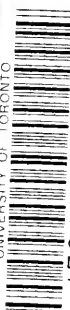


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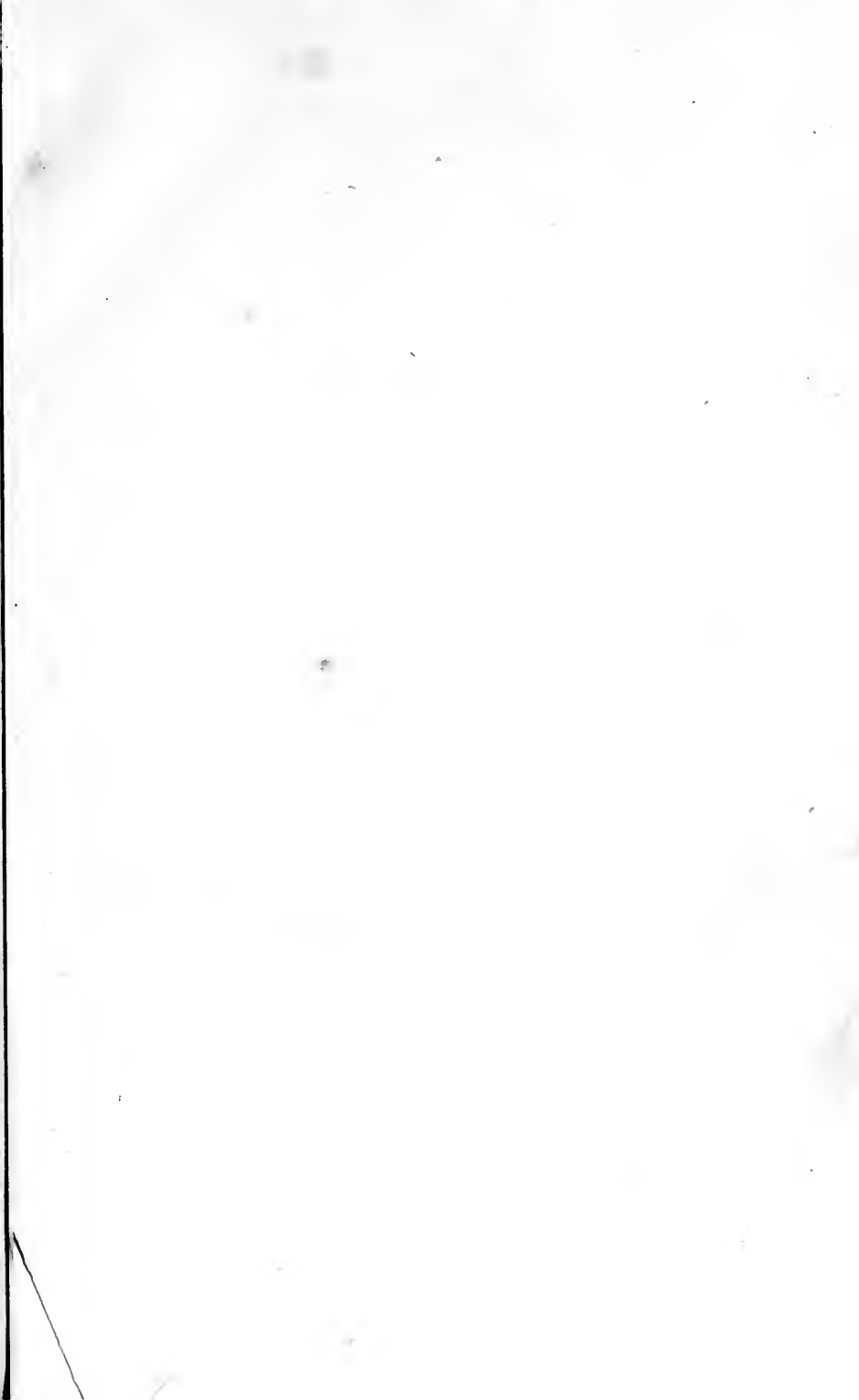
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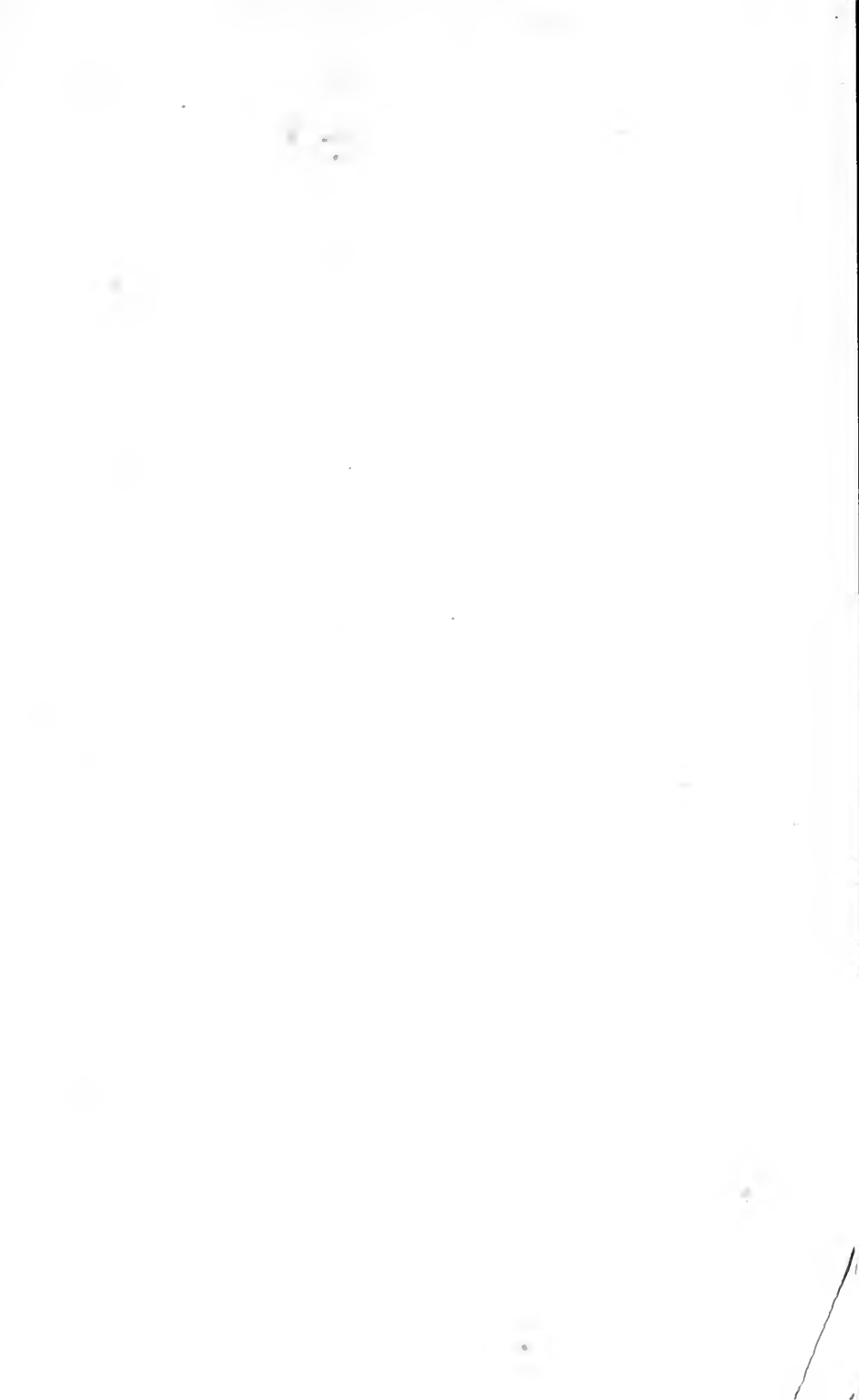


A. W. Christie.









THREE TRAGEDIES.

BERTRAM,

OR

**THE CASTLE OF ST. ALDOBRAND;
A TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.**

BY THE

REV. R. C. MATURIN.

BELLAMIRA,

OR

**THE FALL OF TUNIS;
A TRAGEDY,**

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY

RICHARD SHEIL, Esq.

THE APOSTATE;

A TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

LONDON:—1818.



MA456 B

BERTRAM;

OR,

THE CASTLE OF ST. ALDOBRAND;

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS.



BY

best Charles

THE REV. R. C. MATURIN.



EIGHTH EDITION

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1817.

MAINTENANCE

NO. 1000

PR

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1817

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ST. ALDOBRAND	Mr. POPP.
BERTRAM	Mr. KEAN.
PRIOR of ST. ANSELM.....	Mr. HOLLAND.
1st MONK	Mr. POWELL
2d MONK	Mr. R. PHILLIPS
3d MONK	Mr. BARNARD.
1st ROBBER	Mr. KENT.
2d ROBBER	Mr. COOKE.
HUGO	Mr. CARR.
PIETRO	Mr. COVENEY.
PAGE	Miss CARR.
CHILD	Miss J. CARR.
IMOGINE	Miss SOMERVILLE.
CLOTILDA.....	Miss BOYCE.
TERESA.....	Miss COOKE

Knights, Monks, Soldiers, Banditti, &c. &c. &c.

PREFACE.

IN the Absence of the Author of this Tragedy, the Editor cannot print this edition, which the curiosity of the Public has necessarily rendered a hasty one, without acknowledging in the Author's name, the claims which the Performers and Managers of Drury Lane Theatre have upon his attention.

To those who have witnessed the exertion of Mr. Kean's talents in the finest characters of the Drama, it is unnecessary to say, he in this Tragedy had opportunities, of which the Public rapturously testified how well he knew to avail himself.

It were to neglect a positive duty not here to pay a tribute to the performance of the part of Imogine, by a Young Lady, who will find it a noble, perhaps an arduous task, to realize all the expectations which her successful debüt has excited.

To Mr. Holland, Mr. Pope, Miss Boyce, and the other Gentlemen and Ladies who performed it, as well

PREFACE.

as to Mr. T. Cooke, the Composer of some very effective Music introduced into the Play, the Author's thanks are eminently due.

Several Lines and Speeches which are omitted in Representation, are here inserted. Material omissions however are marked by inverted commas.

PROLOGUE,

Written by J. Hobhouse, Esq.

SPOKEN BY MR. RAE.

TAUGHT by your judgment, by your favour led,
The grateful Stage restored her mighty dead.
But not, when wits of ages past revive,
Should living genius therefore cease to thrive.
No! the same liberal zeal that fondly tries
To save the Poet, though the mortal dies,
Impartial welcomes each illustrious birth,
And, justly crowns contemporary worth.

This night a Bard, who yet, alas! has known
Of conscious merit but the pangs alone ;
Through dark misfortune's gloom condemned to cope
With baffled effort and with blighted hope,
Still dares to think one friendly voice shall cheer
His sinking soul, and thinks to hail it—*here!*
Fanned by the breath of praise, his spark of fame
Still, still may glow, and burst into a flame.

Nor yet let British candour mock the toil
That rear'd the laurel on our sister soil ;
That soil to Fancy's gay luxuriance kind,
That soil which teems with each aspiring mind,
Rich in the fruits of glory's ripening sun—
Nurse of the brave—the land of WELLINGTON.

PROLOGUE.

Here, too, this night—another candidate,
Aspires to please; and trembles for her fate;—
And, as the flower whose ever-constant gaze
Turns to her sun and woos the genial blaze,
To those kind eyes our blushing suppliant bends,
And courts the light that beams from smiling friends;
Oh! calm the conflict of her hopes and fears,
Nor stain her cheek with more than mimic tears.

Since, then, alike each bold adventurer sues
The votary, and the handmaid of the Muse,
Think that the same neglect—the same regard,
Must sink, or save, the actress, and the bard.

BERTRAM;

OR,

THE CASTLE OF ST. ALDOBRAND.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Night, a Gallery in a Convent, a large Gothic window in the extremity, through which lightning is seen flashing. Two Monks enter in terror.

1st Monk. Heaven for its mercy!—what a night is here—

Oh! didst thou hear that peal?

2d. Monk. The dead must hear it.—(*A pause—thunder*). Speak! speak, and let me hear a human voice.

1st Monk. While the dark terror hurtled distantly,
Lapt in the skirts of the advancing clouds,
I cower'd with head full low upon my pallet,
And deem'd that I might sleep—till the strong light
Did, clear as noon day, shew each object round me.
Relic, and rosary, and crucifix,
Did rock and quiver in the bickering glare—
Then forth I rushed in agony of fear.

2d Monk. Among the tombed tenants of the
cloister

I walked and told my beads,
But, by the momentarily gleams of sheeted blue,
Did the pale marbles glare so sternly on me
I almost deemed they lived, and fled in horror.

1st Monk. There is much comfort in a holy man
In such an hour as this. [*Knocking at a door.*]
Ho, wake thee, prior.

2d Monk. Oh! come forth, holy prior, and pray
for us.

Enter the Prior.

Prior. All peace be with you!—'tis a fearful hour.

1st Monk. Hath memory a parallel to this?

2d Monk. How hast thou fared in this most awful
time?

Prior. As one whom fear did not make pitiless:
I bowed me at the cross for those whose heads
Are naked to the visiting blasts of Heav'n
In this its hour of wrath—
For the lone traveller on the hill of storms,
For the tossed shipman on the perilous deep;
Till the last peal that thundered o'er mine head
Did force a cry of—mercy for myself.

1st Monk. (*Eagerly*) Think'st thou these rock-
based turrets will abide?

2d Monk. Think'st thou they will not topple o'er
our heads?

Prior. The hand of Him who rules the storm, is
o'er us.

1st Monk. Oh, holy prior, this is no earthly storm.
The strife of fiends is on the battling clouds,
The glare of hell is in these sulphurous lightnings,—
This is no earthly storm.

Prior. Peace, peace—thou rash and unadvised
man;

Oh! add not to this night of nature's horrors
The darker shadowing of thy wicked fears.
The hand of Heaven, not man, is dealing with us,
And thoughts like thine do make it deal thus sternly.

Enter a Monk pale and breathless.

Prior. Speak, thou hast something seen.

3d Monk.———A fearful sight.

Prior. What hast thou seen?

3d Monk. ———A piteous, fearful sight—

A noble vessel labouring with the storm
Hath struck upon the rocks beneath our walls,
And by the quivering gleams of livid blue
Her deck is crowded with despairing souls,
And in the hollow pauses of the storm
We heard their perishing cries—

Prior. Now haste ye forth,
Haste all—

3d Monk. It cannot be, it is too late;
For many a fathom doth the beetling rock
Rise o'er the breaker's surge that dashes o'er them,—
No help of human hand can reach them there—
One hour will hush their cries—and by the morn
Thou wilt behold the ruin—wreck and corse
Float on the weltering wave.

Prior. Almighty power,
 Can nought be done? All things are possible—
 Wave high your torches on each crag and cliff—
 Let many lights blaze on our battlements—
 Shout to them in the pauses of the storm,
 And tell them there is hope—
 And let our deep-toned bell its loudest peal
 Send cheerly o'er the deep—
 'Twill be a comfort to the wretched souls
 In their extremity—All things are possible;
 Fresh hope may give them strength, and strength de-
 liverance—
 I'll hie me forth with you.

3d Monk. Wilt thou go forth—
 Hardly the vigorous step of daring youth
 May hold its footing on those wave-washed crags:
 And how wilt thou abide?

1st Monk. 'Tis tempting Heaven.—

Prior. To succour man, not tempt my God, I go;
 He will protect his servant.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

The Rocks—The Sea—A Storm—The Convent illuminated in the back ground—The Bell tolls at intervals—A groupe of Monks on the rocks with torches—A Vessel in distress in the Offing.

Enter the Prior and Monks below.

Prior. (*Clasping his hands*). Holy St. Anselm—
 what a sight is here!

1st Monk. Pray for their souls—their earthly part
is doomed—

Prior. Oh! that a prayer could hush the ele-
ments!—

Hold, I do espy a hope, a blessed hope—
That wave hath heaved her from the rock she struck on,
Lo, every arm on board is plied for safety—
Now, all the saints to speed.—

1st Monk. No saint doth hear.

Lo, the recoiling surge drives fiercely o'er her—
In, holy prior, or ere their drowning shriek
Do rive the sense ; in, in, and tell thy beads—

Prior. I will not in, while to that hopeless wreck
One arm doth cling ; while o'er the roaring waste
One voice be raised for help—I will not hence.

Monks above.

She sinks—she sinks—Oh hour of woe and horror!

[*The Vessel sinks—The Prior falls into the arms of
the Monks. The Scene shuts.*

SCENE III.

The Gallery.

Enter the first Monk and the Prior.

1st Monk. Now rest you, holy prior, you are much
moved—

Prior. (*not heeding him*)—All, all did perish—

1st Monk. Change those drenched weeds—

Prior. I wist not of them—every soul did perish—

Enter 3d Monk hastily.

3d Monk. No, there was one did battle with the storm

With careless, desperate force ; full many times
His life was won and lost, as though he recked not—
No hand did aid him, and he aided none—
Alone he breasted the broad wave, alone
That man was saved——

Prior. Where is he? lead him hither.

[The stranger is led in by Monks.]

Prior. Raise to St. Anselm, thou redeemed soul,
Raise high thy living voice in prayer and praise ;
For wonderous hath his mercy been to thee—

2d Monk. He hath not spoken yet—

Stranger. Who are those round me?

Where am I?

Prior. On the shore of Sicily—

The convent of St. Anselm this is called—

Near is the castle of Lord Aldobrand—

A name far known, if, as thy speech imports,

Thou'rt of Italian birth—

(At the name of Aldobrand, the Stranger makes an effort to break from the Monks, but falls through weakness.)

Prior. Tell us thy name, sad man—

Stranger. A man of woe—

Prior. What is thy woe, that Christian love may heal it—

Hast thou upon the pitiless waters lost

Brother, or sire, or son? did she thou lovest

Sink in thy straining sight!—
Or have the hoardings of thy worldly thrift
Been lost with yonder wreck?—

[*To these questions the Stranger gives signs of dissent.*

Prior. Why dost thou then despond?

Stranger. Because I live—

Prior. Look not so wild—can we do aught for
thee?

Stranger. Yes, plunge me in the waves from which
ye snatched me;

So will the sin be on your souls, not mine—

Prior. I'll question not with him—his brain is
wrecked—

For ever in the pauses of his speech
His lip doth work with inward mutterings,
And his fixed eye is rivetted fearfully
On something that no other sight can spy.

Food and rest will restore him—lead him in—

Stranger. (*dashing off the monks as they ap-
proach*)

Off—ye are men—there's poison in your touch,—

[*Sinking back.*

But I must yield, for this hath left me strengthless.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

A Hall in the Castle of Aldobrand.

Enter Pietro and Teresa meeting.

Piet. Hah! Teresa waking! Was ever such a tempest?

Teres. The Lady Imogine would watch all night.—
And I have tended on her. What roused thee?

Piet. Would you could tell me what would give me sleep in such a night. I know of but one remedy for fear and wakefulness; that is a flaggon of wine. I hoped the thunder would have waked old Hugo to open the cellar-door for me.

Teres. He hath left his bed. E'en now I passed him
Measuring the banquet-hall with restless steps
And moody fretful gestures. He approaches.

Enter Hugo.

Piet. Hugo, well met. Does e'en thy age bear memory of so terrible a storm?

Hug. They have been frequent lately.

Piet. They are ever so in Sicily.

Hug. So it is said. But storms when I was young
Would still pass o'er like Nature's fitful fevers
And render'd all more wholesome. Now their rage
Sent thus unseasonable and profitless
Speaks like the threats of Heaven.

Teres. Heaven grant its wrath visit not my kind
Lady!

Hug. Heaven grant, Teresa.
She may be still as happy in these halls,
As when she tripp'd the green a rural maid
And caroll'd light of heart—ere her good father's ruin;
Or our Lord saw and loved her!

Piet. See, if Madam Clotilda be not roused.

Teres. I'm glad, for she's our lady's loved com-
panion
And most esteemed attendant.

Enter Clotilda.

Clot. Is the Lady Imogine risen?

Teres. She hath not rested through the night.
Long ere the storm arose, her restless gestures
Forbade all hope to see her bless'd with sleep.

Clot. Since her lord's absence it is ever thus.
But soon he will return to his loved home,
And the gay knights and noble wassailers
Banish her lonely melancholy.

(Horn-heard without.)

Monk. (without). What, ho.

Hug. There's some one at the gate.
My fears presage unwelcome messengers
At such untimely hours.

Clot. Attend the summons, Hugo.
I seek the Lady Imogine. If 'tis aught
Concerns her or our Lord, follow me thither.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE V.

A Gothic Apartment. Imogine discovered sitting at a Table, looking at a Picture.

Imo. Yes,

The limner's art may trace the absent feature,
 And give the eye of distant weeping faith
 To view the form of its idolatry;
 But oh! the scenes 'mid which they met and parted—
 The thoughts, the recollections sweet and bitter—
 Th' Elysian dreams of lovers, when they loved—
 Who shall restore them?
 Less lovely are the fugitive clouds of eve,
 And not more vanishing—if thou couldst speak,
 Dumb witness of the secret soul of Imogine,
 Thou might'st acquit the faith of womankind—
 Since thou wast on my midnight pillow laid
 Friend hath forsaken friend—the brotherly tie
 Been lightly loosed—the parted coldly met—
 Yea, mothers have with desperate hands wrought
 harm
 To little lives from their own bosoms lent.
 But woman still hath loved—if that indeed
 Woman e'er loved like me.

Enter Clotilda.

Clot. The storm seems hushed—wilt thou to rest,
 Lady?

Imo. I feel no lack of rest—

Clot. Then let us stay—

And watch the last peal murmuring on the blast.
I will sit by the while, so thou wilt tell
Some pleasant story to beguile the time.

Imo. I am not in the mood.

Clot. I pray thee, tell me of some shadowy thing
Crossing the traveller on his path of fear
On such a night as this—
Or shipwrecked seamen clinging to a crag
From which some hand of darkness pushes him.

Imo. Thou simple maid—
Thus to enslave thy heart to foolish fears.

Clot. Far less I deem of peril is in such
Than in those tales women most love to list to,
The tales of love—for they are all untrue.

Imo. Lightly thou say'st that woman's love is false
The thought is falser far—
For some of them are true as martyr's legends,
As full of suffering faith, of burning love,
Of high devotion—worthier heaven than earth—
Oh, I do know a tale.

Clot. Of knight or lady?

Imo. Of one who loved—She was of humble birth
Yet dared to love a proud and noble youth.
His sovereign's smile was on him—glory blazed
Around his path—yet did he smile on her—
Oh then, what visions were that blessed one's!
His sovereign's frown came next—
Then bowed the banners on his crested walls
Torn by the enemies' hand from their proud height,
Where twice two hundred years they mocked the
storm.

The stranger's step profaned his desolate halls,
 An exiled outcast, houseless, nameless, abject,
 He fled for life, and scarce by flight did save it.
 No hoary beadsman bid his parting step
 God speed—No faithful vassal followed him;
 For fear had withered every heart but hers,
 Who amid shame and ruin lov'd him better.

Clot. Did she partake his lot?

Imo. She burned to do it,
 But 'twas forbidden.

Clot. How proyed she then her love?

Imo. Was it not love to pine her youth away?
 In her lone bower she sat all day to hearken
 For tales of him, and—soon came tales of woe.
 High glory lost he recked not what was saved—
 With desperate men in desperate ways he dealt—
 A change came o'er his nature and his heart
 Till she that bore him had recoiled from him,
 Nor know the alien visage of her child.
 Yet still she loved, yea, still loved hopeless on.

Clot. Hapless lady! What hath befallen her?

Imo. Full many a miserable year hath past—
 She knows him as one dead, or worse than dead;
 And many a change her varied life hath known,
 But her heart none.

In the lone hour of tempest and of terror
 Her soul was on the dark hill's side with Bertram,
 Yea, when the launched bolt did sear her sense
 Her soul's deep orisons were breathed for him.
 Was this not love? yea, thus doth woman love.

Clot. I would I had beheld their happier hours,

Hast thou e'er seen the dame? I pray thee, paint her.

Imo. They said her cheek of youth was beautiful
Till withering sorrow blanched the bright rose there—
And I have heard men swear her form was fair;
But grief did lay his icy finger on it,
And chilled it to a cold and joyless statue.
Methought she carolled blithely in her youth,
As the couched nestling trills his vesper lay,
But song and smile, beauty and melody,
And youth and happiness are gone from her.
Perchance—even as she is—he would not scorn her
If he could know her—for, for him she's changed;
She is much altered—but her heart—her heart.

Clot. I would I might behold that wretched lady,
In all her sad and waning loveliness.

Imo. 'Thou would'st not deem her wretched—out-
ward eyes

Would hail her happy.

They've decked her form in purple and in pall.

When she goes forth, the thronging vassals kneel,

And bending pages bear her footcloth well—

No eye beholds that lady in her bower,

That is her hour of joy, for then she weeps,

Nor does her husband hear.

Clot. Sayst thou her husband?—

How could she wed, she who did love so well?

Imo. How could she wed! What could I do but
wed—

Hast seen the sinking fortunes of thy house—

Hast felt the gripe of bitter shameful want—

Hast seen a father on the cold cold earth,

Hast read his eye of silent agony,
 That asked relief, but would not look reproach
 Upon his child unkind—
 I would have wed disease, deformity,
 Yea, griped Death's grisly form to 'scape from it—
 And yet some sorcery was wrought on me,
 For earlier things do seem as yesterday,
 But, I've no recollection of the hour
 They gave my hand to Aldobrand.

Clot. Blessed saints—
 And was it thou indeed ?

Imo. I am that wretch—
 The wife of a most noble, honoured lord—
 The mother of a babe whose smiles do stab me—
 But *thou* art Bertram's still, and Bertram's ever !

(*Striking her heart.*)

Clot. Hath time no power upon thy hopeless love ?

Imo. Yea, time hath power, and what a power I'll
 tell thee,

A power to change the pulses of the heart
 To one dull throb of ceaseless agony,
 To hush the sigh on the resigned lip
 And lock it in the heart—freeze the hot tear
 And bid it on the eyelid hang for ever—
 Such power hath time o'er me.

Clot. And has not then
 A husband's kindness—

Imo. Mark me, Clotilda.
 And mark me well, I am no desperate wretch
 Who borrows an excuse from shameful passion
 To make its shame more vile—
 I am a wretched, but a spotless wife,

I've been a daughter but too dutiful—
 But, oh! the writhings of a generous soul
 Stabb'd by a confidence it can't return,
 To whom a kind word is a blow on th' heart—
 I cannot paint thy wretchedness. (*bursts into tears*).

Clot. Nay, nay

Dry up your tears, soon will your lord return,
 Let him not see you thus by passion shaken.

Imo. Oh wretched is the dame, to whom the sound
 "Your lord will soon return"—no pleasure brings.

Clot. Some step approaches—'tis St. Anselm's
 Monk.

Imo. Remember—now, what wouldst thou reverend
 father?

Enter first Monk.

Monk. St. Anselm's benison on you, gracious dame,
 Our holy prior by me commends him to you—
 The wreck that struck upon our rocks i' th' storm
 Hath thrown some wretched souls upon his care.

(For many have been saved since morning dawned)

Wherefore he prays the wonted hospitality

That the free noble usage of your castle

Doth grant to ship-wreck'd and distressed men—

Imo. Bear back my greetings to your holy prior—

Tell him the lady of St. Aldobrand

Holds it no sin, although her lord be absent,

To ope her gates to wave-tossed mariners—

Now Heaven forefend your narrow cells were cumbered

While these free halls stood empty—tell your prior

We hold the custom of our castle still.

[*Exeunt.*

End of the First Act.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in the Convent, the Stranger lies sleeping on a Couch. The Prior watching him.

Prior. He sleeps, if it be sleep; this starting trance
Whose feverish tossings and deep muttered groans,
Do prove the soul shares not the body's rest—

[*hanging over him.*

How the lip works, how the bare teeth do grind—
And beaded drops course down his written brow—
I will awake him from this horrid trance,
This is no natural sleep—ho, wake thee, stranger—

Stran. What, wouldst thou have, my life is in thy
power—

Prior. Most wretched man, whose fears alone be-
tray thee—

What art thou,—speak.

Stran. ————Thou sayest I am a wretch—
And thou sayest true—these weeds do witness it—
These wave-worn weeds—these bare and bruised limbs,
What wouldst thou more—I shrink not from the
question.

I am a wretch, and proud of wretchedness,
'Tis the sole earthly thing that cleaves to me.

Prior. Lightly I deem of outward wretchedness,
For that hath been the lot of blessed saints—
But in their dire extreme of outward wretchedness
Full calm they slept in dungeons and in darkness—
Such hath not been thy sleep—

Stran. Didst watch my sleep—
But thou couldst glean no secret from my ravings.—

Prior. Thy secrets, wretched man, I reckon not of
them—

But I adjure thee by the church's power
(A power to search man's secret heart of sin),
Shew me thy wound of soul—

Weep'st thou, the ties of nature or of passion
Torn by the hand of Heaven—

Oh no! full well I deemed no gentler feeling
Woke the dark lightning of thy withering eye—

What fiercer spirit is it tears thee thus?

Shew me the horrid tenant of thy heart—

Or wrath, or hatred, or revenge, is there—

Stran. (*suddenly starting from his Couch, falling
on his knees; and raising his clasped hands.*)

I would consort with mine eternal enemy,
To be revenged on him.—

Prior. Art thou a man, or fiend, who speakest thus.

Stran. I was a man, I know not what I am—
What others' crimes and injuries have made me—
Look on me—What am I?— [*advancing.*]

Prior. ————— I know thee not.

Stran. I marvel that thou say'st it—
For lowly men full oft remember those
In changed estate, whom equals have forgotten

A passing beggar hath remembered me,
 When with strange eyes my kinsmen looked on me—
 I wore no sullied weeds on that proud day
 When thou a barefoot monk didst bow full low
 For alms, my heedless hand hath flung to thee—
 Thou dost not know me.— [approaching him.]

Prior. Mine eyes are dim with age—but many
 thoughts

Do stir within me at thy voice.

Stran. List to me, monk, it is thy trade to talk,
 As reverend men do use in saintly wise,
 Of life's vicissitudes and vanities—
 Hear one plain tale that doth surpass all saws—
 Hear it from me—*Count Bertram*—aye—*Count*
Bertram—

The darling of his liege and of his land
 The army's idol, and the council's head—
 Whose smile was fortune, and whose will was law—
 Doth bow him to the prior of St. Anselm
 For water to refresh his parched lip,
 And this hard-matted couch to fling his limbs on.—

Prior. Good Heaven and all its saints!—

Ber. Wilt thou betray me?—

Prior. Lives there the wretch beneath these walls
 to do it?

Sorrow enough hath bowed thy head already
 Thou man of many woes.—
 Far more I fear lest thou betray thyself—
 Hard by do stand the halls of Aldobrand
 (Thy mortal enemy and cause of fall),
 Where ancient custom doth invite each stranger

Cast on this shore to sojourn certain days,
 And taste the bounty of the castle's lord—
 If thou goest not, suspicion will arise
 And if thou dost (all changed as thou art),
 Some desperate burst of passion will betray thee
 And end in mortal scathe—
 What dost thou gaze on with such fixed eyes?

Ber.———What sayest thou?
 I dreamed I stood before Lord Aldobrand
 Impenetrable to his searching eyes—
 And I did feel the horrid joy men feel
 Measuring the serpent's coil whose fangs have stung
 them;
 Scanning with giddy eye the air-hung rock
 From which they leapt and live by miracle;
 Following the dun skirt of the o'erpast storm
 Whose bolt did leave them prostrate—
 —To see that horrid spectre of my thoughts
 In all the stern reality of life—
 To mark the living lineaments of hatred,
 And say, this is the man whose sight should blast me;
 Yet in calm dreadful triumph still gaze on:—
 It is a horrid joy.

Prior.———Nay, rave not thus—
 Thou wilt not meet him, many a day must pass
 Till from Palermo's walls he wend him homeward
 Where now he tarries with St. Anselm's knights.—
 His dame doth dwell in solitary wise
 Few are the followers in his lonely halls—
 Why dost thou smile in that most horrid guise?—

Ber. (repeating his words.)

His dame doth dwell alone—perchance his child—
Oh, no, no, no—it was a damned thought.

Prior. I do but indistinctly hear thy words,
But feel they have some fearful meaning in them.—

Ber. On, that I could but mate him in his might,
Oh, that we were on the dark wave together,
With but one plank between us and destruction,
That I might grasp him in these desperate arms,
And plunge with him amid the weltering billows—
And view him gasp for life—and—

Prior. Horrible—horrible—I charge thee cease—
The shrines are trembling on these sainted walls—
The stony forms will start to life and answer thee

Ber. Ha ha—I see him struggling—
I see him—ha, ha, ha (a frantic laugh.)

Prior.———Oh horrible—
Help, help—to hold him—for my strength doth fail—

Enter 1st Monk.

Monk. The lady of St. Aldobrand sends greeting—

Prior. Oh, art thou come, this is no time for
greeting—

Help—bear him off—thou sees't his fearful state.

[*Exeunt bearing him off.*]

SCENE II.

Hall in the Castle of St. Aldobrand.

*Enter Hugo shewing in Bertram's Comrades,
Clotilda following.*

Hugo. This way, friends, this way, good cheer
awaits you.

1st Sail. Well then, good cheer was never yet
bestowed

On those who need it more.

Hugo. ————To what port bound,
Did this fell storm o'ertake you?

1st Sail. ————No matter
So we find here a comfortable haven.

Hugo. Whence came you?

1st Sail. ————Psha, I cannot answer fasting.

Hugo. Roughness, the proverb says, speaks honesty,
I hope the adage true.

Clot. Lead them in, Hugo,
They need speedy care—which is your leader?

1st Sail. He will be here anon—what ye would
know,
Demand of him.

2d Sail. (*advancing*) He's here.

Clot. I fain would learn
Their country and their fortunes.

*Enter Bertram, with a sullen air, but scrutinizing
all around.*

Clot. Is that him?
His looks appal me, I dare not speak to him,
[*All pause at his appearance.*]

Hugo. Come, come, the feast's prepared within,
this way.

[*Bertram passes on sullenly and exit.*]

Clot. The grief that clothes that leader's woe-
worn form,

The chilling awe his ruin'd grandeur wears
Is of no common sort—I must observe him.

[*Exit Clot.*]

1st Sail. Now, comrades, we will honour our host's
bounty
With jovial hearts, and gay forgetfulness
Of perils past and coming.

Glee.

We be men escaped from dangers,
Sweet to think of o'er our bowls;—
Wilds have ne'er known hardier rangers,
Hall shall ne'er see blither souls.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

*Moonlight; a terraced rampart of the Castle; a part
of the latter is seen, the rest concealed by woods.*

*Imogene alone, she gazes at the Moon for some time,
and then advances slowly.*

Imo. ——— Mine own loved light,
That every soft and solemn spirit worships,
That lovers love so well—strange joy is thine,
Whose influence o'er all tides of soul hath power,

Who lendst thy light to rapture and despair ;—
 The glow of hope and wan hue of sick fancy
 Alike reflect thy rays : alike thou lightest
 The path of meeting or of parting love—
 Alike on mingling or on breaking hearts
 Thou smil'st in throned beauty.—Bertram—Bertram.
 How sweet it is to tell the listening night
 The name beloved—it is a spell of power
 To wake the buried slumberers of the heart,
 Where memory lingers o'er the grave of passion
 Watching its tranced sleep!—
 The thoughts of other days are rushing on me,
 The loved, the lost, the distant, and the dead,
 Are with me now, and I will mingle with them
 'Till my sense fails, and my raised heart is wrapt
 In secret suspension of mortality.

Enter Clotilda.

Clot. Why dost thou wander by this mournful light,
 Feeding sick fancy with the thought that poisons?—

Imo. I will but weep beneath the moon awhile.—
 Now do not chide my heart for this sad respite,
 The thoughts it most doth love do visit it then,
 And make it feel like heaven—

Clot. Nay, come with me, and view those storm-
 'scaped men
 A feasting in thy hall; 'twill cheer thy heart—
 Of perils 'scaped by flood and fire they tell,
 And many an antique legend wild they know
 And many a lay they sing—hark, their deep voices
 Come faintly on the wind.

(*Noise of singing and revelry without.*)

Imo. Their wild and vulgar mirth doth startle me.
This clamorous wassail in a baron's hall
Ill suits the state of rescued fearful men:—
But as I passed the latticed gallery
One stood alone;—I marked him where he stood,
His face was veiled,—faintly a light fell on him;
But through soiled weeds his muffled form did shew
A wild and terrible grandeur.

Clot. I marked him too. He mixed not with the
rest,

But o'er his wild mates held a stern controul—
Their rudest burst of riotous merriment
Beneath his dark eye's stiling energy
Was hushed to silence.

Imo. He never spoke?

Clot. No, he did nought but sigh,
If I might judge by the high-heaving vesture
Folded so deep on his majestic breast;—
Of sound I heard not—

Imo. Call him hither.—
There is a mystery of woe about him.
That strongly stirs the fancy.

Clot. Wilt thou confer alone, at night, with one
Who bears such fearful form?

Imo.— Why therefore send him—
All things of fear have lost their power o'er me—

[*Exit Clotilda.*]

Imogene appears to be debating with herself how to receive him, at length she says

Imo. If he do bear, like me, a withered heart
I will not mock him with a sound of comfort—

Bertram enters slowly from the end of the stage; his arms folded, his eyes fixed on the earth, she does not know him.

Imo. A form like that hath broken on my dreams
So darkly wild, so proudly stern,
Doth it rise on me waking?

Bertram comes to the end of the stage, and stands without looking at her.

Imo. Stranger, I sent for thee, for that I deemed
Some wound was thine, that yon free band might
chafe,—

Perchance thy wordly wealth sunk with yon wreck—
Such wound my gold can heal—the castle's almoner—

Ber. The wealth of worlds were heaped on me in vain.

Imo. Oh then I read thy loss—Thy heart is sunk
In the dark waters pitiless; some dear friend,
Or brother, loved as thine own soul, lies there—
I pity thee, sad man, but can no more—
Gold I can give, but can no comfort give
For I am comfortless—

Yet if I could collect my faltering breath
Well were I meet for such sad ministry,
For grief hath left my voice no other sound—

Ber. (*Striking his heart.*)

No dews give freshness to this blasted soil.—

Imo. Strange is thy form, but more thy words are
strange—

Fearful it seems to hold this parley with thee.
Tell me thy race and country—

Ber. What avails it?

The wretched have no country : that dear name
Comprizes home, kind kindred, fostering friends,
Protecting laws, all that binds man to man—
But none of these are mine ;—I have no country—
And for my race, the last dread trump shall wake
The sheeted relics of mine ancestry,
Ere trump of herald to the armed lists
In the bright blazon of their stainless coat,
Calls their lost child again.—

Imo. I shake to hear him—

There is an awful thrilling in his voice,—
The soul of other days comes rushing in them.—
If nor my bounty nor my tears can aid thee,
Stranger, farewell ; and 'mid thy misery
Pray, when thou tell'st thy beads, for one more wretched.

Ber. Stay, gentle lady, I would somewhat with
thee.

Imagine retreats terrified.

(*Detaining her*)—Thou shalt not go—

Imo. Shall not!—Who art thou ? speak—

Ber. And must I speak ?—

There was a voice which all the world, but thee
Might have forgot, and been forgiven,—

Imo. My senses blaze—between the dead and living
I stand in fear—oh God!—It cannot be—

Those thick black locks—those wild and sun-burnt
features

He looked not thus—but then that voice—
It cannot be—for he would know my name.

Ber. Imagine—[*She has tottered towards him during the last speech, and when he utters her name, shrieks and falls into his arms.*]

Ber. Imagine—yes,
Thus pale, cold, dying, thus thou art most fit
To be enfolded to this desolate heart—
A blighted lily on its icy bed—
Nay, look not up, 'tis thus I would behold thee.
That pale cheek looks like truth—I'll gaze no more—
That fair, that pale, dear cheek, these helpless arms,
If I look longer they will make me human.

Imo. (*starting from him.*)
Fly, fly, the vassals of thine enemy wait
To do thee dead.

Ber. Then let them wield the thunder,
Fell is their dint, who're mailed in despair.
Let mortal might sever the grasp of Bertram.

Imo. Release me—I must break from him—he
knows not—

Oh God!

Ber. Imagine—madness seizes me—
Why do I find thee in mine enemy's walls?
What dost thou do in halls of Aldobrand?
Infernal light doth shoot athwart my mind—
Swear thou art a dependent on his bounty,
That chance, or force, or sorcery, brought thee hither.

Thou canst not be—my throat is swoln with agony—
Hell hath no plague—Oh no, thou couldst not do it.

Imo. (*kneeling.*) Mercy.

Ber. Thou hast it not, or thou wouldst speak—
Speak, speak, (*with frantic violence.*)

Imo. I am the wife of Aldobrand,—
To save a famishing father did I wed.

Ber. I will not curse *her*—but the hoarded ven-
geance—

Imo. Aye—curse, and consummate the horrid spell,
For broken-hearted, in despairing hour
With every omen dark and dire I wedded—
Some ministering demon mocked the robed priest,
With some dark spell, not holy vow they bound me,
Full were the rites of horror and despair.
They wanted but—the seal of Bertram's curse.

Ber. (*not heeding her.*)

—Talk of her father—could a father love thee
As I have loved?—the veriest wretch on earth
Doth cherish in some corner of his heart,
Some thought that makes that heart a sanctuary
For pilgrim dreams in midnight-hour to visit,
And weep and worship there.

—And such thou wert to me—and thou art lost.

—What was her father? could a father's love

Compare with mine?—in want, and war, and peril,
Things that would thrill the hearer's blood to tell of,
My heart grew human when I thought of thee—
Imagine would have shuddered for my danger—
Imagine would have bound my leechless wounds—
Imagine would have sought my nameless corse,

And known it well—and she was wedded—wedded—
 —Was there no name in hell's dark catalogue
 To brand thee with, but mine immortal foe's?—
 And did I 'scape from war, and want, and famine
 To perish by the falsehood of a woman?

Imo. Oh spare me,—Bertram—oh preserve thyself—

Ber. A despot's vengeance, a false country's curses,
 The spurn of menials whom this hand had fed—
 In my heart's steeled pride I shook them off,
 As the bayed lion from his hurtless hide
 Shakes his pursuers' darts—across their path—
 One dart alone took aim, thy hand did barb it.

Imo. He did not hear my father's cry—Oh heaven—
 Nor food, nor fire, nor raiment, and his child
 Knelt madly to the hungry walls for succour—
 E'er her wrought brain could bear the horrid thought
 Or wed with him—or—see thy father perish.

Ber. Thou tremblest least I curse thee, tremble
 not—
 Though thou hast made me, woman, very wretched—
 Though thou hast made me—but I will not curse
 thee—

Hear the last prayer of Bertram's broken heart,
 That heart which thou hast broken, not his foes!—
 Of thy rank wishes the full scope be on thee—
 May pomp and pride shout in thine adderred path
 Till thou shalt feel and sicken at their hollowness—
 May he thou'st wed, be kind and generous to thee
 Till thy wrung heart, stabb'd by his noble fondness
 Writhe in detesting consciousness of falsehood—

May thy babe's smile speak daggers to that mother
 Who cannot love the father of her child,
 And in the bright blaze of the festal hall,
 When vassals kneel, and kindred smile around thee,
 May ruined Bertram's pledge hiss in thine ear—
 Joy to the proud dame of St. Aldobrand—
 While his cold corse doth bleach beneath her towers.

Imo. (Detaining him) Stay.

Ber. No.

Imo. Thou hast a dagger.

Ber. Not for woman.—

Imo. (flinging herself on the ground)

It was my prayer to die in Bertram's presence,
 But not by words like these—

Ber. (turning back)—on the cold earth!
 —I do forgive thee from my inmost soul—

(The child of Imogene rushes in and clings to her)

Child. Mother.

Ber. (eagerly snatching up the child)

God bless thee, child—Bertram hath kissed thy child.

*(He rushes out, Clotilda enters gazing after him
 in terror, and goes to afford relief to Imogene).*

The curtain drops.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

A Wood;—the Stage darkened;—St. Aldobrand speaking to a page behind the Scenes.

Ald. Hold thou my good steed, page; the moon is
down,
We've far outstript the knights, but slacker speed
Hath found a surer road—where, think'st thou, are we?

Enter St. Aldobrand and a Page.

Vainly I listen through the night so still
For bell that tells of holy convent near,
Or warder's bugle from the battlement,
Or horn of knight returning from the chase—
All is dark, still, and lorn; where deemest thou are we?

Page. Oh we are nigh a fell and fearful spot,
For by the last gleams of the sunken moon
I saw the towers—

Ald. What towers are those, boy?

Page. The ruined towers that 'tis said are haunted—
Dimly they rose amid the doubtful gloom,
But not one star-beam twinkled on their summits.

Ald. Then, not four leagues divide me from mine
home.—

Mine home—it is a pleasant sound—there bide
My dame and child—all pleasant thoughts dwell
there—

“ Then, while I rest beneath this broad-armed tree,

“ Or oak, or elm, in this dark night I wot not—

“ It shall be thy sweet penance to rehearse

“ All thou hast heard of these most fearful towers—

“ The tale will sooth my sleep, nor mar my dreams—

“ *Page.* Then let me couch by thee—I pray thee do—

“ For ever I love 'mid frightful tales i' th' dark

“ To touch the hand I tell the tale of fear to”—

[*A bell tolls.*

Ald. Hark! 'tis the convent bell, forego thy tale—
The blessed thoughts of home are in that sound
That near my castle's gallant walls doth float—

[*Chorus of knights heard faintly
from the forest.*

Ald. What voices swell upon the midnight air?

Page. St. Anselm's knights.

Ald. Yes, 'tis their pious wont,

When journeying near the sound of convent-bell

'Mid flood or fire, to raise the holy hymn

That chaunts the praise of their protecting saint—

List to the solemn harmony—

Guided by that we may rejoin their company.

[*Exeunt*

*Chorus heard again, and continues drawing nearer
till the scene changes.*

SCENE II.

The Convent.

The Prior reading ; Bertram views him with the attention of one who envies him, then speaks.

Ber. How many hours have passed since matin-bell?

Prior. I know not, till it sound again to vespers.

Time passes o'er us with a noiseless lapse :

Our hours are marked alone by prayer and study,

And know no change but by their mute succession—

Ber. Yea—thus they live, if this may life be
called

Where moving shadows mock the parts of men.

Prayer follows study, study yields to prayer—

Bell echoes bell, till wearied with the summons

The ear doth ache for that last welcome peal

That tolls an end to listless vacancy—

Aye—when the red swol'n stream comes roaring
down—

Full many a glorious flower, and stately tree,

Floats on the ruthless tide, whose unfelt sway

Moves not the mire that stagnates at the bottom.

The storm for Bertram—and it hath been with me,

Dealt with me branch and bole, bared me to th' roots,

And where the next wave bears my perished trunk

In its dread lapse, I neither know, nor reck of—

Prior.—Thou desperate man, whom mercy
woos in vain,

Although with miracles she pleads—

Forbear, I say, to taint these holy echoes
With the fell sounds of thy profane despair.—

Ber. Good monk, I am beholden to your patience.
Take this from one, whose lips do mock at praise;
Thou art a man, whose mild and reverend functions
Might change the black creed of misanthropy,
And bid my better angel half return.—
But—'tis impossible—I will not trouble thee—
The wayward Bertram and his moody mates
Are tenants all unmeet for cloistered walls—
We will find fitter home.

Prior. Whither wilt thou resort?

Ber. Is there no forest
Whose shades are dark enough to shelter us;
Or cavern rifted by the perilous lightning,
Where we must grapple with the tenanting wolf
To earn our bloody lair?—there let us bide,
Nor hear the voice of man, nor call of heaven.—

Pri. Wend not, I charge thee, with those desperate
men.

Full well I wot who are thy fearful mates—
In their stern strife with the incensed deep,
That dashed them bruised and breathless on our
shores,

When their drenched hold forsook both gold and gear,
They griped their daggers with a murderer's instinct.
—I read thee for the leader of a band
Whose trade is blood.—

Ber. Well then, thou knowest the worst—
And let the worst be known, I am their leader—

Pri. Mark what I reed, renounce that horrid league—

Flee to the castle of St. Aldobrand,
His power may give thee safety, and his dame
May plead for thee against the law's stern purpose—
All as thou art unknown—

Ber. His dame plead for me!—

When my cold corse, torn from some felon wheel,
Or dug from lightless depth of stony dungeon,
Welters in the cold gaze of pitiless strangers,
Then fling it at his gate, whose cursed stones
My living foot treads never,—yet beware
Lest the corse burst its cearments stark, and curse
thee—

Pri. Hush, hush these horrid sounds; where wilt
thou bide?

Near us nor knight nor baron holds his keep,
For far and wide thy foeman's land extends.

Ber. The world hath ample realms beyond his
power.

There must I dwell—I seek my rugged mates—
The frozen mountain, or the burning sand
Would be more wholesome than the fertile realm
That's lorded o'er by Aldobrand.

[*Exit Bertram.*]

Pri. High-hearted man, sublime even in thy guilt,
Whose passions are thy crimes, whose angel-sin
Is pride that rivals the star-bright apostate's.—
Wild admiration thrills me to behold
An evil strength, so above earthly pitch—
Descending angels only could reclaim thee—

Enter 2d Monk.

Monk. The lady of St. Aldobrand in haste
Craves swift admittance to your sacred cell.

Pri. She is a gracious, and a pious dame,
And doth our cell much honour by her presence.

Enter Imogine. She kneels to him.

Pri. The blessings of these sainted walls be on thee.
Why art thou thus disturbed, what moves thee;
daughter?

Imo. Nay, do not raise me with those reverend
hands,
Nor benison of saint greet mine approach,
Nor shadow of holy hand stretched forth to bless me.—
I am a wretched, soul-struck, guilty woman.

Pri. Thou dost amaze me; by mine holy order
I deemed no legends of our cloistered saints
Held holier records of pure sanctity
Than the clear answer of thy stainless life
To shrift's most piercing search—

Imo. Oh holy prior, no matron proud and pure,
Whose dreams ne'er wandered from her wedded lord,
Whose spoused heart was plighted with her hand,
Kneels for thy prayer of power—I am a wretch,
Who, pale and withering with unholy love,
Lay a shrunk corse in duty's fostering arms,
And with cold smiles belied her heart's despair.
I've nursed a slumbering serpent till it stung me,
And from my heart's true guardian, hid its foulness

Prior. Thou'st done an evil deed—
For sin is of the soul, and thine is tainted—

But most I blame thee, that from thy soul's guardian
Thou hiddest thy secret guilt.

Imo. I knew it not—
Last night, oh! last night told a dreadful secret—
The moon went down, its sinking ray shut out,
The parting form of one beloved too well.—
The fountain of my heart dried up within me,—
With nought that loved me, and with nought to love
I stood upon the desart earth alone—
I stood and wondered at my desolation—
For I had spurned at every tie for him,
And hardly could I beg from injured hearts
The kindness that my desperate passion scorned—
And in that deep and utter agony,
Though then, than ever most unfit to die,
I fell upon my knees, and prayed for death.

Prior. And did deserve it, wert thou meet for it—
Art thou a wife and mother, and canst speak
Of life rejected by thy desperate passion—
These bursting tears, wrung hands, and burning words,
Are these the signs of penitence or passion?
Thou comest to me, for to my ear alone
May the deep secret of thy heart be told,
And fancy riot in the luscious poison—
Fond of the misery we paint so well,
Proud of the sacrifice of broken hearts,
We pour on heav'ns dread ear, what man's would
shrink from—
Yea, make a merit of the impious insult,
And wrest the functions of mine holy office
To the foul ministry of earthly passion.

Imo. Why came I here, I had despair at home—
Where shall the wretch resort whom Heaven forsakes?

Prior. Thou hast forsaken Heaven.
Speed to thy castle, shut thy chamber door,
Bind fast thy soul by every solemn vow
Never to hold communion with that object—
If still thy wishes contradict thy prayers,
If still thy heart's responses yield no harmony—
Weary thy saint with agonies of prayer;
On the cold marble quench thy burning breast;
Number with every bead a tear of soul;
Press to thy heart the cross, and bid it banish
The form that would usurp its image there—

Imo. (kneeling) One parting word—

Prior. No, not one parting look—
One parting thought, I charge thee on thy soul.

Imo. (turning away) He never loved.—

Prior. Why clingest thou to my raiment?
Thy grasp of grief is stronger on my heart—
For sterner oft our words than feelings are.

Enter 1st Monk and Page.

Monk. Hail, holy prior, and hail thou noble dame,
With joyful heart I break upon your privacy—
St. Aldobrand before his own good gates
Doth rein his war-steed's pride; the warder's horn
Full merrily rings his peal of welcome home—
I hied me onward with the joyful tidings
To greet his happy dame.

Imo. My thanks await them.—

Prior. Now, by my beads the news is wond'rous
welcome—

Hath thy brave lord in safety reached his home—
Praise to St. Anselm who ne'er leaves his servants.
My rosary hath been well told for him—
(Clear thy dimmed brow, for shame! hie to thy lord,
And shew a dame's true duty in his welcome.)
Came with thy lord the knights of good St. Anselm
Bearing the banner of their guardian saint
Safe from the infidel scathe?—

Page. They come with speed—
Though lated in the forest's wildering maze;
Last night their shelter was the broad brown oak—

Pri. High praise be given—haste, summon all our
brethren;
Th' occasion, noble dame, doth call me from thee—
So Benedicite—

[*Exeunt.*

Imo. (*alone*) That word should mean—
A blessing rest on me—I am not blest—
I'm weary of this conflict of the heart—
These dying struggles of reluctant duty—
These potent throes of wild convulsive passion.
Would I were seared in guilt, or strong in innocence—
I dare not search my heart; some iron vow
Shall bind me down in passive wretchedness,
And mock the force of my rebellious heart
To break its rivetting holds—

[*As she kneels, enter Bertram.*

Ha! art thou there?—
Come kneel with me, and witness to the vow
I offer to renounce thee, and to die—

Ber. Nay, it is meet that we renounce each other—
 Have we not been a miserable pair?
 Hath not our fatal passion cursed, not blessed us?—
 Had we not loved, how different were our fates;
 For thou hadst been a happy honoured dame,
 And I had slept the sleep of those that dream not—
 But life was dear, while Imogene did love.

Imo. Witness my vow—while I have breath to
 speak it—

Ber. Then make it thus—why dost thou shrink
 from me?

Despair hath its embrace as well as passion—
 May I not hold thee in these folded arms?
 May I not clasp thee to this blasted heart?
 When the rich soil teemed with youth's generous
 flowers—

I felt thee sunshine—now thy rayless light
 Falls like the cold moon on a blasted heath
 Mocking its desolation—speak thy vow—
 I will not chide thee if the words should kill me—

Imo. (*sinking into his arms*). I cannot utter
 it—

Ber. Have we not loved, as none have ever loved,
 And must we part as none have ever parted?
 I know thy lord is near; I know his towers
 Must shut thee from my sight—the curfew-hour
 Will send me on a far and fearful journey—
 Give me one hour, nor think thou givest too much,
 When grief is all the boon.—

Imo. One hour to thee?

Ber. When the cold moon gleams on thy castle walls,

Wilt thou not seek the spot where last we met?
 That be our parting spot—Oh Imogine—
 Heaven that denies the luxury of bliss
 Shall yield at least the luxury of anguish,
 And teach us the stern pride of wretchedness—
 “ Our parting hour be at the dim moonlight,
 “ And we will make that hour of parting dearer
 “ Than years of happy love—what recollections—
 “ What rich and burning tears—in that blessed hour
 “ Our former hearts shall glide into our breasts,
 “ Mine free from care, as thine was light of sorrow—
 That hour shall light my parting step of darkness—
 Imogine’s form did gleam on my last glance,
 Imogine’s breath did mix with my last sigh,
 Imogine’s tear doth linger on my cheek,
 But ne’er must dew my grave—

Imo. I am desperate
 To say I’ll meet thee, but I will, will meet thee;
 No future hour can rend my heart like this
 Save that which breaks it.—

[*The child runs in, and clings to Imogine.*

Child. My father is returned, and kissed and blessed me—

Imo. (*falling on the child’s neck.*) What have I done, my child; forgive thy mother.

Ber. (*Surveying her with stern contempt.*)
 Woman, oh woman, and an urchin’s kiss
 Rends from thy heart thy love of many years—

Go, virtuous dame, to thy most happy lord,
And Bertram's image taint your kiss with poison.

[*Exit Bertram.*]

Ino. (*Alone*) 'Tis but the last—and I have sworn
to meet him

My boy, my boy, thy image will protect me.

End of the Third Act.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

A dark night under the Castle Walls;—Bertram appears in a state of the utmost agitation;—he extends his arms towards a spot where the Moon has disappeared.

Ber. Thou hidest away thy face, and wilt not view
me,

All the bright lights of heaven are dark above me—
Beneath the black cope of this starless night
There lurks no darker soul—
My fiend-like glory hath departed from me—
Bertram hath nought above the meanest losel—
I should have bearded him in halls of pride—
I should have mated him in fields of death—
Not stol'n upon his secret bower of peace,
And breathed a serpent's venom on his flower.

(He looks up at the casement of the tower, at which a light appears, he gazes on it)—She is there—
She weeps—no husband wipes her tears away—
She weeps—no babe doth cheer the guilty mother.
Aldobrand—No—I never will forgive thee,
For I am sunk beneath thee—Who art thou?

Enter Two of Bertram's Band.

1st. Rob. Why dost thou wander in the woods alone,

Leaving thy mates to play with idle hilts,
 Or dream with monks o'er rosary and relic?
 Give us a deed to do.

Ber. Yes, ye are welcome,
 Your spirits shall be proud—ho—hear ye, villains,
 I know ye both—ye are slaves that for a ducat
 Would rend the screaming infant from the breast
 To plunge it in the flames;
 Yea, draw your keen knives cross a father's throat,
 And carve with them the bloody meal ye earned;
 Villains, rejoice, your leader's crimes have purged you,
 You punished guilt—I preyed on innocence—
 Ye have beheld me fallen—begone—begone.

1st. Rob. Why then, Heaven's benison be with you,
 Thou'lt need it if thou tarriest longer here.

Ber. How, slave, what fear you?

2d. Rob. Fly; this broad land hath not one spot to
 hide thee,

Danger and death await thee in those walls.

Ber. They'd fell a blasted tree—well—let it fall—
 But though the perished trunk feel not the wound;
 Woe to the smiting hand—its fall may crush him.

1st. Rob. Lord Aldobrand
 Holds high commission from his sovereign liege
 To hunt thy outlaw'd life through Sicily.

Ber. (*wildly.*) Who—what—

2d. Rob. We mingled with the men at arms
 As journeying home. Their talk was of Count Bertram,
 Whose vessel had from Manfredonia's coast
 Been traced towards this realm.

1st. Rob. And if on earth his living form were found,

Lord Aldobrand had power to seal his doom.
Some few did pity him.

Ber. (*bursting into ferocity.*) Villain, abhorred
villain.

Hath he not pushed me to extremity?
Are these wild weeds, these scarred and scathed limbs,
This wasted frame, a mark for human malice?
There have been those who from the high bark's side
Have whelmed their enemy in the flashing deep;
But who hath watch'd to see his struggling hands,
To hear the sob of death?—Fool—idiot—idiot—
'Twas but e'en now, I would have knelt to him
With the prostration of a conscious villain;
I would have crouched beneath his spurning feet;
I would have felt their trampling tread, and blessed it—
For I had injured him—and mutual injury
Had freed my withered heart—Villain—I thank thee.

“ *1st. Rob.* What wilt thou do? shall we prepare
for blows?

“ *Ber.* Behold me, Earth, what is the life he hunts
for?

“ Come to my cave, thou human hunter, come;
“ For thou hast left thy prey no other lair,
“ But the bleak rock, or howling wilderness;
“ Cheer up thy pack of fanged and fleshed hounds,
“ Flash all the flames of hell upon its darkness,
“ Then enter if thou darest.
“ Lo, there the crushed serpent coils to sting thee,
“ Yea, spend his life upon the mortal throe.”

1st. Rob. Wilt thou fly?

Ber. Never—on this spot I stand

The champion of despair---this arm my brand---
 This breast my panoply---and for my gage---
 (Oh thou hast reft from me all knightly pledge)
 Take these black hairs torn from a head that hates thee---
 Deep be their dye, before that pledge is ransomed--
 In thine heart's blood or mine---why strivest thou with
 me?

(Wild with passion.)

Lord Aldobrand, I brave thee in thy halls,
 Wrecked, famished, wrung in heart, and worn in
 limb--

For bread of thine this lip hath never stained--
 I bid thee to the conflict--aye, come on--
 Coward--hast armed thy vassals?--come then all--
 Follow--ye shall have work enough--Follow.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II.

*Imagine in her apartment--a lamp burning on the
 Table--She walks some time in great agitation
 and then pushes the light away.*

Imo. Away, thou glarest on me, thy light is hateful;
 Whom doth the dark wind chide so hollowly?
 The very stones shrink from my steps of guilt,
 All lifeless things have come to life to curse me:
 Oh! that a mountain's weight were cast on me;
 Oh! that the wide, wild ocean heaved o'er me;
 Oh! that I could into the earthy centre
 Sink and be nothing.
 Sense, memory, feeling, life extinct and swallowed,

With things that are not, or have never been,
Lie down and sleep the everlasting sleep—

(She sinks on the ground.)

If I run mad, some wild word will betray me,
Nay—let me think—what am I?—no, what was I?

(A long pause.)

I was the honoured wife of Aldobrand ;
I am the scorned minion of a ruffian.

Enter Clotilda.

Imo. Who art thou that thus comest on me in
darkness?

Clot. The taper's blaze doth make it bright as noon.

Imo. I saw thee not, till thou wert close to me.
So steal the steps of those who watch the guilty ;
How darest thou gaze thus earnestly upon me ;
What seest thou in my face ?

Clot. A mortal horror.
If aught but godless souls at parting bear
The lineaments of despair, such face is thine.

Imo. See'st thou despair alone ?
Nay, mock me not, for thou hast read more deeply,
Else why that piercing look.

Clot. I meant it not—
But since thy lonely walk upon the rampart—
Strange hath been thy demeanour, all thy maidens
Do speak in busy whispers of its wildness—

Imo. Oh hang me shuddering on the baseless crag—
The vampire's wing, the wild-worm's sting be on me,
But hide me, mountains, from the man I've injured—

Clot. Whom hast thou injured ?

Imo. Whom doth woman injure ?
 Another daughter dries a father's tears ;
 Another sister claims a brother's love ;
 An injured husband hath no other wife,
 Save her who wrought him shame.

Clot. I will not hear thee,

Imo. We met in madness, and in guilt we
 parted—

Oh! I see horror rushing to thy face—
 Do not betray me, I am penitent—
 Do not betray me, it will kill my Lord—
 Do not betray me, it will kill my boy,
 My little one that loves me.

Clot. Wretched woman—

Whom guilt hath flung at a poor menial's feet—
 Rise, rise, how canst thou keep thy fatal secret ?
 Those fixt and bloodshot eyes, those wringing hands—

Imo. And were I featureless, inert, and marble—
 Th' accuser *here* would speak—

Clot. Wilt thou seek comfort from the holy prior ?

Imo. When I was innocent, I sought it of him—
 For if his lip of wrath refused my pardon,
 My heart would have absolved me—
 Now when that heart condemns me, what avails
 The pardon of my earthly erring judge ?

Clot. Yet, hie from hence, upon their lady's bower
 No menial dares intrude.

Imo. That seat of honour—
 My guilty steps shall never violate—
 What fearful sound is that ?

Clot. Alas, a feller trial doth abide thee

I hear thy lord's approach.

Madness is in thy looks, he'll know it all—

Imo. Why, I am mad with horror and remorse—
He comes, he comes in all that murderous kindness;
Oh Bertram's curse is on me.

Enter Aldobrand.

Ald. How fares my dame? give me thy white hand,
love.

Oh it is pleasant for a war-worn man
To couch him on the downy lap of comfort—
And on his rush-strewn floors of household peace
Hear his doffed harness ring—Take thou my helmet;
(To page who goes out.)

Well may man toil for such an hour as this.

Imo. *(standing timidly near him)*

Yea, happier they, who on the bloody field
Stretch when their toil is done—

Ald.—What means my love?

Imo. Is there not rest among the quiet dead;
But is there surely rest in mortal dwellings?

Ald. Deep loneliness hath wrought this mood in
thee,

For like a cloistered votaress, thou hast kept,
Thy damsels tell me, this lone turret's bound—
A musing walk upon the moonlight ramparts,
Or thy lute's mournful vespers all thy cheering—
Not thine to parley at the latticed casement
With wandering wooer, or—

Imo. *(wildly)* For mercy's sake forbear—

Ald. How farest thou?

Imo. (*recovering*) well—well—a sudden pain o' th' heart.

Ald. Knowest thou the cause detained me hence so long,
And which again must call me soon away?

Imo. (*trying to recollect herself*)—Was it not war?

Ald.—Aye, and the worst war, love—
When our fell foes are our own countrymen.
Thou knowest the banished Bertram—why, his name
Doth blanch thy altered cheek, as if his band
With their fierce leader, were within these towers—

Imo. Mention that name no more—on with thy tale—

Ald. I need not tell thee, how his mad ambition
Strove with the crown itself for sovereignty—
The craven monarch was his subject's slave—
In that dread hour my country's guard I stood,
From the state's vitals tore the coiled serpent,
First hung him writhing up to public scorn,
Then flung him forth to ruin.

Imo. Thou need'st not tell it—

Ald. Th' apostate would be great even in his fall—
On Manfredonia's wild and wooded shore
His desperate followers awed the regions round—
Late from Taranto's gulf his bark was traced
Right to these shores, perchance the recent storm
Hath spared me further search, but if on earth
His living form be found—

Imo. Think'st thou he harbours here—

Go, crush thy foe—for he is mine and thine—
But tell me not when thou hast done the deed.

Ald. Why art thou thus, my Imogine, my love?
In former happier hours thy form and converse
Had, like thy lute, that gracious melancholy
Whose most sad sweetness is in tune with joy—
Perchance I've been to thee a rugged mate—
My soldier's mood is all too lightly chafed—
But when the gust hath spent its short-liv'd fury
I bowed before thee with a child's submission,
And wooed thee with a weeping tenderness.

Imo. (*after much agitation*) Be generous, and
stab me—

Ald. Why is this?
I have no skill in woman's changeful moods,
Tears without grief and smiles without a joy—
My days have passed away 'mid war and toil—
The grinding casque hath worn my locks of youth;
Beshrew its weight, it hath ploughed furrows there,
Where time ne'er drove its share—mine heart's sole
wish
Is to sit down in peace among its inmates—
To see mine home for ever bright with smiles,
'Mid thoughts of past, and blessed hopes of future,
Glide through the vacant hours of waning life—
Then die the blessed death of aged honour,
Grasping thy hand of faith, and fixing on thee
Eyes that, though dim in death, are bright with love.

Imo. Thou never wilt—thou never wilt on me—
Ne'er erred the prophet heart that grief inspired
Though joy's illusions mock their votarist—

I'm dying, Aldobrand, a malady
 Preys on my heart, that medicine cannot reach,
 Invisible and cureless—look not on me
 With looks of love, for then it stings me deepest—
 When I am cold, when my pale sheeted corse
 Sleeps the dark sleep no venom'd tongue can wake
 List not to evil thoughts of her whose lips
 Have then no voice to plead—
 Take to thine arms some honourable dame,
 (Blessed will she be within thine arms of honour)
 And—if he dies not on his mother's grave—
 Still love my boy as if that mother lived.

Ald. Banish such gloomy dreams—

'Tis solitude that makes thee speak thus sadly—
 No longer shalt thou pine in lonely halls.
 Come to thy couch, my love—

Imo. Stand off—unhand me.—

Forgive me, oh my husband;

I have a vow—a solemn vow is on me—
 And black perdition gulf my perjured soul
 If I ascend the bed of peace and honour
 'Till that——

Ald. 'Till what?

Imo. My penance is accomplished.

Ald. Nay, Heav'n forefend I should disturb thy
 orisons—

The reverend prior were fittest counsellor—
 Farewell!—but in the painful hour of penance
 Think upon me, and spare thy tender frame.

Imo. And dost thou leave me with such stabbing
 kindness?

Ald. (to Clotilda who goes out) Call to my page
To bring the torch and light me to my chamber—

Imo. (with a sudden impulse falling on her knees)
Yet, ere thou goest, forgive me, oh my husband—

Ald. Forgive thee!—What?—

Imo. Oh, we do all offend—

There's not a day of wedded life, if we
Count at its close the little, bitter sum
Of thoughts, and words, and looks unkind and froward,
Silence that chides and woundings of the eye—

But prostrate at each others' feet, we should
Each night forgiveness ask—then what should I?—

Ald. (not hearing the last words) Why take it
freely;

I well may pardon, what I ne'er have felt.

Imo. (following him on her knees, and kissing his
hand)

Dost thou forgive me from thine inmost soul—
God bless thee, oh, God bless thee—

Ald. Farewell—mine eyes grow heavy, thy sad
talk

Hath stolen a heaviness upon my spirits—
I will unto my solitary couch—Farewell.

[Exit Aldobrand.]

Imo. There is no human heart can bide this con-
flict—

All dark and horrible,—Bertram must die—

But oh, within these walls, before mine eyes,

Who would have died for him, while life had value;—

He shall not die,—Clotilda, ho, come forth—

He yet may be redeemed, though I am lost—

Let him depart, and pray for her he ruin'd.
 Hah! was it fancy's work—I hear a step—
 It hath the speech-like thrilling of *his* tread:
 It is himself.

Enter Bertram.

It is a crime in me to look on thee—
 But in whate'er I do there now is crime—
 Yet wretched thought still struggles for thy safety—
 Fly, while my lips without a crime may warn thee—
 Would thou hadst never come, or sooner parted.
 Oh God—he heeds me not;
 Why comest thou thus, what is thy fearful business?
 I know thou comest for evil, but its purport

I ask my heart in vain.

Ber. Guess it, and spare me. *(A long pause, during which she gazes at him.)*

Canst thou not read it in my face?

Imo. I dare not;
 Mixt shades of evil thought are darkening there;
 But what my fears do indistinctly guess
 Would blast me to behold—*(turns away, a pause.)*

Ber. Dost thou not hear it in my very silence?
 That which no voice can tell, doth tell itself.

Imo. My harassed thought hath not one point of fear,
 Save that it must not think.

Ber. *(throwing his dagger on the ground.)*
 Speak thou for me,—
 Shew me the chamber where thy husband lies,
 The morning must not see us both alive.

Imo. *(screaming and struggling with him.)*

Ah! horror! horror! off--withstand me not,
 I will arouse the castle, rouse the dead,
 To save my husband; "villain, murderer, monster,
 "Dare the bayed lioness, but fly from me.
 "Ber. Go, wake the castle with thy frantic cries;
 "Those cries that tell my secret, blazon thine;
 "Yea, pour it on thine husband's blasted ear.
 "Imo. Perchance his wrath may kill me in its mercy.
 "Ber. No, hope not such a fate of mercy from him;
 "He'll curse thee *with his pardon*.
 "And would his death-fixed eye be terrible
 "As its ray bent in love on her that wronged him?
 "And would his dying groan affright thine ear
 "Like words of peace spoke to thy guilt--in vain?
 "Imo. I care not, I am reckless, let me perish.
 "Ber. No, thou must live amid a hissing world,
 "A thing that mothers warn their daughters from,
 "A thing the menials that do tend thee scorn,
 "Whom when the good do name, they tell their beads,
 "And when the wicked think of, they do triumph;
 "Canst thou encounter this?
 "Imo. I must encounter it--I have deserved it;
 "Begone, or my next cry shall wake the dead.
 "Ber. Hear me.
 "Imo. No parley, tempter, fiend, avaunt.
 "Ber. Thy son--*(she stands stupified.)*
 "Go, take him trembling in thy hand of shame,
 "A victim to the shrine of public scorn--
 "Poor boy! his sire's worst foe might pity him,
 "Albeit his mother will not--
 "Banished from hoble halls, and knightly converse,

“ Devouring his young heart in loneliness

“ With bitter thought—my mother was—a wretch.”

Imo. (falling at his feet.)

I am a wretch—but—who hath made me so?

I'm writhing like a worm, beneath thy spurn.

Have pity on me, I have had much wrong.

Ber. My heart is as the steel within my grasp.

Imo. (still kneeling.) Thou hast cast me down from
light,

From my high sphere of purity and peace,

Where once I walked in mine uprightness, blessed—

Do not thou cast me into utter darkness.

Ber. (looking on her with pity for a moment.) Thou
fairest flower—

Why didst thou fling thyself across my path,

My tiger spring must crush thee in its way,

But cannot pause to pity thee.

Imo. Thou must,

For I am strong in woes—I ne'er reproached thee—

I plead but with my agonies and tears—

Kind, gentle Bertram, my beloved Bertram,

For thou wert gentle once, and once beloved,

Have mercy on me—Oh thou couldst not think it—

*(Looking up, and seeing no relenting in his face, she
starts up wildly.)*

By heaven and all its host, he shall not perish.

Ber. By hell and all its host, he shall not live.

This is no transient flash of fugitive passion—

His death hath been my life for years of misery—

Which else I had not lived—

Upon that thought, and not on food, I fed,

Upon that thought, and not on sleep, I rested--
 I come to do the deed that must be done--
 Nor thou, nor sheltering angels, could prevent me.

Imo. But man shall--miscreant--help.

Ber. Thou callest in vain--
 The armed vassals all are far from succour--
 Following St. Anselm's votarists to the convent--
 My band of blood are darkening in their halls--
 Wouldst have him butchered by their ruffian hands
 That wait my bidding?

Imo. (*falling on the ground.*)--Fell and horrible
 I'm sealed, shut down in ransomless perdition.

Ber. Fear not, my vengeance will not yield its prey,
 He shall fall nobly, by my hand shall fall--
 But still and dark the summons of its fate,
 So winds the coiled serpent round his victim.

(*A horn sounds without.*)

Whence was that blast? those felon slaves are come--
 He shall not perish by their ruffian hands.

[*Exit Bertram.*

Imo. (*gazing round her, and slowly recovering
 recollection, repeats his last words*)--He shall
 not perish--

Oh! it was all a dream--a horrid dream--
 He was not here--it is impossible--

(*Tottering towards the door.*)

I will not be alone another moment
 Lest it do come again--where, where art thou?--

Enter Clotilda.

Clo. Didst thou not call me?--at thy voice of
 anguish

I hasten, though I cannot hear thy words—

Imo. Let me lean on thee, let me hold thee fast—

“ Yea, strongly grasp some strong substantial thing

“ To scare away foul forms of things that are not—
They have been with me in my loneliness.

“ Oh, I have had such dark and horrid thoughts,

“ But they are gone—we will not think of them—

Clo. What hath been with thee?

“ *Imo.* Something dark that hovered [*deliriously.*

“ Upon the confines of unmingling worlds,

“ In dread for life—for death too sternly definite,

Something the thought doth try in vain to follow—

Through mist and twilight—

Clo. Woe is me ! methought

I saw the form of Bertram as I entered—

Imo. (*Starting with sudden recollection*)

Oh God—it was no vision then, thou sawest him —

Give me my phrensy back—one moment's thought—

'Tis done, by Heaven, 'tis done—

I will fall down before his injured feet,

I'll tell him all my shame, and all my guilt,

My wrongs shall be a weapon in his hand,

And if it fail, this tainted frame of sin

Shall fall a shield before my husband's breast—

I'll wake the castle—wake the faithful vassals

I'll——(*going she stops suddenly*).

I cannot be the herald of my shame,

Go thou, and tell them what I cannot utter.

Clo. Oh, yet forgive me, through that gloomy
passage

I dare not venture, lest that dark form meet me.

Imo. Nay, thou must go, 'tis I that dare not venture—

For, if I see him in his holy sleep
Resting so calmly on the bed I've wronged,
My heart will burst, and he must die warned—

[*Exit Clotilda.*

Imo. (*Listening after her.*)

How long she lingers—aye—he knows my guilt
Even from this untold summons—aye—my boy
They'll clothe thee with *my* shame.
Hush—look—all's still within—an horrid stillness—
Perchance, that she, even she is bribed to aid—
Woe's me, who now can trust a menial's faith,
When that his wedded wife hath done him wrong—

Enter Clotilda.

Clo. All's safe—all's well—

Imo. What meanest thou by those words?—
For sounds of comfort to my blasted ear
Do ring a death-peal—

Clo. Heardest thou not the horn?

Imo. I heard no horn, I only heard a voice
That menaced murder—

Clo. Oh! the horn did sound—
And with it came a blessed messenger.
St. Anselm's knights within their patron's walls
Do hold a solemn feast, and o'er his shrine
They hang the holy banner of his blessing—
Full swiftly came the summons to thy lord
To join them in their solemn ceremony—
Lord Aldobrand with few attendants gone

Though late the hour, and dark the way, ere this
Hath measured half the distance

Imo. (throwing herself vehemently on her knees.)
Thank God, thank God—Heaven bless the gallant
knights!

Then he is safe until the morning's dawn.

Enter Page.

Imo. Speak—who art thou ?

Page. Dost thou not know me, lady ?

Imo. Well, well, I reck not—wherefore art thou
come ?

Page. So fierce the mountain-stream comes roaring
down,

The rivulet that bathes the convent walls
Is now a foaming flood—upon its brink
Thy lord and his small train do stand appalled—
With torch and bell from their high battlements
The monks do summon to the pass in vain ;
He must return to-night.

Imo. Tis false, he must not—Oh, I shall run mad—
Go thou, and watch upon the turret's height—*(to Clotilda)*

The flood must fail—the bright moon must shine forth ;
Go, go and tell me so—why stayest thou here *(to page)*
Begone, and do no need, and do not watch me.

[Exit page.]

I've lost the courage of mine innocence,
And dare not have the courage of despair—
The evil strength that gave temptation danger,
Yet cannot give remorse its energy.

Enter Clotilda.

Clot. The night is calm and clear, and o'er the plain
Nor arms do glimmer on my straining sight,
Nor through the stilly air, did horseman's tramp
Ring in faint echo from the hollow hill,
Though my fixed ear did list to giddiness—
Be comforted, he must have passed the stream—

Imo. Yea, I am comforted, 'tis blessed comfort—
He must have passed the stream—Oh pitying Heaven,
Accept these tears, these are not sinful tears—
Tell me again that he will not return.

Clot. I soothly say, he must have passed the stream.
(The horn is heard without, announcing Aldobrand's return.)

Clot. 'Tis Aldobrand, he's lost—we all are lost—
(without)

Imo. Now Heaven have mercy on thy soul, my
husband,
For man hath none—Is there no hope—no help?—

*(Looking towards the door, across which the band of
Bertram march silently and range themselves)*

None, none—his gathering band are dark around me—
I will make one last effort for their mercy—
If they be human, they will listen to me—

*(Rushing towards them, they step forward and point
their swords to resist her.)*

Oh, there is nothing merciful in their looks ;
Oh, there is nothing human in their hearts ;
They are not men—Hell hath sent up its devils.
There is no hope—I'll hear his dying groan—

I'll hear his last cry for that help that comes not—
I'll hear him call upon his wife and child—
I will not hear it.—(*stopping her ears.*)
Oh that my tightened heart had breath for prayer—
Mercy, oh mercy, Bertram.

(*Another horn heard without, she starts and staggers towards the door ;—a noise of swords within.*)

Ald. (*within*) Off, villain, off—

Ber. Villain, to thy soul—for I am Bertram.

(*Aldobrand retreating before Bertram, rushes on the stage, and falls at Imogine's feet.*)

Ald. Let me die at her feet, my wife, my wife—
Wilt thou not staunch the life-blood streaming from
me ?

Wilt thou not look at me?—Oh save my boy (*dies*).

(*Imogine at the name of her son, rushes off ;—
Bertram stands over the body holding the dagger
with his eyes fixed on it ;—The band fill up the back.*)

The curtain drops.

End of Fourth Act.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

The Chapel in the Convent of St. Anselm, the shrine splendidly illuminated and decorated. The Prior rising from before the altar.

Enter 1st Monk.

“ *Monk.* How gay and glorious doth our temple seem

“ Look round thee, father.

“ *Prior.* I feel no joy like that the faithful feel,

“ Viewing the glories of their holy place ;

“ An horror of great darkness is upon me,

“ A fearful dread hath overwhelmed me.

“ *Monk.* Wherefore ?

“ *Prior.* As at the shrine I knelt but now in prayer,

“ Nor sleep, nor waking, but a horrible vision

“ Fell on my tranced spirit, and I dreamed—

“ On the dark mountains was the vision wrought,

“ Of mist, and moonlight, mingling fitfully—

“ A brinded wolf did tear a struggling lion

“ While the cowed lioness stood trembling by—

“ I wist not what it meant, but in mine agony,

“ I prayed to be released, and as I woke

“ The echoes gave me back my slumbering cries—

“ *Monk.* 'Tis a good dream, and bodeth some ething good.—

“ *Prior*. How sayest thou, good ?

“ *Monk*. I dreamed it on that night

“ Lord Aldobrand did from his castle come,

“ And blessed days of peace have followed it.—

“ *Prior*. Heaven grant they may !

“ *Monk*. Lo, where the knights approach.

Enter the Knights in solemn procession with the consecrated banner.

The Prior advances to meet them.

Prior. Hail ! champions of the church and of the
land,

The banner of our holy saint in fight

Full bravely have ye borne, and scatheless back,

From unblest weapon and from arm unholy,

Restored it to the power whose might struck for you—

The Music commences, the Knights and Monks advance in procession, the Prior bearing the banner, which he has received from the principal Knight.

Hymn.

Guardian of the good and brave

Their banner o'er thy shrine we wave—

Monk, who counts the midnight bead—

Knight, who spurs the battle steed,—

He, who dies 'mid clarion's swelling

He, who dies 'mid requiem's knelling—

Alike thy care, whose grace is shed

On cowed scalp and helmed head—

Thy temple of the rock and flood

For ages 'mid their wrath has stood—

Thy midnight bell, through storm and calm

Hath shed on listening ear its balm.—

(The Hymn is interrupted by 3d Monk rushing in distractedly.)

3d Monk. Forbear—fear—fear—

Prior Why comest thou thus with voice of desperate fear,

Breaking upon our solemn ceremony?

3d Monk. Despair is round our walls, a wailing spirit

Yea, the mixt wailings of the infernal host

Burst deafeningly amid the shuddering blast—

No earthly lip might utterance give to such—

Prior. Thou'rt wild with watching, fear and loneliness,

In thy sole turret that o'erhangs the flood.

Of winds and waves, the strangely-mingled sounds

Ride heavily the night-wind's hollow sweep,

Mocking the sounds of human lamentation—

3d Monk. Hush, look, it comes again *(a scream)*

Prior. Defend us, heaven,

'Twas horrible indeed—'tis in our walls—

Ha, through the cloister there doth something glide

That seems in truth not earthly—

*Imagine rushes in with her child, her hair dishevelled,
her dress stained with blood.*

Imo. Save me—save me—

Prior. Save thee, from what?

Imo. From earth, and heaven, and hell,

All, all are armed, and rushing in pursuit—

Prior. *Monks and knights gathering around, and speaking together.*

All. Who—what—what hath befallen thee? Speak.

Imo. Oh wait not here to speak, but fly to save
him,

For he lies low upon the bloody ground—

Knight. She speaks in madness, ask the frighted
boy,

Hath aught befallen his father?—

Imo. Ask him not—

He hath no father—we have murdered him—

Traitress and murderer—we have murdered him—

They'll not believe me for mine agony—

Is not his very blood upon my raiment?

Reeks not the charnel-stream of murder from me?

Prior and Monks vehemently. Impossible.

Imo. Aye, heaven and earth do cry, impossible,
The shuddering angels round th' eternal throne,
Vailing themselves in glory, shriek impossible,
But hell doth know it true—

Prior. (*advancing to her solemnly.*)

Spirits of madness, that possess this woman

Depart I charge you, trouble her no more,

Till she do answer to mine adjuration—

Who did the deed?

*Imogine sinks gradually from his fixed eye, till
hiding her face, she falls on the ground in silence.*

Knight. I do believe it, horrid as it seems—

1st Monk. I'd not believe her words, I do her
silence.

Prior. (*who has fallen back in horror into the
arms of the monks, rushes forward*)

Oh! draw your swords, brave knights, and sheathe
them not—

“ Slack not to wield the sword of Aldobrand,
 Arise, pursue, avenge, exterminate
 “ With all the implements of mortal might,
 “ And all the thunders of the church’s curse”—

Exeunt tumultuously knights, monks, and attendants, the prior is following them, Imogine still kneeling grasps him by the robe.

Prior. (With mixt emotion, turning on her)

Thou art a wretch, I did so love and honour thee—
 Thou’st broke mine aged heart—that look again—
 Woman, let go thy withering hold—

Imo. I dare not—

I have no hold but upon heaven and thee.

Prior. (tearing himself from her)

I go, yet ere mine aged feet do bear me
 To the dark chase of that fell beast of blood—
 Hear thou, and—hope not—if by word or deed
 Yea, by invisible thought, unuttered wish
 Thou hast been ministrant to this horrid act—
 With full collected force of malediction
 I do pronounce unto thy soul—despair— [Exit.

Imo. (looking round on the chapel, after a long pause)

They’ve left me—all things leave me—all things
 human—

Follower and friend—last went the man of God—
 The last—but yet he went—

*Child.———*I will not leave thee—

Imo. My son, my son, was that thy voice—
 When heaven and angels, earth and earthly things

Do leave the guilty in their guiltiness—
 A cherub's voice doth whisper in a child's.
 There is a shrine within thy little heart
 Where I will hide, nor hear the trump of doom—

Child. Dear mother, take me home—

Imo. Thou hast no home—

She, whom thou callest mother left thee none—
 We're hunted from mankind—(*sinking down*)
 Here will we lie in darkness down together,
 And sleep a dreamless sleep—what form is that—
 Why have they laid him there? (*recoiling*)
 Plain in the gloomy depth he lies before me
 The cold blue wound whence blood hath ceased to
 flow,

The stormy clenching of the bared teeth—
 The gory socket that the balls have burst from—
 I see them all—(*shrieking*)

It moves—it moves—it rises—it comes on me—
 Twill break th' eternal silence of the grave—
 Twill wind me in its creaking marrowless arms.
 Hold up thy hands to it, it was thy father—
 Ah, it would have thee too, off—save me—off—

(*Rushes out with the child.*)

Scene changes to the Castle—Prior enters alone—

Prior. His halls are desolate—the lonely walls
 Echo my single tread—through the long galleries—
 The hurrying knights can trace nor friend nor foe—
 The murderer hath escaped—the saints forgive me,
 I feel mine heart of weakness is come back,
 Almost I wish he had—ha, here is blood—

Mine ebbing spirits lacked this stirring impulse—
Ho—haste ye here—the shedder must be near—

[*Enter the knights, monks, &c. supporting Clotilda.*

Knight. We found this trembling maid, alone,
concealed—

Prior. Speak—tell of Bertram—of thy lord—the
vassals—

Clot. Oh, give me breath, for I am weak with fear—
Short was the bloody conflict of the night—
The few remaining vassals fled in fear—
The bandits loaded with the castle's spoil—
Are gone—I saw them issue from the walls—
But yet I dared not venture forth, while Bertram—

All. Go on—go on—

Clot. He bore the murdered body—
Alone into yon chamber [*pointing*
I heard the heavy weight trail after him—
I heard his bloody hands make fast the door—
There hath he sat in dread society,
The corse and murderer are there together.

(*The Knights draw their swords, and rush towards the
door.*)

Prior. (*interposing*) Hold, champions hold, this
warfare is for me.

The arm of flesh were powerless on him now—
Hark how the faltering voice of feeble age
Shall bow him to its bidding. Ho, come forth
[*striking the door.*

Thou man of blood, come forth, thy doom awaits thee.

[Bertram opens the door, and advances slowly, his dress is stained with blood, and he grasps the hilt of a dagger in his hand—his look is so marked and grand, that the knights, &c. make room for him, and he advances to the front of the stage untouched.]

All. Who art thou?

Ber. I am the murderer—Wherefore are ye come?—

Prior.—This majesty of guilt doth awe my spirit—
Is it th' embodied fiend who tempted him
Sublime in guilt?

Ber. Marvel not at me—Wist ye whence I come?
The tomb—where dwell the dead—and I dwelt with
him—

Till sense of life dissolved away within me—

(Looking round ghastly,)

I am amazed to see ye living men,
I deemed that when I struck the final blow
Mankind expired, and we were left alone,
The corse and I were left alone together,
The only tenants of a blasted world
Dispeopled for my punishment, and changed
Into a penal orb of desolation—

Prior. Advance and bind him, are ye men and
armed?—

What, must this palsied hand be first on him?—

Advance, and seize him, ere his voice of blasphemy
Shall pile the roof in ruins o'er our heads—

Bar.—Advance, and seize me, ye who smile at
blood—

For every drop of mine a life shall pay—

I'm naked, famished, faint, my brand is broken—
Hush, mailed champions, on the helpless Bertram—

(They sink back)

Now prove what fell resistance I shall make.

(Throws down the hilt of his dagger.)

There—bind mine arms—if ye do list to bind them—
I came to yield—but not to be subdued—

Prior. Oh thou, who o'er thy stormy grandeur
flingest

A struggling beam that dazzles, awes, and vanishes—
Thou, who dost blend our wonder with our curses—
Why didst thou this ?

Ber. He wronged me, and I slew him—
To man but thee I ne'er had said even this—
To man but thee, I ne'er shall utter more—
Now speed ye swift from questioning to death—

(They surround him.)

One prayer, my executioners, not conquerors—
Be most ingenious in your cruelty—
Let rack and pincer do their full work on me—
'Twill rouse me from that dread unnatural sleep,
In which my soul hath dreamt its dreams of agony—
This is my prayer, ye'll not refuse it to me—
(As they are leading him off, the prior lays hold of him)

Prior. Yet bend thy steeled sinews, bend and pray—
The corse of him thou'st murdered, lies within—

(A long pause)

Ber. I have offended Heaven, but will not mock
it—

Spare me your racks and pincers, spare me words.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III.

A dark Wood, in the back Scene a Cavern, Rocks and Precipices above.—Imogene comes forward.

Imo. (Sighing heavily after a long pause.)

If I could waft away this low-hung mist

That darkens o'er my brow—

If I could but unbind this burning band

That tightens round my heart—

———— Or night or morning is it?

I wist not which, a dull and dismal twilight

Pervading all things, and confounding all things,

Doth hover o'er my senses and my soul—

[Comes forward shuddering.]

The moon shines on me, but it doth not light me;

The surge glides past me, but it breathes not on me.

My child, my child, where art thou; come to me—

I know thou hidest thyself for sport to mock me—

Yet come—for I am scared with loneliness—

I'll call on thee no more, lo, there he glides—

And there, and there—he flies from me—he laughs—

I'll sing thee songs the church-yard spirits taught me—

I'll sit all night on the grey tombs with thee,

So thou wilt turn to me—he's gone—he's gone.

Enter Clotilda, Prior and Monks surrounding.

Clo. She's here—she's here—and is it thus I see
her?

Prior. All-pitying Heaven—release her from this
misery.

Imo. Away, unhand me, ye are executioners—
 I know your horrible errand—who hath sent you?
 This is false Bertram's doing—God—oh, God,
 How I did love—and how am I requited—
 Well, well, accuse me of what crime you will,
 I ne'er was guilty of not loving thee—
 Oh, spare the torture—and I will confess—
 Nay, now there heeds it not—his look's enough—
 That smile hath keener edge than many daggers.

[*She sinks into Clotilda's arms.*]

Clo. How could this wasted form sustain the toils—
 Bearing her helpless child.

Imo. (*starting up*)

I was a mother—'twas my child I bore—
 The murderer hung upon my flying steps—
 The winds with all their speed had failed to match me.
 Oh! how we laughed to see the baffled fiend
 Stamp on the shore, and grind his iron teeth—
 While safe and far, I braved the wave triumphant,
 And shook my dripping locks like trophied banner.
 I was a mother then.

Prior. Where is thy child?

Clo. (*Pointing to the cave into which she has
 looked*)

Oh, he lies cold within his cavern-tomb—
 Why dost thou urge her with the horrid theme?

Prior. It was to wake one living chord o' th'
 heart,

And I will try—though mine own breaks at it—
 Where is thy child?

Imo. (with a frantic laugh)

The forest fiend hath snatched him—

He rides the night-mare through the wizard woods.

Prior. Hopeless and dark—even the last spark
extinct.

Enter 3d Monk hastily.

Monk. Bertram—the prisoner Bertram—

Prior. ——— Hush—thou'lt kill her—

Haste thee, Clotilda,—holy brethren, haste;

Remove her hence—aye, even to that sad shelter—

[*Pointing to the cave.*

I see the approaching torches of the guard,

Flash their red light athwart the forest's shade—

Bear her away—oh my weak eye doth fail

Amid these horrors——

[*Imogene is torn to the cave, the Prior follows.*

Manet last Monk—Enter a Knight.

“ *Knight.* Where is the prior?

“ *Monk.* In yonder cave he bides,

“ And here he wills us wait, for 'tis his purpose

“ Once more to parley with that wretched man:

“ How fares he now?

“ *Knight.* As one whose pride of soul

“ Bear him up singly in this terrible hour—

“ His step is firm—his eye is fixed—

“ Nor menace, nor reviling, prayers, nor curses

“ Can win an answer from his closed lips—

“ It pities me—for he is brave—most brave—

“ *Monk.* Pity him not.

“ *Knight.* Hush—lo, he comes——

[*A gleam of torch-light falls on the rocks, Bertram, Knights, and Monks, are seen winding down the precipices, the clank of Bertram's chains the only sound heard. They enter, Bertram is between two Monks, who bear torches.*]

1st Monk. Leave him with us, and seek the Prior,
I pray you.

Knight. (*aside to Monk*)

He yet may try escape. We'll watch concealed.

[*Exeunt all but Bertram and the two Monks.*]

1st Monk. Brief rest is here allowed thee—murderer, pause—

How fearful was our footing on those cliffs,
Where time had worn those steep and rocky steps—
I counted them to thee as we descended,
But thou for pride wast dumb—

Ber. I heard thee not—

2d Monk. Look round thee, murderer, drear thy
resting place—

This is thy latest stage—survey it well—
Lo, as I wave my dimmed torch aloft,
Yon precipice crag seems as if every tread
(Yea, echoed impulse of the passing foe)
Would loose its weight to topple o'er our heads—
Those cavities hollowed by the hand of wrath—
Those deepening gulfs, have they no horrible tenant?
Dare thine eye scan that spectred vacancy?

Ber. I do not mark the things thou tell'st me of.—

1st Monk. Wretch, if thy fear no spectred inmate
shapes—

Ber. (*starting from his trance*)

Cease, triflers, would you have *me* feel remorse?
 Leave me alone—nor cell, nor chain, nor dungeon,
 Speaks to the murderer with the voice of solitude.

1st Monk. Thou sayest true—

In cruelty of mercy will we leave thee—

[*Exeunt Monks.*]

Ber. If they would go in truth—but what avails it?

[*He meditates in gloomy reflection for some minutes,
 and his countenance slowly relaxes from its stern
 expression.*]

[*The prior enters unobserved, and stands opposite
 him in an attitude of supplication, Bertram resumes
 his sternness.*]

Ber. Why art thou here?—There was an hovering
 angel

Just lighting on my heart—and thou hast scared it—

Prior. Yea, rather, with my prayers I'll woo it back.
 In very pity of thy soul I come
 To weep upon that heart I cannot soften—

[*A long pause.*]

Oh! thou art on the verge of awful death—
 Think of the moment, when the veiling scarf
 That binds thine eyes, shall shut out earth for ever—
 When in thy dizzy ear, hurtles the groan
 Of those who see the smiting hand upreared,
 Thou canst but feel—that moment comes apace—

[*Bertram smiles.*]

But terrors move in thee a horrid joy,
 And thou art hardened by habitual danger
 Beyond the sense of aught but pride in death.

[*Bertram turns away.*]

Can I not move thee by one power in nature?
 There have been those whom Heaven hath failed to
 move,
 Yet moved they were by tears of kneeling age.

[*Kneels.*

I wave all pride of ghostly power o'er thee—
 I lift no cross, I count no bead before thee—
 By the locked agony of these withered hands,
 By these white hairs, such as thy father bore,
 (Whom thou could'st ne'er see prostrate in the dust)
 With toil to seek thee here my limbs do fail,
 Send me not broken-hearted back again—
 Yield, and relent, Bertram, my son, my son (*weeping*)
 (*Looking up eagerly.*)

Did not a gracious drop bedew thine eye?

Ber. Perchance a tear had fallen, hadst thou not
 marked it.

Prior. (*rising with dignity.*)
 Obdurate soul—then perish in thy pride—
 Hear in my voice thy parting angel speak,
 Repent—and be forgiven—

(*Bertram turns towards him in strong emotion, when
 a shriek is heard from the cavern, Bertram stands
 fixed in horror.*)

Prior. (*stretching out his hands towards the ca-
 vern.*)

Plead *thou* for me—thou, whose wild voice of horror,
 Has pierced the heart my prayers have failed to
 touch—

Ber. (wildly) What voice was that—yet do not
dare to tell me,
Name not her name, I charge thee.

Prior. Imagine—
A maniac through these shuddering woods she wan-
ders,
But in her madness never cursed thy name.

(Bertram attempts to rush towards the cave, but stands stupefied on hearing a shriek from the cavern. Imogene rushes from it in distraction, bursting from the arms of Clotilda, the Monks and Knights follow, and remain in the back ground.)

Imo. Away, away, away, no wife—no mother—
(She rushes forward till she meets Bertram, who stands in speechless horror.)

Imo. Give me my husband, give me back my child—
Nay, give me back myself—
They say I'm mad, but yet I know thee well—
Look on me—They would bind these wasted limbs—
I ask but death—death from thy hand—*that hand can deal death well*—and yet thou wilt not give it.

Ber. (gazing on her for a moment, then rushing to the prior, and sinking at his feet.)
Who hath done this? Where are the racks I hoped for?

Am I not weak? am I not humbled now?
(Groveling at the Prior's feet, and then turning to the Knights.)

Hast thou no curse to blast--no curse for me--
 Is there no hand to pierce a soldier's heart?
 Is there no foot to crush a felon's neck?

Imo. (Raising herself at the sound of his voice.)

Bertram.

(He rushes towards her, and first repeats Imogine feebly, as he approaches, he utters her name again passionately, but as he draws nearer and sees her look of madness and desperation, he repeats it once more in despair, and does not dare to approach her, till he perceives her falling into Clotilda's arms, and catches her in his.)

Imo. Have I deserved this of thee?—(she dies slowly, with her eyes fixed on Bertram, who continues to gaze on her unconscious of her having expired.)

Prior. 'Tis past--remove him from the corse--

(The Knights and Monks advance, he waves them off with one hand still supporting the body.)

Prior. (to the Monks)--Brethren, remove the corse--

Ber. She is not dead--(starting up.)

She must not, shall not die, till she forgives me--

Speak--speak to me--*(kneeling to the corse)*

(Turning to the Monks)--Yes--she will speak anon--

(A long pause, he drops the corse.)

She speaks no more--Why do ye gaze on me--

I loved her, yea, I love, in death I loved her--

I killed her--but--I loved her--

What arm shall loose the grasp of love and death?

(The Knights and Monks surround, and attempt to tear him from the body, he snatches a sword from one of the Knights, who retreats in terror, as it is pointed towards him. Bertram resuming all his former previous sternness, bursts into a disdainful laugh.)

Ber. Thee—against thee—oh, thou art safe—thou
worm—

Bertram hath but one fatal foe on earth—

And *he is here*—(*stabs himself.*)

Prior. (*rushes forward.*) He dies, he dies.

Ber. (*struggling with the agonies of death.*)

I know thee, holy Prior—I know ye, brethren—

Lift up your holy hands in charity.

(With a burst of wild exultation.)

I died no felon death—

A warrior's weapon freed a warrior's soul—

THE END.

EPILOGUE,

Written by the Hon. George Lamb.

SPOKEN BY MISS KELLY.

SAY, for our Author, whose proud hopes aspire,
To sound the Tragic Bard's neglected lyre ;
Say, for our novice, who at once the weight,
Bears of her own and of the Poet's fate,
Oh say, what hope ? 'Tis mine with doubt and fear
In this dread hour to ask your judgment here ;
Yet, for my sake, before your sentence, stay,
And hear me draw one moral from the play.

Enough for IMAGINE the tears ye gave her ;
I come to say one word in BERTRAM's favour.—
BERTRAM ! ye cry, a ruthless blood-stain'd royer !
He was—but also was the truest lover :
And, faith ! like cases that we daily view,
All might have prosper'd, had the fair been true.

Man, while he loves, is never quite deprav'd,
And woman's triumph, is a lover sav'd.
The branded wretch, whose callous feelings court
Crime for his glory, and disgrace for sport ;
If in his breast love claims the smallest part,
If still he values one fond female heart,
From that one seed, that ling'ring spark, may grow
Pride's noblest flow'r, and virtue's purest glow
Let but that heart—dear female lead with care
To honour's path, and cheer his progress there,
And proud, though haply sad regret occurs
At all his guilt, think all his virtue hers.

The fair not always view with fav'ring eyes
The very virtuous or extremely wise ;
But, odd it seems, will sometimes rather take
Want with the spendthrift, riot with the rake.
“ None, howe'er vitious, find all women froward,
“ None—did I say ? none, save the sot and coward.”

The reason's plain, the good need nought to warn them,
And we must love the wicked to reform them.

“ Yet we some wives, some sweethearts, may discover,
“ Almost no better than the spouse or lover ;
“ Nought can to peace the busy female charm,
“ And if she can't do good, she must do harm—
“ Can chill warm youth, yet fails to warm chill age,
“ Makes sages fools, but rarely makes fools sage ;
“ Some women, like all men, have tastes for evil,
“ And, where they should be angels, play the devil.”

Still woman draws new power, new empire still
From every blessing and from every ill.
Vice on her bosom lulls remorseful care,
And virtue hopes congenial virtue there.
Still she most hides the strength that most subdues,
To gain each end its opposite pursues ;
Lures by neglect, advances by delay,
And gains command by swearing to obey.

Women have pow'r too in these gallant days,
(So Authors think) of recommending plays.
The prologue prosés, ere the play is known,
Rugged and dull as the male speaker's tone ;
When the scène's done, and many a fault provokes you,
Women and Epilogue come forth to coax you.
Yet dare I plead, who in this wond'rous age,
Can only speak and walk upon the stage,—
Who know nor carte, nor tierce, nor fencing odds,
Nor by a rope's assistance seek the Gods !
Yes, I will dare ; for if ye're pleased to-night,
The genuine drama re-asserts its right.

BERTRAM in crime elate, of murder proud,
Ruthless to man, to woman's accents bow'd ;
Be mov'd like him, your sterner thoughts resign
At woman's voice, and let that voice be mine !

Lines between the “ inverted commas” are omitted in speaking.

BELLAMIRA;

OR,

THE FALL OF TUNIS.

A TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS;

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.

BY RICHARD SHEIL, Esq.,

AUTHOR OF "THE APOSTATE"

THIRD EDITION.

LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

1818:

CONFIDENTIAL

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PREFACE.

THIS play is founded upon a fact recorded in the history of Charles V. Haradin is generally known by the name of Barbarossa. The former appellation is employed to avoid an association with a popular tragedy.

The reader will, perhaps, make allowance for defects in a composition which requires more labour and time than the Author's professional pursuits, as a barrister, would permit him to devote to it.

Miss O'NEILL has added to the many obligations already conferred upon him, by a second exertion of her supremacy of dominion over the two great sources of emotion, which has decided the bias of the Public towards the tragic drama in this country.

The part of *Montalto* was performed by Mr. YOUNG, with that serene magnificence, and discriminating power, for which he is distinguished.

In Mr. C. KEMBLE he found not only a consummate actor, but a most judicious friend. That gentleman, who combines the varied excellencies of the author and the artist, assisted him by his kind advice in the course of rehearsal. He is sensible that he owes Mr. C. KEMBLE an apology for having allotted to his great talents a character which, although unequal to them, he played with the highest ability, and the most disinterested zeal.

Mr. MACREADY contributed most essentially to the success of this Tragedy. This is a man of true genius. He has made a giant's step in his professional career.

Salerno is a part loaded with narration. Mr. TERRY made the audience less sensible of its weight. The Author of the admirable Opera of *Guy Mannering* infused into the only two scenes in which he appeared, a power which the writer could not have anticipated.

The abilities of Mr. CONNOR are wasted upon the part of *Kaled*. They are, indeed, too often thrown away upon inferior characters. It is difficult, however, to resist the temptation to bring the full force of so excellent a company into the field.

It is enough to state, that Mr. CHAPMAN and Mr. COMER played the parts of *Anselmo* and *Gonzaga*, to shew how admirably the minor parts are filled at Covent-garden.

He has a second time to express his thanks for the judicious and zealous manner with which Mr. FAWCETT superintended the rehearsal of his play.

TO THE
RIGHT HON. LORD HOLLAND.

MY LORD,

YOUR illustrious kinsman was the object of my earliest veneration. A play, depicting the sufferings of the Christian Captive, would have been an appropriate offering to him who unmanacled the African Slave.

I feel as if I were in some degree dedicating this Play to his memory, when I prefix to it the name of a Nobleman who inherits his taste, his talents, his humanity, and his patriotism.

I have the honour to be,

MY LORD,

Your most obedient

and faithful Servant,

RICHARD SHEIL.

MEMORANDUM

TO : THE PRESIDENT

FROM : THE SECRETARY

SUBJECT: [Illegible]

[Illegible text]

[Illegible text]

APPROVED: [Illegible]

[Illegible text]

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MANFREDI Mr. C. KEMBLE.

MONTALTO..... Mr. YOUNG.

AMURATH Mr. MACREADY.

SALERNO Mr. TERRY.

KALED Mr. CONNOR.

ANSELMO..... Mr. CHAPMAN.

GONZAGA Mr. COMER.

BELLAMIRA Miss O'NEILL.

Slaves, Moors, and Sailors.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

.....	MRS. TAMM
.....	MONTEZ
.....	FRANK
.....	ALBERT
.....	REED
.....	FRANK
.....	GONZALES
.....	MRS. TAMM

.....

PROLOGUE,

(WRITTEN BY WILLIAM GRENVILLE GRAHAM, ESQ.)

SPOKEN BY MR. CONNOR.

WHOE'ER on ages past has wisely thought,
And feels the moral by example taught,
Has learnt that empire, built on crime, is vain,
And short the date of guilty grandeur's reign.

Behold, where traced on ancient story's page,
Proud Carthage stands the wonder of her age,
Beams o'er the world the splendor of her name,
And grasps with mighty hand the scroll of fame;
But sunk at last beneath her load of crimes,
She fell, the blot, and beacon of her times.

Next, 'mid the darkness of Barbaric night,
Up rises Tunis, on the averted sight;
The Moslem faith, with Moslem fierceness joined,
Crushed the free soul, and chained the aspiring mind,
Till, rous'd by pity for a suffering world,
Imperial Charles his victor-flag unfurled;
Poured on her blood-stained towers the storm of war,
And dashed Haradin from his trophied car,
From Christian captives snapp'd the galling chain,
And gave them life and liberty again.
But vainly were the bolts of slavery riven,
And short the respite to our nature given;
Europe once more beheld, with shuddering fear,
The turbaned Corsair urge his wild career,—
Saw the pale Crescent sweep the ocean-wave,
No sword to avenge—no pitying arm to save;

Till thou, my Country ! in the love of right,
Lent to the weeping world thy lion-might,
Broke the dread withering spell of Freedom's sleep,
And rolled thy thunders o'er the insulted deep.

On this famed spot our Poet spreads the scene,
And pictures times and things that once have been ;
His task this night to paint the Christian's fate,
Galled by the fiend-like scourge of Moslem hate,
To paint the struggle of that fateful hour,
When man flings off the chains of guilty power ;
With storied truth he blends the tale of woe,
And bids your tears for fancied sorrows flow,
Claims your compassion for a wife's distress,
And a sad father's exiled loneliness ;
Portrays the effects of passions unrefined,
And the stern outlaw's waywardness of mind.

If Nature's colours through his portraits shine,
Your just applause will crown his proud design,
And, on his heart, while former praises press,
He dares again to hope a like success.

BELLAMIRA,

&c.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

The Port of Tunis.

*Anselmo and Gonzaga, with other Christian slaves,
discovered upon the beach, looking at a Tunisian
galley entering the harbour.*

Ans. **BEHOLD!** a pirate frigate thro' the port
Comes, freighted with calamity. Methinks,
Here, from the shore of Tunis, we behold it
As, on hell's burning margin, the accursed
Rise from their beds of pain, to gaze upon
The newly damned, borne to the realm of woe.

Gon. If crimes bring down the lightning, tell me,
Tunis,

Why dost thou stand unscathed?

Ans. The wrath of Heaven,
The vengeance of the world, will fall at last.
Hast thou not felt the pulse of terror beat
Swift thro' the pirate-city's trembling heart?

Gon. For twice three years I have known captivity,
 And, till this hour, I never yet have breathed
 In labour's burning round. The whip has ceased
 To crackle in the air,—and cruelty
 Seems to forget her victims.

Ans. Oh! Gonzaga,
 If misery were not an infidel;
 To every faith in mercy, I had deemed
 The pirates' fears give warrant to a fame,
 That, e'er my destiny had flung me here,
 Was rumoured wide thro' Europe.

Gon. To your friend
 Impart the precious hope.

Ans. It was reported,
 That Charles the Emperor had at last decreed
 To turn his eye of mercy to the slave;—
 He had trodden Gaul to earth, and all the nations
 Bowed at his feet, in reverence—yet, 'twas said,
 He felt the laurels wreathed around his brow,
 Drip with the blood of Europe, and resolved
 In expiation of ambition's sin,
 To trample out the pirates from the world.
 But see, with hurried step, and wildered look,
 Our fellow captive comes.

Gon. It is Manfredi.

*Enter Manfredi, who rushes precipitately to
 the front of the stage.*

Mon. Thou hast heard our invocation, thou hast
 heard
 The burning invocation nightly poured

From twenty thousand hearts of human mould,—
Thou hast heard the captive's cry?

Gon. Say,—Why is this?

Why hast thou rush'd amongst us? thou art not
A feather to be stirr'd by every breeze,
Of little incident.

Ans. Why are thine hands

Thus locked in supplication—why do tears
Stand on thy quivering eye-lids? Speak, Manfredi,—
Nothing but freedom.

Man. Freedom! Aye! it is freedom

That makes my soul mount in a flight of fire,

“ And rush into the presence of my God!

“ Eternal Providence!—My wife, my child!

“ Joy comes upon my desolated heart,

“ As swift spring-tides return upon the bark,

“ Long stranded on the solitary beach,

“ O'erwhelming as they left it.—But I mock you.

“ Your expectation aches”—Charles has landed.

Ans. Spain's mighty sovereign.—

Man. Twenty leagues from Tunis

His eagles roll along the desert wind.

Upon the shores of Afric he has poured

Twice thirty thousand warriors;—from behind

A ruin'd colonnade, where I had crouch'd,

I overheard a band of Janissaries,

And learn'd the precious tidings.—Yes, he comes,

The glorious champion of humanity,

To blot the shame of Europe,—to let fall

The long-suspended vengeance, and to give—

All. To give us liberty.

Man. Yes! liberty!

What ! have you felt the shock, and are you wild,
 And are you rapt as I was ? “Mighty God,”
 Look down upon us !—Not in all the world,
 Where'er thy bright and infinite eye doth reach,
 Dost thou behold more burning hearts than ours
 Beat in thanksgiving to thee !

Enter Montalto and Moors.

[The Christian Slaves rise as he enters.]

Mont. You have started ?

Man. We prayed, and 'tis your wont, e'en to deny
 That comfort to the wretched.

Mont. If it be (*aside*).

The comfort of the wretched, many years
 Have roll'd their lengthening waves above my head,
 Since I have known it. Ah ! (*after a pause*) I deem
 you are

The Count Manfredi ?

Man. That was once my name.—

Now I am—Slave.

Mont. Strike off his chains !

[The Moors remove his fetters.]

Begone !

[The Christian Slaves and Moors retire.]

Man. How dare you trust a Christian with himself ?

Mont. As yesterday I pass'd along the beach,
 It chanced a ruffian smote you. I observed
 The knitted fortitude upon your front,
 And straight inquired your fortunes. I remembered
 Your father, in a better day, had been
 Sometime my fellow in the field, and was
 A gallant soldier, and a faithful man.

Man. What marvellous chance in war's companionship
Knit Mahomet's abhorrent votary,
And an Italian noble?

Mont. Once—

Man. You are moved—

Mont. Our creeds were once alike.

Man. You are—a renegade?

Mont. Their own peculiar planets rise on all,
And mine might have been happier—'Tis enough—
I have resolved to free you from the lash,
And to transfer you to a gentler service.—
You are henceforth—

Man. Your slave:—full twenty times
I have been bought and sold. I am sold again,
And, what does it import me? It is to me,
As to the floating corse, a change of tide,—
From one rock it but welters to another.

Mont. You see before you one, long deeply read
In the large volumes of calamity,
Who fondly seeks to mitigate his own
By diminution of his fellow's woe.—
I own I feel myself a desolate
And heart-forsaken man. I want a friend.

Man. A friend!

Mont. Speak on,—what does thy smile denote?
Is it the smile of scorn? What see you here,
That can deserve your scorn?

Man. Not in your face,
For there, "in mould'ring faded characters,"
I indistinctly read of truth and honour;

But 'tis an epitaph—even there I read
 That they are dead—nay, do not frown, my lord,—
 “ I was a nobleman, whose fame in arms
 “ Was Naples' boast. I had a wife, my lord,
 “ Who was enough for mortal happiness;
 “ But Heaven, unwearied in its blessing, gave
 “ Another print of beauty, in her child:
 “ I was so blest, my very name had grown
 “ Into a proverb of felicity.
 “ Men wish'd to be as happy as Manfredi.
 “ Well,—crossing to Sicilia's sister-shore,
 “ In an unarmed bark, an African
 “ Spread all his sails behind,—vainly—but why
 “ Retrace the butchery?—on the galley's bench
 “ They *bound* me to the oar, till it became
 “ Almost incorporate with me.—On my limbs
 “ They laid the flaying stripe, until I sank,
 “ Lifeless, beneath; then, back again with stripes
 “ They lash'd me into life. The gnawing chain
 “ Has worn its iron-way into my body,
 “ My ankles fester in the short revulsion
 “ Of the deep-eating fetter.”—Look you here!
 See slavery's livid impress—here, on me,—

[*shows his arm.*]

On me, who was a soldier, am a man!
 Your friend!—the hue of Europe on your face!
 The turban on your head! Your friend! I see you,
 Haradin's—the red-brinded tyrant's slave.—
 Aye! I behold you when revenge, at last,
 Treads with a giant's steps to yonder towers.—
 “ Nay, start not, for I know it all.” I see you

Leagued with these barbarous, cut-throat Africans,
 Confederate with these predestined damned :
 A pirate, and a renegade!

Mont. What, hoa there ?

Dost thou dare to tell it me? Damnation! renegade!
 What, to my face! to dash the base affront
 Against my teeth! What, hoa there!

Enter Moors, who seize Manfredi.

Man. I perceive

You have learn'd the mode of Afric—come—pronounce
 The fate of him, who dares to tell you that,
 You oft, at midnight, whisper to yourself.

Mon. Thou never shalt despise me—well I deem
 Thou smilest to think, I will debase myself.
 Another had impaled thee for the taunt,
 And I could hurl thee—I will not permit
 My anger to o'ermaster me. I spare thee—
 Thou shalt not scorn Montalto.

[*As he retires from the Stage.*]

Man. Hold!

Mont. Away!

Man. Montalto!

Mont. Yes! "the cursed, but not the base,"
 The blighted, not the fallen;—I am Montalto,
 Riven by the lightning, yet not turn'd to ashes,
 That infamy should scatter me abroad,
 With its black breath of pestilence—Farewell!

Man. "I hold thee back by that accursed robe.
 I have heard—"

Mont. You have heard my wrongs?

[*Stopping and turning back.*

Man. Who has not heard the ingratitude of
Venice?

“ You stood her senate’s guide, and, in her councils,
“ Arose her people’s dauntless advocate.
“ You nail’d down victory to her mast; before you,
“ Her foes were dash’d, as burst the billow’s path
“ Upon her guardian mole;—then, at the last,
“ Her leagu’d nobility conspired against you,
“ And, in requital for a thousand battles
“ Waged upon every sea, perfidious Venice
“ Stamp’d shame upon her famous admiral,
“ And cast him from his country.”

Mont. Was that all?

Man. Traitor.

Mont. Ha! traitor! that indeed was hard—
But traitor only fell upon mine ear,
And found no echoes here—leave me—(to the
Moors—they retire)—You said
You were a husband?

Man. Yes!

Mont. A father?

Man. Yes!

Mont. They slew my wife and child—a little night
Was given me ere my exile,—one short night
Given to a father’s, and a husband’s heart.—
My ruin could not satisfy my foes,
They thirsted for my blood.—My only brother,
Stood at the head of the nobility,
And, to secure my treasures, and my name,

Decreed my death.—The ruthless villains burst
My palace-gates asunder. In the night
I heard their loosen'd yells, and, with my sword,
I threw myself before the tide of blood.—
My wife—my child,—I fought for you in vain!
They tore them from my clasp—I can't go on.—
Oh! I have long since lost the power to pray,
I have still the right to curse! A poignard pierced
me,

I saw mine infant whirl'd amid the band
Of howling murderers—I saw my brother
Standing, like Cain, when he had struck the blow.—
If I go on, the thought will madden me!
The spectres will arise!—I have told enough.—
Now, dost thou scorn Montalto?

Man. With my tears.—
Unhappy man! you lived!—

Mont. Yes, for revenge!—
My assassins deem'd me lifeless; but their steels
Had miss'd the seat of being—ere the morn'
A faithful servant bore me to the shore.—
And the first sound that smote my conscious ear,
Told me that I was childless. I knelt down,
And curs'd the mounting sun—Yes, I blasphemed
Against all opening nature.

Man. Could you live?
Mont. I flew to Tunis—gave myself to hell!
Led on the Africans to victory,
Amid that Adriatic, where so oft
I had scatter'd half their navies—I have turn'd
The billows back, foul with Venetian gore,

I have heard the shrieking of the murderers,
 As down they sank into the whelming wave.—
 Oh! Venice, thou has felt Montalto's arm,—
 I am lost—I am reveng'd!—

Man. Ill-fated man!

Mont. Thou sayest aright—I am, indeed, accurs'd,
 I am a lonely heart-abandoned man!

“ Indifference has spread upon my soul
 “ Like a green stagnant lake, that never feels
 “ The stir of healthful motion—All around me
 “ Is a wild stony wilderness, in which
 “ I find no kindred being—when my blood
 “ Ran young, revenge and nature fir'd me still—
 “ I leap'd o'er gulfs of crime, and, in the bound,
 “ I threw away this horrid lethargy,
 “ That lays its death-cold surface o'er my soul.
 “ Oh! it was well, when, like the cataract,
 “ From precipice to precipice I plunged;
 “ But I have reach'd the deep abyss at last,
 “ And, there lie down in ice.”—When I beheld thee,
 A thought rose like a breeze,—an idle hope—
 Thou can'st not be my friend—farewell!

[*He is about to retire.*]

Man. Montalto!

Mont. Well—

Man. You have found a friend!

Mont. Impossible—

The shipwreck'd wretch in the unfathom'd deep,
 Casts not his anchor from the bursting bark,
 Nor, in perdition's gulf will I e'er seek
 A human hold again.

Man. Hear me, Montalto!

Mont. I understand—thou would'st have me twice
a traitor.

Hear me, and hope no more. Thou dost behold
The Governor of Tunis.

Man. You! the Governor
Of these accursed towers!

Mont. I am. Haradin
Has left the city with his choicest troops,
To give the Emperor battle, and to me,
Tunis is now intrusted.

Man. Montalto, there's a voice within my soul,
Crying aloud,—that thou art chosen for
The glorious instrument of liberty!
Not, at a time like this, shalt thou be found
Confederate with villains to the last.—
Thou hast sinned, but e'en thy failings shall be turn'd,
Like clouds impurpled by the evening light,
To deep, and radiant glory. One great deed
Shall melt thy sins to brightness, and shall make thee
A blessing, and a wonder in the world.

Mont. I am trusted—you insult me.

Enter Kaled.

Kal. Hail, my Lord!

Mont. Kaled! this villain tracks the sea with
blood.—

You are return'd from piracy?

Kal. I landed
Upon the shore of western Italy;—

At midnight gave a palace to the flame,—
 Slew half the habitants, and bore the rest
 In slavery back to Tunis. On with them,
 Lead them before the Governor.

Mont. The sight
 Of miserable things delights me not. (*To Manfredi*)
 Come.

Kal. Good, my Lord, you shall behold a prize,
 Bright as e'er crown'd a Corsair's brave exploit,
 Myself, amid the carnage, bore her off,
 As, shrieking with her child, she pierc'd the flames,
 And almost 'scap'd mine arm.

Mont. Begone!

Man. (*Stopping him as he goes out.*) I pray you,
 List to the harbinger of misery!
 Hark to that groan, Montalto! Stay, my lord,
 Stay and behold your fellow-men, Montalto,
 And ask yourself, if e'er a soldier's arm—

Mont. (*With violent emotion.*) Oh, spare me!

Man. Should have leagu'd itself—

Mont. Forbear!

Man. With rapine and with murder—See—they
 come—

Behold!

(*Some Slaves enter from the back of the stage.*)

Mont. Ha!

Man. Look upon these wretched men,—
 Behold this human misery,—then think,
 Think that these deeds of horror are your own.

Mont. Mine! dost thou deem this arm was ever
rais'd

In ruffian piracy?

Man. I see you here.

Mont. Why dost thou push the arrow thro' my
heart?

'Tis deep enough already.

(He rushes out with Manfredi.)

Kal. Get thee gone,
Thou muttering renegade!—I do suspect me,
The Christian lurks beneath the Moslem still.

*(Enter other Slaves,—Salerno.—Bellamira, with
her Child, and moving slowly from the back of
the Stage.)*

On with the Christian dog!

Bel. Look at the shuddering form, the wither'd
face,

The step of tottering weakness.—From his wounds
Half of his life is pour'd—He tries in vain
To heave a cry for mercy.

(Kaled turns to speak with a Moor.)

They have turn'd
Their baleful faces hence.—Alas! my father,
What will become of us? To what dread fate
Are we ordain'd?—What have we done for this?

Sal. Thou may'st exclaim to Heaven—What have
I done?

But I—Oh! Bellamira, I have drawn
Thy ill-starr'd innocence down the deep gulf,

Where guilt precipitates me.

Bel. Oh! my father,
What do I hear?

Sal. Hold—hast thou then forgotten
That I have charg'd thee never to embrace me?
Thy touch is as a scorpion.

Bel. Pardon me.

I had forgotten the tremendous dictate,
Which hath exiled me from a father's breast.
But, at an hour like this, I deem'd I might
Have fled into my home.
When I am thrown e'en from a parent's arms,
Where shall I look for succour?—*(weeps.)*

Kal. *(To a Moor.)* Thou speakest sooth.
Her beauty, in the hour of public fear,
Will ne'er reward our perils; but, 'twere wise
At once to rid us of this fainting wretch,
With yon vile crawling lumber. These soft limbs,
Ere I expose them to the mart of charms,
Must bound again in lightness, and a bloom,
Richer than glows in shells of eastern Ind,
Shall spread upon that marble countenance.
Thou to the market with the herd—meanwhile,
I'll bear her to the Harem.—You must part.

Bel. Hear me! I am a wretch, whose marriage
torch
Burn'd with funereal light, and the same year
That saw the wife, beheld the widow too.
Look up, my boy;—the sorrow in thy face,
Will shew thou art an orphan.

Oh! Sir, this was enough to break a heart
Much harder than mine own; but other griefs
Were still in store for me. At dead of night
You snatch'd me from my couch—with ruthless hands
You dragg'd me to the ocean—and, oh! misery,
I am in Tunis! do not take away
The only earthly arm that now protects me,
Nor mercilessly rend the sinking plank,
From a poor ship-wreck'd creature's drowning grasp.

Kal. What can yon dying, helpless thing avail
thee?

Bel. Would not the thunder-clap, if it had peal'd
Upon a murderer's ear, affright the poignard
From his uplifted hand? and is there not
A reverence in the very name of father,
Could thrill the ruffian's purpose?

Sal. We must part:—
And, tho' you wonder at it, Bellamira,
Thank Heaven that we must part. I pray you,
pirates,
Grant me one precious moment, to reveal
A dreadful secret, that has long remain'd
Hid in the dark recesses of my soul.
I ne'er again shall look upon her face,
And 'tis the last occasion left me now,
To speak a deed of horror. If, hereafter,
Chance ever ransom me, for every word
I'll pay you countless value.

Kal. It is granted.

Sal. Approach thee, Bellamira

Bel. Ah! my father!

Sal. I pray you, Bellamira, do not breathe
That blighting word upon me—for 'twill drive
My fainting spirit from this burning lip,
And what I have to speak will be for ever
Buried within this charnel-house,—my heart.
List to me, Bellamira—Oh! 'tis impossible,
I cannot speak it.

Bel. My appalled soul
Is palpitating in the toil of fate.

Sal. 'Tis the last time that thou canst ever hear me,
And I would not permit thee to remain
In ignorance of thy being—Bellamira,
Tho' I am called Salerno, learn from me.
'Tis but a borrow'd name—when first I reach'd
The realm of Naples, I flung off mine own,
Because 'twas stain'd with blood.

Bel. With blood!—Oh! Heaven,
A murderer, and my father!

Sal. Murderer!
I am a murderer—but not thy father!

Sal. My passing spirit trembles—

Bel. Ha! he faints!

Sal. Thy father was—(*Faints.*)

Bel. Speak,—thou art a murderer,
And thou art not my father! and, thank God,
Thank God, a murderer is not my father!
Oh! thou hast never look'd upon my face
As fathers on their children, and my heart
Ne'er beat with nature to thee—Ha! he faints!
The secret lies in an unthrobbing heart.—

Kal. Bear him from hence!

Bel. Awake!—(to the Moors) forbear, forbear
To whom shall I lift up the frenzied cry
Of nature's helpless anguish? Speak! whose name
Shall I invoke in misery—Speak, Salerno;
His name—a word is all I ask of thee.

Kal. Behold your child!

(*Draws off her child the other way.*)

Bel. My child! another instant.
(*She rushes between her child and Salerno, and stops
on a sudden, to look back at Salerno.*)

I'll breathe my soul into his lifeless body,—
Awake, Salerno! 'wake! Speak—speak—my father?
[*The child is drawn off.*]

Too well—you know what chord about the heart
Will drag a desperate mother thro' the world.

[*Exit, following the child. Salerno borne
off fainting.*]

END OF THE FIRST ACT.



ACT II.

SCENE I.

*The Shores of Tunis.—Vessel seen in the distance,
preparing to sail from the Port.*

*Enter Manfredi, followed by Anselmo, and Gonzaga,
with other Slaves.*

Man. **A**RE you resolv'd?

Ans. Lead on.

Gon. We follow you.

All. We follow you to death or liberty.

Man. I came to teach you this, because I knew
It would rouse you to achievement. Fellow slaves,
Montalto is the governor of Tunis,
And, thro' the hardened mail, that twenty years
Of guilt and misery laced about his breast,
I have deeply struck remorse.

Ans. Call him to Heaven,
And we are free.

Man. A still, but awful voice
Cries in the desert of Montalto's heart,

And bids his generous nature to the skies.
 " I'll ply the work of glory, and assail—
 " The fiend Despair, within him." 'Tis his wont
 At even-tide, along the solemn shore—
 Of the great deep to tread, and here he will
 I meet him, " and accompany his walk
 " In this, his hour of peace."—I wait his coming,
 And listen for his foot-step—let us not
 Abuse the precious moment fortune lends;
 Spain can but ope the way to liberty,
 We must ourselves obtain it. Tunis still
 Expands her bulwarks to Haradin's flight:
 His towers will mock the batt'ring cannon's roar,
 And brave the Spaniard's siege.

Ans. What shall be done?

Man. The gates of Tunis must be closed against
 him.

Gon. By whom?

Man. By slaves, that wish for liberty,
 And know that death is freedom.

Ans. But these chains—

Man. Chains may be burst,—'tis fear that makes
 them adamant—

I have told you, that Haradin has not left
 Five hundred men to garrison the city—

" And I, at least, am free—this arm could wrench

" The fetter from your limbs, and, with its frag-
 ments

" Might we not crush the pirates?

Ans. Hold—a turban—

Man. Montalto?—No—from Kaled's roof he comes,—

We must disperse ourselves—will you be free?

You are slaves—you are in Tunis—are you men?

Ans. Here is my hand.

Gon. And mine,—

All. And ours!

Man. Before you,

And in Heaven's face, I dedicate myself

To this great deed of glory—look you there,

Yon shallop, that prepares to give herself

To ocean, after sun-set, late arrived

From Genoa; to redeem a noble slave

Re-purchased by his country—now, attest me—

Hear while I swear, and thou, recording spirit,

Enroll it in my fate,—be witness, Heaven,

Be witness, earth, that if before she sail

The voice of freedom come and bid me fly

To the embraces of my wife and child,

I'll fling back liberty.—In this great cause

I triumph or I perish.

Ans. Hold Manfredi!—

No slave could keep that oath.—

Man. Manfredi will.

Away! away! here, in this very place,

I'll seek some glorious means to rend your chains,

And, like a loosened earthquake's midnight shock,

We burst on slumbering Tunis. I have sworn—

Will ye not swear?

All. We swear!

Man. "Attest it He,
"Who, framing human nature, planted there
"The love, and right of freedom." Stretch thine
arm
Out from thy dwelling-place above the stars,
And be thou with us! With the cannon's roar,
That Charles pours out upon the turbaned host,
League thy almighty thunder—
As terrible a vengeance, as of old
Fell on the accursed cities, fall from Heaven
Down on the pirate towers! No truce with them,
Who ne'er kept faith,—no mercy for the merciless!
Destruction, and not chastisement,—hurl! crush!
Annihilate at once—and, with a blow,
Strike out the black pollution from the world.

[*Exeunt slaves.*]

Enter a Moor, leading in Bellamira's child.

Whose is the Christian boy?

Moor. A captive woman's,
As almost lifeless on a couch she lay,
From the embracing closure of her arms
I disentangled him; for Kaled mark'd,
That, when she gazed upon him, her swollen breast
Heaved with a fuller anguish.

Man. Prithee, Moor,
Let me look at the boy!

Moor. I must begone,
Else might her shriek pursue me when she wakes
From sorrow's slumbering trance.

[*Exeunt Moor and Child.*]

Man. Ye merciless villains!
 Ye ruthless riflers of the human heart!
 Yet ruthless as you are, I hardly know,
 If a more blighting curse should light upon you,
 Or the stone-bosom'd wretches, who, so long,
 Beheld your perpetration—and away
 Turned from the shrieking of humanity,
 The statesman's ear of deafness—Europe saw
 These horrors nor aveng'd them. Shame upon you,
 You purple-pall'd inheritors of empire,
 And your cold-blooded men of policy,
 Who, in their heartless conclaves coldly sat,
 And at these cruelties, with marble smiles,
 Shrugg'd their state-loaded shoulders.

Bellamira (without).

Bel. Where is my child?

Man. Ah! what a sound was there!

Enter Bellamira.

Bel. Where is my child?

Hear! 'tis a mother cries.—They plunder'd me,
 They robb'd my widow'd heart—they tore him from
 me,—

Here—from my heart—they tore him—ha!

Man. Do I wake?

Merciful Providence! “Ye Powers, that will

“This strange, distracting sight!

“I do not dare to speak it, lest my breath

“Should blow the charming vision from the air,

“That drops from heaven upon me.”

Bel. My brain turns!
 "I'll lay my hands upon this dizzy sight,
 "And then it will begone"—No—it is there,—
 'Tis there again—my husband!

Man. Bellamira!

[*She falls on the ground.*

My wife! Oh! let me catch thee to myself,
 "Till soul and life, and all be deeply lost
 "In the wild flood of rapture." I have found thee,
 My darling bride—The mother—Heaven and earth,
 My wife in Tunis—Bellamira—Yes,
 I hold her in my blasted sight—In Tunis!
 My wife in Tunis!

Enter Kaled and Moors.

Kal. Dost thou dare to lay
 Thy miscreant touch upon a Moslem's slave?

Man. She is my wife,—my own espous'd love,—
 The gift of heav'n and earth—Ha! do you tear her,—
 Do you thus rend her from me?—thus I burst,
 With lion-fury, thro' your ruffian grasp,
 And rush upon his throat!

[*In the struggle he is overpowered, and falls
 to the earth.*

Enter Montalto.

Mont. Slaves, 'tis Montalto speaks—No more—
 Manfredi—

[*They let Manfredi go.*

Man. Leave me alone to horror and myself.

Mont. "It is Montalto, whom thou dost despise,

“ That lifts his voice to call thee from the earth.

“ Arise !”

Man. Montalto—oh ! she is my wife !
The child and mother on this horrid shore
Are brought before my sight,—“ Thou, who hast
turn’d

“ My prayers to fellest curses, and hast granted

“ That I should once again behold my wife,—

“ Now hear another prayer ;—with thy strong flash

“ Here blast us both to ashes !”

[*Falls back on the ground.*]

Bel. It is gone !

That face is gone from me ! “ ’twas but a dream—

“ Oh ! let me sleep again ; for, when I wake,

“ That face is only pictured in my heart ;—

“ Sleep brings it to mine eyes !”

Mont. Hark thee, Manfredi.—

I ask’d your friendship, and you spurn’d me back,—

You thought me wholly villain—rise, Manfredi,

And take her from a villain.

Man. Do you mock me ?

My wife.—

Bel. That voice—that voice !

Mont. (*Holding back Manfredi.*) Hold ! lest
again

The flickering spirit fly—

Bel. That voice ! that voice !—

There’s but one voice like that in all the world.—

Oh ! I should feel it in my sepulchre—

Thrill in my mould’ring heart ! “ That voice—where

“ is it ?

“ Will it not come again upon my soul?

“ Will it not steep me in deliciousness?

“ Oh! *that* was not a dream—where is it? speak!

[*To Montalto.*

“ You are not like the fiends that haunt me here,—

“ Pity my panting heart!—by Heaven, I saw him,

“ I saw him with these eyes—he stood before me—

“ My arms had almost clasp'd him, and he fled,—

“ I could doubt all but that—that voice—that voice,—

“ Oh! I can never doubt that voice!”

Man. “ My wife!”

Bel. “ Again it pour'd itself upon my heart!

“ It is a living sound!—death never spoke

“ With that celestial music.”—It was there!

I know that it was there—oh! let me pass,

And seek it thro' the world!

Man. My wife!

Bel. He lives!

He lives! and on my breast!—my circling arms

Have clasped him to myself. I saw,—I heard,—

Now I embrace him too—oh! my dear husband.

Man. Oh! I must press thee closer, or my heart

Will leap out of my bosom.

Bel. Oh! Manfredi,—

I thought you dead, and that the ocean-wave

Had been your rolling sepulchre. I have knelt

Whole moonless nights upon the foaming shore,

And madly supplicated every wave

To throw thee from its bosom at my feet.

It had been once a broken-hearted joy,

To have wrapt thee in a shroud, and pressed away

The brine-drop from thy locks I would have given,
 To fall upon thy corpse, the extended world.—
 But now I have thee warm with life again,
 Answering each beat of my exulting heart,
 Let me gaze long upon thee—oh! my lord!
 My treasure, life, and all!

Man. My joy! my transport!
 My Bellamira!

Mont. Bellamira! did I hear that sound,
 Or was it only my deserted heart?
 What didst thou say? For, as I am a wretch,
 Thou didst—by Heaven, thou didst!

Man. Could I delay
 To throw myself before thee—but thy gift
 Had drown'd the very gratitude it claim'd.
 Look up, my angel!—Look upon the man
 That gave thee back to me.

Bel. Let me behold him!

Man. There, Bellamira!

*(She rushes towards him; he advances, impelled by
 the power of her name. She falls at his feet,
 while he checks himself.)*

Mont. Where doth distraction bear thee?—Fool!
 a word,

An idle sound, can work thee into madness.—
 I see you wonder at me; but you know
 How much I have endur'd—a very name
 Hath power upon a childless father's heart;—
 And Bellamira wafts a thousand memories
 In its delicious painfulness.—My child,

That was thy name, my child!—Alas! Manfredi,
I deem'd it was my child that stood before me.

Bel. I owe much more than life itself to you,—
And in the word, which can pour out the heart,
The holiest word in nature's burning language,
I'll speak my gratitude—I will—I must—
It cannot be chok'd here—I'll call you father,
And I will be your child.

Mont. No more—no more.
You do not know what daggers you strike here.—
No more of it—my griefs cannot be cured.
Manfredi, if I heard aright, your child
Is in the walls of Tunis?

Bel. Oh! they tore him,
They mercilessly tore him from my arms.
Sorrow at last had sobb'd itself to slumber,
And in my bosom I had clasp'd my child;
But, when I wak'd, and would have press'd him here,
Oh! what a desolation!

Man. I beheld,
And did not know my child.

Mont. Not know your child!
By Heaven! if I had stood upon the grave
That holds my buried infant, I had known
That, underneath a part of me was laid.
Oh! God! if by some wond'rous and blest chance
My child had been preserv'd, and to my arms
She came,—as thou didst now,—there were a voice—
But I forget myself—I am a wretch,
And I grow garrulous in misery!
A father's and a mother's desolate hearts

A yearning for a dear,—a living child,
 While I am counting o'er my wretchedness,
 And weigh my griefs as misers tell their gold.—
 Come,—I will lock them in an iron heart.
 Kaled, this woman's ransom shall be paid,

[*Exeunt Kaled and Moors.*]

She is my slave—deliver to her arms
 The child you plunder'd from her—Go, Manfredi,
 Dispute him with each other. But, I charge you,
 Let it not be before me.

Man. Look you here,—

She cannot speak,—and I, Montalto—Heaven,
 How could so bright a spirit fall from thee!
 Come, Bellamira, let us seek our child,
 And when we have embraced him, let us fall
 Entranced before his feet!

Mont. Go—Bellamira!

Bel. God bless thee!

[*After a long and struggling pause, she falls weakly into Manfredi's arms, overcome by her emotion. He conducts her out.*]

Mont. “ Bless me! if the golden gates
 “ Of open'd Paradise were stretched as wide,
 “ As when the spirit of my murder'd child
 “ Rose in her mother's bosom to the skies,
 “ That blessing were thrown back—And yet 'tis sweet
 “ To hear thee say, ‘ God bless thee!’ ”—Bellamira,
 I will protect thee for thy very name.
 Why did I listen to Manfredi's voice?
 I was as dreary and as calm before,

As ocean's frozen waste;—but now the ice
 Breaks up in storms about me. “ I enjoy'd
 “ A grave-like peace, and seldom did my sin
 “ Sting me back into memory. The serpent
 “ That long lay twined around a stony heart,
 “ Grew petrified at last, and, like the thing
 “ It clasp'd, in folds of marble stiffen'd there.—
 “ Now it begins to stir, and I can feel
 “ Its forked dart again re-animate
 “ With all its venom'd life.” Remorse—remorse,
 Not penitence is left me,—it is done,—
 My part is ta'en—these old, and iron sinews
 Are grown too rusty to be crook'd again.—
 The knot within the stripp'd and barkless pine,
 In the dried channel of a mountain torrent,
 Is not more indurated by the blast,
 Than this hard lump within me.

[*A trumpet is heard.*]

Ha! that sound
 Hath waked me to myself, and chased away
 The terrible dreams of my disastrous past,—
 I am again Montalto.—

Enter a Moor.

Well?

Moor. My lord,
 Our monarch's favoured leader, Amurath,
 Stands at the gates of Tunis, and demands
 Admission to your presence.

Mont. Amurath!
 Lead him before me—Amurath! 'tis strange,

My brother renegade, at such a time
Should leave the camp of Afric! 'Tis himself,—
I know him by that swift impassion'd step
That shews the rushing of his torrent thought,
And a perturbed heart.

Enter Amurath.

Amu. Hail! Ere the dawn
I left the Moorish camp, while, from its tents
Our myriads roll'd to battle.

Mont. I had thought
The bridegroom from the couch had sooner turn'd,
Than Amurath had left the field of death.

Amu. Haradin bids me here. At flush of day,
E'en as he leap'd upon his froth-white steed,
I dream'd, he cried, last night, the battle lost,
And that Christian captives had arisen,
And clos'd the gates of Tunis on my flight.
This dream is born of likelihood.—Away!
Swift to the city—bid the governor,
Soon as the tidings reach him, that our host
Reels at the charge of Spain—Why, how is this?

Mont. Then massacre them all.

Amu. No—thou hast shot
Thy shaft beyond the mark.

Mont. Thou hast relieved me,—
Oh! Amurath, no blood—thank God, no blood!

Amu. Behold the signet!

Mont. It is the mark of empire.

Amu. You are no more the governor of Tunis.
Haradin bade me, if I saw thee shrink,

To strip thee of thy delegated rule,
And robe me with thine office.

Mont. Let me learn
What guilty virtue he suspects in me?
What sacred trust is mark'd for other hands,
Mine are not fitted for?

Amu. Look at this roll:
The chief among the captives must be slain;—
Here are their names, whose fierce unbroken souls
Might rouse their fellows into mutiny.
The rest lie down in weight of heavier chains,
Secure in their own baseness.

Mont. Aye, he knew me!
I thank him for it too.—What! coldly murder!
When the pulse beats with cool and temperate throb,
To grasp the knife, and pour out human blood
From naked, outstretch'd, unresisting throats!
Haradin knew me better.—I have driven
His prows thro' waves of Europe's foaming blood,
But I have never spilt the life of man
In damn'd deliberation.—Well he knew
I was not fit for butchery, and I thank him.

Amu. Hide you the cowl beneath the turban's
fold?

Is this my fellow-renegade? And are you
Like those that, with the purpose to be dead,
Leap from a rock into the whelming ocean,
And, as they sink, then splash among the waves,
And fain would struggle back? Look you, weak man,
You cannot climb the beetling steep again,—

The hand of an archangel could not pluck thee,
 With all the weight of guilt upon thy soul,
 Up the smooth precipice. For me,—be blood
 On him that bade me shed it. Yet I own,
 With a reluctant foot I had trod in gore,
 Had not mine eye glanced on the scroll of death,
 And lighted here.—Behold !

Mont. (After looking at the scroll.) Manfredi!—

Amu. What,

You are acquainted with the word—from Naples,—
 The Count Manfredi !

Mont. Yes ! the Count Manfredi—

Amu. I might have trusted mine own instinct here—
 Farewell ! (going.)

Mont. He is your friend, perchance,—I have
 known

But little of your fortunes ;—but have heard
 That Naples gave you birth—he is your friend,
 And when you found him in the list of death,
 You flew to save him ?

Amu. Save him ! on his heart

To lay the fangs of hate, and by the roots
 Tear up the poison'd bramble.—Save him ! to—
 look ye,

With all the power of my concentered soul
 I execrate his name.—The ambient air
 Wherein that sound is breathed, turns pestilence,
 And drops in venom here. The damned villain !
 Oh ! for the huge constrictor's giant-fold,
 That I might clasp, and crush—Where is he ?

Mont. Hold !

Amu. I was in Algiers, and I did not know
That destiny had brought him to my hate.

Mont. You will not crush the foe beneath your
foot?

Amu. I have heard men say, revenge first drove
thee here,
And made thee what thou art.

Mont. It was revenge.

Amu. If thou did'st meet the man who wrong'd
thee most,
Or most had gall'd thee, for it is the same,
Would'st thou forgive him?

Mont. No;—for he slew my child.

Amu. And he,—here he,—upon my front—here,—
here,—(*strikes his brow.*)

I cannot bring it from my bursting throat,—
But, shall I waste the air—and tell my wrongs?
No! let me first revenge them!

Mont. Amurath!

Amu. Hark thee! I am almost tempted to mistrust
Thy fealty to guilt—No—I will yet
Confide in thy despair—thou can'st not hope—
I'll trust thee, for I trust myself—like me
Thou art gone beyond the reach of penitence;
Thou art swallow'd in perdition—thou art seal'd—
Recorded for damnation—Hell would shout,
And peal with laughter at a prayer of thine.
Thou art a renegade!

[*Exit.*

Mont. I am still a man.

[*Exit, opposite side.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

The Shore of Tunis.

Enter Montalto, in vehement agitation.

Mont. NOT here! not here! I have sought them
every where!

Manfredi! Bellamira! hear my cry,

Hear me, or you are lost! I will preserve you!

I have sworn it to myself.—Where are you? hear me!

Montalto calls—Manfredi—Bellamira!

Ha! you are come at last!

Enter Manfredi, and Bellamira with her child.

Man. My benefactor!

Bel. Behold a mother thanks thee for her child.

Mont. The unrolling canvass pants before the wind,
Yes, I will save you!—Hence!—begone!—away!

[He reclines in weakness on Manfredi's shoulder.]

The time is rushing on.—Enough to tell you

That, in the port a vessel is prepar'd,

Freighted with ransom'd slaves for Genoa,

To wing her o'er the waters.—As I pass'd,
I heard the mariners' up-heaving cry,
And hope came back to me.—I flew to save you
To send you hence for ever!

Bel. “ Husband! child!

“ And freedom!—

Mont. “ More, your honor!

Bel. “ I will kneel,

“ Yes, I will kneel, and worship thee!

Mont. “ Forbear! (*staying her back.*)

Man. “ Montalto!

Mont. Do not waste the precious hour
By asking that it little boots to know,
The bow is bent, the deadly shaft is drawn,
And with an eye, keen with infernal fire,
Is levell'd at your heart;—but I will fling
A saving shield before you,—“ You shall go—
“ I'll tear you from the desert dragon's fold,
“ And he shall dart his forked stings in air,
“ And shed his gorged poison in the dust.” (*going.*)

Man. For Heaven's sake, hear me! Oh!—my oath!
my oath!

Mont. I cannot give you audience—the fresh breeze
Has fill'd her swelling sails—I must from hence,
To bid her mariners ply their swift barge,
And waft you from the beach—Remain you here,
And, soon as you behold the bark,—away!
Lose not a precious moment, and farewell!

Bel. You must permit me to embrace your feet,
To open all my burning bosom here,
And wet the dust you tread on with my tears!

You would not have me go with all the load
Of untold gratitude upon my heart—
“ Nay then, I'll have your hand at least.”—

Mont. Farewell !

I shall not see you more ;—but from the beach
I will pursue the vessel, till her sail
Melts in the circling sky—and you, perchance,
Will stand upon the deck, and thence behold
Amid the twilight's glimmering from afar,
In moslem garb, a miserable man
On the receding shore !—Remember me !

[*Exit.*

Bel. Yes, while I am a mother—“ Stay, Montalto !
“ He hurries from my sight—the tower is pass'd,
And he is gone for ever !

[*Turning to Manfredi.*

Oh ! Manfredi !

Man. “ What a dread sacrifice I am compell'd
“ To offer up at honor's iron altar !
Curse on these frantic lips—to have thee here
But for one mocking instant, and behold thee
Rent from my clasping bosom ! Oh ! I have sworn—

Bel. What hast thou sworn ?

Man. Not to depart from Tunis.

Bel. Thou could'st not lift thy hand to yonder
skies,

And bid them bear a witness to an oath
So rash, so cruel, and so—No, Manfredi,
Thou did'st not, could'st not—'tis impossible !
No, by thy truth thou did'st not.

Man. Yonder rock

“Is not more deeply rooted—Bellamira,”
 The Christian slaves are leagu’d for liberty,
 And I am sworn to lead them! Bellamira,
 Thou must begone from me.

Bel. Begone from thee!

Man. Shall my name go dishonor’d to my child?
 What! lead them to the precipice, and then,
 When I had push’d them on the glorious leap,
 Shrink from the gulf! Honor, thy voice within me,
 Stern as it is, must be obey’d.

Bel. Obey it.

But there’s another voice within me—here—
 It cries as loud, and it shall be obey’d.
 The despot, honor, in a hero’s breast
 Holds not a rule more absolute than love,
 On his own throne, a woman’s trembling heart.

Man. What would’st thou do?

Bel. “I am your wife! you seem
 “To have forgotten that you are my husband.”
 I am your wife! and where’s the seemlier place
 For me to bide, than where my husband stays?
 Thou dost not hope, that I will ever seek
 The place where thou art not.
 If a descending spirit from the star
 That lights the evening, dropp’d upon the earth,
 To waft me on his pinions into bliss,
 I would not go without thee! “No, Manfredi,
 “Here is my shield, my mail, my citadel,
 “My trust, my land of peace—my strength—my
 “refuge.
 “Here will I stay for ever!”

Man. Dost thou think,
 That while the lightning quivers o'er my head,
 I'll hold thee near to an accursed wretch,
 That the same flash may blast us both to ashes ?
 Hark ! 'tis the plashing of the rapid oar !
 Behold, thy safety comes ! the barge approaches !
 Oh ! When I swore if liberty itself
 Came smiling in my face I'd hurl it back,
 I little deemed—

Enter Sailors; in a boat.

1st Sailor. We come to waft you hence,
 Where the ship wheels impatient as the steed
 Ere the loose rein be given. I charge you, haste ;
 The ocean-breeze is ruffling, and the mast
 Bends to the vigorous gale !

Bel. Oh ! my dear lord,
 I never will abandon you !

Man. Know you, you are in Tunis,—in the place
 Of horrid perpetration, where no law
 Of earth, or heaven, can shield the helpless wretch
 From sensuality's ferocious arms ?

“ Have I not started in the dead of night,
 “ And deem'd it was the voices of the storm
 “ That had awakened me ;—but, when I listen'd
 “ I knew the human shrieking !”—Bellamira,
 I have seen the ruffian grasp of violation
 Off from the father rend the clinging child,
 And tear the daughter from the mother's arms ;—
 And thou—thou, Bellamira,—thou, my wife !—

Bel. Ha! (*With horror.*)

Man. Look you there—there is Haradin's palace!
There is the dome of infamy! There—there
The sensual monster pampers up his gorg'd
And furious appetite, and finds a joy
E'en in the shrieking of the frantic wretch
The laughing villain immolates!—And thou,—
“ I cannot hold that thought within my brain,—
“ It bursts at the black image!”—Thus I clasp thee.
Rather than trust thee here another moment
I'll give thee to the whirlwind!

(*As he bears her to the boat, enter Kaled and Moors.*)

Kal. Seize the slave! (*They seize him.*)

Bel. Before my face—here in my sight!—ye
powers

That blast all human hopes, what bitter dregs
Lie in the vials of calamity,
Which I had almost drain'd?—Ye turban'd slaves,
How dare you lay your grasp upon the form
Your lord had bidden free? Speak, by what right?—

Kal. The word of Amurath.

Man. What 'tis that Heaven

Intends to do with such a wretch as I am,
I will not ask.—I have only power to charge thee
To give my dying wish—nay, my command—
Unloose me, villains! (*He rushes up to her.*)
Yes, I will constrain thee!—

I'll force thee to thy safety, Bellamira!

Fly, fly from Tunis! Take her fellow-Christians,
Take her, preserve her—drag her from the shore!

(*The Moors draw Manfredi from her.*)

Bel. No, no, you shall not do it! Dost thou think

That I will e'er abandon thee to death?

“ Crush'd be the vile, the base, and earth-born thought,

“ That never crawl'd into a woman's heart—

“ Do not despise my succour—I have got

“ My tears, my supplications—I have got

“ These arms to twine around Montalto's knee—

“ He will protect thee still—I know he will!”

Misbelieving slaves, you shall repent the deed!—

I'll hence, and bring him here, whose single breath

Shall blow you from the world!—And see, he comes!

It is—it is himself!—My friend, my saviour!

Montalto! Oh, Montalto!

(As she rushes up, enter Amurath, who, in his impetuosity in rushing towards Manfredi, does not see her.)

Amu. Have you got him?

Villain! *(Sees her.)* What do I see?

Man. Speak! who art thou?

Thou call'st me villain, while my powerless arm
Lies subjugate!

Amu. It were too much for faith—

“ It is a vision, a mere dream of hate,

“ That brings her to my presence—Let me try

“ One doubtful sense by the other—I have touch'd

“ her,—

“ By every nerve that shivers o'er with joy,

“ And trembling owns the electric contact here,

"It is herself!"—Oh! villain! hold my soul
Bear him away!—The dungeon! to the dungeon!

Bel. You shall not tear him hence! By Heaven,
you shall not!

Man. Fly, Bellamira, fly!

Amu. Away with him!

Man. That look! let me behold thee once again—
He turns him from my sight—What art thou? speak!
Oh! can it be! that face—that voice—fly! fly!
Distraction! fly! [*Exeunt Moors and Manfredi.*

(*As they bear him off,*)

Bel. Then, take me with him too!

I must not be held back! unhand me, villains!
Keep me not from his arms,—to the same dungeon,
To the same grave,—they bear him from my sight!
Let loose thy dreadful grasp! living or dead—
Thy hand hath clench'd me with a demon's power,
And stopp'd the circling blood.—Oh, sir! have
mercy!

Amu. 'Twas rais'd so high from expectation's reach,
It came not even within my wish—'tis she!
'Tis she, herself! as beautiful as when
She dawn'd upon me first—as when she first
Kindled Vesuvius in my burning breast!
That form is still in undulating beauty,
The master-piece of Nature's sculpturing hand!
There are those eyes, whose rich and liquid lustre
Feeds and rekindles the dead torch of love!
There is the brow where beauty sits sublime
Upon a throne of ivory!—There is Bellamira!
Manfredi's wife!—his wife! it once was hell

To think she was his wife,—'twas hell to love,—
'Tis rapture to revenge !

Bel. Are you the man
Whose word hath sent him——

Amu. To the grave! I am!

Bel. The grave! the grave! what, murder him?—
my husband!

Why would you kill him? why would you profane
Your hands with innocence? What has he done?
What crime has he committed? If for blood
You feel the desert tiger's maddening thirst,
Take mine! take mine! (*after a pause*)
Ha! I have look'd upon him,
And I have hope no more—before one glance
It wither'd in my breast!

Amu. Where would'st thou go?

Bel. Where I may find some human nature still—
I go to find Montalto! let me pass.

Amu. All here are dust before me! 'tis to me
You must address your prayer—

Bel. And have I wrong'd you?
Is mercy resident within your heart?
He does not turn the adder's ear away,
He listens to my cry—My lord—my lord,—
Spare him, and Heaven, out of the book of sin,
Will raze your every trespass!
He is my husband! he is all to me!
My life, and soul, and being,—Heaven and earth—
And mine own heart first chose him for mine own!
'Tis not the common link of duty, forg'd
On cold obsequious form, that binds me to him—

I have enough of love within my breast
 To fill a hundred hearts! in gratitude
 Affection's fountain gush'd—his gen'rous hand——
 Oh! I perceive you listen to my prayer—
 He saved my honor—hear me for his life.
 He rent me from the grasp of violence,—
 He tore me from a villain!

Amu. Ha! a villain!

Bella. Yes! from a villain—Ha! he starts, he
 shrinks.

Back from the thought of blood!—My lord, my lord,
 I read the rising pity in your face,—
 The rigor of your purpose melts away—
 Your trembling form, and agitated look—
 Speak, it has touched—

Amu. It touches me indeed!

He sav'd you from a villain—I confess
 That you have stung my curiosity.—
 Who was this villain?

Bel. “ Give me back my husband.

“ Then, from a o'erfraught heart I will pour out

“ The story of my gratitude!—

Amu. “ Subdue

“ The palpitation of that heaving breast!

“ Who was this villain?”—You perceive what power

The tale hath wrought upon me; to complete

The work of mercy here, speak on! this villain,—

Who was this villain?

Bel. One, that said he lov'd me,

But whom I could not love; desperate he swore

I must be his, and leagued with mountain bandits; and I
 He rush'd down from the Apennine, and seiz'd me.—
 Manfredi swift pursued the ruffian flight,
 And while I shriek'd for succour, and the hills
 Only gave back their echoes to my cry,
 He rush'd, and tore me from him.

Amu. Well, what happen'd?

Bel. His name was shorn of honor—and a brand
 Was struck upon his front.

Amu. And it is here! [Strikes his brow.]

Bel. That face!—that look!—Sinano!

Amu. Aye! Sinano!

“Has memory eked the fatal word at last,
 “From the vile heap of nothings, where it seems,
 “’Twas cast to be forgotten.”—Could the turban,
 Could this vile garb then wrap me from myself?

Hast found it then at last—hast found at last,
 Amid the lumber of thy recollections,

That I am, indeed, Sinano?

Bel. Would to Heaven

Thou wert a demon, that had ta'en his form;

And not Sinano! for a fiend from hell

Would only bear me to a bed of fire,

Not to the couch of shame!

Amu. I am Sinano!

Once I abhor'd the sound, and from myself

I shrunk, as thou dost now—and to mine ear

My Moslem name was a familiar word;

But now, I feel a transport while I tell thee

I am Sinano!

Bel. Pour down molten lead,
 But do not yell that most detested word
 In madness through my brain! It is himself!
 A demon would not look so terrible!
 It is himself! Earth, burst beneath my feet,
 Open thy gulfs around me, and at once
 I'll plunge from life, from infamy, and thee!

Amu. Look here!

Bel. I dare not look on thee again!

Amu. Here, on this festering brow—here was it
 struck,

Indelible, eternal as the fire
 Blown by almighty wrath! oh! villain! villain!
 How shall I make thee feel, all thou hast driv'n
 In madness to my brain? I'll tread upon him!
 I'll trample him to hell! I have him—here,—
 I have her too!—There! there she is!

Bel. No hope! no refuge left, where misery
 May rush from yon avenging villain's grasp!

Amu. (*Grasping her.*) Did'st see me thrown down
 foaming on the earth;

Did'st see the spurning foot upon my form?
 Did'st see me torn at noon, before the eye
 Of the collected rabble—and—it choaks me!
 Did'st see it done—while from their pestilent throats
 They shouted to my shame,—oh! tears of fire!
 Have I then got you still—did'st see all this?
 Thou didst—and 'twas for thee!

Bel. For me! oh, no!
 I did not sin against thee—'twas not I
 That plung'd thee in perdition—'twas not I

That struck the mark of shame upon thy brow—

'Twas the ferocious demon that possess'd thee!

'Twas thy own furious self that did it all!

Where do you drag me? Save me, Christians, save me!

Oh! save me! save me! (*She rushes to the boat.*)

Frenzied that I was,

I dash'd thy mercy back into thy face!

Oh! plunge me in the whirling vortex down,

But, save me from Sinano!

Amu. Bellamira! (*He drags her from the boat, to which she clings on her knees.*)

Bel. You may rend off my arms—hew down my limbs,—

You shall not tear me hence!

[*She is pulled off, and grasps the child.*]

My child! my child!

Oh! save my child, at least!

Amu. (*To a Moor.*) Here!

Bel. Save my child! [*He bears her off.*]

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

The Sea-shore.

Enter Montalto followed by a Moor.

Moor. **A** CHRISTIAN slave with earnest supplication

Begs to behold you—his deep sunken eye
Stream'd o'er with weeping prayer, and his clasp'd
hands

Were palsied in entreaty.

Mont. Tell him then,
That he must find a meeter time than this.—
Until upon the waste I see the ship
That bears two human creatures, for whose safety
I have sworn unto myself, I cannot give
An ear to other misery.

Moor. He bade me
Convey this pictured ivory to your hand,
And said when you beheld it, it would win
Admission to your sight!

Mont. Let me behold him!
 Bring him before my face! [*Exit Moor.*
 By Heaven, it is—
 It is the very picture I suspended
 Around my daughter's neck!
 It is the image of my murder'd wife!
 Perhaps it is some old and faithful servant,
 Who laid them decently within the grave,
 And comes to tell me, where he buried them.

Enter Salerno.

Sal. “ He is alive!—be blest the happy hour
 “ That loosens me from murder!—Yes, he lives!
 “ Montalto stands before me!”
Mont. Speak, who art thou?
 Approach me nearer still—“ for these weak limbs
 “ Are shaken with emotion, and I dare not
 “ Let loose my trembling hold!” [*Holding a pillar.*

The picture,—speak!

I hung it on the bosom of my child,
 Before she call'd me father!

Sal. (*Advancing to him.*) Oh! my brother!

Mont. What horror with an icy grasp lays hold
 On every pow'r within me? Mighty one,
 “ Who keenly followest the track of blood,”
 Let all this trembling consciousness be true!
 Aye! let it be the murderer!

Sal. Tread upon me!
 Lay thy profaning foot upon my head,
 But do not call me by the name of blood!

Mont.
 At last thou hast given him—perfidious villain!
 A heavier damnation is upon thee
 Than e'er was struck on the first murderer's front—
 He slew not Abel's child.—

Sal. Hear and forgive me.—

Mont. Forgive thee—yes—if thou dost bring to me
 A child of thine as fair—as beautiful—
 When I have stabb'd thine infant in thy face,
 Then—then will I forgive thee—murderer—slave
 Rock-hearted traitor—to yon blasted rock
 I'll drag thee up—I'll catch thee in my arms,
 Then plunge with thee into the roaring ocean,
 Lay my strong clench upon thy choaking throat,
 Behold thee blacken under my gripe,
 Then sink with thee—“to hell, and there—ha! ha!
 “There see thee damn'd!”—

Sal. Hear me, my brother, hear me—
 She lives!—

Mont. Lives—lives—who lives!

Sal. Your wondering eyes
 Gaze in misdoubting vacancy upon me.—
 But, by the truth of hopeless misery,—

Mont. What art thou? Let me look on you again!
 You would have murder'd me—that was enough—
 For that I can forgive you—but to mock me—
 Ah! do not mock me now—

Sal. When the false senate leagued against your
 life,
 Your wife and child were spared—rent from your
 arms

Upon the tumult's torrent, they were swept
 Out from the palace gates; and thro' the city
 A rumour of their death was circled wide—
 That none with me might afterwards dispute
 Your title and your treasures—but full soon
 I reap'd in misery what I sow'd in blood.
 The tide of public favour quickly left me—
 Remorse came with adversity—I fled
 Proscrib'd from Venice; but, before mine exile,
 I sought your dying wife, and from her arms
 I took your Bellamira.

Mont. Oh! my brother!
 My child! my child! She that has drawn from me
 Life, breath, and blood, and motion! Oh! my bro-
 ther! (*Falls at his feet.*)

Sal. Let me unknit the hands that should be rais'd
 Up to the heavens in curses—not be turn'd
 In blessings round my knees.—Arise, Montalto!

Mont. You took my Bellamira!—Oh, my brother!
 You have lifted up the grave-stone from my heart.
 She was alive—go on—and still she lives?

Sal. A holy priest, to whom I humbly knelt
 For pardon of my sin, pronounc'd this sentence:—
 Thou hast slain a brother—expiate the sin
 By cherishing his daughter as thine own;
 Bear her for ever in thy blasted sight,
 And let her call thee father.—Then from Venice
 I bore her safe to Naples, where I chang'd
 My blood-mark'd name, and call'd myself Salerno!

Mont. Ha! Bellamira!

Sal. The harden'd gore dissolves upon my soul.—
I heard your name among my fellow-captives,
I sought you for forgiveness, and to tell you—

Mont. Where is my child?—unloose me from the
torture—

Where is my child?

Sal. In Tunis.

(A vessel appears sailing from the harbour.)

Mont. It is herself!

The ship! the ship! conduct me to the ship!—
Ah! 'tis too late! they bear her from my arms!
There!—it ploughs up the ocean!—hold—my child!
“It flies—it rushes o'er the ocean waste—
“It flies from me for ever!” Oh! for a voice—
A voice should reach the limits of the world,
To call her back!—My child! my Bellamira!
Who dares to stay me back?

Sal. What hoa, there! help!

Mont. “I'll plunge into the ocean.—I'll bestride
“The billow's foaming back, and it will bear me
“In triumph to her arms!”—Who dares to stay
A father from his child?

Christian slaves rush in.

Sal. Lay hold of him,—
Till the first shock of passion wastes itself
From phrensy into tears!

Mont. A little while;
Stay yet a little while—“thy sail at least
“Hath heaven's white brightness for a father's eyes.—
“Stand still upon the wave.”—It hears me not!

Yon rugged promontory, like despair
Hath closed it from my sight.—She is gone for ever!

Sal. If yonder bark conveys your daughter hence,
Lift up the voice of joy!

Mont. It had been sweet
To pour a shower of tears upon my child!
That had been sweet!—but, oh! what right have I
To ask it of the heavens?—She lives!—Montalto,
Thy daughter lives!—She is not in the grave—
The worm is not at banquet on her cheek—
That's joy enough for thee!

Sal. Upon the beach,
These eyes beheld a dark, and turban'd man,
Who bears strong semblance to the gloomy face
Of the accurs'd Sinano!—Where's the hand
Could save her from that villain's grasp of shame?

Mont. “Dost dare to breathe it—dost dare to
think it?”

Montalto's child and shame!—my scimitar
Leaps from its sheath—Ha! have I then forgotten
The voice that late was like the thunder-clap,
And shook the walls of Tunis, is as weak
As a poor infant's cry? What had I done?
Where had I rush'd?—I had call'd on you for
succour.—

You would have answer'd—Renegade!

Sal. My brother!

That name is thine no more!—The self-same hour
That wipes the imagin'd spot from off my soul,
Shall strike the turban from Montalto's brow.

Mont. “Thus, thus, I rend it off!—

If men should smile upon me, and exclaim
Behold the wavering traitor!—I will cry,
Behold a father too!

Sal. The brave Manfredi has already leagued
Our fellow-slaves for freedom!—In the night,
They rise, and rush upon the sleep of Tunis!
The rest are chain'd—but we who late arrived—
Thrown on the beach, neglected, and despis'd;
Are not yet cloth'd with fetters—were we arm'd.

Mont. (*Giving his scimitar to Salerno.*) There!
(*To slaves*), follow to my dwelling—you will find
A thousand weapons on the embattled walls—
You shall have arms and liberty!—The villain!
“I'll rend the cup of gore from out his grasp,”
I'll mar his feast of blood!—Arm, fellow Christians,
And save yourselves from carnage!

All. Carnage!

Enter Gonzaga.

Mont. Speak on!

Gon. The pirates seize twice fifty Christian slaves
And mutter massacre!

All. Vengeance!

Gon. Manfredi,
Whose arm, and word, could lead to liberty—
The brave Manfredi—

Mont. Is saved!

Gon. This instant I beheld him borne
Loaded with ponderous fetters—and his wife—

Mont. His wife!

Gon. Amid a ruffian's arms she shriek'd—

Mont. 'Tis false ! “ 'tis false as Satan !” She is gone !

My child is gone for ever.

Gon. If the wife,

Of Count Manfredi be a child of thine—

Mont. My Bellamira !

Gon. Be the flash of heaven !

Save her from Amurath !

Sal. To arms ! to arms !

To freedom ! to revenge !

Mont. My child ! my child !

[*Exeunt, Salerno, Slaves, and Montalto.*

SCENE II.

The entrance to a Turkish Harem.

Enter Sinano, bearing Bellamira in his arms.

Bel. Where do you lead me ?

Sin. For a pulse like this,

I thank thee, Mahomet—convenient prophet,

Look down and envy me.—

Bella. Where am I borne !

Sin. Where should I bear thee ? Ask thyself that question ?

I was not ever what I am—I saw thee,

And the fierce wish was poison on my life,

And, like the hot sirocco, fann'd my heart.—

You did not love me, but you did not loathe me.

Who was it taught you that? the very man
For whom I bore abhorrence in my blood,
Collegued with Spain—his faction trod me down
And rose upon my ruin—but he won thee—
That!—oh to see thee his—that drove me mad!
I hired the bandits of the Apennines
And rush'd to seize thee!—Then,—
The mark that struck my forehead pierc'd my mind,
It made me villain!—Was there ever man
Disgrace made not a villain? Who e'er lost
The esteem of all the world, who kept his own?
What need I tell thee more? The brand was here—
The turban serv'd to wrap it from the world!
My recompensing stars at last hath brought
Your husband to my hate—you to my love!
And now you ask—where do I lead you?—there!
Yonder's the bower—

Bel. Of horror, and of shame!

What! stain'd! profaned! degraded! Ignominy
Clothed upon me like a sheet of death!
To look upon the sun, and know myself
To be the vilest wretch that it beholds!
The immolation to ferocity,
Dishonor's loathsome sacrifice!—
“The soil'd, the shamed, the trampled, cursed thing!”—
Am I to be that thing?—Have mercy on me!

Sin. And who had mercy on me, when in vain
I cried aloud, that they should tie my body
Upon a faggot of slow-flaming fire,
And spare the mark of contumely?
Who then had mercy, when my voice of man

Turn'd to a woman's shriek—when to my back
 They bound my frantic arms—and with my teeth,
 (What had I left?) like a madden'd wolf
 I crunched the red-hot steel—who then had mercy?
 But do not think it is revenge to thee,
 That lights my bosom now—that I hoard up
 “ Like burning charcoal in the furnace here !”
 For thee my early passion glows again—
 “ I love thee still, and will renounce for thee,
 “ All other joyless passion ! From these bowers
 “ I fling the faded wreaths of Eastern beauty,
 And thou alone shalt blossom in my breast !

Bel. Flourish in leprosy, and bloom in sin !
 Hold back thy blis'ring touch—lash me with vipers,
 And whip me thro' the world, but do not lay
 The hand of crime upon me !—Gracious Heaven !
 Where do I stand—here ! in the place of guilt !
 Here ! on the threshold of my infamy—
 And shall it be ?—By Heaven, it shall not be !
 I'll burst thro' adamant ! or, on these bars,
 I'll dash my desperate brains out !

[She rushes to the door of the Harem, and in her endeavours to force it open, falls on her knees.]

Sin. It is in vain !

Bel. Sinano, spare me ! See me on my knees !
 Take not this vile advantage of your power !
 Pity a desolate and helpless creature !
 A wretch, whose fate hath thrown her on your mercy !
 I have beheld you kneel, and weep to me—
 Behold me kneel, and see me weep—Sinano—

Villain ! Oh, no—kind, merciful Sinano !

Oh ! kill me if you will—my life ! my life !—

Sin. Nay, Bellamira !

Bel. Life ! Sinano, life !

My life ! but not my honor !—Oh, Sinano !

[In the struggle she seizes his dagger.

Now, villain, I defy thee !

Sin. Curse on my stars !

Bel. Deaf as the adder, as the mark'd leopard fierce,
And crueller than the hyena's laugh !

Thou barbarous, pitiless, remorseless man—

Oh ! no ! not man—not man—behold ! and tremble !

Sin. What ! at a woman's arm !

Bel. Yes ! at a woman !

In honor's cause, I here unsex my soul,

Firm the strong purpose in my desperate heart,

And brave thee while I grasp my safety here !

Sin. And dost thou think I fear the shivering
blade

That shakes within thy gripe?—Let me behold thee !

Come ! grasp the steel with an heroic grace,

Stand fearless in thy beauty !—Lift aloft

The gleaming whiteness of that polish'd arm !

Let terror sit upon that kindling brow,

Swell the bold lip, and from thine eye dart forth

Fires, harmless as the lightning in the blue

Of summer's evening sky !

Bel. " Stir not one step ! "

Sin. I had not fear'd it in thy husband's hand.

Bel. And learn, that if I do not fear to kill,
I do not fear to die ! think not thy heart

The only one that I can pierce—thank Heaven
There is another here.

Sin. I fear that eye!

Witness the power thou hast.— [Kneeling.

Bel. Oh! I abhor thee!

It is the very instinct of my nature,
Entwin'd around the nicest life-string here,
And running in the channels of my blood!
Arise, and let me pass!

Sin. What would'st thou do?

Bel. Burst through the place of shame!—The very
air

Breaths maculation on my soul! Arise!
I ever deemed thee terrible, Sinano,
I did not think thee base—but now I see
All that thou art indeed!—Oh! thou didst well
To wreath the turban's fold around thy head,
And hide the cicatrix of infamy!
Thou branded villain, hence!

Sin. Branded! perdition!

Did I hear branded? Madness! yes—'twas branded!
'Tis hot and furious as it were impressed
This instant on my quivering flesh!—it burns—
The turban like red iron clasps me round!—
Off from my phrensied brow, and let me feel
The freshness of the air—I dare not do it!
The sun shall never look on it again!
No human eye shall gaze upon my brow!

[After looking at her for a long time.
For thee who liast—Vengeance!

[Rushes out.

Bel. What have I done?

“ I have pour'd fire upon him ;”—his last look
Shot demons as he went!—but, oh! he went,
And hope, that fled affrighted from his glance,
Comes back again upon me! let me fly!
And seize occasion now!—Thou who hast sent
The poignard to my grasp, be with me still!
And save me from—

As she rushes out—Enter Sinano, dragging in Manfredi, attended by Guards.

Sin. Behold!

Man. My wife!

Bel. My husband!

Sin. Yes! husband—wife—Sinano too—go on—
In rapturous replication let me hear
The words beat on my heart!—Behold each other!
Behold me too! the master of your fate!
Manfredi, there's your wife! and, Bellamira,
There is your husband too!—and look you here—
Here is the branded forehead! and Sinano—

Man.—Better to hear the mandrake's shriek of
death,
Whose sound doth burst the charnel!—Better see
The king of fiends upon his throne of fire
Amid the empire of the damn'd, than hear
And see that frantic villain!—“ Bring me, quickly—
“ Bring me your red-hot sheets of burning brass,
“ And clasp them here, till they have sucked away
“ The liquid sight out from each eyeless socket!

Or let me go, and, with a madman's hands,
I'll dash the reeking globes upon the earth
That shew me my dishonor.

Bel. Do not think
That I am yet unworthy of thy sight!
Behold!

Man. Thou art here!

Bel. Behold!

Man. (*seeing the dagger*) Art thou unsullied?

Bel. I am alive!—and could'st thou ever think,
I had lived another instant, with the power
Of death within my hand?—“ Even, from his breast,
“ Even from the throne of crime, I drew it forth,
“ And now before thee lift it, with a hand
“ That's brave enough to strike it to my heart.

Sin. Bid her resign it!

Bel. Was it then for this
You brought him to my eyes? And dost thou think
The man that conquered thee, is base enough
To buy that thing, my life, with infamy?
Fool! 'tis his sight that rouses all my soul,
And wakes the lioness! his sight—poor villain!
What should I feel, if I before him stood—
I am resolved upon it!—Oh! Manfredi!
Nothing but this can save me from my ruin,
And if I cannot die within thine arms,
At least, before thine eyes, I thus can give
The last tremendous proof of truth to thee!

*Sinano rushes towards Manfredi, and places his
scimitar to his breast.*

What would'st thou do?

Sin. I'll hide it in his heart?
Throw down the steel!—she trembles—Bellamira!

Bel. Oh! spare him! spare him!

Man. Strike, Sinano, strike!

I rise to meet the blow! strike! strike at once!

Strike, villain, strike!—I scorn thee as I did!

When down I hurled thee frothing to the ground—

Trod on thee—beat thy bosom to the dust!—

Strike, bandit!

Sin. Ha!

Man. Strike, pirate! renegade!

Strike, branded slave!

Sin. I will!

Bel. Hold! hold, Sinano!

Sin. “Madness had almost driven me on the
deed!

“Down, demons, down!—Behold! 'tis but to push

“My arm a single inch—give back the dagger!

Bel. Only one moment—stay, Sinano, stay!

No—merciless as thou art, thou dost but plan

To win me to thy grasp—thy grasp!—Hear heaven!

Hear, in the grave, thou who hast given me being—

Throw off the sepulchre! Arise, my father!

Enter Montalto.

Start sheeted from the tomb!—Ha! thou wilt save
me!

Thou art dropp'd from heaven to save me!—Oh!
Montalto!

My hope, my friend, my refuge, and my God!

Oh! save me! save me!

*[She rushes up to him, and falls on
her knees.]*

Mont. "Wretch! behold a father!"

"My scimitar! my scimitar! my child!"

[He seeks for the scimitar given to Salerno.]

The curtain drops.

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

A Dungeon.

Manfredi is discovered bound to a Pillar upon one side of the Stage; Montalto to another, upon the opposite side; the intervening part occupied by Anselmo, and other Christian Slaves. Manfredi and Montalto appear haggard, and almost insensible of what is around them.

Ans. THIS morn the hope of liberty arose,
Bright as the sun amid the golden orient,
And kindled up our souls with beams, that threw
Their stretching radiance on futurity;—
But now we darken back again to night,
And, in the place of freedom, find out death.

A Slave. But we are almost blest, when, in the
scale
Of human misery, our woes are weighed
With yonder silent statues, that despair
Seems to have touch'd to marble, "and design"
"As monuments of her terrific power,

“ To stand in her own dwelling-place.”

Ans. His child

Senseless was rent from his parental arms,
Before the secret of her birth could reach
Her phrensy-deafened ear.

Man. That shriek—that shriek—

Ans. No other sound is here,
Save the dull booming of the heavy sea,
That breaks against our dungeon.

Man. Oh! that shriek—

She calls on me for succour—do you hear her?
And I am chain'd—my wife—my wife—my
wife——

He suffocates her cry of agony.—

And I——

Ans. Forbear—thou desperate man, forbear!

Man. Who art thou, that dost tell me to for-
bear?

What right? what patent from calamity

Hast thou to teach me patience? “Speak, what
sorrows

“ Have rained upon thy head?—thou art to die,

“ Thou wilt rot within the earth;—but will the
foot

“ Of insult trample on thy sepulchre?—

“ Will the loud laugh of contumely pierce

“ Down to the bottoms of thy house of death,

“ And scare away the worms about thy heart?

“ Hast thou a wife in Tunis? patience! speak,

“ Thou merciless teacher of forbearance, speak!

“ What right hast thou to bid me not be mad?

Fool! all thy sorrows, weighed with one of mine,
 Are but the mote in yonder moonlight beam
 Weighed with the massive earth—but, harkee,
 sir,

I'll bear with you, if you but find one man
 In the large multitudes of misery,
 Who dares to measure agony with mine.

Mont. (*Rising*) Look here.—

Enter Kaled and Moors.

Kaled. Misbelievers, I am sent to teach you,
 That Spain has won the day—Haradin flies,
 And fifty thousand corses strew the plain.

Slaves. Oh, joy! thy tyrant falls!

Ansel. Spain has prevailed!

Kaled The prophet from his votaries turns
 away—

The scimitar is shatter'd, and the cross
 Waves in wide triumph o'er the wilderness.
 But you must die.

Man, and Mon. Welcome!

Kaled. The great Haradin
 Moats Tunis with your gore—the victory
 That, dressed in glory, danced upon your hope,
 Is 'compained by death—You are chosen to be
 An immolation to security.—
 He had slain all your misbelieving herd,
 But that he deems your sever'd heads will smite
 The meaner crowd with terror, and freeze up
 The purple mire in their unthrobbing veins.
 Unloose them from the pillars—to my trust

The charge is given by Amurath, to lead you
 Forth from the dungeon to the sea-worn beach,
 And there, in presence of your fellow-slaves;
 To lift the scimitar.

Man. Conduct me forth,
 And, as my head leaps from the sever'd trunk,
 The quiv'ring lips shall mutter thanks to thee.

Kal. Before I bear you hence, hear what the law
 Of Mahomet proclaims—mercy to him
 Who calls upon the prophet—choose between
 Death or the Koran.

All. (*except Montalto.*) Death!

Kal. Then follow me.

Mont. Hold! you forget me!

Kal. Not upon thy head
 Their destiny hath fallen; for Amurath,
 Tho' thou hast lifted up thy impious hand
 Against the glass of majesty, remembers
 Thy service to the state, and, place of death,
 He wills captivity.

Mont. Deny me death!

“Deny its right to age,—to grief its cure,
 “The broken-heart its resting-place. I charge
 thee,
 “Kaled, I charge thee, hold! leave me to live,
 “And with a brain of lava, where despair
 “Hath struck the horrid image of my child?”—
 Hold, Kaled, hold! I have a right to death!
 More right than any wretch among them all—
 What, will you bear him to the grave, and slap
 The sepulchre against me?

Kal. On—

Man. Montalto,—

Mont. Away!—thou hast betray'd my child!

Man. Betray'd her!

Mont. Did I not bid thee fly—begone.—

Man. Farewell! [*Exeunt Kaled and Slaves.*]

Mont. “They throw me back to life—they
leave me here,

“Like a damn'd spirit on a burning rock,”

Manfredi—Kaled!—Villains!

[*He throws himself on the basis of pillar.*]

Enter Bellamira with her child.

Bel. I have reached

The dungeon where he lies—I shall behold

My husband ere he perishes—Manfredi!

Manfredi!—silent as the sepulchre,—

No answer, save the replicated murmur

Of yonder vaulted chamber, that gives back

My voice in its deep echoes.—All around

Is a wide waste of dungeon—he is dead,—

The horrid consciousness is in my heart,—

He is already dead—Manfredi!—ha!

(*Montalto groans.*)

A groan hath hope—hath life in it (*groans again.*)

Again!

What do I see? a human form at last

Hath come upon my sight—beneath that robe

What shivering trances shoot—what agony

Hath clenched those grappling hands?

Mont. Oh, Bellamira—

Bel. Ha! he calls upon me.

Mont. Out, horrid thought!

Oh madness!

Bel. Hold! (*discovers him*) Montalto!

Mont. What do I see? "I have heard that fiends
are wont

"To robe themselves in fleshy lineaments,
"Of the dead child of some abandoned man,
"Whom heaven consigned to them before the grave.
"But thou art still so like my Bellamira."

A demon could not mock a face like thine.

"This hand was never underneath the earth,

"It is a living hand—the dew of death

"Hath not been shed on it—my—

Bel. Speak—Montalto,

By what strange circumstance I see thee here.

Montalto in the dungeon,—chains upon him!

A thousand recollections faintly fit

On my perplexed thought—but I remember

I flew to thee for help, and saw thee seized,

When to the place of shame—

Mont. The place of shame!

Bel. Thy face was on me, and I heard thee
cry.

Yes! I did hear thee wish me dead.

Mont. Speak on!

That I may know, if I should wish thee living.

Bel. He spurned my tears, my phrensied suppli-
cation

Seemed but to light his fury—Oh! Montalto,

I had no help but heaven!

Mont. And heaven abandoned thee?

Bel. No, heaven did not abandon me,—the cry
Of ruin came on his appalled ear—
Frantic he sought the messenger of fate;—
I sprung again with innocence, and seized
My child amid the tumult—to the dungeon,
Unmark'd by fear, with frantic steps I flew—
No ruffian hand was thrust against my path,
The gates unfolded stood—the guards were fled—
I rush'd into the dungeon,—but I found—

Mont. Thy father!

Bel. (*Starting*) Ha!

Mont. (*Kneeling*) “Thou Father of the world,
“For twenty years this heart hath never heav'd
“Despair's black heap away, nor ever throbb'd
“One supplication to thee—but the rock
“Hath burst at last within me—here the fount
“Of human nature gushes—I can weep—
“Nature hath thawed the ice within my breast,
“And tears are come at last—My child! my
child!

“*Bel.* Your child!

*She is at such a distance, that he cannot reach her
with his arms.*

“*Mont.* My Bellamira! to these arms—
“Rush quickly to these arms.—Where is my
“child?
“I have not got thee yet—Curse on these chains
“That keep thee from my bosom!—Bellamira,
“Have mercy on me! Do not now deny

“ The only joy that’s left me—Only once,

“ But once against my heart !

Bel. The sacred word

Hath thrill’d thro’ all my being—Oh, that face !

Those trembling hands—that face of streaming
love !

By the instinctive power within my heart,

Whose life thus rushes to its source again,

By nature, by almighty nature’s power,

Are you?—You are my father !

[*Rushing into his arms.*

Mont. I am—

I have thee then against my wither’d breast,—

My own, my beautiful, my darling child—

My all, my Bellamira !

Bel. Oh ! my father !

Enter Sinano.

Sin. Traitor ! perfidious traitor !

Bel. Ha ! Sinano !

Mont. Villain ! she is my child—and he that
arms

Parental nature thro’ the universe,

Shall mate my arm, chain’d as it is, against thee.

Bel. O save me from his grasp !

Sin. Thou damn’d traitor !

Thou recreant from hell, as well as heaven !—

[*A shout is heard.*

Hark ! doth it reach thee ?

Mont. Yes ! What is the sound ?

Stay nearer to my heart—nay, nearer still.

[*To his daughter.*

Sin. Dost make a falsehood of thy very face?
Did'st thou not free the Christians?

Mont. Ha!

Sin. Who was it
That rent their bonds asunder, and let loose
The hungry wolves upon us? Even now
A Christian slave was seized, and with the rack
We tore thy crime from out his bared heart—
Montalto was his groan.

Mont. It was Montalto!

Sin. Curse on the foolish lenity that spared
Thy hairs of grey, and did not to the steel
Give all the rabble herd!

Mont. 'Twas I that did it.

Sin. Die!

Bel. Hold! he is my father—let that word
Fall on thee like the thunder!

Sin. It is done!

*(He stabs Montalto, after a short struggle
with Bellamira.)*

Bel. My father! *[Falls upon him.]*

Sin. *(Flinging the dagger down.)* I shall need
thee now no more.

Come thou, whose sweep of death hath often
hew'd

A chasm amid the phalanx, thou, at least,
Tho' destiny desert me,—my right arm
And thou art left me still.

[Draws his scimitar.—Exit.]

Bel. And was I then
Ordain'd for this at last? The self-same hour

That shews the hidden fountain of my life,
Hath redden'd it with blood.—There, there it is,—
That blood that gave me being.

Mont. My dear child !

Long lost, and found at last, but found too late.

Bel. Why was I given the mystery of my birth?
Oh ! why this mockery, Heaven !

Mont. The deadly steel
Hath reached a mortal depth—'Tis done with
me,

My fainting spirit journeys from the world—
Oh ! look upon me well—my child, my child !
That look will stay with me beyond the grave ;
And now I charge thee, fly !

Bel. What, fly from thee !

No ! here I am for ever—Oh ! my father.
I'll cling around thee, even in death itself,
And thou shalt be entomb'd within mine arms.

Mont. Fly, and preserve thy child.

Bel. My child—oh, Heaven !

Yes ! I will save my child !

*[She rushes suddenly to the door of the prison
with her child, then looks back, and seeing
her father in agony, returns to him.]*

Oh ! my father !

I never will abandon thee ! arise,
Arise ; and fly with me—Off, chains, away !
Can you resist a phrensied daughter's power ?
Thus—thus I pluck you from your marble hold,
Thus rend you into pieces.—Ha ! the fiend.

[*Re-enter Sinano, bloody, with his turban off, the brand appearing in his forehead, his hair dishevelled, his scimitar broken.—A*

shout heard.

Bel. The fiend comes back upon me.

(*She throws herself on her child.*)

Sin. He has conquer'd—
My scimitar was shiver'd with the blow.

That fell upon my head—the palace gates

Are stormed with rushing myriads—'He flies,'

The villain cried, 'he flies'—but 'twas revenge,

Not fear, that wing'd my flight—The blood hath
shot

A purple dizziness upon my sight.

Ha! there it stands—and yet, Sinano, hold!

I cannot kill the wretch—but I can less

Die unreveng'd—Oh! for a scimitar.

Sin. Aye! that is vengeance still.—The child is
spared—

I could not tread upon that little worm;

But I will throw him prostrate in the dust—

I'll make the villain kneel and ask for mercy,

And my last look shall see a bending foe—

He shall kneel down, and beg him from my grasp—

[*He approaches Bellamira.*]

Bel. What would'st thou do! hast thou not
gorged thyself

With blood enough already—look thee there—

Sin. You need not fear for him.

Bel. Not fear for him?

Doth not thy glaring eye,—thy bared front
 Interpret to a mother's frantic heart?
 Thou bid'st me not to fear, when I behold
 The brand, like hell's own impress, on thy
 brow.—

Sin. (*Feeling his head.*)

The turban cleft—the mark of infamy,
 That, 'till this hour, no mortal eye hath seen,
 Glaring upon my front—'twas he, that did it!—
 Not satisfied with having stamp'd it here,
 He bares it to the world.

[*Bellamira falls on the child, so as to cover it
 on the earth.*]

Bel. Now villain, strike,—
 Strike thro' a mother's bosom!

Sin. Give him to me!

[*He tears the child from her.*]

Bel. Oh! mercy, mercy!—Help me, nature,
 help me!

Sinano, spare my child!—behold this breast—
 It heaves, and pants for mercy!

A mother's shriek hath pierced the savage heart
 Of the wild brute, and cannot reach to thine.

A tiger would not touch him—mercy, mercy!

I supplicate thee by a mother's pangs,
 I call thee by a parent's agony—

By thy own mother's breast! Oh! help—oh! help!

—[*Manfredi, Salerno, and the other slaves rush
 in—Manfredi recoils.*]

Man. Almighty Heav'n!

Sin. (*Lifts up the child.*) Behold!

[*Montalto, who, during the struggle, has risen upon his knees, and grasped the dagger which Sinano had thrown down.*

Mont. Die!

[*He stabs Sinano in the back, who falls dead, Bellamira catches the child in her arms.*

Mercy! mercy!

[*Dies.*

THE CURTAIN FALLS.

Cries, "Let me stay, Mamma, for *Country Bumpkin*,
And have, *at last*, one merry dance to jump in."

Already on my side, all those I name,
The question's carried, and my right I claim,
To plead the Poet's cause——But who shall sway,
This *host* of intellect, in dread array?—
Here taste and feeling ambush'd on our flanks,
There wit and critic lore, in serried ranks;
Yonder, in phalanx, native judgment jamn'd,
Compress'd like air, into the air-gun cramm'd!
Yet, 'gainst these hostile bands thus rang'd tremendous,
If we've but gain'd the passions, they'll befriend us.
Acting as oil upon the raging sea,
Or as *you*, ladies, vers'd in chemistry,
Find acids neutralized by alkali.

If *here*, for instance, purer taste should chide,
With softer feelings in your breast allied,
'Twill effervesce a moment—and subside.

Yonder, if cat-calls wake their shriller tone,
'Tis half *for fun*!—nay, 'tis but fair we own,
If you can't *hear our noise*, you *make* your own.
And *here*, when wit has dipp'd his lash in gall,
A note,—a gesture on the heart will fall—
The scourge is dropp'd, and nature's tear has shone
Beneath the brow where lower'd the critic-frown.

While thus within your bosoms it appears,
That we may set two *parties* by the ears;
Why, let them fight it out, and, when they cool,
The kindlier feelings, *here*, are sure to rule.

THE
A P O S T A T E,

A TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS;

AS PERFORMED AT THE
THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.

BY RICHARD SHEIL, Esq.

FIFTH EDITION.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.

1818.

[*Price Three Shillings.*]

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PREFACE.

SISMONDI gives a detailed account of a tragedy by Calderon, called "Love after Death; or, The Mountains of Grenada," and founded upon the revolt of the Moors against Philip the Second. It is an historical play, and embraces the principal events during a warfare of three years.

The political condition of the Moors, as described by Calderon, appeared to the author to be highly dramatic. He has not consciously adopted a single incident in the plot, or line in the composition of the Spanish Poet, but has endeavoured to catch his general tone and colouring in depicting the detestation which the cruelty of the Spaniards had naturally generated in the Moors. He mentions this to relieve himself from the imputation of having sought the illegitimate assistance of political allusion; and he hopes that, upon reflecting on the nature of the subject, the reader will consider the introduction of the Inquisition as unavoidable. It would be hard, indeed, to write a play upon *any* event in the reign of Philip the Second, without inveighing against the persecutor and the tyrant. It would be impossible, in the *present* instance. If it be a fault, Schiller and Alfieri have fallen into it. It would be a very strange delicacy, indeed, were the author to spare the guilt, the ferocity, and the baseness of Philip, out of *respect* to such a man as the present King of Spain!

It has been also said that he is greatly indebted to the performers. He is, indeed, indebted, and most grateful to them. Who must not be under great obligations to such an unprecedented union of varied excellence as the proprietors of Covent-

Garden have brought together? The dignity,—the pathos,—the subdued and cultivated genius of Mr. Young; the fine countenance, the graceful movement, and the impassioned tenderness of Mr. C. Kemble; the just conception and the admirable execution of Mr. M'Cready, who, by his great powers, succeeded in counteracting the odium which such a character as *Pescara* was calculated to create;—these would impose obligation upon writers to whose talents the author does not aspire.—Of Miss O'Neill he forbears to say any thing—she finds her eulogy in tears—those evidences of tragic superiority to which Athens gave the palm.

It is not only to the performers in this tragedy that the author owes his thanks—he returns them to Mr. Fawcett, for his zealous and judicious superintendence of the preparation of his tragedy, and his gentleman-like attentions towards himself.

Mr. Bishop assisted the Author by two of those delightful airs which he only can produce.

He cannot conclude without expressing his warm acknowledgments for the liberality of the proprietors in sparing no expense, and for their great personal politeness.

The metre will be occasionally found incomplete, as the play is published from the prompt-book. The passages omitted in representation were not considered by the author as worthy of publication.

TO MISS O'NEILL.

MADAM,

I AM indebted to you for the zealous and brilliant exertion of your rare talents, in the performance of this Tragedy—for the kind and judicious suggestions which I derived from your dramatic taste and knowledge, in the course of its composition,—and I inscribe it to you—

I have the honour to be,

MADAM,

Your most obedient

and faithful Servant,

RICHARD SHEIL.

THE HISTORY OF

PART II

... of the ...
... and ...
... in the ...
... and ...
... on ...
... to ...

I have the honor to be

Yours

...

...

...

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

HEMEYA, *the descendant of the* }
Moorish Kings } Mr. C. KEMBLE.

MALEC, *an old Moor* Mr. YOUNG.

HAMET, } *Two Moors, friends of* } Mr. CHAPMAN,
HALY, } *Hemeya* } Mr. COMER.

ALVAREZ, *a Nobleman of Grenada* .. Mr. MURRAY.

PESCARA, *the Governor of Grenada*, Mr. M'CREADY.

GOMEZ, *an Inquisitor* Mr. EGERTON.

FLORINDA, Miss O'NEILL.

Moors, Spaniards, Guards, Monks, the Cadi.

Scene—Grenada.

DRAMATIC RESPONSE



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PROLOGUE.

(WRITTEN BY WILLIAM WALLACE, ESQ.)

SPOKEN BY MR. CONNOR.

VARIOUS the realms, and boundless are the views,
Where Fancy wanders with the Tragic Muse.
What spot to-night, o'er that expansive sphere,
Wakes manhood's sympathy—asks woman's tear?
'Tis Spain,—the land where oft, enthron'd sublime,
Shone Muse-lov'd Chivalry in olden time!
'Tis Spain—where late Britannia's conqu'ring hand
Unmanacled the Genius of the land.
Glory's bright beacon, lighted once again,
Bade prostrate Europe blush, and burst her chain;
And gave the world that noblest Chivalry,
Of reas'ning man—immortal Liberty!
What time stern Philip's ruthless edict fell
With persecution, and her band of hell,
In frantic ruin o'er the Moorish race—
Our Poet chose his fancied scene to trace.
He there presents, in virtue's bold relief,
A Moorish lover and a Moorish chief;
And shews a villain rob'd in guilt, in shame,
Altho' the villain bear the Christian name;
Convinc'd, when man in virtue's light you view,
Alike the Crescent or the Cross to you!
But not alone those springs, whose strong control
With ruder force can wake and vex the soul,
He tries—but still, in softer strains, would prove
That dearer spell of mightier pow'r to move,—
A woman's sorrows, and a woman's love!

}

One praise at least he claims to bless his lays—
Nor scene immoral, nor offensive phrase,
Wounds the chaste ear of virgin Modesty—
Quells the pure ardour of young Beauty's eye,
Or spreads the crimson of ingenuous shame
On outrag'd Innocence's cheek of flame !
Next—tho' a foreign land the scene supply'd—
Think not he chose a foreign Muse his guide :—
Spurning wild Germany's uncultur'd schools,
And self-pleas'd Gallia's boasted borrowed rules,
A native Muse, to-night, by native arts,
Would please your judgments and subdue your hearts.
And this, her simple suit, by me she sends—
Give British justice !—yet—as British friends !

THE APOSTATE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A Moorish Apartment in Grenada.

Enter Hemeya, Hamet, and Haly.

HEM. IT is in vain—you talk to me in vain.

HAM. Have you forgot that you are last of all
The race of famous kings who ruled Grenada
Before the Spaniard conquer'd? In their slavery,
The Moors still hold you for their righteous prince;
And, in return for kingly reverence,
You owe them kingly care.

HALY. Once, I remember,
The wrongs our Christian tyrants heap upon us
Could fire your soul with rage.—Aloud you cried
Against the treach'rous breach of ev'ry right
That Ferdinand secured; but now, when fame
Has told abroad, that Philip will blot out
The very name of Moor, and has decreed
To rob us of our faith, our nation's rites,
Our sacred usages, and all that men

Hold dearer far than life,—this fatal passion
Has bound you like a spell.

HAM. This Spanish woman
Has banish'd from your soul each nobler care.—
The daughter of Alvarez—she alone
Possesses all your being ! You can think
And speak but of Florinda—When the Moors
Weep o'er their cruel wrongs, Aben Hemeya,
Amid the assembled council sits enrapt,
And, in a lengthen'd sigh, breathes out “ Florinda !”

HEM. Oh ! blame me not, it is my cruel fate !
I feel this passion, like necessity,
Rule my o'ermaster'd soul. What can you say ?
Is there a pow'r in eloquence or reason
To cure the heart's deep malady ?—Ha ! tell me,
Have you e'er seen her face ? have you beheld
That rare assemblage of all nature's beauties ?
Ah ! have you ever seen her ? Where is the
remedy
For passion like to mine ?

HAL. You should have found it,
If not in duty, in despair.—You know
Our Spanish tyrants spurn as well as hate us—
Would not Alvarez deem it infamy
That e'en a Moorish prince should wed Florinda ?
When you approach his palace, ev'ry slave,
The menials of his threshold, cry, in scorn,
“ Behold the Moor !”
And e'en the fair Florinda
Has ne'er confessed she smiles upon your passion.
And yet you love——

HEM. And must love on for ever.
 Love is a fire self-fed, and does not need
 Hope to preserve its flame. Full well I know
 I must despair—and yet, when I behold her,
 And her blue eyes are lifted——

HAM. What avails it?
 Even if she loved, she never could be yours—
 Is she not promised to Grenada's governor?

HEM. Kind heaven, let not that fell Pescara
 clasp
 Those beauties to his bosom, and profane
 An angel's form in his accurs'd embrace!
 Oh no! it will not be—for she abhors him!
 She shudders when she sees that man of blood,
 Whom Philip sends to crush us. Well she feels
 That he was once the Inquisition's satellite,
 Till Philip pluck'd the cowl from off his front,
 To raise him to his councils. Oh! Florinda,
 Before I see thee his, may Heav'n's swift fire
 Fall on my head!

HAL. Weak and degenerate passion!
 How it unmans your nature! I perceive
 Malec alone can break this fatal charm.
 Would that the aged Moor, to whom your father
 Upon his death-bed gave you, had return'd!
 Too long amid the Moorish mountaineers
 He lingers from Grenada. Would he were here,
 To wake your slumb'ring virtue!

HEM. (*Going*) Fare you well!

HAL. Where wouldst thou go? 'Tis midnight's
 silent hour.

Nightly you wander forth. No couch now strews
 Repose and sleep for you ; nor, till the morn,
 Pale and aghast you come.

HEM. This is my hour,
 My only hour of joy. Haly, I go
 To stand beside her lattice—there, sometimes,
 I hear her distant voice, when up to heav'n
 It goes in midnight melody. The moon
 Throws, sometimes, on her face, its tender beams ;
 And e'en when I no longer can behold her,
 I see the light that from the casement shines,
 And gaze upon it, as it were the star
 Of lovers, till the morning. Hark !

HAL. A sound
 Of far-off tumult murmurs on mine ear,
 Like ocean's chafing surge—

HAM. Behold, the sky
 Doth redden in the black horizon's verge ;
 A strong unnatural light streams o'er the dark,
 And mocks the dawn of morn.

(*Fire-Bell heard.*)

Enter a Moor.

MOOR. My lord, the palace
 Of Count Alvarez stands enwrapped in fire !

HEM. Florinda ? Speak !

MOOR. She has not yet been seen.

HEM. Oh heavens, Florinda !

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A Street in Grenada.

Enter Alvarez, supported by two Servants.

ALV. Where is my child? where is my child,
Florinda?

Where do you drag me? Let me go!—unhand me!
Let me go back and die! Unnatural men,
You should not force the father from the child.

1st SERV. The thought is phrensy!—from the
rolling smoke

You scarce were ta'en alive; and here we lead you
To breathe the fresh'ning air—You shall not go,
For, should you pass the flaming gates again,
They would swallow you for ever.

ALV. Oh, my daughter!

Enter a Spaniard.

Speak—tell me—speak!

SPAN. Your daughter has appear'd
Amid the flames at last, and at her casement
Stands with her face and arms to heaven uplifted,
And seems a suff'ring angel—while below
The multitude in speechless horror stand.

ALV. (*Kneeling.*) Hear, and record my oath! He
that shall bear

Florinda to my arms shall win her hand,
And be inheritor of all my treasures;

And, if I break that oath, the heaviest curse
Fall on my head!

(A loud shout is heard.)

What is it that I hear?

(Enter a Spaniard—after a short pause)

SPAN. My lord, a desp'rate man with furious
force
Bursts thro' the gather'd thousands, scales the walls,
And plunges thro' the flame.

ALV. Oh, Heav'n reward him!

(Another shout.)

That sound sends life again thro' ev'ry vein,
And my heart bounds—

Voices without. She is sav'd! she is sav'd!

ALV. O heaven!

Lead me from hence, and let me see my child.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III.

*A Garden adjoining the Palace of Alvarez, part
of which appears already consumed and blackened.*

Enter Hemeya, bearing Florinda in his arms.

HEM. I feel thy pressure in my heart—I have
thee—

I clasp thee here, while all my senses rush
In the full throb of rapture—all my being

Seems gather'd in the pulse that beats to thee--
I am belov'd--I am belov'd!

FLOR. Hemeya!

Heaven, let me thank thee, that this generous
man

Has saved me! I will look on thee, Hemeya!--

My eyes will tell thee,--I am very faint--

I cannot speak,—but I am grateful to thee.

HEM. Florinda! my belov'd!

Oh, pardon me,

If, for one moment of delirious joy,

I held thee to my heart; but here, behold,

A slave before thy feet—all that I ask

Is to gaze long upon thee, till my soul

Forgets all earthly sorrow—Oh, Florinda!

What sleepless nights, what days of desperation,

Since first thy form came on my raptur'd sight

And rested in my heart!

I did not know you lov'd me.

FLOR. I confess

That I am grateful to thee.

HEM. Do not talk

Of chilling gratitude; in the dread moment

When death hung hov'ring o'er thee—I did hear—

Oh! I did hear thee say, that death itself

Was welcome here—was welcome in my arms.

FLOR. Don't look upon me! for within thy

gaze

I sink into the earth.

HEM. Why should Florinda,

She who is made of gentleness and pity.

Deny that beam of dawning happiness,
That glimpse of op'ning heaven?

FLO. Because Florinda
Scarce to her shudd'ring heart had dared to tell
What she has told to thee—I ne'er can wed thee,
And what a pang it is to love thee still!—
Dost thou not know my father frowns upon thee?
Dost thou not know I never can be thine?
Yet, wretched that I am, I have reveal'd
What I must blush to think of.—But he comes—
My father comes—Oh! I must dry these tears;
Within his arms forget my ev'ry grief;
And feel I am a daughter.—My dear father!

Enter Alvarez.

ALV. My child!

HEM. Yes, take her, clasp her to your heart,
And, as that heart beats with a father's transport,
Moor as I am, don't blame me that I love her.

ALV. By Heaven, I see thy mother in thy face!
Thou god-like man, what shall I say to thee?
Oh! let my tears fall on this noble hand,
And speak a burning soul!

HEM. I am rewarded.

ALV. Brave, generous man!

HEM. Nay, good my lord, you o'erpay
My poor desert, and grow my creditor:—
But you forget me—I am most unworthy,—
I am the Moor.

ALV. No,—I remember well,
Thou art hateful to the Christian.—Yesterday.

I did command Florinda, on the pain
Of heaviest imprecation, ne'er to gaze
Upon thy face again.

FLOR. Oh, my dear father!
Florinda can be wretched if you please,
But not ungrateful too.

ALV. Give me thy hand:—
You love the Moor?

FLOR. My lord!

ALV. Come, you confess it;
Your looks reveal your heart; and Count Pescara
Interpreted the silent tear aright,
When first I bade you wed him.

FLOR. Let my grave,
Oh! let a couch of lead, let the cold shroud,
And the earth's grass, be all my place of rest,
Ere Count Pescara, at Heaven's awful shrine,
Claims from these lips the perjur'd oath to love
The man from whom my sinking heart recoils.

HEM. Howe'er you deal with me, let not Flo-
rinda
Be wedded to that villain!—

ALV. Hear me, Moor!
Pescara is Grenada's governor,
And bears the sway of Philip;—long he loved,
And woo'd Florinda with her father's sanction;
Thou art a Moor—thy nation is a slave—
And, tho' from Moorish kings thou art descended,
The Christian spurns thee—Yet it is to thee
I give Florinda's hand.

FLOR. What do I hear?

HEM. Am I in heaven?—O speak, speak, Count Alvarez,
 Speak it again!—Let me be sure of it,
 For I misdoubt my senses.

ALV. She is yours!

HEM. Which of you shall I kneel to? Let me
 press
 Your rev'rend knees within my straining arms—
 I shall grow wild with rapture—Men will say
 The madd'ning planet smote me with its power.
 Florinda, thou art mine—my wife—my joy!—
 Thou exquisite perfection!—Thou fair creature!
 Who now shall part us?

(As he embraces her, Pescara enters.)

PES. I! Speak, Count Alvarez,
 What is it I behold?—Don't look upon me
 As if you never had beheld my face:
 I am Pescara—You have not to learn
 What Count Pescara is.—Who ever wrong'd me
 That did not perish? I had come to greet you,
 And, as I pass'd, the rascal rabble talk'd
 Of some wild dotard vow, some grey-beard's
 folly—
 I seiz'd a wretch that dar'd to slander you,
 And dash'd him to the earth for the vile falsehood.

ALV. If gratitude be crime—

PES. What do I hear?

HEM. What you shall hear again:

PES. Moor, not from thee—
 I would not let thee speak a Spaniard's shame.

You, madam, will inform me ; you, whose eyes
Are bent upon the ground,—whose yielding form
Doth seem like sculptur'd modesty—Nay, tell me,
For I have tidings for *your* ear.

FLO. My lord, I do confess, my father's will
Unites me to the Moor.

PES. And you obey him ;
For here obedience is an easy virtue.

FLO. Yes—where my heart swells with the
glowing sense
Of tender thrilling gratitude—my being
Owns in its deep recess the consciousness
That it is all his own—Nay, think, my lord,
Can I behold his face, and not exclaim,
“ This is the man who sav'd me ! ” Can I feel
The pleasures of existence,—can I breathe
The morning air, or see the dying day
Sink in the western sky,—can I inhale
The rose's perfume, or behold the lights
That shine for ever in yon infinite heaven,—
Or can I taste one joy that nature gives
To this, our earthly tarrying place,—nor think
That 'tis to him I owe each little flower
I tread on in life's bleakness ?
E'en now I place my hand upon my heart,
And, as it throbs, there is a voice within
That tells this throbbing heart it would be still,
Were not Hemeya brave.—This is my father,—
He gave that life Hemeya did preserve,—
And, when he gives my hand in recompense,
I cannot but obey.

PES. I thank you, madam ;—
 And, since it seems that gratitude's the fashion,
 Your pains shall be requited.—Know, fair maid,
 The daughter of Alvarez never shall
 Be wedded to a Moor—Nay, do not start—
 Never !

HEM. My lord !

PES. No !—never !

ALV. Count Pescara !

What is it that you mean ?

PES. I mean, my lord,
 That others have more care of your nobility
 Than you have ta'en yourself.—Ha ! ha ! a Moor !
 One of that race that we have trodden down
 From 'empire's height, and crush'd—a damn'd
 Morisco,
 Accursed of the church, and by the laws
 Proscrib'd and branded.—What, you choose a
 Moor

To swell the stream of your nobility
 With his polluted blood ?—In sooth, 'tis pleasant !

HEM. You have forgot me—you forget your-
 self.—

Thro' centuries of glory, on the heads
 Of my great ancestors, the diadem
 Shone thro' the world, and from each royal brow
 Came down with gath'ring splendor ;—and if here
 It shines no more—'tis fate—But what art thou ?—
 The frown of Fortune could not make me base ;
 The smile of Fortune could not make thee noble.—
 Who knows not that Pescara once, within

The Inquisition's dungeons, toil'd at torture?—
 There Philip found you, and his kindred soul
 Own'd the soft sympathy.

PES. My birth!—confusion—
 And must I ever feel the reptile crawl,
 And see it pointed at?—What if I rush,
 And with a blow strike life from out his heart?—
 No—no! my dagger is my last resource.

(Draws a roll of parchment from his bosom.)

Here, Moor, within thy grasp I plant a serpent,
 And, as it stings, think 'tis Pescara's answer—
 This very night it reach'd me from Madrid,
 And thou art first to hear it—Look you here—
 If Caucasus were heap'd between you both,
 With all his snows,—his snows have not the pow'r
 To freeze your amorous passion half so soon
 As Philip's will.—Farewell—but not for ever!

[Exit Pescara.]

ALV. As Philip's will!—Rumour went late
 abroad

Spain's gloomy sovereign had decreed to crush
 Your race to deeper servitude.—Florinda,
 Be not so terrified.

FLOR. Can I behold
 The quick convulsive passions o'er his face,
 And read his soul's deep agony, nor feel
 A terror in my heart?—Tell me, Hemeya,
 What heavy blow relentless Fortune strikes—
 What other misery is still in store
 To fall upon our heads.

HEM. A Christian!—No!—

FLO. Wilt thou not speak to me? wilt thou not
chase

The dreadful fears that throng about my soul?—

Wilt thou not speak to me? 10

HEM. Accursed tyrant!

Florinda, wilt thou leave me?—Can my fate—

Can kings and priests—e'er pluck thee from my soul?

FLO. No!

HEM. Then, Florinda, thus I spurn the tyrant!

They'd make a Christian of me—Philip pro-
scribes

My nation and my creed; and, on the pain

Of instant death, unless he publicly

Abjure his prophet's law, no Moor can wed

A Christian woman.

FLO. Well, dost thou renounce me?

ALV. Hear me, Hemeya!—Will you yield obe-
dience

To Philip's will, and swear yourself a Christian?

HEM. A Christian!

ALV. Ay! it is the law.

HEM. The law!

What law can teach me to renounce my coun-
try?

ALV. Then choose between your prophet and
Florinda.

HEM. Wilt thou abandon me? (*To Florinda.*)

ALV. Let my deep curse

Fall on her head——

FLO. Don't breathe those dreadful words—

Do I deserve that you should doubt me?—No!

In infancy I gaz'd upon your face
With an instinctive reverence, that grew
To reason's tender dictate—Never, yet
Have I offended you; and let me say
My tears may flow from eyes long used to weep-
ing,—

My form may wither in the gripe of grief—
My heart may break indeed—Love can do this—
But never can it teach Florinda's hand
To draw down sorrows on a father's age,
Or to deserve his curse.

HEM. This, this from thee!

FLOR. You've found the dreadful secret of my
soul—

But hold—what am I doing?—Pride, where art
thou?

Am I so fallen in passion?—Oh, my father,
Lead me from hence!

HEM. Florinda, stay one moment—
Don't leave me—don't abandon me.

FLOR. My father,
Lead me from hence!

ALV. (*To Hemeya.*) You have heard Alvarez'
will—

Take one day for decision—If to-morrow
You do not, in the face of Heav'n, renounce
The faith of Mahomet, renounce Florinda!

HEM. Oh misery!—My Florinda, look upon
me!

FLOR. Yes, I will look upon thee, and perhaps

Shall never look again—for, from this hour,
You never may behold or hear me more.

HEM. Then let me die!

FLO. Hemeya, listen to me!

My heart has own'd its weakness—yet, thank
Heav'n,

With all my sex's folly, still I bear
My sex's dignity—I've not the pow'r
To crush the fatal passion in my breast,
But I can bury it—Yes, yes, Hemeya,
I feel my blood is noble, and Florinda
Shall never stoop before thee—From the world
I'll fly—from thee for ever!—Tears may fall,
But none shall see the blushes where they hang!—
Thou shalt not see me weep—thou shalt not have
The cruel pleasure—In religion's cells
I'll hide my wretchedness—Faréwell, Hemeya!
And, Heaven, if I may dare to lift to thee
A pray'r of earthly passion, touch his heart,
Fill it with holy light, and make him thine—
And, howsoe'er thou shalt decide my doom,
On him pour down thy blessings!—

(As she goes out, she looks back for an instant.)

Oh, Hemeya!—

[Exit Florinda.]

Hemeya manet.

She blest me as she parted; yet I feel
A curse fall on my heart!—

I am doom'd to choose
Between despair and crime—My fate cries out,
Be wretched or be guilty!—But, Florinda,
How could I live without thee?—Can I see
That form, to which I stretch'd my desp'rate arms
In the wild dream of passion and despair,
Brought to my bosom in assur'd reality,
Nor rush to clasp it here?—Would the faint tra-
veller

Who long hath toil'd thro' Afric's sultry sands,
Droop o'er the fount that 'mid the desert gush'd
Even from the burning rock, and die with thirst,
While its clear freshness woo'd him to be blest?—
No! he would drink, tho' there were poison in it.

[*Exit.*

END OF ACT THE FIRST.

A C T II.

SCENE I.

The Exterior of the Inquisition.

Enter Malec and Haly.

MALEC. **R**ENOUNCE his people! Haly, I did
not think,

As here I journey'd from yon rugged cliffs,
To hear these fatal tidings.—Oh Hemeya!

HALY. After long struggles of reluctant honor,
He promis'd to abjure his nation's creed.
To-day the public rite of abjuration
Is to be solemnized.

MAL. I have heard enough.

HAL. But when you tell what you had come to
teach him—
And he has heard that on his brows shall shine
The crown his fathers wore—When you have told
him——

MAL. I will not tell him—Till he has deserv'd,
He shall not wear a crown. A diadem
Shall never call him back to honor's road,
If honor could not do it. But I'll try
My wonted pow'r upon him—From its ashes
'Twill not be hard to wake th' expiring flame

That once burnt bright within him. Thou, meanwhile,
 Call at the Cadi's house the noblest Moors,
 That to their secret ears I may unfold
 The cause of my return.

[*Exit Haly.*]

MAL. Renounce the faith
 That suffering had endear'd, when twenty thousand

Of his brave countrymen are leagued together,
 To break the bonds of Philip's tyranny!—
 When freedom's flame from yonder mountain tops
 Will blaze thro' Spain's wide realm, he basely falls
 Before the tyrant's edict, and obeys!—

But, hold—he comes!—There was a time, Hemeya,

When I had rush'd to catch thee in my arms.

[*Enter Hemeya.*]

I charge thee not to touch my garment's edge.

HEM. Oh, Malec, this from thee! When I behold
 thee,

After long months of absence, dost thou scorn me?

MAL. Dost thou not scorn thyself?—I know it
 all;

Fame has not kept thy baseness from mine ears.
 What, for a wanton——!

HEM. Wanton!

MAL. Ay, a Spanish wanton!—
 Is she not one of those same melting dames,
 Unlike the prophet's virgin votaries,

That let men's eyes blaze on unveiled charms,
 And are themselves the wooers?—'Tis for a wanton
 You choose to be a villain.

HEM. I permit you
 To rail against myself; heap on my head
 Your heaviest curse, your blackest reprobation;
 Open my heart, and stab; drive in more deep
 The arrows of remorse;—but do not dare,
 Tho' you're my father's friend——

MAL. What should I fear?
 Away, slight boy! and speak not of thy father.
 I'm glad he sleeps in unattesting marble,
 Else hadst thou been a parricide.

HEM. I am guilty; I confess that I am guilty.
 But if you felt what youth and passion feel,—
 If those soft eyes had ever beam'd upon thee,—
 If long, like me, thou'dst wither'd in despair,
 Till fresh'ning Hope rose in thy desert heart,—
 Oh, if, like me, thou'dst borne her in thy bosom,
 While ruin flam'd above——

MAL. Forbear, fond youth! my ears are pall'd
 already.—
 Rein in thy wanton fancy.—Dost thou think
 That I am made to hear a lover's follies?
 Go, tell them to the moon, and howl with dogs!—
 Did she possess the charms of her who sleeps
 Within the prophet's bosom, I would spurn
 The man who had renounc'd, for her embrace,
 His country and himself.

HEM. We have no country!

MAL. Thou hast, indeed, no country.

HEM. Are we not bound to earth? The lording
Spaniard

Treads on our heads—We groan beneath the yoke
That, shaken, goes more deeply!—

Resistance will but ope new founts of blood
To gush in foaming torrents—Dost thou forget
The Spaniard lifts the sword, and almost wishes
That we should give pretence to tyranny?

Look at yon gloomy towers; e'en now we stand
Within the shadows of the Inquisition:

MAL. Art thou afraid? Look at yon gloomy
towers!

Has thy fair minion told thee to beware
Of damps and rheums, caught in the dungeon's
vapours?

Or has she said those dainty limbs of thine
Were only made for love? Look at yon towers!—

Ay! I will look upon them, not to fear,
But deeply curse them. There ye stand aloft,

Frowning in all your black and dreary pride,
Monastic monuments of human misery,—

Houses of torment, palaces of horror!
Oft have you echoed to the lengthen'd shriek

Of midnight murder; often have you heard
The deep-choaked groan of stifled agony

Burst in its dying whisper—Curses on ye!
Curse on the tyrant that sustains you too!

Oh, may ye one day, from your tow'ring height,
Fall on the wretches that uphold your domes.

And crush them in your ruins! Oh, Hemeya! Look there, Hemeya! think how many Moors, How many of our wretched countrymen, Are doom'd to perish there, unless—

HEM. By Heav'ns! Thy burning front, thy flaming eyes, proclaim it— Some glorious thought is lab'ring—Speak—what dost thou mean'st thou?

I feel thy spirit's mastery—my soul Fires in the glowing contact—Malec, speak! Tell me, what can we do?

MAL. What men can do Who groan beneath the lash of tyranny, And feel the strength of madness.—Have we not scimitars?

'Twas not in vain I sought those rugged heights, Nor vainly do I now again return— Amid the Alpuxerra's cragg'd cliffs, Are there not myriads of high-hearted Moors, That only need a leader to be free? Thy voice would be a trumpet in the mountains, That, from their snow-crown'd tops and hollow vales, Would echo back the blast of liberty.— Dost thou not understand me?

HEM. Speak!—Can I free my people?—Can I rend Our shameful bonds asunder, and revenge?—

MAL. Canst thou?—

HEM. Do not command me not to love; But, if there be a road to liberty,

Provided Death, with his uplifted dart
Stand at its entrance—speak—is there a way?—

MAL. And, were there not a way,
We'd hew one in the rock!—There is a way—

HEM. My soul hangs in thy lips—

MAL. I fear thee still—
I fear thy wav'ring nature.

HEM. No, you wrong me—
By Heav'n you wrong me!—

MAL. Fall upon the earth,
And by thy father's sacred memory—
By all thy people's wrongs—by Allah's name—
Swear—

Enter Florinda.

FLOR. (*Interrupting him.*) Hold! what is it that
I see?

HEM. A wretch!

MAL. Swear! quickly swear, before a woman's
art

Turn thee to that a woman's self should spurn.

FLOR. What should he swear?—

MAL. For ever to renounce thee!

FLOR. Ay! let him, if he will; let him renounce
me.

I will not say that I am hardly us'd,
Nor load him with my love!—I can bear all,
Except to see him perish.

MAL. Swear, Hemeya,
Never to be a Christian.

FLOR. Hold! for Heaven's mercy!

HEM. Bright angel, art thou come to save, or
damn me?

FLOR. I'm come to tell the perils that surround
thee.—

Cruel, unkind, Hemeya! I perceive
The pow'r that Malec holds upon thy soul.—
But yesterday, e'en at the cloister's gates,
You cried you would renounce the world for me.

MAL. Ay! what is worth much more than all the
world,
More than the crescent diadem that shines
On Selim's turban'd brow—more than the heav'n
The prophet's eye beheld—nay, more than thee—
His honour and his truth!—Rightly thou hast said
'Tis I who snatch him from thee.

FLOR. Not from me—
It is from life you snatch him. Let him leave me—
Never behold me more!

HEM. Can I do that?

FLOR. Do any thing but perish.
I reckon not of myself; but I have heard,
Since last we parted, more than first I fear'd:
The king's decree has arm'd Pescara's hand
With pow'r omnipotent against the Moors.
Death hovers o'er thy head! Gomez, Pescara,
Are crouch'd to leap upon thee.
Hemeya, be a Christian, or you perish!

HEM. It is not hard to die—thou, thou alone
Art all that makes life worth the keeping to me.

MAL. I will not think a well-wrought tear or two
Can make thee base again.

HEM. Within thy bosom (*to Malec*)
I'll bury all my face ; for, if I dare
To gaze upon her charms, they will unman me.

FLO. And dost thou scorn to look upon
Florinda ?
And am I spurn'd so far ? Once, once 'twas
otherwise :
Now I am fit for scorn !

HEM. Florinda !

MAL. Hold !

Weigh not your country with a woman's tears.

FLO. I am, indeed, a woman ; and I feel
My sex's cruel portion, to be woo'd,
And flattered, and ador'd, until at last
We own our nature's folly ;—then you spurn,
Who wept and sighed before. You then pull
down

The idol that you worshipp'd, and you deem,
Because a woman loves, she should be scorn'd !
I should not weep, and you would not despise me.

HEM. Malec !

MAL. Are you a man ?—are you his son
Whose heart ne'er felt a throb but for his country ?

HEM. Look here, and pity me !—Behold this
face,
Where shines a soul so pure, so sweet a spirit—
Can I renounce her ? tell me if I can—
Look on him, my Florinda ! lift those eyes,
So full of light, and purity, and love ;
Look on him, and he'll pity me.

FLO. Hemeya,
Art thou so kind again, and wilt thou live?

HEM. Stay near my heart, and, as I press thee
thus,

I shall no longer feel this agony :

I never can resign thee.

MAL. Worthless Moor !

Why does my poniard tremble in my grasp ?

Woman !

FLO. You shall not tear him into death.

MAL. (*Aside.*) I cannot do it—yet, must I behold
The son of Moorish kings a woman's slave?—
I'll try to rouse him still.—Perfidious traitor !

HEM. Traitor !

MAL. Traitor ! and, if there be a name more foul,
Apostate !

FLO. Spare him—spare him !—Dost thou see
How his frame trembles, and what agony
Is stamp'd upon his face?—Oh, pity him !

MAL. I do indeed—I spurn him for his weak-
ness ;—

But, woman, have a care,—leave him,—renounce
him,

Or else——

FLO. I can resign Hemeya's heart,
But cannot give his life—nay, tell me, Malec,
You, who have lov'd him, watch'd his tend'rest
youth,

And hold him in your heart,—would you consent
To yield him up to burning martyrdom,

And cast him in the raging furnaces
That persecution lights with blasts of hell?

MAL. Better that he should perish—

FLOR. Dost thou say so?

Would'st plunge him in destruction? Would'st thou
see him

In all the torments of a ling'ring death,
While Gomez and Pescara stood beside,
To glut themselves upon his agonies?

MAL. Woman, thou hast employ'd thy sex's
cunning,

To make my friend a villain;—but beware,—
Else I will break thy spells—I will unloose
The charmed threads thou wind'st around his soul.

FLOR. I will renounce him!—You, perchance,
desire,

That, from your prophet's vot'ries, he should choose
One fairer and more happy than Florinda—
Let him but speak it, and a cloister's cell
Shall be the refuge of her misery.—
I ask for nothing but Hemeya's safety,
And that's too dear to part with.

HEM. Leave me! never—

[*Malec draws his dagger.*]

MAL. Then it is done—Prophet, behold the
deed!

Strengthen my trembling hand—it is for freedom,
It is for Heav'n I strike!

(*He pauses for an instant, and, after a
struggle, exclaims*)

I cannot do it!—

I am myself a coward. *(He lets the dagger fall).*

[Hemeya and Florinda start.

HEM. Abhorr'd, detested villain!

MAL. Call me coward,—

For that I feel I am;—'twas Heav'n itself

That bade me strike—and nature conquer'd me.

HEM. Curs'd be the creed that can make murder
holy!—

Thee! thee! Florinda—here within my arms!—

Ha! was it here thou would'st have plunged the
poniard!

Fear not, sweet trembler! shelter thee, my love!—

Harm shall ne'er reach thee here.—Avoid my
sight!—

Fanatic, hence!—In him I once rever'd

I see the reeking murderer—

MAL. Do not think

The blow was destin'd for her heart alone—

If, in obedience to the prophet's law,

I had been brave enough to do the deed

That Mahomet had sanctioned, from her breast

I would have drawn the steel to plunge it here,

And, as the life flow'd forth, have told thee that

Which thou shalt never hear. I leave thee now;

For thou art sunk so deep, that 'twere in vain

To pluck thee from thy shame. I go to seek

Grenada's Moors, met for a noble purpose.

Know, thou hast lost a crown—Farewell for ever!

Hemeya! ah! Hemeya! *[Exit Malec.*

HEM. I heed not what he says; I can but think

His cursed steel was aim'd against thy life.

FLOR. And that alone could blot thine image here.

HEM. But murder trembled as it gazed upon thee;

He could not strike—thy beauty, like a charm,
Unnerv'd his grasp!—Heav'n sets its seal upon thee,

And consecrates thy form!—Oh! what bright wonders

Are gathered in thy face, when e'en the prophet
Could not compel him to the bloody deed,
And Malec's hand could shudder!

FLOR. Thou then wilt ne'er
Renounce Florinda for the cruel faith
That would have pierc'd a heart that beats for thee.

That look! I'm blest,—and see, my father comes,
To be the witness of Florinda's bliss.

Enter Alvarez.

ALV. (*To Hemeya.*) I come to seek you, for the
gorgeous temple
Is kindled with the church's brightest pomp,
And thousands wait your presence, to begin
The rite of abjuration.

HEM. Is my fate
So near its hard completion?

ALV. It is well
Thou hast consented, else the fiercest fires
The Inquisition kindles for the Moors
Had been thy portion.

FLOR. Then lose not an instant ;
Take him, my father, else he will go back.

ALV. To-night a priest shall join your wedded
hands.

HEM. And let that thought alone possess my
soul :

Upon the verge of ruin I will gaze
On the bright vision that allures me on,
And leads me to the gulf—I'll turn my eyes
Tow'rds the star-studded heav'n, where still it shines
While I am sinking. Yes ! when I behold thee,
Conscience is scarce a rebel to thy charms.—
I go, Florinda ; but do not forget
That, if I dare be guilty, 'tis for thee !

[*Exeunt Alvarez and Hemeza.*]

FLOR. I am happy now—
A beam of angel-bliss falls on my heart.
And spreads Heav'n's light about it.

The gates of the Inquisition open.—A bell tolls twice.

What do I see ?

*Enter Gomez, Pescara, and Inquisitors from the
interior of the edifice.*

The Inquisition's servants—Gomez !—Pescara !
(*She rushes up wildly and exultingly to the Inquisitors.*)

He is a Christian!—he has 'scaped your toils,—
 Heav'n watches o'er his safety—You are foil'd.
 Stir not another step—Back, back again—
 Back to your cells and caverns. Do you not see
 Faith, like an angel, hov'ring o'er his head?—
 Back, back, he is a Christian!

GOM. (*Advancing towards her.*) Who art thou,
 That with loud adjuration hast presum'd
 To interrupt the servants of the church?

PES. Forgive her, holy father, for she seems
 Touch'd with inspiring power.

(*Goes up to her.*) The fair Florinda!

I cry your mercy, madam.

FLOR. Pardon me,
 I know not what I said.

PES. Ay, but I know it.

Stay, stay, fair maid!—

(*To Gomez.*) Speed, Gomez—strike the blow,—
 Strike it at once.—And, hark ye, as you go,
 Think that Pescara will not be ungrateful.

[*Exeunt Gomez and Inquisitors.*]

FLOR. He sends him forth
 Upon some dreadful purpose.

PES. Do you deign
 To look upon the wretch from whom your eyes
 Were ever turn'd with loathing?—But 'tis mer-
 ciful.

This sun-set beam of hope,—
 Nay, do not tremble;
 You should not fear the man that you despise.

FLO. My lord, 'tis not my purpose to offend
you :

One poor request is all that I entreat ;—
Tell me, what cause has call'd these men of death
Forth from their dread abodes ? Whom do they
seek ?

What is their dread intent ?—Teach me, my lord ;
I do conjure you, teach me.

PES. Ay, 'tis your sex's vice—when curiosity
Once stings a woman's heart, Scorn will turn sup-
pliant,

And Hate itself will almost learn to woo.

FLO. Not against him ?

PES. Who is it that you mean ?

I do not understand you.

FLO. His dark eye
Glitters with horrid meaning—“ Like the glass,
“ Within whose orb the voice of magic calls
“ The fiends from hell, within its fiery globe
“ The demon passions rise !”

My lord, forgive me

That I have dar'd to ask—I take my leave.

PES. (*Stopping her.*) Nay, do not go—Altho' I
am forbid

To tell the secrets of the Inquisition,
Yet something can I tell you.

FLO. Well, my lord—?

PES. 'Tis but a dream.

FLO. You mock me.

PES. Do not think it—

You are a pious and believing maid,
And long within a convent's holy cells
Commun'd with Heav'n's pure votaries.—I re-
member

When you did marvel what young virgins meant
When all their talk was love; for, on your
heart,

It fell like moonlight on a frozen fountain.—
That heart has melted since;—but you, per-
chance,

Have still retain'd enough of true belief
Not to despise a vision! On my couch,
Last night, I long lay sleepless—I revol'd
The scorns, the contumelies I have suffered,
But will not brook;—at last, sleep closed my eye-
lids,

And then methought I saw the am'rous Moor
In all the transports of exulting passion;
And I stood by, chained to a fiery pillar,
Condemned to gaze for ever; while two fiends
Did grin and mow upon me.—
Senseless I fell with rage.—As thus I lay,
From forth the yawning earth a figure rose,
Whose stature reach'd to heaven—his robes ap-
pear'd

Woven out of solid fire—around his head
A serpent twin'd its huge gigantic folds;
And on his front, in burning characters,
Was written “Vengeance!”

FLORENCE. Vengeance! Oh! my lord!

You fright me ;—but I ne'er offended you—
What crime have I committed ?

PES. Listen to me :—

He cried “ Do not despair !” and bade me follow.

FLOR. Let me depart—

PES. I followed,—

He led me to a bow'r of Paradise,
And held a cup of joy, which, he exclaim'd,
Was mingled by himself—I quaff'd ; 'twas nectar,
And thrilled within my heart—Then, then, Florinda!—

FLOR. Let me implore you.—(*Struggling.*)

PES. Then, within my arms
Methought I press'd thee.

FLOR. Hold!—This violence—

PES. Nay, do not talk of violence ;
You seem'd a willing and a tender bride,
And rushed into my bosom.—

FLOR. Count Pescara,
I must not hear this mockery—Do not speak
Of what you should not think—This very day
Shall bind me, with an everlasting vow,
To him!—ay, him, I do not fear to tell it,—
To him my heart adores—'Tis not to me
You should unfold your wild and horrid fancies.

PES. Mark me!—There's oft a prophecy in dreams.

[*Exit Pescara.*]

FLOR. (*Alone*) Ha! this means something. Well
I know Pescara :—

His voice doth sound like fate within my soul,
That answers back in faint and trembling echoes.

This horrid band of death—his fell commands—
 The terrors of his eye—his looks of destiny—
 All, all affright me!—If I must be wretched,
 O Heav'n! don't let me know it—leave me still
 The bliss of ignorance! What if Pescara,
 Before Hemeya has abjured his creed,
 Should treacherously seize him?—
 Would that the rite were done!

[*A distant symphony is heard.*

What seraph music floats upon my soul?
 Methinks it is the organ's solemn swell,
 That from the church's aisles ascends to heaven.
 The holy rite proceeds—Sweet sounds, awake;
 Awake again upon my raptured soul!

[*A distant chorus sings.*

CHORUS.

The mystic light
 Has dawn'd upon his sight:
 He sees, and he believes. Rejoice, rejoice,
 With one acclaiming voice!
 Strike, seraphs! strike your harps, and, thro' the
 sky,
 Swell the full tide of rapt'rous melody!

The Curtain falls, while Florinda kneels.

END OF ACT THE SECOND.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

A magnificent Apartment in the House of the Cadi of Grenada.

A number of Moors are assembled together.

The Cadi, Halv, Hamet, &c.

CADI. **H**ALV, the noblest of Grenada's Moors,
Within the sacred walls where we are wont
To celebrate the prophet's holy name,
Meet at your bidding.

HAL. You are call'd together
By the command of Malec; he returns
From the Alpuxerras, fraught with some great tiding,
And bade me summon you.

CADI. We need his counsel
In this our hour of sorrow—When our prince
Turns recreant from his people, it is well
Malec is left us still—for his great soul,
Firm to the prophet, lifts its stubborn height,
And, by the storms of fate, more deeply still
Is rooted in his country.

HAM. See—he comes!—
But with disturbed step.—

Enter Malec.

MAL. He is a Christian!
Lend me thy aid, good Hamet!—Ha! I am old—
What! do I weep? Dry—dry my tears in rage—
Do not despise me, Moors!—I am a man—
I am again a man—No more of him!—
Moors, fellow countrymen—

CADI. Speak, thou brave man!
We wait the voice of Heav'n—

MAL. The voice of Heav'n
First waked the great design—Amid the moun-
tains
I sought those untam'd Moors, whose fathers
fled
To Nature's fortresses, and left their sons
Their freedom and their faith!—The prophet
smil'd,
And gave me pow'r to light within their breasts
The fire that glów'd in mine!—Moors! if your
souls
Are noble as the rugged mountaineers,
You will not brook to see your sacred rights
Robb'd by the tyrant.—Philip's law proscribes
Our creed, our rites, our sacred usages—
Plucks off our silken garments from our limbs,
And clothes us in our slav'ry. If he could,
He'd blot the burning sunbeam from our faces,

And wash us into white and pallid Christians !
Would you not rather die ?

MOORS. We will die before it.

MAL. No, you shall live in freedom !
Know that already twenty thousand Moors
Are leagued by direst oaths—Ha ! I am glad
Your hands are laid upon your sciimitars—
Draw, draw them forth ; and, as they blaze aloft,
Swear that you will be free !

MOORS. We swear !

MAL. Then learn,
Thro' the Morisco towns a wide conspiracy
Has long been form'd to raise again on high.
The standard of the prophet—The first blow
Shall be Grenada's capture !—Be prepar'd
To join your countrymen.—This very night,
Their marshal'd numbers, 'neath the auspicious
moon,

Shall move upon the glorious enterprise !
And, ere the morn, the crescent shall be fix'd
High on the Alhambra's tow'rs !

MOORS. We shall be free !

[They brandish their scimitars.]

MAL. God and the prophet grant it !
Oh, Mahomet ! look down from Paradise,—
Pity thy suffering people,—raise again
Amid the land, where once our fathers rul'd,
Thine empire and thy faith !—Kneel, fellow Moors,
(For 'tis the hour of pray'r) ; and tow'rds the
east,

As low you bend, from mid the sacred shrine,

Arise the hymn of holy melody,
For 'tis in Heaven we trust!

(The Moors kneel.)

Chant.

Allah! hear thy people's pray'r,
And lift thy vot'ries from despair!
On empire's mountain-height replace
The children of a noble race!

And set us free!

Prophet of God! restore

The conqu'ring days of yore,

And set us free!

(A step is heard without.)

CADI. Suspend your holy rite—let your hymns
cease!

Behold, a Spaniard with profaning step
Comes rushing tow'rd's the shrine!

MALEC. An infidel

Presumes to break on our solemnity!

Enter Hemeya in precipitation, and in Spanish garments. The Moors all rise.

What do I see? Ha! does he come to blast me?

HEM. I know you wonder that I dare approach
This consecrated spot—but when you hear——
Ha! now I feel my guilt.

MAL. Speak, noble Christian!

How are we honour'd with your gracious presence?

HEM. Oh! hear my prayer—

MAL. You mean your high commands—

I am a Moor, a vile ignoble slave—

You are a Christian!

These costly garments that adorn your body
Proclaim your lordly rule:—What is your pleasure?

If you would buffet me, as many a time
I've seen it done, I'll bear it patiently.
Employ the privilege of your religion,
Right worthy, true, and honourable Christian!

HEM. Your ev'ry word stings like an aspick
here!

But do not think that, with remorseless soul,
I dare to come where ev'ry voiceless thing
Proclaims my guilt aloud—It is your safety
That leads me here before you—Malec, fly!—

The Inquisition—

MAL. What! the Inquisition—

HEM. Prepare to drag thee to their cells of
death!

MAL. Are we betray'd? hast *thou* betray'd *us*
too?

Traitor! accursed traitor! (*Seizes him—after a
pause.*) I had forgot—

'Tis well—I had forgot—I did not tell thee—

HEM. Oh, use me as thou wilt; I will not pause
To search thy meaning—Hear me! 'twas e'en now
I met Pescara—With a face of smile
He came to greet me, and, with outstretch'd arm,
He grasp'd my hand in his; with that exclaim'd,
“ Here let our discord end: thou 'st gain'd Flo-
rinda:

A gen'rous mind tow'rs o'er its enmities!”—

And then, in pledge of friendship, bade me seek thee.—

He bade me tell thee that the Inquisition
Had mark'd thee for their victim—I had doubted
him,

And would have turn'd with scorn, but that I saw
Their bands of death move o'er Grenada's streets.
E'en now they come.

MAL. Why, let them come—I'm glad
They choose me for the torture! Let them come,
And I will brave them.—Ha! I know you well—
The knock of death is there!

(*A loud knocking.*)

HEM. He is lost for ever!

(*The Moors draw their scimitars.*)

MAL. Let your scimitars
Shrink back within their sheaths.—Put up your
weapons.

MOOR. They're drawn but to defend you.

MAL. Put them up!
Rumour, perchance, has reach'd their watchful ears,
And, doubtless, they are come, in hope to force
Confession from my lips;—but I will brave them.
Another, in the tort'ring wheel, might speak
What all their engines ne'er shall tear from me.—
Nay, I command you, hence!—Put up your wea-
pons—

Resistance now were vain—they would seize us
all—

They'd put a hundred of us to the torture.

Fly hence! Begone! [*The Moors retire.*]

Manent Hemeya and Malec.

MAL. They burst the gates—I am prepar'd to meet them.

Enter Gomez at the head of the Inquisitors.

GOM. You stand the Inquisition's prisoner!
 Invetrate infidel, by thy example
 The Moors shall learn——

MAL. That I'm beyond your power.

GOM. Beyond our power?

MAL. These old and palsied limbs indeed are yours,

But my eternal spirit is my own!
 Then hear! I spurn as well as curse your power,
 And the vile tyrant that upholds you!

GOM. Bear witness that he utters blasphemy
 Against the anointed king.

MAL. Against the king! against the anointed king!

Oh, you profane that name, when thus you call
 The villain who has sham'd the diadem
 On his perfidious brows—His gloomy throne
 Is pall'd with black, and stain'd with martyr blood,
 While Superstition, with a torch of hell,
 Stands its fierce guardian! “ Monks, with holy
 rage,

“ Rule ev'ry council, prompt each barb'rous impulse,

“ And light their own ferocity within him!”

Such is the monarch "of your wretched Spain,"
 Abhorr'd in his unhappy realm, and spurn'd
 By all the world beside.

GOM. Hold! or yon roof
 Will topple on our heads! You have confirm'd
 The deadly guilt that you are charg'd withal,
 And added heavier crime. You are accus'd
 Of foul endeavour to seduce a Moor
 Back to your cursed faith.

HEM. A Moor! what Moor?

GOM. Thyself!

HEM. Me!

GOM. And Grenada's governor,
 The Count Pescara, at our dread tribunal
 Stands his accuser.

HEM. What? Pescara? Ha!
 A light from hell flares o'er my yawning ruin!
 My horrors break upon me—What? Pescara!

GOM. And gave in proof that in this place of
 sacrilege
 You would be found.

HEM. Why does the earth not burst?—
 Why do I live?—Villain, abhorred villain!—
 Caught in thy snares, and wrung within thy grasp:
 Ingenious reptile, under friendship's shade
 Who spun his toils, and from his poison'd heart
 Wrought out the thread to catch me—Here I stand
 Abus'd and fool'd to ruin.

MAL. Lead me hence!

HEM. (*To Gomez.*) 'Tis false! 'tis false! there is
 not in the catalogue

Of all hell's crimes a name to speak its falsehood!
 'Twas he himself who sent me!—What avails it?
 I see the mock'ry grin upon thy brow:
 Well may'st thou look upon me as a fiend
 Glares on the damn'd below.

GOM. With proof before our eyes, one way
 alone

Remains to prove him guiltless.

HEM. Say, what means?
 Shew me one ray of hope.

GOM. 'Tis thy example—
 He must renounce his prophet!

MAL. Lead me hence!

HEM. Oh, Malec!

MAL. Well!

HEM. Say, shall the fatal blow
 Fall from my innocent hand?

MAL. It will but perfect
 What thou hast done already.—Well, speak on!
 What wouldst thou ask?—Why dost thou stand
 aghast?

HEM. From rav'nous fires to save thy reverend
 head—

To save me from that horror—

MAL. (*stamps*) What! have I struck thee dumb?
 —Thou didst not dare,—

By Heavens! thou didst not dare to ask it of me!
 Christian was on thy lip, but back again
 I frightened the base word within thy heart.—
 There let it rankle—there let be an adder

And breed a thousand other reptiles there—
 It was enough to come before my face,
 Fresh from the mould of shame, just stamp'd with
 “ Villain !”

Now get thee gone !

HEM. Must I behold thee—
 And I the cursed cause ?

MAL. May'st thou behold me—
 Methinks there will be a joy in all my tortures,
 If they can tear thee too—Ha ! have I rooted
 thee ?—

There stand for ever !

[*Exeunt Malec and Inquisitors.*
Enter Pescara.

PES. Now is he fit to gaze on,
 And I am half reveng'd !—This is the time
 To sink him deeper into desperation.—
 Most noble Moor—Christian, I should have said !—

HEM. Ha ! villain, art thou here ?

PES. The Count Pescara,
 Grenada's governor—your friend—is here.

HEM. We are alone—Thou art come to give me
 vengeance !

Perfidious fiend !—Nay, do not look astonish'd ;
 This is no time for mockery.

PES. Mockery ! those alone
 Who feel the poignant consciousness of shame
 Should fear its chastisement—Who is compell'd
 To spurn himself, will, in an idiot's eyes,
 Seek the strong flashes of Malignity,
 And find Scorn's fingers in an infant's hand !

You need not fear it—But I cry you mercy—
 Moor sounded harshly in converted ears ;
 But I'll repair the wrong, and call you Christian.
 And sure you are one—

HEM. Ay, I am—thank Heav'n,
 This sword proclaims it—Once the scimitar
 Hung idly at my side, and I was forc'd
 To gnash a chok'd revenge—but now I am
 A Spaniard, and your peer!—Thou damned villain,
 Whose baseness is but equal'd by thy guilt—
 If I did not abhor, I'd pity thee!

PES. You'd pity me!—It is a kind return
 For admiration. Sure those virtues most
 Command our wonder that we ne'er can reach ;
 And I confess I ne'er could win the top
 Of wisdom thou hast gain'd!—On Afric's shore,
 Were I thy pirate brethren's wretched slave,
 I would not be a cursed renegade!
 I would not be what thou art!

HEM. I confess
 That I am fallen, since e'en a wretch like thee
 Can tell it to me too—and yet, Pescara,
 One thing at least I've gained—the right of ven-
 geance,
 As thou shalt sorely feel! Come on, Pescara!

PES. I marvel at your wrath—what is my crime?
 Indeed you wrong me.

HEM. Did not thy treach'rous falsehood win me
 here?
 Didst thou not bid me fly to save my friend?
 And then——

PES. I did—but 'twas in kindness to thee—
This day I mean to celebrate your marriage
With a most new and curious spectacle—
There shall be music too.

HEM. What dev'lish purpose
Lurks in thy words, and shews but half the fiend?

PES. I tell thee, music—thou shalt have the
groans
Of grey-hair'd Malec ringing in thine ears!—
The crackling flames in which he perishes
Shall hiss upon thee when thou art softly laid
Within the bosom of the amorous fair!—
Nay, put thy sword within its sheath again;
Grenada's governor will never stoop
Down to thy wretched level!

HEM. Stay, Pescara!
And take the recompense of cowardice!

(Strikes him.)

PES. A blow—from thee! My furious soul
breaks loose,
And rushes on thee—I intended vengeance
More desperate and sweet;—but thou hast forc'd
me
To shed thy life too soon.

(They fight.)

(Enter Florinda, who rushes between them.)

FLOR. Forbear! forbear! or in Florinda's blood
Let Fury quench her fires.

PES. Fool that I was!

The sudden phrensy hurried me away—
I might have slain him, and a single blow
Had burst the complicated toils I weave.

(*Aloud*) A woman's bosom be thy shield!—He
'scapes

Pescara's arm to goad Pescara's vengeance.

[*Exit.*]

HEM. He goes, and bears life with him—Fall to
ashes,

Thou recreant hand, that did not pierce his heart!
Thou too, Florinda, hast conspir'd against me—
See what I am for thy sake!

FLO. Oh, Hemeya!

Speak as thou wilt, thou canst not take away
The tender pleasure of beholding thee.—
E'en now 'twas rumour'd that the Inquisition
Had seiz'd and borne thee to the dread tribunal.—
The sound was terrible; Fear wing'd my steps;
I flew to find thee, and I find thee safe.—
E'en as I pass'd I saw that aged Moor
Dragg'd pitiless along—and oh, Hemeya!
I own a throb of joy—of fearful joy—
Burst here as I beheld it.

HEM. Joy, Florinda!

FLO. On thee they would have cast the clodded
earth,—
On thee they would have flung opprobrium's
stain,—
On thee they would have trampled;—ev'ry blow
That fell on Malec's face would have been
thine.

And, oh! to see what thou hast scap'd—to feel,
To clasp, the certainty within my heart—

HEM. The earth was cast upon his reverend
face?

FLOR. It had been cast in thine.

HEM. The populace?

FLOR. They would have scoff'd at thee too.

HEM. Now, perhaps,
From their infernal caverns they bring forth
The glitt'ring engines of ingenious agony—
The fires——

FLOR. The fires were thine;—his groans and
tortures,—
Their engines and their racks,—all, all were thine,
And I must have beheld it!

HEM. Coward! slave!
Thou traitor to thy people—with a lie
Stuck quiv'ring in thy heart!—Here, here I
stand,
Fest'ring in Christian garments, with my shame,
Like an envenom'd robe, to scorch my limbs.
I dare lift up my brow, and mock the man.
Here is the place for me—here, on the earth,
Let ev'ry wretch tread on me as he passes.

FLOR. This is too much for any mortal crea-
ture!

But, since I'm doom'd to more than human woe,
Give me, just Heav'n, much more than human
patience!
Hemeya! dear as thou art cruel to me!

I can bear all my sorrow—but to see thee
Phrensied in agony—think, ev'ry pang
That breaks within thy heart, must burst in mine.

HEM. Hark thee, Florinda! I am not so vile—
I'm not the very villain that you think me.
Now, by my natal star in yonder heav'n,
He shall not perish!

FLO. Speak—what would'st thou do?

HEM. Where are you, Moors?—It is Hemeya calls!
Where are you? I would kindle in your souls
The brave and fierce despair that rages here.—
Or, if you dread to follow me—alone
I'll save or die with him.

FLO. You shall not rush on death.

HEM. The voice of Heav'n cries out within my
soul—

A pow'r invincible swells in my arm—
Nothing can stay me now!—I'll save my friend;
And—when 'tis done—I've done with living too.

FLO. Why is it that I live then? Oh, Hemeya!
Why did you save me from the kinder flames,
To make me curse the blessed light of heaven,
And call on death?—But I shall call in vain,
When they have dragg'd me shrieking to the
altar,

And fell Pescara—

HEM. Ha, the cursed name,
That rakes up hell within me!—'Tis Pescara—

FLO. Yes, 'tis Pescara that will tear me too
To his accurs'd embrace.

HEM. Shew not that image
To my distracted thought.

FLO. When thou art gone,
What will become of me? Who then will hear
My phrensied shrieks for death, for help, for mercy?
Who then will hear me? Who will help me then?
Thou wilt not! No, thou wilt abandon me.—
“ Oh! they will ring the marriage bell for me,
“ And, mid their frantic merriment, I'll hear
“ The toll of death for thee.”

HEM. What shall I do?
Malec, can I desert thee?—And Florinda——!

FLO. Is he to be my husband? Am I to be
The victim of his execrable love?

HEM. Thy husband! Fall before the face of
Heav'n,
And bid it witness, that, whate'er befalls me—

FLO. Behold me then! before the face of
Heav'n—
That Heav'n that does not pity me—I swear,
If I must choose between Pescara's love
And death's eternal bed, I will prefer
Death for my horrid bridegroom.
Now then tell me,
Am I to die? for death, if thou forsake me,
Death only can preserve me.

HEM. No! this arm,
When I have done the deed, shall bear thee hence
Far from Grenada's towers.

Enter Haly.

HAL. My lord, my lord!

HEM. Speak!—

HAL. Malec—

HEM. Malec!

HAL. Is condemn'd—

HEM. Condemn'd!

HAL. Already has the toll of death peal'd out
Its dreadful notice—Ere the sun descend,
In all the pomp of martyrdom he dies.

HEM. Where are the Moors? Where are my
countrymen?

HAL. Before the Inquisition's gates they stand,
And say he should not perish, if their prince——

HEM. Tell them he shall not perish:—from the
pile

Of blazing fires I'll tear him.

FLOR. Oh, Hemeya!

I see the fate that wings thee to perdition.

HEM. Wilt thou not follow me?

FLOR. Throughout the world—

I'll fasten to thy fate—I'll perish with thee—

I stand upon the brink of destiny,

And see the deep descent that gapes beneath:—

Oh! since I cannot save thee from the gulf,

From the steep verge I'll leap with thee along—

Cling to thy heart, and grasp thee with my ruin!

(*She throws herself into his arms—he bears her off.*)

The curtain falls.

END OF ACT THE THIRD.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

A Street.

Bell tolls. Procession of the Inquisition.

Malec—Gomez. Hemeya, Hamet, Haly (in disguise).

GOM. **H**ERE pause, and give his feeble frame
repose,

Else, ere we gain the place of execution,

His aged limbs will sink upon the earth.

MAL. (*Very weak.*) Monks, have I reach'd
your faggots?

GOM. Scarce ten paces

Divide thee from the bourne of earthly pain.—

If thou hast pow'r, look forth, and hence behold

The Villarambla, where ascends the pile,

Upon whose burning top thou'rt doom'd to die!

MAL. (*Looking towards the side of the Stage.*)

Let me behold!

HEM. O Haly, look upon him!

HAL. Hold, my lord,

Or you create suspicion—All bespeaks

The prosp'rous issue of our enterprise.—
I have dispos'd the bravest of the Moors
Around the pile of death.

HEM. Be it thy care
To lead him to the eastern gate,—meanwhile
I fly to bear Florinda from the spot
Of safety, where I left her—Then we mount
Our Arab steeds, and speed us to the mountains.

GOM. (*To Malec.*) Fear shakes your frame—you
 seem to gaze appall'd
On yonder glitt'ring scene, where all Grenada
Has pour'd her thousands to behold thee die.

MAL. It is a spectacle that fills my heart
With terror for mankind,—not for myself.
Unhappy country! land of monks and martyrs!
Women, and men, and children,—young and
 old,—

The beggar and the noble,—all are there,
To view the spectacle of human pain,
In laughing horrid merriment!—The mother
Comes with her little children, to behold—
Nay, some, perhaps, bear life within their bo-
 soms,
Yet gaze without a shudder!—There, young
 maids,
Who would have shriek'd to see a spider crawl,
Are met to see their fellow-creature burn—
And this you call religion! But your faith,
Spaniards! your faith doth tell you otherwise;
For He, who taught you, taught you mercy too.
But one day Heav'n will vindicate itself.

The blood of millions, that has drench'd your
earth,

In a red cloud doth gather round his throne,

Charg'd with the lightnings of eternal wrath,

To burst, at last, upon your guilty heads.—

Peru shall be reveng'd, and Mexico

Shall be reveng'd,—and I shall be reveng'd.

GOM. Perverse and harden'd sinner, I intended,
When here we paus'd, that thou shouldst give the

Moors
Example of repentance.

MAL. Prithee, Monk,

Do not disturb me now—I am not worth it.

Grant me one poor request—

GOM. What wouldst thou ask?

MAL. Tell me, where is my friend?

GOM. I cannot tell thee.

MAL. I thought he would not have abandon'd
me

In my last hour. When I am dead, perhaps,—

HEM. O Hamet!

HAM. Hold, or you will ruin all!

MAL. If there's a Spaniard here, to whom his
creed

Does not forbid compassion, I entreat

That he approach, and bear a legacy

To one that still I love.

HEM. (*To Gomez.*) Let me approach him.

GOM. Then speed thee, for the hour of death

draws on.

HEM. I cannot speak.

(*He goes up to Malec, whose weakness prevents him from distinctly seeing him.*)

MAL. Whoe'er thou art, I thank thee.

I have a friend, sir,—you, perchance, have heard it:—

He left his faith, and he abandon'd me;

E'en now, when you yourself have pity on me,

Hemeya left his friend;—and yet I charge thee

To bear him my forgiveness;—tell him, sir,

Tell him I love him still!—Wilt thou do this?

HEM. I'll tell him to revenge thee.

MAL. Hold! that voice!

HEM. Malec, no more!—You wrong'd me.—Ha!
he faints.

GOM. Come, let us on—Support his feebleness.

MAL. You need not lend your aid,—a passing
trance

Came sudden on me,—I shall die contented.

(*Bell tolls—They move slowly out.*)

SCENE II.

A Street.

Enter Pescara and an Officer.

PES. Have you dispos'd the chosen band of troops
Where I commanded?

OFF. In the narrow street,
That from the Villarambla eastward runs,
The bravest soldiers of the garrison
Await your orders.

PES. It is well.

[*Exit Officer.*

(*Alone*) O Fortune,

Thy smile still follows me, and each event
Swells the deep rush of Fate, in whose swift tide
I'll plunge the man I loathe.—And did he think,
The Argus Hate would close his hundred eyes,
And that he could deceive me?

[*A shout is heard, and drums beat.*

Ha! that shout

Halloos me on, and seems as if my fortune
Cried “Triumph” from afar. Come forth, my
sword!

Be true as fate to me.—Again! — [*Another shout.*
I come!

Rise, Spaniards, rise! like crouched tigers start;
Rush on the slaves, and revel in their blood!

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

A Street.

*Enter Hamet and Haly, supporting Malec, and
other Moors.*

MAL.—Give me a scimitar!—let me go back,—
Let me behold my brave heroic Moor!

HAL. Soon as he pluck'd you from the raging
— flames

He gave us orders to conduct you here;—
This is the way to safety.

MAL. That to glory!
 Let me go back, and fight till all my life
 Flows from my swelling veins!—Shall I stand here,
 While he confronts the fiery face of battle?—

HAL. Your safety is our nation's common weal—

HAM. Behold, he sinks
 Beneath the pow'r of torture—It is well!
 Or back he would have rush'd—To th' eastern gate
 Bear him with swiftest speed, while we return,
 And share our prince's perils.—Come, my friends,
 And plunge amid the tumult—that afar
 Rolls like the mutt'ring thunder.

HAL. Hold!—he comes—
 And bears no happy presage.

Enter Hemeya.

HEM. All is lost!—
 Fly!—all is lost!—

HAM. What means my glorious prince?—

HEM. Pescara had foreseen our enterprise:
 With all his veterans he falls upon us—
 And piles up heaps of carnage—Fly! away!—

(Drums.)

Hark—there! again!—One moment, and my friend
 Is drawn within my fate—Fly—follow him—
 Preserve him, Hamet!—and I charge thee, Hamet,
 Watch o'er Florinda's safety—even now
 To yonder gate a faithful Moor conducts her—
 I will endeavour to defend this pass,
 And gain some precious instants.

HAM. Shall we leave you
To perish here alone?—

HEM. Ay, let me perish—
No matter what befalls me!—Here, alone,
I'll stem the tumbling torrent. Hence—away!
See where it falls upon us—Be it thy care,
Hamet, to save Florinda and my friend!

[*Exeunt Moors.*]

Thou evil genius of my natal hour,
Thou dark presiding spirit of my fortunes,
Who mad'st me slave—then traitor—and at last
Hast made me wretch!—here, here I bare my bosom:
Try if in all thy quiver there be left
Another shaft to pierce it. Ha! he comes!—
Well, hast thou gorged thyself with blood enough?
Art satisfied with murder?

Enter Pescara.

PES. Yield thee, slave!
Yield, traitor and apostate! traitor Christian—
Apostate Moor!—Thy coward countrymen
Are scatter'd and dispers'd—and not a hope
Is left thee now.

HEM. Thou liest! there is hope
To shed thy heart's black venom ere I fall.

[*They fight.*]

Enter Spanish Soldiers, who rush upon Hemeya.

PES. Alive!—seize him alive!—

My foe! the man I hate! and in my grasp!—
I have thee!——

HEM. Ay! thou seest me here before thee,
Surrounded by thy blood-hounds. Yet, Pescara,
E'en here, encompass'd by thy pow'r, Pescara,
I can defy thee still.

PES. Defy me! dost thou?

Enter Spaniard.

SPAN. My lord, the daughter of the Count
Alvarez,
With Malec, borne on steeds of Arab race,
Fly thro' the eastern gate.

PES. Perdition!

HEM. Destiny,
Art thou not powerless now? and thou, Pescara,
Speak! may I not defy thee? Well mayst thou
stand

As if the lightning rived thee. Now, Pescara,
I brave—I tread upon thee.

PES. Fury! despair!
Love, rage, and madness, seize upon my heart!
Fight for your prey, and rend it.—Now, Revenge!
Revenge, where art thou? Hast thou held thy cup
High to my burning lip to mock my thirst;
Then, as I clutched, to dash it from my grasp?—
Traitors and slaves! gone, fled! Are all my hopes
Thus wither'd in an instant—tumbled down—
Hurl'd headlong from the height to which I toil'd!

Do you stand here to gape upon my tortures,
 And blast me with his sight?—Away with him!
 Hence!—let me not behold him!—to the rack!
 That joy is left me still!

HEM. Bind me upon your beds of burning pain
 Here on my limbs waste all your arts of agony,
 And try some new experiment in torture—
 Yet, even then, the pangs that rend my body
 Will be heav'n's bliss to torment such as thine—
 Guilt's poison'd shaft shall quiver in thy heart!
 And in Remorse's fires thy scorpion soul
 Shall writhe and sting itself!

PES. Hence! from my sight!
 This instant let him die!

HEM. And may'st thou live,
 With thy eternal hell within thee, live,
 And, to be fully damned, be immortal!

[*Exit Hemeya, guarded.*]

Enter Gomez.

GOM. My lord, I give you joy.

PES. No, give me all the torments
 That teem within thy brain—Am I not foil'd—
 Dash'd from my purpose—thrown upon the
 ground?

When I had hover'd long, and pounc'd upon her,
 She 'scapes me—she is gone!

GOM. She is o'ertaken:
 The Moor has 'scap'd—but she is your's again.

PES. Mine!—in my clutch!—within my hate
 again!

Mine! Vengeance! all thy joys have burst within
me,

And detestation triumphs in my soul—

Mine!—Mine again! My friend, let me embrace
thee.

What ho! who waits there? Ha! methinks I have
her

Clasp'd in my arms already!—on the wheel

Methinks I see him heave!—What ho! who waits
there?

My star shall never set—Mine! mine again!

Enter Spaniard.

To that fam'd chamber in the Alhambra palace,

Where Moorish kings were wont to be confin'd,

Conduct the traitor. Mine, indeed, again!

Gomez, she shall be mine!—

You shall behold

Pescara's master-piece.

GOM. You would not spare him?

PES. Spare him!—But hold, she comes to meet my
purpose—

Let us retire, and unobserved, I'll tell thee

The thought that labours here——

Enter Florinda.

FLOR. Will none in pity teach me if he lives,

And pluck the frantic agonies of hope

From out my tortur'd heart?

Ha! here is one [*Gomez approaches her.*
That Death has sent to tell me—

GOMEZ. What wouldst thou learn ?

FLOR. No ! I would still hope on—
Don't tell me—Even now I would have given
The world to hear he liv'd—but do not speak,
Lest thou should'st tell me that he breathes no
more !

The sound would blast me !

GOM. He has pass'd the bounds
That limit earthly pardon—

FLOR. He is dead !

GOM. 'Twere too much mercy
That he had perish'd in his impious deed—
Do not deceive yourself—
With its short glimmer hope deludes the heart,
Plays for a moment on the clouds of fate,
And leaves behind a blacker desolation.—
No mortal arm can aid him !

FLOR. Then you kill'd him—
You kill'd him in your dungeons—
You plung'd your cruel hands within his breast.

GOM. Let not your fears thus hurry you
away—

By Count Pescara's order he was led
To the Alhambra palace—but I deem
That in the Inquisition's deepest cells
Reserv'd for ev'ry torment—

FLOR. Does he live ?—

PES. (*From a distant part of the Stage.*)
He lives, and shall not die !

FLOR. Thrice-blessed sound !

Hope, thou art here!—and never mother yet
 Hugg'd her dear child with half the tenderness
 I feel thee here, and clasp thee to my heart—
 He shall not die!

PES. (*Who gradually advances towards her, after dismissing Gomez.*)

He shall not!

FLOR. Let me see thee—

Let me behold the man who bids me hope—
 And, tho' thy words be false, still speak them o'er,
 And say he shall not die! (*suddenly recognises him.*)
 Pescara!

PES. Yes!

Don't gaze upon me with misdoubting fears—
 I know you marvel that Pescara's breast
 Should own a single touch of pity's weakness;—
 But you mistake me—Nature did me wrong,
 When on my face she laid her ruder hand,
 And seem'd to make me pitiless—My heart
 Is rich in tenderness—the Moor shall live—
 I pardon him!

FLOR. Heav'ns! is it possible?

Or has grief wrought upon my tortur'd brain
 Until it grew to wild delirious joy,
 And madness made me blest?—It is indeed!
 It is Pescara! Oh, my lord! once more
 Tell me that he shall live—

PES. He shall!

FLOR. Let me embrace your feet—here let me fall,
 And drop in helpless clinging gratitude!

Oh! let me look upon you—Gracious heaven!
I now no longer see the man I fear'd—
No! Mercy sheds its light about thy head!
A glory beams around thee—Oh! Pescara—
Art thou so great, so god-like, to forgive?

PES. Hemeya shall be free! I spare my foe
To win Florinda's gratitude—to win
That look that melts me, and that smile that burns—

FLOR. Once—will you not forgive me when I
tell it?—

I shudder'd when I look'd upon your face,
And shrunk at your approach—I fear'd your eye—
But now you have compell'd me to esteem you,
And with the gentlest, dearest violence,
Have won my admiration!

PES. Once you hated me.

FLOR. I did not know your virtue.

PES. 'Tis in you—

'Tis in your heart I seek my recompense.

FLOR. Your own heart will reward you.—When
you see

The man you spar'd—when you behold his face,
And watch him as he heaves the air of heav'n,
And looks upon the sun, will you not feel
A transport in your bosom? When you wake
At midnight's hour, will you not be at peace,
And sleep again upon that blessed thought?
And, as you kneel to Heaven, may you not ask
That mercy that you gave?—

PES. These are the gifts

Of self-rewarding virtue—but, Florinda,
A traitor's life deserves a larger price.

He shall be free,

But such condition as on life I set

Must be perform'd.—

FLO. Speak what I am to do :

Command me something dire ; something impos-
sible

To any heart but woman's when she loves ;—

Barefoot o'er burning deserts bid me go,

On some far pilgrimage ; let ev'ry limb

Be wrapp'd within the sackcloth's galling fold—

I will endure it all—and bless misfortune !—

Nay, I will fall in love with wretchedness,

If 'tis for him I bear it.

PES. Do not think

That on your tender nature I impose

Such rude conditions.

You shall be the harbinger

Of freedom and of life—Your steps shall seek

The dungeon where he lingers, and your hand

Unbar the pond'rous bolts.

FLO. Oh ! let me fly.

PES. But first the price of freedom must be
paid.

FLO. My life, if you command it !—With my
life

I'll buy his dearer safety :

PES. With yourself !—

To-night you must be mine—my wife !

FLO. Your wife !

PES. Ay, madam! Is there thunder in the sound?

FLO. You do not mean it—No! you do not ask it—

You cannot think it.

PES. I am resolv'd upon it.—

What mean these shudd'ring looks, these trembling hands,

These heav'n-turn'd eyes, and these wild fits of horror?

Where is the desp'rate valour which o'erthrew

Nature herself, and mock'd impossibility?

You would have giv'n your life; I ask your love!

FLO. My life, but not my love! I cannot give
What I no longer have—My wretched heart

Lies in Hemeysa's dungeon. Pardon me,

But, rather than resign to other arms

A cold, reluctant, unconsenting form,

I'd fold a basilisk within my heart,

Bid its cold coil entwine my shudd'ring limbs,

And warm its icy flesh!

PES. If you detest me as the serpent's coil,

Fear—fear me as its sting!—My lifted hand

Holds death above his head:

FLO. Upon my knees,

I call'd on Heav'n to witness—

PES. Well—

FLO. I swore I never would be yours.

PES. Rage, do not choke me!

FLO. I breath'd a deadly oath, that in my tomb

I would lie down for ever—

PES. Do you dare—?
 But hold! I must dissemble—Do not weep,
 Or if you do, like dew on morning roses
 Your tears must dry in the warm light of love.

(Attempts to embrace her.)

FLOR. Forbear, my lord!—I am a wretch indeed;—
 But, while my sorrows cast me at your feet—
 Fall'n as I am to be your suppliant—
 Learn that you have not yet the rights of insult.

PES. Curse on her pride!—Forgive me, fair Flo-
 rinda,
 If, thro' the blushing fence of modesty,
 With hasty hand I dar'd to pluck its flowers.
 The husband—

FLOR. Husband!

PES. Speak! will you be mine?—

FLOR. Never!

PES. Damnation! when the bow is bent,
 And to the head the winged arrow's drawn,
 The string slips off—Florinda!

FLOR. Well, my lord!

PES. Will you be mine?

FLOR. You fright me—you rattle my every sense!

PES. I have too long endur'd it. Gomez, ho!

Enter Gomez.

GOM. My lord, I wait your pleasure.

PES. You shall feel *(to Florinda)*
 What 'tis to wake the furies in my heart—
 Ho! Gomez, art thou there?—Drag, drag him
 forth!

Begone, I'll follow thee!

FLOR. Oh! monstrous! horrible!

PES. I say, begone!

FLOR. (*Rushing up to Gomez.*)

Stay! in the name of Heav'n, whose priest you are,
Do not profane your office—do not stain
Your sacred robe with blood. Stay, holy father!
Go not on hell's curs'd errand.

PES. Thou shalt see him

In madd'ning agony—thou shalt behold him,
And vainly think thou couldst have sav'd him too—

FLOR. How?—Save him!—Can I save him?

(*Wildly.*)

PES. Be my wife.

FLOR. Your wife! Oh! no! it is too horrible!

PES. I'll hunt for life in every trembling limb,
And chase it down. The diving steel shall plunge—
Nay, do not stop your ears—for his shrill screams
Shall pierce the solid deafness of the tomb!

FLOR. They're in my brain already!—Oh, Hemeysa!
Let me not hear thy cries. Let, let me fly,
And 'scape from it.—Oh, for some depth of earth,
Where I may plunge to hear that scream no more!

(*Pescara seizes her as she attempts to fly.*)

Unhand me! let me fly!—'Tis in my heart,
My eyes, my brain—

PES. Look there—look there!—He dies!—see
where he dies!—

The wheel goes round—See, the red froth of blood!—

His hair stands up, and drips with agony!
On thee—on thee she calls—and bids thee save
him!—

Look there!—

FLO. Spare, spare him! Villains! murderers!

Oh! spare him!—

Hemeya!—Lo, they wrench his heart away!

They drink his gushing blood!—Oh, God! Oh,
God!

(She falls into Pescara's arms.)

END OF ACT THE FOURTH.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

*Grenada stands in moonlight at some distance.
Mosques and Palaces are seen in the perspective.*

*Enter Malec and Haly, at the head of the Moors.
(The moon appears in a crescent.)*

MAL. **BEHOLD** Grenada, Moors!

HAL. When the sun sunk
From yon high cliffs we scarce beheld its tow'rs
Set in the bright horizon's golden round.
Now, ere the auspicious night has pass'd its noon,
We stand before the city of our fathers.

MAL. Hemeya's life has wing'd your rapid march,
And, tho' the drops of labour dew'd your brows,
You triumph in the toil.—Behold Grenada!
There stand the tow'rs our fathers rais'd to heav'n,
To be the residence of Moorish kings.
Those silver spires, those magic palaces,—
The work of Arab art, the Alhambra's dome,
Are now the tenements of infidels;
And 'tis not fitting, Moors—

Enter Hamet.

Well, faithful Hamet,
Have you secur'd the sentinels?

HAM. We have—
And from their lips have learnt
That in the Alhambra's prison lies our prince.

MAL. There then we speed, to burst its pond'rous
gates,
And lead him forth to glory!—Not in vain
Pescara chose that dungeon, for its walls
Hold hidden murder in their hollow womb!

HAM. They tell, besides, that thro' Grenada's
streets
There hath been joyaunce and wild revelry.
The garrison lie slumb'ring in debauch,
And will but wake to perish.

MAL. Let the scimitar
Be undefil'd by blood of innocence.
Come on!—'tis Heav'n conducts us—See, my
friends,
In the pure azure, where the crescent shines,
And seems our glorious standard!—Let us on;
And, as we go, let ev'ry patriot breast
Be fill'd with trust, to see the diadem
Shine on your prince's brow!—I long to clasp
him,
To rush into his prison, burst his chains,
And from a dungeon lead him to a throne!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A Dungeon, of Saracenic Architecture.

Hemeya discovered.

HEM. 'Tis hush'd!—a deep repose succeeds the
murmur

Of their loud exultation, and my dungeon

Is still again :—it imitates the grave.

They triumph o'er my fate—and have, perchance,

Reserv'd me for to-morrow's spectacle.

It is for this I still am let to live!

Yet, they may be deceiv'd—for now, I deem,

The hour is almost come which Malec mark'd

To fall upon Grenada. Hope, thou flatterer,

I cannot trust the voice that whispers me

She still may be mine own! What sound was
there?

Or death or safety comes!—What heav'nly form

Glides like a beauteous spirit on the night?

Still, still it comes upon me!

*Enter Florinda, in bridal garments, and with a
wreath of flowers on her head.*

It is herself!

It is!—it is Florinda!

FLOR. Oh! Hemeya!

[*Falls fainting into his arms.*]

HEM. My eyes behold thee, and my arms embrace thee!

I have thee here—here on this throbbing breast,
The resting-place of love! Droop not, sweet
flow'r!—

Oh, smile upon me!—tell me—ev'ry sense
Be charm'd at once. Say, by what wondrous ways
Thou'rt here before me—Yet, I know it all—
Malec victorious comes. The Moors arise—
They burst their bonds!—and thou art mine for
ever!

FLOR. I prythee do not speak!—thy words
disturb me.

HEM. Thy looks but ill befit an hour so blest.

FLOR. Thou'rt sav'd! 'tis all that's left of hap-
piness—

I am not quite accurs'd.

HEM. Accurs'd! Florinda?

FLOR. One moment, as I gaz'd upon thy face,
I felt a throb of joy within my bosom,
Such as I us'd to feel when I beheld thee.

The slumb'ring serpent wakes, it winds around,
And here it stings!—Ah! how it stings me here

HEM. Why, how is this? joy has no tears like
these.

FLOR. The gate stands stretch'd upon its hinge
—I will—

Yes, I will look my last—(*after a long pause*) Now,
go for ever!

HEM. Thy words are full of madness or despair.

FLOR. Oh, question me no further, but begone!

HEM. By heav'n and earth, no pow'r shall tear
me hence,

Till thou hast satisfied the fearful thought
That rushes on my soul! Thou'rt here alone—
Why art thou here alone?—Where, where is Malec?

FLOR. (*Wildly*) Malec!

HEM. Distract me not—I saw thee turn away
Far from Grenada's gates. Shrink not, but hear
me!

This night—this very hour, the Moors decreed
To seize Grenada!

FLOR. Moors! Grenada!

HEM. Yes!—

This very night the Moors had form'd a project
To fall upon Grenada.

FLOR. Gracious Heav'n!

Oh God! what have I done? Was it this night?
This cursed night of death, despair, and horror!
Was there another way to save thee from him?—
O God! what have I done?

HEM. Ah! frantic thought!

It grapples at my heart!—thy sight doth blast me!
This bridal robe!—these flow'rs—they're full of
adders!

FLOR. And are they here—to mock my wretched-
ness?—

Off! Off, I say! you should not blow for me!
Did not a blight fall on you as you grew
Around this cursed front? Off! Off, I say!
And in your place let hemlock blacken here!

And from the yawning church-yard let them weave
A ranc'rous garland—Let the roots of death
Bloom on this blasted front!

Ah! ah! Hemeya!

Hadst thou but told me, ere this wretched mo-
ment,

That Malec could have saved thee—thou wouldst
ne'er

Behold a victim clad for sacrifice

Shudd'ring before thy sight, and thinking death

The only mercy left.—Then I had been—

I had been still thine own—But now, oh God!

I do not dare to tell thee what I am.

HEM. Let me embrace thee once ere thou hast
said

What will call down my curse, and make me fling
thee

Like a detested creature from my heart!

FLO. Hold! for thy touch is guilt—Unloose
me!—spare me!—

I am—

HEM. What art thou?

FLO. I am Pescara's wife!

HEM. Thou art a woman!—that's another
name.

For falsehood, treason, perjury, and hell!

FLO. If I have wrongs to Heaven, I've none
to thee.

HEM. Where is thy oath to die?—thine oath,
Florinda!

Where is thy oath that an eternal grave
Should be thy bed?

FLOR. I have kept it—'twas thy life
That dragg'd me to the shrine—to save that life—
To pluck thee from the rack.

HEM. No—'twas to bind me
Down on a bed of fire!—Ten thousand deaths
Were better than to see thee what thou art!
E'en from Pescara's arms—

FLOR. No—at the shrine
I claim'd aloud his promise—I was desperate;
And tho' he stamp'd, and in his mouth a curse
Froth'd in its gnashing fury, from the altar
I rush'd into thy dungeon. Oh, Hemeya!
I came to give thee freedom.—Go, Hemeya,
And leave me here to die! Oh! prize that life,—
I charge thee, prize it well,—for which I paid
So large a price.—Keep! keep it as a pledge
Of broken-hearted love! and, ere thou goest,
Hear my last words—for, wedded as I am,
Death will excuse the passion of my soul.—
Since first I saw, I loved thee;—ev'ry day
But added to the fire thine eyes had kindled:—
And now, e'en now, thou art more dear than
ever!

There may be those as wretched as myself,
But none e'er lov'd so tenderly—Pescara!
(*Pescara, who has gradually advanced during the
last speech, rushes between them.*)

PES. Have I no other name?
It is your husband!

HEM. Villain!

FLOR. Do not speak to him—
Thou art still within his power.

PES. I sent thee here
To liberate a traitor—Opportunity
Should not have been abus'd.—Why is he here?

FLOR. He shall depart—Oh, hold! (*To Hemeysa.*)
He shall depart.

PES. He shall—and never shall return.

HEM. Pescàra,
This blackest plot of hell was worthy thee!
Worthy the Inquisition, where thy soul
Was early fram'd to guilt.

PES. (*Stamping.*) Behold my answer!
A Cell opens in the wall, and Executioners appear in it.
Now let me look upon you!—This is well—
Thou art the man I hate—I woo'd this woman,
And I was scorn'd for thee—If without love
I lov'd, I didn't hate without revenge!—
Thou'st told me I was tutor'd in the cells
Of the Inquisition—Thou'rt in the right,
And I will prove that I have studied well
The science of infiction!

HEM. Dost thou think
Thy tortures fright me, then?

PES. I do not think it—
Here is my victim!

FLOR. Do you hear this, ye heavens?

PES. And do you hear me—
E'en now the priest scarce breath'd the marriage
vow,

And passion fiercely burn'd—yet, even then,
 You dar'd me with his name—You call'd aloud,
 And bade me free him—Love then died at once,
 And hate reign'd here alone!—I sent thee here—
 I follow'd thee—I saw thee in his bosom—
 Now hear—he dies!

FLOR. Oh Heav'n!

PES. He dies before thy face.

FLOR. No, 'tis impossible—

'Tis but to try, 'tis but to terrify me;
 You do not mean the horrid deed you speak—
 You are a man—you are a human creature—
 O no! thou wilt not—Have I not perform'd
 Each dread condition? Did I not appear
 Shudd'ring before the altar?—didst thou not pro-
 mise,

Didst thou not swear? Am—am I not your wife.

PES. You are, and love my foe—Come forth, and
 seize him!

(The Executioners advance.)

HEM. And send me quickly from this cursed
 world,

Where guilt, like his, can triumph.

FLOR. Mercy!

PES. Mercy!

FLOR. Then, Heav'n, where are thy lightnings?

PES. In my grasp.

Drag, drag him to your tortures!

FLOR. Hold, tormentors!

And kill, oh, kill me first—here, in my heart,

Quench your fell thirst for blood.

(Pescara drags her from them.)

FLOR. Oh! let me not behold it—Death, do thy work—

Thou art too slow within my raging breast!

Fall, mountains, down, and hide me from this horror!

Burst, earth, and swallow me! Almighty Heav'n,
Stretch forth thy arm, and save him! Ha! they drag him,

They bear him to their torments!—Why, O Heav'n!

Why am I thus abandon'd?

VOICES. *(Without.)* "The Moors!"

[Florinda listens for a moment, and a shout is heard. She shrieks, and rushes towards the front of the Stage, and falls on her knees—Pescara stands appalled—The Alarm-Bell rings.]

HEM. That sound has rais'd me to the sun; my soul

Mounts into triumph! Well, infernal villain,

Well, may'st thou stand amaz'd—thy hour is come!

Thou art enclos'd in thy own den of blood.

PES. Traitors and slaves!—Ha! that thought.

[He clenches his dagger.]

(Hemeya struggles with the Executioners.)

This,—this is left me still!—Within my grasp

I clutch it like a fierce and desp'rate joy,

Look here! look here, vile Moor!—Despite of fate

I still shall triumph o'er thee.

[*Pescara advances to stab Florinda. As he lifts the dagger, Hemeya, who has broken from his Executioners, rushes up, tears it from his hand, and stabs him.—The Moors rush in with Malec at their head, while Florinda sinks into the arms of Hemeya. Pescara, after a vain attempt to speak, falls dead.*]

MAL. Hail, glorious Moor!

HEM. My friend! my brave deliverer!

MAL. The Moors are up in arms—The Alpuxerras
Have pour'd their marshall'd thousands to the field:
The crescent floats upon Grenada's tower,
And morning shall behold thee on the throne.
Kneel, Moors! behold your king!

HEM. Arise, my friends! Florinda, fate has pour'd
A thousand blessings in one rapt'rous hour—
But, in the thick'ning splendours of my stars,
Thou art my loveliest light.

FLOR. If it be possible,
Thou, who dost weigh our mis'ries with our crimes,
Oh, take from death this agony! Hemeya,
While 'twas for thee I trembled, pain grew dull,
And lost its pow'r upon me—Now, 'tis here!

HEM. Florinda!

FLOR. Yes, I have kept my promise to thee:
This is its dread fulfilment!—You were wrong
To chide me for my falsehood—Ere my marriage,
I pour'd a deadly draught within my veins,

That first was ice ; but now in streams of fire
Comes rushing thro' my bosom !

HEM. Give me a sword !

Give me some means of death !—Bring, bring me
poison !

Or tear me to the rack from which I 'scaped !

Here, here, in mercy plunge your steels together !

Ha ! what is't I see ? I thank thee, Fortune !

Thou hast struck the wound, but thou canst heal it
too.

*[He perceives Pescara's dagger on the ground, and
stabs himself. Florinda shrieks, and falls on her
knees beside him.]*

MAL. Thou shouldst have liv'd !—thy life was
still thy country's !

And, but for that, I'd follow thee.

HEM. Florinda,

Fate cannot take the joy to look upon thee,

To die beholding thee !—(Dies.)

[Florinda continues insensible.]

MAL. In the next battle

I'll find the way to join thee. Ha ! Hemeya !

Is this the palace of thy monarchy ?

Is this thy throne ? And is this silent corse

All that remains of him that once I lov'd ?

*[While Malec is speaking, Florinda staunches the
blood of Hemeya with her hair.]*

FLO. It still will flow—But I'll stay here, for
ever !

I'll look on these cold lips—My shiv'ring hand
Shall press this dewy forehead!—and I'll staunch
This blood, that still flows on.

MAL. Remove the body—Poor distracted wretch,
I pity thee!—Uplift that bleeding corse,
And bear it from the dungeon.

FLOR. No, you shall not—
You shall not tear me hence—No!—never! never!
He is my lord!—my husband!—Death!—'twas
death!—

Death married us together!—Here I will dig
A bridal bed, and we'll lie there for ever!
I will not go!—Ha! you may pluck my heart out,
But I will never go.—Help!—help!—Hemeya!
They drag me to Pescara's cursed bed,—
They rend the chains of fire that bind me to thee!
Help!—help!—(*She dies.*)

THE END.

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EPILOGUE.

(WRITTEN BY E. S. BARRET, ESQ.)

SPOKEN BY MISS BOOTH.

A Player outside.

THE Prompter says you lost it—Find it you,
Or speak yourself—I can't without the cue.

[*Pushes on Miss Booth, and exit.*]

Miss Booth searching round.

Bless me! did any see—have any found—
A scribbled sheet of paper on the ground?
Your pardon, pray (*To Audience*); but that unlucky dog,
The Prompter, has mislaid our Epilogue.

Prompter outside, in a loud whisper.

I? 'twas yourself, Miss Booth!—What were you reading,
The time you ask'd me “Was the play succeeding?”

Miss Booth.

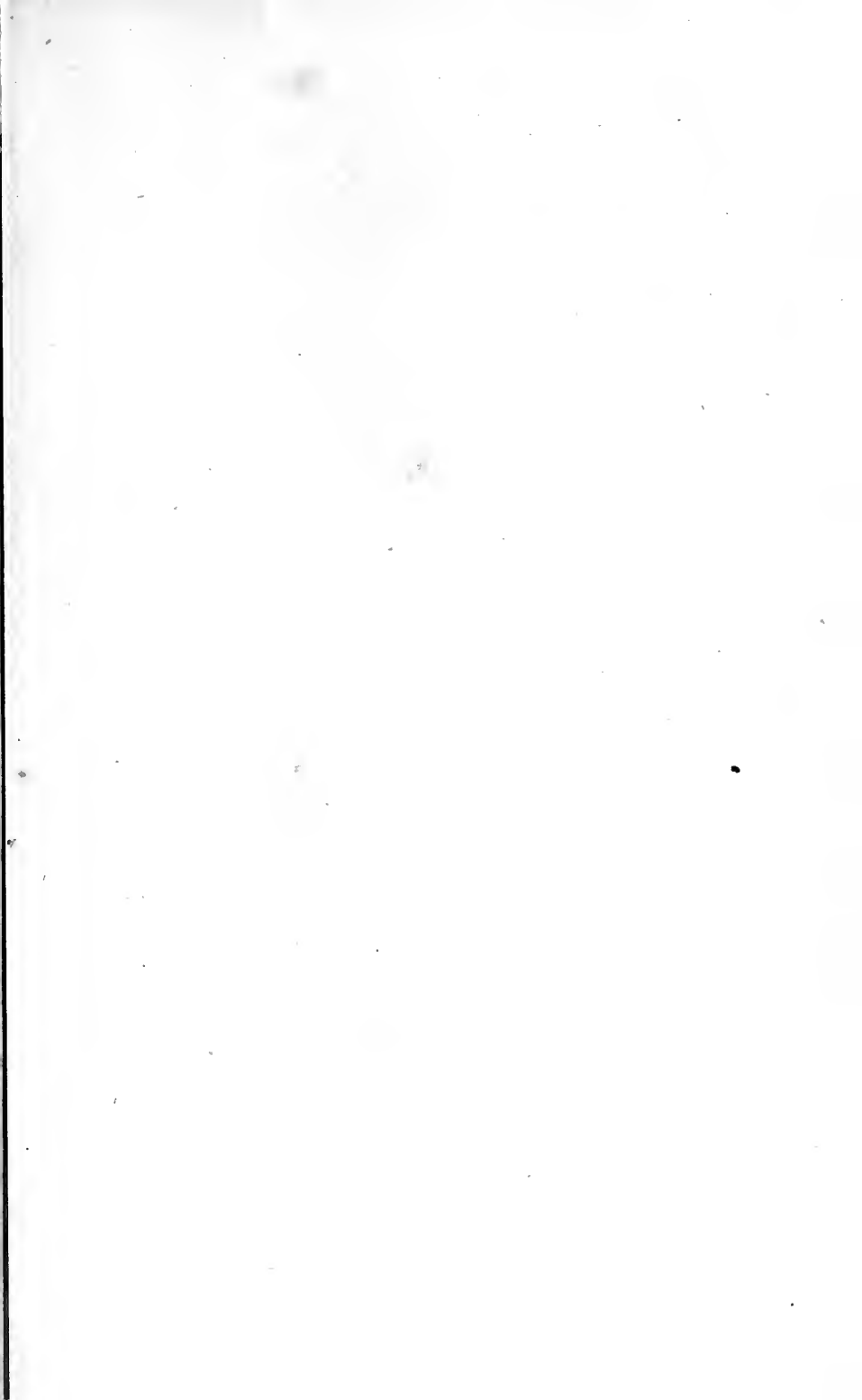
'Tis all a plot—and look! each great Grandee,
Who died just now, stands jesting there at me.
Yon Moor, *Hemeya*, who late rav'd about,
And stamp'd and storm'd most awfully, no doubt,
Is simp'ring silyly there, to put me out!
Pescara, who could once *Florinda* scare,
Now chatters to her with the gayest air,
Forgetting she's a corpse; and, on my life,
By that gay air, forgetting she's his wife!
Fierce *Malec* scowls at me, as if, forsooth,
He thought me Miss *Florinda*, not Miss Booth;
And e'en *Florinda*—ay, Ma'am, you may frown—
Who late fell poison'd on the carpet down,
Looks not at her dead Moor, but dusty gown:

EPILOGUE.

Nay, now while I expose her, turns round speedy,
And to *Pescara* cries—" Did you hear that, Macready ?"
Say, damsels, who beheld her fate, have ye
Love warm enough to go so far as she ?
She went into the other world, I ween,—
Ye would just go so far as—Gretna-Green !
Yet, love too fervent freezes in a trice,
As water boil'd will soonest turn to ice.
Not so with you—You first inquire, approve,
And, after, fall judiciously in love ;
For, if an elder brother have th' estate,
The younger, faultless otherwise, you hate, }
For that vile crime—of being born too late !
But when you wed, these transient follies flown,
Leave constancy, love, honour, all your own !
Home, stranger, friend, you solace, charm, endear ;
And now 'tis yours our trembling hopes to cheer !
Support that sex, too, who to-night are scorn'd,
For mark—one only fair our stage adorn'd.
The world's a stage ; and when one only fair,
Call'd *Eve*, was on it, sad things happen'd there :—
That stage a serpent ruin'd ; he could hiss ;
Then, ladies, let not serpents ruin this.
And, if to us you owe a single tear,
Now give your smiles to bless our efforts here.









PH Maturin, Charles Robert
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