him, but gone, and seen
 No more your eyes, which see me every day
 Yet cannot notice me.
 Lady, I go. My heart's too full to speak ;
 I know that I shall love you till I die.
 Fear not that I shall talk of my misfortune,
 But if you hear that I am dead, then think
 That once I was alive. Good-bye. Good-bye.

[*Exit.*]

PHENICE.

Oh, how I pity him! Such faithfulness
 Deserved more luck, good Lady. Don't you pity
 him ?

BERENICE.

His going so
 Leaves me, I grant you, with a troubled mind.

PHENICE.

I would have kept him back.

BERENICE.

I keep him back ?

No ; rather would I lose the memory of him.
Could I encourage such a senseless love ?

PHENICE.

Titus has not yet spoken out his mind.
Rome looks upon you with most jealous eyes.
Lady, the rigour of the Roman laws
Makes me afraid for you.
Romans can marry none but Roman women.
Rome hates all royalty, and you are Queen.

BERENICE.

Phenice, the time for terror is gone by,
And Titus loves me. He is all-powerful.
Have you not seen the splendours of to-night ?
The torches, and the lamps and bonfires burning ;
The Eagles of the Army standing ranked ;
The crowd of Kings, the Consuls and the Senate,
All lending all their glory to my lover.
Purple and gold and laurels for his victory,
And all those eyes from every land on earth
Staring on him alone with greedy looks,
Watching that splendid port, that gentle pre-
sence.

Can one see this not thinking as I think,
That even if he had been obscurely born,

The world would still have known him as its
King?

Now, while all Rome is making prayer for Titus,
And offers sacrifice for the new reign,
Let us too go and offer prayer for him.
Then I will go to him, and we shall speak
All that our full hearts hold for one another.

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

[TITUS, PAULINUS.]

TITUS.

Has no one seen the King of Comagena,
Or does he know that I await him here ?

PAULINUS.

Sir, I have seen the Queen.
The King of Comagena had been with her,
But had gone out shortly before I came.
I have left word to warn him of your orders.

TITUS.

Enough. What was the Queen doing ?

PAULINUS.

Sir, she was going out
To pray the gods for your prosperity.

TITUS.

Too kind Princess, alas !

PAULINUS.

Prince, why be sad for her ?
Half of the Eastern world will now be hers.
You pity her ?

TITUS.

Paulinus, let all leave you here with me.

[*Exit* GUARDS.]

Alas ! Rome is uncertain of my plans
And waits to know the fortunes of the Queen.
The secrets of her heart and mine, Paulinus,
Are now the talk of all the earthly world.
Now the time comes, I must explain myself.
What do they say about the Queen and me ?
Speak ; what do you hear ?

PAULINUS.

I hear on every side .
About your virtue, Emperor, and her beauty.

TITUS.

What do they say about my love for her ?
What do they expect from it ?

PAULINUS.

You can do what you please—love—cease to
love ;
The Court will think as you and take your part.

TITUS.

Yes, I have seen that Court, and close at hand,
That Court too careful to applaud its master ;
I've seen that Court approve the crimes of Nero,
Go on their knees to him, and consecrate him.
Idolatrous courtiers shall not be my judge ;
I will not lend my ear to flatterers.
Now, dear Paulinus, let me see and hear ;

Be you my ears and eyes, interpret for me
The varying hearts of all my countrymen';
Now speak! What ought Queen Berenice to
hope ?

Will Rome be cruel or indulgent to her ?
Will Rome be angry if so fair a Queen
Be raised as Empress to the throne of Caesar ?

PAULINUS.

Lord, there can be no doubt, whate'er the cause,
Be it reason or caprice, Rome does not want her
To be the Empress here. They say, of course,
That she is good and beautiful, and seems
Made to be Empress over human beings ;
They say she has a truly Roman heart,
And has a thousand virtues ; but, my Lord,
You know the rest. Rome, by unchanging law,
Will have no foreign blood mixed with her blood,
Will recognise no children born of marriage
Made against Roman custom, Roman law.
Besides, you know, in banishing her Kings
Rome took a hatred to the name of King.
Though Rome is faithful to the race of Caesars,
That hate of Kings and Queens is furious still.
For Julius Caesar longed for Cleopatra,
But dared not marry her. She was a Queen.
Mark Anthony, who made an idol of her,
Dared never marry her. And since that time
Caligula and Nero, monstrous men,
Who stamped beneath their feet the laws of
Rome,

Still feared that law, and did not dare to make
Marriages hateful to the Roman heart.

You have commanded me to be sincere—

Well, in the East, a slave, whom you set free,
A man still half a slave, a branded man,
Marked with hot irons, Lord, the freed man

Pallas,

Married two Queens of Berenice's blood ;
And do you think that you could marry her
Without outraging Rome while men know that ?
You marry her, while three days' sail from

Rome

A branded slave, freed from our fetters lately,
Marries her relatives !

That is what Romans think about your love.

It may well be that ere this evening comes

The Imperial Senate's self will come to you,

To tell you all that I have told you now.

To say that Rome falls at your very feet

But asks that you should make another choice

More worthy her and you.

You might be thinking of your answer, Lord.

TITUS.

Alas ! they ask me to give up myself.

PAULINUS.

It is a bitter struggle, I confess.

TITUS.

Bitterer a thousand times than you can think.

It has been very life to see her here.

Each day to see her, love her, and to please her.
I have a hundred times given thanks to God
For bringing all the East beneath my father
And putting bleeding Rome into his hands.
I have desired my dead father's place,
Much as I loved him,
In hope of making Berenice the Empress.
And now, Paulinus, when the time has come,
In spite of all my love and all her beauty,
In spite of all my lover's oaths and tears,
Now that I have Imperial power to crown her,
Now that I love her deeper than before,
Now that a happy marriage might unite us
After five years of prayers and hopes and love,
After all these, Paulinus— Oh, you gods!

PAULINUS.

What is it, Lord ?

TITUS.

I part from her for ever.
If I have made you speak to me to-day,
It was because I wished that your great friendship
Should help to kill my love which dies most hard.
Believe me, it is hard to conquer love ;
My heart will bleed for more than one day yet.
And now, to-day, Rome watches what I do.
Shameful to me and ominous to her
If my first act should scatter every custom
And build my happiness on broken law.
I have resolved to make this sacrifice ;

But how prepare Queen Berenice for it?
How can a man begin?
These last eight days full twenty times I've tried
To tell her this,
But at the first word my poor stumbling tongue
Seemed frozen in my mouth, I could not speak.
I hoped my sorrow and anxiety
Might make her feel our common misery;
But she has not suspected and knows nothing.
Now I have gathered all my constancy,
And I am waiting for Antiochus:
I shall give him the prize I cannot keep,
And bid him take her back into the East.
He will leave Rome to-morrow with the Queen,
And I shall see her now and tell her this,
I shall now speak to her for the last time.

PAULINUS.

Lord, I expected this from your great glory;
I knew your heart would not destroy its work,
That you, the conqueror of so many nations
Would conquer all your passions if you willed.

TITUS.

Glory is cruel under its fine names;
My sad eyes find her lovelier than glory.
If I have dared the death in seeking glory,
It was because her beauty lit in me
A longing for all lovely, splendid things.
You know quite well I did not always have
Renown or glory. I'd an evil name,

My youth was spent within the Court of Nero
And followed ways I love not to recall.
It was my seeing her that changed my life,
And to please her I loved, I did strange things
And came back triumphing.
I owe her everything, and as reward,
Reward for all the good that she has done me,
I shall say "Go, and never see me more."

PAULINUS.

Sir, do you fear that she will think you faithless?
The very Senate is surprised to think
How many honours you have given the Queen.
You have given her magnificence of power,
Up to Euphrates you have made her Queen
Over a hundred peoples.

TITUS.

But petty solace for a grief so great.
I know the Queen; I know only too well
That she has asked for nothing but my heart.
I loved her, she loved me; and since that day—
I cannot say if it were glad or sorry—
Her life has had no object but her love.
Unknown at Court, a stranger here in Rome,
She passes all her days with no more thought
Save that she see me some time, and the rest
Expect to see me.
And if, as sometimes happens, I am late,
I find her weeping.
All that there is most powerful in love—

Joy, beauty, glory, virtue, are in her.
For five long years each day that I have seen her
Has given me the joy the first sight had.
Let's think no more, because the more I think,
The more my made-up mind shakes in its
purpose.

I know my duty and must follow it,
Whether I live or die is no great matter.

[*Enter* RUTILIUS.]

RUTILIUS.

My lord, Queen Berenice would speak with you.

TITUS.

Paulinus—

PAULINUS.

So, Lord, you seem all ready to draw back.
Remember all your noble plans ; it's time.

TITUS.

Well, let us see her. Let her enter there.

[*Enter* BERENICE.]

BERENICE.

Do not be vexed if with a too great zeal
I break the secret of your solitude.
While the Court rings with all your gifts to me,
Would it be right were I to hold my peace ?
Your mourning time is past ; you are alone,
And none can hinder you ; and yet, my Lord,

You do not come to see me as of old.
I hear you offer me another crown,
Yet hear it not from you. Give me more love,
Give me less glory, Lord. Can your love show
Only through orders of the Senate, then?
Ah, Titus! what new care does your love bring
me?
Can it give naught but princedom? Ah! since
when
Have you believed that greatness touches me?
A look, a sigh, a word out of your mouth,
Makes the ambition of a heart like mine.
See me more often, do not give me things.
Are all your moments given to the Empire?
After eight days have you no word to say?
Lord, reassure my trouble with a word.
Did you then speak of me when I surprised you?
Lord, was I at the least within your thought?

TITUS.

Doubt it not, Lady. I attest the gods
That you are ever present in my thought.
I swear that never absence' self, nor time,
Can tear you from this heart that worships you.

BERENICE.

You swear eternal worship, but you swear
Most coldly. Why bring in the gods to witness?
Did you want oaths to overcome mistrust?
My heart does not contain mistrust of you;
I should believe you on a simple sigh.

TITUS.

Lady!

BERENICE.

Well, Lord? But what, you do not answer.
You turn your eyes and seem confounded, Sire.
Can you not see me, save with looks of grief?
Does your mind always mourn your father's
death?
Can nothing charm away this eating care?

TITUS.

Would God my father lived still,
I'd be happy!

BERENICE.

Lord, this mourning
Justly proceeds from piety; but now
You have paid tribute to his memory
Enough; you owe now other cares to Rome.
I dare not speak to you about myself,
But formerly I could bring peace to you,
And you have listened to me even with pleasure.
You mourn a father still (alas, poor grief!)
While I, the memory makes me shudder still:
They would have dragged me from the man I
love,
Dragged me, whose broken-heartedness you
know
When you have left me even for a day.
I think that I should die upon the day
That they forbade me see you.

TITUS.

Lady, alas! what do you say to me?
What time is this for speech? For pity, stop!
I am unworthy and your goodness kills me.

BERENICE.

Unworthy, Lord! How could you be?
Does what you call my goodness weary you?

TITUS.

No, Lady, never. But since I must speak,
My heart seems burning in a living fire.

BERENICE.

Go on.

TITUS.

Alas!

BERENICE.

Speak!

TITUS.

Rome, the Empire—

BERENICE.

Well?

TITUS.

We'll go, Paulinus—I cannot speak to her!

[*Exit* TITUS and PAULINUS.]

BERENICE.

What, leave me thus and never say the reason!

What fatal thing is this? What have I done?
What does he want? What does this silence
mean?

PHENICE.

It seems more strange the more one thinks on it.
Does anything come to your memory
That might have prejudiced him against you,
Lady?

BERENICE.

Believe me, dear,
When I recall the memories of the past,
From when I saw him first to this sad day,
Loving him well has been my only fault.
Could I have said a thing that has displeased
him?

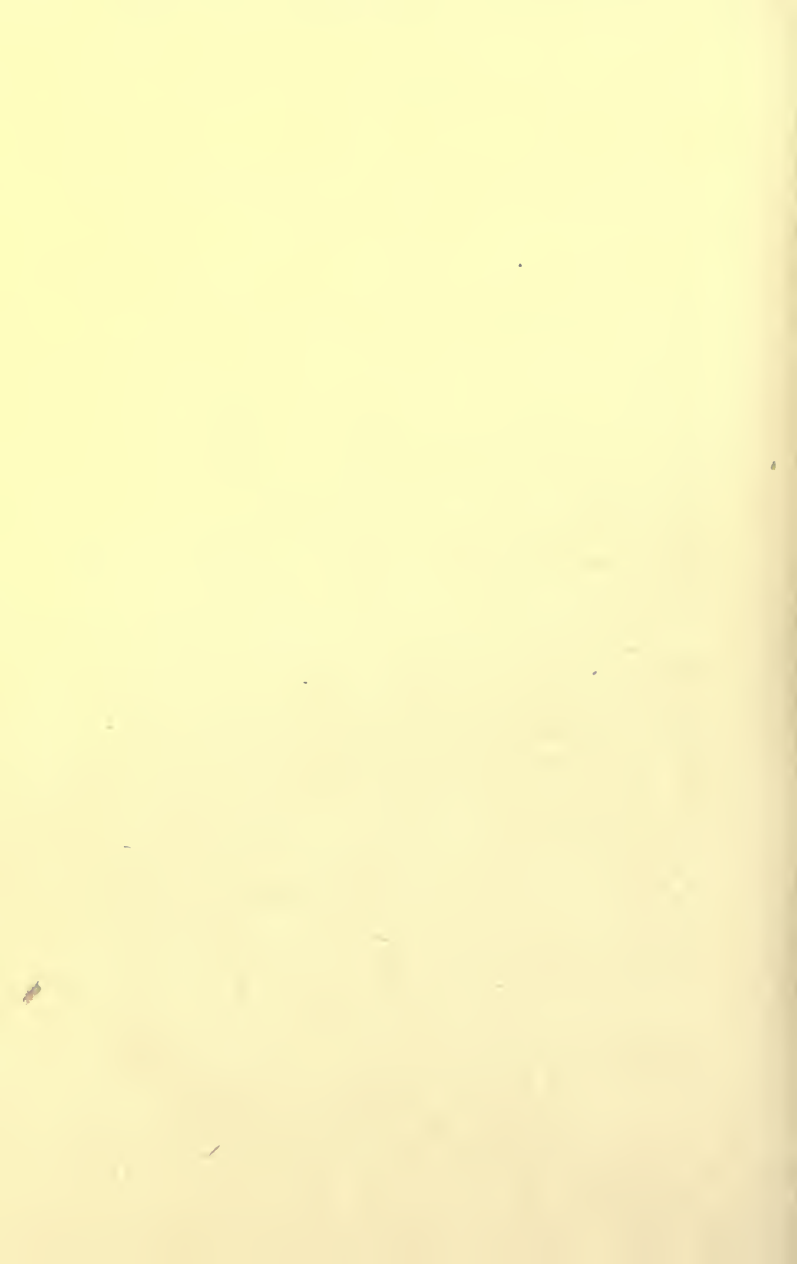
Have I with too much warmth returned his gifts?
Or blamed his depth of mourning for his father?
Or is it that he fears the hate of Rome?

Alas! if that were true,—but no! so often
He has declared to me a hundred times
His love is stronger than their cruel laws—
He must explain his silence.

I cannot live in this uncertainty;
I could not live, thinking that I had hurt him,
Or that he did not care. Wait, let me think!
Now that I think, it seems explained to me.
He knows the love of King Antiochus,
Perhaps that vexes him. And I was told
That he expects Antiochus even now.

Let us not seek elsewhere the explanation ;
Doubtless the trouble that alarms him so
Is but a light suspicion easily killed.
Would Heaven, Titus, that a rival came,
A man more powerful than you, to tempt me,
To put more Empires at my feet than you,
To buy my love with sceptres numberless,
While you had nothing for me but your love—
Ah ! then, dear Titus, you would see the price
I put upon my heart. But come, Phenice,
Let us be quiet, for he loves me still,
And I do wrong to count myself unhappy.
If he be jealous, 'tis a sign of love.

CURTAIN.



ACT III.

[TITUS, ANTIOCHUS, ARSACES.]

TITUS.

So you are going, Prince? What sudden cause
Presses your going? (One might call it flight.)
You hide from me until you say good-bye.
What, do you leave us as an enemy?
What will the Court, what will the Empire say?
Come! as your friend, have you a grudge against
me?

Have I neglected you in all this crowd
Of Kings and Sovereigns pressing in the Court?
You were my friend during my father's life,
Friendship was all I had to give you then.
Now, when my friendship has so much to give,
You fly from me.

Why, can you think that I forget old friends
And think about my greatness more than them,
And cast them off as things of no more use?
Prince, you are more than ever needful to me.

ANTIOCHUS.

I, Lord?

TITUS.

Yes, you.

ANTIOCHUS.

Alas, Sir, what can you expect but prayer
From an unhappy Prince ?

TITUS.

Prince, I remember that my victory
Owed half its glory to your gallant deeds.
Rome has seen many of your captives pass,
And in the Capitol the spoils you took
Even from the Jews.
Now I expect from you no deeds of war,
Only your voice. I know that Berenice
Counts you her one true friend now here in
Rome ;
You, only, make one heart and soul with us.
Now, in the name of this most constant friendship
I bid you use the power you have upon her.
See her on my behalf.

ANTIOCHUS.

I ? See the Queen ?
Sir, I have said farewell to her for ever.

TITUS.

See her but once again for me, Antiochus.

ANTIOCHUS.

Lord, you must speak to her. She worships
you.
Why rob yourself of such a charming task ?
Sir, she is waiting for you with impatience.
I answer, Sir, for her obedience.

She herself told me, she will marry you:
You need but see her, Sir, for she is won.

TITUS.

Time was, so sweet a speech would have seemed
sweet ;

I should have been most happy. Even to-day
I thought to be most happy ; yet to-day
I have to leave her, Prince.

ANTIOCHUS.

Leave her ? You, Lord ?

TITUS.

Such is my destiny.
This is no marriage day for her and Titus ;
I pleased myself in vain with that sweet hope.
Now, Prince, to-morrow she must sail with you.

ANTIOCHUS.

O Heaven ! What do I hear ?

TITUS.

Pity my greatness !
Being master of the world, I rule her fortune ;
I can make Kings and then can unmake them,
And yet my heart is not my own to give.
Rome, ever bitter against Kings, disdains
An Empress born in the purple with a crown
And all a hundred Kings for forefathers.
My heart is free to love some common woman,
Rome would with pleasure see me marry one,

Even the most worthless in the city bounds—
Even Julius Caesar bowed to this decree.
To-morrow, if she still be here, the Romans
Will come in fury here to bid her go.
Spare her this insult. Since we must surrender
Let us surrender finely. Long ago
I should have told her of this cruel thing.
Now at this very time she waits for me
To tell her of the trouble of my heart.
O spare my heart the pain of telling her.
Go to her and explain my misery :
Above all, beg that I may keep from her.
But let us both avoid that deadly meeting
That would destroy our last poor constancy.
And if the hope that I shall always love her
Can make the bitterness of parting less,
Swear to her, Prince, I shall be always faithful
And carry to my grave my love for her.
She was the one desire of my heart
And I shall love her always till I die.

[*Exit* TITUS.]

ARSACES.

So Heaven does justice to you! You will go,
But she'll go with you. Heaven does not take her,
But gives her.

ANTIOCHUS.

Give me the time to breathe!
It is too great a change and I am shaken :

All that I love is put into my hands—
Can I believe what I have heard just now?
And if I can believe, should I be glad?

ARSACES.

But, my great Lord, what can I think of you?
What barrier is there to your happiness?
A little while ago you came from her
All shaken from your last farewells with her,
Going, because her marriage broke your heart.
And now the marriage is the broken thing,
So what can grieve you now? Go where love
calls you.

ANTIOCHUS.

Arsaces, I am charged to take her home.
For a long time I shall be close to her;
It may be that in time her heart will change
And think my perseverance something sweet.
Titus o'erwhelms me here with all his greatness:
No one can be compared to him in Rome;
But in the East the Queen may count me some-
thing.

ARSACES.

Doubt it not, Lord, all happens as you wish.

ANTIOCHUS.

Ah! how we glory to deceive ourselves!

ARSACES.

And why "deceive ourselves"?

ANTIOCHUS.

Ah! I might please her.
Might it not be that she would hear my love?
Among her woe, neglected by the world,
Might she not turn to me and stoop to me
For help that she would know my love would
render?

ARSACES.

Who could console her better than yourself?
Her fortune changes. Titus flings her off.

ANTIOCHUS.

Alas for that great change! Now I shall know
Even from her tears how much she loves him,
friend.
For I shall see her weep, and pity her.
The only fruit of love that I shall gather,
Tears, which are not for me.

ARSACES.

Why do you thus delight to wound yourself?
Did ever a brave heart show such a weakness?
Open your eyes, my Lord, and bravely think
How many reasons make the Queen your own.
Since Titus from to-day has cast her off,
Think thus. The Queen is forced to marry
you.

ANTIOCHUS.

Forced?

ARSACES.

Yes. But grant her, first, some days for
tears ;

Let her first rush of sorrow run its course.

Then all will speak for you ; her hate, her
vengeance,

Absence of Titus, presence of yourself,

Time, and three kingdoms that she cannot rule—

Your kingdoms side by side, the better joined.

Interest, reason, friendship, all things bind you.

ANTIOCHUS.

I breathe again. You give me life, Arsaces,

It is a happier prospect. Why delay ?

Let us perform what we are bidden do.

We'll find the Queen, and, since the Emperor bids,

Tell her that Titus now abandons her.

No ; stay ! What am I doing ? Can I do it ?

I take this cruel task ? My heart shrinks from it.

The lovely Berenice to hear from me

That she is cast aside ! Unhappy Queen !

Who could have thought that this would be your
fate ?

ARSACES.

Her anger will not fall on you, but Titus.

You only speak at his request, my Lord.

ANTIOCHUS.

No, we'll not see her ; we'll respect her grief.

Plenty will come to tell her of her fall.

Do you not think she will be sad enough

To learn to what contempt Titus condemns her,
Without this final thrust, to have the news
By Titus' only rival? Let us go.
By going thus we shall escape her hatred.

ARSACES.

Sir, here she comes! Think what to do and say.

ANTIOCHUS.

O heaven!

[*Enter BERENICE.*]

BERENICE.

So, Lord, you are not gone?

ANTIOCHUS.

Lady, I see you looked for Caesar here.
Blame only Caesar if you find me here
In spite of my farewells.
Perhaps by this I should have been in Ostia,
Had he not strictly ordered me to stay.

BERENICE.

He wanted you alone. He avoids us.

ANTIOCHUS.

He only kept me here to speak of you.

BERENICE.

Of me, Prince?

ANTIOCHUS.

Yes.

BERENICE.

What could he have to say?

ANTIOCHUS.

Thousands of other men could tell you better
Than I.

BERENICE.

What do you mean?

ANTIOCHUS.

O be not vexed!

Others at such a moment might not keep
Silence so well, but would rejoice, perhaps,
Would swell with pride and joy to break the
news;

But I, still trembling; I, as you know well,
Reckoning your quiet dearer than my own,
Would rather vex you than distress you, Queen.
I fear your sorrow more than your annoyance.
Before to-night you will acquit me, Queen.
Lady, good-bye.

BERENICE.

But what strange speech! O stay!
O Prince, I cannot keep my grief from you.
You see before you a distressful Queen,
Whose heart seems killed, who only asks two
words.

I think you said you feared to vex my quiet,
And therefore will not speak.
Lord, if my peace of mind be precious to you,

If I were ever precious in your eyes,
Lighten the darkness that is on my soul.
What did the Emperor say to you?

ANTIOCHUS.

For God's sake!

O, Lady,

BERENICE.

Is my heart's wish so little to you, then?

ANTIOCHUS.

And if I speak, you will for ever hate me.

BERENICE.

I beg you speak. I order you to speak.

ANTIOCHUS.

O gods!

Lady, once more, you'll wish I had not
spoken.

BERENICE.

Prince, either calm my mind by speaking now,
Or be assured that here our friendship ends.

ANTIOCHUS.

Queen, after that, I cannot remain silent.
So, since you wish it, I will break the news.
Have no illusions now. For I shall tell you
Miseries, perhaps, of which you dared not think.
I know your very heart. Now be prepared,
For I shall strike your heart's most tender place.
Titus has ordered me . . .

BERENICE.

What has he ordered?

ANTIOCHUS.

To say to you, that you . . . that you and he . . .
That you and he must separate, for ever.

BERENICE.

Separate? What? Who? I and he, you say?

ANTIOCHUS.

Lady, let be. I must be just to him.
All that a loving and a generous heart
Could hold of wild despair in its worst moment
Was there in Titus' heart. He wept. He loves
you.

But little serves it if he love you still:
The Roman Empire dreads to have a Queen,
So you must separate. You go to-morrow.

BERENICE.

Go! Misery! Phenice!

PHENICE.

Ah, blessed Lady,
This is a bitter blow! It daunts your soul.
Show your soul's greatness.

BERENICE.

Titus to leave me after all his vows,
Titus, who swore to me! I cannot think it!
He cannot leave me.
Some trap is made to tear us from each other,

For Titus loves me, he does not wish my death
Go now and see him, I would speak with him.
Perhaps you turn his innocent mind against me.

ANTIOCHUS.

And you could look at me, and think that I—

BERENICE.

You long for this too well to persuade me.
Know, I do not believe you. But true or false,
Keep you for ever from my sight henceforth.
Do not you leave me, Phenice, I am faint.
Help me, good Phenice, put your arm here—so.
[*Exeunt BERENICE and PHENICE.*]

ANTIOCHUS.

“Keep me for ever henceforth from her sight!”
I think I shall, for should I not have gone
Had Titus not against my will restrained me?
She thought to hurt me, but her hate has helped
me.

You saw me going sick with hopeless love,
Jealous and in despair and wild of head;
And now, Arsaces, after this dismissal
Perhaps I may set out with resignation.

ARSACES.

No, Lord; that less than ever. You must stay.

ANTIOCHUS.

I stay? To see myself disdained!

See myself punished for the guilt of Titus !
With what injustice and indignity
She doubted of my truth.
She said that Titus loved her, I betrayed her !
Ungrateful Queen, to reckon me a traitor !
At such a time, too ; at the fatal moment
When I was telling of my rival's sorrow.

ARSACES.

Lord, what a pain you take to grieve yourself !
Let her grief go. Let its first anguish pass,
For in a week or month it will be passed.
Stay till it passes.

ANTIOCHUS.

No, I go, Arsaces.

All things excite me to be gone from here,
So let us go. And for a long, long time
Let us not speak of her.
The day is no yet over. Go now, you ;
See if her grief has not brought death to her.
Run ! I will wait until you come to me ;
We'll know if she's alive before we start.

CURTAIN.



ACT IV.

BERENICE.

Phenice is late. How slowly the time passes!
The bitter time! My strength is going from me.
Yet rest seems death to me. How late Phenice
is!

It is ill-omened, and it frightens me.
It means that she will have no message for me,
That cruel Titus has not heard her speak,
But flies from her.

[*Enter PHENICE.*]

Now, Phenice, have you seen the Emperor?
What did he say? When will he come?

PHENICE.

I saw him, Lady,
Told him the trouble of your soul, and saw
His tears.

BERENICE.

And is he coming?

PHENICE.

Doubt not, madam,
He's coming; but you cannot see him thus;
You are disordered, madam; calm yourself,

And let me raise these fallen veils of lawn
And scattered hairs with which your eyes are
 hidden,
And marks of tears.

BERENICE.

No, leave them, Phenice; he shall see his work.
What use are these vain ornaments to me?
If all my love and tears and sighs and sorrow—
Nay, if my certain death can call him not,
How shall these useless helps of beauty call him?
They do not call him now.

PHENICE.

Why be unjust?
I hear a noise—the Emperor is coming.
See him alone, within.

[*They go off.*]

[*Enter TITUS and PAULINUS.*]

TITUS.

Go to the Queen, Paulinus. I will see her.
Leave me alone a little while; now go.

PAULINUS [*Going*].

I fear this seeing the Queen!
Gods, save his glory and the country's honour.
Now for the Queen!

[*Exit PAULINUS.*]

TITUS [*Alone*].

Titus, the time has come ; what will you do ?
Have you prepared farewells, and steeled your
heart

And braced it to the pitch of cruelty ?

For in this bitter struggle now prepared

You need not bravery, but barbarism.

Now you will see her beauty all in tears ;

And seeing that, can I fulfil my duty,

And break the heart I love, the heart that loves
me,

And cast her off for ever ?

Why should I break that heart ? Who bids
me ? I do.

Even now the Romans cry about the palace,

The State is trembling at the precipice.

Is there no other means but this to save it ?

Would they not see the virtue of the Queen ?

Would they not presently confess her Roman ?

After such tears and love and faithfulness

Rome would be kind to us. Ah, no ! not Rome !

Hatred of Kings is stamped in every soul,

And cannot be effaced by fear or love.

Rome, casting out her Kings, condemned your
Queen.

Coward I am. I love. Give up the Empire,

Go to the wide world's end, and live with her ;

Make place for those more fit than I to reign.

Yes, but are these those deeds in the great style,

That were to crown me in men's memories ?

Now I have reigned eight days, and till this day

I have done all for love, nothing for honour.
Now I must do what honour asks of me
And break the only link that hinders me.

[*Enter* BERENICE.]

BERENICE.

Leave me, I say! you cannot keep me back,
I must speak with him. So, Lord, you are here
Well, is it true that Titus casts me off?
That we must part, that Titus orders it?

TITUS.

Lady, have pity on a wretched Prince.
We must not here give way to tenderness;
I have sufficient bitterness at heart
Without your tears to torture me still more.
Recall that heart, which many times of old
Showed me my duty; for the time has come;
Put by your love, look simply at my duty
And fortify my heart against yourself,
And help me overcome my love for you.
Duty demands that we must separate.

BERENICE.

You tell me this! I felt sure that you loved me!
My soul that loved you only lived for you.
Were you then ignorant of your Roman laws
When for the first time I confessed my love?
Why did you not, then, say "Oh, wretched Queen,
There is no hope! Why pledge your love to me?
Give not your heart to one who cannot take it."

But no, you took it, but to fling it back.
Full twenty times they have conspired against us :
Then was the time—why not have cast me then ?
I should not then have had this cruel blow,
Even when I hoped to be most happy here.
Now when your love commands and is a King,
When Rome is silent and your father dead,
And all the world is bowing at your feet,
When I have nothing more to fear—then you—
You spurn me.

TITUS.

Ah, in the past I would not face the future ;
Examined nothing, hoped the impossible ;
Perhaps for death rather than these farewells.
The very obstacles increased my love.
But this is not a question now of loving ;
I have to reign.

BERENICE.

Then reign, harsh King, and be content with glory.
I will not vex you. No ; I only waited
Before I would believe that those same lips
After a thousand oaths of love for me,
Would order me away for evermore.
I wished to hear you say it in this place.
Now nothing more. Good-bye for ever, then.
For ever, Sir, it is a cruel word
When one's in love.
A month will come, a year will come, and we—
We shall be parted by a world of seas.

How shall we suffer when the day begins
And the sun climbs the sky and then declines,
And Titus will not see his Berenice.
And all day long she will not look on Titus !
Perhaps you will not feel those days so long ;
They may be long for me, too short for you.

TITUS.

Lady, I shall not live for many days ;
I hope that presently news of my death
Will show you that I cannot live without you.

BERENICE.

If that be true, why should we separate ?
I do not speak of marriage with you now :
Rome has condemned me not to see you more :
But do you envy me the air you breathe ?

TITUS.

You can do all things, Lady. Stay, if you wish ;
I'll not forbid it ; but I feel my weakness ;
It would be endless struggle, endless fear,
And endless watching to restrain my steps
From turning towards your beauty all day long.

BERENICE.

Well, Lord, and what could happen if I stayed ?
Would all your Romans rise against me, Lord ?

TITUS.

Who knows ? Suppose they did ? Suppose
they clamoured ?

I should be forced to back my choice by blood ;
And if they did not speak and did not rise,
They would expect that some day I should pay
them.

What would they not demand for their com-
plaisance ?

How can I guard the laws I cannot keep ?

BERENICE.

You count the tears of Berenice for nothing ?

TITUS.

That is unjust.

BERENICE.

Unjust ? For unjust laws, that you can change,
You would condemn yourself to lifelong grief.
You say Rome has her rights. Have you not
yours ?

And are Rome's interests dearer than our own ?
Come, speak !

TITUS.

Alas, my Queen, you torture me !

BERENICE.

You are the Emperor, Lord, and yet you weep.

TITUS.

Yes, Lady, it is true. I do. I weep.
When I accepted here the Emperor's purple,
Rome made me swear to maintain all her laws.
I must maintain them. Already many times

Rome has most strictly proved her Emperors ;
They have obeyed her orders to the death,
To their sons' deaths. Rome and the glory of
Rome
Have won the victory in those Roman hearts ;
And I, in leaving you, do as they did,
But think I pass them in austerity.

BERENICE.

All things seem easy to your barbarism.
I will not speak again of staying here.
Think you I would have wished, ashamed,
despised,
To stay among the mocks of those who hate me ?
Do not expect me to break out against you,
But if the gods have pity of my tears,
And if your harsh injustice touches them,
And if before I die I, the sad Queen,
Wish for some bold avenger of my death,
I'll seek that bold avenger in your heart—
My love, my love that cannot be effaced,
My present grief and my past happiness,
Are the enemies that I will leave you, Lord.
I leave my vengeance unto them. Good-bye.

[*Exit.*]

PAULINUS.

Lord, she has gone. Will she then leave the
country ?

TITUS.

Paulinus, follow her. I think she is dying.
Run to her help.

PAULINUS.

My Lord, her women will be round her there,
They'll turn her thoughts. Fear not, the worst
is over.

Go on, my Lord, the victory is yours :
I know you could not hear her without pity ;
I couldn't keep from pity even in seeing her—
But you must take long views, and you must
know

That happiness will come from this brief pain :
All the wide world will ring with praise of you.

TITUS.

I hate myself! I am a brute! Even Nero
Was not so cruel. Oh, I cannot bear it!
If Berenice should die!
Come, let Rome say what it may.

PAULINUS.

What, Lord ?

TITUS.

I know not what I say.
Excess of trouble overwhelms my spirit.

PAULINUS.

Do not be troubled for what Rome will say.
The news that she has gone is spread abroad ;
Rome, which was murmuring, is triumphing,
The altars are all smoking in your honour,
And in the streets the crowd, singing your virtues,
Crown all your statues with eternal laurel.

TITUS.

Ah, Rome! Ah, Berenice! Unhappy fate,
To be a lover and an Emperor!

[*Enter* ANTIOCHUS *and* ARSACES.]

ANTIOCHUS.

What have you done, my Lord? For Berenice
Is perhaps dying in Phenice's arms—
Hears and knows nothing, but cries out for death;
And you alone, my Lord, can save her life.
Lord, why delay? Go, show yourself to her,
And speak one word.

TITUS.

And what word can I say?

[*Enter* RUTILIUS.]

RUTILIUS.

Lord, all the Tribunes, both the Consuls, and
The Conscript Fathers of the Roman Senate,
With one voice in the State's name call for you.
A great impatient crowd is with them, Lord;
They wait your presence in your audience
chamber.

TITUS.

So be it. O great gods, I beg you save
That heart so like to die!

PAULINUS.

Come, then, my Lord, we will attend the Senate.

ANTIOCHUS.

Go to the Queen first.

PAULINUS.

My Lord, you cannot ! 'Twere indignity,
It were an insult to delay your coming,
Trampling the majesty of Rome beneath you.

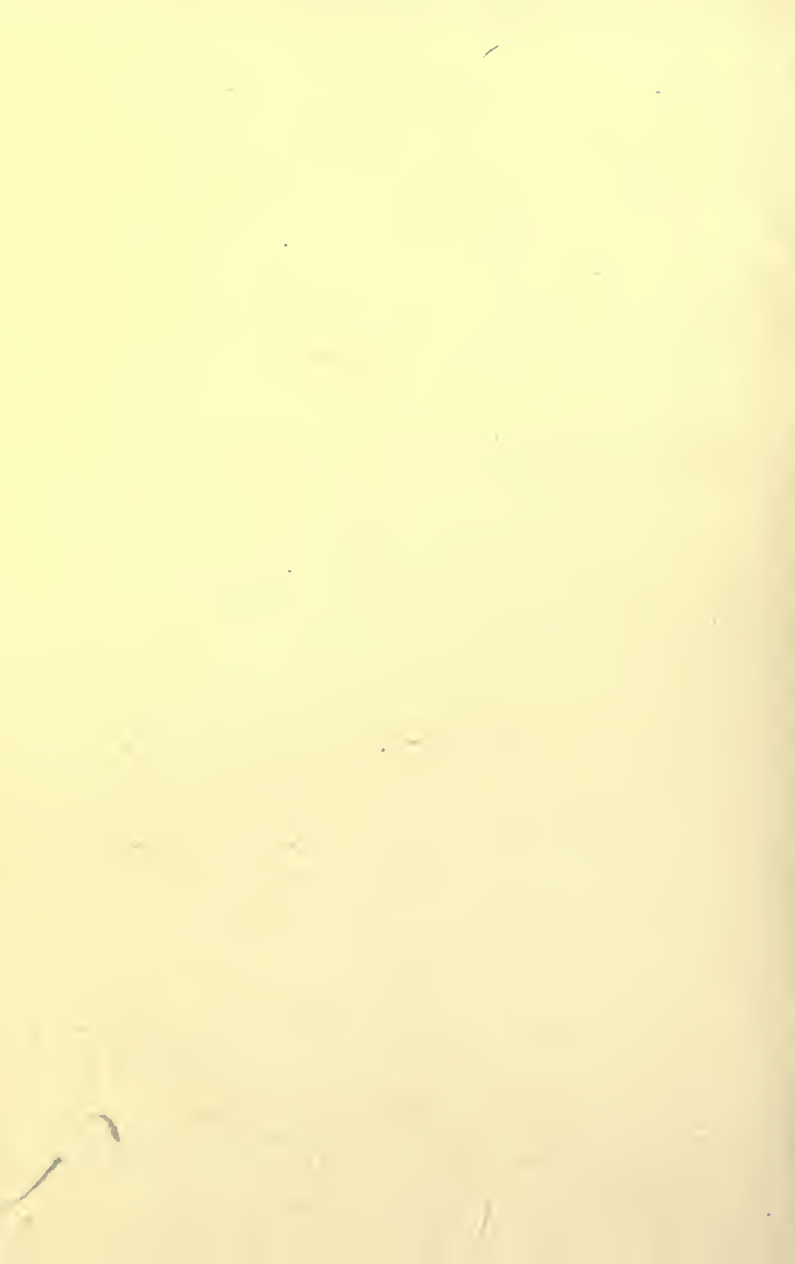
TITUS.

Enough, Paulinus, I will hear the Senate [*To*
RUTILIUS].

[*Turns to* ANTIOCHUS.]

Prince, this is duty not to be put by ;
Go, see the Queen. I hope on my return
She will not doubt my love.

CURTAIN.



ACT V.

ARSACES.

Where shall I find this all too faithful Prince?
Heaven grant that at this moment I may tell
him
Of happiness such as he dare not hope.
Oh, happy chance, he comes! Sir, the Queen
starts—

[*Enter* ANTIOCHUS.]

ANTIOCHUS.

She starts?

ARSACES.

She starts this evening.
She is most hurt that Titus leaves her there
So long in tears. She is not angry now,
But she renounces Rome and Emperor both,
And would be gone before the Romans see her
In her distress, and glory in her flight.
She writes to Caesar.

ANTIOCHUS.

And Titus?

ARSACES.

Titus has not appeared before the Queen,
For the great crowd of Romans rings him round,
Shouting the titles that the Senate gives him.

Those titles, and the crowd, and that applause,
Become so many honourable chains
To keep him from the Queen and steel his heart.
In spite of all the sad Queen's sighs and tears,
I think perhaps he will not see her more.

ANTIOCHUS.

Fortune has played with me, and many times
I have seen all my plans blown by the wind ;
My heart scarce hopes, lest it should anger
Fortune.

But Titus comes.

[*Enter* TITUS. *Exit* ARSACES.]

TITUS.

Let no one follow me.
Prince, I am come to keep my promise here—
Come with a broken heart. I wish to see her.

ANTIOCHUS.

So dies the hope that you had given me !

[*Enter* BERENICE and PHENICE.]

BERENICE.

I do not wish to hear. My mind's made up ;
I wish to go. Why show yourself to me ?
Why bring more bitterness to my despair ?
Aren't you content ? I do not wish to see you.

TITUS.

Please listen !

BERENICE.

The time's past.

TITUS.

Lady, a word!

BERENICE.

No, not a word. You wish that I should go;
I am resolved to go, and I shall go.

TITUS.

No, stay.

BERENICE.

Why should I stay?

To hear the people cheer for my misfortune?

Do you not hear their cruel joy already?

What have I done to them that they should
cheer?

What have I done—save love yourself too well!

TITUS.

It is a senseless crowd. Why listen to it?

BERENICE.

There's nothing here that does not wound my
heart.

This room where we were lovers, you and I,
Come, Phenice.

TITUS.

You are unjust to me.

BERENICE.

You must go back, Lord, to the sacred Senate
Which now applauds you for your cruelty.
Are you content with what they say and vote?
And have you promised to forget my memory—
That will not expiate your love for me.
Have you made promise that you'll hate me
always?

TITUS.

No, I have promised nothing. O my gods !
Lady, for five years you and I have loved ;
I never loved you better than to-day,
Never so tenderly, never so dearly.

BERENICE.

"You loved," and yet at your command I go.
Do you find beauty in my heart's despair?
What use to me your heart's most useless
love?

Show me less love for very pity's sake,
And let me at the least set forth persuaded
That I am leaving one who is not sad
To see me go.

[TITUS reads a letter.]

That is a letter that I wrote to you ;
Read it, most cruel one, and let me go.

TITUS.

You shall not go ! I cannot grant you leave.

No, for your going is a stratagem ;
You mean to kill yourself.
Call for Antiochus. Let him quickly come.

[*Exit* PAULINUS.]

Lady, when first I knew we had to part,
I braced my soul for great unhappiness,
But did not once foresee the tiniest part
Of what I suffer now.

Lady, I might say this : that I am ready
To give up Rome for you and follow you.
Even to the wide world's end to live with you.
But you yourself would blush if I said that,
You would not, without shame behold me so,
See me a worthless Emperor, without Empire,
March in your train, a spectacle to men.
No, to escape these torments of the soul
There is a nobler way, as you know well,
Which men too shaken by misfortune take
When sorrow upon sorrow following close,
Comes like a secret order to surrender.
In this my state I can do anything.
I will not answer that my hand, before you
Put not a bloody end to this our parting.

[*Enter* ANTIOCHUS.]

Come, Prince, come in !

ANTIOCHUS.

Lord, you have honoured me with your esteem,
And I can tell you here, Lord, I have been

A faithful friend to you,
A faithful friend although I was a rival.

TITUS.

My rival!

ANTIOCHUS.

Yes, it's time I told you that.
Lord, I have always worshipped Berenice,
Have striven to kill my love, but could not do it.
At least I could be silent, and I was.
Your change of heart gave me some feeble hope;
But the Queen's tears have wiped away that hope.
She asked to see you, and I called you, Lord,
And you came back. You love her. She loves
you.

I pray the gods to keep their blows from you,
Or cast them upon me, whose life is yours.

BERENICE.

Most generous Princes, I am in despair!
Titus, you know my heart; I can say truly
I never longed for greatness nor for glory.
I loved, I loved and wished to be beloved.
I thought your love had come unto its end.
I know my error now. I know you love me.
I am not worth your trouble, nor deserve
That marrying me your Empire should be broken.
I think that for five years until to-day
My love for you has been a real love.
That is not all. Now, in this fatal moment,
By a last effort I must crown the rest;

I shall obey your orders to the last.
Good-bye, Sir. Reign. I shall not see you more,
Prince, after this farewell, you must be sure
I cannot listen to another's love ;
But live, and make an effort like our own.
I love him, he loves me, and yet we part.
Go, Sir, far from me, and forget your love.
Good-bye. We'll be example to all time
Of the most tender and unhappy love
That ever was in dolorous history.
All is made ready. They are waiting for me.
No, follow not my steps. Good-bye !
For the last time, good-bye, Lord.

[*Exit.*]

ANTIOCHUS.

Woe is me !

CURTAIN.

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