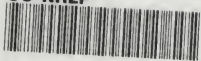
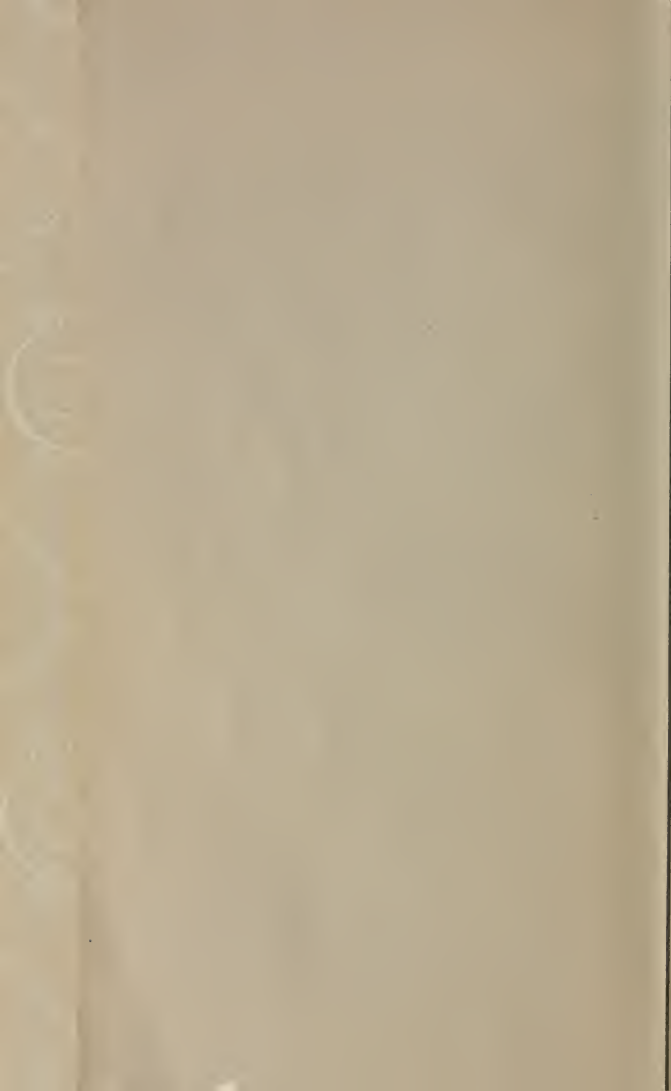



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DEMETRIUS,

THE IMPOSTOR;

A TRAGEDY.



BY

ALEXANDER SOUMAROKOVE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN.

LONDON:

Printed by J. Nichols and Son, Red Lion Passage, Fleet Street;
FOR J. BOOTH, 14, DUKE STREET, PORTLAND PLACE.

1806.



ADVERTISEMENT.

ALEXANDER Soumarokove, the Father of the Russian Theatre, and its first Dramatic Poet, was born at Moscow in the year 1727; and died in 1777, at the age of 50. He was contemporary with the celebrated Lomonossove, so justly styled "The Pindar of Russia." These two rival sons of Apollo (the art of Poetry having been very little known before their time) were the first, and are considered the best, of the Russian Poets. They formed, or rather created the language, and, with a power almost magic, displayed its wonderful energy, amazing capability, grace, and enchanting melody. The pathetic strains of the Tragic Muse in the one, and the daring flights of the Heroic in the other, broke forth on a sudden, and astonished the age. Emerging as it were from the regions of ice, they shone forth like two meteors, piercing through the native darkness of the clime, and exposing at once

the absurdity of ascribing great talents to the influence of a climate.

Soumarokove melted the heart with the softness of Racine; Lomonossove shook the soul with the thunder of Pindar. Such is the harmony of language, the sublimity of thought, the ever-flowing majesty of style, the awfulness of imagery, and solemn energy of expression, in the latter, that, were it possible to transfer them to another language, it would appear, that Europe cannot boast of a Poet who excelled him, and that there are few capable even of approaching him.

The works of Soumarokove, which form at present several volumes, have been honoured with the most flattering approbation of the public. Whether in Tragedy or in Comedy, his genius still led him to fame. As a dramatic writer, whatever may be the degree of his merit, when judged by impartial and discerning posterity; and however he may be supposed to owe, in some measure, his reputation to that indulgence, which is always shewn in favour of a first attempt; he certainly merited the title bestowed upon him, since the Russian Theatre owed to him its origin, and its existence.

Be this as it may, the Translator, by the present undertaking, had in view, to satisfy the curiosity of the English public, and to afford it an opportunity of deciding, in some measure, upon the deserts of an Author, hitherto known only by name and reputation. He thinks, however, it is his duty to state, that the choice of the Tragedy presented here, is owing more to chance than to any conviction of its being the Author's master-piece.

Soumarokove was a strict observer of the rules laid down by the Ancients, and a great lover of unity and simplicity. He maintained, with Racine (a poet whom he most admired, and endeavoured to imitate), that he, who, in one single event, important enough to become the subject of a Tragedy, cannot find matter enough to supply five acts, wants genius, and the power of invention. For it is much easier to fill up the space of a drama, by a number and variety of far-fetched, or supernatural incidents, no ways relating to the main plot, than by a simple and uniform connection of one particular event, or transaction, which must be confined within certain limits of time.

Most of Soumarokove's plays are founded upon the events of the Russian History; and such is the Tragedy of Demetrius the Impostor. The history of this bold adventurer, such as it is, or is supposed to be, is expressed in the first act, with great accuracy and precision. In exposing the character of the tyrant, unnatural* and monstrous as it needs must appear, Soumarokove has strictly adhered to historic truth; he has not availed himself of the privileges of a Poet, but has followed a great example,—

Not to extenuate;
Nor set down aught in malice!

SHAKSPEARE'S *Othello*.

To a generous People, celebrated for their benignity to Foreigners occasionally residing amongst them, and for liberal indulgence to their own Dramatic Authors, the Trans-

* Mr. Levesque, in his History of Russia, in opposition to all the Russian Historians, affirms, that the reign of Demetrius was the most humane and benevolent, and doubts even the fact of the Imposture: but, independent of different traditions, it is well known, that Soumarokoff had examined attentively, the records of the reign of Demetrius in the archives of the empire, and undoubtedly formed his judgment upon the result of his own enquiries.

lator submits the following scenes ; in humble expectation of public encouragement (even should they appear to have no higher merit), in consideration of its being the first attempt to present to British readers, a literary novelty—a Russian Tragedy, in a British dress.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M E N.

DEMETRIUS, the Impostor.

SHOUSKY, a Russian Nobleman.

GEORGIUS, Prince of Galitz.

PARMEN, Confident of Demetrius.

Captain of the Guards, Grandees, Soldiers, &c.

W O M E N.

KSCENIA, Daughter to Shousky.

Attendants, &c.

SCENE—KREMLE*, in the Royal Palace.

* The Fortrefs of Moscow.

D E M E T R I U S.

ACT I

SCENE I.

D E M E T R I U S *and* P A R M E N .*Parmen,*

MY gracious liege! Thirty days have thy astonished subjects beheld thee sad and dejected, amidst the splendours of the throne; and so long has thy faithful Parmen been the silent observer of thy inward struggles. Honoured with thy august confidence, let him no longer be ignorant of that hidden source, from whence thy brooding mind draws the subtle venom of deep-secreted anguish, and imbibes those malignant vapours, which seem to blast thy just unfolded glory in its liveliest bloom. Surely some secret, potent grief overwhelms thy mighty soul! What ails Demetrius? What forrows poison his felicity? Does his fatiated eye survey no longer with delight, the dazzling charms of the diadem; or is his present state embittered by the remembrance of the past? Mighty monarch! now,
that

that thy new career of majesty has commenced; that thy lawful inheritance, usurped by the perfidious Godunoff, has been restored, and the base attempts of that traitor, to hurl thee prematurely into the grave, frustrated;—now that propitious Fate has rescued thee from the grasp of Death, and, proclaiming thy right, placed thee on thy father's throne;—what is there still wanting to gratify thy wishes? Or, what new calamities, what fresh disasters?

Demetrius is guilty

Dem. Tormenting furies prey on my bleeding heart! They gnaw my entrails; they drain my vital blood! All, all, is hell within! Can inward agony be concealed, under the feigned smile of calm serenity? No! The wicked soul enjoys no peace. There is no relief, no tranquillity, for the conscious guilty!

Par. Alas! tis true;—thou hast indulged the utmost excesses of cruelty: many of thy subjects expiring under tortures, and the whole Realm distracted by proscriptions, exile, and the persecution of innocence;—laws, human and divine, trampled upon;—the most sacred duties, and the dearest interests of mankind, shamefully disregarded;—dishonour and disgrace heaped upon this unhappy country;—these are the trophies, the sanguinary omens, of an inauspicious reign. This city, once so fair and beautiful, has now become a gloomy prison, the dismal dungeon of the unfortunate, whose only crimes were

noble

noble dignity of soul, integrity, and conspicuous virtue. The flower of Russia, her noblest progeny, are excluded, disdainfully, from thy presence; while strangers supplant them in their exalted and most favourite offices; while the proud ostentatious Poles are insultingly admitted the only guardians of thy throne. Destruction threatens the Church, and the whole Empire is on the verge of falling under the oppressive yoke of Rome. Oh! if Nature rebels within thee; if thou art swayed solely by the malignancy of thy evil genius; rouse thy better spirit, subdue thyself, and be a Father to thy People!

Dem. My solemn oath to CLEMENT, the Sovereign Pontiff, binds me irrevocably to the Roman faith. I owe much, nay, every thing, to the friendly services of Poland. Russia, therefore, unless she submits to pay homage to the holy See, can have no claim to my favours.

Par. Methinks, a man, at most, is but a man; nor can perverted doctrine make him more: a doctrine, whose sanctified imposture feeds hypocrites, awes the credulous, and thrives with the spoils of ignorance beguiled; a doctrine, which the Fathers of our Church have nobly disclaimed, and, in disclaiming, have justly gloried. Great Britain, Holland, half the German States, have shaken off this yoke of stupid credulity, and blind superstition. They have unravelled this web, this intricate maze,
of

antagonistic perhaps against Catholicism
of the designing priesthood; and the time is fast approaching, when all Europe, unshackled from her fears, and restored to religious freedom, will hurl the ambitious Pontiff from his usurped throne; no longer the idol of misguided worship; no longer a God in the sphere of mortals; nor a self-erected Colossus, soaring above mankind, and presumptuously overleaping the limits of humanity.

Dem. Audacious man, forbear! curb thy licentious tongue! He, whom thy insulting speech assails thus impiously, is a sacred luminary, whose orb, resplendent with refulgent rays, even the mightiest of our earthly potentates behold with awful reverence.

Par. Not all his disciples submit by choice to his government. Many are compelled to it by force. In the eye of reason, he is but a Patriarch; no God, no Judge, no Sovereign of the World. Thinks he, that men want judgment and understanding to reflect on the true God?

Dem. In reasoning thus, thou dost but waste thy words. There is no alternative between reason and religion. To follow wisdom is to stray from heaven. It flatters, but it soon betrays to misery.

Par. Can the Almighty be averse to wisdom, of which he is the fountain-head? That wisdom, which, first engendered in himself, planned the
grand

grand creation of the world; which to a shapeless mass gave symmetry and matchless beauty; endued with a living soul the cold and lifeless clay; and displayed, in most transcendent order, this majestic universe! Can that wisdom be reprobated, which shines, sublimely conspicuous, in the works of the Supreme? Or must we condemn in ourselves, what in Him we cannot but love and adore?

Dem. To man, the wisdom of God is incomprehensible!

Par. Then it is equally so to your Pontiff. Though the human mind is doomed to dwell in narrow limits, yet it is not precluded from improving, by contemplating the features of divinity imprinted on the face of Nature. Guided by the unerring torch of Truth, and aided by mature reflection, it will soon arrive at that degree of knowledge, which the spiritual monopolist vain would wrest from mankind; and fix, with all the pompous machinery of craft, in the ostentatious phantom of a Pope.

Dem. Thy tongue profane, will lead thee to everlasting damnation.

Par. I fear it not: I might, were I a tyrant.

Dem. Hold! no more!—And what if my heart delights in deeds of cruelty?

Par.

Par. Methinks, thou shouldst forego the vicious course.

Dem. Impossible. Demetrius cannot, will not change himself, to please the slave. The prostrate Realm shall kiss the holy Pontiff's feet; else, shall its name, its splendour, and its high renown, be sunk in dark oblivion. My hand shall, by force, extort submission. So wills the monarch; and what he wills, who can, who dares oppose?

Par. Thou venturest, heedless, on a stormy sea, where, whilst thou meditatest the ruin of Moskow's sons, thy vengeful fate flies on the wind, impels the sail, and wafts thee, rapid, to thy own disastrous end. Thy unsteady throne doth shake, and the crown already totters on thy head. *Adieu*

Dem. High-raised, I scorn the clamour of the abject populace; and, in despite, I will persist in my despotic rule. Aversion and hatred are the fruits which this pernicious clime bears for me; aversion, then, and hatred, will I breed in turn. Can I bestow my affections, where I am detested? No. Let me, at least, have the consolation of reigning, to the terror and consternation of the race I abhor. Till they are extirpated, or reduced to the most abject slavery; till my extensive domains are lorded over by the Poles, and peopled with strangers; till then, my impatient soul will languish, distasteful of
the

the comforts of the crown; nor will it then, though satiated, be at rest, unless it obtains its last, its fondest wish. For, be it known to thee, Parmen, that I have doubly to suffer. Beside the agonizing pangs of conscience, I have to endure the torments of love, irresistible love, for Ksœnia.

Par. Ksœnia has a lover, and you a wife.

Dem. Parmen; thee have I chosen for my friend, the sole partner of my secret thoughts. Mark me, then. There are means;—there are such things as poison, to rid me of the irksome yoke.

Par. I shudder at the thought!

Dem. It is because thou art one of Nature's blunders. By mistake she made a man, where she designed a woman.

Par. My soul recoils with horror!

Dem. But mine is proof against it. Set it to murder, to things e'er so atrocious, and thou wilt never find it shrink. It courteth scenes of blood. It grows and lives on deeds of cruelty.

Par. Consider thy consort's innocence and virtue.

Dem. Truth must be silent before a monarch. It is not truth, but I that govern here. My power is law,

law, and my passions are my laws. He is not a monarch, but a slave, who would renounce his pleasures merely to gratify the vulgar notions of propriety and justice. Where is the privilege of a king, if he is to submit to rules, made only for slaves? What benefit could he reap from all his cares for the public welfare, were he reduced to a level with his subjects, to the same censure, and harsh condemnation?

Par. (aside) Heavens! let me be the instrument of saving a royal, innocent life!—(*To Demetrius*) This one deed will for ever exclude thee from the presence of God!

Dem. O Clements! if I may enter the kingdom of heaven, where is the man that shall undergo those dreadful and endless torments, which shake the very soul with horror!

SCENE II.

DEMETRIUS, PARMEN, and Captain of the Guards.

Captain. Mighty sovereign! the spirit of revolt spreads like a huge torrent through thy vast domains. Tumultuous, like the foaming waves, the people rise in arms; they rave, they threaten, and, with unreserved audacity, proclaim their traiterous designs, and their abhorrence of thy power.

Dem.

Dem. I shall soon crush the despicable herd of slaves! What is it their licentious tongue presumes to utter?

Captain. I cannot; I dare not repeat it.

Dem. Proceed; I know how to chastise their insolence.

Captain. They say thou art not of royal descent. Demetrius, the prince, whose name and person, like an impostor, thou hast assumed, was slain, and is buried in Oulitz. They call thee "Obrepieve," and thus relate thy history: Thou hast been a monk; thou hast fled from a convent; taken refuge in Poland; imposed there, on thy father-in-law and thy present consort, under the assumed name of the deceased prince; and still continuing to impose, thou hast at length obtained, through their aid, the royal dignity. They add, that the safety of the state is endangered by thy innovations and thy indulgence to the treacherous Poles: that thou art the protector of the Western church; the abettor of heresy and impiety; a foe to Moskow; an enemy to Russia, and a dreadful scourge of thy subjects.

Dem. Redouble the guard; summon my faithful Poles; place them on the watch. My soul burns within; I can no longer listen to the monstrous tale.

Where is Shoufky ? bring him hither ; conduct him and his daughter instantly to my presence.

S C E N E III.

DEMETRIUS *and* PARMEN.

Par. Since thou wert decreed by fate to reign, it is no longer birth, but actions befitting the royal dignity, that can alone support the basis of thy throne. Were thy reign propitious and upright, the people, whether thou beest the true Demetrius or not, would bless—would adore thee !

Dem. Shoufky is at the bottom of this conspiracy. I see—I read it in his countenance. If I fail to make this foe, my friend, this very day shall be his last. The grave which is open for him, shall also close upon his daughter !

Par. My blood freezes ! What ? her, for whom thou professest unbounded love and admiration ?

Dem. From love, which meets not a return, to revenge the passage is rapid, in a mind unused to controul. Should Ksœnia disregard this maxim, her blooming roses shall fade, shall drop unheeded into the grave, and yield their last perfumes to midnight shades and all-devouring time. To oppose
my

my will, is sacrilegiously to trample upon the high and sacred prerogatives of a rightful sovereign.

SCENE IV.

DEMETRIUS, PARMEN, SHOUSKY, and KSCENIA.

Dem. The bold rebellion of the outrageous mob has reached my ears; who are their secret agents and instigators has also come to my knowledge. They are the nobles of Moskow. It is they who endanger the safety of my throne.

Shou. Nothing of moment can be apprehended from the murmurs of the rabble. Their clamour is but an empty sound dispersed by the slightest breath of Heaven. It will soon vanish,—

Dem. Hold! Thy mysterious conduct is no longer proof against my penetration. It is clear; I see it plain; thou aspirest to the possession of my throne!

Shou. To reign in this glorious clime is a chimaera too distant from my thoughts—too distant even from my dreams. Thou art our lawful sovereign, the legitimate offspring of the late beloved monarch. Thou art our illustrious prince, crowned solemnly in the face of God and the people, and vested with the sceptre by the unanimous sanction

of both. It is the perverse Godunoff on whom the old and the young vent their eternal curses. Thou art beloved. Thou art severe, because thou art just; yet not more so than was thy royal father. None but the wicked complain of thee; the virtuous adore thee; thy apparent cruelty is necessity, which done away, thy mercy and benevolence will resume their ordinary channel!

Dem. Mark me! I am not to be duped by smooth and flattering speeches. Thy looks and thy words do but ill disguise thy thoughts. If thou wouldst be a friend, prove thyself such!

Shou. I am thy faithful servant.

Dem. Parmen, leave us.

SCENE V.

DEMETRIUS, SHOUSKY, and KSCENIA.

Dem. I will have proofs—speedy and unequivocal proofs of thy attachment! Weigh my proposal attentively, and answer decisively. My heart burns fiercely with love! My whole blood is chafed by its subtle and penetrating flame! Thou alone canst quench it! In Kscenia thou holdest both my remedy and the pledge of thy fealty. Give me her hand!

Ksc.

Ksæ. My hand ?

Shou. Think of the Queen !

Dem. She is of the Roman faith ! A modest virgin of Russian birth, brought up in the religion of her country, will, with greater propriety and dignity, share the throne of the Russian monarch.

Ksæ. My heart has been long united to another.

Dem. Dost thou then refuse me ?

Ksæ. The dazzling splendour of the crown ; the sovereignty of the world ; the possession of all that is most precious in human estimation, cannot swerve me from my faith, nor shake my constancy. The flame that glows within my bosom is chaste, and pure as Heaven's light. No power on earth can ever extinguish it ! It warms my frame, it expands my soul, and it absorbs my senses. No one but Georgius shall ever dwell in this faithful and devoted heart !

Dem. Reflect that death can instantly, in both of you, annihilate this flame,

Ksæ. Should it be so, we must forget each other. Till then, we will preserve our love and faith perfect and unfulled,

Dem.

Dem. Art thou conscious to whom thou repliest? Has torture, anguish, death, nothing to dismay thee?

Ksæ. Nothing!

Dem. Well then. 'Tis done. I am resolved. Tremble at the sufferings that await thee! Welcome, if thou canst, thy dreadful fate! Not a particle—not an atom of thee shall be spared. I call Heaven to witness, my revenge is just. Oh that I could but torment, and still keep life within her! I would rend Ksœnia's heart! I would revel in her blood! I would try her with perpetual agonies! I would conjure up from Heaven, Earth, and Hell, everlasting torments for her soul!

Shou. Gracious liege, urge not so hastily thy vengeance! suspend awhile thy dreadful indignation! Dismiss thy anger, I beseech thee; and, since her form is pleasing in thine eyes, let the father answer for the rest. The wayward spirit of petulance has dwelt in her from her infancy. Commit her to my care; I am best acquainted with the temper of her mind; I know best how to reason with her, and doubt not of soothing her into compliance.

Ksæ. My honour I will preserve inviolable to the grave. Vain will be thy admonition—vain! since, forgetful of a parent's duty, thou undertakest to make thy daughter faithless! to stain her spotless

name with dishonour, and plunge her headlong into a gulph of despair!

Shou. Trust me, my liege, I shall keep my word. I shall persuade her into reason, and subdue her obstinacy. Till then I solicit thy forbearance.

Dem. Take her; and remember that I expect every thing from the authority and influence of a father.

Ksæ. Imagine not I can ever be thine!

SCENE VI.

SHOUSKY and KSCENIA.

Shou. Justice and Vengeance, arise to crush this merciless tyrant! Just Heaven, be propitious to the designs of Shousky! behold my actions with complacence, and the monster shall no longer tyrannize over this afflicted country!

Ksæ. How's this, my father? just now you held a different language to the tyrant.

Shou. Think not I would disclose my real thoughts to him. Thy inexperience, and youthful mind wrapt up in love; thy soul absorbed in one object; and thy words and actions directed solely by that
 most

most powerful of passions, have made thee blind to all the considerations of caution and prudence. The way to happiness and the refined luxuries of the soul, is not, at all times, to be pursued by exposing the heart to open and unobstructed view. Dissimulation and disguise are often indispensable. When we have to deal with a lawless and inexorable tyrant—a tyrant into whose grasping and inflexible power we are pitilessly delivered up; then it is not the time for openness and sincerity. One word of an unfeigned sentiment may prove fatal. Where Fraud and Imposture hold a sovereign sway, Truth, their eternal enemy, cannot speak without offence. To dissemble, or chain the tongue in silence, is the only sad alternative left for her adoption. When the mask is once taken off, the chains of tyranny loosened, and the people gathering breath and struggling against oppression—then is the time for her to make a bold and decisive appeal!—Merciful God! speed this thrice-blessed-time! Bring us to the longed-for moment of deliverance, freedom, and peace!

Kfæ. The tyrant threatens my life,

Shou. Simulation, therefore, is thy safest course. Disguise thy sentiments as much as thou canst; give him hopes; invent delays and excuses; soothe and lull his savage spirit with the feigned voice of love; and let the sighs of a lover cool, from time to time,

his

his raging fury. The power of love is irresistible, The most obdurate outcasts of nature submit to its impulse; the lion, the tiger, the subtle serpent, even these with eagerness obey its imperious dictates. The most insensible among the savage race, tempered into mildness, and divested of their native ferocity, yield to its instinct, and come to sacrifice at its everlasting shrine.

Kfæ. Crocodiles, basilisks, even stones of flint, are not half so inflexible as this unfeeling tyrant.

Shou. Banish such thoughts! keep thy mind unharrassed and free from such destructive apprehensions. Arm thyself against despair. Remember, the safety of thy father, thy lover, and thy whole country, depends upon thy conduct.

Kfæ. I know it, dear father. I am fully sensible of this great truth; yet I fear my weakness. I fear, alas! the task is too great for my feeble spirits.—Gracious Heaven, save us from peril! deliver our dear oppressed country from the galling yoke of abhorred tyranny.

END OF ACT I.

ACT

ACT II,

SCENE I.

GEORGIUS *and* KSCENIA.

Georgius.

AND am I come to this? must I belie myself, and utter what my thoughts disown? Thus it is that an honest man becomes a hypocrite, when violence fills the throne, and maddened fury supercedes the laws.

Ksæ. How unlike—how blessed must be that monarch, whose commands are acts of kindness, and who delights in deeds of mercy; whose power extends not to deprive the mind of her genuine freedom; whose virtues are an ornament to his throne; whose glory and greatness consists in the welfare of his people; and whose justly-exercised authority is dreaded by none but the vicious and the guilty!

Geor. Poor deserted *Kremle*, the silent witness of persecuted virtue, even thou seemest to mourn thy woeful and deplorable state! Thy mossy aged walls seem to shake with horror at the sad devastation

tion

tion around thee. How desolate a scene! Nature's bountiful riches, hitherto gay and radiant on the plains of Moskow, are withered and despoiled. The sporting gambols of the heavenly rays, the emblem of mirth, content, and innocence, seem now to sink in dark and endless night. Thick and unwieldy clouds of suddenly-emerging vapours overhang, in ominous suspence, this drooping city. Scarcely able to uphold her tottering head, she sees her squares forsaken; her habitations deserted; her children torn from her embraces, and led lawlessly to execution. The solemn bell, hitherto devotion's sacred monitor, seems now to mimic the groans of her expiring victims, and to announce the approaching fall of her beloved church;—she hears it, and her power fails her. In vain she looks for succour; in vain she pleads against the usurpation of Rome; her tears avail not; she trembles and sinks into despair. The cruel and relentless Clement has already devoted her to the wretched fate, deplorably wretched, of the new world. His pernicious tongue has already proclaimed Heaven's high reward, to all who will rise for her destruction, who will imbrue their impious hands in her unfulled blood.—O Father of Heaven! avert these dreadful evils! Save our unhappy country—save it from being a prey to bigotry and the cruelty of religious enthusiasm! Cut off that monster of Popish superstition, which, with the cross in one hand, and the dagger in the other, overran the vast territories of the new world; drenched the earth in
the

the blood of a guiltless race; perpetrated the most horrid acts of ravage, torture, and massacre; and strewed with mangled bodies, the tracks of his bloody career. All-ruling Providence! let not Moskow be a second victim to this destructive fiend, engendered in the selfishness, the base artifices, and the sanguinary ambition of Rome!

K/w. Whatever befalls us, Ksœnia's constancy will remain ever unimpaired. All the efforts of malicious power; all the horrors of provoked cruelty; Demetrius! Clement!—all that is most dreadful to my thoughts, my love for thee will meet with undaunted fortitude. Since there is no redress—since the tyrant's will is his only law, let him do his worst. The stubborn Caucasus gave him birth; Hircania's savage milk nourished his flinty heart. Tutored by savages, cast up from hell to scourge mankind, still I will defy him. Let me only hope, thou Supreme and Merciful Being, that thou wilt preserve our dear country from the rapacious power of the insidious and aspiring heretic! O let not this usurper of thy divine authority, with the slavish arms of his bigoted wretches, prevail over a people, hitherto guided by the genuine emanation of thy heavenly light! Permit not the profanation of thy sacred altars by his iniquitous and sacrilegious bands! Protect thy temples and thy patriarchs, who daily present thee the offerings of thy pious race! Hurl destruction on the tyrant, who, in league with Rome,
rebels

rebels against thy sacred will, and pours showers of misery upon this desolated clime! People of Russia! arise—awake to the voice of vengeance! Pluck the wreath of royalty from the usurper's head! Wrench the sceptre from the barbarous hand that oppresses you! Crush the monster who exults in your sufferings, and give the crown to him who most deserves, yet least desires it; to him who would have his power subjected to law and justice, and not govern by caprice and violence;—to him whose views and actions would solely tend to fix the happiness of his people, and not to gratify his lawless wishes. To him who, anointed and vested with the diadem, would act as behoves the sacred and awful vicegerent of the King of Kings. Alas! were we blessed with such a monarch, Kscœnia would not have been doomed to suffer, and to be torn from all that is dear to her. She might——

SCENE II.

DEMETRIUS, GEORGIUS, and KSCœNIA.

Dem. Repels, crawling upon the earth in low obscurity, bow to the will of your monarch! Respect it; it is the will of Heaven! Georgius, thou hast presumed too much in thy views upon this Princess;—she is mine. It is her superior destiny to be so. Hear me! I forbid thee, under pain of death,

to

to think of her, except with the respect due to the consort of thy sovereign.

Geor. I murmur not.—I obey!

Ksæ. I submit, my liege.

Dem. To-morrow, then, I shall clasp thee in these arms.

Ksæ. A mind long accustomed to doat upon one object, is not so easily reconciled to a speedy union with another. Great as is the power of a monarch, that of love is no less so. To relinquish what has been so dear, and pluck from the heart, at once, the deep-rooted passion, is more than human strength can effect. Allow me, Sire, a time, in which the violence of past affection subsiding, I may learn how to forget Georgius, and heal the still bleeding wounds, of my heart. What pleasure can it be to see me at the altar in tears; expiring perhaps at the very moment of pronouncing the solemn oath of eternal fidelity?

Dem. Stifle this degrading passion;—renounce it, or Georgius is no more! His life is on a cast;—he dies a victim unworthy of a monarch's wrath. Can this worm—this insignificant being stand in competition with the crowned head of Demetrius?

Geor. I have submitted too much.

Ksæ.

Ksæ. Restrain thy indignation.

Geor. I can bear it no longer.

Ksæ. My prince!

Dem. My vengeance is on the wing. Wretch, that darest to abuse my clemency, thy doom is fixed. Death's devouring jaws already open for thee. Who waits there? (*Guards enter.*) Seize that traitor!

Geor. Prepare thy torments, tyrant, I am ready to endure them, since it is my fate to fall into thy barbarous hands. Since thy thirst of blood is not quenched yet with the torrent that flows incessantly from the veins of this bleeding country—Villain! Usurper! Murderer! drink mine!—drink it, till it burst thy hideous trunk. Kill, destroy, riot in wanton cruelty, till Heaven's just vengeance overtakes thee, and sinks thee ten thousand fathoms deeper than the low and abject den of misery, from which, like a villain—like an Impostor, thou hast suddenly vaulted into the sacred seat of majesty.

Dem. Away with him to prison.

SCENE III.

DEMETRIUS and KSCENIA.

Ksæ. Rack me—torture me, barbarian! summon all thy strength of cruelty! waste on me all the
stores

stores of torments, hoarded in thy blood-thirsty mind! I curse thee; I execrate thee; I pray for thy destruction! O God, that see'st the horrid atrocities of this inhuman monster; that hearest incessantly the groans, the piercing cries extorted by his merciless fury; that alone canst measure the extent of my sufferings; deign to view them with pity! behold my tears! behold my heart corroded with sorrow! Lend an ear of compassion to the supplicating voice of misery! Strike the tyrant; and snatch my sinking soul from wretchedness and despair!

Dem. I shall soon grant thy prayers. Thou shalt soon be better acquainted with Demetrius! Georgius shall be torn to pieces—to ten thousand atoms. Thou shalt feast thy eyes on his scattered limbs, and read in them, the fate which my compassion has in reserve for thee.

Ksæ. To die on the scaffold by the side of Georgius, is more gratifying, more honourable, than to live and reign with Demetrius.

Dem. Thou shalt soon have that happiness. The flame for Georgius will no longer consume thee;—I will quench it with thy life. I will stand forth the ample avenger of insulted majesty.

Ksæ. I wait, impatient, for death. Thou sparest neither rank, nor birth; neither age, nor sex. To die,

die, therefore, I am prepared. This only will I prophecy to thy consternation: thy end is near; destruction hovers over thee; the daily appeal of the blood wantonly and barbarously shed by thee is too powerful for Heaven to suffer thee long upon the throne. The melting touch of pity never warmed thy soul! the dew of mercy never moistened thy parched heart; the groans of the people, the echoes of the very walls that enclose thee, are the infallible prognostics of thy approaching ruin. Thou threatenest me in vain; thy tortures strike no fear into me. Virtue is above fear. I despise them as much as I do the wretch that inflicts them. Lead me, tyrant, to execution!—Why thus slow in thy bloody purpose?

S C E N E IV.

DEMETRIUS, SHOUSKY, and KSCENIA.

Shou. Outrageous girl! whence is this disobedience—this glaring defiance of thy sovereign's authority?

Dem. Unexampled audacity! most daring insult to a monarch!. The world will scarcely credit the offence.

Shou. Is this the result of the advice I gave thee?

Kfæ. Driven to despair——

Shou. Worthless wretch, that darest to brave thy
Monarch! Away from my fight!

SCENE V.

DEMETRIUS and SHOUSKY.

Shou. My liege, before the Queen of Night displays her silver orb in the fields of Heaven, my daughter shall return to her duty and obedience.

Dem. The sweet persuasive voice of love pleads powerful in her behalf. Till now, I have not felt the full energy of my passion. My soul hitherto panted for glory, nor could the softer charms of love entice it to pursue them. It was enough that I imagined love to be the lot of vulgar and inferior souls. I placed my delight in majesty and splendor; my heart felt gratified when Russia trembled at my nod; when *Moskow* brightened up at my smile, and sunk into dejection at my frown! My soul danced with joy to see the rich, the nobles, the princes prostrate at my feet with awful expectation of my pleasure. Yet this very soul, proud and aspiring, is at length subdued. Love, in glorious triumph, has brought it to the common standard, and placed it on the level with its species. Bid thy daughter to
throw

throw herself at my feet ; and, should she be willing, with becoming obedience, to gratify my wishes, present her this ring, which, if accepted, shall become a pledge of her affections ; or if refused, a fatal messenger of her speedy death.

Shou. To disobey thee is to incense Heaven. Thy resolve is just, and Shousky is all submission. Our wishes and passions were given to us only to be subservient to the will of God, and to that of our Sovereign.

SCENE VI.

DEMETRIUS, PARMEN, and SHOUSKY.

Parm. The storm of revolt gathers afresh. The raging populace swells more and more. Pushed on by a fresh provocation, like the heavy clouds impelled by a sudden northern blast, they threaten to burst over thy head, and overwhelm thee in a deluge of mighty devastation. The imprisonment and condemnation of Georgius, reviving in memory thy past cruelties, has put the whole mass of citizens in commotion. It has roused the dormant spirit of redress ; kindled the spark of mutiny in the mind ; and spread through all ranks, the flames of fury and revenge. Thy peril is not less than thy greatness ; dangers besiege thee, and destruction hems thee in, on every side.

It is thus thou reapest, at length, the fruit of thy oppressive reign. Hadst thou had the happiness of thy people at heart, the very multitude that assail thy throne, would now range themselves around it, and protect it, at the hazard of their lives.

Shou. I will protect it still;—I will stem the torrent, and bring the incensed mob to the sense of their duty. My liege, rely upon Shousky!

Dem. Must I be reproached with cruelty, even while I endure Georgius living; while I behold the outrages of the populace, without bedewing the streets afresh with their treacherous blood? Is it cruelty that I should hug the very serpent that aims his venomous sting at my breast? Well—Be it so. Shousky, repair to the miscreants; be it your task to restore them to reason. Parmen, look to the watch;—let the guard be augmented.

SCENE VII.

DEMETRIUS *solus.*

I can withstand no longer the boding fears of my soul. In vain would I conceal the danger from myself. I feel my crown sits unsteady; the hand of Justice is ready to tear it from my head. Methinks the avenging Angel has armed all Nature to vent its curses

curse and reproaches on Demetrius! The towering Kremlé frowns dreadful, and seems as if its ponderous weight bent forward, ready to fall and crush me, its dire and mortal foe. The sacred temples seem as if they would uplift me to their spiry tops, and dash me on the hallowed stones beneath, which my destroying hand so often forced to bear its bleeding palpitating victims. Each countenance, each feature I behold proclaims I am a tyrant, who has undone, who has destroyed every source of human happiness. Within, without, and around Moskow, where'er I look, where'er I bend my steps, abhorrence of Demetrius universally prevails. All, all, conspire against me! I totter on the verge of an abyss—dark and fathomless! The veil of mortality falls off, and the dreaded prospect of Hell breaks suddenly on my sight. Methinks I behold the ghastly spectres grin!—I hear the dire yell of dæmons innumerable exulting at the approach of their new victim. Ah, where to look—which way to turn to avoid the dismal scene? shall I lift my eyes to Heaven! There, rest the souls of good, of righteous and illustrious kings. Enclosed in circlets bright of heavenly rays, they mix with angels, drink ambrosia, and soar aloft, like them, on the wings of light, elastic spirit. I dare not, cannot look that way. Despair and endless anguish is my hard-earned portion! living and after death incessant torments await me! I am no crowned monarch, but a wretch, a wicked wretch, renounced by God, cast off by men. I perish—yet why so late?
sooner ;

sooner; how many thousands had been saved!—but now—what?—I must away—I must fly from this detested spot! It is polluted by the presence of a tyrant, of a murderer!—There he is!—Where? I see no one; I am alone!—Alas! it is myself;—I am that tyrant and murderer. I would revenge—I would strike the villain to the heart! yet that villain is myself. Shall I pursue myself with hatred? No, 'tis impossible;—I love myself too well—I love myself, yet know not why. Even the earth I tread rises up against me. There is nothing living, nothing suffering, but what appeals to Heaven for vengeance! I live but for the misery of mankind, and my death is the only relief they are anxiously imploring. The humblest lot in life to me is enviable: even they who are oppressed with various calamities, with slavery and with grievous poverty, are permitted to enjoy that peace, that tranquillity, from which, though a monarch, I am for ever excluded. Must I then for ever suffer? must I pine and perish like a miserable wretch?—No;—since fraud and imposture have raised me to the throne, I will maintain them to the last. Let mankind hate me; let them persecute me; I will retort their hatred, and persecute in turn! I have lived, and I will die, a persevering tyrant!

END OF ACT II.

ACT

ACT III.

SCENE I.

SHOUSKY and PARMEN.

Parmen.

I HAVE endeavoured to appease the tyrant, and prevent the repetition of farther cruelties. My arguments have forced conviction upon his distracted mind, and Georgius is restored to life and freedom. As a friend and confident, my whole life should be devoted to his service, were he a better man, and a better king!—but as he is——

Shou. Demetrius's birth has raised him to the throne.

Par. Birth is nothing, where there are none of those distinguished talents which qualify one individual to govern a vast empire. Let him be *Obrepieve*, the monk; still, were he a good and worthy sovereign, he would deserve his exalted station. Let him be the issue of a Russian monarch; yet, if his actions do not come up to the standard of monarchical dignity, we cannot love him;—we cannot think of him as a
father,

father, and look up to him, as we ought, with filial affection. When a people find no relief from the throne; when Innocence pines away, overwhelmed with despair; widows and orphans are bathed in tears; and property, life, and honour are in danger—When bribery, flattery, corruption, and hypocrisy block up every access to redress, and mingle virtue and undistinguished merit in one loathsome groupe with vice and ignorance—When humanity suffers, and villainy sleeps in profound security, the glory of a monarch is a mere phantom—a mere illusion that vanishes like a dream. Empty praise is no sooner born than it expires;—that fame which is not warranted by the happiness of others, has no solidity, and, at most, is but a creature of chance, and a spurious offspring of fortune.

Shou. I am equally attached to the king and to the people.

Parm. Beware, Shousky! while I can only pray to Heaven, thou mayest save thy country. Remember that in doing so, thou wilt save thyself, Georgius, and thy only daughter.

SCENE II.

SHOUSKY *solus.*

Dissemblest thou or not, Demetrius shall perish.
He shall fall to rise no more! I will die, if such be
the

the decree of Heaven; yet I will raise against Demetrius a storm, that, sooner or later, shall overwhelm him. I will venture my life to save my country; and if it should be lost, I shall have another and better life in exchange—life immortal! Great is the hero who has triumphed over a mighty foe; yet he who rescues his country from the heavy yoke of oppression is infinitely greater. It is sweet and praiseworthy to die for one's country.

SCENE III.

SHOUSKY, GEORGIUS, and KSCENIA.

Shou. Once more, in hopes of forcing you to a reconciliation with your fate, the common destroyer of our peace desires a conference with you. Disgusting as are his proposals, you needs must seem to receive them with complacence. Above all, be careful that this advice may not a second time prove fruitless, through your inadvertency and imprudence. He that cannot temporize with necessity, and yield to the urgency of the times, is totally ignorant of the manners and customs of social life.

Geor. I am to blame. Youth and warmth of temper have betrayed me. My honour could not brook so insulting a language;—a keen sense of injury, that penetrated my whole frame, broke through

through all the barriers of cautious prudence. Unused to so harsh a treatment, and born with a spirit ill calculated to endure it, I was thunder-struck at the opprobrious terms disdainfully cast upon me. It was what I never expected, and was therefore less prepared to bear. Had not the dread of my Ksœnia being lost for ever bereft me of my reason, I should have plunged the dagger into the very heart of the cruel despot. Be assured, however, that for her sake, I will bear the worst of injuries. In as much as the insolent upstart is rash and insulting, Georgius shall be cautious and patient. After this, Ksœnia, need I say how much I love thee?

Ksœ. And I, my father, seeing Georgius condemned to suffer, could no longer dissemble with the tyrant. My patience fled, and my soul burst with agony; my tongue no longer obeyed me. Life without him was not worth preserving.—My prince, my Georgius! I live but in thee, and for thee alone. My joys, my treasures, and all earthly happiness centre in thee. There is no misery I would not endure—no sufferings I would not call blessings, if they purchased me the possession of thee;—there is no lot of life, however obscure and comfortless, that I would not think a happiness to share with thee. No tyrant—no torments can ever burst the chain that binds me to thee;—no power, however malicious, shall ever tear me from thy beloved arms.

Shou. Suppress these transports, and endeavour to stifle thy passion in the presence of the tyrant.

Geor. Heavens! should he tear her away from me!—should he force her to the altar! Such a sight would strike me with instant death. My blood curdles at the thought.—Impossible! It would burst a heart much firmer than mine.

Ksæ. Dismiss thy fears. Death is the guardian of my safety;—to him I would fly from the detestable sacrifice! If not in this world, at least in the grave we may hope to be united. Oh, my prince, it is my death that alarms thee, and not the tyrant's odious love.

Geor. O Ksænia, let me die alone! let me alone be the victim of cruelty and injustice! To behold thee expire—Heavens! the thought is insupportable. Dear, beloved Ksænia, any thing but that Georgius can bear. Live, dear object of my wishes! Commit thy chastity to Heaven, and be an angel on earth. The spirit of our church is not yet subdued, and thy vows to God will still protect thee from the tyrant. We have men—holy men, who, regardless of worldly danger, will oppose the heretic, and struggling gloriously, still dare to resist his usurping power.

Shou. God is merciful and just;—reign to him your cares and your sorrows, and rely firmly upon

his kind providence. Mean while, arm yourself with fortitude, and act as the advice I have given will direct you.

Kfæ. Thy wisdom, my father, shall be our guide.

SCENE IV.

GEORGIUS *and* KSCENIA.

Kfæ. Days of tears—days of sorrow, when will ye be over?

Geor. Days of woe, fly on; pass on swiftly, and return no more! Almighty love, cease to rage in my bosom!—cease to burn in my veins!—yield for a moment to dire necessity, and hide thy torch in the deepest recesses of my heart! Let not the emanation of thy flaming light betray once more the dear secret of my soul. One glance, alas!—one unguarded moment of the mutual interchange of tenderness, may prove our misery and utter destruction.

Kfæ. Dissemble, my fond eyes;—gaze not with rapture on Georgius!—Forego your wonted felicity, and aid me to deceive the tyrant! Moments of bliss—of happiness, past, yet dear—dear as the present misery is insupportable, keep away from my
memory,

memory, and haunt not my imagination! Let me not think of you, that my mind, unintruded by the remembrance of its past felicity, may, with more safety, go through the dreadful trial that awaits it!

Geor. O God, gracious God, deign to relieve my sufferings!

Kfœ. Deign to enumerate my sighs and my galling tears!

Geor. Pity my hard destiny! Take back my existence, or with the balm of thy heavenly mercy revive the growth of hope expiring in my bosom!—O Kfœnia, my constancy is as firm as my love is unextinguishable. Let fate strike, the blow cannot part us.—We will live and die together.

Kfœ. Kfœnia will welcome death with thee; she will joyfully, for thy sake, undergo all the torments of inventive cruelty. She loves thee more than life. This city, made odious by tyranny, is still dear to me—dear as paradise, because it contains thee. Every place in it seems full of thee; Nature's whole space without thee, would be one immense and dismal void to Kfœnia. I kiss the verdant grass that bends beneath thy feet. I do^est on the ground that bore thee, and gaze, enraptured, on the gliding streamlet, whose soft and gentle murmurs were mingled with the sweet melody of thy voice.

Geor.

Geor. The city, the adjacent plains, the neighbouring forest, the sparkling crystal descending from rocks and scattering his treasures beneath; the radiant glory of a summer's day; the awful darkness of majestic night; all, all present to me my Ksœnia. An age past with thee would appear to me but as one blessed moment of uninterrupted happiness. Thy power over me is sacred, uncontrollable, and lasting as the never-fading charms of thy heavenly mind.

Ksœ. My love for thee is as true, as constant, as the object that inspires it in merit and virtue is above all comparison.

SCENE V.

DEMETRIUS, GEORGIUS, and KSCENIA.

Dem. Came ye hither to pay obedience to my will?

Geor. Convinced by reflection, we come duly to offer our homage and submission.

Dem. In consideration of this, I pardon your past offences. But remember my authority cannot be abused with impunity;—should ye offend again, expect no mercy from Demetrius. Female weakness shrinks from the severity of justice; but manly, and above all, royal vengeance finds in it a source of superior

rior delight. It is the perfection of worldly happiness, that while thousands of worthless and ignoble lives languish in obscurity, a monarch by his sole authority can call forth, or annihilate them at pleasure.

Geor. The establishment of their welfare and happiness must certainly be a source of infinite gratification to him.

Dem. Their welfare is prejudicial to him. To enrich him, the people must toil in perpetual poverty; his joy and felicity is incompatible with theirs; they must weep to make him smile. The slave, before he works, must smart under the lash of strict and wholesome discipline.

Geor. Attachment, love, and proper laws are better calculated to excite his industry.

Dem. Of what use are laws where there is a power that can enact, or annul them at pleasure?

Geor. If such a power acts on the principle of Justice, it is best calculated to promote a people's happiness. To be thus governed is, thank Heaven, the happy lot of Russia! Where it exists not, unanimity is destroyed, and the love of virtue and honour is lost in general confusion. Men as insignificant—as insolent, start up, seize on the sovereign authority,
and

and trample with impunity upon the rights of their fellow-citizens. He who wishes his equals to hold in their hands the reins of government, is a foe to his country. Such a form of government has never been known in Russia. The supreme power, when no sovereign exists, is a heavy, multiplied burthen; it breeds as many oppressors as there are individuals blinded by ambition and endowed with talents. Woe to the country depending on their mercy! Cabals, intrigues, and party-diffentions desolate the people; injuries find no redress; truth mourns in silence, and the interest of the community is sacrificed to private revenge, and the base selfishness of a few self-created tyrants. Our country reposes happily under the auspices of monarchical government; and if the regal splendour is not maintained at the price of the people's misery; if the monarch's power is not oppressive to his subjects, they will bless him; and their posterity, contemplating his life with conscious pride, will pay the tribute of love and gratitude to his memory.

Dem. Tales like these besit a woman's ears;—they please me not! Whether Moskow smiles with content, or groans with anguish, it matters not. Demetrius lives not for the people, but the people for Demetrius. From the strain of thy discourse, thou wouldst fain persuade me to give up the princess.

Geor.

Geor. Truth is not weakened from being uttered under the influence of a virtuous passion. Surely, in this instance, I do not merit my sovereign's displeasure;—his will rules over me, but that will cannot command my passions; they are implanted by Nature, and she alone has the power of directing them.

Dem. There is nothing but what must and shall be subjected to my controul. All thou hast is mine. Prince as thou art, descended from the illustrious Constantine, before me thou art a mere atom—a mere nothing. All is God's and mine!

Geor. Am I not the owner of myself?

Dem. No. God and Demetrius claim thee;—thy whole is theirs. Thou hast nought of thy own.

Geor. May I call the soul, that inspires me, my own?

Dem. Thou dar'st not! God has given it to Demetrius.

Geor. Yet that same God has given to all his creatures, the privilege of property and freedom;—can they lawfully be deprived of them? A potentate may do what is unjust; but what is unjust, it can never make otherwise.

Dem. Cease thy impertinent loquacity; it grows troublesome.—It incommodes me. Repair, my princess, to the apartments assigned for thy reception. Thy attendants wait to conduct thee. To-morrow my hand shall lead thee, a bride, to the altar. Why those tears?

Kisæ. Grief overcomes me;—yet—I will obey; I will strive to conquer it. (*To Georgius.*) My prince, summon thy fortitude; subdue thy sorrow; and aid, second, by thy example, my feeble efforts! Adieu! imperious destiny demands this sacrifice!

S C E N E VI.

DEMETRIUS and GEORGIUS.

Dem. Thou but ill compliest with my wish;—why that mournful countenance?

Geor. A slight struggle, my liege.—It is over.

Dem. Thou turnest pale!

Geor. No. I am well—quite well. Quite composed; only a little affected at the parting—that is all! One cannot altogether resign what one has loved, without some trifling sensation of regret.

Dem.

Dem. It is culpable, nevertheless; none but crowned heads should give vent to their feelings;—they, being exalted above the rest of mortals, alone, may indulge them. Their passions alone may flow with the course of unrestrained freedom.

Geor. Whatever be the distance between sovereign and subject, they are equals under the sweet dominion of love. To deify man is an absurd flattery. The various avocations of life, the divers paths men pursue, are sometimes the accidental cause of one individual being raised to an immense height above another. Personal merit and splendid talents are often productive of such events;—still a monarch should be a father, and look upon his people as so many children committed to his care. Our life is short;—monarch and slave both must die. The toiling peasant and the mighty conqueror, both, sooner or later, must descend into the grave;—one is snatched from an humble cottage; the other from a magnificent palace. He that rules, and he that is ruled, are actuated by the same impulse of Nature—her laws admit of no distinction. The most renowned hero, as well as the meanest wretch, has his pangs and his struggles; in both, misery or happiness will produce pain or pleasure. Mighty sovereign, thy soul feels the power of love—so does mine! Thy royal breast is agitated by the tempest of passions—so is mine! God alone can know what I suffer, by this cruel separation;—to Him then, I shall look

for succour;—to Him alone, shall flow my tears and my secret prayers. Oh, that he would, in pity, stretch his all-powerful hand for my relief!—My lost, my lamented Kscœnia—alas, I might still preserve thee!

Dem. Moralize, pray, weep, grieve, implore God's protection—thou art at liberty to do it. It does my heart good to see thee bewail so bitterly, those charms, which, for ever lost to thee, are now in my possession.

SCENE VII.

GEORGIUS *solus.*

Disregardful of God—disdainful of man! rejoice, thou tyrant, in my sufferings! Triumph at the torments thy barbarity inflicts! 'Tis well—thy time is short. Thou doest well to profit by it. O God!—O Kscœnia!—Must I lose thee?—The very thought chills, like ice, my veins—it benumbs my senses; my strength fails me; my sight grows dim. Dismal darkness invades all nature. Poison drops from the brooding vapours above! Must I then perish?—Must I never behold my Kscœnia? O Sun, thou father of light, shall thy benignant rays infuse no joy into the wretched inhabitants of Moskow? Are they doomed never to greet thee, as thy morning
ray

ray dawns joyous upon the rest of the world, with responsive gladness and serenity? Shall thy penetrating eye never behold them freed from cruelty and oppression? Shall the peaceful waves that bathe the walls of this once blessed metropolis, never again resound with the joyful acclamations of a happy people? Shall I never again behold the time, in which Ksœnia hung on me with rapturous delight, while I feasted my soul on the charms of her beautiful angelic form? How long is this city a witness impiety, brutality, and the barbarous excesses of furious despotism? How long must the rage and malice of tyranny fill her streets with disgust and horror? How long are its palaces and temples to be bathed in innocent blood? How long must youthful beauty, the brightest ornament of Moskow, be a prey to lust and lawless desire? Oh, let me hope—let me think that peace and tranquillity will again revive in this desolated realm! Let me hope that Moskow, rescued from the iron hand which oppresses her, once more will rear her drooping head. That the people, no longer dreading the never-sleeping jealousy of the tyrant, will again enjoy the happiness of solid intercourse—again will taste the sweets of friendship and benevolence; and again possess the blessings of freedom, which is the kindest and the choicest gift of Heaven!

END OF ACT III.

ACT

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

DEMETRIUS *and* KSCENIA.*Demetrius.*

CHARMING Kscenia, why this gloomy countenance ; why this dejection—this apparent reluctance to comply with the sweet dictates of love ?—of love which, even now, invites us to the delicious banquet of its pure and heavenly delights. Let it console thee, beauteous princess, that thy husband, accustomed to the exercise of despotic rule, invites thee to share his throne for the charitable purpose of mitigating his severity, by thy mild and humane intercession. The unfortunate will find in thee, that mercy which my harsh and stubborn nature will not grant them. Thy pity will dry up the tears of affliction ! Like an administering angel thou wilt give relief and comfort, where my decrees produce misery and despondence. Thy compassion and generosity will be proportionate to my inflexibility. Shouldst thou fail in this virtuous and pleasing task—still, the assurance of a patroness, ready to console and

and relieve them, will be a valuable acquisition to those who are compelled to implore thy persuasive aid. Should their grievances remain unredressed, yet, while there is a prospect of relief, each complainant will bear his burthen without repining; and though every day adds to the weight, still he will cling to hope; think every succeeding toil the last, and expire under the sweet delusion. It is the nature of a low-born wretch to put up with *to-day*, in hopes of better fare to-morrow;—to-morrow comes, and brings fresh affliction;—still another *to-morrow* remains, and he rests satisfied. The world is depraved—every one in it lives for himself.—Of what import is it then to *Demetrius* that his subjects suffer? Virtue is the phantom of a disordered imagination;—every thing proves that it has no real existence. Whether I am a tyrant, or not, can make no difference. Inclination is my guide; it excites me to cruelty, and in exercising it, I seek my own gratification. Hell, that child of terror and superstition, whether it exists or not, does not appal me. To extirpate, therefore, a few mean wretches, is no more than to trample upon some obnoxious reptiles that may chance to crawl under my feet.

Kſa. It is justice to exterminate the wicked, but to confound the innocent with them is unjust and cruel. Without a proper distinction, where would be the use of rewards and punishments?

Dem.

Dem. All mankind are wicked ;—therefore ought to perish.

Ksæ. If so, art thou alone excepted ?

Dem. Were it not for self-love, Demetrius would long ago have destroyed Demetrius. Could I become two persons instead of one ; one self would rejoice at the sufferings of the other self ;—each would exult in the torments of the other, and both would feed on their own despair.

Ksæ. Admirable prospect for thy consort ! will that man spare his wife, who, but for necessity, would not spare himself ?

Dem. Certainly—since it depends upon herself to secure his favour, by cultivating his affection with the utmost ardour and assiduity ; by respecting him as a being superior to mortals, and revering in him the image of her God.

Ksæ. Removed as are monarchs to an immense distance from the rest of mankind—love makes that distance vanish. She, whom a monarch deigns to receive as his queen, however humble her lot, becomes his equal. If this please thee not, thou hadst better seek a bride of more noble birth, and more approximated to thy elevated rank.

Dem.

Dem. I seek a bride that is endowed with angelic beauty and celestial virtues—such as neither birth nor rank can bestow! Flowers spring up in deserts, as well as in cities. Once mine, thou must obey thy destiny; adore in me, thy husband and thy sovereign; and, by submission, seek to insure my love. Shouldst thou disregard this advice, dreadful will be the consequence!

Ksæ. Not so Georgius!—Generous sentiments and liberal discourse ever flow from his tongue.

Dem. Georgius thinks and speaks like a slave—
Demetrius like a monarch.

SCENE II.

DEMETRIUS, KSCENIA, and CAPTAIN of the GUARD.

Capt. Dread liege, the city teems with dismal news. Thy peace and security will vanish with the sun's setting ray; thy eyes will never again behold its radiant lustre. Certain as the day declines, danger advances! The approaching night portends ruin and perdition! *Ignatius** the patriarch, pro-

* A Greek by birth, and elevated to the dignity of Patriarch by Demetrius, for the purpose, as was supposed, of assisting him in subverting the Greek religion.

scribed as a heretic and supplanted by another, has already fled the impending destruction of the popular vengeance. The nobles and the people have sworn thy ruin; and this very night have fixed for the execution of their treasonable purpose. Thou hast no safety but in thy own resources. Beware, my liege, the crown is falling from thy head.

Dem. Let it! it shall crush the traitors in its fall.

Capt. The guards wait thy orders;—what are thy commands?

Dem. Valour is the word! Send Parmen hither—mount the watch!—Remember, this night admits of no repose!

SCENE III.

DEMETRIUS and KSCENIA.

Dem. These are the fruits of the fidelity of thy beloved princes.

Kscæ. Heaven, guard them! Can they be culpable for the misguided rage of the populace?

Dem. I know them both too well.—Retire!

SCENE

SCENE IV.

DEMETRIUS *and* PARMEN.

Dem. Do as I bid thee, and see my commands fulfilled. This dreadful night chills my soul with apprehensions! stiffening fear seizes forcibly on my nerves; I tremble—my heart beats convulsive. The torch of life decays within—where shall I fly? All rise against me; my throne totters! burning sulphur glows in my veins! vengeful fiends tear my guilty soul! God forsakes me! men shrink with horror at the sight of me! Traitor to my country; cruel scourge of mankind!—Nature shudders at me; and the vindictive arm of Heaven already wields its ponderous bolt to hurl destruction on my head!

Par. Persist not thus in harbouring black despair! The mercy of our God is greater than thy offences. | —

Dem. It is much greater than my ability to de-
serve it.]

Par. It requires no more than to obey the dictates of virtue.

Dem. They are not congenial to my mind. My heart finds the access to virtue insurmountable. There is no hope—no escaping! Heaven, earth, all is in the power of the irritated Deity. There is

no refuge left me! Oh, that some sudden blast would sweep me from the earth, or the keen flash of lightning pierce my distracted brain!—Yet hold!—There is a consolation still in my power.

Par. I hope it proceeds from conviction of the divine mercy. Would but thy reason once yield to truth, repentance would make consolation certain.

Dem. (*giving a paper.*) Peruse the contents, and see them fully carried into execution.

Par. Heavens! still bent on fresh atrocities?

Dem. Were my power equal to my will, I should spare neither age nor sex. The clergy, the citizens, and the nobles,—all should fall under the keen edge of my vengeance.

Par. Since it is thy positive will, I have only to obey.

Dem. Let Ksœnia with her father and Georgius be instantly brought hither.

SCENE V.

DEMETRIUS *solus.*

While the righteous soul, when departing, seeks its way back to Heaven;—mine sees no road but that

that which leads to the dark abode of the infernal regions. This night will be my last! What is horrible even in a dream, will appear then in reality. Farewell to all my greatness! A miserable death will at length deliver the wretched people from their detestable tyrant. Already the crimson hue tinges the sky;—the weary sun descends to rest, that he may again with fresh vigour pierce the fullen darkness of the retreating night!—Stay, thou bright luminary—ah, wait awhile! Let me still gaze on thee! Fear not to disappoint Nature! thy radiant form again, in the revolving hours, will cheer her! But I, alas, shall never more behold thee!

SCENE VI.

DEMETRIUS, SHOUSKY, and GEORGIUS.

Dem. Your plots and machinations I no longer doubt. Traitors, prepare for your doom!—Prepare for torture and execution!

Shou. Gracious sovereign!

Dem. Spare thy supplications.

Geor. Torn from Ksœnia, death is welcome to me—life has no charms for Georgius.

Shou.

Shou. O, grant me, my last request;—let me bid adieu to my daughter! let me breathe my last farewell on her lips, and I die content. It is for her alone that I tremble!

Dem. I mean it so, that your sufferings may strike the keener, and sink the deeper into your soul.

SCENE VII.

SHOUSKY and GEORGIUS.

Geor. Let us die nobly!—let us undaunted meet the stroke of death, and shew that our fortitude is no less than our devotion to our country!

Shou. Since it is the decree of Providence, Shousky cheerfully resigns his life!

SCENE VIII.

SHOUSKY, GEORGIUS, and KSCENIA.

Ksæ. At length the dreadful hour approaches! The fatal day is come of eternal separation! Oh cruel day!—Inhuman wretch!—To be parted thus,
to

to be snatched from each other by an accursed tyrant!—Human fortitude cannot support it.—My heart dies within me.—My frame sinks.—Succour me, gracious Heaven!

Shou. Thus does the tyrant crown thy bridal day!

Geor. Thus does he end my love for thee!

Ksœ. And dooms Ksœnia to everlasting wretchedness and despair!

Geor. Dear, beloved princess!

Shou. My comfort, my only daughter! I lose thee!

Geor. I part with thee for ever.

Shou. Pattern of virtue and excellence; delight of my days; prop of my declining years; my hope, my only solace!—In thee I lose my all. Nature has reared thee up to grace the age, to be an honour to thy family, a treasure to thy friends, the pride and ornament to thy sex! Oh, happy, happy would have been the princely youth that was to have possessed thee!

Geor. Dear, thrice blessed hope! thou art gone!

Ksœ. My father! my prince! dear objects of my love, duty, and affection! All my visions of happiness

ness vanish with you ! All that made my life dear to me ; all that busy fancy had pourtrayed of worldly bliss and felicity ; one unpropitious moment has blasted for ever ! Oh, wicked, fascinating dreams ! False, deceitful hopes ! Alas ! the sweet delusion now is over ; the mist that concealed our awful fate is dispersed, and a bottomless precipice opens suddenly underneath ! My feet tremble upon the brink ! O'erwhelming giddiness seizes on me ! Oh, save me, save me, my father ! Take back thy gift of life, now grown insupportable ! Strike, in mercy, the last, the welcome blow ! Georgius, save thy loving Ksœnia ! plunge the friendly dagger into my heart, and thus put an eternal seal on my inviolable fidelity !

Geor. Princess, exert thy fortitude.

Shou. Moderate thy grief. We die in a noble cause, the cause of our country.

Geor. Such a death is happiness !

SCENE IX.

SHOUSKY, GEORGIUS, KSCÆNIA, *with her Attendants,*
and PARMEN.

Parm. I am commanded to conduct you to prison.

Shou.

Shou. I follow!

Geor. I go prepared to meet my doom!

Shou. No more.—Since it must be so, undaunted we encounter death.

Parm. Since ye have dared to violate the peace, receive the just reward!

Shou. Shame on thee! art thou a man?—Is this the speech of a Russian?

Geor. Thou art our executioner—a judge thou canst never be.

Ksæ. Thou hast exchanged thy compassion for the savage ferocity which, but lately, thou hadst thyself condemned.

Parm. Lead them on!

Shou. Farewell, dear Ksœnia!—Weep not—subdue thy grief, if possible!

Geor. Adieu, dear princess, forget thy wretched Georgius!

SCENE X.

PARMEN *and* KSCENIA.

Ksæ. Minister of death! Odious executor of a still more odious tyrant! since no pity moves thee—since no woe can melt thy flinty heart, exult in my torments! let the sight of agonizing grief satiate thy savage joy! Since thy only law is the unbridled will of the tyrant, here I stand—here I defy thee! Strike me—tear my trembling joints! wade in my innocent blood!—then, if thou darest, lift thy polluted hands up to Heaven for salvation! God is just and merciful; he beholds the tyrant's excessive enormities, and his thunder is on the wing. Vain will be your supplications! perdition will seize the tyrant, and all the infamous executors of his diabolical commands. Yet, alas, what comfort can it bring me? What, though the wretch groans in the agonies of death—though loosened fiends snatch his wicked soul?—My father, my prince are gone, to return no more! Who can dissolve the icy chain of death, and rekindle the extinguished spark of life! O God! my guide, my guardian! soothe my distracted mind; and, ah! restore to me my friends—my lost, lamented friends!

Parm. Weep on! indulge thy desperate grief! Pour complaints and reproaches into the tyrant's ear!

ear! I say nothing. I pray only that my hopes and wishes may be fulfilled. (*Aside.*) Unhappy princess, you mistake my character!

Ksæ. The wrongs—the sufferings of innocence, appeal strongly to Heaven. Eternal wrath of God, sooner or later, will avenge—fiercely avenge them!

SCENE XI.

KSCENIA *and her* ATTENDANTS.

Ksæ. All is over.—The bitter cup of woe is filled to the brim. My father, my prince—where are they? I see them linger in tortures!—I see the murderer's hand uplifted!—the fatal instrument descends!—O God, it strikes! They fall! they expire! Hark! they call on Ksœnia!—Sweet shades, I obey your summons—I fly to you! Oh, shelter me from the tyrant; leave me not to his mercy, an orphan forlorn and unprotected! let my throbbing heart once more beat in unison with yours!—Who holds me here?—let me go!—Help! help! Avaunt, ye fiends! Release me from this dark and dismal dungeon!—What dungeon? I see no dungeon. Where am I—do I still live? Has the earth opened? Has the firmament fallen in? Alas! Heaven and earth

earth are still the same. The world falls not in ruins; but my princes—my sweet, beloved princes are gone—are lost for ever. Where would ye have me go, ministers of cruelty, satellites of the sanguinary despot?—Lead me on—any where! all places are equally wretched to Ksœnia! (*Led off distracted.*)

END OF ACT IV.

ACT

ACT V.

SCENE I.

DEMETRIUS *solus.*

(Sleeping on a couch, with a table near him, on which are seen the royal insignia :—he starts, and speaks :)

AWAY, horrid dreams, frightful visions, hideous phantoms! Away, ye nameless terrors of a disordered brain! Is it not enough to feel the sting of remorse?—Is it not enough to endure the agonies of a guilty conscience, that malignant Fancy should thus, with her magic spell, set thousands of horrible and shapeless things athwart my sight; and thus by imaginary, add wantonly to my real tortures?—but hold—methinks her images were just. All the disasters with which this city threatens me; all the torments which I dread hereafter; all that is most terrible and afflicting to human nature, appeared in forms so palpable, in colours so substantial, that my harrowed soul shrunk within me, and froze with horror. *(Bell strikes.)* Hark! the bell strikes—What can it mean? It is the signal of alarm; it
 refounds

refounds my misery, or else it warns me of my fate! My end then is near, and my last hour fast approaching! This night—this awful night will close the lingering scene of my transient glory. Thousands will hail my fall, for they will exclaim, it is the fall of a monster that preyed on their vitals!—I tremble! Fear, never felt till now, shakes my guilty frame! The earth seems to burst and overwhelm me in its ruin! Where shall I look for safety?—To God! Wretch that I am, I dare not implore his mercy. I have forfeited all claim to it!—No, I have nothing to hope from God—nothing from men. Hell is the only asylum left me; thither then will my soul escape. Vain hopes! even there the mighty wrath of God will pursue it; his searching eye will pierce the depth of infernal darkness, and his power call it up for judgment! My monstrous deeds will be laid open, and the awful sentence of the just and never-erring Judge be passed upon them. Cursed be the hour that gave me birth! Cursed be the chance that gave me power, which made me a tyrant—a relentless persecutor of what it was my duty to cherish most, and a dire exterminator of God's noblest creation. Hark! the noise increases;—consternation and wild uproar fill the air! The palace is beset! Single-handed, how shall I withstand a rising host of foes? Defenceless and forlorn here must I wait, trembling, for my destiny. Heaven and earth have leagued against me! My crown, my realm, my vast empire are already wrested from

from me! Oh, 'tis too much for mortal man to bear!

How he is mortal

SCENE II.

DEMETRIUS, GUARDS, and their CAPTAIN.

Capt. My liege, Krenle is filled with rebels. The palace is besieged! Fury and revenge spur them on! The flames of sedition rage beyond controul! All the avenues—all the principal posts are seized! The guard is forced; and we are the only few who have escaped.

Dem. Then all is lost. Cursed fate! barbarous reverse!—let us away—let us chastise the traitors! Stay!—Advance!—Remain here—Speed forward! Oppose, strike, overpower their numbers! fly to save Demetrius! Where would ye go?—would ye leave me alone and helpless?—Stand here—recede not an inch! defend the door! let us be gone! alas, it is too late! The last link of fate is broken. Bring Ksœnia before me!

SCENE III.

DEMETRIUS *solus.*

It is not the loss of kingdom, nor the loss of life that afflicts me;—my poignant grief is, that I die
and

and taste not the sweetness of revenge. Oh, that I were a monarch still! I would drown the traitors in their blood!—I would pile up mountains of their mangled bodies!—I would rise a dæmon of destruction, with sword, fire, pestilence, and famine, to extirpate this detested city, and in its ruins leave an awful and lasting monument of my wrath! I would teach the affrighted world what it is to provoke a monarch's vengeance!—Vain hope! never can I have this consolation.

SCENE IV.

DEMETRIUS and KSCENIA.

Dem. Imagine not that, though treachery overpowers me, thou canst escape in safety. The moment my power is gone, thou art no more! the blow that strikes me, will fall with double weight, on thee. Since thou canst not share my throne, share now my death!

Ksæ. How have I offended, to forfeit thus my life?

Dem. To doat on my mortal foes is a crime that nothing but death can expiate. Attached to the traitors that have undone me!—thy blood must be
the

the forfeit, which, had they not escaped, their own should pay.

Kfæ. Then let it be so. Since my father lives—since my prince is safe, I resign my life with pleasure! The sacrifice of youth and health, since it is for their sake, I offer here without regret!—yet I fain would spare thee, the shame and ignominy of having perpetrated a deed, as atrocious as dishonourable; unworthy of a man—much more of a monarch! What will the world say, when it is known, that thy hand has wantonly destroyed her who was nearest to thy heart—destroyed her while guiltless and innocent? Who could hear, and not deprecate so infamous—so unmanly an action? Who would not shudder at so sudden and unnatural a revolution in thy affections?—Ah, little did I expect such bitter fruits from thy love! Little thinks my father that his daughter is doomed to suffer for offences, of which she never was guilty;—for the crimes, of the very knowledge of which, she was innocent!

Dem. While I reigned, I loved thee; but now that my end is certain, thy death becomes my only wish. Were it not that my revenge has no other victim but thee, I might, perhaps, spare thee—I might even view thy sufferings with pity; but now, guilty or not, thou must precede me to the grave! The tumult increases—The ruffians are at hand—prepare! Be my messenger to the dead. (*Seizes her,*

F

her,

her, and holds the dagger over her.) Tell them Demetrius follows thee !

SCENE the LAST.

DEMETRIUS, SHOUSKY, GEORGIUS, KSCENIA, SOLDIERS, and PEOPLE.

Geor. Horrid fight !

Shou. Savage monster !

Dem. Traitors, behold her death !

Geor. If thy vengeance seeks the offender, I am he ! (*Advancing.*) Strike Georgius, but spare the guiltless Kscœnia !—Spare her innocence ! Oh, let thy own heart plead for her.

Shou. Wreak thy vengeance upon me. Georgius and my daughter both are innocent. It is I who have sought thy destruction ;—Shousky is chief of the rebels, and he alone is your enemy.

Dem. If thou wouldst have me spare her, resume thy duty of allegiance, and sue for mercy. Proclaim to the people my pardon, should they return to obedience ; or this instant the princess dies !

Shou.

Shou. Then be it so.—Daughter, fear not to die !
Thy sufferings are in behalf of thy country ; and
who that loves it would not envy them ?

Geor. Affliction past measure ! dire, cruel woe !—
Heavens—countrymen, save her ! Monster, release
her ! Plunge the dagger into my heart !—let my
blood flow instead !

Dem. My vengeance demands a greater victim !

Geor. (*Retreating, and turning to the people.*) De-
prived of her, I fly to death. (*Advancing towards
Demetrius.*) Farewell, Ksœnia !

Ksœ. Farewell !

Dem. (*Offering to stab her.*) Fade, ye blooming
roses !——

Par. (*Rushing suddenly from behind the stage, sword
in hand, and snatching Ksœnia from his hands.*) The
time of thy arbitrary sway is over. Thy rage is
as fruitless, as thy threats are vain ! Heaven mocks
thy feeble, pitiful efforts ! A tyrant, disabled and
powerless, is dreaded by none. Enough of blood
already hast thou shed. The hour of retribution is
come ! The people, once more restored to freedom
and liberty, deride the impotent fury of the fallen
tyrant, from whose grasp Providence, aiding their
native

DEMETRIUS.

native courage, has rescued them. Cruelty, injustice, tortures, and bloody executions will now expire with thee; and accursed be the wretch that ever revives them!

Dem. Perfidious traitor!—Perdition seize ye all! Descend, my soul, to Hell, and languish there in everlasting pain. (*Stabs himself, and falling into the hands of attendants.*) Oh, that the whole universe might perish with Demetrius! (*Dies.*)

THE CURTAIN FALLS.

THE END.



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