





DRAMATIC WORKS

PRINTED BY WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS, EDINBURGH

LE  
H987d

DRAMATIC WORKS

BY

FELICIA HEMANS

11-1-1850

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS  
EDINBURGH AND LONDON

1850

RECEIVED

LIBRARY



## CONTENTS

---

	PAGE
THE VESPERS OF PALERMO, . . . . .	1
THE SIEGE OF VALENCIA, . . . . .	103
SEBASTIAN OF PORTUGAL, . . . . .	199
DE CHATILLON, . . . . .	221

Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2007 with funding from  
Microsoft Corporation

THE VESPERS OF PALERMO

A DRAMATIC TRAGEDY

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

COUNT DI PROCIDA, . . .	<i>A Noble of Conradin's party.</i>
RAIMOND DI PROCIDA, . . .	<i>His Son.</i>
ERIBERT, . . . . .	<i>Viceroy of Sicily.</i>
DE COUCI, . . . . .	<i>A French Noble.</i>
MONTALBA, } . . . . .	<i>Sicilian Nobles.</i>
GUIDO, } . . . . .	
ALBERTI, } . . . . .	
ANSELMO, . . . . .	<i>A Monk.</i>
VITTORIA, . . . . .	<i>The betrothed of Conradin.</i>
CONSTANCE, . . . . .	<i>Sister to Eribert.</i>

*Nobles, Soldiers, Messengers, Vassals, Peasants, &c.*

SCENE—*Palermo.*

# THE VESPERS OF PALERMO

---

## ACT I.

SCENE I. — *A Valley, with vineyards and cottages. Groups of peasants. PROCIDA, disguised as a pilgrim, among them.*

1ST PEASANT. — Ay, this was wont to be a festal time  
In days gone by! I can remember well  
The old familiar melodies that rose  
At break of morn from all our purple hills,  
To welcome in the vintage. Never since  
Hath music seemed so sweet. But the light hearts  
Which to those measures beat so joyously,  
Are tamed to stillness now. There is no voice  
Of joy through all the land.

2D PEASANT. — Yes! there are sounds  
Of revelry within the palaces,  
And the fair castles of our ancient lords,  
Where now the stranger banquets. Ye may hear  
From thence the peals of song and laughter rise  
At midnight's deepest hour.

3D PEASANT. — Alas! we sat,  
 In happier days, so peacefully beneath  
 The olives and the vines our fathers reared,  
 Encircled by our children, whose quick steps  
 Flew by us in the dance! The time hath been  
 When peace was in the hamlet, wheresoe'er  
 The storm might gather. But this yoke of France  
 Falls on the peasant's neck as heavily  
 As on the crested chieftain's. We are bowed  
 Even to the earth.

PEASANT'S CHILD. — My father, tell me when  
 Shall the gay dance and song again resound  
 Amidst our chestnut-woods, as in those days  
 Of which thou'rt wont to tell the joyous tale?

1ST PEASANT. — When there are light and reckless hearts  
 once more  
 In Sicily's green vales. Alas, my boy!  
 Men meet not now to quaff the flowing bowl,  
 To hear the mirthful song, and cast aside  
 The weight of work-day care : they meet to speak  
 Of wrongs and sorrows, and to whisper thoughts  
 They dare not breathe aloud.

PROCIDA (*from the background.*) — Ay, it is well  
 So to relieve the o'erburthened heart, which pants  
 Beneath its weight of wrongs ; but better far  
 In silence to avenge them.

AN OLD PEASANT. — What deep voice  
 Came with that startling tone ?

1ST PEASANT. — It was our guest's,  
 The stranger pilgrim who hath sojourned here  
 Since yester-morn. Good neighbours, mark him well :  
 He hath a stately bearing, and an eye  
 Whose glance looks thro' the heart. His mien accords

Ill with such vestments. How he folds around him  
 His pilgrim cloak, even as it were a robe  
 Of knightly ermine! That commanding step  
 Should have been used in courts and camps to move.  
 Mark him!

OLD PEASANT. — Nay, rather mark him not; the times  
 Are fearful, and they teach the boldest hearts  
 A cautious lesson. What should bring him here?

A YOUTH. — He spoke of vengeance!

OLD PEASANT. — Peace! we are beset  
 By snares on every side, and we must learn  
 In silence and in patience to endure.  
 Talk not of vengeance, for the word is death.

PROCIDA (*coming forward indignantly.*)

The word is death! And what hath life for thee,  
 That thou shouldst cling to it thus? thou abject thing!  
 Whose very soul is moulded to the yoke,  
 And stamped with servitude. What! is it life  
 Thus at a breeze to start, to school thy voice  
 Into low fearful whispers, and to cast  
 Pale jealous looks around thee, lest even then  
 Strangers should catch its echo? Is there aught  
 In this so precious, that thy furrowed cheek  
 Is blanched with terror at the passing thought  
 Of hazarding some few and evil days,  
 Which drag thus poorly on?

SOME OF THE PEASANTS. — Away, away!

Leave us, for there is danger in thy presence.

PROCIDA. — Why, what is danger? Are there deeper ills  
 Than those ye bear thus calmly? Ye have drained  
 The cup of bitterness till naught remains  
 To fear or shrink from: therefore, be ye strong!  
 Power dwelleth with despair. Why start ye thus

At words which are but echoes of the thoughts  
 Locked in your secret souls? Full well I know  
 There is not one among you but hath nursed  
 Some proud indignant feeling, which doth make  
 One conflict of his life. I know thy wrongs—  
 And thine—and thine; but if within your breast  
 There is no chord that vibrates to my voice,  
 Then fare ye well.

A *Youth (coming forward.)*—No, no! say on, say on!  
 There are still free and fiery hearts even here,  
 That kindle at thy words.

PEASANT.—If that indeed  
 Thou hast a hope to give us—

PROCIDA.—There is hope  
 For all who suffer with indignant thoughts  
 Which work in silent strength. What! think ye heaven  
 O'erlooks the oppressor, if he bear awhile  
 His crested head on high? I tell you, no!  
 The avenger will not sleep. It was an hour  
 Of triumph to the conqueror, when our king,  
 Our young brave Conradin, in life's fair morn  
 On the red scaffold died. Yet not the less  
 Is Justice throned above; and her good time  
 Comes rushing on in storms: that royal blood  
 Hath lifted an accusing voice from earth,  
 And hath been heard. The traces of the past  
 Fade in man's heart, but ne'er doth heaven forget.

PEASANT.—Had we but arms and leaders, we are men  
 Who might earn vengeance yet; but, wanting these,  
 What wouldst thou have us do?

PROCIDA.—Be vigilant;  
 And when the signal wakes the land, arise!  
 The peasant's arm is strong, and there shall be



A rich and noble harvest. Fare ye well.

[*Exit PROCIDA.*]

1ST PEAS.—This man should be a prophet. How he seem'd  
To read our hearts with his dark searching glance  
And aspect of command! And yet his garb  
Is mean as ours.

2D PEASANT.—Speak low; I know him well.  
At first his voice disturbed me, like a dream  
Of other days; but I remember now  
His form, seen oft when in my youth I served  
Beneath the banners of our kings. 'Tis he  
Who hath been exiled and proscribed so long,  
The Count di Procida.

PEASANT.—And is this he?  
Then heaven protect him! for around his steps  
Will many snares be set.

1ST PEASANT.—He comes not thus  
But with some mighty purpose—doubt it not;  
Perchance to bring us freedom. He is one  
Whose faith, through many a trial, hath been proved  
True to our native princes. But away!  
The noontide heat is past, and from the seas  
Light gales are wandering thro' the vineyards. Now  
We may resume our toil. [*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II.

*The Terrace of a Castle.* ERIBERT and VITTORIA.

VITTORIA.—Have I not told thee, that I bear a heart  
Blighted and cold? The affections of my youth  
Lie slumbering in the grave; their fount is closed,

And all the soft and playful tenderness  
Which hath its home in woman's breast, ere yet  
Deep wrongs have seared it—all is fled from mine.  
Urge me no more.

ERIBERT.—O lady ! doth the flower  
That sleeps entombed through the long wintry storms,  
Unfold its beauty to the breath of spring ;  
And shall not woman's heart, from chill despair,  
Wake at love's voice ?

VITTORIA.—Love !—make love's name thy spell,  
And I am strong ! The very word calls up  
From the dark past, thoughts, feelings, powers, arrayed  
In arms against thee. Know'st thou whom I loved,  
While my soul's dwelling-place was still on earth ?  
One who was born for empire, and endowed  
With such high gifts of princely majesty,  
As bowed all hearts before him ! Was he not  
Brave, royal, beautiful ? And such he died ;  
He died !—hast thou forgotten ? And thou'rt here,  
Thou meet'st my glance with eyes which coldly looked,  
Coldly !—nay, rather with triumphant gaze,  
Upon his murder ! Desolate as I am,  
Yet in the mien of thine affianced bride,  
O my lost Conradin ! there should be still  
Somewhat of loftiness, which might o'erawe  
The hearts of thine assassins.

ERIBERT.—Haughty dame !  
If thy proud heart to tenderness be closed,  
Know danger is around thee : thou hast foes  
That seek thy ruin, and my power alone  
Can shield thee from their arts.

VITTORIA.—Provençal, tell  
Thy tale of danger to some happy heart

Which hath its little world of loved ones round,  
 For whom to tremble, and its tranquil joys  
 That make earth Paradise. I stand alone.  
 They that are blest may fear.

ERIBERT.—Is there not one

Who ne'er commands in vain? Proud lady, bend  
 Thy spirit to thy fate; for know that he,  
 Whose car of triumph in its earthquake path,  
 O'er the bowed neck of prostrate Sicily,  
 Hath borne him to dominion; he, my king,  
 Charles of Anjou, decrees thy hand the boon  
 My deeds have well deserved; and who hath power  
 Against his mandates?

VITTORIA.—Viceroy, tell thy lord

That, even where chains lie heaviest on the land,  
 Souls may not all be fettered. Oft, ere now,  
 Conquerors have rocked the earth, yet failed to tame  
 Unto their purposes that restless fire  
 Inhabiting man's breast. A spark bursts forth,  
 And so they perish! 'Tis the fate of those  
 Who sport with lightning—and it may be his.  
 Tell him I fear him not, and thus am free.

ERIBERT.—'Tis well. Then nerve that lofty heart to bear  
 The wrath which is not powerless. Yet again  
 Bethink thee, lady! Love may change—hath changed  
 To vigilant hatred oft, whose sleepless eye  
 Still finds what most it seeks for. Fare thee well.  
 Look to it yet!—To-morrow I return.

[Exit ERIBERT.]

VITT.—To-morrow!—Some ere now have slept and dreamt  
 Of morrows which ne'er dawned—or ne'er for them;  
 So silently their deep and still repose  
 Hath melted into death! Are there not balms

In nature's boundless realm, to pour out sleep  
 Like this on me? Yet should my spirit still  
 Endure its earthly bonds, till it could bear  
 To his a glorious tale of his own isle,  
 Free and avenged.—Thou shouldst be now at work,  
 In wrath, my native Etna! who dost lift  
 Thy spiry pillar of dark smoke so high,  
 Thro' the red heaven of sunset! Sleep'st thou still,  
 With all thy founts of fire, while spoilers tread  
 The glowing vales beneath?

(*PROCIDA enters, disguised.*)

Ha! who art thou  
 Unbidden guest, that with so mute a step  
 Dost steal upon me?  
 PROCIDA.—One o'er whom hath passed  
 All that can change man's aspect. Yet not long  
 Shalt thou find safety in forgetfulness.  
 I am he, to breathe whose name is perilous,  
 Unless thy wealth could bribe the winds to silence.  
 —Know'st thou this, lady?

(*He shows a ring.*)

VITTORIA.—Righteous heaven! the pledge  
 Amidst his people from the scaffold thrown  
 By him who perished, and whose kingly blood  
 Even yet is unatoned. My heart beats high—  
 —Oh, welcome, welcome! thou art Procida,  
 The Avenger, the Deliverer!

PROCIDA.—Call me so,  
 When my great task is done. Yet who can tell  
 If the returned be welcome? Many a heart  
 Is changed since last we met.

VITTORIA.—Why dost thou gaze,

With such a still and solemn earnestness,  
Upon my altered mien ?

PROCIDA.—That I may read  
If to the widowed love of Conradin,  
Or the proud Eribert's triumphant bride,  
I now intrust my fate.

VITTORIA.—Thou, Procida !  
That thou shouldst wrong me thus ! Prolong thy gaze  
Till it hath found an answer.

PROCIDA.—'Tis enough.  
I find it in thy cheek, whose rapid change  
Is from death's hue to fever's ; in the wild  
Unsettled brightness of thy proud dark eye,  
And in thy wasted form. Ay, 'tis a deep  
And solemn joy, thus in thy looks to trace,  
Instead of youth's gay bloom, the characters  
Of noble suffering : on thy brow the same  
Commanding spirit holds its native state,  
Which could not stoop to vileness. Yet the voice  
Of Fame hath told afar, that thou shouldst wed  
This tyrant Eribert.

VITTORIA.—And told it not  
A tale of insolent love repelled with scorn—  
Of stern commands and fearful menaces  
Met with indignant courage ? Procida !  
It was but now that haughtily I braved  
His sovereign's mandate, which decrees my hand,  
With its fair appanage of wide domains  
And wealthy vassals, a most fitting boon,  
To recompense his crimes. I smiled—ay, smiled—  
In proud security ; for the high of heart  
Have still a pathway to escape disgrace,  
Though it be dark and lone.

PROCIDA.—Thou shalt not need

To tread its shadowy mazes. Trust my words :  
 I tell thee that a spirit is abroad  
 Which will not slumber, till its path be traced  
 By deeds of fearful fame. Vittoria, live !  
 It is most meet that thou shouldst live, to see  
 The mighty expiation ; for thy heart  
 (Forgive me that I wronged its faith !) hath nursed  
 A high majestic grief, whose seal is set  
 Deep on thy marble brow.

VITTORIA. — Then thou canst tell

By gazing on the withered rose, that there  
 Time, or the blight, hath worked ! Ay, this is in  
 Thy vision's scope : but oh ! the things unseen,  
 Untold, undreamt of, which like shadows pass  
 Hourly o'er that mysterious world, a mind  
 To ruin struck by grief ! Yet doth my soul,  
 Far midst its darkness, nurse one soaring hope,  
 Wherein is bright vitality. 'Tis to see  
*His* blood avenged, and his fair heritage,  
 My beautiful native land, in glory risen  
 Like a warrior from his slumbers !

PROCIDA. — Hear'st thou not

With what a deep and ominous moan the voice  
 Of our great mountain swells ? There will be soon  
 A fearful burst. Vittoria ! brood no more  
 In silence o'er thy sorrows, but go forth  
 Amidst thy vassals, (yet be secret still,)  
 And let thy breath give nurture to the spark  
 Thou'lt find already kindled. I move on  
 In shadow, yet awakening in my path  
 That which shall startle nations. Fare thee well.

VITTORIA.—When shall we meet again ? Are we not those

Whom most he loved on earth ! and think'st thou not  
*That* love even yet shall bring his spirit near,  
 While thus we hold communion ?

PROCIDA. — Yes, I feel

Its breathing influence whilst I look on thee,  
 Who wert its light in life. Yet will we not  
 Make womanish tears our offering on his tomb ;  
 He shall have nobler tribute. I must hence,  
 But thou shalt soon hear more. Await the time.

[*Exeunt separately.*]

### SCENE III.

*The Sea-shore.* RAIMOND DI PROCIDA and CONSTANCE.

CONSTANCE. — There is a shadow far within your eye,  
 Which hath of late been deepening. You were wont,  
 Upon the clearness of your open brow,  
 To wear a brighter spirit, shedding round  
 Joy like our southern sun. It is not well,  
 If some dark thought be gathering o'er your soul,  
 To hide it from affection. Why is this ?  
 My Raimond, why is this ?

RAIMOND. — Oh ! from the dreams

Of youth, sweet Constance ! hath not manhood still  
 A wild and stormy wakening ? They depart—  
 Light after light, our glorious visions fade,  
 The vaguely beautiful ! till earth, unveiled,  
 Lies pale around ; and life's realities  
 Press on the soul, from its unfathomed depth  
 Rousing the fiery feelings and proud thoughts,  
 In all their fearful strength. 'Tis ever thus,  
 And doubly so with me ; for I awoke  
 With high aspirings, making it a curse

To breathe where noble minds are bowed, as here.

To breathe!—It is not breath!

CONSTANCE. — I know thy grief—

And is't not mine?—for those devoted men  
Doomed with their life to expiate some wild word,  
Born of the social hour. Oh! I have knelt,  
Even at my brother's feet, with fruitless tears,  
Imploring him to spare. His heart is shut  
Against my voice; yet will I not forsake  
The cause of mercy.

RAIMOND. — Waste not thou thy prayers,

O gentle love! for them. There's little need  
For pity, though the galling chain be worn  
By some few slaves the less. Let them depart!  
There is a world beyond the oppressor's reach,  
And thither lies their way.

CONSTANCE. — Alas! I see

That some new wrong hath pierced you to the soul.

RAIMOND. — Pardon, beloved Constance! if my words,

From feelings hourly stung, have caught perchance  
A tone of bitterness. Oh! when thine eyes,  
With their sweet eloquent thoughtfulness, are fixed  
Thus tenderly on mine, I should forget  
All else in their soft beams. And yet I came  
To tell thee——

CONSTANCE.—What? What wouldst thou say? Oh speak!

Thou wouldst not leave me?

RAIMOND. — I have cast a cloud,

The shadow of dark thoughts and ruined fortunes,  
O'er thy bright spirit. Haply, were I gone,  
Thou wouldst resume thyself, and dwell once more  
In the clear sunny light of youth and joy,  
Even as before we met—before we loved!



CONSTANCE.—This is but mockery. Well thou know'st thy  
love

Hath given me nobler being ; made my heart  
A home for all the deep sublimities  
Of strong affection ; and I would not change  
The exalted life I draw from that pure source,  
With all its checkered hues of hope and fear,  
Even for the brightest calm. Thou most unkind !  
Have I deserved this ?

RAIMOND. — Oh ! thou hast deserved  
A love less fatal to thy peace than mine.  
Think not 'tis mockery ! But I cannot rest  
To be the scorned and trampled thing I am  
In this degraded land. Its very skies,  
That smile as if but festivals were held  
Beneath their cloudless azure, weigh me down  
With a dull sense of bondage, and I pine  
For freedom's chartered air. I would go forth  
To seek my noble father : he hath been  
Too long a lonely exile, and his name  
Seems fading in the dim obscurity  
Which gathers round my fortunes.

CONSTANCE. — Must we part ?  
And is it come to this ? Oh ! I have still  
Deemed it enough of joy with thee to share  
Even grief itself. And now ! But this is vain.  
Alas ! too deep, too fond, is woman's love :  
Too full of hope, she casts on troubled waves  
The treasures of her soul.

RAIMOND. — Oh, speak not thus !  
Thy gentle and desponding tones fall cold  
Upon my inmost heart. I leave thee but  
To be more worthy of a love like thine ;

For I have dreamt of fame! A few short years,  
And we may yet be blest.

CONSTANCE. — A few short years!

Less time may well suffice for death and fate  
To work all change on earth; to break the ties  
Which early love had formed; and to bow down  
The elastic spirit, and to blight each flower  
Strewn in life's crowded path. But be it so!  
Be it enough to know that happiness  
Meets thee on other shores.

RAIMOND. — Where'er I roam,

Thou shalt be with my soul. Thy soft low voice  
Shall rise upon remembrance, like a strain  
Of music heard in boyhood, bringing back  
Life's morning freshness. Oh! that there should be  
Things which we love with such deep tenderness,  
But, through that love, to learn how much of woe  
Dwells in one hour like this! Yet weep thou not!  
We shall meet soon; and many days, dear love!  
Ere I depart.

CONSTANCE. — Then there's a respite still.

Days!—not a day but in its course may bring  
Some strange vicissitude to turn aside  
The impending blow we shrink from. Fare thee well.

( *Returning.* )

Oh, Raimond! this is not our last farewell?  
Thou wouldst not so deceive me!

RAIMOND. — Doubt me not,

Gentlest and best beloved! we meet again.

[*Exit* CONSTANCE.]

RAIMOND (*after a pause.*)—When shall I breathe in freedom, and give scope

To those untameable and burning thoughts,  
 And restless aspirations, which consume  
 My heart i' the land of bondage? Oh! with you,  
 Ye everlasting images of power  
 And of infinity! thou blue-rolling deep,  
 And you, ye stars! whose beams are characters  
 Wherewith the oracles of fate are traced—  
 With you my soul finds room, and casts aside  
 The weight that doth oppress her. But my thoughts  
 Are wandering far; there should be one to share  
 This awful and majestic solitude  
 Of sea and heaven with me.

(PROCIDA enters unobserved.)

It is the hour

He named, and yet he comes not.

PROCIDA (*coming forward.*) — He is here.

RAIMOND.—Now, thou mysterious stranger! thou, whose  
 glance

Doth fix itself on memory, and pursue  
 Thought like a spirit, haunting its lone hours—  
 Reveal thyself; what art thou?

PROCIDA.—One whose life

Hath been a troubled stream, and made its way  
 Through rocks and darkness, and a thousand storms,  
 With still a mighty aim. But now the shades  
 Of eve are gathering round me, and I come  
 To this, my native land, that I may rest  
 Beneath its vines in peace.

RAIMOND.—Seek'st thou for peace?

This is no land of peace: unless that deep  
 And voiceless terror, which doth freeze men's thoughts  
 Back to their source, and mantle its pale mien

With a dull hollow semblance of repose,  
May so be called.

PROCIDA. — There are such calms full oft  
Preceding earthquakes. But I have not been  
So vainly schooled by fortune, and inured  
To shape my course on peril's dizzy brink,  
That it should irk my spirit to put on  
Such guise of hushed submissiveness as best  
May suit the troubled aspect of the times.

RAIMOND. — Why then thou'rt welcome, stranger, to the land  
Where most disguise is needful. He were bold  
Who now should wear his thoughts upon his brow  
Beneath Sicilian skies. The brother's eye  
Doth search distrustfully the brother's face ;  
And friends, whose undivided lives have drawn  
From the same past their long remembrances,  
Now meet in terror, or no more ; lest hearts,  
Full to o'erflowing, in their social hour  
Should pour out some rash word, which roving winds  
Might whisper to our conquerers. This it is,  
To wear a foreign yoke.

PROCIDA. — It matters not  
To him who holds the mastery o'er his spirit,  
And can suppress its workings, till endurance  
Becomes as nature. We can tame ourselves  
To all extremes ; and there is that in life  
To which we cling with most tenacious grasp,  
Even when its lofty aims are all reduced  
To the poor common privilege of breathing.  
— Why dost thou turn away ?

RAIMOND. — What wouldst thou with me ?  
I deemed thee, by the ascendant soul which lived  
And made its throne on thy commanding brow,

One of a sovereign nature, which would scorn  
 So to abase its high capacities  
 For aught on earth. But thou art like the rest.  
 What wouldst thou with me?

PROCIDA.—I would counsel thee.

Thou must do that which men—ay, valiant men—  
 Hourly submit to do; in the proud court,  
 And in the stately camp, and at the board  
 Of midnight revellers, whose flushed mirth is all  
 A strife, won hardly. Where is he whose heart  
 Lies bare, through all its foldings, to the gaze  
 Of mortal eye? If vengeance wait the foe,  
 Or fate the oppressor, 'tis in depths concealed  
 Beneath a smiling surface. — Youth, I say,  
 Keep thy soul down! Put on a mask!—'tis worn  
 Alike by power and weakness; and the smooth  
 And specious intercourse of life requires  
 Its aid in every scene.

RAYMOND.—Away, dissembler!

Life hath its high and its ignoble tasks,  
 Fitted to every nature. Will the free  
 And royal eagle stoop to learn the arts  
 By which the serpent wins his spell-bound prey?  
 It is because I will not clothe myself  
 In a vile garb of coward semblances,  
 That now, even now, I struggle with my heart,  
 To bid what most I love a long farewell,  
 And seek my country on some distant shore,  
 Where such things are unknown!

PROCIDA, (*exultingly*).—Why, this is joy:

After long conflict with the doubts and fears,  
 And the poor subtleties of meaner minds,  
 To meet a spirit whose bold elastic wing

Oppression hath not crushed. High-hearted youth !  
 Thy father, should his footsteps e'er again  
 Visit these shores——

RAIMOND.—My father ! what of him ?  
 Speak ! was he known to thee ?

PROCIDA.—In distant lands  
 With him I've traversed many a wild, and looked  
 On many a danger ; and the thought that thou  
 Wert smiling then in peace, a happy boy,  
 Oft through the storm hath cheered him.

RAIMOND.—Dost thou deem  
 That still he lives ? Oh ! if it be in chains,  
 In woe, in poverty's obscurest cell,  
 Say but he lives —and I will track his steps  
 Even to earth's verge.

PROCIDA.—It may be that he lives,  
 Though long his name hath ceased to be a word  
 Familiar in man's dwellings. But its sound  
 May yet be heard ! Raimond di Procida,  
 Rememberest thou thy father !

RAIMOND.—From my mind  
 His form hath faded long, for years have passed  
 Since he went forth to exile : but a vague  
 Yet powerful image of deep majesty,  
 Still dimly gathering round each thought of him,  
 Doth claim instinctive reverence ; and my love  
 For his inspiring name hath long become  
 Part of my being.

PROCIDA.—Raimond ! doth no voice  
 Speak to thy soul, and tell thee whose the arms  
 That would enfold thee now ? My son ! my son !

RAIMOND.—Father ! Oh God !—my father ! Now I know  
 Why my heart woke before thee !

PROCIDA.—Oh! this hour

Makes hope reality; for thou art all  
My dreams had pictured thee!

RAIMOND.—Yet why so long

Even as a stranger hast thou crossed my paths,  
One nameless and unknown? And yet I felt  
Each pulse within me thrilling to thy voice.

PROCIDA.—Because I would not link thy fate with mine,

Till I could hail the day-spring of that hope  
Which now is gathering round us. Listen, youth!  
*Thou* hast told *me* of a subdued and scorned  
And trampled land, whose very soul is bowed  
And fashioned to her chains:—but *I* tell *thee*  
Of a most generous and devoted land,  
A land of kindling energies; a land  
Of glorious recollections!—proudly true  
To the high memory of her ancient kings,  
And rising in majestic scorn to cast  
Her alien bondage off!

RAIMOND.—And where is this?

PROCIDA.—Here, in our isle, our own fair Sicily!

Her spirit is awake, and moving on,  
In its deep silence mightier, to regain  
Her place amongst the nations; and the hour  
Of that tremendous effort is at hand.

RAIMOND.—Can it be thus indeed? Thou pour'st new life

Through all my burning veins! I am as one  
Awakening from a chill and deathlike sleep  
To the full glorious day.

PROCIDA.—Thou shalt hear more!

Thou shalt hear things which would, which will, arouse  
The proud free spirits of our ancestors  
Even from their marble rest. Yet mark me well!

Be secret!—for along my destined path  
I yet must darkly move. Now, follow me,  
And join a band of men, in whose high hearts  
There lies a nation's strength.

RAIMOND.—My noble father!

Thy words have given me all for which I pined—  
An aim, a hope, a purpose! And the blood  
Doth rush in warmer currents through my veins,  
As a bright fountain from its icy bonds  
By the quick sun-stroke freed.

PROCIDA.—Ay, this is well!

Such natures burst men's chains! Now follow me.

[*Exeunt.*]

---

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Apartment in a Palace.* ERIBERT and CONSTANCE.

CONSTANCE.—Will you not hear me? Oh! that they who need  
Hourly forgiveness— they who do but live  
While Mercy's voice, beyond the eternal stars,  
Wins the great Judge to listen, should be thus,  
In their vain exercise of pageant power,  
Hard and relentless! Gentle brother! yet  
'Tis in your choice to imitate that heaven,  
Whose noblest joy is pardon.

ERIBERT.—'Tis too late.

You have a soft and moving voice, which pleads  
With eloquent melody— but they must die.

CONSTANCE.—What!—die!—for words?—for breath which  
leaves no trace



To sully the pure air wherewith it blends,  
 And is, being uttered, gone? Why, 'twere enough  
 For such a venial fault, to be deprived  
 One little day of man's free heritage,  
 Heaven's warm and sunny light. Oh! if you deem  
 That evil harbours in their souls, at least  
 Delay the stroke, till guilt, made manifest,  
 Shall bid stern justice wake.

ERIBERT.—I am not one  
 Of those weak spirits that timorously keep watch  
 For fair occasions, thence to borrow hues  
 Of virtue for their deeds. My school hath been  
 Where power sits crowned and armed. And, mark me,  
 sister!

To a distrustful nature it might seem  
 Strange, that your lips thus earnestly should plead  
 For these Sicilian rebels. O'er my being  
 Suspicion holds no power. And yet, take note—  
 I have said, and they must die.

CONSTANCE.—Have you no fear?

ERIBERT.—Of what?—that heaven should fall?

CONSTANCE.—No! but that earth

Should arm in madness. Brother! I have seen  
 Dark eyes bent on you, even midst festal throngs,  
 With such deep hatred settled in their glance,  
 My heart hath died within me.

ERIBERT.—Am I then

To pause and doubt and shrink, because a girl,  
 A dreaming girl, hath trembled at a look?

CONSTANCE.—Oh! looks are no illusions, when the soul  
 Which may not speak in words, can find no way  
 But theirs to liberty! Have not these men  
 Brave sons or noble brothers?

ERIBERT.—Yes! whose name

It rests with me to make a word of fear—

A sound forbidden midst the haunts of men.

CONSTANCE.—But not forgotten! Ah! beware, beware!

—Nay, look not sternly on me. There is one

Of that devoted band, who yet will need

Years to be ripe for death. He is a youth,

A very boy, on whose unshaded cheek

The spring-time glow is lingering. 'Twas but now

His mother left me, with a timid hope

Just dawning in her breast: and I—I dared

To foster its faint spark. You smile!—Oh! then

He will be saved!

ERIBERT.—Nay, I but smiled to think

What a fond fool is Hope! She may be taught

To deem that the great sun will change his course

To work her pleasure, or the tomb give back

Its inmates to her arms. In sooth 'tis strange!

Yet, with your pitying heart, you should not thus

Have mocked the boy's sad mother: I have said—

You should not thus have *mock'd* her!—Now, farewell!

[*Exit.*]

CONSTANCE.—O brother, hard of heart!—for deeds like these

There must be fearful chastening, if on high

Justice doth hold her state. And I must tell

Yon desolate mother that her fair young son

Is thus to perish! Haply the dread tale

May slay her too — for heaven is merciful.

—'Twill be a bitter task!

[*Exit.*]

## SCENE II.

*A ruined Tower surrounded by woods.* PROCIDA and VITTORIA.

PROCIDA.—Thy vassals are prepared, then ?

VITTORIA.—Yes ; they wait

Thy summons to their task.

PROCIDA.—Keep the flame bright,

But hidden till the hour. Wouldst thou dare, lady,

To join our councils at the night's mid watch,

In the lone cavern by the rock-hewn cross ?

VITTORIA.—What should I shrink from ?

PROCIDA.—Oh ! the forest-paths

Are dim and wild, even when the sunshine streams

Through their high arches ; but when powerful night

Comes, with her cloudy phantoms, and her pale

Uncertain moonbeams, and the hollow sounds

Of her mysterious winds ; their aspect *then*

Is of another and more fearful world—

A realm of indistinct and shadowy forms,

Waking strange thoughts almost too much for this—

Our frail terrestrial nature.

VITTORIA.—Well I know

All this and more. Such scenes have been the abodes

Where through the silence of my soul have passed

Voices and visions from the sphere of those

That have to die no more. Nay, doubt it not !

If such unearthly intercourse hath e'er

Been granted to our nature, 'tis to hearts

Whose love is with the dead. They, they alone,

Unmaddened could sustain the fearful joy

And glory of its trances. At the hour

Which makes guilt tremulous, and peoples earth

And air with infinite viewless multitudes,  
I will be with thee, Procida.

PROCIDA.—Thy presence

Will kindle nobler thoughts, and, in the souls  
Of suffering and indignant men, arouse  
That which may strengthen our majestic cause  
With yet a deeper power. Know'st thou the spot?

VITTORIA.—Full well. There is no scene so wild and lone,  
In these dim woods, but I have visited  
Its tangled shades.

PROCIDA.—At midnight, then, we meet.

[*Exit.*

VITT.—Why should I fear? Thou wilt be with me—thou,  
The immortal dream and shadow of my soul,  
Spirit of him I love! that meet'st me still  
In loneliness and silence; in the noon  
Of the wild night, and in the forest depths,  
Known but to me, for whom thou givest the winds  
And sighing leaves a cadence of thy voice,  
Till my heart faints with that o'erthrilling joy!  
—Thou wilt be with me there, and lend my lips  
Words, fiery words, to flush dark cheeks with shame  
That thou art unavenged!

[*Exit.*

### SCENE III.

*A Chapel, with a monument on which is laid a sword. Moonlight.*

PROCIDA, RAIMOND, and MONTALBA.

MONTALBA.—And know you not my story?

PROCIDA.—In the lands

Where I have been a wanderer, your deep wrongs  
Were numbered with our country's; but their tale

Came only in faint echoes to mine ear.

I would fain hear it now.

MONTALBA.—Hark! while you spoke,

There was a voice-like murmur in the breeze,  
Which even like death came o'er me. 'Twas a night  
Like this, of clouds contending with the moon,  
A night of sweeping winds, of rustling leaves,  
And swift wild shadows floating o'er the earth,  
Clothed with a phantom life, when, after years  
Of battle and captivity, I spurred  
My good steed homewards. Oh, what lovely dreams  
Rose on my spirit! There were tears and smiles,  
But all of joy! And there were bounding steps,  
And clinging arms, whose passionate clasp of love  
Doth twine so fondly round the warrior's neck  
When his plumed helm is doffed. Hence, feeble thoughts!  
I am sterner now—yet once such dreams were mine.

RAIMOND.—And were they realised?

MONTALBA.—Youth! ask me not,

But listen! I drew near my own fair home.  
There was no light along its walls, no sound  
Of bugle pealing from the watch-tower's height  
At my approach, although my trampling steed  
Made the earth ring; yet the wide gates were thrown  
All open. Then my heart misgave me first,  
And on the threshold of my silent hall  
I paused a moment, and the wind swept by  
With the same deep and dirge-like tone which pierced  
My soul even now! I called—my struggling voice  
Gave utterance to my wife's, my children's names.  
They answered not. I roused my failing strength,  
And wildly rushed within. And they were there.

RAIMOND.—And was all well?

MONTALBA.—Ay, well!—for death is well:  
 And they were all at rest! I see them yet,  
 Pale in their innocent beauty, which had failed  
 To stay the assassin's arm!

RAIMOND.—Oh, righteous Heaven!  
 Who had done this?

MONTALBA.—Who?

PROCIDA.—Canst thou question, who?  
 Whom hath the earth to perpetrate such deeds,  
 In the cold-blooded revelry of crime,  
 But those whose yoke is on us?

RAIMOND.—Man of woe!  
 What words hath pity for despair like thine?

MONTALBA.—Pity! fond youth! My soul disdains the grief  
 Which doth unbosom its deep secrecies  
 To ask a vain companionship of tears,  
 And so to be relieved.

PROCIDA.—For woes like these  
 There is no sympathy but vengeance.

MONTALBA.—None!  
 Therefore I brought you hither, that your hearts  
 Might catch the spirit of the scene! Look round.  
 We are in the awful presence of the dead;  
 Within yon tomb they sleep whose gentle blood  
 Weighs down the murderer's soul. *They sleep!*—but I  
 Am wakeful o'er their dust. I laid my sword,  
 Without its sheath, on their sepulchral stone,  
 As on an altar; and the eternal stars,  
 And heaven, and night, bore witness to my vow,  
 No more to wield it save in one great cause—  
 The vengeance of the grave. And now the hour  
 Of that atonement comes!

*(He takes the sword from the tomb.)*

RAIMOND.—My spirit burns !

And my full heart almost to bursting swells.

Oh, for the day of battle !

PROCIDA.—Raimond, they

Whose souls are dark with guiltless blood must die—

But not in battle.

RAIMOND.—How, my father ?

PROCIDA.—No !

Look on that sepulchre, and it will teach

Another lesson. But the appointed hour

Advances. Thou wilt join our chosen band,

Noble Montalba ?

MONTALBA.—Leave me for a time,

That I may calm my soul by intercourse

With the still dead, before I mix with men

And with their passions. I have nursed for years,

In silence and in solitude, the flame

Which doth consume me ; and it is not used

Thus to be looked or breathed on. Procida !

I would be tranquil—or appear so—ere

I join your brave confederates. Through my heart

There struck a pang—but it will soon have passed.

PROCIDA.—Remember !—in the cavern by the cross.

Now, follow me, my son. [*Exeunt PROCIDA and RAIMOND*

MONTALBA (*after a pause, leaning on the tomb.*)—

Said he, “ *My son ?* ” Now, why should this man’s life

Go down in hope, thus resting on a son,

And I be desolate ? How strange a sound

Was that—“ *my son !* ” I had a boy, who might

Have worn as free a soul upon his brow

As doth this youth. Why should the thought of him

Thus haunt me ? When I tread the peopled ways

Of life again, I shall be passed each hour

By fathers with their children, and I must  
 Learn calmly to look on. Methinks 'twere now  
 A gloomy consolation to behold  
 All men bereft as I am! But away,  
 Vain thoughts! One task is left for blighted hearts,  
 And it shall be fulfilled.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE IV.

*Entrance of a Cave, surrounded by rocks and forests. A rude Cross  
 seen among the rocks. PROCIDA and RAIMOND.*

PROCIDA.—And is it thus, beneath the solemn skies  
 Of midnight, and in solitary caves,  
 Where the wild forest-creatures make their lair—  
 Is't thus the chiefs of Sicily must hold  
 The councils of their country?

RAIMOND.—Why, such scenes  
 In their primeval majesty, beheld  
 Thus by faint starlight and the partial glare  
 Of the red streaming lava, will inspire  
 Far deeper thoughts than pillared halls, wherein  
 Statesmen hold weary vigils. Are we not  
 O'ershadowed by that Etna, which of old  
 With its dread prophecies hath struck dismay  
 Through tyrant's hearts, and bade them seek a home  
 In other climes? Hark! from its depths, even now,  
 What hollow moans are sent!

(*Enter MONTALBA, GUIDO, and other Sicilians.*)

PROCIDA.—Welcome, my brave associates! We can share  
 The wolf's wild freedom here. The oppressor's haunt  
 Is not midst rocks and caves. Are we all met?



SICILIANS.—All, all!

PROCIDA.—The torchlight, swayed by every gust,  
 But dimly shows your features. Where is he  
 Who from his battles had returned to breathe  
 Once more without a corslet, and to meet  
 The voices and the footsteps and the smiles  
 Blent with his dreams of home? Of that dark tale  
 The rest is known to vengeance. Art thou here,  
 With thy deep wrongs and resolute despair,  
 Childless Montalba?

MONTALBA (*advancing*).—He is at thy side.  
 Call on that desolate father in the hour  
 When his revenge is nigh.

PROCIDA.—Thou, too, come forth,  
 From thine own halls an exile! Dost thou make  
 The mountain-fastnesses thy dwelling still,  
 While hostile banners o'er thy rampart-walls  
 Wave their proud blazonry?

1ST SICILIAN.—Even so. I stood  
 Last night before my own ancestral towers  
 An unknown outcast, while the tempest beat  
 On my bare head. What reaked it? There was joy  
 Within, and revelry; the festive lamps  
 Were streaming from each turret, and gay songs  
 I' the stranger's tongue, made mirth. They little deemed  
 Who heard their melodies. But there are thoughts  
 Best nurtured in the wild; there are dread vows  
 Known to the mountain-echoes. Procida!  
 Call on the outcast, when revenge is nigh.

PROCIDA.—I knew a young Sicilian—one whose heart  
 Should be all fire. On that most guilty day  
 When, with our martyred Conradin, the flower  
 Of the land's knighthood perished; he of whom

I speak, a weeping boy, whose innocent tears  
 Melted a thousand hearts that dared not aid,  
 Stood by the scaffold with extended arms,  
 Calling upon his father, whose last look  
 Turned full on him its parting agony.  
 The father's blood gushed o'er him ; and the boy  
 Then dried his tears, and with a kindling eye,  
 And a proud flush on his young cheek, looked up  
 To the bright heaven.—Doth he remember still  
 That bitter hour ?

2D SICILIAN.—He bears a sheathless sword !

—Call on the orphan when revenge is nigh.

PROCIDA.—Our band shows gallantly—but there are men  
 Who should be with us now, had they not dared  
 In some wild moment of festivity  
 To give their full hearts way, and breathe a wish  
 For freedom : and some traitor—it might be  
 A breeze, perchance—bore the forbidden sound  
 To Eribert : so they must die—unless  
 Fate (who at times is wayward) should select  
 Some other victim first. But have they not  
 Brothers or sons among us ?

GUIDO.—Look on me !

I have a brother—a young high-souled boy,  
 And beautiful as a sculptor's dream, with brow  
 That wears, amidst its dark rich curls, the stamp  
 Of inborn nobleness. In truth, he is  
 A glorious creature. But his doom is sealed  
 With theirs of whom ye spoke ; and I have knelt—  
 Ay, scorn me not ! 'twas for his life—I knelt  
 Even at the viceroy's feet, and he put on  
 That heartless laugh of cold malignity  
 We know so well, and spurned me. But the stain

Of shame like this takes blood to wash it off,  
 And thus it shall be cancelled ! Call on me,  
 When the stern moment of revenge is nigh.

PROCIDA.—I call upon thee now ! The land's high soul  
 Is roused, and moving onward, like a breeze  
 Or a swift sunbeam, kindling nature's hues  
 To deeper life before it. In his chains,  
 The peasant dreams of freedom.—Ay, 'tis thus  
 Oppression fans the imperishable flame  
 With most unconscious hands. No praise be hers  
 For what she blindly works ! When slavery's cup  
 O'erflows its bounds, the creeping poison, meant  
 To dull our senses, through each burning vein  
 Pours fever, lending a delirious strength  
 To burst man's fetters. And they shall be burst !  
 I have hoped, when hope seemed frenzy ; but a power  
 Abides in human will, when bent with strong  
 Unswerving energy on one great aim,  
 To make and rule its fortunes ! I have been  
 A wanderer in the fulness of my years,  
 A restless pilgrim of the earth and seas,  
 Gathering the generous thoughts of other lands,  
 To aid our holy cause. And aid is near :  
 But we must give the signal. Now, before  
 The majesty of yon pure heaven, whose eye  
 Is on our hearts—whose righteous arm befriends  
 The arm that strikes for freedom—speak ! decree  
 The fate of our oppressors.

MONTALBA.—Let them fall  
 When dreaming least of peril :—when the heart,  
 Basking in sunny pleasure, doth forget  
 That hate may smile, but sleeps not. Hide the sword  
 With a thick veil of myrtle ; and in halls

Of banqueting, where the full wine-cup shines  
 Red in the festal torchlight, meet we there,  
 And bid them welcome to the feast of death.

PROCIDA.—Thy voice is low and broken, and thy words  
 Scarce meet our ears.

MONTALBA.—Why, then, I must repeat  
 Their import. Let the avenging sword burst forth  
 In some free festal hour—and woe to him  
 Who first shall spare !

RAYMOND.—Must innocence and guilt  
 Perish alike ?

MONTALBA.—Who talks of innocence ?  
 When hath *their* hand been stayed for innocence ?  
 Let them all perish !—Heaven will choose its own.  
 Why should *their* children live ? The earthquake whelms  
 Its undistinguished thousands, making graves  
 Of peopled cities in its path—and this  
 Is heaven's dread justice—ay, and it is well !  
 Why then should we be tender, when the skies  
 Deal thus with man ? What if the infant bleed ?  
 Is there not power to hush the mother's pangs ?  
 What if the youthful bride perchance should fall  
 In her triumphant beauty ? Should we pause,  
 As if death were not mercy to the pangs  
 Which make our lives the records of our woes ?  
 Let them all perish ! And if one be found  
 Amidst our band to stay the avenging steel  
 For pity, or remorse, or boyish love,  
 Then be his doom as theirs !

( *A pause.* )

Why gaze ye thus ?

Brethren, what means your silence ?

SICILIANS.—Be it so !

If one among us stay the avenging steel  
 For love or pity, be his doom as theirs !  
 Pledge we our faith to this.

RAYMOND (*rushing forward indignantly.*)—Our faith to this !

No ! I but *dreamt* I heard it ! Can it be ?  
 My countrymen, my father !—is it thus  
 That freedom should be won ? Awake !—awake  
 To loftier thoughts ! Lift up exultingly,  
 On the crowned heights and to the sweeping winds,  
 Your glorious banner. Let your trumpet's blast  
 Make the tombs thrill with echoes. Call aloud,  
 Proclaim from all your hills, the land shall bear  
 The stranger's yoke no longer. What is he  
 Who carries on his practised lip a smile,  
 Beneath his vest a dagger, which but waits  
 Till the heart bounds with joy, to still its beatings ?  
 That which our nature's instinct doth recoil from,  
 And our blood curdle at—ay, yours and mine—  
 A murderer ! Heard ye ? Shall that name with ours  
 Go down to after days ? O friends ! a cause  
 Like that for which we rise, hath made bright names  
 Of the elder time as rallying-words to men—  
 Sounds full of might and immortality.  
 And shall not ours be such ?

MONTALBA.—Fond dreamer, peace !

Fame ! What is Fame ? Will our unconscious dust  
 Start into thrilling rapture from the grave,  
 At the vain breath of praise ? I tell thee, youth !  
 Our souls are parched with agonising thirst,  
 Which must be quench'd, tho' death were in the draught :  
 We must have vengeance, for our foes have left  
 No other joy unblighted.

PROCIDA.—O my son !

The time is past for such high dreams as thine.  
 Thou know'st not whom we deal with : knightly faith  
 And chivalrous honour are but things whereon  
 They cast disdainful pity. We must meet  
 Falsehood with wiles, and insult with revenge.  
 And, for our names—whate'er the deeds by which  
 We burst our bondage—is it not enough  
 That in the chronicle of days to come,  
 We, through a bright *For Ever*, shall be called  
 The men who saved their country ?

RAIMOND.—Many a land  
 Hath bowed beneath the yoke, and then arisen  
 As a strong lion rending silken bonds,  
 And on the open field, before high heaven,  
 Won such majestic vengeance as hath made  
 Its name a power on earth. Ay, nations own  
 It is enough of glory to be called  
 The children of the mighty, who redeemed  
 Their native soil—but not by means like these.

MONTALBA.—I have no children. Of Montalba's blood  
 Not one red drop doth circle through the veins  
 Of aught that breathes. Why, what have *I* to do  
 With far futurity ? My spirit lives  
 But in the past. Away ! when thou dost stand  
 On this fair earth as doth a blasted tree  
 Which the warm sun revives not, *then* return,  
 Strong in thy desolation : but till then,  
 Thou art not for our purpose ; we have need  
 Of more unshrinking hearts.

RAIMOND.—Montalba ! know  
 I shrink from crime alone. Oh ! if my voice  
 Might yet have power among you, I would say,  
 Associates, leaders, be avenged ! but yet

As knights, as warriors !

MONTALBA.—Peace ! have we not borne  
The indelible taint of contumely and chains ?  
We are not knights and warriors. Our bright crests  
Have been defiled and trampled to the earth.  
Boy ! we are slaves : and our revenge shall be  
Deep as a slave's disgrace.

RAIMOND.—Why, then, farewell :  
I leave you to your counsels. He that still  
Would hold his lofty nature undebased,  
And his name pure, were but a loiterer here.

PROCIDA.—And is it thus indeed ? Dost thou forsake  
Our cause, my son !

RAIMOND.—O father ! what proud hopes  
This hour hath blighted ! Yet, whate'er betide,  
It is a noble privilege to look up  
Fearless in heaven's bright face—and this is mine,  
And shall be still. [Exit.

PROCIDA.—He's gone ! Why, let it be !  
I trust our Sicily hath many a son  
Valiant as mine. Associates ! 'tis decreed  
Our foes shall perish. We have but to name  
The hour, the scene, the signal.

MONTALBA.—It should be  
In the full city, when some festival  
Hath gathered throngs, and lulled infatuate hearts  
To brief security. Hark ! is there not  
A sound of hurrying footsteps on the breeze ?  
We are betrayed.—Who art thou ?

( VITTORIA enters. )

PROCIDA.— One alone  
Should be thus daring. Lady, lift the veil

That shades thy noble brow.

(*She raises her veil—the Sicilians draw back with respect.*)

SICILIANS. — The affianced bride

Of our lost king !

PROCIDA. — And more, Montalba ; know,

Within this form there dwells a soul as high  
As warriors in their battles e'er have proved,  
Or patriots on the scaffold.

VITTORIA. — Valiant men !

I come to ask your aid. You see me, one  
Whose widowed youth hath all been consecrate  
To a proud sorrow, and whose life is held  
In token and memorial of the dead.  
Say, is it meet that lingering thus on earth,  
But to behold one great atonement made,  
And keep one name from fading in men's hearts,  
A tyrant's will should force me to profane  
Heaven's altar with unhallowed vows—and live  
Stung by the keen unutterable scorn  
Of my own bosom, live—another's bride ?

SICILIANS. — Never ; oh, never ! Fear not, noble lady !  
Worthy of Conradin !

VITTORIA. — Yet hear me still—

*His* bride, that Eribert's, who notes our tears  
With his insulting eye of cold derision,  
And, could he pierce the depths where feeling works,  
Would number even our agonies as crimes.  
Say, is this meet ?

GUIDO. — We deemed these nuptials, lady,

Thy willing choice ; but 'tis a joy to find  
Thou'rt noble still. Fear not : by all our wrongs,  
This shall not be.



PROCIDA. — Vittoria, thou art come  
To ask *our* aid—but we have need of thine.  
Know, the completion of our high designs  
Requires—a festival; and it must be  
Thy bridal!

VITTORIA. — Procida!

PROCIDA. — Nay, start not thus.  
'Tis no hard task to bind your raven hair  
With festal garlands, and to bid the song  
Rise, and the wine-cup mantle. No—nor yet  
To meet your suitor at the glittering shrine,  
Where death, not love, awaits him!

VITTORIA. — Can my soul  
Dissemble thus?

PROCIDA. — We have no other means  
Of winning our great birthright back from those  
Who have usurped it, than so lulling them  
Into vain confidence, that they may deem  
All wrongs forgot; and this may best be done  
By what I ask of thee.

MONTALBA. — Then we will mix  
With the flushed revellers, making their gay feast  
The harvest of the grave.

VITTORIA. — A bridal-day!  
Must it be so? Then, chiefs of Sicily!  
I bid you to my nuptials. But be there  
With your bright swords unsheathed, for thus alone  
*My* guests should be adorned.

PROCIDA. — And let thy banquet  
Be soon announced; for there are noble men  
Sentenced to die, for whom we fain would purchase  
Reprieve with other blood.

VITTORIA. — Be it then the day

Preceding that appointed for their doom.

GUIDO.—My brother, thou shalt live! Oppression boasts  
No gift of prophecy. It but remains  
To name our signal, chiefs!

MONTALBA.—The Vesper-bell!

PROCIDA.—Even so—the Vesper-bell, whose deep-toned peal  
Is heard o'er land and wave. Part of our band,  
Wearing the guise of antic revelry,  
Shall enter, as in some fantastic pageant,  
The halls of Eribert; and at the hour  
Devoted to the sword's tremendous task,  
I follow with the rest. The Vesper-bell!  
That sound shall wake the avenger; for 'tis come,  
The time when power is in a voice, a breath,  
To burst the spell which bound us. But the night  
Is waning with her stars, which one by one  
Warn us to part. Friends, to your homes. Your *homes!*  
That name is yet to win. Away! prepare  
For our next meeting in Palermo's walls.  
The Vesper-bell! Remember!

SICILIANS.—Fear us not.

The Vesper-bell!

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

---

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Apartment in a Palace.* ERIBERT and VITTORIA.

VITTORIA.—Speak not of love. It is a word with deep  
Strange magic in its melancholy sound,  
To summon up the dead; and they should rest,  
At such an hour, forgotten. There are things

We must throw from us, when the heart would gather  
 Strength to fulfil its settled purposes ;  
 Therefore, no more of love ! But if to robe  
 This form in bridal ornaments—to smile  
 (I can smile yet) at thy gay feast, and stand  
 At the altar by thy side ;—if this be deemed  
 Enough, it shall be done.

ERIBERT. — My fortune's star  
 Doth rule the ascendant still ! (*Apart.*)—If not of love,  
 Then, pardon, lady, that I speak of joy,  
 And with exulting heart——

VITTORIA. — There is no joy !  
 Who shall look through the far futurity,  
 And, as the shadowy visions of events  
 Develop on his gaze, midst their dim throng,  
 Dare, with oracular mien, to point, and say,  
 “This will bring happiness?” Who shall do this ?  
 Who, thou and I, and all ! There's One, who sits  
 In His own bright tranquillity enthroned,  
 High o'er all storms, and looking far beyond  
 Their thickest clouds ; but we, from whose dull eyes  
 A grain of dust hides the great sun—even we  
 Usurp his attributes, and talk, as seers,  
 Of future joy and grief !

ERIBERT. — Thy words are strange.  
 Yet will I hope that peace at length shall settle  
 Upon thy troubled heart, and add soft grace  
 To thy majestic beauty. Fair Vittoria !  
 Oh ! if my cares——

VITTORIA. — I know a day shall come  
 Of peace to all. Even from my darkened spirit  
 Soon shall each restless wish be exorcised,  
 Which haunts it now, and I shall then lie down

Serenely to repose. Of this no more.

I have a boon to ask.

ERIBERT. — Command my power,  
And deem it thus most honoured.

VITTORIA. — Have I then  
Soared such an eagle pitch, as to command  
The mighty Eribert?—And yet 'tis meet;  
For I bethink me now, I should have worn  
A crown upon this forehead. Generous lord!  
Since thus you give me freedom, know, there is  
An hour I have loved from childhood, and a sound  
Whose tones, o'er earth and ocean sweetly bearing  
A sense of deep repose, have lulled me oft  
To peace—which is forgetfulness; I mean  
The Vesper-bell. I pray you let it be  
The summons to our bridal. Hear you not?  
To our fair bridal!

ERIBERT. — Lady, let your will  
Appoint each circumstance. I am too blessed,  
Proving my homage thus.

VITTORIA. — Why, then, 'tis mine  
To rule the glorious fortunes of the day,  
And I may be content. Yet much remains  
For thought to brood on, and I would be left  
Alone with my resolves. Kind Eribert!  
(Whom I command so absolutely,) now  
Part we a few brief hours; and doubt not, when  
I'm at thy side once more, but I shall stand  
There—to the last!

ERIBERT. — Your smiles are troubled, lady—  
May they ere long be brighter! Time will seem  
Slow till the Vesper-bell.

VITTORIA. — 'Tis lovers' phrase

To say—Time lags ; and therefore meet for you ;  
 But with an equal pace the hours move on,  
 Whether they bear, on their swift silent wing,  
 Pleasure or—fate.

ERIBERT. — Be not so full of thought  
 On such a day. Behold, the skies themselves  
 Look on my joy with a triumphant smile  
 Unshadowed by a cloud.

VITTORIA. — 'Tis very meet  
 That heaven (which loves the just) should wear a smile  
 In honour of his fortunes. Now, my lord,  
 Forgive me if I say farewell until  
 The appointed hour.

ERIBERT. — Lady, a brief farewell. [ *Exeunt separately.* ]

## SCENE II.

*The Sea-shore.*—PROCIDA and RAIMOND.

PROCIDA. — And dost thou still refuse to share the glory  
 Of this our daring enterprise?

RAIMOND. — O father!

I, too, have dreamt of glory ; and the word  
 Hath to my soul been as a trumpet's voice,  
 Making my nature sleepless. But the deeds  
 Whereby 'twas won—the high exploits, whose tale  
 Bids the heart burn, were of another cast  
 Than such as thou requirest.

PROCIDA. — Every deed  
 Hath sanctity, if bearing for its aim  
 The freedom of our country ; and the sword  
 Alike is honoured in the patriot's hand,

Searching, midst warrior hosts, the heart which gave  
Oppression birth, or flashing through the gloom  
Of the still chamber, o'er its troubled couch,  
At dead of night.

RAIMOND (*turning away.*)—There is no path but one  
For noble natures.

PROCIDA.—Wouldst thou ask the man  
Who to the earth hath dashed a nation's chains,  
Rent as with heaven's own lightning, by what means  
The glorious end was won? Go, swell the acclaim!  
Bid the deliverer hail! and if his path,  
To that most bright and sovereign destiny,  
Had led o'er trampled thousands, be it called  
A stern necessity, but not a crime!

RAIMOND.—Father! my soul yet kindles at the thought  
Of nobler lessons in my boyhood learned,  
Even from thy voice. The high remembrances  
Of other days are stirring in the heart  
Where thou didst plant them; and they speak of men  
Who needed no vain sophistry to gild  
Acts that would bear heaven's light—and such be mine!  
O father! is it yet too late to draw  
The praise and blessing of all valiant hearts  
On our most righteous cause?

PROCIDA.—What wouldst thou do?

RAIMOND.—I would go forth, and rouse the indignant land  
To generous combat. Why should freedom strike  
Mantled with darkness? Is there not more strength  
Even in the waving of her single arm  
Than hosts can wield against her? I would rouse  
That spirit whose fire doth press resistless on  
To its proud sphere—the stormy field of fight.

PROCIDA.—Ay! and give time and warning to the foe

To gather all his might! It is too late.  
 There is a work to be this eve begun  
 When rings the Vesper-bell; and, long before  
 To-morrow's sun hath reached i' the noonday heaven  
 His throne of burning glory, every sound  
 Of the Provençal tongue within our walls,  
 As by one thunderstroke—(you are pale, my son)—  
 Shall be for ever silenced!

RAIMOND.—What! such sounds  
 As falter on the lip of infancy,  
 In its imperfect utterance? or are breathed  
 By the fond mother as she lulls her babe?  
 Or in sweet hymns, upon the twilight air  
 Poured by the timid maid? Must all alike  
 Be stilled in death? And wouldst thou tell my heart  
 There is no crime in this?

PROCIDA.—Since thou dost feel  
 Such horror of our purpose, in thy power  
 Are means that might avert it.

RAIMOND.—Speak! oh, speak!

PRO.—How would those rescued thousands bless thy name,  
 Shouldst thou betray us!

RAIMOND.—Father! I can bear—  
 Ay, proudly woo—the keenest questioning  
 Of thy soul-gifted eye, which almost seems  
 To claim a part of heaven's dread royalty,—  
 The power that searches thought.

PROCIDA (*after a pause.*)—Thou hast a brow  
 Clear as the day; and yet I doubt thee, Raimond!  
 Whether it be that I have learned distrust  
 From a long look through man's deep-folded heart;  
 Whether my paths have been so seldom crossed  
 By honour and fair mercy, that they seem

But beautiful deceptions, meeting thus  
 My unaccustomed gaze : howe'er it be,  
 I doubt thee ! See thou waver not—take heed.  
 Time lifts the veil from all things ! [Exit.

RAIMOND.—And 'tis thus  
 Youth fades from off our spirit ; and the robes  
 Of beauty and of majesty, wherewith  
 We clothed our idols, drop ! Oh, bitter day !  
 When, at the crushing of our glorious world,  
 We start, and find men thus ! Yet, be it so !  
 Is not my soul still powerful in itself  
 To realise its dreams ? Ay, shrinking not  
 From the pure eye of heaven, my brow may well  
 Undaunted meet my father's. But, away !  
 Thou shalt be saved, sweet Constance ! Love is yet  
 Mightier than vengeance. [Exit.

### SCENE III.

*Gardens of a Palace. CONSTANCE alone.*

CONST.—There was a time when my thoughts wander'd not  
 Beyond these fairy scenes :—when but to catch  
 The languid fragrance of the southern breeze  
 From the rich flowering citrons, or to rest,  
 Dreaming of some wild legend, in the shade  
 Of the dark laurel foliage, was enough  
 Of happiness. How have these calm delights  
 Fled from before one passion, as the dews,  
 The delicate gems of morning, are exhaled  
 By the great sun !

(RAIMOND enters.)



Raimond! oh! now thou'rt come—

I read it in thy look—to say farewell

For the last time—the last!

RAIMOND.—No, best beloved!

I come to tell thee there is now no power

To part us but in death.

CONSTANCE.—I have dreamt of joy,

But never aught like this. Speak yet again!

Say we shall part no more!

RAIMOND.—No more—if love

Can strive with darker spirits; and he is strong

In his immortal nature! All is changed

Since last we met. My father—keep the tale

Secret from all, and most of all, my Constance,

From Eribert — my father is returned:

I leave thee not.

CONSTANCE. Thy father! blessèd sound!

Good angels be his guard! Oh! if he knew

How my soul clings to thine, he could not hate

Even a Provençal maid! Thy father!—now

Thy soul will be at peace, and I shall see

The sunny happiness of earlier days

Look from thy brow once more. But how is this?

Thine eye reflects not the glad soul of mine;

And in thy look is that which ill befits

A tale of joy.

RAIMOND.—A dream is on my soul.

I see a slumberer, crowned with flowers, and smiling

As in delighted visions, on the brink

Of a dread chasm; and this strange fantasy

Hath cast so deep a shadow o'er my thoughts,

I cannot but be sad.

CONSTANCE.—Why, let me sing

One of the sweet wild strains you love so well,  
And this will banish it.

RAIMOND.—It may not be.

O gentle Constance! go not forth to-day:  
Such dreams are ominous.

CONSTANCE.—Have you, then, forgot

My brother's nuptial feast? I must be one  
Of the gay train attending to the shrine  
His stately bride. In sooth, my step of joy  
Will print earth lightly now. What fear'st thou, love?  
Look all around! the blue transparent skies,  
And sunbeams pouring a more buoyant life  
Through each glad thrilling vein, will brightly chase  
All thought of evil. Why, the very air  
Breathes of delight. Through all its glowing realms  
Doth music blend with fragrance; and even here  
The city's voice of jubilee is heard,  
Till each light leaf seems trembling unto sounds  
Of human joy.

RAIMOND.—Their lie far deeper things —

Things that may darken thought for life, beneath  
That city's festive semblance. I have passed  
Through the glad multitudes, and I have marked  
A stern intelligence in meeting eyes,  
Which deemed their flash unnoticed, and a quick  
Suspicious vigilance, too intent to clothe  
Its mien with carelessness; and now and then,  
A hurrying start, a whisper, or a hand  
Pointing by stealth to some one, singled out  
Amidst the reckless throng. O'er all is spread  
A mantling flush of revelry, which may hide  
Much from unpractised eyes; but lighter signs  
Have been prophetic oft.

CONSTANCE.—I tremble, Raimond !

What may these things portend ?

RAIMOND.—It was a day

Of festival like this ; the city sent  
Up through her sunny firmament a voice  
Joyous as now ; when, scarcely heralded  
By one deep moan, from his cavernous depths  
The earthquake burst ; and the wide splendid scene  
Became one chaos of all fearful things,  
Till the brain whirled, partaking the sick motion  
Of rocking palaces.

CONSTANCE.—And then didst thou,

My noble Raimond ! through the dreadful paths  
Laid open by destruction, past the chasms,  
Whose fathomless clefts a moment's work had given  
One burial unto thousands, rush to save  
Thy trembling Constance—she who lives to bless  
Thy generous love, that still the breath of heaven  
Wafts gladness to her soul !

RAIMOND.—Heaven ! — heaven is just !

And being so, must guard thee, sweet one ! still.  
Trust none beside. Oh ! the omnipotent skies  
Make their wrath manifest, but insidious man  
Doth compass those he hates with secret snares,  
Wherein lies fate. Know, danger walks abroad,  
Masked as a reveller. Constance ! oh, by all  
Our tried affection, all the vows which bind  
Our hearts together, meet me in these bowers—  
Here, I adjure you, meet me, when the bell  
Doth sound for vesper prayer !

CONSTANCE.—And know'st thou not

'Twill be the bridal hour ?

RAIMOND.—It will not, love !

That hour will bring no bridal ! Naught of this  
 To human ear ; but speed thou hither — fly,  
 When evening brings that signal. Dost thou heed ?  
 This is no meeting by a lover sought  
 To breathe fond tales, and make the twilight groves  
 And stars attest his vows ; deem thou not so,  
 Therefore denying it ! I tell thee, Constance !  
 If thou wouldst save me from such fierce despair  
 As falls on man, beholding all he loves  
 Perish before him, while his strength can but  
 Strive with his agony — thou'lt meet me then.  
 Look on me, love ! — I am not oft so moved —  
 Thou'lt meet me ?

CONSTANCE.—Oh ! what mean thy words ? If then  
 My steps are free, — I will. Be thou but calm,

RAIMOND.—Be calm ! There is a cold and sullen calm,  
 And, were my wild fears made realities,  
 It might be mine ; but in this dread suspense—  
 This conflict of all terrible fantasies,  
 There is no calm. Yet fear thou not, dear love !  
 I will watch o'er thee still. And now, farewell  
 Until that hour !

CONSTANCE.—My Raimond, fare thee well. [Exeunt.

#### SCENE IV.

*Room in the Citadel of Palermo. ALBERTI and DE COUCI.*

DE COUCI.—Saidst thou this night ?

ALBERTI.—This very night. And lo !

Even now the sun declines.

DE COUCI.—What ! are they armed ?

ALBERTI.—All armed, and strong in vengeance and despair.

DE COUCI.—Doubtful and strange the tale! Why was not this  
Revealed before?

ALBERTI.—Mistrust me not, my lord!  
That stern and jealous Procida hath kept  
O'er all my steps (as though he did suspect  
The purposes, which oft his eye hath sought  
To read in mine) a watch so vigilant  
I knew not how to warn thee, though for this  
Alone I mingled with his bands—to learn  
Their projects and their strength. Thou know'st my faith  
To Anjou's house full well.

DE COUCI.—How may we now  
Avert the gathering storm? The Viceroy holds  
His bridal feast, and all is revelry.  
'Twas a true-boding heaviness of heart  
Which kept me from these nuptials.

ALBERTI.—Thou thyself  
May'st yet escape, and haply of thy bands  
Rescue a part, ere long to wreak full vengeance  
Upon these rebels. 'Tis too late to dream  
Of saving Eribert. Even shouldst thou rush  
Before him with the tidings, in his pride  
And confidence of soul, he would but laugh  
Thy tale to scorn.

DE COUCI.—He must not die unwarned,  
Though it be all in vain. But thou, Alberti,  
Rejoin thy comrades, lest thine absence wake  
Suspicion in their hearts. Thou hast done well,  
And shalt not pass unguerdoned, should I live  
Through the deep horrors of the approaching night.

ALBERTI.—Noble De Couci, trust me still. Anjou  
Commands no heart more faithful than Alberti's. [*Exit.*

DE COUCI.—The grovelling slave! And yet he spoke too true.

For Eribert, in blind elated joy,  
 Will scorn the warning voice. The day wanes fast,  
 And through the city, recklessly dispersed,  
 Unarmed and unprepared, my soldiers revel  
 Even on the brink of fate. I must away. [Exit.

## SCENE V.

*A Banqueting Hall. PROVENÇAL NOBLES assembled.*

1ST NOBLE.—Joy be to this fair meeting! Who hath seen  
 The Viceroy's bride?

2D NOBLE.—I saw her as she passed  
 The gazing throngs assembled in the city.  
 'Tis said she hath not left for years, till now,  
 Her castle's wood-girt solitude. 'Twill gall  
 These proud Sicilians that her wide domains  
 Should be the conqueror's guerdon.

3D NOBLE.—'Twas their boast  
 With what fond faith she worshipped still the name  
 Of the boy Conradin. How will the slaves  
 Brook this new triumph of their lords?

2D NOBLE.—In sooth,  
 It stings them to the quick. In the full streets  
 They mix with our Provençals, and assume  
 A guise of mirth, but it sits hardly on them.  
 'Twere worth a thousand festivals to see  
 With what a bitter and unnatural effort  
 They strive to smile!

1ST NOBLE.—Is this Vittoria fair?

2D NOBLE.—Of a most noble mien; but yet her beauty  
 Is wild and awful, and her large dark eye

In its unsettled glances hath strange power,  
From which thou'lt shrink as I did.

1ST NOBLE.—Hush! they come.

(Enter ERIBERT, VITTORIA, CONSTANCE, and others.)

ERIBERT.—Welcome, my noble friends!—there must not  
lour

One clouded brow to-day in Sicily.  
Behold my bride!

NOBLES.—Receive our homage, lady!

VITTORIA.—I bid all welcome. May the feast we offer  
Prove worthy of such guests.

ERIBERT.—Look on her, friends!

And say if that majestic brow is not  
Meet for a diadem?

VITTORIA.—'Tis well, my lord!

When memory's pictures fade—'tis kindly done  
To brighten their dim hues!

1ST NOBLE (*apart.*)—Marked you her glance?

2D NOB.—What eloquent scorn was there? Yet he, the elate  
Of heart, perceives it not.

ERIBERT.—Now to the feast!

Constance, you look not joyous. I have said  
That all should smile to-day.

CONSTANCE.—Forgive me, brother!

The heart is wayward, and its garb of pomp  
At times oppresses it.

ERIBERT.—Why, how is this?

CONSTANCE.—Voices of woe, and prayers of agony,

Unto my soul have risen, and left sad sounds  
There echoing still. Yet would I fain be gay,  
Since 'tis your wish. In truth I should have been  
A village maid.

ERIBERT.—But being as you are,  
Not thus ignobly free, command your looks  
(They may be taught obedience) to reflect  
The aspect of the time.

VITTORIA.—And know, fair maid!  
That, if in this unskilled, you stand alone  
Amidst our court of pleasure.

ERIBERT.—To the feast!  
Now let the red wine foam! There should be mirth  
When conquerors revel! Lords of this fair isle!  
Your good swords' heritage, crown each bowl, and pledge  
The present and the future; for they both  
Look brightly on us. Dost thou smile, my bride?

VITTORIA.—Yes, Eribert! Thy prophecies of joy  
Have taught even me to smile.

ERIBERT.—'Tis well. To-day  
I have won a fair and almost royal bride;  
To-morrow let the bright sun speed his course,  
To waft me happiness!—my proudest foes  
Must die; and then my slumber shall be laid  
On rose-leaves, with no envious folds to mar'  
The luxury of its visions!—Fair Vittoria,  
Your looks are troubled.

VITTORIA.—It is strange — but oft,  
Midst festal songs and garlands, o'er my soul  
Death comes, with some dull image! As you spoke  
Of those whose blood is claimed, I thought for them  
Who, in a darkness thicker than the night  
E'er wove with all her clouds, have pined so long,  
How blessèd were the stroke which makes them things  
Of that invisible world, wherein, we trust,  
There is at least no bondage. But should we,  
From such a scene as this, where all earth's joys



Contend for mastery, and the very sense  
Of life is rapture — should we pass, I say,  
At once from such excitements to the void  
And silent gloom of that which doth await us —  
Were it not dreadful ?

ERIBERT.—Banish such dark thoughts :

They ill beseem the hour.

VITTORIA.—There is no hour

Of this mysterious world, in joy or woe,  
But they beseem it well. Why, what a slight  
Impalpable bound is that, the unseen, which severs  
Being from death ! And who can tell how near  
Its misty brink he stands ?

1ST NOBLE (*aside*).—What mean her words ?

2D NOBLE.—There's some dark mystery here.

ERIBERT.—No more of this !

Pour the bright juice, which Etna's glowing vines  
Yield to the conquerors ; and let music's voice  
Dispel these ominous dreams. Wake, harp and song !  
Swell out your triumph !

(*A messenger enters, bearing a letter.*)

MESSENGER.—Pardon, my good lord !

But this demands——

ERIBERT.—What means thy breathless haste,  
And that ill-boding mien ? Away ! such looks  
Befit not hours like these.

MESSENGER.—The Lord De Couci

Bade me bear this, and say, 'tis fraught with tidings  
Of life and death.

VITTORIA (*hurriedly*).—Is this a time for aught  
But revelry ? My lord these dull intrusions  
Mar the bright spirit of the festal scene.

ERIBERT.—Hence! Tell the Lord De Couci, we will talk  
Of life and death to-morrow. [*Exit Messenger.*]

Let there be  
Around me none but joyous looks to-day,  
And strains whose very echoes wake to mirth!

(*A band of the conspirators enter, to the sound of music, disguised as shepherds, bacchanals, &c.*)

What forms are these? What means this antic triumph?  
VITTORIA.—'Tis but a rustic pageant, by my vassals  
Prepared to grace our bridal. Will you not  
Hear their wild music? Our Sicilian vales  
Have many a sweet and mirthful melody,  
To which the glad heart bounds. Breathe ye some strain  
Meet for the time, ye sons of Sicily!

(*One of the Masquers sings.*)

THE festal eve, o'er earth and sky,  
In her sunset robe looks bright,  
And the purple hills of Sicily  
With their vineyards laugh in light:  
From the marble cities of her plains  
Glad voices mingling swell;  
But with yet more loud and lofty strains  
They shall hail the Vesper-bell.

Oh! sweet its tones, when the summer breeze  
Their cadence wafts afar,  
To float o'er the blue Sicilian seas,  
As they gleam to the first pale star.  
The shepherd greets them on his height,  
The hermit in his cell;  
But a deeper voice shall breathe to-night,  
In the sound of the Vesper-bell!

(*The bell rings.*)

ERIB.—It is the hour. Hark, hark, my bride! our summons!  
 The altar is prepared and crowned with flowers,  
 That wait——

VITTORIA.—The victim!

*(A tumult heard without. PROCIDA and MONTALBA enter, with others, armed.)*

PROCIDA.—Strike! The hour is come!

VITTORIA.—Welcome, avengers! welcome. Now, be strong.

*(The conspirators throw off their disguise, and rush with their swords drawn upon the Provençals. ERIBERT is wounded, and falls.)*

PROCIDA.—Now hath fate reached thee, in thy mid career,  
 Thou reveller in a nation's agonies!

*(The Provençals are driven off, pursued by the Sicilians.)*

CONST. *(supporting ERIBERT.)*—My brother! oh, my brother!

ERIBERT.—Have I stood

A leader in the battle-fields of kings,  
 To perish thus at last? Ay, by these pangs,  
 And this strange chill, that heavily doth creep  
 Like a slow poison through my curdling veins,  
 This should be—death! In sooth, a dull exchange  
 For the gay bridal feast!

VOICES WITHOUT.—Remember Conradin! Spare none!—  
 spare none!

VITTORIA *(throwing off her bridal wreath and ornaments.)*—

This is proud freedom! Now my soul may cast,  
 In generous scorn, her mantle of dissembling  
 To earth for ever! And it is such joy,  
 As if a captive from his dull cold cell  
 Might soar at once, on chartered wing, to range  
 The realms of starred infinity. Away,

Vain mockery of a bridal wreath! The hour  
 For which stern patience ne'er kept watch in vain  
 Is come; and I may give my bursting heart  
 Full and indignant scope. Now, Eribert!  
 Believe in retribution. What! proud man!  
 Prince, ruler, conqueror! didst thou deem heaven slept?  
 "Or that the unseen immortal ministers,  
 Ranging the world to note even purposed crime  
 In burning characters, had laid aside  
 Their everlasting attributes for *thee*?"  
 O blind security! He in whose dread hand  
 The lightnings vibrate, holds them back until  
 The trampler of this goodly earth hath reached  
 His pyramid height of power; that so his fall  
 May with more fearful oracles make pale  
 Man's crowned oppressors.

CONSTANCE.—Oh, reproach him not!

His soul is trembling on the dizzy brink  
 Of that dim world where passion may not enter.  
 Leave him in peace.

VOICES WITHOUT.—Anjou! Anjou!—De Couci to the rescue!

ERIBERT (*half raising himself*).—

My brave Provençals! do ye combat still?  
 And I your chief am here! Now, now I feel  
 That death indeed is bitter.

VITTORIA.—Fare thee well!

Thine eyes so oft with their insulting smile  
 Have looked on man's last pangs, thou shouldst by this  
 Be perfect how to die. [Exit.

(RAYMOND enters.)

RAYMOND.—Away, my Constance!

Now is the time for flight. Our slaughtering bands

Are scattered far and wide. A little while  
 And thou shalt be in safety. Know'st thou not  
 That slow sweet vale, where dwells the holy man  
 Anselmo—he whose hermitage is reared  
 Mid some old temple's ruins? Round the spot  
 His name hath spread so pure and deep a charm,  
 'Tis hallowed as a sanctuary wherein  
 Thou shalt securely bide, till this wild storm  
 Have spent its fury. Haste!

CONSTANCE.—I will not fly!

While in his heart there is one throb of life,  
 One spark in his dim eyes, I will not leave  
 The brother of my youth to perish thus,  
 Without one kindly bosom to sustain  
 His dying head.

ERIBERT.—The clouds are darkening round.

There are strange voices ringing in mine ear  
 That summon me—to what? But I have been  
 Used to command! Away! I will not die,  
 But on the field——

*(He dies.)*

CONSTANCE *(kneeling by him.)*—O Heaven! be merciful  
 As thou art just!—for he is now where naught  
 But mercy can avail him. It is past!

*(GUIDO enters with his sword drawn.)*

GUIDO *(to RAIMOND.)*—

I've sought thee long. Why art thou lingering here?  
 Haste, follow me! Suspicion with thy name  
 Joins the word—*Traitor!*

RAIMOND.—Traitor! Guido?

GUIDO.—Yes!

Hast thou not heard that, with his men-at-arms,

After vain conflict with a people's wrath,  
 De Couci hath escaped? And there are those  
 Who murmur that from thee the warning came  
 Which saved him from our vengeance. But even yet,  
 In the red current of Provençal blood,  
 That doubt may be effaced. Draw thy good sword,  
 And follow me!

RAIMOND.—And thou couldst doubt me, Guido?  
 'Tis come to this! Away! mistrust me still.  
 I will not stain my sword with deeds like thine.  
 Thou know'st me not!

GUIDO.—Raimond di Procida!—  
 If thou art he whom once I deemed so noble—  
 Call me thy friend no more! [Exit.

RAIMOND (*after a pause*).—Rise, dearest, rise!  
 Thy duty's task hath nobly been fulfilled,  
 Even in the face of death; but all is o'er,  
 And this is now no place where nature's tears  
 In quiet sanctity may freely flow.  
 Hark! the wild sounds that wait on fearful deeds  
 Are swelling on the winds, as the deep roar  
 Of fast-advancing billows; and for thee  
 I shame not thus to tremble! Speed! oh, speed! [*Exeunt.*

---

## ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Street in Palermo. PROCIDA enters.*

PROCIDA.—How strange and deep a stillness loads the air,  
 As with the power of midnight! Ay, where death  
 Hath passed, there should be silence. But this hush

Of nature's heart, this breathlessness of all things,  
 Doth press on thought too heavily, and the sky,  
 With its dark robe of purple thunder-clouds,  
 Brooding in sullen masses o'er my spirit,  
 Weighs like an omen. Wherefore should this be?  
 Is not our task achieved—the mighty work  
 Of our deliverance? Yes; I should be joyous:  
 But this our feeble nature, with its quick  
 Instinctive superstitions, will drag down  
 The ascending soul. And I have fearful bodings  
 That treachery lurks amongst us. Raimond! Raimond!  
 Oh, guilt ne'er made a mien like his its garb!  
 It cannot be!

(MONTALBA, GUIDO, and other Sicilians enter.)

PROCIDA.—Welcome! we meet in joy!

Now may we bear ourselves erect, resuming  
 The kingly port of freemen. Who shall dare,  
 After this proof of slavery's dread recoil,  
 To weave us chains again? Ye have done well.

MONT.—We *have* done well. There needs no choral song,  
 No shouting multitudes, to blazon forth  
 Our stern exploits. The silence of our foes  
 Doth vouch enough; and they are laid to rest,  
 Deep as the sword could make it. Yet our task  
 Is still but half achieved, since with his bands  
 De Couci hath escaped, and doubtless leads  
 Their footsteps to Messina, where our foes  
 Will gather all their strength. Determined hearts,  
 And deeds to startle earth, are yet required  
 To make the mighty sacrifice complete.  
 Where is thy son?

PROCIDA.—I know not. Once last night

He crossed my path, and with one stroke beat down  
 A sword just raised to smite me, and restored  
 My own, which in that deadly strife had been  
 Wrenched from my grasp; but when I would have  
     pressed him

To my exulting bosom, he drew back,  
 And with a sad and yet a scornful smile,  
 Full of strange meaning, left me. Since that hour  
 I have not seen him. Wherefore didst thou ask?

MONT.—It matters not. We have deep things to speak of.

Know'st thou that we have traitors in our councils?

PROCIDA.—I know some voice in secret must have warned  
 De Couci, or his scattered bands had ne'er  
 So soon been marshalled, and in close array  
 Led hence as from the field. Hast thou heard aught  
 That may develop this?

MONTALBA.—The guards we set

To watch the city gates, have seized, this morn,  
 One whose quick fearful glance and hurried step  
 Betrayed his guilty purpose. Mark! he bore  
 (Amidst the tumult, deeming that his flight  
 Might all unnoticed pass) these scrolls to him,  
 The fugitive Provençal. Read and judge.

PROCIDA.—Where is this messenger?

MONTALBA.—Where should he be?

They slew him in their wrath.

PROCIDA.—Unwisely done!

Give me the scrolls.

*(He reads.)*

Now, if there be such things  
 As may to death add sharpness, yet delay  
 The pang which gives release; if there be power



In execration, to call down the fires  
 Of yon avenging heaven, whose rapid shafts  
 But for such guilt were aimless; be they heaped  
 Upon the traitor's head! Scorn make his name  
 Her mark for ever!

MONTALBA.—In our passionate blindness,  
 We send forth curses, whose deep stings recoil  
 Oft on ourselves.

PROCIDA.—Whate'er fate hath of ruin  
 Fall on his house! What! to resign again  
 That freedom for whose sake our souls have now  
 Engrained themselves in blood! Why, who is he  
 That hath devised this treachery? To the scroll  
 Why fixed he not his name, so stamping it  
 With an immortal infamy, whose brand  
 Might warn men from him? Who should be so vile?  
 Alberti?—In his eye is that which ever  
 Shrinks from encountering mine. But no! his race  
 Is of our noblest: oh, he could not shame  
 That high descent. Urbino?—Conti? No:  
 They are too deeply pledged. There's one name more:  
 I cannot utter it! Now shall I read  
 Each face with cold suspicion, which doth blot  
 From man's high mien its native royalty,  
 And seal his noble forehead with the impress  
 Of its own vile imaginings. Speak your thoughts,  
 Montalba! Guido! Who should this man be?

MONT.—Why, what Sicilian youth unsheathed last night  
 His sword to aid our foes, and turned its edge  
 Against his country's chiefs? He that did this,  
 May well be deemed for guiltier treason ripe.

PROCIDA.—And who is he?

MONTALBA.—Nay, ask thy son.

PROCIDA.—My son !

What should he know of such a recreant heart ?  
Speak, Guido ! thou'rt his friend.

GUIDO.—I would not wear

The brand of such a name !

PROCIDA.—How ? what means this ?

A flash of light breaks in upon my soul—  
Is it to blast me ? Yet the fearful doubt  
Hath crept in darkness through my thoughts before,  
And been flung from them. Silence !—Speak not yet !  
I would be calm and meet the thunder-burst  
With a strong heart.

(*A pause.*)

Now, what have I to hear ?

Your tidings ?

GUIDO.—Briefly, 'twas your son did thus :

He hath disgraced your name.

PROCIDA.—My son did thus !

Are thy words oracles, that I should search  
Their hidden meaning out ? What did my son ?  
I have forgot the tale. Repeat it, quick !

GUIDO.—'Twill burst upon thee all too soon. While we

Were busy at the dark and solemn rites  
Of retribution ; while we bathed the earth  
In red libations, which will consecrate  
The soil they mingled with to freedom's step  
Through the long march of ages : 'twas his task  
To shield from danger a Provençal maid,  
Sister of him whose cold oppression stung  
Our hearts to madness.

MONTALBA.—What ! should she be spared

To keep that name from perishing on earth ?

I crossed them in their path, and raised my sword  
 To smite her in her champion's arms. We fought.  
 The boy disarmed me ! And I live to tell  
 My shame, and wreak my vengeance !

GUIDO.—Who but he

Could warn De Couci, or devise the guilt  
 These scrolls reveal ? Hath not the traitor still  
 Sought, with his fair and specious eloquence,  
 To win us from our purpose ? All things seem  
 Leagued to unmask him.

MONTALBA.—Know you not there came,

Even in the banquet's hour, from this De Couci,  
 One, bearing unto Eribert the tidings  
 Of all our proposed deeds ? And have we not  
 Proof, as the noon-day clear, that Raimond loves  
 The sister of that tyrant ?

PROCIDA.—There was one

Who mourned for being childless. Let him now  
 Feast o'er his children's graves, and I will join  
 The revelry !

MONTALBA (*apart.*)—Thou shalt be childless too !

PROCIDA.—Was't you, Montalba ? Now rejoice, I say !

There is no name so near you that its stains  
 Should call the fevered and indignant blood  
 To your dark cheek. But I will dash to earth  
 The weight that presses on my heart, and then  
 Be glad as thou art.

MONTALBA.—What means this, my lord ?

Who hath seen gladness on Montalba's mien ?

PROCIDA.—Why, should not all be glad who have no sons

To tarnish their bright name ?

MONTALBA.—I am not used

To bear with mockery.

PROCIDA.—Friend ! by yon high heaven,  
 I mock thee not ! 'Tis a proud fate to live  
 Alone and unallied. Why, what's alone ?  
 A word whose sense is—*free* ! Ay, free from all  
 The venom'd stings implanted in the heart  
 By those it loves. Oh ! I could laugh to think  
 O' the joy that riots in baronial halls  
 When the word comes, " A son is born ! " A son !  
 They should say thus—" He that shall knit your brow  
 To furrows, not of years—and bid your eye  
 Quail its proud glance to tell the earth its shame,  
 Is born, and so rejoice ! " Then might we feast,  
 And know the cause ! Were it not excellent ?

MONTALBA.—This is all idle. There are deeds to do :  
 Arouse thee, Procida !

PROCIDA.—Why, am I not  
 Calm as immortal justice ? She can strike,  
 And yet be passionless—and thus will I.  
 I know thy meaning. Deeds to do !—'tis well.  
 They shall be done ere thought on. Go ye forth :  
 There is a youth who calls himself my son.  
 His name is Raimond—in his eye is light  
 That shows like truth—but be not ye deceived !  
 Bear him in chains before us. We will sit  
 To-day in judgment, and the skies shall see  
 The strength which girds our nature. Will not this  
 Be glorious, brave Montalba ? Linger not,  
 Ye tardy messengers ! for there are things  
 Which ask the speed of storms.

(*Guido and others go out.*)

Is not this well ?

MONT.—'Tis noble. Keep thy spirit to this proud height—

(*Aside.*) And then be desolate like me ! My woes  
Will at the thought grow light.

PROCIDA.—What now remains

To be prepared ? There should be solemn pomp  
To grace a day like this. Ay, breaking hearts  
Require a drapery to conceal their throbs  
From cold inquiring eyes ; and it must be  
Ample and rich, that so their gaze may not  
Explore what lies beneath.

[*Exit.*

MONTALBA.—Now this is well !

I hate this Procida ; for he hath won  
In all our councils that ascendancy  
And mastery o'er bold hearts, which should have been  
Mine by a thousand claims. Had he the strength  
Of wrongs like mine ? No ! for that name, his country,  
He strikes ; my vengeance hath a deeper fount.  
But there's dark joy in this. And fate hath barred  
My soul from every other.

[*Exit.*

## SCENE II.

*A Hermitage surrounded by the Ruins of an Ancient Temple.*

CONSTANCE, ANSELMO.

CONSTANCE.—'Tis strange he comes not ! Is not this the still  
And sultry hour of noon ? He should have been  
Here by the daybreak. Was there not a voice ?  
No ! 'tis the shrill cicada, with glad life  
Peopling these marble ruins, as it sports  
Amidst them in the sun. Hark ! yet again !  
No ! no ! Forgive me, father ! that I bring  
Earth's restless griefs and passions, to disturb  
The stillness of thy holy solitude :  
My heart is full of care.

ANSELMO.—There is no place  
 So hallowed as to be unvisited  
 By mortal cares. Nay, whither should we go  
 With our deep griefs and passions, but to scenes  
 Lonely and still, where He that made our hearts  
 Will speak to them in whispers? I have known  
 Affliction too, my daughter.

CONSTANCE.—Hark ! his step !  
 I know it well—he comes—my Raimond, welcome !

VITTORIA *enters*. CONSTANCE *shrinks back on perceiving her*.

Oh, heaven ! that aspect tells a fearful tale.

VIT. (*not observing her*.)—There is a cloud of horror on my soul ;  
 And on thy words, Anselmo, peace doth wait,  
 Even as an echo, following the sweet close  
 Of some divine and solemn harmony :  
 Therefore I sought thee now. Oh ! speak to me  
 Of holy things and names, in whose deep sound  
 Is power to bid the tempests of the heart  
 Sink, like a storm rebuked.

ANSELMO.—What recent grief  
 Darkens thy spirit thus ?

VITTORIA.—I said not grief.

We should rejoice to-day, but joy is not  
 That which it hath been. In the flowers which wreath  
 Its mantling cup, there is a scent unknown,  
 Fraught with a strange delirium. All things now  
 Have changed their nature : still, I say, rejoice !  
 There is a cause, Anselmo ! We are free—  
 Free and avenged ! Yet on my soul there hangs  
 A darkness, heavy as the oppressive gloom  
 Of midnight fantasies. Ay, for this, too,  
 There is a cause.

ANSELMO.—How say'st thou, we are free?

There may have raged within Palermo's walls  
Some brief wild tumult; but too well I know  
They call the stranger lord.

VITTORIA.—Who calls the *dead*

Conqueror or lord? Hush! breathe it not aloud;  
The wild winds must not hear it. Yet again  
I tell thee we are free!

ANSELMO.—Thine eye hath looked

On fearful deeds, for still their shadows hang  
O'er its dark orb. Speak! I adjure thee; say,  
How hath this work been wrought?

VITTORIA.—Peace! ask me not!

Why shouldst thou hear a tale to send thy blood  
Back on its fount? We cannot wake them now!  
The storm is in my soul, but they are all  
At rest!—Ay, sweetly may the slaughtered babe  
By its dead mother sleep; and warlike men,  
Who midst the slain have slumbered oft before,  
Making their shield their pillow, may repose  
Well, now their toils are done. Is't not enough?

CONST.—Merciful heaven! have such things been? And yet

There is no shade come o'er the laughing sky!  
—I am an outcast now.

ANSELMO.—O Thou whose ways

Clouds mantle fearfully! of all the blind  
But terrible ministers that work thy wrath,  
How much is man the fiercest! Others know  
Their limits—yes! the earthquakes, and the storms,  
And the volcanoes!—he alone o'erleaps  
The bounds of retribution. Couldst thou gaze,  
Vittoria! with thy woman's heart and eye,  
On such dread scenes unmoved?

VITTORIA.—Wast it for me

To stay the avenging sword? No, though it pierced  
My very soul! Hark! hark! what thrilling shrieks  
Ring through the air around me! Canst thou not  
Bid them be hushed? Oh!—look not on me thus!

ANSELMO.—Lady, thy thoughts lend sternness to the looks

Which are but sad! Have all then perished?—all?  
Was there no mercy?

VITTORIA.—Mercy! it hath been

A word forbidden as the unhallowed names  
Of evil powers. Yet one there was who dared  
To own the guilt of pity, and to aid  
The victims;—but in vain. Of him no more!  
He is a traitor, and a traitor's death  
Will be his meed.

CON. (*coming forward.*)—Oh, heaven!—his name, his name!

Is it—it cannot be!

VITTORIA (*starting.*)—Thou here, pale girl!

I deemed thee with the dead! How hast thou 'scaped  
The snare? Who saved thee, last of all thy race?  
Was it not he of whom I spake even now,  
Raimond di Procida?

CONSTANCE.—It is enough:

Now the storm breaks upon me, and I sink.  
Must he too die?

VITTORIA.—Is it even so? Why then,

Live on—thou hast the arrow at thy heart!  
Fix not on me thy sad reproachful eyes—  
I mean not to betray thee. Thou may'st live:  
Why should Death bring thee his oblivious balms?  
He visits but the happy. Didst thou ask  
If Raimond too must die? It is as sure  
As that his blood is on thy head, for thou



Didst win him to this treason.

CONSTANCE.—When did men

Call mercy treason? Take my life, but save  
My noble Raimond!

VITTORIA.—Maiden! he must die.

Even now the youth before his judges stands;  
And they are men who, to the voice of prayer,  
Are as the rock is to the murmured sigh  
Of summer-waves:—ay, though a father sit  
On their tribunal. Bend thou not to me.  
What wouldst thou?

CONSTANCE.—Mercy! Oh! wert thou to plead  
But with a look, even yet he might be saved!  
If thou hast ever loved——

VITTORIA.—If I have loved?

It is that love forbids me to relent:  
I am what it hath made me. O'er my soul  
Lightning hath passed and seared it. Could I weep  
I then might pity—but it will not be.

CONSTANCE.—Oh, thou wilt yet relent! for woman's heart  
Was formed to suffer and to melt.

VITTORIA.—Away!

Why should I pity thee? Thou wilt but prove  
What I have known before—and yet I live!  
Nature is strong, and it may all be borne.  
The sick impatient yearning of the heart  
For that which is not; and the weary sense  
Of the dull void, wherewith our homes have been  
Circled by death; yes, all things may be borne!  
All, save remorse. But I will not bow down  
My spirit to that dark power; there was no guilt!  
Anselmo! wherefore didst thou talk of guilt?

ANS.—Ay, thus doth sensitive conscience quicken thought,

Lending reproachful voices to a breeze,  
Keen lightning to a look.

VITTORIA.—Leave me to peace !

Is't not enough that I should have a sense  
Of things thou canst not see, all wild and dark,  
And of unearthly whispers, haunting me  
With dread suggestions, but that thy cold words,  
Old man, should gall me, too? Must all conspire  
Against me?—O thou beautiful spirit ! wont  
To shine upon my dreams with looks of love,  
Where art thou vanished? Was it not the thought  
Of thee which urged me to the fearful task,  
And wilt thou now forsake me? I must seek  
The shadowy woods again, for there, perchance,  
Still may thy voice be in my twilight paths ;  
Here I but meet despair !

[*Exit.*

ANSELMO (*to* CONSTANCE).—Despair not thou,  
My daughter ! He that purifies the heart  
With grief will lend it strength.

CONSTANCE (*endeavouring to rouse herself.*)—Did she not say  
That some one was to die?

ANSELMO.—I tell thee not

Thy pangs are vain—for nature will have way,  
Earth must have tears ; yet in a heart like thine,  
Faith may not yield its place.

CONSTANCE.—Have I not heard

Some fearful tale?—Who said that there should rest  
Blood on my soul? What blood? I never bore  
Hatred, kind father ! unto aught that breathes :  
Raimond doth know it well. Raimond ! High heaven !  
It bursts upon me now ! And he must die !  
For my sake—even for mine !

ANSELMO.—Her words were strange,

And her proud mind seemed half to frenzy wrought ;  
Perchance this may not be.

CONSTANCE.—It must not be.

Why do I linger here !

*(She rises to depart.)*

ANSELMO.—Where wouldst thou go ?

CONSTANCE.—To give their stern and unrelenting hearts

A victim in his stead.

ANSELMO.—Stay ! wouldst thou rush

On certain death ?

CONSTANCE.—I may not falter now.

—Is not the life of woman all bound up

In her affections ? What hath she to do

In this bleak world alone ? It may be well

For man on his triumphal course to move

Uncumbered by soft bonds ; but we were born

For love and grief.

ANSELMO.—Thou fair and gentle thing,

Unused to meet a glance which doth not speak

Of tenderness or homage ! how shouldst thou

Bear the hard aspect of unpitying men,

Or face the King of Terrors ?

CONSTANCE.—There is strength

Deep-bedded in our hearts, of which we reek

But little, till the shafts of heaven have pierced

Its fragile dwelling. Must not earth be rent

Before her gems are found ? Oh ! now I feel

Worthy the generous love which hath not shunned

To look on death for me ! My heart hath given

Birth to as deep a courage, and a faith

As high in its devotion.

*[Exit.]*

ANSELMO.—She is gone !

Is it to perish? God of mercy! lend  
 Power to my voice, that so its prayer may save  
 This pure and lofty creature! I will follow—  
 But her young footstep and heroic heart  
 Will bear her to destruction, faster far  
 Than I can track her path.

[*Exit.*]

### SCENE III.

*Hall of a Public Building. PROCIDA, MONTALBA, GUIDO, and others, seated on a Tribunal.*

PROCIDA.—The morn loured darkly; but the sun hath now  
 With fierce and angry splendour through the clouds  
 Burst forth, as if impatient to behold  
 This our high triumph.—Lead the prisoner in.

(*RAIMOND is brought in, fettered and guarded.*)

Why, what a bright and fearless brow is here!  
 Is this man guilty?—Look on him, Montalba!

MONTALBA.—Be firm. Should justice falter at a look?

PROCIDA.—No, thou say'st well. Her eyes are filleted,  
 Or should be so. Thou, that dost call thyself—  
 But no! I will not breathe a traitor's name—  
 Speak! thou art arraigned of treason.

RAIMOND.—I arraign

You, before whom I stand, of darker guilt,  
 In the bright face of heaven; and your own hearts  
 Give echo to the charge. Your very looks  
 Have ta'en the stamp of crime, and seem to shrink,  
 With a perturbed and haggard wildness, back  
 From the too-searching light. Why, what hath wrought  
 This change on noble brows? There is a voice

With a deep answer, rising from the blood  
 Your hands have coldly shed. Ye are of those  
 From whom just men recoil with curdling veins,  
 All thrilled by life's abhorrent consciousness,  
 And sensitive feeling of a murderer's presence.  
 Away! come down from your tribunal seat,  
 Put off your robes of state, and let your mien  
 Be pale and humbled; for ye bear about you  
 That which repugnant earth doth sicken at,  
 More than the pestilence. That I should live  
 To see my father shrink!

PROCIDA.—Montalba, speak!

There's something chokes my voice; but fear me not.

MONTALBA.—If we must plead to vindicate our acts,  
 Be it when thou hast made thine own look clear,  
 Most eloquent youth! What answer canst thou make  
 To this our charge of treason?

RAIMOND.—I will plead

That cause before a mightier judgment-throne,  
 Where mercy is not guilt. But here I feel  
 Too buoyantly the glory and the joy  
 Of my free spirit's whiteness; for even now  
 The embodied hideousness of crime doth seem  
 Before me glaring out. Why, I saw thee,  
 Thy foot upon an aged warrior's breast,  
 Trampling out nature's last convulsive heavings.  
 And thou, thy sword—O valiant chief!—is yet  
 Red from the noble stroke which pierced at once  
 A mother and the babe, whose little life  
 Was from her bosom drawn! Immortal deeds  
 For bards to hymn!

GUIDO (*aside*).—I look upon his mien,  
 And waver. Can it be? My boyish heart

Deemed him so noble once ! Away, weak thoughts !  
 Why should I shrink, as if the guilt were mine,  
 From his proud glance ?

PROCIDA.—O thou dissembler ! thou,  
 So skilled to clothe with virtue's generous flush  
 The hollow cheek of cold hypocrisy,  
 That, with thy guilt made manifest, I can scarce  
 Believe thee guilty !—look on me, and say  
 Whose was the secret warning voice that saved  
 De Couci with his bands, to join our foes,  
 And forge new fetters for the indignant land ?  
 Whose was this treachery ?

*(Shows him papers.)*

Who hath promised here  
 (Belike to appease the manès of the dead)  
 At midnight to unfold Palermo's gates,  
 And welcome in the foe ? Who hath done this,  
 But thou—a tyrant's friend ?

RAYMOND.—Who hath done this ?

Father !—if I may call thee by that name—  
 Look with thy piercing eye on those whose smiles  
 Were masks that hid their daggers. There, perchance,  
 May lurk what loves not light too strong. For me,  
 I know but this—there needs no deep research  
 To prove the truth that murderers may be traitors,  
 Even to each other.

PROCIDA *(to MONTALBA.)*—His unaltered cheek

Still vividly doth hold its natural hue,  
 And his eye quails not ! Is this innocence ?

MONTALBA.—No ! 'tis the unshrinking hardihood of crime.

—Thou bearest a gallant mien. But where is she  
 Whom thou hast bartered fame and life to save,

The fair Provençal maid? What! know'st thou not  
 That this alone were guilt, to death allied?  
 Was't not our law that he who spared a foe  
 (And is she not of that detested race?)  
 Should thenceforth be amongst us as a foe?  
 —Where hast thou borne her? speak!

RAIMOND.—That Heaven, whose eye  
 Burns up thy soul with its far-searching glance,  
 Is with her: she is safe.

PROCIDA.—And by that word  
 Thy doom is sealed. Oh God! that I had died  
 Before this bitter hour, in the full strength  
 And glory of my heart!

(CONSTANCE enters, and rushes to RAIMOND.)

CONSTANCE.—Oh! art thou found?  
 But yet, to find thee thus! Chains, chains for thee!  
 My brave, my noble love! Off with these bonds;  
 Let him be free as air: for I am come  
 To be your victim now.

RAIMOND.—Death has no pang  
 More keen than this. Oh, wherefore art thou here?  
 I could have died so calmly, deeming thee  
 Saved, and at peace.

CONSTANCE.—At peace!—And thou hast thought  
 Thus poorly of my love! But woman's breast  
 Hath strength to suffer too. Thy father sits  
 On this tribunal; Raimond, which is he?

RAIMOND.—My father? who hath lulled thy gentle heart  
 With that false hope? Beloved! gaze around—  
 See if thine eye can trace a father's soul  
 In the dark looks bent on us.

(CONSTANCE, after earnestly examining the countenances of  
 the Judges, falls at the feet of PROCIDA.)

CONSTANCE.—Thou art he!

Nay, turn thou not away! for I beheld  
 Thy proud lip quiver, and a watery mist  
 Pass o'er thy troubled eye; and then I knew  
 Thou wert his father! Spare him! take my life!  
 In truth, a worthless sacrifice for his,  
 But yet mine all. Oh! he hath still to run  
 A long bright race of glory.

RAIMOND.—Constance, peace!

I look upon thee, and my failing heart  
 Is as a broken reed.

CONSTANCE (*still addressing PROCIDA.*)—Oh, yet relent!

If 'twas his crime to rescue me—behold  
 I come to be the atonement! Let him live  
 To crown thine age with honour. In thy heart  
 There's a deep conflict; but great Nature pleads  
 With an o'ermastering voice, and thou wilt yield!  
 —Thou art his father!

PROCIDA (*after a pause.*)—Maiden, thou art deceived:

I am as calm as that dread pause of nature  
 Ere the full thunder bursts. A judge is not  
 Father or friend. Who calls this man my son?  
 My son! Ay! thus his mother proudly smiled—  
 But she was noble! Traitors stand alone,  
 Loosed from all ties. Why should I trifle thus?  
 Bear her away!

RAIMOND (*starting forward.*)—And whither?

MONTALBA.—Unto death.

Why should she live, when all her race have perished?

CONSTANCE (*sinking into the arms of RAIMOND.*)—

Raimond, farewell! Oh! when thy star hath risen  
 To its bright noon, forget not, best beloved!  
 I died for thee.



RAIMOND.—High Heaven! thou see'st these things,  
 And yet endur'st them! Shalt thou die for me,  
 Purest and loveliest being?—but our fate  
 May not divide us long. Her cheek is cold—  
 Her deep blue eyes are closed: should this be death  
 —If thus, there yet were mercy! Father, father!  
 Is thy heart human?

PROCIDA.—Bear her hence, I say!  
 Why must my soul be torn?

(ANSELMO enters, holding a Crucifix.)

ANSELMO.—Now, by this sign  
 Of Heaven's prevailing love! ye shall not harm  
 One ringlet of her head. How! is there not  
 Enough of blood upon your burdened souls?  
 Will not the visions of your midnight couch  
 Be wild and dark enough, but ye must heap  
 Crime upon crime? Be ye content: your dreams,  
 Your councils, and your banquetings, will yet  
 Be haunted by the voice which doth not sleep,  
 Even though this maid be spared! Constance, look up!  
 Thou shalt not die.

RAIMOND.—Oh! death even now hath veiled  
 The light of her soft beauty. Wake, my love!  
 Wake at my voice!

PROCIDA.—Anselmo, lead her hence,  
 And let her live, but never meet my sight.  
 Begone! my heart will burst.

RAIMOND.—One last embrace!  
 Again life's rose is opening on her cheek;  
 Yet must we part. So love is crushed on earth:  
 But there are brighter worlds! Farewell, farewell!

(He gives her to the care of ANSELMO.)

CONSTANCE (*slowly recovering*).—There was a voice which  
called me. Am I not

A spirit freed from earth? Have I not passed  
The bitterness of death?

ANSELMO.—Oh, haste away!

CONSTANCE.—Yes! Raimond calls me. He too is released  
From his cold bondage. We are free at last,  
And all is well. Away!

(*She is led out by ANSELMO.*)

RAIMOND.—The pang is o'er,  
And I have but to die.

MONTALBA.—Now, Procida,  
Comes thy great task. Wake! summon to thine aid  
All thy deep soul's commanding energies;  
For thou—a chief among us—must pronounce  
The sentence of thy son. It rests with thee.

PROCIDA.—Ha! ha! Men's hearts must be of softer mould  
Than in the elder time. Fathers could doom  
Their children then with an unfaltering voice,  
And we must tremble thus! Is it not said  
That nature grows degenerate, earth being now  
So full of days?

MONTALBA.—Rouse up thy mighty heart.

PRO.—Ay, thou say'st right. There yet are souls which tower  
As landmarks to mankind. Well, what's the task?  
There is a man to be condemned, you say?  
Is he then guilty?

ALL.—Thus we deem of him,  
With one accord.

PROCIDA.—And hath he naught to plead?

RAIMOND.—Naught but a soul unstained.

PROCIDA.—Why, that is little.

Stains on the soul are but as conscience deems them,  
 And conscience may be seared. But for this sentence :  
 Was not the penalty imposed on man,  
 Even from creation's dawn, that he must die ?  
 It was : thus making guilt a sacrifice  
 Unto eternal justice ; and we but  
 Obey Heaven's mandate when we cast dark souls  
 To the elements from among us. Be it so !  
 Such be his doom ! I have said. Ay, now my heart  
 Is girt with adamant, whose cold weight doth press  
 Its gaspings down. Off ! let me breathe in freedom !  
 Mountains are on my breast !

*(He sinks back.)*

MONTALBA.—Guards, bear the prisoner  
 Back to his dungeon.

RAIMOND.—Father ! oh, look up ;  
 Thou art my father still !

*(GUIDO leaves the tribunal, and throws himself on the neck of  
 RAIMOND.)*

GUIDO.—Oh ! Raimond, Raimond !  
 If it should be that I have wronged thee, say  
 Thou dost forgive me.

RAIMOND.—Friend of my young days,  
 So may all-pitying Heaven !

*(RAIMOND is led out.)*

PROCIDA.—Whose voice was that ?  
 Where is he ?—gone ? Now I may breathe once more  
 In the free air of heaven. Let us away. *[Exeunt.]*

## ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Prison dimly lighted. RAIMOND sleeping.*  
*PROCIDA enters.*

PROCIDA (*gazing upon him earnestly.*)—

Can he, then, sleep? The o'ershadowing night hath wrapt  
 Earth at her stated hours; the stars have set  
 Their burning watch; and all things hold their course  
 Of wakefulness and rest; yet hath not sleep  
 Sat on mine eyelids since—but this avails not!  
 And thus he slumbers! Why, this mien doth seem  
 As if its soul were but one lofty thought  
 Of an immortal destiny!—his brow  
 Is calm as waves whereon the midnight heavens  
 Are imaged silently. Wake, Raimond! wake!  
 Thy rest is deep.

RAIMOND (*starting up.*)—My father! Wherefore here?  
 I am prepared to die, yet would I not  
 Fall by thy hand.

PROCIDA.—'Twas not for this I came.

RAIMOND.—Then wherefore? and upon thy lofty brow  
 Why burns the troubled flush?

PROCIDA.—Perchance 'tis shame.

Yes, it may well be shame!—for I have striven  
 With nature's feebleness, and been o'erpowered.  
 Howe'er it be, 'tis not for thee to gaze,  
 Noting it thus. Rise, let me loose thy chains.  
 Arise, and follow me; but let thy step  
 Fall without sound on earth: I have prepared  
 The means for thy escape.

RAIMOND.—What! thou! the austere,

The inflexible Procida ! hast thou done this,  
Deeming me guilty still ?

PROCIDA.—Upbraid me not !

It is even so. There have been nobler deeds  
By Roman fathers done,—but I am weak.  
Therefore, again I say, arise, and haste,  
For the night wanes. Thy fugitive course must be  
To realms beyond the deep ; so let us part  
In silence, and for ever.

RAIMOND.—Let him fly

Who holds no deep asylum in his breast  
Wherein to shelter from the scoffs of men ;  
—I can sleep calmly here.

PROCIDA.—Art thou in love

With death and infamy, that so thy choice  
Is made, lost boy ! when freedom courts thy grasp ?

RAIMOND.—Father ! to set the irrevocable seal

Upon that shame wherewith ye have branded me,  
There needs but flight. What should I bear from this,  
My native land ?—A blighted name, to rise  
And part me, with its dark remembrances,  
For ever from the sunshine. O'er my soul  
Bright shadowings of a nobler destiny  
Float in dim beauty through the gloom ; but here  
On earth, my hopes are closed.

PROCIDA.—Thy hopes are closed !

And what were they to mine ?—Thou wilt not fly !  
Why, let all traitors flock to thee, and learn  
How proudly guilt can talk ! Let fathers rear  
Their offspring henceforth, as the free wild birds  
Foster their young : when these can mount alone,  
Dissolving nature's bonds, why should it not  
Be so with us ?

RAIMOND.—O father! now I feel  
 What high prerogatives belong to Death.  
 He hath a deep though voiceless eloquence,  
 To which I leave my cause. His solemn veil  
 Doth with mysterious beauty clothe our virtues,  
 And in its vast oblivious folds, for ever  
 Give shelter to our faults. When I am gone,  
 The mists of passion which have dimmed my name  
 Will melt like day-dreams; and my memory then  
 Will be—not what it should have been, for I  
 Must pass without my fame—but yet unstained  
 As a clear morning dewdrop. Oh! the grave  
 Hath rights inviolate as a sanctuary's,  
 And they should be my own!

PROCIDA.—Now, by just Heaven,  
 I will not thus be tortured! Were my heart  
 But of thy guilt or innocence assured,  
 I could be calm again. But in this wild  
 Suspense—this conflict and vicissitude  
 Of opposite feelings and convictions—What!  
 Hath it been mine to temper and to bend  
 All spirits to my purpose? have I raised  
 With a severe and passionless energy,  
 From the dread mingling of their elements,  
 Storms which have rocked the earth?—and shall I now  
 Thus fluctuate as a feeble reed, the scorn  
 And plaything of the winds? Look on me, boy!  
 Guilt never dared to meet these eyes, and keep  
 Its heart's dark secret close.—O pitying Heaven!  
 Speak to my soul with some dread oracle,  
 And tell me which is truth.

RAIMOND.—I will not plead.  
 I will not call the Omnipotent to attest

My innocence. No, father! in thy heart  
 I know my birthright shall be soon restored;  
 Therefore I look to death, and bid thee speed  
 The great absolver.

PROCIDA.—O my son! my son!

We will not part in wrath! The sternest hearts,  
 Within their proud and guarded fastnesses,  
 Hide something still, round which their tendrils cling  
 With a close grasp, unknown to those who dress  
 Their love in smiles. And such wert thou to me!  
 The all which taught me that my soul was cast  
 In nature's mould. And I must now hold on  
 My desolate course alone! Why, be it thus!  
 He that doth guide a nation's star, should dwell  
 High o'er the clouds, in regal solitude,  
 Sufficient to himself.

RAIMOND.—Yet, on the summit,  
 When with her bright wings glory shadows thee,  
 Forget not him who coldly sleeps beneath,  
 Yet might have soared as high.

PROCIDA.—No, fear thou not!  
 Thou'lt be remembered long. The canker-worm  
 O' the heart is ne'er forgotten.

RAIMOND.—Oh! not thus—  
 I would not thus be thought of.

PROCIDA.—Let me deem  
 Again that thou art base!—for thy bright looks,  
 Thy glorious mien of fearlessness and truth,  
 Then would not haunt me as the avenging powers  
 Follow the parricide. Farewell, farewell!  
 I have no tears. Oh! thus thy mother looked,  
 When, with a sad yet half-triumphant smile,  
 All radiant with deep meaning, from her deathbed

She gave thee to my arms.

RAIMOND.—Now death has lost

His sting, since thou believ'st me innocent!

PROC. (*wildly.*)—Thou innocent! Am I thy murderer, then?

Away! I tell thee thou hast made my name

A scorn to men! No! I will not forgive thee;

A traitor! What! the blood of Procida

Filling a traitor's veins? Let the earth drink it.

Thou wouldst receive our foes!—but they shall meet

From thy perfidious lips a welcome, cold

As death can make it. Go, prepare thy soul!

RAIMOND.—Father! yet hear me!

PROCIDA.—No! thou'rt skilled to make

Even shame look fair. Why should I linger thus?

(*Going to leave the prison, he turns back for a moment.*)

If there be aught—if aught—for which thou need'st

Forgiveness—not of me, but that dread Power

From whom no heart is veiled—delay thou not

Thy prayer,—time hurries on.

RAIMOND.—I am prepared.

PROCIDA.—'Tis well.

[*Exit.*]

RAIMOND.—Men talk of torture: can they wreak

Upon the sensitive and shrinking frame,

Half the mind bears—and lives? My spirit feels

Bewildered; on its powers this twilight gloom

Hangs like a weight of earth.—It should be morn;

Why, then, perchance, a beam of heaven's bright sun

Hath pierced, ere now, the grating of my dungeon,

Telling of hope and mercy!

(*Retires into an inner cell.*)



## SCENE II.

*A Street of Palermo. Many Citizens assembled.*

- 1ST CITIZEN.—The morning breaks ; his time is almost come :  
Will he be led this way ?
- 2D CITIZEN.—Ay, so 'tis said,  
To die before that gate through which he purposed  
The foe should enter in.
- 3D CITIZEN.—'Twas a vile plot !  
And yet I would my hands were pure as his  
From the deep stain of blood. Didst hear the sounds  
I' the air last night ?
- 2D CITIZEN.—Since the great work of slaughter,  
Who hath not heard them duly at those hours  
Which should be silent ?
- 3D CITIZEN.—Oh ! the fearful mingling,  
The terrible mimicry of human voices,  
In every sound, which to the heart doth speak  
Of woe and death.
- 2D CITIZEN.—Ay, there was woman's shrill  
And piercing cry ; and the low feeble wail  
Of dying infants ; and the half-suppressed  
Deep groan of man in his last agonies.  
And, now and then, there swelled upon the breeze  
Strange savage bursts of laughter, wilder far  
Than all the rest.
- 1ST CITIZEN.—Of our own fate, perchance,  
These awful midnight wailings may be deemed  
An ominous prophecy. Should France regain  
Her power among us, doubt not, we shall have  
Stern reckoners to account with.—Hark !

*(The sound of trumpets heard at a distance.)*

2D CITIZEN.—'Twas but  
A rushing of the breeze.

3D CITIZEN.—Even now, 'tis said,  
The hostile bands approach.

*(The sound is heard gradually drawing nearer.)*

2D CITIZEN.—Again! that sound  
Was no illusion. Nearer yet it swells—  
They come, they come!

*(PROCIDA enters.)*

PROCIDA.—The foe is at your gates ;  
But hearts and hands prepared shall meet his onset.  
Why are ye loitering here ?

CITIZEN.—My lord, we came—

PROCIDA.—Think ye I know not wherefore?—'twas to see  
A fellow-being die ! Ay, 'tis a sight  
Man loves to look on ; and the tenderest hearts  
Recoil, and yet withdraw not from the scene.  
For this ye came. What ! is our nature fierce,  
Or is there that in mortal agony  
From which the soul, exulting in its strength,  
Doth learn immortal lessons? Hence, and arm !  
Ere the night-dews descend, ye will have seen  
Enough of death—for this must be a day  
Of battle ! 'Tis the hour which troubled souls  
Delight in, for its rushing storms are wings  
Which bear them up ! Arm ! arm ! 'tis for your homes,  
And all that lends them loveliness. Away ! *Exeunt.*

## SCENE III.

*A Prison.* RAIMOND, ANSELMO.

RAIMOND.—And Constance then is safe ! Heaven bless thee,  
father !

Good angels bear such comfort.

ANSELMO.—I have found

A safe asylum for thine honoured love,  
Where she may dwell until serener days,  
With Saint Rosalia's gentlest daughters—those  
Whose hallowed office is to tend the bed  
Of pain and death, and soothe the parting soul  
With their soft hymns : and therefore are they called  
Sisters of Mercy.

RAIMOND.—Oh ! that name, my Constance !

Befits thee well. Even in our happiest days,  
There was a depth of tender pensiveness  
Far in thine eyes' dark azure, speaking ever  
Of pity and mild grief. Is she at peace ?

ANSELMO.—Alas ! what should I say ?

RAIMOND.—Why did I ask,

Knowing the deep and full devotedness  
Of her young heart's affections ? Oh ! the thought  
Of my untimely fate will haunt her dreams,  
Which should have been so tranquil !—and her soul,  
Whose strength was but the lofty gift of love,  
Even unto death will sicken.

ANSELMO.—All that faith

Can yield of comfort, shall assuage her woes :  
And still, whate'er betide, the light of heaven  
Rests on her gentle heart. But thou, my son !  
Is thy young spirit mastered, and prepared

For nature's fearful and mysterious change?

RAIMOND.—Ay, father ! of my brief remaining task  
 The least part is to die. And yet the cup  
 Of life still mantled brightly to my lips,  
 Crowned with that sparkling bubble, whose proud name  
 Is—glory ! Oh ! my soul, from boyhood's morn,  
 Hath nursed such mighty dreams ! It was my hope  
 To leave a name, whose echo from the abyss  
 Of time should rise, and float upon the winds  
 Into the far hereafter ; there to be  
 A trumpet-sound, a voice from the deep tomb,  
 Murmuring—Awake ! arise ! But this is past.  
 Erewhile, and it had seemed enough of shame  
 To sleep forgotten in the dust ; but now—  
 Oh God !—the undying record of my grave  
 Will be—Here sleeps a traitor !—One, whose crime,  
 Was—to deem brave men might find nobler weapons  
 Than the cold murderer's dagger !

ANSELMO.—Oh ! my son,  
 Subduethese troubled thoughts. Thou wouldst not change  
 Thy lot for theirs, o'er whose dark dreams will hang  
 The avenging shadows, which the blood-stained soul  
 Doth conjure from the dead.

RAIMOND.—Thou'rt right. I would not.  
 Yet 'tis a weary task to school the heart,  
 Ere years or griefs have tamed its fiery spirit,  
 Into that still and passive fortitude  
 Which is but learned from suffering. Would the hour  
 To hush these passionate throbbings were at hand !

ANSELMO.—It will not be to-day. Hast thou not heard ?  
 But no—the rush, the trampling, and the stir  
 Of this great city, arming in her haste,  
 Pierce not these dungeon-depths. The foe hath reached

Our gates, and all Palermo's youth, and all  
Her warrior men, are marshalled, and gone forth,  
In that high hope which makes realities,  
To the red field. Thy father leads them on.

RAIMOND (*starting up*).—They are gone forth ! my father  
leads them on !

All—all Palermo's youth ! No ! one is left,  
Shut out from glory's race ! They are gone forth !  
Ay, now the soul of battle is abroad ;  
It burns upon the air. The joyous winds  
Are tossing warrior-plumes, the proud white foam  
Of battle's roaring billows. On my sight  
The vision bursts—it maddens ! 'tis the flash,  
The lightning-shock of lances, and the cloud  
Of rushing arrows, and the broad full blaze  
Of helmets in the sun. The very steed  
With his majestic rider glorying shares  
The hour's stern joy, and waves his floating mane  
As a triumphant banner. Such things are  
Even now—and I am here !

ANSELMO.—Alas, be calm !

To the same grave ye press,—thou that dost pine  
Beneath a weight of chains, and they that rule  
The fortunes of the fight.

RAIMOND.—Ay ! Thou canst feel

The calm thou wouldst impart ; for unto thee  
All men alike, the warrior and the slave,  
Seem, as thou say'st, but pilgrims, pressing on  
To the same bourne. Yet call it not the same :  
Their graves who fall in this day's fight will be  
As altars to their country, visited  
By fathers with their children, bearing wreaths,  
And chanting hymns in honour of the dead :

Will mine be such?

(VITTORIA *rushes in wildly, as if pursued.*)

VITTORIA.—Anselmo ! art thou found !

Haste, haste, or all is lost ! Perchance thy voice,  
Whereby they deem heaven speaks, thy lifted cross,  
And prophet mien, may stay the fugitives,  
Or shame them back to die.

ANSELMO.—The fugitives !

What words are these ? The sons of Sicily  
Fly not before the foe ?

VITTORIA.—That I should say

It is too true !

ANSELMO.—And thou—thou bleedest, lady !

VITTORIA.—Peace ! heed not me when Sicily is lost !

I stood upon the walls, and watched our bands,  
As, with their ancient royal banner spread,  
Onward they marched. The combat was begun,  
The fiery impulse given, and valiant men  
Had sealed their freedom with their blood—when, lo !  
That false Alberti led his recreant vassals  
To join the invader's host.

RAIMOND.—His country's curse

Rest on the slave for ever !

VITTORIA.—Then distrust,

Even of their noble leaders, and dismay,  
That swift contagion, on Palermo's bands  
Came like a deadly blight. They fled !—Oh shame !  
Even now they fly ! Ay, through the city gates  
They rush, as if all Etna's burning streams  
Pursued their wingèd steps.

RAIMOND.—Thou hast not named

Their chief—Di Procida—he doth not fly ?

VITTORIA.—No ! like a kingly lion in the toils,  
 Daring the hunters yet, he proudly strives :  
 But all in vain ! The few that breast the storm,  
 With Guido and Montalba, by his side,  
 Fight but for graves upon the battle-field.

RAYMOND.—And I am here ! Shall there be power, O God !  
 In the roused energies of fierce despair,  
 To burst my heart—and not to rend my chains ?  
 Oh, for one moment of the thunderbolt  
 To set the strong man free !

VITTORIA (*after gazing upon him earnestly.*)—  
 Why, 'twere a deed  
 Worthy the fame and blessing of all time,  
 To loose thy bonds, thou son of Procida !  
 Thou art no traitor !—from thy kindled brow  
 Looks out thy lofty soul. Arise ! go forth !  
 And rouse the noble heart of Sicily  
 Unto high deeds again. Anselmo, haste ;  
 Unbind him ! Let my spirit still prevail,  
 Ere I depart—for the strong hand of death  
 Is on me now.

*(She sinks back against a pillar.)*

ANSELMO.—Oh heaven ! the life-blood streams  
 Fast from thy heart—thy troubled eyes grow dim.  
 Who hath done this ?

VITTORIA.—Before the gates I stood,  
 And in the name of him, the loved and lost,  
 With whom I soon shall be, all vainly strove  
 To stay the shameful flight. Then from the foe,  
 Fraught with my summons to his viewless home,  
 Came the fleet shaft which pierced me.

ANSELMO.—Yet, oh yet,

It may not be too late. Help, help !

VITTORIA, (*to Raimond.*)—Away !

Bright is the hour which brings thee liberty !

(*Attendants enter.*)

Haste, be those fetters riven ! Unbar the gates,  
And set the captive free !

(*The attendants seem to hesitate.*)

Know ye not her

Who should have worn your country's diadem ?

ATTENDANT.—O lady ! we obey.

(*They take off RAIMOND'S chains. He springs up exultingly.*)

RAIMOND.—Is this no dream ?

Mount, eagle ! thou art free ! Shall I then die  
Not midst the mockery of insulting crowds,  
But on the field of banners, where the brave  
Are striving for an immortality ?

It is even so ! Now for bright arms of proof,  
A helm, a keen-edged falchion, and even yet  
My father may be saved !

VITTORIA.—Away, be strong !

And let thy battle-word, to rule the storm,  
Be—*Conradin.*

(*RAIMOND rushes out.*)

Oh ! for one hour of life,  
To hear that name blent with the exulting shout  
Of victory ! It will not be. A mightier power  
Doth summon me away.

ANSELMO.—To purer worlds

Raise thy last thoughts in hope.



VITTORIA.—Yes! *he* is there,  
 All glorious in his beauty—Conradin!  
 Death parted us, and death shall reunite!  
 He will not stay—it is all darkness now!  
 Night gathers o'er my spirit.

*(She dies.)*

ANSELMO.—She is gone!  
 It is an awful hour which stills the heart  
 That beat so proudly once. Have mercy, Heaven!

*(He kneels beside her.)*

#### SCENE IV.

*Before the gates of Palermo. Sicilians flying tumultuously towards the gates.*

VOICES WITHOUT.—Montjoy! Montjoy! St Denis for Anjou!  
 Provençals, on!

SICILIANS.—Fly, fly, or all is lost!

*(RAIMOND appears in the gateway armed, and carrying a banner.)*

RAIMOND.—Back, back, I say! ye men of Sicily!  
 All is not lost! Oh shame! A few brave hearts  
 In such a cause, ere now, have set their breasts  
 Against the rush of thousands, and sustained,  
 And made the shock recoil. Ay, man, free man,  
 Still to be called so, hath achieved such deeds  
 As heaven and earth have marvelled at; and souls,  
 Whose spark yet slumbers with the days to come,  
 Shall burn to hear, transmitting brightly thus  
 Freedom from race to race! Back! or prepare  
 Amidst your hearths, your bowers, your very shrines,

To bleed and die in vain! Turn!—follow me!  
 Conradin, Conradin!—for Sicily  
 His spirit fights! Remember Conradin!

*(They begin to rally round him.)*

Ay, this is well! Now, follow me, and charge!

*(The Provençals rush in, but are repulsed by the Sicilians.)*

SCENE V.

*Part of the field of battle. MONTALBA enters wounded, and supported by RAIMOND, whose face is concealed by his helmet.*

RAIMOND.—Here rest thee, warrior.

MONTALBA.—Rest! ay, death is rest,

And such will soon be mine. But thanks to thee,

I shall not die a captive. Brave Sicilian!

These lips are all unused to soothing words,

Or I should bless the valour which hath won,

For my last hour, the proud free solitude

Wherewith my soul would gird itself. Thy name?

RAIMOND.—'Twill be no music to thine ear, Montalba.

Gaze—read it thus!

*(He lifts the visor of his helmet.)*

MONTALBA.—Raimond di Procida!

RAIMOND.—Thou hast pursued me with a bitter hate:

But fare thee well! Heaven's peace be with thy soul!

I must away. One glorious effort more,

And this proud field is won.

*[Exit.*

MONTALBA.—Am I thus humbled?

How my heart sinks within me! But 'tis Death

(And he can tame the mightiest) hath subdued

My towering nature thus. Yet is he welcome!

That youth—'twas in his pride he rescued me !  
 I was his deadliest foe, and thus he proved  
 His fearless scorn. Ha ! ha ! but he shall fail  
 To melt me into womanish feebleness.  
 There I still baffle him—the grave shall seal  
 My lips for ever—mortal shall not hear  
 Montalba say—"forgive !"

*(He dies.)*

SCENE VI.

*Another part of the field. PROCIDA, GUIDO, and other Sicilians.*

PROCIDA.—The day is ours ; but he, the brave unknown,  
 Who turned the tide of battle—he whose path  
 Was victory—who hath seen him ?

*(ALBERTI is brought in, wounded and fettered.)*

ALBERTI.—Procida !

PROCIDA.—Be silent, traitor ! Bear him from my sight,  
 Unto your deepest dungeons.

ALBERTI.—In the grave  
 A nearer home awaits me. Yet one word  
 Ere my voice fail—thy son——

PROCIDA.—Speak, speak !

ALBERTI.—Thy son  
 Knows not a thought of guilt. That trait'rous plot  
 Was mine alone.

*(He is led away.)*

PROCIDA.—Attest it, earth and heaven !  
 My son is guiltless ! Hear it, Sicily !  
 The blood of Procida is noble still !

My son! He lives, he lives! His voice shall speak  
 Forgiveness to his sire! His name shall cast  
 Its brightness o'er my soul!

GUIDO.—O day of joy!

The brother of my heart is worthy still  
 The lofty name he bears!

(ANSELMO enters.)

PROCIDA.—Anselmo, welcome!

In a glad hour we meet; for know, my son  
 Is guiltless.

ANSELMO.—And victorious! By his arm  
 All hath been rescued.

PROCIDA.—How!—the unknown—

ANSELMO.—Was he,

Thy noble Raimond!—by Vittoria's hand  
 Freed from his bondage, in that awful hour  
 When all was flight and terror.

PROCIDA.—Now my cup

Of joy too brightly mantles! Let me press  
 My warrior to a father's heart—and die;  
 For life hath naught beyond. Why comes he not?  
 Anselmo, lead me to my valiant boy!

ANSELMO.—Temper this proud delight.

PROCIDA.—What means that look?

He hath not fallen?

ANSELMO.—He lives.

PROCIDA.—Away, away!

Bid the wide city with triumphal pomp  
 Prepare to greet her victor. Let this hour  
 Atone for all his wrongs!

[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE VII.

(*Garden of a Convent. RAIMOND is led in wounded, leaning on attendants.*)

RAIMOND.—Bear me to no dull couch, but let me die  
In the bright face of nature! Lift my helm,  
That I may look on heaven.

1ST ATTENDANT.—Lay him to rest  
On this green sunny bank, and I will call  
Some holy sister to his aid; but thou  
Return unto the field, for high-born men  
There need the peasant's aid.

(*To RAIMOND.*)

Here gentle hands  
Shall tend thee, warrior; for, in these retreats,  
They dwell whose vows devote them to the care  
Of all that suffer. May'st thou live to bless them!

(*The attendants leave him.*)

RAIM.—Thus have I wished to die! 'Twas a proud strife!  
My father blessed the unknown who rescued him,  
(Blessed him, alas, because unknown!) and Guido,  
Beside him bravely struggling, called aloud,  
"Noble Sicilian, on!" Oh! had they deemed  
'Twas I who led that rescue, they had spurned  
Mine aid, though 'twas deliverance; and their looks  
Had fallen like blights upon me. There is one,  
Whose eye ne'er turned on mine but its blue light  
Grew softer, trembling through the dewy mist  
Raised by deep tenderness! Oh, might the soul,

Set in that eye, shine on me ere I perish !  
—Is't not her voice ?

(CONSTANCE enters speaking to a Nun, who turns into another path.)

CONSTANCE.—Oh, happy they, kind sister !  
Whom thus ye tend ; for it is theirs to fall  
With brave men side by side, when the roused heart  
Beats proudly to the last ! There are high souls  
Whose hope was such a death, and 'tis denied !

(She approaches RAIMOND)

Young warrior, is there aught—Thou here, my Raimond !  
*Thou* here—and thus ! Oh ! is this joy or woe ?

RAIMOND.—Joy, be it joy ! my own, my blessed love !  
Even on the grave's dim verge. Yes ! it is joy,  
My Constance ! Victors have been crowned ere now  
With the green shining laurel, when their brows  
Wore death's own impress—and it may be thus  
Even yet with me ! They freed me when the foe  
Had half prevailed, and I have proudly earned,  
With my heart's dearest blood, the meed to die  
Within thine arms.

CONSTANCE.—Oh ! speak not thus—to die !  
These wounds may yet be closed.

(She attempts to bind his wounds.)

Look on me, love !  
Why, there is more than life in thy glad mien—  
'Tis full of hope ; and from thy kindled eye  
Breaks even unwonted light, whose ardent ray  
Seems born to be immortal.

RAIMOND.—'Tis even so !  
The parting soul doth gather all her fires

Around her—all her glorious hopes, and dreams,  
 And burning aspirations, to illumine  
 The shadowy dimness of the untrodden path  
 Which lies before her; and encircled thus,  
 Awhile she sits in dying eyes, and thence  
 Sends forth her bright farewell. Thy gentle cares  
 Are vain, and yet I bless them.

CONSTANCE.—Say not vain;

The dying look not thus. We shall not part.

RAIMOND.—I have seen death ere now, and known him wear  
 Full many a changeful aspect.

CONSTANCE.—Oh! but none

Radiant as thine, my warrior! Thou wilt live.

Look round thee: all is sunshine. Is not this  
 A smiling world?

RAIMOND.—Ay, gentlest love! a world

Of joyous beauty and magnificence,

Almost too fair to leave. Yet must we tame

Our ardent hearts to this. Oh, weep thou not!

There is no home for liberty or love,

Beneath these festal skies. Be not deceived;

My way lies far beyond! I shall be soon

That viewless thing, which, with its mortal weeds

Casting off meaner passions, yet, we trust,

Forgets not how to love.

CONSTANCE.—And must this be?

Heaven, thou art merciful!—oh, bid our souls

Depart together!

RAIMOND.—Constance! there is strength

Within thy gentle heart, which hath been proved

Nobly, for me: arouse it once again!

Thy grief unmans me—and I fain would meet

That which approaches, as a brave man yields

With proud submission to a mightier foe.

—It is upon me now!

CONSTANCE.—I will be calm.

Let thy head rest upon my bosom, Raimond.  
And I will so suppress its quick deep sobs,  
They shall but rock thee to thy rest. There is  
A world (ay, let us seek it!) where no blight  
Falls on the beautiful rose of youth, and there  
I shall be with thee soon!

(PROCIDA and ANSELMO enter. *The former, on seeing RAIMOND, starts back.*)

ANSELMO.—Lift up thy head,  
Brave youth, exultingly; for lo! thine hour  
Of glory comes! Oh! doth it come too late?  
Even now the false Alberti hath confessed  
That guilty plot, for which thy life was doomed  
To be the atonement.

RAIMOND.—'Tis enough. Rejoice,  
Rejoice, my Constance! for I leave a name  
O'er which thou mayst weep proudly.

(*He sinks back.*)

To thy breast  
Fold me yet closer, for an icy dart  
Hath touched my veins.

CONSTANCE.—And must thou leave me, Raimond?  
Alas! thine eye grows dim—its wandering glance  
Is full of dreams.

RAIMOND.—Haste, haste, and tell my father  
I was no traitor!

PROCIDA (*rushing forward*).—To thy father's heart  
Return, forgiving all thy wrongs—return!



Speak to me, Raimond!—thou wert ever kind,  
 And brave, and gentle! Say that all the past  
 Shall be forgiven! That word from none but thee  
 My lips e'er asked.—Speak to me once, my boy,  
 My pride, my hope! And it is with thee thus?  
 Look on me yet!—Oh! must this woe be borne?

RAIMOND.—Off with this weight of chains! it is not meet  
 For a crown'd conqueror!—Hark! the trumpet's voice!

*(A sound of triumphant music is heard gradually approaching.)*

Is't not a thrilling call? What drowsy spell  
 Benumbs me thus? Hence! I am free again!  
 Now swell your festal strains—the field is won!  
 Sing me to glorious dreams.

*(He dies.)*

ANSELMO.—The strife is past;  
 There fled a noble spirit!

CONSTANCE.—Hush! he sleeps—  
 Disturb him not!

ANSELMO.—Alas! this is no sleep  
 From which the eye doth radiantly unclose.  
 Bow down thy soul, for earthly hope is o'er!

*(The music continues approaching. GUIDO enters with citizens and soldiers.)*

GUL.—The shrines are decked, the festive torches blaze—  
 Where is our brave deliverer? We are come  
 To crown Palermo's victor!

ANSELMO.—Ye come too late.  
 The voice of human praise doth send no echo  
 Into the world of spirits.

*(The music ceases.)*

PROCIDA (*after a pause.*)—Is this dust

I look on—Raimond? 'Tis but a sleep! A smile  
On his pale cheek sits proudly. Raimond, wake!  
Oh God! and this was his triumphant day!  
My son, my injured son!

CONSTANCE, (*starting.*)—Art thou his father!

I know thee now. Hence! with thy dark stern eye,  
And thy cold heart! Thou canst not wake him now!  
Away! he will not answer but to me—  
For none like me hath loved him. He is mine!  
Ye shall not rend him from me.

PROCIDA.—Oh! he knew

Thy love, poor maid! Shrink from me now no more!  
He knew thy heart—but who shall tell him now  
The depth, the intenseness, and the agony  
Of my suppressed affection? I have learned  
All his high worth in time to deck his grave.  
Is there not power in the strong spirit's woe  
To force an answer from the viewless world  
Of the departed? Raimond!—speak!—forgive!  
Raimond! my victor, my deliverer! hear!  
—Why, what a world is this! Truth ever bursts  
On the dark soul too late; and glory crowns  
The unconscious dead. There comes an hour to break  
The mightiest hearts! My son! my son! is this  
A day of triumph? Ay! for thee alone!

(*He throws himself upon the body of RAIMOND.  
Curtain falls.*)

# THE SIEGE OF VALENCIA

A DRAMATIC POEM

"JUDICIO HA DADO ESTA NO VISTA HAZANNA  
DEL VALOR QUE EN LOS SIGLOS VENIDEROS  
TENDRAN LOS HIJOS DE LA FUERTE ESPANNA,  
HIJOS DE TAL PADRES HEREDEROS.

HALLO SOLA EN NUMANCIA TODO QUANTO  
DEBE CON JUSTO TITULO CANTARSE  
Y LO QUE PUEDE DAR MATERIA AL CANTO."  
*Cervantes' Numancia.*

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

ALVAR GONZALEZ,	. . .	<i>Governor of Valencia.</i>
ALPHONSO, CARLOS,	. . .	<i>His Sons.</i>
HERNANDEZ,	. . . .	<i>A Priest.</i>
ABDULLAH,	. . . .	<i>Prince of the Moors.</i>
GARCIAS,	. . . .	<i>A Spanish Knight.</i>
ELMINA,	. . . .	<i>Wife to Gonzalez.</i>
XIMENA,	. . . .	<i>Her Daughter.</i>
THERESA,	. . . .	<i>An Attendant.</i>

*Citizens, Soldiers, Attendants, &c.*

# THE SIEGE OF VALENCIA

---

## ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Room in a Palace of Valencia. XIMENA singing to a lute.*

### BALLAD

“THOU hast not been with a festal throng  
At the pouring of the wine ;  
Men bear not from the hall of song  
A mien so dark as thine !  
There’s blood upon thy shield,  
There’s dust upon thy plume,  
Thou hast brought from some disastrous field  
That brow of wrath and gloom !”

“And is there blood upon my shield ?  
Maiden, it well may be !  
We have sent the streams from our battle-field  
All darkened to the sea :  
We have given the founts a stain,  
Midst their woods of ancient pine ;  
And the ground is wet—but not with rain,  
Deed-dyed—but not with wine !

“The ground is wet—but not with rain—  
We have been in war-array,  
And the noblest blood of Christian Spain  
Hath bathed her soil to-day.  
I have seen the strong man die,  
And the stripling meet his fate,  
Where the mountain-winds go sounding by  
In the Roncesvalles’ Strait.

“In the gloomy Roncesvalles’ Strait  
There are helms and lances cleft;  
And they that moved at morn elate  
On a bed of heath are left!  
There’s many a fair young face  
Which the war-steed hath gone o’er;  
At many a board there is kept a place  
For those that come no more!”

“Alas for love, for woman’s breast,  
If woe like this must be!  
Hast thou seen a youth with an eagle-crest,  
And a white plume waving free?  
With his proud quick-flashing eye,  
And his mien of mighty state?  
Doth he come from where the swords flashed high  
In the Roncesvalles’ Strait?”

“In the gloomy Roncesvalles’ Strait  
I saw, and marked him well:  
For nobly on his steed he sate,  
When the pride of manhood fell.  
But it is not youth which turns  
From the field of spears again;  
For the boy’s high heart too wildly burns,  
Till it rests amidst the slain!”

“Thou canst not say that he lies low,  
 The lovely and the brave:  
 Oh, none could look on his joyous brow,  
 And think upon the grave!  
 Dark, dark perchance the day  
 Hath been with valour's fate;  
 But he is on his homeward way  
 From the Roncesvalles' Strait!”

“There is dust upon his joyous brow,  
 And o'er his graceful head;  
 And the war-horse will not wake him now,  
 Though it browse his greensward bed.  
 I have seen the stripling die,  
 And the strong man meet his fate,  
 Where the mountain-winds go sounding by  
 In the Roncesvalles' Strait!”

(ELMINA enters.)

ELMINA.—Your songs are not as those of other days,  
 Mine own Ximena! Where is now the young  
 And buoyant spirit of the morn, which once  
 Breathed in your spring-like melodies, and woke  
 Joy's echo from all hearts?

XIMENA.—My mother, this  
 Is not the free air of our mountain-wilds;  
 And these are not the halls wherein my voice  
 First poured those gladdening strains.

ELMINA.—Alas! thy heart  
 (I see it well) doth sicken for the pure  
 Free-wandering breezes of the joyous hills,  
 Where thy young brothers o'er the rock and heath  
 Bound in glad boyhood, even as torrent-streams  
 Leap brightly from the heights. Had we not been

Within these walls thus suddenly begirt,  
 Thou shouldst have tracked ere now, with step as light,  
 Their wild-wood paths.

XIMENA.—I would not but have shared  
 These hours of woe and peril, though the deep  
 And solemn feelings wakening at their voice  
 Claim all the wrought-up spirit to themselves,  
 And will not blend with mirth. The storm doth hush  
 All floating whispery sounds, all bird-notes wild  
 O' the summer-forest, filling earth and heaven  
 With its own awful music. And 'tis well!  
 Should not a hero's child be trained to hear  
 The trumpet's blast unstartled, and to look  
 In the fixed face of death without dismay?

ELMINA.—Woe! woe! that aught so gentle and so young  
 Should thus be called to stand i' the tempest's path,  
 And bear the token and the hue of death  
 On a bright soul so soon! I had not shrunk  
 From mine own lot; but thou, my child, shouldst move  
 As a light breeze of heaven, through summer-bowers  
 And not o'er foaming billows. We are fallen  
 On dark and evil days.

XIMENA.—Ay, days that wake  
 All to their tasks! Youth may not loiter now  
 In the green walks of spring; and womanhood  
 Is summoned into conflicts, heretofore  
 The lot of warrior-spirits. Strength is born  
 In the deep silence of long-suffering hearts,  
 Not amidst joy.

ELMINA.—Hast thou some secret woe  
 That thus thou speakest?

XIMENA.—What sorrow should be mine,  
 Unknown to thee?



ELMINA.—Alas ! the baleful air

Wherewith the pestilence in darkness walks  
Through the devoted city, like a blight  
Amidst the rose-tints of thy cheek hath fallen,  
And wrought an early withering. Thou hast crossed  
The paths of death, and ministered to those  
O'er whom his shadow rested, till thine eye  
Hath changed its glancing sunbeam for a still,  
Deep, solemn radiance ; and thy brow hath caught  
A wild and high expression, which at times  
Fades into desolate calmness, most unlike  
What youth's bright mien should wear. My gentle child !  
I look on thee in fear.

XIMENA.—Thou hast no cause

To fear for me. When the wild clash of steel,  
And the deep tambour, and the heavy step  
Of armèd men, break on our morning dreams—  
When, hour by hour, the noble and the brave  
Are falling round us, and we deem it much  
To give them funeral-rites, and call them blest  
If the good sword in its own stormy hour  
Hath done its work upon them, ere disease  
Had chilled their fiery blood ;—it is no time  
For the light mien wherewith, in happier hours,  
We trode the woodland mazes, when young leaves  
Were whispering in the gale.—My father comes—  
Oh ! speak of me no more. I would not shade  
His princely aspect with a thought less high  
Than his proud duties claim.

(GONZALEZ enters.)

ELMINA.—My noble lord !

Welcome from this day's toil ! It is the hour

Whose shadows, as they deepen, bring repose  
 Unto all weary men ; and wilt not thou  
 Free thy mailed bosom from the corslet's weight,  
 To rest at fall of eve ?

GONZALEZ.—There may be rest

For the tired peasant, when the vesper-bell  
 Doth send him to his cabin, and beneath  
 His vine and olive he may sit at eve,  
 Watching his children's sport : but unto him  
 Who keeps the watch-place on the mountain-height,  
 When heaven lets loose the storms that chasten realms,  
 Who speaks of rest ?

XIMENA.—My father, shall I fill

The wine-cup for thy lips, or bring the lute  
 Whose sounds thou lov'st ?

GONZALEZ.—If there be strains of power

To rouse a spirit, which in triumphant scorn  
 May cast off nature's feebleness, and hold  
 Its proud career unshackled, dashing down  
 Tears and fond thoughts to earth ; give voice to those :  
 I have need of such, Ximena !—we must hear  
 No melting music now.

XIMENA.—I know all high

Heroic ditties of the elder-time,  
 Sung by the mountain Christians,\* in the holds  
 Of the everlasting hills, whose snows yet bear  
 The print of Freedom's step ; and all wild strains  
 Wherein the dark Serranos† teach the rocks

\* Mountain Christians, those natives of Spain who, under their prince Pelayo, took refuge amongst the mountains of the northern provinces, where they maintained their religion and liberty, whilst the rest of their country was overrun by the Moors.

† Mountaineers.

And the pine-forests deeply to resound  
The praise of later champions. Wouldst thou hear  
The war-song of thine ancestor, the Cid ?

GONZALEZ.—Ay, speak of him ; for in that name is power  
Such as might rescue kingdoms. Speak of him !  
We are his children. They that can look back  
I' the annals of their house on such a name,  
How should they take Dishonour by the hand,  
And o'er the threshold of their fathers' halls  
First lead her as a guest ?

ELMINA.—Oh, why is this ?  
How my heart sinks !

GONZALEZ.—It must not fail thee yet,  
Daughter of heroes !—thine inheritance  
Is strength to meet all conflicts. Thou canst number  
In thy long line of glorious ancestry  
Men, the bright offering of whose blood hath made  
The ground it bathed even as an altar, whence  
High thoughts shall rise for ever. Bore they not,  
Midst flame and sword, their witness of the Cross,  
With its victorious inspiration girt  
As with a conqueror's robe, till the Infidel,  
O'erawed, shrank back before them ? Ay, the earth  
Doth call them martyrs ; but their agonies  
Were of a moment, tortures whose brief aim  
Was to destroy, within whose powers and scope  
Lay naught but dust. And earth doth call them martyrs !  
Why, heaven but claimed their blood, their lives, and not  
The things which grew as tendrils round their hearts ;  
No, not their children !

ELMINA.—Mean'st thou ? know'st thou aught ?—  
I cannot utter it—my sons ! my sons !  
Is it of them ? Oh ! wouldst thou speak of them ?

GONZALEZ.—A mother's heart divineth but too well.

ELMINA.—Speak, I adjure thee ! I can bear it all.

Where are my children ?

GONZALEZ.—In the Moorish camp

Whose lines have girt the city.

XIMENA.—But they live ?

All is not lost, my mother !

ELMINA.—Say, they live.

GONZALEZ.—Elmina, still they live.

ELMINA.—But captives ! They

Whom my fond heart had imaged to itself

Bounding from cliff to cliff, amidst the wilds

Where the rock-eagle seemed not more secure

In its rejoicing freedom ! And my boys

Are captives with the Moor !—oh ! how was this ?

GONZALEZ.—Alas ! our brave Alphonso, in the pride

Of boyish daring, left our mountain-halls,

With his young brother, eager to behold

The face of noble war. Thence on their way

Were the rash wanderers captured.

ELMINA.—'Tis enough.

And when shall they be ransomed ?

GONZALEZ.—There is asked

A ransom far too high.

ELMINA.—What ! have we wealth

Which might redeem a monarch, and our sons

The while wear fetters ? Take thou all for them,

And we will cast our worthless grandeur from us

As 'twere a cumbrous robe ! Why, thou art one,

To whose high nature pomp hath ever been

But as the plumage to a warrior's helm,

Worn or thrown off as lightly. And for me,

Thou know'st not how serenely I could take

The peasant's lot upon me, so my heart,  
Amidst its deep affections undisturbed,  
May dwell in silence.

XIMENA.—Father! doubt thou not  
But we will bind ourselves to poverty,  
With glad devotedness, if this, but this,  
May win them back. Distrust us not, my father!  
We can bear all things.

GONZALEZ.—Can ye bear disgrace?

XIMENA.—We were not born for this.

GONZALEZ.—No, thou say'st well!  
Hold to that lofty faith. My wife, my child!  
Hath earth no treasures richer than the gems  
Torn from her secret caverns? If by them  
Chains may be riven, then let the captive spring  
Rejoicing to the light. But he for whom  
Freedom and life may but be won with shame,  
Hath naught to do, save fearlessly to fix  
His steadfast look on the majestic heavens,  
And proudly die!

ELMINA.—Gonzalez, who must die?

GON. (*hurriedly*).—They on whose lives a fearful price is set,  
But to be paid by treason. Is't enough?  
Or must I yet seek words?

ELMINA.—That look saith more!  
Thou canst not mean——

GONZALEZ.—I do! Why dwells there not  
Power in a glance to speak it? They must die!  
They—must their names be told?—our sons must die,  
Unless I yield the city.

XIMENA.—Oh, look up,  
My mother! sink not thus! Until the grave  
Shut from our sight its victims, there is hope.

ELMINA (*in a low voice.*)—

Whose knell was in the breeze? No, no, not theirs!  
 Whose was the blessed voice that spoke of hope?  
 —And there is hope! I will not be subdued—  
 I will not hear a whisper of despair!  
 For nature is all-powerful, and her breath  
 Moves like a quickening spirit o'er the depths  
 Within a father's heart. Thou, too, Gonzalez,  
 Wilt tell me there is hope!

GONZALEZ (*solemnly.*)—Hope but in Him

Who bade the patriarch lay his fair young son  
 Bound on the shrine of sacrifice, and when  
 The bright steel quivered in the father's hand  
 Just raised to strike, sent forth his awful voice  
 Through the still clouds and on the breathless air,  
 Commanding to withhold. Earth has no hope:  
 It rests with Him.

ELMINA.—Thou canst not tell me this!

Thou, father of my sons, within whose hands  
 Doth lie thy children's fate.

GONZALEZ.—If there have been

Men in whose bosoms nature's voice hath made  
 Its accents as the solitary sound  
 Of an o'erpowering torrent, silencing  
 The austere and yet divine remonstrances  
 Whispered by faith and honour, lift thy hands;  
 And, to that Heaven which arms the brave with strength,  
 Pray that the father of thy sons may ne'er  
 Be thus found wanting.

ELMINA.—Then their doom is sealed!

Thou wilt not save thy children?

GONZALEZ.—Hast thou cause,

Wife of my youth! to deem it lies within

The bounds of possible things, that I should link  
My name to that word—traitor? They that sleep  
On their proud battle-fields, thy sires and mine,  
Died not for this.

ELMINA.—Oh, cold and hard of heart!

Thou shouldst be born for empire, since thy soul  
Thus lightly from all human bonds can free  
Its haughty flight. Men, men! too much is yours  
Of vantage; ye that with a sound, a breath,  
A shadow, thus can fill the desolate space  
Of rooted-up affections, o'er whose void  
Our yearning hearts must wither! So it is  
Dominion must be won! Nay, leave me not—  
My heart is bursting, and I must be heard.  
Heaven hath given power to mortal agony,  
As to the elements in their hour of might  
And mastery o'er creation. Who shall dare  
To mock that fearful strength? I must be heard!  
Give me my sons.

GONZALEZ.—That they may live to hide

With covering hands the indignant flush of shame  
On their young brows, when men shall speak of him  
They called their father! Was the oath whereby,  
On the altar of my faith, I bound myself  
With an unswerving spirit to maintain  
This free and Christian city for my God  
And for my king, a writing traced on sand,  
That passionate tears should wash it from the earth,  
Or even the life-drops of a bleeding heart  
Efface it, as a billow sweeps away  
The last light vessel's wake? Then never more  
Let man's deep vows be trusted!—though enforced  
By all the appeals of high remembrances,

And silent claims o' the sepulchres wherein  
 His fathers with their stainless glory sleep,  
 On their good swords ! Think'st thou *I* feel no pangs?  
 He that hath given me sons doth know the heart  
 Whose treasure he recalls. Of this no more :  
 'Tis vain. I tell thee that the inviolate Cross  
 Still from our ancient temples must look up  
 Through the blue heavens of Spain, though at its foot  
 I perish, with my race. Thou dar'st not ask  
 That I, the son of warriors—men who died  
 To fix it on that proud supremacy—  
 Should tear the sign of our victorious faith  
 From its high place of sunbeams, for the Moor  
 In impious joy to trample !

ELMINA.—Scorn me not

In mine extreme of misery ! Thou art strong—  
 Thy heart is not as mine. My brain grows wild ;  
 I know not what I ask. And yet 'twere but  
 Anticipating fate—since it must fall,  
 That Cross must fall at last ! There is no power,  
 No hope within this city of the grave,  
 To keep its place on high. Her sultry air  
 Breathes heavily of death, her warriors sink  
 Beneath their ancient banners, ere the Moor  
 Hath bent his bow against them ; for the shaft  
 Of pestilence flies more swiftly to its mark  
 Than the arrow of the desert. Even the skies  
 O'erhang the desolate splendour of her domes  
 With an ill omen's aspect, shaping forth,  
 From the dull clouds, wild menacing forms and signs  
 Foreboding ruin. Man might be withstood,  
 But who shall cope with famine and disease  
 When leagued with armèd foes ? Where now the aid,



Where the long-promised lances of Castile ?  
We are forsaken in our utmost need—  
By heaven and earth forsaken !

GONZALEZ.—If this be,

(And yet I will not deem it,) we must fall  
As men that in severe devotedness  
Have chosen their part, and bound themselves to death,  
Through high conviction that their suffering land  
By the free blood of martyrdom alone  
Shall call deliverance down.

ELMINA.—Oh ! I have stood

Beside thee through the beating storms of life  
With the true heart of unrepining love—  
As the poor peasant's mate doth cheerily,  
In the parched vineyard, or the harvest field,  
Bearing her part, sustain with him the heat  
And burden of the day. But now the hour,  
The heavy hour is come, when human strength  
Sinks down, a toil-worn pilgrim, in the dust,  
Owning that woe is mightier ! Spare me yet  
This bitter cup, my husband ! Let not her,  
The mother of the lovely, sit and mourn  
In her unpeopled home—a broken stem,  
O'er its fallen roses dying !

GONZALEZ.—Urge me not,

Thou that through all sharp conflicts hast been found  
Worthy a brave man's love !—oh, urge me not  
To guilt, which, through the midst of blinding tears,  
In its own hues thou seest not ! Death may scarce  
Bring aught like this !

ELMINA.—All, all thy gentle race,

The beautiful beings that around thee grew,  
Creatures of sunshine ! Wilt thou doom them all ?

She, too, thy daughter—doth her smile unmarked  
 Pass from thee, with its radiance, day by day?  
 Shadows are gathering round her: seest thou not  
 The misty dimness of the spoiler's breath  
 Hangs o'er her beauty; and the face which made  
 The summer of our hearts, now doth but send,  
 With every glance, deep bodings through the soul,  
 Telling of early fate?

GONZALEZ.—I see a change

Far nobler on her brow. She is as one  
 Who, at the trumpet's sudden call, hath risen  
 From the gay banquet, and in scorn cast down  
 The wine-cup and the garland and the lute  
 Of festal hours, for the good spear and helm,  
 Besecming sterner tasks. Her eye hath lost  
 The beam which laughed upon the awakening heart,  
 Even as morn breaks o'er earth. But far within  
 Its full dark orb, a light hath sprung, whose source  
 Lies deeper in the soul. And let the torch,  
 Which but illumed the glittering pageant, fade!  
 The altar-flame, in the sanctuary's recess,  
 Burns quenchless, being of heaven! She hath put on  
 Courage and faith and generous constancy,  
 Even as a breastplate. Ay! men look on her,  
 As she goes forth serenely to her tasks,  
 Binding the warriors' wounds, and bearing fresh  
 Cool draughts to fevered lips—they look on her,  
 Thus moving in her beautiful array  
 Of gentle fortitude, and bless the fair  
 Majestic vision, and unmurmuring turn  
 Unto their heavy toils.

ELMINA.—And seest thou not

In that high faith and strong collectedness,

A fearful inspiration ? They have cause  
 To tremble, who behold the unearthly light  
 Of high and, it may be, prophetic thought  
 Investing youth with grandeur ! From the grave  
 It rises, on whose shadowy brink thy child  
 Waits but a father's hand to snatch her back  
 Into the laughing sunshine. Kneel with me ;  
 Ximena ! kneel beside me, and implore  
 That which a deeper, more prevailing voice  
 Than ours doth ask, and will not be denied,  
 His children's lives !

XIMENA.—Alas ! this may not be :

Mother !—I cannot.

[Exit.

GONZALEZ.—My heroic child !

—A terrible sacrifice thou claim'st, O God !  
 From creatures in whose agonising hearts  
 Nature is strong as death !

ELMINA.—Is't thus in thine ?

Away ! What time is given thee to resolve  
 On—what I cannot utter ? Speak ! thou know'st  
 Too well what I would say.

GONZALEZ.—Until—ask not !

The time is brief.

ELMINA.—Thou said'st—I heard not right——

GONZALEZ.—The time is brief.

ELMINA.—What ! must we burst all ties

Wherewith the thrilling chords of life are twined ;  
 And, for this task's fulfilment, can it be  
 That man, in his cold heartlessness, hath dared  
 To number and to mete us forth the sands  
 Of hours, nay, moments ? Why, the sentenced wretch,  
 He on whose soul there rests a brother's blood  
 Poured forth in slumber, is allowed more time

To wean his turbulent passions from the world  
 His presence doth pollute ! It is not thus ?  
 We must have time to school us.

GONZALEZ.—We have but

To bow the head in silence, when heaven's voice  
 Calls back the things we love.

ELM.—Love ! love !—there are soft smiles and gentle words,  
 And there are faces, skilful to put on  
 The look we trust in—and 'tis mockery all !  
 A faithless mist, a desert-vapour, wearing  
 The brightness of clear waters, thus to cheat  
 The thirst that semblance kindled ! There is none,  
 In all this cold and hollow world—no fount  
 Of deep strong deathless love, save that within  
 A mother's heart. It is but pride, wherewith  
 To his fair son the father's eye doth turn,  
 Watching his growth. Ay, on the boy he looks,  
 The bright glad creature springing in his path,  
 But as the heir of his great name—the young  
 And stately tree, whose rising strength ere long  
 Shall bear his trophies well. And this is love !  
 This is *man's* love ! What marvel ?—*you* ne'er made  
 Your breast the pillow of his infancy,  
 While to the fulness of your heart's glad heavings  
 His fair cheek rose and fell, and his bright hair  
 Waved softly to your breath ! *You* ne'er kept watch  
 Beside him, till the last pale star had set,  
 And morn, all dazzling, as in triumph, broke  
 On your dim weary eye ; not *yours* the face  
 Which, early faded through fond care for him,  
 Hung o'er his sleep, and, duly as heaven's light,  
 Was there to greet his wakening ! *You* ne'er smoothed  
 His couch, ne'er sang him to his rosy rest ;

Caught his least whisper, when his voice from yours  
Had learned soft utterance ; pressed your lip to his,  
When fever parched it ; hushed his wayward cries,  
With patient vigilant never-wearied love !

No ! these are woman's tasks !—in these her youth,  
And bloom of cheek, and buoyancy of heart,  
Steal from her all unmarked. My boys ! my boys !  
Hath vain affection borne with all for this ?

Why were ye given me ?

GONZALEZ.—Is there strength in man

Thus to endure ? That thou couldst read, through all  
Its depths of silent agony, the heart  
Thy voice of woe doth rend !

ELMINA.—Thy heart—thy heart ! Away ! it feels not now !

But an hour comes to tame the mighty man  
Unto the infant's weakness ; nor shall heaven  
Spare you that bitter chastening. May you live  
To be alone, when loneliness doth seem  
Most heavy to sustain ! For me, my voice  
Of prayer and fruitless weeping shall be soon  
With all forgotten sounds—my quiet place  
Low with my lovely ones ; and we shall sleep,  
Though kings lead armies o'er us—we shall sleep,  
Wrapt in earth's covering mantle ! You the while  
Shall sit within your vast forsaken halls,  
And hear the wild and melancholy winds  
Moan through their drooping banners, never more  
To wave above your race. Ay, then call up  
Shadows—dim phantoms from ancestral tombs,  
But all, all—*glorious*,—conquerors, chieftains, kings,  
To people that cold void ! And when the strength  
From your right arm hath melted, when the blast  
Of the shrill clarion gives your heart no more

A fiery wakening,—if at last you pine  
 For the glad voices and the bounding steps  
 Once through your home re-echoing, and the clasp  
 Of twining arms, and all the joyous light  
 Of eyes that laughed with youth, and made your board  
 A place of sunshine,—when those days are come,  
 Then, in your utter desolation, turn  
 To the cold world—the smiling, faithless world,  
 Which hath swept past you long—and bid it quench  
 Your soul's deep thirst with *fame!* immortal *fame!*  
 Fame to the sick of heart!—a gorgeous robe,  
 A crown of victory, unto him that dies  
 In the burning waste, for water!

GONZALEZ.—This from thee!

Now the last drop of bitterness is poured.  
 Elmina—I forgive thee!

(ELMINA goes out.)

Aid me, Heaven!

From whom alone is power! Oh! thou hast set  
 Duties so stern of aspect in my path,  
 They almost to my startled gaze assume  
 The hue of things less hallowed! Men have sunk  
 Unblamed beneath such trials! Doth not He  
 Who made us know the limits of our strength?  
 My wife! my sons! Away! I must not pause  
 To give my heart one moment's mastery thus! [*Exit.*]

## SCENE II.

*The aisle of a Gothic church. HERNANDEZ, GARCIAS, and others.*

HER.—The rites are closed. Now, valiant men! depart,  
 Each to his place—I may not say, of rest—  
 Your faithful vigils for your sons may win

What must not be your own. Ye are as those  
Who sow, in peril and in care, the seed  
Of the fair tree, beneath whose stately shade  
They may not sit. But bless'd be those who toil  
For after-days ! All high and holy thoughts  
Be with you, warriors ! through the lingering hours  
Of the night-watch.

GARCÍAS.—Ay, father ! we have need  
Of high and holy thoughts, wherewith to fence  
Our hearts against despair. Yet have I been  
From youth a son of war. The stars have looked  
A thousand times upon my couch of heath,  
Spread midst the wild sierras, by some stream  
Whose dark-red waves looked e'en as tho' their source  
Lay not in rocky caverns, but the veins  
Of noble hearts ; while many a knightly crest  
Rolled with them to the deep. And, in the years  
Of my long exile and captivity,  
With the fierce Arab I have watched beneath  
The still, pale shadow of some lonely palm,  
At midnight in the desert ; while the wind  
Swelled with the lion's roar, and heavily  
The fearfulness and might of solitude  
Pressed on my weary heart.

HERNÁNDEZ (*thoughtfully*).—Thou little know'st  
Of what is solitude. I tell thee, those  
For whom—in earth's remotest nook, howe'er  
Divided from their path by chain on chain  
Of mighty mountains, and the amplitude  
Of rolling seas—there beats one human heart,  
There breathes one being, unto whom their name  
Comes with a thrilling and a gladdening sound  
Heard o'er the din of life, are not alone !

Not on the deep, nor in the wild, alone ;  
 For there is that on earth with which they hold  
 A brotherhood of soul ! Call him alone,  
 Who stands shut out from this !—and let not those  
 Whose homes are bright with sunshine and with love,  
 Put on the insolence of happiness,  
 Glorifying in that proud lot ! A lonely hour  
 Is on its way to each, to all ; for Death  
 Knows no companionship.

GARCÍAS.—I have looked on Death  
 In field, and storm, and flood. But never yet  
 Hath aught weighed down my spirit to a mood  
 Of sadness, dreaming o'er dark auguries,  
 Like this, our watch by midnight. Fearful things  
 Are gathering round us. Death upon the earth,  
 Omens in heaven ! The summer skies put forth  
 No clear bright stars above us, but at times,  
 Catching some comet's fiery hue of wrath,  
 Marshal their clouds to armies, traversing  
 Heaven with the rush of meteor-steeds—the array  
 Of spears and banners tossing like the pines  
 Of Pyrenean forests, when the storm  
 Doth sweep the mountains.

HERNANDEZ.—Ay, last night I too  
 Kept vigil, gazing on the angry heavens ;  
 And I beheld the meeting and the shock  
 Of those wild hosts i' the air, when, as they closed,  
 A red and sultry mist, like that which mantles  
 The thunder's path, fell o'er them. Then were flung  
 Through the dull glare, broad cloudy banners forth ;  
 And chariots seemed to whirl, and steeds to sink,  
 Bearing down crested warriors. But all this  
 Was dim and shadowy ; then swift darkness rushed



Down on the unearthly battle, as the deep  
 Swept o'er the Egyptian's armament. I looked,  
 And all that fiery field of plumes and spears  
 Was blotted from heaven's face. I looked again,  
 And from the brooding mass of cloud leaped forth  
 One meteor-sword, which o'er the reddening sea  
 Shook with strange motion, such as earthquakes give  
 Unto a rocking citadel. I beheld,  
 And yet my spirit sank not.

GARCÍAS.—Neither deem

That mine hath blenched. But these are sights and sounds  
 To awe the firmest. Know'st thou what we hear  
 At midnight from the walls? Wer't but the deep  
 Barbaric horn, or Moorish tambour's peal,  
 Thence might the warrior's heart catch impulses  
 Quickening its fiery currents. But our ears  
 Are pierced by other tones. We hear the knell  
 For brave men in their noon of strength cut down,  
 And the shrill wail of woman, and the dirge  
 Faint swelling through the streets. Then e'en the air  
 Hath strange and fitful murmurs of lament,  
 As if the viewless watchers of the land  
 Sighed on its hollow breezes. To my soul  
 The torrent-rush of battle, with its din  
 Of trampling steeds and ringing panoply,  
 Were, after these faint sounds of drooping woe,  
 As the free sky's glad music unto him  
 Who leaves a couch of sickness.

HERNÁNDEZ (*with solemnity*).—If to plunge

In the mid waves of combat, as they bear  
 Chargers and spearmen onwards, and to make  
 A reckless bosom's front the buoyant mark,  
 On that wild current, for ten thousand arrows—

If thus to dare were valour's noblest aim,  
 Lightly might fame be won. But there are things  
 Which ask a spirit of more exalted pitch,  
 And courage tempered with a holier fire.  
 Well may'st thou say that these are fearful times ;  
 Therefore, be firm, be patient ! There is strength,  
 And a fierce instinct, even in common souls,  
 To bear up manhood with a stormy joy,  
 When red swords meet in lightning. But our task  
 Is more and nobler. We have to endure,  
 And to keep watch, and to arouse a land,  
 And to defend an altar. If we fall,  
 So that our blood make but the millionth part  
 Of Spain's great ransom, we may count it joy  
 To die upon her bosom, and beneath  
 The banner of her faith. Think but on this,  
 And gird your hearts with silent fortitude,  
 Suffering, yet hoping all things. Fare ye well.

GARCIAS.—Father, farewell.

*(Exit with his followers.)*

HERNANDEZ.—These men have earthly ties  
 And bondage on their natures. To the cause  
 Of God, and Spain's revenge, they bring but half  
 Their energies and hopes. But he whom heaven  
 Hath called to be the awakener of a land,  
 Should have his soul's affections all absorbed  
 In that majestic purpose, and press on  
 To its fulfilment — as a mountain-born  
 And mighty stream, with all its vassal rills,  
 Sweeps proudly to the ocean, pausing not  
 To dally with the flowers. Hark ! what quick step  
 Comes hurrying through the gloom, at this dead hour ?

*(ELMINA enters.)*

ELMINA.—Are not all hours as one to misery? Why  
Should she take note of time, for whom the day  
And night have lost their blessed attributes  
Of sunshine and repose?

HERNANDEZ.—I know thy griefs;  
But there are trials for the noble heart,  
Wherein its own deep fountains must supply  
All it can hope of comfort. Pity's voice  
Comes with vain sweetness to the unheeding ear  
Of anguish, even as music heard afar  
On the green shore, by him who perishes  
Midst rocks and eddying waters.

ELMINA.—Think thou not  
I sought thee but for pity. I am come  
For that which grief is privileged to demand  
With an imperious claim, from all whose form —  
Whose human form, doth seal them unto suffering!  
Father! I ask thine aid.

HERNANDEZ.—There is no aid  
For thee or for thy children, but with Him  
Whose presence is around us in the cloud,  
As in the shining and the glorious light.

ELMINA.—There is no aid! Art thou a man of God?  
Art thou a man of sorrow?— for the world  
Doth call thee such;— and hast thou not been taught  
By God and sorrow, mighty as they are,  
To own the claims of misery?

HERNANDEZ.—Is there power  
With me to save thy sons? Implore of heaven!

ELMINA.—Doth not heaven work its purposes by man?  
I tell thee thou canst save them! Art thou not  
Gonzalez' counsellor? Unto him thy words  
Are even as oracles —

HERNANDEZ.—And therefore? Speak!—

The noble daughter of Pelayo's line  
Hath naught to ask unworthy of the name  
Which is a nation's heritage. Dost thou shrink?

ELMINA.—Have pity on me, father! I must speak

That, from the thought of which but yesterday  
I had recoiled in scorn. But this is past.  
Oh! we grow humble in our agonies,  
And to the dust, their birthplace, bow the heads  
That wore the crown of glory! I am weak—  
My chastening is far more than I can bear.

HERNANDEZ.—These are no times for weakness. On our hills

The ancient cedars in their gathered might  
Are battling with the tempest, and the flower  
Which cannot meet its driving blast must die.  
But thou hast drawn thy nurture from a stem  
Unwont to bend or break. Lift thy proud head,  
Daughter of Spain!—what wouldst thou with thy lord?

ELMINA.—Look not upon me thus! I have no power

To tell thee. Take thy keen disdainful eye  
Off from my soul! What! am I sunk to this?  
I, whose blood sprung from heroes! How my sons  
Will scorn the mother that would bring disgrace  
On their majestic line! My sons! my sons!  
Now is all else forgotten. I had once  
A babe that in the early spring-time lay  
Sickening upon my bosom, till at last,  
When earth's young flowers were opening to the sun,  
Death sank on his meek eyelid, and I deemed  
All sorrow light to mine. But now the fate  
Of all my children seems to brood above me  
In the dark thunder-clouds. Oh! I have power  
And voice unfaltering now to speak my prayer

And my last lingering hope, that thou shouldst win  
The father to relent, to save his sons!

HERNANDEZ.—By yielding up the city?

ELMINA.—Rather say

By meeting that which gathers close upon us,  
Perchance one day the sooner! Is't not so?  
Must we not yield at last? How long shall man  
Array his single breast against disease  
And famine and the sword?

HERNANDEZ.—How long? While He

Who shadows forth His power more gloriously  
In the high deeds and sufferings of the soul,  
Than in the circling heavens with all their stars,  
Or the far-sounding deep, doth send abroad  
A spirit, which takes affliction for its mate,  
In the good cause, with solemn joy! How long?  
And who art thou that, in the littleness  
Of thine own selfish purpose, wouldst set bounds  
To the free current of all noble thought  
And generous action, bidding its bright waves  
Be stayed, and flow no farther? But the Power  
Whose interdict is laid on seas and orbs,  
To chain them in from wandering, hath assigned  
No limits unto that which man's high strength  
Shall, through its aid, achieve.

ELMINA.—Oh! there are times,

When all that hopeless courage can achieve  
But sheds a mournful beauty o'er the fate  
Of those who die in vain.

HERNANDEZ.—Who dies in vain

Upon his country's war-fields, and within  
The shadow of her altars? Feeble heart!  
I tell thee that the voice of noble blood,

Thus poured for faith and freedom, hath a tone  
 Which from the night of ages, from the gulf  
 Of death, shall burst, and make its high appeal  
 Sound unto earth and heaven. Ay, let the land,  
 Whose sons through centuries of woe have striven  
 And perished by her temples, sink awhile,  
 Borne down in conflict! But immortal seed  
 Deep, by heroic suffering, hath been sown  
 On all her ancient hills; and generous hope  
 Knows that the soil, in its good time, shall yet  
 Bring forth a glorious harvest. Earth receives  
 Not one red drop from faithful hearts in vain.

ELMINA.—Then it must be! And ye will make those lives,  
 Those young bright lives, an offering—to retard  
 Our doom one day?

HERNANDEZ.—The mantle of that day  
 May wrap the fate of Spain.

ELMINA.—What led me here?

Why did I turn to thee in my despair?  
 Love hath no ties upon thee. What had I  
 To hope from thee, thou lone and childless man?  
 Go to thy silent home!—there no young voice  
 Shall bid thee welcome, no light footstep spring  
 Forth at the sound of thine. What knows thy heart?

HER.—Woman! how darest thou taunt me with my woes?  
 Thy children, too, shall perish, and I say  
 It shall be well! Why tak'st thou thought for them,  
 Wearing thy heart, and wasting down thy life  
 Unto its dregs, and making night thy time  
 Of care yet more intense, and casting health  
 Unprized to melt away in the bitter cup  
 Thou minglest for thyself? Why, what hath earth  
 To pay thee back for this? Shall they not live

(If the sword spare them now) to prove how soon  
 All love may be forgóttén? Years of thought,  
 Long faithful watchings, looks of tenderness,  
 That changed not, though to change be this world's law—  
 Shall they not flush thy cheek with shame, whose blood  
 Marks even like branding iron? to thy sick heart  
 Make death a want, as sleep to weariness?  
 Doth not all hope end thus? or even at best,  
 Will they not leave thee—far from thee seek room  
 For the o'erflowings of their fiery souls  
 On life's wide ocean? Give the bounding steed  
 Or the winged bark to youth, that his free course  
 May be o'er hills and seas; and weep thou not  
 In thy forsaken home, for the bright world  
 Lies all before him, and be sure he wastes  
 No thought on thee.

ELMINA.—Not so—it is not so!

Thou dost but torture me. My sons are kind  
 And brave and gentle.

HERNANDEZ.—Others, too, have worn

The semblance of all good. Nay, stay thee yet;  
 I will be calm, and thou shalt learn how earth,  
 The fruitful in all agonies, hath woes  
 Which far outweigh thine own.

ELMINA.—It may not be!

Whose grief is like a mother's for her sons?

HERNANDEZ.—My son lay stretched upon his battle-bier,

And there were hands wrung o'er him which had caught  
 Their hue from his young blood!

ELMINA.—What tale is this?

HERNANDEZ.—Read you no records in this mien, of things

Whose traces on man's aspect are not such  
 As the breeze leaves on water? Lofty birth,

War, peril, power !—affliction's hand is strong,  
 If it erase the haughty characters  
 They grave so deep. I have not always been  
 That which I am. The name I bore is not  
 Of those which perish. I was once a chief—  
 A warrior—nor, as now, a lonely man.  
 I was a father !

ELMINA.—Then thy heart can feel !  
 Thou wilt have pity.

HERNANDEZ.—Should I pity *thee* ?

*Thy* sons will perish gloriously: their blood—

EL.—Their blood, my children's blood ! Thou speak'st as 'twere  
 Of casting down a wine-cup, in the mirth  
 And wantonness of feasting. My fair boys !  
 Man ! hast thou been a father ?

HERNANDEZ.—Let them die !

Let them die *now*, thy children ! so thy heart  
 Shall wear their beautiful image all undimmed  
 Within it, to the last. Nor shalt thou learn  
 The bitter lesson, of what worthless dust  
 Are framed the idols whose false glory binds  
 Earth's fetter on our souls. Thou think'st it much  
 To mourn the early dead ; but there are tears  
 Heavy with deeper anguish. We endow  
 Those whom we love, in our fond passionate blindness,  
 With power upon our souls, too absolute  
 To be a mortal's trust. Within their hands  
 We lay the flaming sword, whose stroke alone  
 Can reach our hearts ; and they are merciful,  
 As they are strong, that wield it not to pierce us.  
 Ay, fear them—fear the loved ! Had I but wept  
 O'er my son's grave as o'er a babe's, where tears  
 Are as spring dew-drops, glittering in the sun,



And brightening the young verdure, I might still  
Have loved and trusted.

ELMINA (*disdainfully*).—But he fell in war !  
And hath not glory medicine in her cup  
For the brief pangs of nature ?

HERNANDEZ.—Glory !—Peace,  
And listen ! By my side the stripling grew,  
Last of my line. I reared him to take joy  
In the blaze of arms, as eagles train their young  
To look upon the day-king. His quick blood  
Even to his boyish cheek would mantle up  
When the heavens rang with trumpets, and his eye  
Flash with the spirit of a race whose deeds—  
—But this availeth not ! Yet he was brave.  
I've seen him clear himself a path in fight  
As lightning through a forest ; and his plume  
Waved like a torch above the battle-storm,  
The soldier's guide, when princely crests had sunk,  
And banners were struck down. Around my steps  
Floated his fame like music, and I lived  
But in the lofty sound. But when my heart  
In one frail ark had ventured all, when most  
He seemed to stand between my soul and heaven,  
Then came the thunder-stroke.

ELMINA.—'Tis ever thus !  
And the unquiet and foreboding sense  
That thus 'twill ever be, doth link itself  
Darkly with all deep love. He died ?

HERNANDEZ.—Not so !  
—Death ! Death ! Why, earth should be a paradise,  
To make that name so fearful ! Had he died,  
With his young fame about him for a shroud  
I had not learned the might of agony

To bring proud natures low ! No ! he fell off—  
 Why do I tell thee this ? what right hast thou  
 To learn how passed the glory from my house ?  
 Yet listen ! He forsook me. He, that was  
 As mine own soul, forsook me ! trampled o'er  
 The ashes of his sires ! ay, leagued himself  
 Even with the Infidel, the curse of Spain ;  
 And, for the dark eye of a Moorish maid,  
 Abjured his faith, his God ! Now, talk of death !

ELMINA.—Oh ! I can pity thee——

HERNANDEZ.—There's more to hear.

I braced the corslet o'er my heart's deep wound,  
 And cast my troubled spirit on the tide  
 Of war and high events, whose stormy waves  
 Might bear it up from sinking ;——

ELMINA.—And ye met

No more ?

HERNANDEZ.—Be still ! we did ! we met once more.

God had his own high purpose to fulfil,  
 Or think'st thou that the sun in his bright heaven  
 Had looked upon such things ? We met once more.  
 That was an hour to leave its lightning-mark  
 Seared upon brain and bosom. There had been  
 Combat on Ebro's banks, and when the day  
 Sank in red clouds, it faded from a field  
 Still held by Moorish lances. Night closed round—  
 A night of sultry darkness, in the shadow  
 Of whose broad wing, even unto death, I strove  
 Long with a turbaned champion ; but my sword  
 Was heavy with God's vengeance—and prevailed.  
 He fell—my heart exulted—and I stood  
 In gloomy triumph o'er him. Nature gave  
 No sign of horror, for 'twas Heaven's decree !

He strove to speak—but I had done the work  
Of wrath too well ; yet in his last deep moan  
A dreadful something of familiar sound  
Came o'er my shuddering sense. The moon look'd forth,  
And I beheld—speak not !—twas he—my son !  
My boy lay dying there. He raised one glance  
And knew me—for he sought with feeble hand  
To cover his glazed eyes. A darker veil  
Sank o'er them soon. I will not have thy look  
Fixed on me thus ! Away !

ELMINA.—Thou hast seen this,

Thou hast done this—and yet thou liv'st ?

HERNANDEZ.—I live !

And know'st thou wherefore ? On my soul there fell  
A horror of great darkness, which shut out  
All earth, and heaven, and hope. I cast away  
The spear and helm, and made the cloister's shade  
The home of my despair. But a deep voice  
Came to me through the gloom, and sent its tones  
Far through my bosom's depths. And I awoke ;  
Ay, as the mountain-cedar doth shake off  
Its weight of wintry snow, even so I shook  
Despondence from my soul, and knew myself  
Sealed by that blood wherewith my hands were dyed,  
And set apart, and fearfully marked out  
Unto a mighty task :—to rouse the soul  
Of Spain as from the dead ; and to lift up  
The Cross, her sign of victory, on the hills,  
Gathering her sons to battle. And my voice  
Must be as freedom's trumpet on the winds,  
From Roncesvalles to the blue sea-waves  
Where Calpe looks on Afric ; till the land  
Have filled her cup of vengeance. Ask me now

To yield the Christian city, that its fanes  
 May rear the minaret in the face of heaven !—  
 But death shall have a bloodier vintage-feast  
 Ere that day come.

ELMINA.—I ask thee this no more,  
 For I am hopeless now. But yet one boon—  
 Hear me, by all thy woes ! Thy voice hath power  
 Through the wide city : here I cannot rest—  
 Aid me to pass the gates !

HERNANDEZ.—And wherefore ?

ELMINA.—Thou,  
 That wert a father, and art now—alone !  
 Canst thou ask wherefore ? Ask the wretch whose sands  
 Have not an hour to run, whose failing limbs  
 Have but one earthly journey to perform,  
 Why, on his pathway to the place of death,  
 Ay, when the very axe is glistening cold  
 Upon his dizzy sight, his pale parched lip  
 Implores a cup of water ! Why, the stroke  
 Which trembles o'er him in itself shall bring  
 Oblivion of all wants, yet who denies  
 Nature's last prayer ? I tell thee that the thirst  
 Which burns my spirit up is agony  
 To be endured no more. And I must look  
 Upon my children's faces, I must hear  
 Their voices, ere they perish. But hath heaven  
 Decead that they must perish ? Who shall say  
 If in yon Moslem camp there beats no heart  
 Which prayers and tears may melt ?

HERNANDEZ.—There !—with the Moor !

Let him fill up the measure of his guilt.  
 'Tis madness all ! How wouldst thou pass the array  
 Of armèd foes ?

ELMINA.—Oh! free doth sorrow pass,

Free and unquestioned, through a suffering world.

HERNANDEZ.—This must not be. Enough of woe is laid

Even now upon thy lord's heroic soul,

For man to bear unsinking. Press thou not

Too heavily the o'erburthened heart. Away!

Bow down the knee, and send thy prayers for strength

Up to heaven's gate. Farewell! [Exit.

ELMINA.—Are all men thus?

Why, wer't not better they should fall even now

Than live to shut their hearts, in haughty scorn,

Against the sufferer's pleadings? But no, no!

Who can be like this man, that slew his son,

Yet wears his life still proudly, and a soul

Untamed upon his brow?

(After a pause.)

There's one, whose arms

Have borne my children in their infancy,

And on whose knees they sported, and whose hand

Hath led them oft—a vassal of their sire's;

And I will seek him: he may lend me aid,

When all beside pass on.

(Dirge heard without.)

THOU to thy rest art gone,

High heart! and what are we,

While o'er our heads the storm sweeps on,

That we should mourn for thee?

Free grave and peaceful bier

To the buried son of Spain!

To those that live, the lance and spear,

And well if not the chain!

Be theirs to weep the dead,  
 As they sit beneath their vines,  
 Whose flowery land hath borne no tread  
 Of spoilers o'er its shrines !

Thou hast thrown off the load  
 Which we must yet sustain,  
 And pour our blood where thine hath flowed,  
 Too blest if not in vain.

We give thee holy rite,  
 Slow knell, and chanted strain :  
 For those that fall to-morrow night,  
 May be left no funeral train.

Again, when trumpets wake,  
 We must brace our armour on ;  
 But a deeper note thy sleep must break—  
 Thou to thy rest art gone !

Happier in this than all,  
 That, now thy race is run,  
 Upon thy name no stain may fall,  
 Thy work hath well been done !

ELM.—“Thy work hath well been done :” so thou may'st rest.  
 There is a solemn lesson in those words—  
 But now I may not pause. [Exit.

### SCENE III.

*A street in the city.* HERNANDEZ, GONZALEZ.

HERNANDEZ.—Would they not hear ?

GONZALEZ.—They heard, as one that stands  
 By the cold grave, which hath but newly closed  
 O'er his last friend, doth hear some passer-by

Bid him be comforted! Their hearts have died  
Within them. We must perish, not as those  
That fall when battle's voice doth shake the hills,  
And peal through heaven's great arch, but silently,  
And with a wasting of the spirit down,  
A quenching day by day of some bright spark  
Which lit us on our toils. Reproach me not;  
My soul is darkened with a heavy cloud—  
Yet fear not I shall yield.

HERNANDEZ.—Breathe not the word,  
Save in proud scorn. Each bitter day o'erpassed  
By slow endurance, is a triumph won  
For Spain's red Cross. And be of trusting heart!  
A few brief hours, and those that turned away  
In cold despondence, shrinking from your voice,  
May crowd around their leader, and demand  
To be arrayed for battle. We must watch  
For the swift impulse, and await its time,  
As the bark waits the ocean's. You have chosen  
To kindle up their souls, an hour, perchance,  
When they were weary; they had cast aside  
Their arms to slumber; or a knell, just then,  
With its deep hollow tone, had made the blood  
Creep shuddering thro' their veins; or they had caught  
A glimpse of some new meteor, and shaped forth  
Strange omens from its blaze.

GONZALEZ.—Alas! the cause  
Lies deeper—in their misery. I have seen,  
In my night's course through this beleaguered city,  
Things whose remembrance doth not pass away  
As vapours from the mountains. There were some  
That sat beside their dead, with eyes wherein  
Grief had ta'en place of sight, and shut out all

But its own ghastly object. To my voice  
 Some answered with a fierce and bitter laugh,  
 As men whose agonies were made to pass  
 The bounds of sufferance, by some reckless word  
 Dropt from the light of spirit. Others lay—  
 —Why should I tell thee, father! how despair  
 Can bring the lofty brow of manhood down  
 Unto the very dust? And yet for this,  
 Fear not that I embrace my doom—O God!  
 That 'twere my doom alone!—with less of fixed  
 And solemn fortitude. Lead on, prepare  
 The holiest rites of faith, that I by them  
 Once more may consecrate my sword, my life;  
 —But what are these? Who hath not dearer lives  
 Twined with his own! I shall be lonely soon—  
 Childless! Heaven wills it so. Let us be gone.  
 Perchance before the shrine my heart may beat  
 With a less troubled motion. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE IV.

*A tent in the Moorish camp.* ABDULLAH, ALPHONSO, CARLOS.

ABD.—These are bold words: but hast thou looked on death,  
 Fair stripling? On thy cheek and sunny brow  
 Scarce fifteen summers of their laughing course  
 Have left light traces. If thy shaft hath pierced  
 The ibex of the mountains, if thy step  
 Hath climbed some eagle's nest, and thou hast made  
 His nest thy spoil, 'tis much! And fear'st thou not  
 The leader of the mighty?

ALPHONSO.—I have been  
 Reared amongst fearless men, and midst the rocks



And the wild hills whereon my fathers fought  
And won their battles. There are glorious tales  
Told of their deeds, and I have learned them all.  
How should I fear thee, Moor?

ABDULLAH.—So, thou hast seen

Fields, where the combat's roar hath died away  
Into the whispering breeze, and where wild flowers  
Bloom o'er forgotten graves! But know'st thou aught  
Of those, where sword from crossing sword strikes fire,  
And leaders are borne down, and rushing steeds  
Trample the life from out the mighty hearts  
That ruled the storm so late? Speak not of death  
Till thou hast looked on such.

ALPHONSO.—I was not born

A shepherd's son, to dwell with pipe and crook  
And peasant-men amidst the lowly vales,  
Instead of ringing clarions and bright spears  
And crested knights. I am of princely race;  
And, if my father would have heard my suit,  
I tell thee, infidel, that long ere now  
I should have seen how lances meet, and swords  
Do the field's work.

ABDULLAH.—Boy!—know'st thou there are sights

A thousand times more fearful? Men may die  
Full proudly, when the skies and mountains ring  
To battle-horn and tecbir. But not all  
So pass away in glory. There are those,  
Midst the dead silence of pale multitudes,  
Led forth in fetters—dost thou mark me, boy?—  
To take their last look of the all-gladdening sun,  
And bow, perchance, the stately head of youth  
Unto the death of shame! Hadst thou seen this—

ALPHONSO.—Sweet brother, God is with us—fear thou not!

We have had heroes for our sires :—this man  
Should not behold us tremble.

ABDULLAH.—There are means

To tame the loftiest natures. Yet again  
I ask thee, wilt thou, from beneath the walls,  
Sue to thy sire for life?—or wouldst thou die  
With this thy brother?

ALPHONSO.—Moslem! on the hills,

Around my father's castle, I have heard  
The mountain-peasants, as they dressed the vines,  
Or drove the goats by rock and torrent home,  
Singing their ancient songs; and these were all  
Of the Cid Campeador; and how his sword  
Tizona\* cleared its way through turbaned hosts,  
And captured Afric's kings, and how he won  
Valencia from the Moor.† I will not shame  
The blood we draw from him!

*(A Moorish soldier enters.)*

SOLDIER.—Valencia's lord

Sends messengers, my chief.

ABDULLAH.—Conduct them hither.

*(The soldier goes out and re-enters with ELMINA, disguised, and an attendant.)*

CARLOS *(springing forward to the attendant.)*—

\* Tizona, the fire-brand. The name of the Cid's favourite sword, taken in battle from the Moorish king Bucar.

† Valencia, which has been repeatedly besieged and taken by the armies of different nations, remained in possession of the Moors for a hundred and seventy years after the Cid's death. It was regained from them by King Don Jayme of Aragon, surnamed the Conqueror; after whose success I have ventured to suppose it governed by a descendant of the Campeador.

Oh ! take me hence, Diego ! take me hence  
 With thee, that I may see my mother's face  
 At morning when I wake. Here dark-browed men  
 Frown strangely, with their cruel eyes, upon us.  
 Take me with thee, for thou art good and kind,  
 And well I know thou lov'st me, my Diego !

ABD.—Peace, boy ! What tidings, Christian, from thy lord ?  
 Is he grown humbler ?—doth he set the lives  
 Of these fair nurslings at a city's worth ?

ALPHONSO (*rushing forward impatiently.*)—  
 Say not he doth !—Yet wherefore art thou here ?  
 If it be so, I could weep burning tears  
 For very shame. If this can be, return !  
 Tell him, of all his wealth, his battle-spoils,  
 I will but ask a war-horse and a sword,  
 And that beside him in the mountain-chase,  
 And in his halls, and at his stately feasts,  
 My place shall be no more. But no !—I wrong,  
 I wrong my father ! Moor, believe it not :  
 He is a champion of the Cross and Spain,  
 Sprung from the Cid :—and I, too, I can die  
 As a warrior's high-born child !

ELMINA.—Alas, alas !

And wouldst thou die, thus early die, fair boy ?  
 What hath life done to thee, that thou shouldst cast  
 Its flower away, in very scorn of heart,  
 Ere yet the blight be come ?

ALPHONSO.—That voice doth sound——

ABD.—Stranger, who art thou ?—this is mockery ! speak !

(*ELMINA throws off a mantle and helmet, and embraces her sons.*)

ELM.—My boys ! whom I have reared through many hours  
 Of silent joys and sorrows, and deep thoughts

Untold and unimagined ; let me die  
 With you, now I have held you to my heart,  
 And seen once more the faces, in whose light  
 My soul hath lived for years !

CARLOS.—Sweet mother ! now  
 Thou shalt not leave us more.

ABDULLAH.—Enough of this !  
 Woman ! what seek'st thou here ? How hast thou dared  
 To front the mighty thus amidst his hosts ?

ELM.—Think'st thou there dwells no courage but in breasts  
 That set their mail against the ringing spears,  
 When helmets are struck down ? Thou little know'st  
 Of nature's marvels. Chief ! my heart is nerved  
 To make its way through things which warrior men,  
 Ay, they that master death by field or flood,  
 Would look on ere they braved ! I have no thought,  
 No sense of fear. Thou'rt mighty ; but a soul  
 Wound up like mine is mightier, in the power  
 Of that one feeling poured through all its depths,  
 Than monarchs with their hosts. Am I not come  
 To die with these my children ?

ABDULLAH.—Doth thy faith  
 Bid thee do this, fond Christian ? Hast thou not  
 The means to save them ?

ELMINA.—I have prayers and tears  
 And agonies !—and he, my God—the God  
 Whose hand, or soon or late, doth find its hour  
 To bow the crested head—hath made these things  
 Most powerful in a world where all must learn  
 That one deep language, by the storm called forth  
 From the bruised reeds of earth. For thee, perchance,  
 Affliction's chastening lesson hath not yet  
 Been laid upon thy heart ; and thou may'st love

To see the creatures, by its might brought low,  
Humbled before thee.

(*She throws herself at his feet.*)

Conqueror, I can kneel !  
I, that drew birth from princes, bow myself  
Even to thy feet ! Call in thy chiefs, thy slaves,  
If this will swell thy triumph, to behold  
The blood of kings, of heroes, thus abased.  
Do this, but spare my sons !

ALPH. (*attempting to raise her.*)—Thou shouldst not kneel  
Unto this infidel. Rise, rise, my mother !  
This sight doth shame our house.

ABDULLAH.—Thou daring boy !  
They that in arms have taught thy father's land  
How chains are worn, shall school that haughty mien  
Unto another language.

ELMINA.—Peace, my son !  
Have pity on my heart. Oh, pardon, chief !  
He is of noble blood. Hear, hear me yet.  
Are there no lives through which the shafts of heaven  
May reach your soul ? He that loves aught on earth,  
Dares far too much if he be merciless.  
Is it for those whose frail mortality  
Must one day strive alone with God and death,  
To shut their souls against the appealing voice  
Of nature in her anguish ? Warrior, man,  
To you too, ay, and haply with your hosts,  
By thousands and ten thousands marshalled round,  
And your strong armour on, shall come that stroke  
Which the lance wards not. Where shall your high heart  
Find refuge then, if in the day of might  
Woe hath lain prostrate, bleeding at your feet,

And you have pitied not ?

ABDULLAH.—These are vain words.

ELMINA.—Have you no children ?—fear ye not to bring  
The lightning on their heads ? In your own land  
Doth no fond mother, from the tents beneath  
Your native palms, look o'er the deserts out,  
To greet your homeward step ? You have not yet  
Forgot so utterly her patient love—  
For is not woman's in all climes the same ?—  
That you should scorn my prayer. Oh heaven ! his eye  
Doth wear no mercy !

ABDULLAH.—Then it mocks you not.

I have swept o'er the mountains of your land,  
Leaving my traces as the visitings  
Of storms upon them. Shall I now be stayed ?  
Know, unto me it were as light a thing,  
In this my course, to quench your children's lives,  
As, journeying through a forest, to break off  
The young wild branches that obstruct the way  
With their green sprays and leaves.

ELMINA.—Are there such hearts  
Amongst thy works, O God ?

ABDULLAH.—Kneel not to me—

Kneel to your lord ! On his resolves doth hang  
His children's doom. He may be lightly won  
By a few bursts of passionate tears and words.

ELMINA (*rising indignantly*.)—

Speak not of noble men ! He bears a soul  
Stronger than love or death.

ALPHONSO (*with exultation*.)—I knew 'twas thus !  
He could not fail !

ELMINA.—There is no mercy, none,  
On this cold earth ! To strive with such a world,

Hearts should be void of love. We will go hence,  
 My children ! we are summoned. Lay your heads,  
 In their young radiant beauty, once again  
 To rest upon this bosom. He that dwells  
 Beyond the clouds which press us darkly round,  
 Will yet have pity, and before His face  
 We three will stand together. Moslem ! now  
 Let the stroke fall at once !

ABDULLAH.—'Tis thine own will.

These might even yet be spared.

ELMINA.—Thou wilt not spare !

And he beneath whose eye their childhood grew,  
 And in whose paths they sported, and whose ear  
 From their first lisping accents caught the sound  
 Of that word, *Father*—once a name of love—  
 Is—Men shall call him steadfast.

ABDULLAH.—Hath the blast

Of sudden trumpets ne'er at dead of night,  
 When the land's watchers feared no hostile step,  
 Startled the slumberers from their dreamy world,  
 In cities, whose heroic lords have been  
 Steadfast as thine ?

ELMINA.—There's meaning in thine eye,

More than thy words.

ABD. (*pointing to the city*).—Look to yon tower and walls.

Think you no hearts within their limits pine,  
 Weary of hopeless warfare, and prepared  
 To burst the feeble links which bind them still  
 Unto endurance ?

ELMINA.—Thou hast said too well.

But what of this ?

ABDULLAH.—Then there are those, to whom

The Prophet's armies not as foes would pass

Yon gates, but as deliverers. Might they not  
 In some still hour, when weariness takes rest,  
 Be won to welcome us? Your children's steps  
 May yet bound lightly through their father's halls.

ALPHONSO (*indignantly*).—Thou treacherous Moor!

ELMINA.—Let me not thus be tried

Beyond all strength, O Heaven!

ABDULLAH.—Now, 'tis for thee,

Thou Christian mother, on thy sons to pass

The sentence—life or death! The price is set

On their young blood, and rests within thy hands.

ALPHONSO.—Mother! thou tremblest.

ABDULLAH.—Hath thy heart resolved?

ELMINA (*covering her face with her hands*).—

My boy's proud eye is on me, and the things

Which rush in stormy darkness through my soul

Shrink from his glance. I cannot answer here.

ABDULLAH.—Come forth. We'll commune elsewhere.

CARLOS (*to his mother*).—Wilt thou go?

Oh! let me follow thee!

ELMINA.—Mine own fair child!

Now that thine eyes have poured once more on mine

The light of their young smile, and thy sweet voice

Hath sent its gentle music through my soul,

And I have felt the twining of thine arms—

How shall I leave thee?

ABDULLAH.—Leave him, as 'twere but

For a brief slumber, to behold his face

At morning, with the sun's.

ALPHONSO.—Thou hast no look

For me, my mother!

ELMINA.—Oh! that I should live

To say, I dare not look on thee! Farewell,



My first-born, fare thee well !

ALPHONSO.—Yet, yet beware !

It were a grief more heavy on thy soul  
That I should blush for thee, than o'er my grave  
That thou shouldst proudly weep.

ABDULLAH.—Away ! we trifle here. The night wanes fast.  
Come forth !

ELMINA.—One more embrace ! My sons, farewell !

(*Exeunt ABDULLAH with ELMINA and her attendant.*)

ALPH.—Hear me yet once, my mother ! Art thou gone ?  
But one word more !

(*He rushes out, followed by CARLOS.*)

#### SCENE V.

*The garden of a palace in Valencia. XIMENA and THERESA.*

THERESA.—Stay yet awhile. A purer air doth rove  
Here through the myrtles whispering, and the limes,  
And shaking sweetness from the orange boughs,  
Than waits you in the city.

XIMENA.—There are those  
In their last need, and on their bed of death,—  
At which no hand doth minister but mine,—  
That wait me in the city. Let us hence.

THERESA.—You have been wont to love the music made  
By founts and rustling foliage, and soft winds  
Breathing of citron-groves. And will you turn  
From these to scenes of death ?

XIMENA.—To me the voice  
Of summer, whispering thro' young flowers and leaves,  
Now speaks too deep a language ; and of all  
Its dreamy and mysterious melodies,

The breathing soul is sadness. I have felt  
 That summons through my spirit, after which  
 The hues of earth are changed, and all her sounds  
 Seem fraught with secret warnings. There is cause  
 That I should bend my footsteps to the scenes  
 Where Death is busy taming warrior-hearts,  
 And pouring winter through the fiery blood,  
 And fettering the strong arm ; for now no sigh  
 In the dull air, nor floating cloud in heaven,  
 No, not the lightest murmur of a leaf,  
 But of his angel's silent coming bears  
 Some token to my soul. But naught of this  
 Unto my mother. These are awful hours ;  
 And on their heavy steps afflictions crowd  
 With such dark pressure, there is left no room  
 For one grief more.

HERESA.—Sweet lady, talk not thus !

Your eye this morn doth wear a calmer light,  
 There's more of life in its clear tremulous ray  
 Than I have marked of late. Nay, go not yet ;  
 Rest by this fountain, where the laurels dip  
 Their glossy leaves. A fresher gale doth spring  
 From the transparent waters, dashing round  
 Their silvery spray, with a sweet voice of coolness,  
 O'er the pale glistening marble. 'Twill call up  
 Faint bloom, if but a moment's, to your cheek.  
 Rest here, ere you go forth, and I will sing  
 The melody you love.

*(She sings.)*

WHY is the Spanish maiden's grave  
 So far from her own bright land ?  
 The sunny flowers that o'er it wave  
 Were sown by no kindred hand.

'Tis not the orange-bough that sends  
Its breath on the sultry air,  
'Tis not the myrtle-stem that bends  
To the breeze of evening there ;

But the rose of Sharon's eastern bloom  
By the silent dwelling fades,  
And none but strangers pass the tomb  
Which the palm of Judah shades.

The lowly Cross, with flowers o'ergrown,  
Marks well that place of rest ;  
But who hath graved, on its mossy stone,  
A sword, a helm, a crest ?

These are the trophies of a chief,  
A lord of the axe and spear :  
Some blossom plucked, some faded leaf,  
Should grace a maiden's bier !

Scorn not her tomb—deny not her  
The honours of the brave !  
O'er that forsaken sepulchre  
Banner and plume might wave.

She bound the steel, in battle tried,  
Her fearless heart above,  
And stood with brave men side by side,  
In the strength and faith of love.

That strength prevailed—that faith was blest.  
True was the javelin thrown,  
Yet pierced it not her warrior's breast—  
She met it with her own !

And nobly won, where heroes fell  
In arms for the holy shrine,  
A death which saved what she loved so well,  
And a grave in Palestine.

Then let the rose of Sharon spread  
 Its breast to the glowing air,  
 And the palm of Judah lift its head,  
 Green and immortal there !

And let yon gray stone, undefaced,  
 With its trophy mark the scene,  
 Telling the pilgrim of the waste  
 Where Love and Death have been.

XIM.—Those notes were wont to make my heart beat quick,  
 As at a voice of victory ; but to-day  
 The spirit of the song is changed, and seems  
 All mournful. Oh ! that, ere my early grave  
 Shuts out the sunbeam, I might hear one peal  
 Of the Castilian trumpet ringing forth  
 Beneath my father's banner ! In that sound  
 Were life to you, sweet brothers ! But for me——  
 Come on ; our tasks await us. They who know  
 Their hours are numbered out, have little time  
 To give the vague and slumb'rous languor way,  
 Which doth steal o'er them in the breath of flowers,  
 And whisper of soft winds.

*(ELMINA enters hurriedly.)*

ELMINA.—The air will calm my spirit, ere yet I meet  
 His eye, which must be met.—Thou here, Ximena !

*(She starts back on seeing her daughter.)*

XIMENA.—Alas ! my mother ! in that hurrying step  
 And troubled glance I read——

ELMINA *(wildly)*.—Thou read'st it not !

Why, who would live, if unto mortal eye  
 The things lay glaring, which within our hearts

We treasure up for God's? Thou read'st it not!  
 I say, thou canst not! There's not one on earth  
 Shall know the thoughts which for themselves have made  
 And kept dark places in the very breast  
 Whereon he hath laid his slumber, till the hour  
 When the graves open!

XIMENA.—Mother, what is this?

Alas! your eye is wandering, and your cheek  
 Flushed as with fever. To your woes the night  
 Hath brought no rest.

ELMINA.—Rest!—who should rest? Not he  
 That holds one earthly blessing to his heart  
 Nearer than life. No! if this world have aught  
 Of bright or precious, let not him who calls  
 Such things his own, take rest. Dark spirits keep watch;  
 And they to whom fair honour, chivalrous fame,  
 Were as Heaven's air, the vital element  
 Wherein they breathed, may wake, and find their souls  
 Made marks for human scorn. Will they bear on  
 With life struck down, and thus disrobed of all  
 Its glorious drapery? Who shall tell us this?  
 Will *he* so bear it?

XIMENA.—Mother, let us kneel

And blend our hearts in prayer. What else is left  
 To mortals when the dark hour's might is on them?  
 —Leave us, Theresa. Grief like this doth find  
 Its balm in solitude.

[Exit THERESA.]

My mother! peace

Is Heaven's benignant answer to the cry  
 Of wounded spirits. Wilt thou kneel with me?

ELMINA.—Away! 'tis but for souls unstained to wear  
 Heaven's tranquil image on their depths. The stream  
 Of my dark thoughts, all broken by the storm,

Reflects but clouds and lightnings. Didst thou speak  
 Of peace?—'tis fled from earth. But there is joy—  
 Wild troubled joy! And who shall know, my child,  
 It is not happiness? Why, our own hearts  
 Will keep the secret close. Joy, joy! if but  
 To leave this desolate city, with its dull  
 Slow knells and dirges, and to breathe again  
 The untainted mountain-air: But hush! the trees,  
 The flowers, the waters, must hear naught of this.  
 They are full of voices, and will whisper things—  
 We'll speak of it no more.

XIMENA.—O pitying Heaven!

This grief doth shake her reason.

ELMINA (*starting.*)—Hark! a step!

'Tis—'tis thy father's. Come away—not now—  
 He must not see us now.

XIMENA.—Why should this be?

(GONZALEZ enters and detains ELMINA.)

GONZALEZ.—Elmina, dost thou shun me? Have we not  
 Even from the hopeful and the sunny time  
 When youth was as a glory round our brows,  
 Held on through life together? And is this,  
 When eve is gathering round us, with the gloom  
 Of stormy clouds, a time to part our steps  
 Upon the darkening wild?

ELMINA (*coldly.*)—There needs not this.

Why shouldst thou think I shunned thee?

GONZALEZ.—Should the love

That shone o'er many years, the unfading love  
 Whose only change hath been from gladdening smiles  
 To mingling sorrows and sustaining strength,  
 Thus lightly be forgotten?

ELMINA.—Speak'st thou thus?

I've knelt before thee with that very plea,  
When it availed me not. But there are things  
Whose very breathings from the soul erase  
All record of past love, save the chill sense,  
The unquiet memory of its wasted faith,  
And vain devotedness. Ay! they that fix  
Affection's perfect trust on aught of earth,  
Have many a dream to start from.

GONZALEZ.—This is but

The wildness and the bitterness of grief,  
Ere yet the unsettled heart hath closed its long  
Impatient conflicts with a mightier power,  
Which makes all conflict vain. — Hark! was there not  
A sound of distant trumpets, far beyond  
The Moorish tents, and of another tone  
Than the Afric horn, Ximena?

XIMENA.—O my father!

I know that horn too well. — 'Tis but the wind,  
Which, with a sudden rising, bears its deep  
And savage war-note from us, wafting it  
O'er the far hills.

GONZALEZ.—Alas! this woe must be.

I do but shake my spirit from its height,  
So startling it with hope. But the dread hour  
Shall be met bravely still. I can keep down  
Yet for a little while—and heaven will ask  
No more—the passionate workings of my heart:  
—And thine, Elmina?

ELMINA.—'Tis — I am prepared.

I have prepared for all.

GONZALEZ.—Oh, well I knew

Thou wouldst not fail me! Not in vain my soul

Upon thy faith and courage hath built up  
Unshaken trust.

ELMINA (*wildly*).—Away! thou know'st me not!  
Man dares too far—his rashness would invest  
This our mortality with an attribute  
Too high and awful, boasting that he knows  
One human heart.

GONZALEZ.—These are wild words, but yet  
I will not doubt thee. Hast thou not been found  
Noble in all things, pouring thy soul's light  
Undimmed o'er every trial? And as our fates,  
So must our names be, undivided!—Thine,  
I' the record of a warrior's life, shall find  
Its place of stainless honour. By his side——

ELMINA.—May this be borne? How much of agony  
Hath the heart room for? Speak to me in wrath—  
I can endure it. But no gentle words!  
No words of love! no praise! Thy sword might slay,  
And be more merciful.

GONZALEZ.—Wherefore art thou thus,  
Elmina, my beloved?

ELMINA.—No more of love!  
Have I not said there's that within my heart,  
Whereon it falls as living fire would fall  
Upon an unclosed wound?

GONZALEZ.—Nay, lift thine eyes,  
That I may read their meaning.

ELMINA.—Never more  
With a free soul. What have I said?—'twas naught!  
Take thou no heed. The words of wretchedness  
Admit not scrutiny. Wouldst thou mark the speech  
Of troubled dreams?

GONZALEZ.—I have seen thee in the hour



Of thy deep spirit's joy, and when the breath  
Of grief hung chilling round thee; in all change—  
Bright health and drooping sickness, hope and fear,  
Youth and decline; but never yet, Elmina,  
Ne'er hath thine eye till now shrunk back, perturbed  
With shame or dread, from mine.

ELMINA.—Thy glance doth search  
A wounded heart too deeply.

GONZALEZ.—Hast thou there  
Aught to conceal?

ELMINA.—Who hath not?

GONZALEZ.—Till this hour  
Thou never hadst. Yet hear me!—by the free  
And unattainted fame which wraps the dust  
Of thine heroic fathers ——

ELMINA.—This to me!  
Bring your inspiring war-notes, and your sounds  
Of festal music round a dying man—  
Will his heart echo them? But if thy words  
Were spells to call up, with each lofty tone,  
The grave's most awful spirits, they would stand  
Powerless before my anguish.

GONZALEZ.—Then, by her  
Who there looks on thee in the purity  
Of her devoted youth, and o'er whose name  
No blight must fall, and whose pale cheek must ne'er  
Burn with that deeper tinge, caught painfully  
From the quick feeling of dishonour—Speak!  
Unfold this mystery! By thy sons——

ELMINA.—My sons!  
And canst thou name them?

GONZALEZ.—Proudly! Better far  
They died with all the promise of their youth,

And the fair honour of their house upon them,  
 Than that, with manhood's high and passionate soul  
 To fearful strength unfolded, they should live,  
 Barred from the lists of crested chivalry,  
 And pining, in the silence of a woe  
 Which from the heart shuts daylight, o'er the shame  
 Of those who gave them birth! But thou couldst ne'er  
 Forget their lofty claims.

ELMINA (*wildly*).—'Twas but for them!

'Twas for them only! Who shall dare arraign  
 Madness as crime? And He who made us, knows  
 There are dark moments of all hearts and lives,  
 Which bear down reason.

GONZALEZ.—Thou, whom I have loved

With such high trust as o'er our nature threw  
 A glory scarce allowed—what hast thou done?  
 —Ximena, go thou hence.

ELMINA.—No, no, my child!

There's pity in thy look. All other eyes  
 Are full of wrath and scorn. Oh, leave me not!

GONZALEZ.—That I should live to see thee thus abased!

Yet speak. What hast thou done?

ELMINA.—Look to the gate!

Thou'rt worn with toil—but take no rest to-night:—  
 The western gate! Its watchers have been won—  
 The Christian city hath been bought and sold:—  
 They will admit the Moor!

GONZALEZ.—They have been won!

Brave men and tried so long! Whose work was this?

EL.—Think'st thou all hearts like thine? Can mothers stand

To see their children perish?

GONZALEZ.—Then the guilt

Was thine?

ELMINA.—Shall mortal dare to call it guilt?

I tell thee Heaven, which made all holy things,  
 Made naught more holy than the boundless love  
 Which fills a mother's heart. I say, 'tis woe  
 Enough, with such an aching tenderness,  
 To love aught earthly—and in vain, in vain!  
 We are pressed down too sorely.

GONZALEZ (*in a low desponding voice.*)—Now my life  
 Is struck to worthless ashes! In my soul  
 Suspicion hath ta'en root. The nobleness  
 Henceforth is blotted from all human brows;  
 And fearful power, a dark and troublous gift,  
 Almost like prophecy, is poured upon me,  
 To read the guilty secrets in each eye  
 That once looked bright with truth.

Why, then, I've gained  
 What men call wisdom!—a new sense, to which  
 All tales that speak of high fidelity  
 And holy courage and proud honour, tried,  
 Searched, and found steadfast even to martyrdom,  
 Are food for mockery. Why should I not cast  
 From my thinned locks the wearing helm at once,  
 And in the heavy sickness of my soul  
 Throw the sword down for ever? Is there aught  
 In all this world of gilded hollowness,  
 Now the bright hues drop off its loveliest things,  
 Worth striving for again?

XIMENA.—Father, look up!  
 Turn unto me, thy child.

GONZALEZ.—Thy face is fair,  
 And hath been unto me, in other days,  
 As morning to the journeyer on the deep.  
 But now—'tis too like hers!

ELMINA (*falling at his feet.*)—Woe, shame and woe  
Are on me in their might. Forgive! forgive!

GONZALEZ (*starting up.*)—Doth the Moor deem that I have  
part or share

Or counsel in this vileness? Stay me not!  
Let go thy hold—'tis powerless on me now.

I linger here while treason is at work. [*Exit.*

ELMINA.—Ximena, dost thou scorn me?

XIMENA.—I have found

In mine own heart too much of feebleness,  
Hid, beneath many foldings, from all eyes  
But His whom naught can blind, to dare do aught  
But pity thee, dear mother!

ELMINA.—Blessings light

On thy fair head, my gentle child, for this,  
Thou kind and merciful! My soul is faint—  
Worn with long strife. Is there aught else to do,  
Or suffer, ere we die?—Oh God! my sons!  
I have betrayed them. All their innocent blood  
Is on my soul.

XIMENA.—How shall I comfort thee?

Oh, hark! what sounds come deepening on the wind,  
So full of solemn hope?

*(A procession of Nuns passes across the scene, bearing relics,  
and chanting.)*

#### CH A N T

A SWORD is on the land!

He that bears down young tree and glorious flower,  
Death, is gone forth, he walks the wind in power.

Where is the warrior's hand?

Our steps are in the shadows of the grave:  
Hear us, we perish!--Father, hear and save!

If, in the days of song,  
 The days of gladness, we have called on thee,  
 When mirthful voices rang from sea to sea,  
 And joyous hearts were strong ;  
 Now that alike the feeble and the brave  
 Must cry, " We perish ! "—Father, hear and save !

The days of song are fled !  
 The winds come loaded, wafting dirge-notes by ;  
 But they that linger soon unmourned must die—  
 The dead weep not the dead.  
 Wilt thou forsake us midst the stormy wave ?  
 We sink, we perish !—Father, hear and save !

Helmet and lance are dust !  
 Is not the strong man withered from our eye ?  
 The arm struck down that held our banners high ?  
 Thine is our spirits' trust :  
 Look through the gathering shadows of the grave.  
 Do we not perish ?—Father, hear and save !

(HERNANDEZ enters.)

ELM.—Why com'st thou, man of vengeance ? What have I  
 To do with thee ? Am I not bowed enough ?  
 Thou art no mourner's comforter.

HERNANDEZ.—Thy lord  
 Hath sent me unto thee. Till this day's task  
 Be closed, thou daughter of the feeble heart !  
 He bids thee seek him not, but lay thy ways  
 Before heaven's altar, and in penitence  
 Make thy soul's peace with God.

ELMINA.—Till this day's task  
 Be closed ! There is strange triumph in thine eyes :  
 Is it that I have fallen from that high place  
 Whereon I stood in fame ? But I can feel

A wild and bitter pride in thus being past  
The power of thy dark glance. My spirit now  
Is wound about by one sole mighty grief ;  
Thy scorn hath lost its sting. Thou may'st reproach——

HER.—I come not to reproach thee. Heaven doth work  
By many agencies ; and in its hour  
There is no insect which the summer breeze  
From the green leaf shakes trembling, but may serve  
Its deep unsearchable purposes, as well  
As the great ocean, or the eternal fires  
Pent in earth's caves. Thou hast but speeded that  
Which, in the infatuate blindness of thy heart,  
Thou wouldst have trampled o'er all holy ties  
But to avert one day.

ELMINA.—My senses fail.

Thou said'st—speak yet again—I could not catch  
The meaning of thy words.

HERNANDEZ.—Even now thy lord

Hath sent our foes defiance. On the walls  
He stands in conference with the boastful Moor,  
And awful strength is with him. Through the blood  
Which this day must be poured in sacrifice  
Shall Spain be free. On all her olive-hills  
Shall men set up the battle-sign of fire,  
And round its blaze, at midnight, keep the sense  
Of vengeance wakeful in each other's hearts  
Even with thy children's tale.

XIMENA.—Peace, father ! peace !

Behold, she sinks !—the storm hath done its work  
Upon the broken reed. Oh ! lend thine aid  
To bear her hence.

*(They lead her away.)*

## SCENE VI.

*A street in Valencia. Several groups of Citizens and Soldiers, many of them lying on the steps of a church. Arms scattered on the ground around them.*

AN OLD CITIZEN.—The air is sultry, as with thunder-clouds.  
I left my desolate home that I might breathe  
More freely in heaven's face, but my heart feels  
With this hot gloom o'erburdened. I have now  
No sons to tend me. Which of you, kind friends,  
Will bring the old man water from the fount,  
To moisten his parched lip?

*(A citizen goes out.)*

2D CITIZEN.—This wasting siege,  
Good Father Lopez, hath gone hard with you.  
'Tis sad to hear no voices through the house  
Once peopled with fair sons.

3D CITIZEN.—Why, better thus  
Than to be haunted with their famished cries,  
Even in your very dreams!

OLD CITIZEN.—Heaven's will be done!  
These are dark times. I have not been alone  
In my affliction.

3D CITIZEN *(with bitterness)*.—Why, we have but this thought  
Left for our gloomy comfort!—And 'tis well!  
Ay, let the balance be awhile struck even  
Between the noble's palace and the hut  
Where the worn peasant sickens. They that bear  
The humble dead unhonoured to their homes,  
Pass now in the streets no lordly bridal train  
With its exulting music; and the wretch  
Who on the marble steps of some proud hall

Flings himself down to die, in his last need  
 And agony of famine, doth behold  
 No scornful guests, with their long purple robes,  
 To the banquet sweeping by. Why, this is just !  
 These are the days when pomp is made to feel  
 Its human mould.

4TH CITIZEN.—Heard you last night the sound  
 Of Saint Iago's bell? How sullenly  
 From the great tower it pealed !

5TH CITIZEN.—Ay, and 'tis said  
 No mortal hand was near when so it seemed  
 To shake the midnight streets.

OLD CITIZEN.—Too well I know  
 The sound of coming fate ! 'Tis ever thus  
 When Death is on his way to make it night  
 In the Cid's ancient house.\* Oh ! there are things  
 In this strange world of which we've all to learn  
 When its dark bounds are passed. Yon bell, untouched,  
 (Save by the hands we see not,) still doth speak—  
 When of that line some stately head is marked—  
 With a wild hollow peal, at dead of night,  
 Rocking Valencia's towers. I've heard it oft,  
 Nor known its warning false.

4TH CITIZEN.—And will our chief  
 Buy with the price of his fair children's blood  
 A few more days of pining wretchedness  
 For this forsaken city?

OLD CITIZEN.—Doubt it not !  
 But with that ransom he may purchase still  
 Deliverance for the land. And yet 'tis sad  
 To think that such a race, with all its fame,

\* It was a Spanish tradition that the great bell of the cathedral of Saragossa always tolled spontaneously before a king of Spain died.



Should pass away! For she, his daughter too,  
 Moves upon earth as some bright thing whose time  
 To sojourn there is short.

5TH CITIZEN.—Then woe for us  
 When she is gone! Her voice, the very sound  
 Of her soft step, was comfort, as she moved  
 Through the still house of mourning. Who like her  
 Shall give us hope again?

OLD CITIZEN.—Be still!—she comes,  
 And with a mien how changed! A hurrying step,  
 And a flushed cheek! What may this bode? Be still!

(XIMENA enters, with attendants carrying a banner.)

XIMENA.—Men of Valencia! in an hour like this,  
 What do ye here?

A CITIZEN.—We die!

XIMENA.—Brave men die now  
 Girt for the toil, as travellers suddenly  
 By the dark night o'ertaken on their way.  
 These days require such death. It is too much  
 Of luxury for our wild and angry times,  
 To fold the mantle round us, and to sink  
 From life as flowers that shut up silently  
 When the sun's heat doth scorch them. Hear ye not?

A CITIZEN.—Lady! what wouldst thou with us?

XIMENA.—Rise and arm!  
 Even now the children of your chief are led  
 Forth by the Moor to perish. Shall this be—  
 Shall the high sound of such a name be hushed,  
 I' the land to which for ages it hath been  
 A battle-word, as 'twere some passing note  
 Of shepherd-music? Must this work be done,  
 And ye lie pining here, as men in whom

The pulse which God hath made for noble thought  
Can so be thrilled no longer ?

A CITIZEN.—'Tis even so !

Sickness and toil and grief have breathed upon us :  
Our hearts beat faint and low.

XIMENA.—Are ye so poor

Of soul, my countrymen ! that ye can draw  
Strength from no deeper source than that which sends  
The red blood mantling through the joyous veins,  
And gives the fleet step wings ? Why, how have age  
And sensitive womanhood ere now endured  
Through pangs of searching fire, in some proud cause,  
Blessing that agony ! Think ye the Power  
Which bore them nobly up, as if to teach  
The torturer where eternal heaven had set  
Bounds to his sway, was earthy, of this earth—  
This dull mortality ? Nay, then look on me !  
Death's touch hath marked me, and I stand amongst you  
As one whose place i' the sunshine of your world  
Shall soon be left to fill !—I say, the breath  
Of the incense, floating through yon fane, shall scarce  
Pass from your path before me ! But even now  
I've that within me, kindling through the dust,  
Which from all time hath made high deeds its voice  
And token to the nations. Look on me !  
Why hath heaven poured forth courage as a flame,  
Wasting the womanish heart, which must be stilled  
Yet sooner for its swift consuming brightness,  
If not to shame your doubt and your despair  
And your soul's torpor ? Yet, arise and arm !  
It may not be too late.

A CITIZEN.—Why, what are we,

To cope with hosts ? Thus faint and worn and few,

O'ernumbered and forsaken, is't for us

To stand against the mighty?

XIMENA.—And for whom

Hath He, who shakes the mighty with a breath

From their high places, made the fearfulness

And ever-wakeful presence of his power

To the pale startled earth most manifest,

But for the weak? Was't for the helmed and crowned

That suns were stayed at noonday?—stormy seas

As a rill parted?—mailed archangels sent

To wither up the strength of kings with death?

I tell you, if these marvels have been done,

'Twas for the wearied and the oppressed of men.

They needed such. And generous faith hath power,

By her prevailing spirit, even yet to work

Deliverances, whose tale shall live with those

Of the great elder-time. Be of good heart.

Who is forsaken? He that gives the thought

A place within his breast. 'Tis not for you.

—Know ye this banner?

CITS. (*murmuring to each other.*)—Is she not inspired?

Doth not heaven call us by her fervent voice?

XIMENA.—Know ye this banner?

CITIZENS.—'Tis the Cid's.

XIMENA.—The Cid's!

Who breathes that name but in the exulting tone

Which the heart rings to? Why, the very wind,

As it swells out the noble standard's fold,

Hath a triumphant sound. The Cid's! it moved

Even as a sign of victory through the land,

From the free skies ne'er stooping to a foe.

OLD CIT.—Can ye still pause, my brethren! Oh, that youth

Through this worn frame were kindling once again!

XIMENA.—Ye linger still? Upon this very air,  
 He that was born in happy hour for Spain\*  
 Poured forth his conquering spirit. 'Twas the breeze  
 From your own mountains which came down to wave  
 This banner of his battles, as it drooped  
 Above the champion's deathbed. Nor even then  
 Its tale of glory closed. They made no moan  
 O'er the dead hero, and no dirge was sung,†  
 But the deep tambour and shrill horn of war  
 Told when the mighty passed. They wrapt him not  
 With the pale shroud, but braced the warrior's form  
 In war-array, and on his barded‡ steed,  
 As for a triumph, reared him; marching forth  
 In the hushed midnight from Valencia's walls,  
 Beleaguered then, as now. All silently  
 The stately funeral moved. But who was he  
 That followed, charging on the tall white horse,  
 And with the solemn standard, broad and pale,  
 Waving in sheets of snowlight? And the cross,  
 The bloody cross, far-blazing from his shield,  
 And the fierce meteor-sword? They fled, they fled!  
 The kings of Afric, with their countless hosts,  
 Were dust in his red path. The scimitar  
 Was shivered as a reed;—for in that hour  
 The warrior-saint that keeps the watch for Spain,  
 Was armed betimes. And o'er that fiery field  
 The Cid's high banner streamed all joyously,  
 For still its lord was there.

\* "El que en buen hora nasco;" he that was born in happy hour. An appellation given to the Cid in the ancient chronicles.

† For this, and the subsequent allusions to Spanish legends, see *The Romances, and Chronicle of the Cid*.

‡ *Barded*, caparisoned for battle.

CITIZENS (*rising tumultuously.*)—Even unto death  
Again it shall be followed !

XIMENA.—Will he see

The noble stem hewn down, the beacon-light  
Which from his house for ages o'er the land  
Hath shone thro' cloud and storm, thus quenched at once?  
Will he not aid his children in the hour  
Of this their utmost peril? Awful power  
Is with the holy dead, and there are times  
When the tomb hath no chain they cannot burst !  
Is it a thing forgotten how he woke  
From its deep rest of old, remembering Spain  
In her great danger?—at the night's mid-watch  
How Leon started, when the sound was heard  
That shook her dark and hollow-echoing streets  
As with the heavy tramp of steel-clad men,  
By thousands marching through? For he had risen !  
The Campeador was on his march again,  
And in his arms, and followed by his hosts  
Of shadowy spearmen. He had left the world  
From which we are dimly parted, and gone forth,  
And called his buried warriors from their sleep,  
Gathering them round him to deliver Spain;  
For Afric was upon her. Morning broke,  
Day rushed through clouds of battle; but at eve  
Our God had triumphed, and the rescued land  
Sent up a shout of victory from the field,  
That rocked her ancient mountains.

CITIZENS.—Arm ! to arms !

On to our chief ! We have strength within us yet  
To die with our blood roused. Now, be the word  
For the Cid's house !

(*They begin to arm themselves.*)

XIMENA.—Ye know his battle-song—  
 The old rude strain wherewith his bands went forth  
 To strike down Paynim swords?

*(She sings.)*

THE Moor is on his way!  
 With the tambour-peal and the tecbir-shout,  
 And the horn o'er the blue seas ringing out,  
 He hath marshalled his dark array.

Shout through the vine-clad land!  
 That her sons on all their hills may hear;  
 And sharpen the point of the red wolf-spear,  
 And the sword for the brave man's hand.

*(The citizens join in the song, while they continue arming themselves.)*

Banners are in the field!  
 The chief must rise from his joyous board,  
 And turn from the feast ere the wine be poured,  
 And take up his father's shield.

The Moor is on his way!  
 Let the peasant leave his olive-ground,  
 And the goats roam wild thro' the pine-woods round:  
 There is nobler work to-day.

Send forth the trumpet's call!  
 Till the bridegroom cast the goblet down,  
 And the marriage-robe, and the flowery crown;  
 And arm in the banquet hall.

And stay the funeral-train:  
 Bid the chanted mass be hushed awhile,  
 And the bier laid down in the holy aisle,  
 And the mourners gird for Spain.

*(They take up the banner and follow XIMENA out; their voices are heard gradually dying away in the distance.)*

Ere night must swords be red!  
 It is not an hour for knells and tears,  
 But for helmets braced and serried spears.  
 To-morrow for the dead!

The Cid is in array!  
 His steed is barded, his plume waves high,  
 His banner is up in the sunny sky—  
 Now, joy for the Cross to-day!

## SCENE VII.

*The walls of the city. The plains beneath, with the Moorish camp and army. GONZALEZ, GARCIAS, HERNANDEZ. A wild sound of Moorish music heard from below.*

HER.—What notes are these in their deep mournfulness  
 So strangely wild?

GARCIAS.—'Tis the shrill melody  
 Of the Moor's ancient death-song. Well I know  
 The rude barbaric sound; but, till this hour,  
 It seemed not fearful. Now, a shuddering chill  
 Comes o'er me with its tones.—Lo! from yon tent  
 They lead the noble boys.

HERNANDEZ.—The young and pure  
 And beautiful victims!—'Tis on things like these  
 We cast our hearts in wild idolatry,  
 Sowing the winds with hope! Yet this is well:  
 Thus brightly crowned with life's most gorgeous flowers,  
 And all unblemished, earth should offer up  
 Her treasures unto heaven.

GARCIAS (*to GONZALEZ.*)—My chief, the Moor  
Hath led your children forth.

GONZALEZ (*starting.*)—Are my sons there ?

I knew they could not perish ; for yon heaven  
Would ne'er behold it ! Where is he that said  
I was no more a father ? They look changed—  
Pallid and worn, as from a prison-house :  
Or is't mine eyes see dimly ? But their steps  
Seem heavy, as with pain. I hear the clank—  
Oh God ! their limbs are fettered.

ABD. (*coming forward beneath the walls.*)—Christian ! look  
Once more upon thy children. There is yet  
One moment for the trembling of the sword ;  
Their doom is still with thee.

GONZALEZ.—Why should this man

So mock us with the semblance of our kind ?  
Moor ! Moor ! thou dost too daringly provoke,  
In thy bold cruelty, the all-judging One,  
Who visits for such things. Hast thou no sense  
Of thy frail nature ? 'Twill be taught thee yet ;  
And darkly shall the anguish of my soul,  
Darkly and heavily, pour itself on thine,  
When thou shalt cry for mercy from the dust,  
And be denied.

ABDULLAH.—Nay, is it not thyself

That hast no mercy and no love within thee ?  
These are thy sons, the nurslings of thy house ;  
Speak ! must they live or die ?

GONZALEZ (*in violent emotion.*)—Is it heaven's will

To try the dust it kindles for a day,  
With infinite agony ? How have I drawn  
This chastening on my head ? They bloomed around me,  
And my heart grew too fearless in its joy,



Glorying in their bright promise !—If we fall,  
Is there no pardon for our feebleness ?

(HERNANDEZ, *without speaking, holds up the Cross before him.*)

ABDULLAH.—Speak !

GONZALEZ (*snatching the Cross, and lifting it up.*)—

Let the earth be shaken through its depths,  
But this must triumph !

ABDULLAH.—Be it as thou wilt.

(*To his guards.*)—Unsheathe the scimitar !

GARCIAS (*to GONZALEZ.*)—Away, my chief !

This is your place no longer. There are things  
No human heart, though battle-proof as yours,  
Unmaddened may sustain.

GONZALEZ.—Be still ! I have now

No place on earth but this.

ALPHONSO (*from beneath.*)—Men ! give me way,

That I may speak forth once before I die !

GARCIAS.—The princely boy !—how gallantly his brow

Wears its high nature in the face of death !

ALPHONSO.—Father !

GONZALEZ.—My son ! my son !—Mine eldest-born !

ALPHONSO.—Stay but upon the ramparts ! Fear thou not—

There is good courage in me. O my father !

I will not shame thee !—only let me fall

Knowing thine eye looks proudly on thy child,  
So shall my heart have strength.

GONZALEZ.—Would, would to God

That I might die for thee, my noble boy !

Alphonso, my fair son !

ALPHONSO.—Could I have lived,

I might have been a warrior. Now, farewell !

But look upon me still ! I will not blench

When the keen sabre flashes. Mark me well!  
 Mine eyelids shall not quiver as it falls,  
 So thou wilt look upon me.

GARCÍAS (*to GONZALEZ.*)—Nay, my lord!

We must be gone! Thou canst not bear it.

GONZALEZ.—Peace!

Who hath told thee how much man's heart can bear?  
 Lend me thine arm—my brain whirls fearfully—  
 How thick the shades close round! My boy! my boy!  
 Where art thou in this gloom?

GARCÍAS.—Let us go hence:

This is a dreadful moment.

GONZALEZ.—Hush!—what saidst thou?

Now let me look on him! Dost thou see aught  
 Through the dull mist which wraps us?

GARCÍAS.—I behold—

Oh, for a thousand Spaniards! to rush down—

GON.—Thou seest—My heart stands still to hear thee speak!

There seems a fearful hush upon the air,  
 As 'twere the dead of night.

GARCÍAS.—The hosts have closed

Around the spot in stillness. Through the spears,  
 Ranged thick and motionless, I see him not!

—But now—

GONZALEZ.—He bade me keep mine eye upon him,

And all is darkness round me!—Now?

GARCÍAS.—A sword,

A sword springs upward like a lightning-burst  
 Through the dark serried mass. Its cold blue glare  
 Is wavering to and fro—'tis vanished—hark!

GONZALEZ.—I heard it, yes!—I heard the dull dead sound

That heavily broke the silence. Didst thou speak?  
 —I lost thy words—come nearer!

GARCÍAS.—'Twas—'tis past!

The sword fell then!

HERNAN. (*with exultation.*)—Flow forth, thou noble blood!

Fount of Spain's ransom and deliverance, flow  
 Unchecked and brightly forth! Thou kingly stream!  
 Blood of our heroes! blood of martyrdom!  
 Which through so many warrior-hearts hast poured  
 Thy fiery currents, and hast made our hills  
 Free, by thine own free offering! Bathe the land,—  
 But there thou shalt not sink. Our very air  
 Shall take thy colouring, and our loaded skies  
 O'er the Infidel hang dark and ominous,  
 With battle-hues of thee. And thy deep voice,  
 Rising above them to the judgment-seat,  
 Shall call a burst of gathered vengeance down,  
 To sweep the oppressor from us; for thy wave  
 Hath made his guilt run o'er.

GONZALEZ (*endeavouring to rouse himself.*)—"Tis all a dream.

There is not one—no hand on earth could harm

That fair boy's graceful head! Why look you thus?

ABDULLAH.—Christian! even yet thou hast a son.

GONZALEZ.—Even yet!

CARLOS.—My father! take me from these fearful men!

Wilt thou not save me, father?

GONZ. (*attempting to unsheath his sword.*)—Is the strength

From mine arm shivered? Garcías, follow me!

GARCÍAS.—Whither, my chief?

GONZALEZ.—Why, we can die as well

On yonder plain—ay, a spear's thrust will do

The little that our misery doth require,

Sooner than even this anguish! Life is best

Thrown from us in such moments.

(*Voices heard at a distance.*)

HERNANDEZ.—Hush! what strain  
Floats on the wind?

GARCIAS.—'Tis the Cid's battle-song!  
What marvel hath been wrought?

*(Voices approaching heard in chorus.)*

The Moor is on his way!  
With the tambour-peal and the tecbir-shout,  
And the horn o'er the blue seas ringing out,  
He hath marshalled his dark array.

*(XIMENA enters, followed by the citizens, with the banner.)*

XIMENA.—Is it too late?—My father, these are men,  
Through life and death prepared to follow thee  
Beneath this banner. Is their zeal too late?  
Oh! there's a fearful history on thy brow!  
What hast thou seen?

GARCIAS.—It is not all too late.

XIMENA.—My brothers!

HER.—All is well. *(To GARCAS.)* Hush! wouldst thou chill  
That which hath sprung within them, as a flame  
From the altar-embers mounts in sudden brightness?  
I say, 'tis not too late, ye men of Spain!  
On to the rescue!

XIMENA.—Bless me, O my father!  
And I will hence, to aid thee with my prayers,  
Sending my spirit with thee through the storm  
Lit up by flashing swords!

GON. *(falling upon her neck.)*—Hath aught been spared?  
Am I not all bereft? Thou'rt left me still!  
Mine own, my loveliest one, thou'rt left me still!  
Farewell!—thy father's blessing, and thy God's,  
Be with thee, my Ximena.

XIMENA.—Fare thee well!

If, ere thy steps turn homeward from the field,  
The voice is hushed that still hath welcomed thee,  
Think of me in thy victory!

HERNANDEZ.—Peace! no more!

This is no time to melt our nature down  
To a soft stream of tears. Be of strong heart.  
Give me the banner. Swell the song again!

*(Citizens in chorus.)*

Ere night must swords be red!  
It is not an hour for knells and tears.  
But for helmets braced and serried spears.  
To-morrow for the dead! [*Exeunt.*

#### SCENE VIII.

*Before the altar of a church. ELMINA rises from the steps of the altar.*

ELMINA.—The clouds are fearful that o'erhang thy ways,  
O thou mysterious Heaven! It cannot be  
That I have drawn the vials of thy wrath  
To burst upon me, through the lifting up  
Of a proud heart elate in happiness!  
No! in my day's full noon, for me life's flowers  
But wreathed a cup of trembling; and the love,  
The boundless love, my spirit was formed to bear,  
Hath ever, in its place of silence, been  
A trouble and a shadow, tinging thought  
With hues too deep for joy. I never looked  
On my fair children, in their buoyant mirth  
Or sunny sleep, when all the gentle air  
Seemed glowing with their quiet blessedness,

But o'er my soul there came a shuddering sense  
 Of earth, and its pale changes ; even like that  
 Which vaguely mingles with our glorious dreams—  
 A restless and disturbing consciousness  
 That the bright things must fade ! How have I shrunk  
 From the dull murmur of the unquiet voice,  
 With its low tokens of mortality,  
 Till my heart fainted midst their smiles ! Their smiles !  
 Where are those glad looks now ? Could they go down  
 With all their joyous light, that seemed not earth's,  
 To the cold grave ? My children !—righteous heaven !  
 There floats a dark remembrance o'er my brain  
 Of one who told me, with relentless eye,  
 That this should be the hour !

(XIMENA enters.)

XIMENA.—They are gone forth  
 Unto the rescue—strong in heart and hope,  
 Faithful, though few ! My mother, let thy prayers  
 Call on the land's good saints to lift once more  
 The sword and Cross that sweep the field for Spain,  
 As in old battle ; so thine arms even yet  
 May clasp thy sons. For me, my part is done !  
 The flame which dimly might have lingered yet  
 A little while, hath gathered all its rays  
 Brightly to sink at once. And it is well !  
 The shadows are around me : to thy heart  
 Fold me, that I may die.

ELMINA.—My child ! what dream  
 Is on thy soul ? Even now thine aspect wears  
 Life's brightest inspiration !

XIMENA.—Death's !

ELMINA.—Away !

Thine eye hath starry clearness; and thy cheek  
Doth glow beneath it with a richer hue  
Than tinged its earliest flower!

XIMENA.—It may well be!

There are far deeper and far warmer hues  
Than those which draw their colouring from the founts  
Of youth, or health, or hope.

ELMINA.—Nay, speak not thus!

There's that about thee shining which would send  
Even through my heart a sunny glow of joy,  
Were't not for these sad words. The dim cold air  
And solemn light, which wrap these tombs and shrines  
As a pale gleaming shroud, seem kindled up  
With a young spirit of ethereal hope  
Caught from thy mien. Oh no! this is not death!

XIM.—Why should not he, whose touch dissolves our chain,

Put on his robes of beauty when he comes  
As a deliverer? He hath many forms—  
They should not all be fearful. If his call  
Be but our gathering to that distant land,  
For whose sweet waters we have pined with thirst,  
Why should not its prophetic sense be borne  
Into the heart's deep stillness, with a breath  
Of summer-winds, a voice of melody,  
Solemn yet lovely? Mother, I depart!—  
Be it thy comfort, in the after-days,  
That thou hast seen me thus!

ELMINA.—Distract me not

With such wild fears! Can I bear on with life  
When thou art gone?—thy voice, thy step, thy smile,  
Passed from my path? Alas! even now thine eye  
Is changed—thy cheek is fading!

XIMENA.—Ay, the clouds

Of the dim hour are gathering o'er my sight ;  
 And yet I fear not, for the God of Help  
 Comes in that quiet darkness. It may soothe  
 Thy woes, my mother ! if I tell thee now  
 With what glad calmness I behold the veil  
 Falling between me and the world, wherein  
 My heart so ill hath rested.

ELMINA.—Thine !

XIMENA.—Rejoice

For her that, when the garland of her life  
 Was blighted, and the springs of hope were dried,  
 Received her summons hence ; and had no time,  
 Bearing the canker at the impatient heart,  
 To wither ; sorrowing for that gift of Heaven,  
 Which lent one moment of existence light  
 That dimmed the rest for ever !

ELMINA.—How is this ?

My child, what mean'st thou ?

XIMENA.—Mother, I have loved,

And been beloved ! The sunbeam of an hour,  
 Which gave life's hidden treasures to mine eye,  
 As they lay shining in their secret founts,  
 Went out and left them colourless. 'Tis past—  
 And what remains on earth ? The rainbow mist  
 Through which I gazed hath melted, and my sight  
 Is cleared to look on all things as they are.  
 But this is far too mournful. Life's dark gift  
 Hath fallen too early and too cold upon me :  
 Therefore I would go hence !

ELMINA.—And thou hast loved

Unknown——

XIMENA.—Oh ! pardon, pardon that I veiled

My thoughts from thee ! But thou hadst woes enough,



And mine came o'er me when thy soul had need  
Of more than mortal strength. For I had scarce  
Given the deep consciousness that I was loved  
A treasure's place within my secret heart,  
When earth's brief joy went from me!

'Twas at morn

I saw the warriors to their field go forth,  
And he—my chosen—was there amongst the rest,  
With his young glorious brow. I looked again :  
The strife grew dark beneath me—but his plume  
Waved free above the lances. Yet again—  
It had gone down ; and steeds were trampling o'er  
The spot to which mine eyes were riveted,  
Till blinded by the intenseness of their gaze !  
And then—at last—I hurried to the gate,  
And met him there !—I met him—on his shield,  
And with his cloven helm, and shivered sword,  
And dark hair steeped in blood ! They bore him past :  
Mother, I saw his face ! Oh ! such a death  
Works fearful changes on the fair of earth,  
The pride of woman's eye !

ELMINA.—Sweet daughter, peace !

Wake not the dark remembrance ; for thy frame——

XIMENA.—There will be peace ere long. I shut my heart,  
Even as a tomb, o'er that lone silent grief,  
That I might spare it thee.—But now the hour  
Is come, when that which would have pierced thy soul  
Shall be its healing balm. Oh ! weep thou not,  
Save with a gentle sorrow.

ELMINA.—Must it be ?

Art thou indeed to leave me ?

XIMENA (*exultingly*).—Be thou glad !

I say, rejoice above thy favoured child !

Joy for the soldier, when his field is fought ;  
 Joy for the peasant when his vintage task  
 Is closed at eve.—But most of all for her,  
 Who, when her life had changed its glittering robes  
 For the dull garb of sorrow, which doth cling  
 So heavily around the journeyers on,  
 Cast down its weight—and slept !

ELMINA.—Alas ! thine eye

Is wandering—yet how brightly ! Is this death,  
 Or some high wondrous vision ? Speak, my child !  
 How is it with thee now ?

XIMENA (*wildly*).—I see it still !

'Tis floating, like a glorious cloud on high,  
 My father's banner ! Hear'st thou not a sound ?  
 The trumpet of Castile ! Praise, praise to Heaven !  
 Now may the weary rest ! Be still ! Who calls  
 The night so fearful ?—

(*She dies.*)

ELMINA.—No ! she is not dead !

Ximena !—speak to me ! Oh yet a tone  
 From that sweet voice, that I may gather in  
 One more remembrance of its lovely sound,  
 Ere the deep silence fall ! What, is all hushed ?—  
 No, no !—it cannot be ! How should we bear  
 The dark misgivings of our souls, if Heaven  
 Left not such beings with us ? But is this  
 Her wonted look ?—too sad a quiet lies  
 On its dim fearful beauty ! Speak, Ximena !  
 Speak ! My heart dies within me ! She is gone,  
 With all her blessed smiles ! My child ! my child !  
 Where art thou ?—Where is that which answered me,  
 From thy soft-shining eyes ?—Hush ! doth she move ?

One light lock seemed to tremble on her brow,  
As a pulse throbb'd beneath ;—'twas but the voice  
Of my despair that stirred it ! She is gone !

(*She throws herself on the body. GONZALEZ enters wounded.*)

ELMINA (*rising as he approaches.*)—

I must not now be scorn'd !—No, not a look,  
A whisper of reproach ! Behold my woe !—  
Thou canst not scorn me now !

GONZALEZ.—Hast thou heard all ?

ELMINA.—Thy daughter on my bosom laid her head,  
And passed away to rest. Behold her there,  
Even such as death hath made her.

GONZALEZ (*bending over XIMENA'S body.*)—Thou art gone  
A little while before me, O my child !  
Why should the traveller weep to part with those  
That scarce an hour will reach their promised land,  
Ere he too cast his pilgrim staff away,  
And spread his couch beside them ?

ELMINA.—Must it be

Henceforth enough that once a thing so fair  
Had its bright place amongst us ? Is this all  
Left for the years to come ? We will not stay !  
Earth's chain each hour grows weaker.

GONZALEZ (*still gazing upon XIMENA.*)—And thou art laid  
To slumber in the shadow, blessed child !  
Of a yet stainless altar, and beside  
A sainted warrior's tomb ! Oh, fitting place  
For thee to yield thy pure heroic soul  
Back unto Him that gave it ! And thy cheek  
Yet smiles in its bright paleness !

ELMINA.—Hadst thou seen

The look with which she passed !

GONZALEZ (*still bending over her.*)—Why, 'tis almost  
 Like joy to view thy beautiful repose!  
 The faded image of that perfect calm  
 Floats, even as long forgotten music, back  
 Into my weary heart. No wild dark spot  
 On thy clear brow doth tell of bloody hands  
 That quenched young life by violence! We've seen  
 Too much of horror, in one crowded hour,  
 To weep for aught so gently gathered hence.  
 —Oh! man leaves other traces!

ELMINA (*suddenly starting.*)—It returns  
 On my bewildered soul! Went ye not forth  
 Unto the rescue? And thou art here alone!  
 —Where are my sons?

GONZALEZ (*solemnly*)—We were too late!

ELMINA.—Too late!

Hast thou naught else to tell me?

GONZALEZ.—I brought back  
 From that last field the banner of my sires,  
 And my own death-wound.

ELMINA.—Thine!

GONZALEZ.—Another hour  
 Shall hush its throbs for ever. I go hence,  
 And with me——

ELMINA.—No! Man could not lift his hands—  
 Where hast thou left thy sons?

GONZALEZ.—I have no sons.

ELMINA.—What hast thou said?

GONZALEZ.—That now there lives not one  
 To wear the glory of mine ancient house,  
 When I am gone to rest.

(ELMINA *throws herself on the ground, and speaks in a low hurried voice.*)

ELMINA.—In one brief hour all gone!—and such a death!

I see their blood gush forth!—their graceful heads!

—Take the dark vision from me, O my God!

And such a death for them! I was not there!

They were but mine in beauty and in joy,

Not in that mortal anguish! All, all gone!—

Why should I struggle more? What is this Power,

Against whose might, on all sides pressing us,

We strive with fierce impatience, which but lays

Our own frail spirits prostrate?

*(After a long pause.)*

Now I know

Thy hand, my God!—and they are soonest crushed

That most withstand it! I resist no more.

*(She rises.)*

A light, a light springs up from grief and death,

Which with its solemn radiance doth reveal

Why we have thus been tried.

GONZALEZ.—Then I may still

Fix my last look on thee in holy love,

Parting, but yet with hope!

ELMINA *(falling at his feet.)*—Canst thou forgive?

Oh, I have driven the arrow to thy heart,

That should have buried it within mine own,

And borne the pang in silence! I have cast

Thy life's fair honour, in my wild despair,

As an unvalued gem upon the waves,

Whence thou hast snatched it back, to bear from earth,

All stainless, on thy breast. Well hast thou done—

But I—canst thou forgive?

GONZALEZ.—Within this hour

I've stood upon that verge whence mortals fall,

And learned how 'tis with one whose sight grows dim,  
 And whose foot trembles on the gulf's dark side.  
 Death purifies all feeling : we will part  
 In pity and in love.

ELMINA.—Death ! And thou too  
 Art on thy way ! Oh, joy for thee, high heart !  
 Glory and joy for thee ! The day is closed,  
 And well and nobly hast thou borne thyself  
 Through its long battle-toils, though many swords  
 Have entered thine own soul ! But on my head  
 Recoil the fierce invoking of despair,  
 And I am left far distanced in the race,  
 The lonely one of earth ! Ay, this is just.  
 I am not worthy that upon my breast  
 In this, thine hour of victory, thou shouldst yield  
 Thy spirit unto God.

GONZALEZ.—Thou art ! thou art !  
 Oh ! a life's love, a heart's long faithfulness,  
 Even in the presence of eternal things,  
 Wearing their chastened beauty all undimmed,  
 Assert their lofty claims ; and these are not  
 For one dark hour to cancel ! We are here,  
 Before that altar which received the vows  
 Of our unbroken youth ; and meet it is  
 For such a witness, in the sight of heaven,  
 And in the face of death, whose shadowy arm  
 Comes dim between us, to record the exchange  
 Of our tried hearts' forgiveness. Who are they,  
 That in one path have journeyed, needing not  
 Forgiveness at its close ?

( *A citizen enters hastily.* )

CITIZEN.—The Moors ! the Moors !

GONZALEZ.—How ! is the city stormed ?

O righteous heaven ! for this I looked not yet.  
Hath all been done in vain ? Why, then, 'tis time  
For prayer, and then to rest !

CITIZEN.—The sun shall set,

And not a Christian voice be left for prayer,  
To-night, within Valencia. Round our walls  
The Paynim host is gathering for the assault,  
And we have none to guard them.

GONZALEZ.—Then my place

Is here no longer. I had hoped to die  
Even by the altar and the sepulchre  
Of my brave sires ; but this was not to be.  
Give me my sword again, and lead me hence  
Back to the ramparts. I have yet an hour,  
And it hath still high duties. Now, my wife !  
Thou mother of my children—of the dead—  
Whom I name unto thee in steadfast hope—  
Farewell !

ELMINA.—No, not farewell ! My soul hath risen  
To mate itself with thine ; and by thy side,  
Amidst the hurling lances, I will stand,  
As one on whom a brave man's love hath been  
Wasted not utterly.

GONZALEZ.—I thank thee, Heaven !

That I have tasted of the awful joy  
Which thou hast given, to temper hours like this  
With a deep sense of Thee, and of thine ends  
In these dread visitings !

(To ELMINA.) We will not part,

But with the spirit's parting.

ELMINA.—One farewell

To her, that, mantled with sad loveliness,

Doth slumber at our feet! My blessed child!  
 Oh, in thy heart's affliction thou wert strong,  
 And holy courage did pervade thy woe,  
 As light the troubled waters! Be at peace,  
 Thou whose bright spirit made itself the soul  
 Of all that were around thee! And thy life  
 Even then was struck and withering at the core!  
 Farewell! thy parting look hath on me fallen,  
 Even as a gleam of heaven, and I am now  
 More like what thou hast been. My soul is hushed;  
 For a still sense of purer worlds hath sunk  
 And settled on its depths with that last smile  
 Which from thine eye shone forth. Thou hast not lived  
 In vain! My child, farewell!

GONZALEZ.—Surely for thee

Death had no sting, Ximena! We are blest  
 To learn one secret of the shadowy pass,  
 From such an aspect's calmness. Yet once more  
 I kiss thy pale young cheek, my broken flower!  
 In token of the undying love and hope  
 Whose land is far away.

[*Exeunt.*]

#### SCENE IX.

*The walls of the city.* HERNANDEZ: *a few citizens gathered round him.*

HER.—Why, men have cast the treasures which their lives  
 Had been worn down in gathering, on the pyre;  
 Ay, at their household hearths have lit the brand,  
 Even from that shrine of quiet love to bear  
 The flame which gave their temples and their homes  
 In ashes to the winds! They have done this,



Making a blasted void where once the sun  
 Looked upon lovely dwellings ; and from earth  
 Razing all record that on such a spot  
 Childhood hath sprung, age faded, misery wept,  
 And frail humanity knelt before her God :  
 They have done this, in their free nobleness,  
 Rather than see the spoiler's tread pollute  
 Their holy places. Praise, high praise be theirs,  
 Who have left man such lessons ! And these things,  
 Made your own hills their witnesses ! The sky,  
 Whose arch bends o'er you, and the seas wherein  
 Your rivers pour their gold, rejoicing saw  
 The altar and the birthplace and the tomb,  
 And all memorials of man's heart and faith,  
 Thus proudly honoured. Be ye not outdone  
 By the departed ! Though the godless foe  
 Be close upon us, we have power to snatch  
 The spoils of victory from him. — Be but strong !  
 A few bright torches and brief moments yet  
 Shall baffle his flushed hope ; and we may die,  
 Laughing him unto scorn. Rise, follow me !  
 And thou Valencia ! triumph in thy fate—  
 The ruin, not the yoke ; and make thy towers  
 A beacon unto Spain !

CITIZENS.—We'll follow thee !

Alas ! for our fair city, and the homes  
 Wherein we reared our children ! But away !  
 The Moor shall plant no Crescent o'er our fanes !

VOICE (*from a tower on the walls.*)—

Succours !—Castile ! Castile !

CITIZENS (*rushing to the spot.*)—It is even so !

Now blessing be to heaven, for we are saved !  
 Castile ! Castile !

VOICE FROM THE TOWER.—Line after line of spears,  
 Lance after lance, upon the horizon's verge,  
 Like festal lights from cities bursting up,  
 Doth skirt the plain. In faith, a noble host!

ANOTHER VOICE.—The Moor hath turned him from our  
 walls, to front

The advancing might of Spain!

CITIZENS (*shouting.*)—Castile! Castile!

(*GONZALEZ enters, supported by ELMINA and a citizen.*)

GONZALEZ.—What shouts of joy are these?

HERNANDEZ.—Hail, chieftain! hail!

Thus, even in death, 'tis given thee to receive  
 The conqueror's crown! Behold, our God hath heard,  
 And armed himself with vengeance. Lo! they come—  
 The lances of Castile!

GONZALEZ.—I knew, I knew

Thou wouldst not utterly, my God! forsake  
 Thy servant in his need! My blood and tears  
 Have not sunk vainly to the attesting earth.  
 Praise to Thee, thanks and praise, that I have lived  
 To see this hour!

ELMINA.—And I, too, bless thy name,

Though thou hast proved me unto agony!  
 O God!—thou God of chastening!

VOICE FROM THE TOWER.—They move on!

I see the royal banner in the air,  
 With its emblazoned towers!

GONZALEZ.—Go, bring ye forth

The banner of the Cid, and plant it here,  
 To stream above me, for an answering sign  
 That the good Cross doth hold its lofty place  
 Within Valencia still. What see you now?

HERNANDEZ.—I see a kingdom's might upon its path,  
 Moving in terrible magnificence  
 Unto revenge and victory. With the flash  
 Of knightly swords, up-springing from the ranks  
 As meteors from a still and gloomy deep,  
 And with a waving of ten thousand plumes,  
 Like a land's harvest in the autumn wind,  
 And with fierce light, which is not of the sun,  
 But flung from sheets of steel—it comes, it comes,  
 The vengeance of our God!

GONZALEZ.—I hear it now,  
 The heavy tread of mail-clad multitudes,  
 Like thunder-showers upon the forest paths.

HER.—Ay, earth knows well the omen of that sound;  
 And she hath echoes, like a sepulchre's,  
 Pent in her secret hollows, to respond  
 Unto the step of death!

GONZALEZ.—Hark! how the wind  
 Swells proudly with the battle-march of Spain?  
 Now the heart feels its power! A little while  
 Grant me to live, my God! What pause is this?

HERNANDEZ.—A deep and dreadful one. The serried files  
 Level their spears for combat; now the hosts  
 Look on each other in their brooding wrath,  
 Silent, and face to face.

*(Voices heard without, chanting.)*

#### DIRGE

CALM on the bosom of thy God,  
 Fair spirit! rest thee now!  
 Even while with ours thy footsteps trode  
 His seal was on thy brow.

Dust, to its narrow house beneath !  
 Soul, to its place on high !  
 They that have seen thy look in death  
 No more may fear to die.

ELMINA (*to Gonzalez.*)—

It is the death-hymn o'er thy daughter's bier !  
 But I am calm ; and even like gentle winds,  
 That music, through the stillness of my heart,  
 Sends mournful peace.

GONZALEZ.—Oh ! well those solemn tones  
 Accord with such an hour, for all her life  
 Breathed of a hero's soul !

(*A sound of trumpets and shouting from the plain.*)

HER.—Now, now they close ! Hark ! what a dull dead sound  
 Is in the Moorish war-shout ! I have known  
 Such tones prophetic oft. The shock is given—  
 Lo ! they have placed their shields before their hearts,  
 And lowered their lances with the streamers on,  
 And on their steeds bent forward. God for Spain !  
 The first bright sparks of battle have been struck  
 From spear to spear, across the gleaming field.  
 There is no sight on which the blue sky looks  
 To match with this ! 'Tis not the gallant crests,  
 Nor banners with their glorious blazonry ;  
 The very nature and high soul of man  
 Doth now reveal itself !

GONZALEZ.—Oh, raise me up,  
 That I may look upon the noble scene !—  
 It will not be !—That this dull mist would pass  
 A moment from my sight ! Whence rose that shout,  
 As in fierce triumph ?

HERNANDEZ (*clasping his hands.*)—Must I look on this?

The banner sinks—'tis taken!

GONZALEZ.—Whose?

HERNANDEZ.—Castile's!

GONZALEZ.—O God of Battles!

ELMINA.—Calm thy noble heart;

Thou wilt not pass away without thy meed.

Nay, rest thee on my bosom.

HERNANDEZ.—Cheer thee yet!

Our knights have spurred to rescue. There is now

A whirl, a mingling of all terrible things,

Yet more appalling than the fierce distinctness

Wherewith they moved before. I see tall plumes

All wildly tossing o'er the battle's tide,

Swayed by the wrathful motion, and the press

Of desperate men, as cedar boughs by storms.

Many a white streamer there is dyed with blood,

Many a false corslet broken, many a shield

Pierced through. Now, shout for Santiago, shout!

Lo! javelins with a moment's brightness cleave

The thickening dust, and barded steeds go down

With their helmed riders! Who, but One, can tell

How spirits part amidst that fearful rush

And trampling-on of furious multitudes?

GON.—Thou'rt silent! See'st thou more? My soul grows dark.

HERNANDEZ.—And dark and troubled, as an angry sea,

Dashing some gallant armament in scorn

Against its rocks, is all on which I gaze.

I can but tell thee how tall spears are crossed,

And lances seem to shiver, and proud helms

To lighten with the stroke. But round the spot

Where, like a storm-felled mast, our standard sank,

The heart of battle burns.

GONZALEZ.—Where is that spot ?

HERNANDEZ.—It is beneath the lonely tuft of palms,  
That lift their green heads o'er the tumult still,  
In calm and stately grace.

GONZALEZ.—*There*, didst thou say ?  
Then God is with us, and we *must* prevail !  
For on that spot they died : my children's blood  
Calls on the avenger thence !

ELMINA.—They perished there !  
And the bright locks that waved so joyously  
To the free winds, lay trampled and defiled  
Even on that place of death ! O Merciful !  
Hush the dark thought within me !

HERNANDEZ (*with sudden exultation.*)—Who is he,  
On the white steed, and with the castled helm,  
And the gold-broidered mantle, which doth float  
Even like a sunny cloud above the fight ;  
And the pale cross, which from his breast-plate gleams  
With star-like radiance ?

GONZALEZ (*eagerly.*)—Didst thou say the cross ?

HER.—On his mailed bosom shines a broad white cross,  
And his long plumage through the darkening air  
Streams like a snow-wreath.

GONZALEZ.—That should be—

HERNANDEZ.—The king !  
Was it not told to us how he sent, of late,  
To the Cid's tomb, even for the silver cross,  
Which he who slumbers there was wont to bind  
O'er his brave heart in fight ?\*

GONZALEZ (*springing up joyfully.*)—My king ! my king !

\* This circumstance is recorded of King Don Alfonso, the last of that name, "because of the faith which he had, that through it he should obtain the victory."—SOUTHBY'S *Chronicle of the Cid*.

Now all good saints for Spain ! My noble king !  
 And thou art there ! That I might look once more  
 Upon thy face ! But yet I thank thee, Heaven !  
 That thou hast sent him, from my dying hands  
 Thus to receive his city !

*(He sinks back into ELMINA'S arms.)*

HERNANDEZ.—He hath cleared

A pathway midst the combat, and the light  
 Follows his charge through yon close living mass,  
 Even as a gleam on some proud vessel's wake  
 Along the stormy waters ! 'Tis redeemed—  
 The castled banner ; it is flung once more  
 In joy and glory to the sweeping winds !  
 There seems a wavering through the Paynim hosts—  
 Castile doth press them sore—now, now rejoice !

GONZALEZ.—What hast thou seen ?

HERNANDEZ.—Abdullah falls ! He falls !

The man of blood !—the spoiler !—he hath sunk  
 In our king's path ! Well hath that royal sword  
 Avenged thy cause, Gonzalez !

They give way,  
 The Crescent's van is broken ! On the hills,  
 And the dark pine-woods, may the Infidel  
 Call vainly, in his agony of fear,  
 To cover him from vengeance ! Lo ! they fly :  
 They of the forest and the wilderness  
 Are scattered, even as leaves upon the wind.  
 Woe to the sons of Afric ! Let the plains,  
 And the vine mountains, and Hesperian seas,  
 Take their dead unto them !—that blood shall wash  
 Our soil from stains of bondage.

GONZALEZ (*attempting to raise himself.*)—Set me free !

Come with me forth, for I must greet my king  
After his battle-field.

HERNANDEZ.—Oh, blest in death !  
Chosen of heaven, farewell ! Look on the Cross,  
And part from earth in peace.

GONZALEZ.—Now, charge once more !  
God is with Spain, and Santiago's sword  
Is reddening all the air ! Shout forth " Castile !"  
The day is ours ! I go ; but fear ye not !  
For Afric's lance is broken, and my sons  
Have won their first good field !

*(He dies.)*

ELMINA.—Look on me yet !  
Speak one farewell, my husband !—must thy voice  
Enter my soul no more ? Thine eye is fixed.  
Now is my life uprooted—and 'tis well.

*(A sound of triumphant music is heard, and many Castilian knights and soldiers enter.)*

A CIT.—Hush your triumphal sounds, although ye come  
Even as deliverers ! But the noble dead,  
And those that mourn them, claim from human hearts  
Deep silent reverence.

ELMINA *(rising proudly.)*—No, swell forth, Castile !  
Thy trumpet-music, till the seas and heavens  
And the deep hills give every stormy note  
Echoes to ring through Spain. How, know ye not  
That all arrayed for triumph, crowned and robed  
With the strong spirit which hath saved the land,  
Even now a conqueror to his rest is gone ?  
Fear not to break that sleep, but let the wind  
Swell on with victory's shout !—*He* will not hear—  
Hath earth a sound more sad ?



HERNANDEZ.—Lift ye the dead,  
And bear him with the banner of his race  
Waving above him proudly, as it waved  
O'er the Cid's battles, to the tomb wherein  
His warrior sires are gathered.

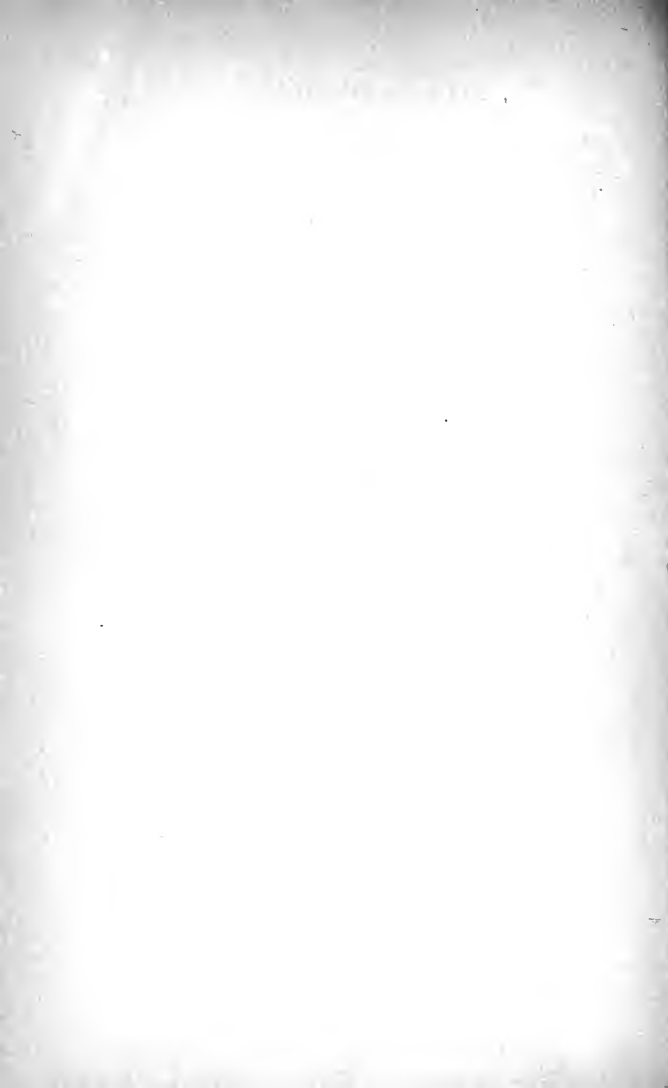
*(They raise the body.)*

ELMINA.—Ay, 'tis thus  
Thou shouldst be honoured! And I follow thee  
With an unfaltering and a lofty step,  
To that last home of glory. She that wears  
In her deep heart the memory of thy love,  
Shall thence draw strength for all things; till the God  
Whose hand around her hath unpeopled earth,  
Looking upon her still and chastened soul,  
Call it once more to thine!

*(To the Castilians.)* Awake, I say!

Tambour and trumpet, wake! And let the land  
Through all her mountains hear your funeral peal.  
So should a hero pass to his repose.

*(Curtain falls.)*



SEBASTIAN OF PORTUGAL

A DRAMATIC FRAGMENT

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

SEBASTIAN,	. . . . .	<i>King of Portugal.</i>
GONZALEZ,	. . . . .	<i>His friend.</i>
ZAMOR,	. . . . .	<i>A young Arab.</i>
SYLVEIRA,	. . . . .	<i>A courtier.</i>

# SEBASTIAN OF PORTUGAL

---

## SCENE I.

*The sea-shore near Lisbon.* SEBASTIAN, GONZALEZ, ZAMOR.

SEB.—With what young life and fragrance in its breath  
My native air salutes me! From the groves  
Of citron, and the mountains of the vine,  
And thy majestic tide thus foaming on  
In power and freedom o'er its golden sands,  
Fair stream, my Tajo! youth, with all its glow  
And pride of feeling, through my soul and frame  
Again seems rushing, as these noble waves  
Past their bright shores flow joyously. Sweet land,  
My own, my fathers' land, of sunny skies  
And orange bowers!—Oh! is it not a dream  
That thus I tread thy soil? Or do I wake  
From a dark dream but now? Gonzalez, say,  
Doth it not bring the flush of early life  
Back on the awakening spirit, thus to gaze  
On the far-sweeping river, and the shades  
Which, in their undulating motion, speak  
Of gentle winds amidst bright waters born,

After the fiery skies and dark-red sands  
 Of the lone desert? Time and toil must needs  
 Have changed our mien; but this, our blessed land,  
 Hath gained but richer beauty since we bade  
 Her glowing shores farewell. Seems it not thus?  
 Thy brow is clouded.

GONZALEZ.—To mine eye the scene  
 Wears, amidst all its quiet loveliness,  
 A hue of desolation; and the calm,  
 The solitude and silence which pervade  
 Earth, air, and ocean, seem belonging less  
 To peace than sadness. We have proudly stood  
 Even on this shore, beside the Atlantic wave,  
 When it hath looked not thus.

SEBASTIAN.—Ay, now thy soul  
 Is in the past! Oh no! it looked not thus  
 When the morn smiled upon our thousand sails,  
 And the winds blew for Afric. How that hour,  
 With all its hues of glory, seems to burst  
 Again upon my vision! I behold  
 The stately barks, the arming, the array,  
 The crests, the banners of my chivalry,  
 Swayed by the sea-breeze till their motion showed  
 Like joyous life! How the proud billows foamed,  
 And the oars flashed like lightnings of the deep,  
 And the tall spears went glancing to the sun,  
 And scattering round quick rays, as if to guide  
 The valiant unto fame! Ay, the blue heaven  
 Seemed for that noble scene a canopy  
 Scarce too majestic, while it rang afar  
 To peals of warlike sound. My gallant bands!  
 Where are you now?

GONZALEZ.—Bid the wide desert tell

Where sleep its dead ! To mightier hosts than them  
Hath it lent graves ere now ; and on its breast  
Is room for nations yet.

SEBASTIAN.—It cannot be

That all have perished ! Many a noble man,  
Made captive on that war-field, may have burst  
His bonds like ours. Cloud not this fleeting hour,  
Which to my soul is as the fountain's draught  
To the parched lip of fever, with a thought  
So darkly sad !

GONZALEZ.—Oh never, never cast

That deep remembrance from you ! When once more  
Your place is midst earth's rulers, let it dwell  
Around you, as the shadow of your throne,  
Wherein the land may rest. My king ! this hour  
(Solemn as that which to the voyager's eye,  
In far and dim perspective, doth unfold  
A new and boundless world) may haply be  
The last in which the courage and the power  
Of truth's high voice may reach you. Who may stand  
As man to man, as friend to friend, before  
The ancestral throne of monarchs ? Or perchance  
Toils, such as tame the loftiest to endurance,  
Henceforth may wait us here. But howsoe'er  
This be, the lessons now from sufferings past  
Befit all time, all change, Oh ! by the blood,  
The free, the generous blood of Portugal,  
Shed on the sands of Afric—by the names  
Which, with their centuries of high renown,  
There died, extinct for ever—let not those  
Who stood in hope and glory at our side  
Here, on this very sea-beach, whence they passed  
To fall, and leave no trophy—let them not

Be soon, be e'er forgotten ! for their fate  
Bears a deep warning in its awfulness,  
Whence power might well learn wisdom.

SEBASTIAN.—Thinkst thou, then,

That years of suff'rance and captivity,  
Such as have bowed down eagle hearts ere now,  
And made high energies their spoil, have passed  
So lightly o'er my spirit ? It is not thus !  
The things thou wouldst recall are not of those  
To be forgotten. But my heart hath still  
A sense, a bounding pulse for hope and joy ;  
And it is joy which whispers in the breeze  
Sent from my own free mountains. Brave Gonzalez !  
Thou'rt one to make thy fearless heart a shield  
Unto thy friend, in the dark stormy hour  
When knightly crests are trampled, and proud helms  
Cleft, and strong breastplates shivered. Thou art one  
To infuse the soul of gallant fortitude  
Into the captive's bosom, and beguile  
The long slow march beneath the burning noon  
With lofty patience ; but for those quick bursts,  
Those buoyant efforts of the soul to cast  
Her weight of care to earth, those brief delights  
Whose source is in a sunbeam, or a sound  
Which stirs the blood, or a young breeze, whose wing  
Wanders in chainless joy ; for things like these  
Thou hast no sympathies. And thou, my Zamor,  
Art wrapt in thought. I welcome thee to this,  
The kingdom of my fathers. Is it not  
A goodly heritage ?

ZAMOR.—The land is fair ;

But he, the archer of the wilderness,  
Beholdeth not the palms beneath whose shade



His tents are scattered, and his camels rest ;  
And therefore is he sad !

SEBASTIAN.—Thou must not pine

With that sick yearning of the impatient heart,  
Which makes the exile's life one fevered dream  
Of skies and hills and voices far away,  
And faces wearing the familiar hues  
Lent by his native sunbeams. I have known  
Too much of this, and would not see another  
Thus daily die. If it be so with thee,  
My gentle Zamor, speak. Behold, our bark  
Yet, with her white sails catching sunset's glow,  
Lies within signal-reach. If it be thus,  
Then fare thee well—farewell, thou brave and true  
And generous friend ! How often is our path  
Crossed by some being whose bright spirit sheds  
A passing gladness o'er it, but whose course  
Leads down another current, never more  
To blend with ours ! Yet far within our souls,  
Amidst the rushing of the busy world,  
Dwells many a secret thought, which lingers yet  
Around that image. And even so, kind Zamor !  
Shalt thou be long remembered.

ZAMOR.—By the fame

Of my brave sire, whose deeds the warrior tribes  
Tell round the desert's watchfire, at the hour  
Of silence and of coolness and of stars,  
I will not leave thee ! 'Twas in such an hour  
The dreams of rest were on me, and I lay  
Shrouded in slumber's mantle, as within  
The chambers of the dead. Who saved me then,  
When the pard, soundless as the midnight, stole  
Soft on the sleeper ? Whose keen dart transfixed

The monarch of the solitudes ? I woke,  
And saw thy javelin crimsoned with his blood,  
Thou, my deliverer ! and my heart even then  
Called thee its brother.

SEBASTIAN.—For that gift of life  
With one of tenfold price, even freedom's self,  
Thou hast repaid me well.

ZAMOR.—Then bid me not  
Forsake thee ! Though my fathers' tents may rise  
At times upon my spirit, yet my home  
Shall be amidst thy mountains, prince ! and thou  
Shalt be my chief, until I see thee robed  
With all thy power. When thou canst need no more  
Thine Arab's faithful heart and vigorous arm,  
From the green regions of the setting sun  
Then shall the wanderer turn his steps, and seek  
His Orient wilds again.

SEBASTIAN.—Be near me still,  
And ever, O my warrior ! I shall stand  
Again amidst my hosts a mail-clad king,  
Begirt with spears and banners, and the pomp  
And the proud sounds of battle. Be thy place  
Then at my side. When doth a monarch cease  
To need true hearts, bold hands ? Not in the field  
Of arms, nor on the throne of power, nor yet  
The couch of sleep. Be our friend, we will not part.

GONZALEZ.—Be all thy friends thus faithful, for even yet  
They may be fiercely tried.

SEBASTIAN.—I doubt them not.  
Even now my heart beats high to meet their welcome.  
Let us away !

GONZALEZ.—Yet hear once more, my liege.  
The humblest pilgrim, from his distant shrine

Returning, finds not even his peasant home  
Unchanged amidst its vineyards. Some loved face,  
Which made the sunlight of his lowly board,  
Is touched by sickness; some familiar voice  
Greets him no more; and shall not fate and time  
Have done their work, since last we parted hence,  
Upon an empire? Ay, within those years,  
Hearts from their ancient worship have fallen off,  
And bowed before new stars; high names have sunk  
From their supremacy of place, and others  
Gone forth, and made themselves the mighty sounds  
At which thrones tremble. Oh! be slow to trust  
Even those to whom your smiles were wont to seem  
As light is unto flowers. Search well the depths  
Of bosoms in whose keeping you would shrine  
The secret of your state. Storms pass not by  
Leaving earth's face unchanged.

SEBASTIAN.—Whence didst thou learn  
The cold distrust which casts so deep a shadow  
O'er a most noble nature?

GONZALEZ.—Life hath been  
My stern and only teacher. I have known  
Vicissitudes in all things, but the most  
In human hearts. Oh, yet awhile tame down  
That royal spirit, till the hour be come  
When it may burst its bondage! On thy brow  
The suns of burning climes have set their seal,  
And toil and years and perils have not passed  
O'er the bright aspect and the ardent eye  
As doth a breeze of summer. Be that change  
The mask beneath whose shelter thou may'st read  
Men's thoughts, and veil thine own.

SEBASTIAN.—Am I thus changed

From all I was? And yet it needs must be,  
 Since even my soul hath caught another hue  
 From its long sufferings. Did I not array  
 The gallant flower of Lusian chivalry,  
 And lead the mighty of the land to pour  
 Destruction on the Moslem? I return,  
 And as a fearless and a trusted friend,  
 Bring, from the realms of my captivity,  
 An Arab of the desert!—But the sun  
 Hath sunk below the Atlantic. Let us hence.  
 Gonzalez, fear me not. [*Exeunt.*

---

SCENE II.

*A street in Lisbon illuminated. Many citizens.*

- 1ST CITIZEN.—In sooth, our city wears a goodly mien,  
 With her far-blazing fanes, and festive lamps  
 Shining from all her marble palaces,  
 Countless as heaven's fair stars. The humblest lattice  
 Sends forth its radiance. How the sparkling waves  
 Fling back the light!
- 2D CITIZEN.—Ay, tis a gallant show;  
 And one which serves, like others, to conceal  
 Things which must not be told.
- 3D CITIZEN.—What wouldst thou say?
- 2D CIT.—That which may scarce, in perilous times like these,  
 Be said with safety. Hast thou looked within  
 Those stately palaces? Were they but peopled  
 With the high race of warlike nobles, once  
 Their princely lords, think'st thou, good friend, that now

They would be glittering with this hollow pomp  
To greet a conqueror's entrance ?

3D CITIZEN.—Thou say'st well.

None but a land forsaken of its chiefs  
Had been so lost and won.

4TH CITIZEN.—The lot is cast ;

We have but to yield. Hush ! for some strangers come !  
Now, friends, beware.

1ST CITIZEN.—Did the king pass this way

At morning, with his train ?

2D CITIZEN.—Ay : saw you not

The long and rich procession ?

(SEBASTIAN enters, with GONZALEZ and ZAMOR.)

SEBASTIAN (*to GONZALEZ.*)—This should be

The night of some high festival. Even thus  
My royal city to the skies sent up,  
From her illumined fanes and towers, a voice  
Of gladness, welcoming our first return  
From Afric's coast. Speak thou, Gonzalez ! ask  
The cause of this rejoicing. To my heart  
Deep feelings rush, so mingling and so fast,  
My voice perchance might tremble.

GONZALEZ.—Citizen,

What festal night is this, that all your streets  
Are thronged and glittering thus ?

1ST CITIZEN.—Hast thou not heard

Of the king's entry, in triumphal pomp,  
This very morn ?

GONZALEZ.—The king ! triumphal pomp !—

Thy words are dark.

SEBASTIAN.—Speak yet again : mine ears

Ring with strange sounds. Again !

1ST CITIZEN.—I said, the king,  
Philip of Spain, and now of Portugal,  
This morning entered with a conqueror's train  
Our city's royal palace : and for this  
We hold our festival.

SEBASTIAN (*in a low voice.*)—Thou saidst—the king !  
His name ?—I heard it not.

1ST CITIZEN.—Philip of Spain.

SEBASTIAN.—Philip of Spain ! We slumber, till aroused  
By th' earthquake's bursting shock. Has there not fallen  
A sudden darkness ? All things seem to float  
Obscurely round me. Now 'tis past. The streets  
Are blazing with strange fire. Go, quench those lamps ;  
They glare upon me till my very brain  
Grows dizzy, and doth whirl. How dare ye thus  
Light up your shrines for him ?

GONZALEZ.—Away, away !  
This is no time, no scene——

SEBASTIAN.—Philip of Spain !  
How name ye this fair land ? Why, is it not  
The free, the chivalrous Portugal ?—the land  
By the proud ransom of heroic blood  
Won from the Moor of old ? Did that red stream  
Sink to the earth, and leave no fiery current  
In the veins of noble men, that so its tide,  
Full swelling at the sound of hostile steps,  
Might be a kingdom's barrier ?

2D CITIZEN.—That high blood  
Which should have been our strength, profusely shed  
By the rash King Sebastian, bathed the plains  
Of fatal Alcazar. Our monarch's guilt  
Hath brought this ruin down.

SEBASTIAN.—Must this be heard

And borne, and unchastised? Man, darest thou stand  
 Before me face to face, and thus arraign  
 Thy sovereign?

ZAMOR (*aside to Sebastian.*)—Shall I lift the sword, my prince,  
 Against thy foes?

GONZALEZ.—Be still, or all is lost.

2D CIT.—I dare speak that which all men think and know.  
 'Tis to Sebastian, and his waste of life  
 And power and treasure, that we owe these bonds.

3D CIT.—Talk not of bonds. May our new monarch rule  
 The weary land in peace! But who art thou?  
 Whence com'st thou, haughty stranger, that these things,  
 Known to all nations, should be new to thee?

SEB. (*wildly.*)—I come from regions where the cities lie  
 In ruins, not in chains!

(*Exit, with GONZALEZ and ZAMOR.*)

2D CITIZEN.—He wears the mien  
 Of one that hath commanded; yet his looks  
 And words were strangely wild.

1ST CITIZEN.—Marked you his fierce  
 And haughty gesture, and the flash that broke  
 From his dark eye, when King Sebastian's name  
 Became our theme?

2D CITIZEN.—Trust me, there's more in this  
 Than may be lightly said. These are no times  
 To breathe men's thoughts in the open face of heaven  
 And ear of multitudes. They that would speak  
 Of monarchs and their deeds, should keep within  
 Their quiet homes. Come, let us hence; and then  
 We'll commune of this stranger.

## SCENE III.

*The portico of a palace.* SEBASTIAN, GONZALEZ, ZAMOR.

SEB.—Withstand me not ! I tell thee that my soul,  
 With all its passionate energies, is roused  
 Unto that fearful strength which must have way,  
 Even like the elements in their hour of might  
 And mastery o'er creation.

GONZALEZ.—But they wait  
 That hour in silence. Oh ! be calm awhile—  
 Thine is not come. My king——

SEBASTIAN.—I am no king,  
 While in the very palace of my sires,  
 Ay, where mine eyes first drank the glorious light,  
 Where my soul's thrilling echoes first awoke  
 To the high sound of earth's immortal names,  
 The usurper lives and reigns. I am no king  
 Until I cast him thence.

ZAMOR.—Shall not thy voice  
 Be as a trumpet to the awakening land ?  
 Will not the bright swords flash like sunbursts forth  
 When the brave hear their chief ?

GONZALEZ.—Peace, Zamor ! peace !  
 Child of the desert, what hast thou to do  
 With the calm hour of counsel ?

Monarch, pause :  
 A kingdom's destiny should not be the sport  
 Of passion's reckless winds. There is a time  
 When men, in very weariness of heart  
 And careless desolation, tamed to yield



By misery strong as death, will lay their souls  
 Even at the conqueror's feet—as nature sinks,  
 After long torture, into cold and dull  
 And heavy sleep. But comes there not an hour  
 Of fierce atonement? Ay! the slumberer wakes  
 With gathered strength and vengeance; and the sense  
 And the remembrance of his agonies  
 Are in themselves a power, whose fearful path  
 Is like the path of ocean, when the heavens  
 Take off its interdict. Wait, then, the hour  
 Of that high impulse.

SEBASTIAN.—Is it not the sun

Whose radiant bursting through the embattled clouds  
 Doth make it morn? The hour of which thou speak'st,  
 Itself, with all its glory, is the work  
 Of some commanding nature, which doth bid  
 The sullen shades disperse. Away!—even now  
 The land's high hearts, the fearless and the true,  
 Shall know they have a leader. Is not this  
 The mansion of mine own, mine earliest friend  
 Sylveira?

GONZALEZ.—Ay, its glittering lamps too well

Illume the stately vestibule to leave  
 Our sight a moment's doubt. He ever loved  
 Such pageantries.

SEBASTIAN.—His dwelling thus adorned

On such a night! Yet will I seek him here.  
 He must be faithful, and to him the first  
 My tale shall be revealed. A sudden chill  
 Falls on my heart; and yet I will not wrong  
 My friend with dull suspicion. He hath been  
 Linked all too closely with mine inmost soul.

And what have I to lose?

GONZALEZ.—Is their blood naught  
Who without hope will follow where thou ledest,  
Even unto death?

SEBASTIAN.—Was that a brave man's voice?  
Warrior and friend! how long, then, hast thou learned  
To hold thy blood thus dear?

GONZALEZ.—Of mine, mine own  
Think'st thou I spoke? When all is shed for thee  
Thou'lt know me better.

SEBAS. (*entering the palace.*)—For a while farewell. [*Exit.*]

GON.—Thus princes lead men's hearts. Come, follow me;  
And if a home is left me still, brave Zamor!  
There will I bid thee welcome. [*Exeunt.*]

---

#### SCENE IV.

*A hall within the palace. SEBASTIAN and SYLVEIRA.*

SYLVEIRA.—Whence art thou, stranger? what wouldst thou  
with me?

There is a fiery wildness in thy mien  
Startling and almost fearful.

SEBASTIAN.—From the stern  
And vast and desolate wilderness, whose lord  
Is the fierce lion, and whose gentlest wind  
Breathes of the tomb, and whose dark children make  
The bow and spear their law, men bear not back  
That smilingness of aspect, wont to mask  
The secrets of their spirits midst the stir

Of courts and cities. I have looked on scenes  
Boundless and strange and terrible ; I have known  
Sufferings which are not in the shadowy scope  
Of wild imagination ; and these things  
Have stamped me with their impress. Man of peace,  
Thou look'st on one familiar with the extremes  
Of grandeur and of misery.

SYLVEIRA.—Stranger, speak

Thy name and purpose briefly, for the time  
Ill suits these mysteries. I must hence ; to-night  
I feast the lords of Spain.

SEBASTIAN.—Is that a task

For King Sebastian's friend ?

SYLVEIRA.—Sebastian's friend !

That name hath lost its meaning. Will the dead  
Rise from their silent dwellings to upbraid  
The living for their mirth ? The grave sets bounds  
Unto all human friendship.

SEBASTIAN.—On the plain

Of Alcazar full many a stately flower,  
The pride and crown of some high house, was laid  
Low in the dust of Afric ; but of these  
Sebastian was not one.

SYLVEIRA.—I am not skilled

To deal with men of mystery. Take, then, off  
The strange dark scrutiny of thine eye from mine.  
What mean'st thou ? Speak !

SEBASTIAN.—Sebastian died not there.—

I read no joy in that cold doubting mien.  
Is not thy name Sylveira ?

SYLVEIRA.—Ay.

SEBASTIAN.—Why, then,

Be glad ! I tell thee that Sebastian lives !

Think thou on this—he lives ! Should he return—  
 For he may yet return—and find the friend  
 In whom he trusted with such perfect trust  
 As should be Heaven's alone—mark'st thou my words?—  
 Should he then find this man, not girt and armed,  
 And watching o'er the heritage of his lord,  
 But, reckless of high fame and loyal faith,  
 Holding luxurious revels with his foes,  
 How would thou meet his glance ?

SYLVEIRA.—As I do thine,  
 Keen though it be, and proud.

SEBASTIAN.—Why, thou dost quail  
 Before it ! even as if the burning eye  
 Of the broad sun pursued thy shrinking soul  
 Through all its depths.

SYLVEIRA.—Away ! He died not there ?  
 He should have died there, with the chivalry  
 And strength and honour of his kingdom, lost  
 By his impetuous rashness.

SEBASTIAN.—This from *thee* ?  
 Who hath given power to falsehood, that one gaze  
 At its unmasked and withering mien, should blight  
 High souls at once ? I wake. And this from thee ?  
 There are whose eyes discern the secret springs  
 Which lie beneath the desert, and the gold  
 And gems within earth's caverns, far below  
 The everlasting hills : but who hath dared  
 To dream that heaven's most awful attribute  
 Invested his mortality, and to boast  
 That through its inmost folds his glance could read  
 One heart, one human heart ? Why, then, to love  
 And trust is but to lend a traitor arms  
 Of keenest temper and unerring aim,

Wherewith to pierce our souls. But thou, beware!  
Sebastian lives!

SYLVEIRA.—If it be so, and thou  
Art of his followers still, then bid him seek  
Far in the wilds, which gave one sepulchre  
To his proud hosts, a kingdom and a home;  
For none is left him here.

SEBASTIAN.—This is to live  
An age of wisdom in an hour! The man  
Whose empire, as in scorn, o'erpassed the bounds  
Even of the infinite deep; whose Orient realms  
Lay bright beneath the morning, while the clouds  
Were brooding in their sunset mantle still  
O'er his majestic regions of the West;  
This heir of far dominion shall return,  
And in the very city of his birth  
Shall find no home! Ay, I will tell him this,  
And he will answer that the tale is false,  
False as a traitor's hollow words of love;  
And that the stately dwelling, in whose halls  
We commune now—a friend's, a monarch's gift,  
Unto the chosen of his heart, Sylveira,  
Should yield him still a welcome.

SYLVEIRA.—Fare thee well!  
I may not pause to hear thee, for thy words  
Are full of danger, and of snares, perchance  
Laid by some treacherous foe. But all in vain.  
I mock thy wiles to scorn.

SEBASTIAN.—Ha! ha! The snake  
Doth pride himself in his distorted cunning,  
Deeming it wisdom. Nay, thou go'st not thus.  
My heart is bursting, and I will be heard.  
What! know'st thou not my spirit was born to hold

Dominion over thine? Thou shalt not cast  
Those bonds thus lightly from thee. Stand thou there,  
And tremble in the presence of thy lord!

SYLVEIRA.—This is all madness.

SEBASTIAN.—Madness! no—I say

'Tis reason starting from her sleep, to feel  
And see and know, in all their cold distinctness,  
Things which come o'er her as a sense of pain  
O' the sudden wakes the dreamer. Stay thee yet;  
Be still. Thou'rt used to smile and to obey;  
Ay, and to weep. I have seen thy tears flow fast,  
As from the fulness of a heart o'ercharged  
With loyal love. Oh! never, never more  
Let tears or smiles be trusted! When thy king  
Went forth on his disastrous enterprise,  
Upon thy bed of sickness thou wast laid,  
And he stood o'er thee with the look of one  
Who leaves a dying brother, and his eyes  
Were filled with tears like thine. No! not like thine:  
His bosom knew no falsehood, and he deemed  
Thine clear and stainless as a warrior's shield,  
Wherein high deeds and noble forms alone  
Are brightly imaged forth.

SYLVEIRA.—What now avail

These recollections?

SEBASTIAN.—What! I have seen thee shrink,

As a murderer from the eye of light, before me:  
I have earned (how dearly and how bitterly  
It matters not, but I have earned at last)  
Deep knowledge, fearful wisdom. Now, begone!  
Hence to thy guests, and fear not, though arraigned  
Even of Sebastian's friendship. Make his scorn  
(For he will scorn thee as a crouching slave

By all high hearts is scorned) thy right, thy charter  
 Unto vile safety. Let the secret voice,  
 Whose low upbraidings will not sleep within thee,  
 Be as a sign, a token of thy claim  
 To all such guerdons as are showered on traitors,  
 When noble men are crushed. And fear thou not :  
 'Tis but the kingly cedar which the storm  
 Hurls from his mountain throne—the ignoble shrub,  
 Grovelling beneath, may live.

SYLVEIRA.—It is thy part  
 To tremble for thy life.

SEBASTIAN.—They that have looked  
 Upon a heart like thine, should know too well  
 The worth of life to tremble. Such things make  
 Brave men, and reckless. Ay, and they whom fate  
 Would trample should be thus. It is enough—  
 Thou may'st depart.

SYLVEIRA.—And thou, if thou dost prize  
 Thy safety, speed thee hence. [Exit.

SEBASTIAN (*alone.*)—And this is he  
 Who was as mine own soul : whose image rose,  
 Shadowing my dreams of glory with the thought  
 That on the sick man's weary couch he lay,  
 Pining to share my battles !

#### CHORUS

YE winds that sweep  
 The conquered billows of the western deep,  
 Or wander where the morn  
 Midst the resplendent Indian heavens is born,  
 Waft o'er bright isles and glorious worlds the fame  
 Of the crowned Spaniard's name :

Till in each glowing zone  
Its might the nations own,  
And bow to him the vassal knee  
Whose sceptre shadows realms from sea to sea.

SEBASTIAN.—Away, away! This is no place for him  
Whose name hath thus resounded, but is now  
A word of desolation. [Exit.



# DE CHATILLON

## OR THE CRUSADERS

[In this tragedy Mrs Hemans made it her purpose to attempt a more compressed style of writing, avoiding that redundancy of poetic diction which had been censured as the prevailing fault of "The Vespers." It may possibly be thought that in the composition in question she has fallen into the opposite extreme of want of elaboration; yet, in its present state, it is, perhaps, scarcely amenable to criticism — for, by some strange accident, the fair copy transcribed by herself was either destroyed or mislaid in some of her subsequent removals, and the piece was long considered as utterly lost. Nearly two years after her death, the original rough MS., with all its hieroglyphical blots and erasures, was discovered amongst a mass of forgotten papers; and it has been a task of no small difficulty to decipher it, and complete the copy now first given to the world.—1840.]

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

RAINIER DE CHATILLON,	. . . . .	<i>A French Baron.</i>
AYMER,	. . . . .	<i>His Brother.</i>
MELECH,	. . . . .	<i>A Saracen Emir.</i>
HERMAN,	} . . . . .	<i>Knights.</i>
DU MORNAY,		
GASTON,	. . . . .	<i>A Vassal of Rainier's.</i>
URBAN,	. . . . .	<i>A Priest.</i>
SADI,	. . . . .	<i>A Saracen soldier.</i>
MORAIMA,	. . . . .	<i>Daughter of Melech.</i>

*Knights, Arabs, Citizens, &c.*

# DE CHATILLON

---

## ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Before the gates of a city in Palestine. URBAN, priests, citizens, at the gates. Others looking from the walls above.*

URBAN (*to a citizen on the walls above.*)—

You see their lances glistening? You can tell  
The way they take?

CITIZEN.—Not yet. Their march is slow;  
They have not reached the jutting cliff, where first  
The mountain path divides.

URBAN.—And now?

CITIZEN.—The wood  
Shuts o'er their track. Now spears are flashing out—  
It is the banner of De Chatillon.

*(Very slow and mournful military music without.)*

This way! they come this way!

URBAN.—All holy saints  
Grant that they pass us not! Those martial sounds  
Have a strange tone of sadness. Hark! they swell  
Proudly, yet full of sorrow.

*(RAINIER DE CHATILLON enters with knights, soldiers, &c.)*

Welcome, knights!

Ye bring us timely aid: men's hearts were full  
Of doubt and terror. Brave De Chatillon!  
True soldier of the Cross! I welcome thee;  
I greet thee with all blessing. Where thou art  
There is deliverance.

RAINIER (*bending to receive the priest's blessing.*)—

Holy man, I come  
From a lost battle.

URBAN.—And thou bring'st the heart  
Whose spirit yields not to defeat.

RAINIER.—I bring  
My father's bier.

URBAN.—His bier! I marvel not  
To see your brow thus darkened! And he died,  
As he had lived, in arms?

RAINIER (*gloomily.*)—Not, not in arms—  
His war-cry had been silenced. Have ye place  
Amidst your ancient knightly sepulchres  
For a warrior with his sword? He bade me bear  
His dust to slumber here.

URBAN.—And it shall sleep  
Beside our noblest, while we yet can call  
One holy place our own. Heard you, my lord,  
That the fierce Kaled's host is on its march  
Against our city?

RAINIER (*with sudden exultation.*)—That were joy to know!  
That were proud joy! Who told it? There's a weight  
That must be heaved from off my troubled heart  
By the strong tide of battle. Kaled—ay,  
A gallant name. How heard you?

URBAN.—Nay, it seemed  
As if a breeze first bore the rumour in.

I know not how it rose ; but now it comes  
Like fearful truth, and we were sad, thus left  
Hopeless of aid or counsel—till we saw——

RAINIER (*hastily*).—You have my brother here ?

URBAN (*with embarrassment*).—We have ; but he——

RAINIER.—But he—but he !—Aymer de Chatillon !

The fiery knight—the very soul o' the field—

Rushing on danger with the joyous step

Of a hunter o'er the hills !—is that a tone

Wherewith to speak of him ? I heard a tale—

If it be true—nay, tell me !

URBAN.—He is here :

Ask him to tell thee.

RAINIER.—If that tale be true——

(*He turns suddenly to his companions.*)

Follow me, give the noble dead his rites,  
And we will have our day of vengeance yet,  
Soldiers and friends !

[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II.

*A hall of Oriental architecture, opening upon gardens. A fountain in the centre. AYMER DE CHATILLON ; MORAIMA bending over a couch on which her brother is sleeping.*

MORAIMA.—He sleeps so calmly now ; the soft wind here  
Brings in such lulling sounds ! Nay, think you not  
This slumber will restore him ? See you not  
His cheek's faint glow ?

AYMER (*turning away*).—It was my sword which gave  
The wound he dies from.

MORAIMA.—Dies from ? say not so !

The brother of my childhood and my youth,

My heart's first friend! Oh, I have been too weak,  
 I have delayed too long! He could not sue,  
 He bade me urge the prayer he would not speak,  
 And I withheld it! Christian, set us free!  
 You have been gentle with us: 'tis the weight,  
 The bitter feeling, of captivity  
 Which preys upon his life.

AYMER.—You would go hence?

MORAIMA.—For his sake.

AYMER.—You would leave me! 'Tis too late!

You see it not—you know not that your voice  
 Hath power in its low mournfulness to shake  
 Mine inmost soul?—that you but look on me,  
 With the soft darkness of your earnest eyes,  
 And bid the world fade from me, and call up  
 A thousand passionate dreams, which wrap my life  
 As with a troubled cloud? The very sound  
 Of your light step hath made my heart o'erflow,  
 Even unto aching, with the sudden gush  
 Of its deep tenderness. You know it not?  
 Moraima!—speak to me!

MORAIMA (*covering herself with her veil.*)—I can but weep!  
 Is it even so?—this love was born for tears!  
 Aymer, I can but weep!

(*Going to leave him, he detains her.*)

AYMER.—Hear me, yet hear me! I was reared in arms;  
 And the proud blast of trumpets, and the shouts  
 Of bannered armies—these were joy to me,  
 Enough of joy! Till you!—I looked on you—  
 We met where swords were flashing, and the light  
 Of burning towers glared wildly on the slain—  
 And then——

MORAIMA (*hurriedly*).—Yes! then you saved me!

AYMER.—Then I knew

At once what springs of deeper happiness  
Lay far within my soul; and they burst forth  
Troubled and dashed with fear—yet sweet. I loved.  
Moraima, leave me not!

MORAIMA.—For us to love!

Oh! is't not taking sorrow to our hearts,  
Binding her there? I know not what I say!  
How shall I look upon my brother? Hark!  
Did he not call?

(*She goes up to the couch.*)

AYMER.—Am I beloved? She wept

With a full heart! I am! and such deep joy  
Is found on earth! If I should lose her now!  
If aught—

(*An attendant enters.*)

You seek me!—why is this?

ATTENDANT.—My lord,

Your brother and his knights—

AYMER.—Here! are they here?

The knights—my brother, saidst thou?

ATTENDANT.—Yes, my lord,

And he would speak with you.

AYMER.—I see—I know.

Leave me!

[*Exit attendant.*]

I know why he is come: 'tis vain,  
They shall not part us!

(*Looking back on Moraima as he goes out.*)

What a silent grace  
Floats round her form! They shall not part us! no!  
[*Exit.*]

## SCENE III.

*A square of the city—a church in the background.* RAINIER DE CHATILLON.

RAINIER (*walking to and fro impatiently.*)—  
 And now, too! now! My father unavenged,  
 Our holy places threatened, every heart  
 Tasked to its strength! A knight of Palestine  
 Now to turn dreamer, to melt down his soul  
 In love-lorn sighs; and for an infidel!  
 Will he lift up his eyes to look on mine?  
 Will he not—hush!

(*AYMER enters. They look on each other for a moment without speaking.*)

RAINIER (*suppressing his emotion.*)—  
 So brothers meet! You know  
 Wherefore I come?

AYMER.—It cannot be; 'tis vain.  
 Tell me not of it!

RAINIER.—How! You have not heard?

(*Turning from him.*)

He hath so shut the world out with his dreams,  
 The tidings have not reached him, or perchance  
 Have been forgotten. You have captives here?

AYMER.—Yes, mine! my own—won by the right of arms!  
 You dare not question it.

RAINIER.—A prince, they say,  
 And his fair sister:—is the maid so fair?

AYMER (*turning suddenly upon him.*)—  
 What! you would see her?

RAINIER (*scornfully.*)—I! Oh yes! to quell  
 My soul's deep yearnings! Let me look on swords.



Boy, boy! recall yourself!—I come to you  
With the last blessing of our father.

AYMER.—Last!

His last!—how mean you? Is he——

RAINIER.—Dead? Yes! dead.

He died upon my breast.

AYMER (*with the deepest emotion.*)—And I was here!

Dead!—and upon your breast! You closed his eyes—

While I—he spoke of me?

RAINIER.—With such deep love!

He ever loved you most. His spirit seemed

To linger for your coming.

AYMER.—What! he thought

That I was on my way? He looked for me?

And I——

RAINIER.—You came not. I had sent to you,

And told you he was wounded.

AYMER.—Yes. But not—

Not mortally.

RAINIER.—'Twas not that outward wound—

That might have closed. And yet he surely thought

That you would come to him! He called on you

When his thoughts wandered. Ay, the very night,

The very hour he died, some hasty step

Entered his chamber—and he raised his head,

With a faint lightning in his eyes, and asked

If it was yours. That hope's brief moment passed—

He sank then.

AYMER (*throwing himself upon his brother's neck.*)—

Brother! take me to his grave,

That I may kneel there till my burning tears,

With the strong passion of repentant love,

Wring forth a voice to pardon me!

RAINIER.—You weep!

Tears for the garlands on a maiden's grave!

You know not how he died.

AYMER.—Not of his wound?

RAINIER.—His wound!—it is the silent spirit's wound,

We cannot reach to heal. One burning thought

Preyed on his heart.

AYMER.—Not—not—he had not heard—

He blessed me, Rainier?

RAINIER.—Have you flung away

Your birthright? Yes, he blessed you! But he died—

He whose name stood for Victory's—he believed

The ancient honour from his gray head fallen,

And died—he died of shame!

AYMER.—What feverish dream—

RAI. (*vehemently*).—Was it not lost, the warrior's latest field,

The noble city held for Palestine

Taken—the Cross laid low? I came too late

To turn the tide of that disastrous fight,

But not to rescue him. We bore him thence

Wounded, upon his shield—

AYMER.—And I was here!

RAINIER.—He cast one look back on his burning towers,

Then threw the red sword of a hundred fields

To the earth—and hid his face! I knew, I knew

His heart was broken. Such a death for him!

The wasting—the sick loathing of the sun.

Let the foe's charger trample out my life,

Let me not die of shame! But we will have—

AYMER (*grasping his hand eagerly*).—Yes! vengeance!

RAINIER.—Vengeance! By the dying once,

And once before the dead, and yet once more

Alone with heaven's bright stars, I took that vow

For both his sons! Think of it, when the night  
Is dark around you, and in festive halls  
Keep your soul hushed, and think of it!

*(A low chant of female voices, heard from behind the scenes.)*

Fallen is the flower of Islam's race!  
 Break ye the lance he bore,  
 And loose his war-steed from its place:  
 He is no more—

SINGLE VOICE.— No more!

Weep for him mother, sister, bride!  
 He died, with all his fame—

SINGLE VOICE.— He died!

*(AYMER points to a palace, and eagerly speaks to his attendant, who enters.)*

AYM.—Came it not thence? Rudolf, what sounds are these?

ATTENDANT.—The Moslem prince, your captive—he is dead:

It is the mourners' wail for him.

AYMER.—And she—

His sister—heard you—did they say she wept?

*(Hurrying away.)*

RAINIER *(indignantly)*.—

All the deep stirring tones of honour's voice  
In a moment silenced!

*(Solemn military music. A funeral procession, with priests, &c. crosses the background to enter the church.)*

RAINIER *(following AYMER and grasping his arm)*.—

Aymer! there—look there!

It is your father's bier!

AYMER (*returning.*)—He blessed me, Rainier?

You heard him bless me? Yes! you closed his eyes:  
He looked for me in vain!

(*He goes to the bier, and bends over it, covering his face.*)

---

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A room in the citadel.* RAINIER, AYMER, *knights,*  
*assembled in council.*

A KNIGHT.—What! with our weary and distracted bands  
To dare another field! Nay, give them rest.

RAI. (*impatiently.*)—Rest! and that sleepless thought—

KNIGHT.—These walls have strength

To baffle siege. Let the foe gird us in—

We must wait aid; our soldiers must forget

That last disastrous day.

RAI. (*coming forward.*)—If they forget it, in the combat's press

May their spears fail them!

KNIGHT.—Yet, bethink thee, chief.

RAINIER.—When *I* forget it—how! you see not, knights!

Whence we must now draw strength. Send down your  
thoughts

Into the very depths of grief and shame,

And bring back courage thence. To talk of rest!

How do they rest, unburied on their field,

Our brethren slain by Gaza? Had we time

To give them funeral rites? and ask we now

Time to forget their fall? My father died—

I cannot speak of him! What! and forget

The Infidel's fierce trampling o'er our dead?

Forget his scornful shout? Give battle now,  
 While the thought lives as fire lives—there lies strength!  
 Hold the dark memory fast! Now, now—this hour!  
 Aymer, you do not speak!

AYMER (*starting.*)—Have I not said?

Battle!—yes, give us battle!—room to pour  
 The troubled spirit forth upon the winds,  
 With the trumpet's ringing blast! Way for remorse!  
 Free way for vengeance!

ALL THE KNIGHTS.—Arm! Heaven wills it so!

RAINIER.—Gather your forces to the western gate.

Let none forget that day! Our field was lost,  
 Our city's strength laid low—one mighty heart  
 Broken! Let none forget it! [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE II.

*Garden of a palace. MORAIMA.*

MORAIMA.—Yes! his last look—my brother's dying look  
 Reproached me as it faded from his face.  
 And I deserved it! Had I not given way  
 To the wild guilty pleadings of my heart,  
 I might have won his freedom. Now, 'tis past.  
 He is free now.

(AYMER *enters, armed as for battle.*)

Aymer! you look so changed!

AYMER.—Changed!—it may be. A storm o' the soul goes by  
 Not like a breeze. There's such a fearful grasp  
 Fixed on my heart! Speak to me—lull remorse!  
 Bid me farewell!

MORAIMA.—Yes, it must be farewell !

No other word but that.

AYMER.—No other word !

The passionate burning words that I could pour  
From my heart's depths ! 'Tis madness ! What have I  
To do with love ? I see it all—the mist  
Is gone—the bright mist gone ! I see the woe,  
The ruin, the despair ! And yet I love,  
Love wildly, fatally ! But speak to me :  
Fill all my soul once more with reckless joy !  
That blessèd voice again !

MORAIMA.—Why, why is this ?

Oh ! send me to my father ! We must part.

AYMER.—Part ! Yes, I know it all ! I could not go  
Till I had seen you. Give me one farewell,  
The last—perchance the last !—but one farewell,  
Whose mournful music I may take with me  
Through tumult, horror, death !

*(A distant sound of trumpets.)*

MORAIMA *(starting.)*—You go to battle !

AYMER.—Hear you not that sound ?

Yes ! I go there, where dark and stormy thoughts  
Find their free path.

MORAIMA.—Aymer, who leads the foe ?

*(Confused.)*

I meant—I mean—my people ! Who is he,  
My people's leader ?

AYM.—Kaled. *(Looking at her suspiciously.)* How ? you seem—  
The name disturbs you.

MORAIMA.—My last brother's name !

AYMER.—Fear not my sword for him.

MORAIMA (*turning away.*)—If they should meet !  
I know the vow he made.

(*To AYMER.*)                      If thou—if thou  
Shouldst fall !

AYMER.—Moraima ! then your blessèd tears  
Would flow for me ? then you would weep for me ?

MORAIMA.—I must weep tears of very shame ; and yet  
If—if your words have been love's own true words.  
Grant me one boon !

(*Trumpet sounds again.*)

AYMER.—Hark ! I must hence. A boon !  
Ask it, and hold its memory to your heart,  
As the last token, it may be, of love  
So deep and sad.

MORAIMA.—Pledge me your knightly faith !

AYMER.—My knightly faith, my life, my honour—all,  
I pledge thee all to grant it !

MORAIMA.—Then, to-day,  
Go not this day to battle ! He is there,  
My brother Kaled !

AYMER (*wildly.*)—Have I flung my sword  
Down to dishonour ?

(*Going to leave her—she detains him.*)

MORAIMA.—Oh ! your name hath stirred  
His soul amidst his tents, and he had vowed,  
Long ere we met, to cross his sword with yours,  
Till one or both should fall. There hath been death  
Since then amongst us ; he will seek revenge.  
And his revenge—forgive me !—oh, forgive !  
I could not bear that thought.

AYMER.—Now must the glance

Of a brave man strike me to the very dust !  
Ay, this is shame.

*(Covering his face. Turning wildly to MORAIMA.)*

You scorn me too ? Away !—She does not know  
What she hath done ! *[Rushes out.]*

### SCENE III.

*Before a gateway within the city. RAINIER, HERMAN, knights,  
men-at-arms, &c.*

HERMAN.—'Tis past the hour.

RAINIER *(looking out anxiously.)*—Away ! 'tis not the hour—  
Not yet ! When was the battle's hour delayed  
For a Chatillon ? We must have come too soon.  
All are not here.

HERMAN.—Yes, all.

RAINIER.—They came too soon !

*(Going up to the knights.)*

Couci, De Foix, Du Mornay—here, all here !  
And he the last !—my brother !

*(To a soldier.)* Where's your lord ?

*(Turning away.)*

Why should I ask, when that fair Infidel—

*(AYMER enters.)*

The Saracen at our gates—and you the last !  
Come on, remember all your fame.

AYMER *(coming forward in great agitation.)*—My fame !  
Why did you save me from the Paynim's sword  
In my first battle ?



RAINIER.—What wild words are these?

AYMER.—You should have let me perish then—yes, then!

Go to your field and leave me.

KNIGHTS (*thronging round him.*)—Leave you!

RAINIER.—Aymer!

Was it your voice?

AYMER.—Now talk to me of fame!

Tell me of all my warlike ancestors,

And of my father's death—that bitter death!

Never did pilgrim for the fountains thirst

As I for this day's vengeance! To your field!

I may not go!

RAIN. (*turning from him.*)—The name his race hath borne  
Through a thousand battles—lost!

(*Returning to AYMER.*) A Chatillon,

Will you live and wed dishonour?

AYMER (*covering his face.*)—Let the grave

Take me and cover me! I must go down

To its rest without my sword!

RAI.—There's some dark spell upon him. Aymer, brother!

Let me not die of shame! He that died so

Turned sickening from the sun.

AYMER.—Where should I turn?

(*Going up abruptly to the knights.*)

Herman—Du Mornay! ye have stood with me

In the battle's front—ye know me! ye have seen

The fiery joy of danger bear me on

As a wind the arrow! Leave me now—'tis past!

RAINIER (*with bitterness.*)—

He comes from her!—the Infidel hath smiled,

Doubtless, for this.

AYMER.—I should have been to-day

Where shafts fly thickest, and the crossing swords  
Cannot flash out for blood !—Hark ! you are called !

*(Wild Turkish music heard without. The background of the scene becomes more and more crowded with armed men.)*

Lay lance in rest !—wave, noble banners ! wave !

*(Throwing down his sword.)*

Go from me !—leave the fallen !

HERMAN.—Nay, but the cause ?

Tell us the cause.

RAINIER *(approaching him indignantly.)*—

Your sword, your crested helm,  
And your knight's mantle—cast them down ! your name  
Is in the dust !—our father's name ! The cause ?  
Tell it not, tell it not !

*(Turning to the soldiers and waving his hand.)*

Sound trumpets ! sound !

On, lances ! for the Cross !

*(Military music. As the knights march out, he looks back at AYMER.)*

I would not now

Call back my noble father from the dead,

If I could with but a breath !—Sound, trumpets, sound !

*[Exeunt knights and soldiers.]*

AYMER.—Why should I bear this shame ? 'tis not too late !

*(Rushing after them, he suddenly checks himself.)*

My faith ! my knightly faith pledged to my fall !

## SCENE IV.

*(Before a church. Groups of citizens passing to and fro. AYMER standing against one of the pillars of the church in the background, and leaning on his sword.)*

1ST CIT. *(to 2D.)*—From the walls, how goes the battle?

2D CITIZEN.—Well, all well,  
Praise to the Saints! I saw De Chatillon  
Fighting, as if upon his single arm  
The fate o' the day were set.

3D CITIZEN.—Shame light on those  
That strike not with him in their place!

1ST CITIZEN.—You mean  
His brother? Ay, is't not a fearful thing  
That one of such a race—a brave one too—  
Should have thus fallen?

2D CITIZEN.—They say the captive girl  
Whom he so loved, hath won him from his faith  
To the vile Paynim creed.

AYMER *(suddenly coming forward.)*—Who dares say that?  
Show me who dares say that!

*(They shrink back—he laughs scornfully.)*

Ha! ha! ye thought  
To play with a sleeper's name!—to make your mirth  
As low-born men sit by a tomb, and jest  
O'er a dead warrior! Where's the slanderer? Speak!

*(A citizen enters hastily.)*

CITIZEN.—Haste to the walls! De Chatillon hath slain  
The Paynim chief! [Exeunt.]

AYM.—Why should they shrink? I, I should ask the night  
To cover me—I that have flung my name  
Away to scorn! Hush! am I not alone?

*(Listening eagerly.)*

There's a voice calling me—a voice i' the air—  
My father's!—'twas my father's! Are the dead,  
'Unseen, yet with us? Fearful!

*(Loud shouts without, he rushes forward exultingly.)*

'Tis the shout  
Of victory? We have triumphed! We! my place  
Is midst the fallen!

*Music heard, which approaches, swelling into a triumphant march. Knights enter in procession, with banners, torch-bearers, &c. The gates of the church are thrown open, and the altar, tombs, &c. within, are seen illuminated. Knights pass over, and enter the church. One of them takes a torch, and lifts it to AYMER'S face in passing. He strikes it down with his sword; then, seeing RAINIER approach, drops the sword, and covers his face.)*

AY. *(grasping RAINIER by the mantle, as he is about to pass.)*—  
Brother, forsake me not!

RAI. *(suddenly drawing his sword, and showing it him.)*—  
My sword is red  
With victory and revenge! Look—dyed to the hilt!  
We fought—and where were you?

AYMER.—Forsake me not!

RAI. *(pointing with his sword to the tombs within the church.)*—  
Those are proud tombs! The dead, the glorious dead—  
Think you they sleep, and know not of their sons  
In the mysterious grave? We laid him there!  
Before the ashes of your father, speak!  
Have you abjured your faith?

AYMER (*indignantly*).—

Your name is mine, your blood—and you ask this !

Wake him to hear me answer ! Have you ? No !

You have not dared to think it. [*Exit.*

RAI. (*entering the church, and bending over one of the tombs*).—

Not yet lost !

Not yet all lost ! He shall be thine again !

So shalt thou sleep in peace !

(*Music and chorus of voices from the church.*)

Praise, praise to heaven !

Sing of the conquered field, the Paynim flying ;

Light up the shrines, and bid the banners wave ;

Sing of the warrior for the red-cross dying—

Chant a proud requiem o'er his holy grave.

Praise, praise to heaven !

Praise!—lift the song through night's resounding sky !

Peace to the valiant for the Cross that die !

Sleep soft, ye brave !

### ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A platform before the citadel. Knights entering.*

HERMAN (*to one of the knights*).—You would plead for him ?

KNIGHT.—Nay, remember all

His past renown !

HERMAN.—I had a friend in youth :

This Aymer's father had him shamed for less

Than his son's fault—far less.

We must accuse him ;—he must have his shield

Reversed—his name degraded.

KNIGHT.—He might yet——

ALL THE KNIGHTS.—

Must his shame cleave to us? We cast him forth—  
We will not bear it.

(RAINIER *enters.*)

RAINIER.—Knights! ye speak of him—

My brother: was't not so? All silent! Nay,  
Give your thoughts breath. What said ye?

HERMAN.—That his name

Must be degraded.

RAINIER.—Silence! ye disturb

The dead. Thou hear'st, my father!

(*Going up indignantly to the knights.*)

Which of ye

Shall first accuse him? He, whose bold step won  
The breach at Ascalon ere Aymer's step,  
Let him speak first!

He that plunged deeper through the stormy fight,  
Thence to redeem the banner of the Cross,  
On Cairo's plain, let him speak first! Or he  
Whose sword burst swifter o'er the Saracen,  
I' the rescue of our king, by Jordan's waves—  
I say, let him speak first!

HERMAN.—Is he not an apostate?

RAINIER.—No, no, no!

If he were that, had my life's blood that taint,  
This hand should pour it out. He is not that.

HERMAN.—Not yet.

RAINIER.—Not yet, nor ever! Let me die

In a lost battle first!

HERMAN.—Hath he let go

Name, kindred, honour, for an infidel,  
And will he grasp his faith?

RAINIER (*after a gloomy pause.*)—

That which bears poison—should it not be crushed?  
What though the weed look lovely?

(*Suddenly addressing DU MORNAY.*)

You have seen  
My native halls, Du Mornay, far away  
In Languedoc?

DU MORNAY.—I was your father's friend—  
I knew them well.

RAINIER (*thoughtfully.*)—The weight of gloom that hangs—  
The very banners seem to droop with it—  
O'er some of those old rooms! Were we there now,  
With a dull wind heaving the pale tapestries,  
Why, I could tell you——

(*Coming closer to DU MORNAY.*)

There's a dark-red spot  
Grained in the floor of one—you know the tale?

DU MORNAY.—I may have heard it by the winter fires,—  
Now 'tis of things gone by.

RAI. (*turning from him displeased.*)—Such legends give  
Some minds a deeper tone.

(*To HERMAN.*)                      If you had heard

That tale i' the shadowy tower——

HERMAN.—Nay, tell it now.

RAINIER.—They say the place is haunted—moaning sounds  
Come thence at midnight—sounds of woman's voice.

HERMAN.—And you believe——

RAINIER.—I but believe the deed  
Done there of old. I had an ancestor——

Bertrand, the Lion-chief—whose son went forth  
 (A younger son—I am not of his line)  
 To the wars of Palestine. He fought there well—  
 Ay, all his race were brave; but he returned,  
 And with a Paynim bride.

HERMAN.—The recreant!—say,  
 How bore your ancestor?

RAINIER.—Well may you think  
 It chafed him; but he bore it—for the love  
 Of that fair son, the child of his old age.  
 He pined in heart, yet gave the Infidel  
 A place in his own halls.

HERMAN.—But did this last?

RAINIER.—How should it last? Again the trumpet blew,  
 And men were summoned from their homes to guard  
 The city of the Cross. But he seemed cold—  
 That youth! He shunned his father's eye, and took  
 No armour from the walls.

HERMAN.—Had he then fallen?  
 Was his faith wavering?

RAINIER.—So the father feared.

HERMAN.—If I had been that father —

RAINIER.—Ay, you come  
 Of an honoured lineage. What would you have done?

HERMAN.—Nay, what did he?

RAINIER.—What did the lion-chief?

(*Turning to DU MORNAY.*)

Why, thou hast seen the very spot of blood  
 On the dark floor! He slew the Paynim bride.  
 Was it not well?

(*He looks at them attentively, and as he goes out exclaims*)—

My brother must not fall!



## SCENE II.

*A deserted Turkish burying-ground in the city—tombs and stones overthrown—the whole shaded by dark cypress-trees. MORAIMA leaning over a monumental pillar, which has been lately raised.*

MORAIMA.—He is at rest;—and I! Is there no power  
In grief to win forgiveness from the dead?  
When shall I rest? Hark! a step—Aymer's step!  
The thrilling sound!

*(She shrinks back as reproaching herself.)*

To feel that joy even here!

Brother! oh, pardon me!

RAINIER *(entering, and slowly looking round.)*—

A gloomy scene!

A place for —— Is she not an infidel!

Who shall dare call it murder?

*(He advances to her slowly, and looks at her.)*

She is fair—

The deeper cause! Maid, have you thought of death

Midst these old tombs?

MORAIMA *(shrinking from him fearfully.)*—

This is my brother's grave.

RAINIER.—Thy brother's! That a warrior's grave had closed

O'er mine—the free and noble knight he was!

Ay, that the desert sands had shrouded him

Before he looked on thee!

MORAIMA.—If you are his—

If Aymer's brother—though your brow be dark,

I may not fear you!

RAINIER.—No ? why, thou shouldst fear  
 The very dust o' the mouldering sepulchre,  
 If it had lived, and borne his name on earth !  
 Hear'st thou—that dust hath stirred, and found a voice,  
 And said that thou must die !

MORAIMA (*clinging to the pillar as he approaches.*)—  
 Be with me, heaven !  
 You will not murder me ?

RAINIER (*turning away.*)—A goodly word  
 To join with a warrior's name !—a sound to make  
 Men's flesh creep. What !—for Paynim blood  
 Did he stand faltering thus—my ancestor—  
 In that old tower ?

(*He again approaches her—she falls on her knees.*)

MORAIMA.—So young, and thus to die !  
 Mercy—have mercy ! In your own far land  
 If there be love that weeps and watches for you,  
 And follows you with prayer—even by that love,  
 Spare me—for it is woman's ! If light steps  
 Have bounded there to meet you, clinging arms  
 Hung on your neck, fond tears o'erflowed your cheek,  
 Think upon those that loved you thus, for thus  
 Doth woman love ! and spare me !—think on them ;  
 They, too, may yet need mercy ! Aymer, Aymer !  
 Wilt thou not hear and aid me ?

RAINIER (*starting.*)—There's a name  
 To bring back strength ! Shall I not strike to save  
 His honour and his life ? Were his life all ——

MOR.—To save his life and honour ?—will my death ——

(*She rises and stands before him, covering her face hurriedly.*)

Do it with one stroke ! I may not live for him !

RAINIER (*with surprise.*)—A woman meet death thus!

MORAIMA (*uncovering her eyes.*)—Yet one thing more—

I have sisters and a father. Christian knight!  
Oh! by your mother's memory, let them know  
I died with a name unstained.

RAINIER (*softened and surprised.*)—

And such high thoughts from her!—an infidel!  
And she named my mother! Once in early youth  
From the wild waves I snatched a woman's life;  
My mother blessed me for it—

(*Slowly dropping his dagger.*)

even with tears  
She blessed me. Stay, are there no other means?

(*Suddenly recollecting himself.*)

Follow me, maiden! Fear not now.

MORAIMA.—But he—

But Aymer—

RAINIER (*sternly.*)—Wouldst thou perish? Name him not!—

Look not as if thou wouldst! Think'st thou dark thoughts  
Are blown away like dew-drops? or I, like him,  
A leaf to shake and turn i' the changing wind?  
Follow me, and beware!

(*She bends over the tomb for a moment, and follows him. AYMER enters, and slowly comes forward from the background.*)

AYMER.—For the last time—yes! it must be the last!

Earth and heaven say—the last! The very dead  
Rise up to part us. But one look—and then  
She must go hence for ever! Will she weep?  
It had been little to have died for her—  
I have borne shame.

She shall know all! Moraima! Said they not  
 She would be found here at her brother's grave?  
 Where should she go? Moraima! There's the print  
 Of her step—what gleams beside it?

*(Seeing the dagger, he takes it up.)*

Ha! men work  
 Dark deeds with things like this!

*(Looking wildly and anxiously round.)*

I see no —— blood.

*(Looking at the dagger.)*

Stained!—it may be from battle: 'tis not—wet.

*(Looks round, intently listening; then again examines the spot.)*

Ha!—what is this? Another step in the grass!  
 Hers and another's step!

*(He rushes into the cypress-grove.)*

### SCENE III.

*A hall in the citadel, hung with arms and banners. RAINIER,  
 HERMAN. Knights in the background, laying aside their armour.*

HERMAN *(coming forward and speaking hurriedly.)*

Is it done? Have you done it?

RAINIER *(with disgust.)*—What! you thirst

For blood so deeply?

HERMAN *(indignantly.)*—Have you struck, and saved  
 The honour of your house?

RAINIER *(thoughtfully to himself.)*—The light i' the soul  
 Is such a wavering thing! Have I done well?

*(To HERMAN.)*

Ask me not ! Never shall they meet again.  
Is 't not enough ?

(*AYMER enters hurriedly with the dagger, and goes up with it to several of the knights, who begin to gather round the front.*)

AYMER.—Whose is this dagger ?

RAINIER (*coming forward and taking it.*)—Mine.

AYMER.—Yours ! yours !—and know you where—

RAINIER (*about to sheath it, but stopping.*)—Oh, you do well  
So to remind me ! Yes, it must have lain  
In the Moslem burial-ground—and that vile dust—  
Hence with it ! 'tis defiled.

(*Throws it from him.*)

AYMER.—If such a deed ——

Brother ! where is she ?

RAINIER.—Who ? What knight hath lost  
A lady-love ?

AYMER.—Could he speak thus and wear  
That scornful calm, if —— No ! he is not calm.  
What have you done ?

RAINIER (*aside.*)—Yes ! she shall die to him.

AYMER (*grasping his arm.*)—What have you done ?—speak !

RAINIER.—You should know the tale  
Of our dark ancestor, the Lion-chief,  
And his son's bride.

AYMER.—Man ! man ! you murdered her !

(*Sinking back.*)

It grows so dark around me ! She is dead !

(*Wildly.*)

I'll not believe it ! No ! she never looked  
Like what could die !

(*Goes up to his brother.*)

If you have done that deed ——

RAINIER (*sternly*).—If I have done it, I have flung off shame  
From my brave father's house.

AYMER (*in a low voice to himself*).—

So young, and dead!—because I loved her—dead!

(*To RAINIER.*)

Where is she, murderer? Let me see her face.

You think to hide it with the dust!—ha! ha!

The dust to cover her! We'll mock you still:

If I call her back, she'll come! Where is she?—speak!

Now, by my father's tomb! but I am calm.

RAINIER.—Never more hope to see her.

AYMER.—Never more!

(*Sitting down on the ground.*)

I loved her, so she perished! All the earth

Hath not another voice to reach my soul,

Now hers is silent! Never, never more!

If she had but said farewell!—

(*Bewildered.*)

It grows so dark!

This is some fearful dream. When morn comes I shall  
wake.

My life's bright hours are done!

RAINIER.—I must be firm.

(*Takes a banner from the wall, and brings it to AYMER.*)

Have you forgotten this? We thought it lost,

But it rose proudly waving o'er the fight

In a warrior's hand again! Yours, Aymer! yours!

Brother, redeem your fame!

AYMER (*putting it from him*).—The worthless thing!

Fame ! She is dead ! Give a king's robe to one  
 Stretched on the rack ! Hence with your pageantries  
 Down to the dust !

HERMAN.—The banner of the Cross !

Shame on the recreant ! Cast him from us !

RAINIER.—Boy !

Degenerate boy ! Here, with the trophies won  
 By the sainted chiefs of old in Paynim war  
 Above you and around ; the very air,  
 When it but shakes their armour on the walls,  
 Murmuring of glorious deeds ; to sit and weep  
 Here for an infidel ! My father's son,  
 Shame ! shame ! deep shame !

KNIGHTS.—Aymer de Chatillon !

Go from us, leave us !

AYMER (*starting up.*)—Leave you ! what ! ye thought  
 That I would stay to breathe the air you breathe !—  
 And fight by you ! Murderers ! I burst all ties.

(*Throws his sword on the ground before them.*)

There's not a thing of the desert half so free.

(*To RAINIER.*)

You have no brother ! Live to need the love  
 Of a human heart, and steep your soul in fame  
 To still its restless yearnings ! Die alone !  
 Midst all your pomps and trophies—die alone !

(*Going out, he suddenly returns.*)

Did she not call on me to succour her ?

Kneel to you—plead for life ! The voice of blood

Follow you to your grave !

[*Exit.*]

RAINIER (*with emotion.*)—Alas, my brother !

The time hath been when in the face of death  
I have bid him leave me, and he would not!

(*Turning to the Knights.*) Knights!

The Soldan marches for Jerusalem—  
We'll meet him on the way.

---

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Camp of the Saracens.* MELECH, SADI, and soldiers.

MELECH.—Yes! he I mean—Rainier de Chatillon.

Go, send swift riders o'er the mountains forth,  
And through the deserts, to proclaim the price  
I set upon his life.

SADI.—Thou gavest the word

Before. It hath been done—they are gone forth.

MEL.—Would that my soul could wing them! Didst thou heed

To say his life? I'll have my own revenge.

Yes! I would save him from another's hand.

Thou saidst he must be brought alive?

SADI.—I heard

Thy will, and I obeyed.

MELECH.—He slew my son—

That was in battle—but to shed her blood!

My child Moraima's! Could he see and strike her?

A Christian see her face, too! From my house

The crown is gone. Who brought the tale?

SADI.—A slave

Of your late son's, escaped.

MELECH.—Have I a son



Left? Speak—the slave of which? Kaled is gone—  
 And Octar gone—both, both are fallen—  
 Both my young stately trees, and she, my flower.  
 No hand but mine shall be upon him, none!

*(A sound of festive music without. An attendant enters.)*

What mean they there?

ATTENDANT.—Tidings of joy, my chief!

MELECH.—Joy!—is the Christian taken?

*(MORAIMA enters, and throws herself into his arms.)*

MORAIMA.—Father! father!

I did not think this world had yet so much  
 Of aught like happiness!

MELECH.—My own fair child!

Is it on thee I look indeed, my child?

*(Turning to attendants.)*

Away, there!—gaze not on us! Do I hold  
 Thee in my arms! They told me thou wert slain.  
 Rainier de Chatillon, they said—

MORAIMA *(hurriedly)*.—Oh, no!

'Twas he that sent thee back thy child, my father.

MELECH.—He! why, his brother Aymer still refused  
 A monarch's ransom for thee!

MORAIMA *(with a momentary delight)*.—Did he thus?

*(Suddenly checking herself.)*

Yes, I knew well. Oh, do not speak of him!

MEL.—What! hath he wrong'd thee? Thou hast suffer'd much  
 Amongst these Christians. Thou art changed, my child.  
 There's a dim shadow in thine eye, where once—  
 But they shall pay me back for all thy tears  
 With their best blood.

MORAIMA (*alarmed.*)—Father! not so, not so!  
 They still were gentle with me. But I sat  
 And watched beside my dying brother's couch  
 Through many days: and I have wept since then—  
 Wept much.

MELECH.—Thy dying brother's couch!—yes, thou  
 Wert ever true and kind.

MORAIMA (*covering her face.*)—Oh, praise me not!  
 Look gently on me, or I sink to earth;  
 Not thus!

MELECH.—No praise? Thou'rt faint, my child, and worn:  
 The length of way hath——

MORAIMA (*eagerly.*)—Yes! the way was long,  
 The desert's wind breathed o'er me. Could I rest?

MELECH.—Yes, thou shalt rest within thy father's tent.  
 Follow me, gentle child! Thou look'st so changed.

MORAIMA (*hurriedly.*)—  
 The weary way,—the desert's burning wind——

(*Laying her hand on him as she goes out.*)

Think thou no evil of those Christians, father!  
 They were still kind.

## SCENE II.

*Before a fortress amongst rocks, with a desert beyond. Military music.*

*RAINIER DE CHATILLON, knights and soldiers.*

RAINIER.—They speak of truce?

THE KNIGHTS.—Even so. Of truce between  
 The Soldan and our King.

RAINIER.—Let him who fears  
 Lest the close helm should wear his locks away,

Cry truce, and cast it off. I have no will  
 To change mine armour for a masquer's robe,  
 And sit at festivals. Halt, lances, there!  
 Warriors and brethren! hear. I own no truce—  
 I hold my life but as a weapon now  
 Against the Infidel! He shall not reap  
 His field, nor gather of his vine, nor pray  
 To his false gods—no! save by trembling stealth,  
 Whilst I can grasp a sword. Wherefore, noble friends,  
 Think not of truce with me!—but think to quaff  
 Your wine to the sound of trumpets, and to rest  
 In your girt hauberks, and to hold your steeds  
 Barded in the hall beside you. Now turn back,

*(He throws a spear on the ground before them.)*

Ye that are weary of your armour's load:  
 Pass o'er the spear, away!

THEY ALL SHOUT.—A Chatillon!

We'll follow thee—all! all!

RAINIER.—A soldier's thanks!

*(Turns away from them agitated.)*

There's one face gone, and that a brother's!

*(Aloud.)* War!—

War to the Paynim—war! March, and set up  
 On our stronghold the banner of the Cross,  
 Never to sink!

*(Trumpets sound. They march on, winding through the rocks with military music. Enter GASTON, an aged vassal of RAINIER'S, as an armed follower. RAINIER addresses him.)*

You come at last! And she—where left you her?  
 The Paynim maid?

GASTON.—I found her guides, my lord,  
 Of her own race, and left her on the way  
 To reach her father's tents.

RAINIER.—Speak low!—the tale  
 Must rest with us. It must be thought she died.  
 I can trust you.

GASTON.—Your father trusted me.

RAINIER.—He did, he did!—my father! You have been  
 Long absent, and you bring a troubled eye  
 Back with you. Gaston, heard you aught of him?

GASTON.—Whom means my lord?

RAINIER (*impatiently*).—Old man, you know too well—  
 Aymer, my brother.

GASTON.—I have seen him.

RAINIER.—How!

Seen him! Speak on.

GASTON.—Another than my chief  
 Should have my life before the shameful tale.

RAINIER.—Speak quickly.

GASTON.—In the desert, as I journeyed back,  
 A band of Arabs met me on the way,  
 And I became their captive. Till last night—

RAINIER.—Go on! Last night?

GASTON.—They slumbered by their fires—  
 I could not sleep; when one—I thought him one  
 O' the tribe at first—came up and loosed my bonds,  
 And led me from the shadow of the tents,  
 Pointing my way in silence.

RAINIER.—Well, and he—

You thought him one o' the tribe.

GASTON.—Ay, till we stood

In the clear moonlight forth!—and then, my lord—

RAINIER.—You dare not say 'twas Aymer?

GASTON.—Woe and shame !

It was, it was !

RAINIER.—In their vile garb, too ?

GASTON.—Yes,

Turbaned and robed like them.

RAINIER.—What ! Did he speak ?

GASTON.—No word, but waved his hand,

Forbidding speech to me.

RAINIER.—Tell me no more.

Lost, lost—for ever lost ! He that was reared

Under my father's roof with me, and grew

Up by my side to glory !—lost ! Is this

My work ?—who dares to call it mine ? And yet,

Had I not dealt so sternly with his soul

In its deep anguish——What ! he wears their garb

In the face of heaven ? You saw the turban on him ?

You should have struck him to the earth, and so

Put out our shame for ever.

GASTON.—Lift my sword

Against your father's son ?

RAINIER.—My father's son !

Ay, and so loved !—that yearning love for him

Was the last thing death conquered. See'st thou there ?

*(The banner of the Cross is raised on the fortress.)*

The very banner he redeemed for us

In the fight at Cairo. No ! by yon bright sign,

He shall not perish. This way—follow me—

I'll tell thee of a thought.

*(Suddenly stopping him.)*

Take heed, old man !

Thou hast a fearful secret in thy grasp :

Let me not see thee wear mysterious looks.  
 But no ! thou lovest our name !— I'll trust thee, Gaston !  
[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE III.

*An Arab encampment round a few palm-trees in the Desert. Watch-fires in the background. Night. Several Arabs enter with*  
 AYMER.

ARAB.—Thou hast fought bravely, stranger. Now, come on  
 To share the spoil.

AYMER.—I reckon not of it. Go,  
 Leave me to rest.

ARAB.—Well, thou hast earned thy rest  
 With a red sabre. Be it as thou wilt.

*(They go out. AYMER throws himself under a palm-tree.)*

AYMER.—This were an hour, if they would answer us—  
 They from whose viewless world no answer comes—  
 To hear their whispering voices. Would they but  
 Speak once, and say they loved !  
 If I could hear thy thrilling voice once more,  
 It would be well with me. Moraima ! speak !

*(RAINIER enters disguised as a dervise.)*

Moraima, speak ! No ! the dead cannot love.

RAL.—What doth the stranger here ? Is there not mirth  
 Around the watch-fires yonder ?

AYMER.—Mirth ? Away !—

I've naught to do with mirth. Begone.

RAINIER.—They tell

Wild tales by that red light ; wouldst thou not hear  
Of Eastern marvels ?

AYMER.—Hence ! I heed them not.

RAINIER.—Nay, then, hear me.

AYMER.—Thee ?

RAINIER.—Yes, I know a tale

Wilder than theirs.

AYMER (*raising himself in surprise.*)—Thou know'st ?——

RAINIER (*without minding, continues.*)—A tale of one

Who flung in madness to the reckless deep

A gem beyond all price.

AYMER.—My day is closed.

What is aught human unto me ?

RAINIER.—Yet mark !

His name was of the noblest—dost thou heed ?—

Even in a land of princely chivalry ;

Brightness was on it—but he cast it down.

AYMER.—I will not hear. Speak'st thou of chivalry ?

RAINIER.—Yes ! I have been upon thy native hills.

There's a gray cliff juts proudly from their woods,

Crowned with baronial towers—remember'st thou ?

And there's a chapel by the moaning sea—

Thou know'st it well—tall pines wave over it,

Darkening the heavy banners and the tombs.

Is not the Cross upon thy fathers' tombs ?

Christian ! what dost thou here ?

AYMER (*starting up indignantly.*)—Man ! who art thou ?

Thy voice disturbs my soul. Speak ! I will know

Thy right to question me.

(RAINIER, *throwing off his disguise, stands before him in the full  
dress of a Crusader.*)

RAINIER.—My birthright ! Look !

AYMER.—Brother !     *(Retreating from him with horror.)*

Her blood is on your hands !—keep back !

RAINIER *(scornfully.)*—

Nay, keep the Paynim's garb from touching mine.

Answer me thence !—what dost thou here ?

AYMER.—You shrink

From your own work ! You, that have made me thus,

Wherefore are you here ? Are you not afraid

To stand beneath the awful midnight sky,

And you a murderer ? Leave me.

RAINIER.—I lift up

No murderer's brow to heaven.

AYMER.—You dare speak thus ?

Do not the bright stars, with their searching rays,

Strike through your guilty soul ? Oh, no !—tis well,

Passing well ! Murder ! Make the earth's harvests grow

With Paynim blood !—Heaven wills it ! The free air,

The sunshine—I forgot—they were not made

For infidels. Blot out the race from day !

Who talks of murder ? Murder ! when you die

Claim your soul's place of happiness in the name

Of that good deed !

*(In a tone of deep feeling.)*

If you had loved a flower,

I would not have destroyed it !

RAINIER *(with emotion.)*—Brother !

AYMER *(impetuously.)*—No !—

No brother now. She knelt to you in vain ;

And that hath set a gulf, a boundless gulf,

Between our souls. Your very face is changed.

There's a red cloud shadowing it : your forehead wears

The marks of blood—her blood !



(*In a triumphant tone.*)

But you prevail not ! You have made the dead  
The mighty—the victorious ! Yes ! you thought  
To dash her image into fragments down,  
And you have given it power—such deep sad power  
I see naught else on earth.

RAINIER (*aside.*)—I dare not say she lives.

(*To AYMER, holding up the cross of his sword.*)

You see not this ?

Once by our father's grave I asked, and here,  
I' the silence of the waste, I ask once more—  
Have you abjured your faith ?

AYMER.—Why are you come

To torture me ? No, no ! I have not. No !  
But you have sent the torrent through my soul,  
And by their deep strong roots torn fiercely up  
Things that were part of it—inborn feelings, thoughts.  
I know not what I cling to !

RAINIER.—Aymer, yet

Heaven hath not closed its gates ! Return, return  
Before the shadow of the palm-tree fades  
I' the waning moonlight. Heaven gives time. Return,  
My brother ! By our early days—the love  
That nurtured us !—the holy dust of those  
That sleep i' the tomb !—sleep ! no, they cannot sleep !  
Doth the night bring no voices from the dead  
Back on your soul ?

AYMER (*turning from him.*)—Yes—hers !

RAINIER (*indignantly turning off.*)—Why should I strive ?

Why doth it cost me these deep throes to fling  
A weed off ?

(*Checking himself.*) Brother, hath the stranger come

Between our hearts for ever? Yet return—  
Win back your fame, my brother!

AYMER.—Fame again!

Leave me the desert!—leave it me! I hate  
Your false world's glittering draperies, that press down  
The o'erlaboured heart! They have crushed mine.

Your vain

And hollow-sounding words are wasted now:  
You should adjure me by the name of him  
That slew his son's young bride!—our ancestor—  
That were a spell! Fame, fame!—your hand hath rent  
The veil from off your world. To speak of fame,  
When the soul is parched like mine! Away!  
I've joined these men because they war with man  
And all his hollow pomp. Will you go hence?

(*Fiercely.*) Why do I talk thus with a *murderer*? Ay,  
This is the desert, where true words may rise  
Up unto heaven i' the stillness. Leave it me—  
The free wild desert!

(*Arab chief enters.*)

ARAB.—Stranger, we have shared  
The spoil, forgetting not—A Christian here!  
Ho! sons of Kedar!—'tis De Chatillon!  
This way!—surround him. There's an Emir's wealth  
Set on his life. Come on!

(*Several Arabs rush in and surround RAINIER, who, after vainly endeavouring to force his way through them, is made prisoner.*)

RAINIER.—And he stands there  
To see me bought and sold! Death, death!—not chains!

(*AYMER, who has stood for a moment as if bewildered, rushes forward, and strikes down one of the Arabs.*)

AYMER.—Off from my brother, infidel!

*(The others hurry RAINIER away.)*

*(Recollecting himself.)* Why, then, heaven  
Is just! So! now I see it! Blood for blood!

*(Again rushing forward.)*

No! he shall feel remorse. I'll rescue him,  
And make him weep for her. [Exit.

## ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Hall in the fortress occupied by DE CHATILLON'S followers. Knights listening to a troubadour.*

HERMAN.—No more soft strains of love. Good Vidal, sing  
The imprisoned warrior's lay. There's a proud tone  
Of lofty sadness in it.

*(TROUBADOUR sings.)*

'Twas a trumpet's pealing sound!  
And the knight looked down from the Paynim's tower,  
And a Christian host in its pride and power  
Through the pass beneath him wound.  
"Cease awhile, clarion! clarion, wild and shrill,  
Cease! let them hear the captive's voice—be still!

"I knew 'twas a trumpet's note!  
And I see my brethren's lances gleam,  
And their pennons wave by the mountain-stream,  
And their plumes to the glad wind float.  
Cease awhile, clarion! &c.

“ I am here with my heavy chain !  
 And I look on a torrent sweeping by,  
 And an eagle rushing to the sky,  
 And a host to its battle-plain.  
 Cease awhile, clarion ! &c.

“ Must I pine in my fetters here ?  
 With the wild wave’s foam, and the free bird’s flight,  
 And the tall spears glancing on my sight,  
 And the trumpet in mine ear ?  
 Cease awhile, clarion,” &c.

(*AYMER enters hurriedly, in his Arab dress.*)

AYMER.—Silence, thou minstrel ! silence !

HERMAN.—Aymer, here !

And in that garb ! Seize on the regicide.

Knights, he must die.

AYMER (*scornfully*).—Die ! die !—the fearful threat !

To be thrust out of this same blessed world,

Your world—all yours ! (*Fiercely.*) But I will not be made

A thing to circle with your pomps of death,

Your chains, and guards, and scaffolds ! Back ! I’ll die

As the free lion dies ! (*Drawing his sabre.*)

HERMAN.—What seek’st thou here ?

AYMER.—Naught but to give your Christian swords a deed

Worthier than——Where’s your chief ? in the Paynim’s  
 bonds !

Made the wild Arab’s prize ! Ay, heaven is just !

If ye will rescue him, then follow me :

I know the way they bore him.

HERMAN.—Follow thee !

Recreant ! deserter of thy house and faith !

To think true knights would follow thee again !

’Tis all some snare—away !

AYMER.—Some snare! Heaven, heaven!

Is my name sunk to this? Must men first crush  
My soul, then spurn the ruin they have made?  
Why, let him perish!—blood for blood!—must earth  
Cry out in vain? Wine, wine! we'll revel here!  
On, minstrel, with thy song!

(TROUBADOUR *continues the song.*)

“They are gone—they have all passed by!  
They in whose wars I had borne my part,  
They that I loved with a brother's heart,  
They have left me here to die!  
Sound again, clarion! clarion, pour thy blast!  
Sound, for the captive's dream of hope is past!”

AYMER (*starting up.*)—

That was the lay he loved in our boyish days—  
And he must die forsaken! No, by heaven!  
He shall not. Follow me! I say your chief  
Is bought and sold. Is there no generous trust  
Left in your souls? De Foix, I saved your life  
At Ascalon. Du Mornay, you and I  
On Jaffa's wall together set our breasts  
Against a thousand spears. What! have I fought  
Beside you, shared your cup, slept in your tents,  
And ye can think——

(*Dashing off his turban.*)

Look on my burning brow!  
Read if there's falsehood branded on it—read  
The marks of treachery there!

KNIGHTS (*gathering round him.*)—No, no! come on!  
To the rescue! lead us on! we'll trust thee still!

AYMER.—Follow, then !—this way. If I die for him,  
 There will be vengeance ! He shall think of me  
 To his last hour. [*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II.

*A pavilion in the camp of Melech.* MELECH and SADI.

MELECH.—It must be that these sounds and sights of woe  
 Shake her too gentle nature. Yes, her cheek  
 Fades hourly in my sight. What other cause—  
 None, none. She must go hence. Choose from thy band  
 The bravest, Sadi ! and the longest tried,  
 And I will send my child——

VOICE WITHOUT.—Where is your chief ?

(*DE CHATILLON enters, guarded by Arab and Turkish soldiers.*)

ARAB.—The sons of Kedar's tribe have brought to the son  
 Of the Prophet's house a prisoner !

MELECH (*half drawing his sword.*)—Chatillon !  
 That slew my boy ! Thanks for the avenger's hour  
 Sadi, their guerdon—give it them—the gold !  
 And me the vengeance !

(*Looking at RAINIER, who holds the upper fragment of his sword,  
 and seems lost in thought.*)

This is he

That slew my first-born !

RAINIER (*to himself.*)—Surely there leaped up  
 A brother's heart within him ! Yes, he struck  
 To the earth a Paynim——

MELECH (*raising his voice.*)—Christian ! thou hast been  
 Our nation's deadliest foe.

RAINIER (*looking up and smiling proudly.*)—'Tis joy to hear  
I have not lived in vain.

MELECH.—Thou bear'st thyself

With a conqueror's mien. What is thy hope from me?

RAINIER.—A soldier's death.

MELECH (*hastily.*)—Then thou wouldst fear a slave's?

RAINIER.—Fear! As if man's own spirit had not power

To make his death a triumph! Waste not words;

Let my blood bathe thine own sword. Infidel!

I slew thy son!

(*Looking at his broken sword.*)

Ay, there's the red mark here!

MELECH (*approaching him.*)—Thou darest to tell me this?

(*A tumult heard without.*)

VOICES WITHOUT.—A Chatillon!

RAINIER.—My brother's voice! He is saved!

MELECH (*calling.*)—What, ho! my guards!

(*AYMER enters with the knights, fighting their way through  
MELECH's soldiers, who are driven before them.*)

AYMER.—On with the war-cry of our ancient house:

For the Cross—De Chatillon!

KNIGHTS.—For the Cross—De Chatillon!

(*RAINIER attempts to break from his guards. SADI enters with  
more soldiers to the assistance of MELECH. AYMER and the  
knights are overpowered. AYMER is wounded and falls.*)

MELECH.—Bring fetters—bind the captives!

RAINIER.—Lost—all lost!

No! he is saved!

(*Breaking from his guards, he goes up to AYMER.*)

Brother, my brother ! hast thou pardoned me  
That which I did to save thee? Speak ! forgive !

AYMER (*turning from him.*)—

Thou see'st I die for thee. She is avenged.

RAINIER.—I am no murderer ! Hear me ! turn to me !  
We are parting by the grave.

(MORAIMA enters veiled, and goes up to MELECH.)

MORAIMA.—Father ! Oh, look not sternly on thy child.  
I came to plead. They said thou hast condemned  
A Christian knight to die——

MELECH.—Hence to thy tent !  
Away—begone !

AYMER (*attempting to rise.*)—Moraima ! hath her spirit come  
To make death beautiful ? Moraima ! speak.

MORAIMA.—It was his voice ! Aymer !

(*She rushes to him, throwing aside her veil.*)

AYMER.—Thou liv'st—thou liv'st !  
I knew thou couldst not die. Look on me still.  
Thou liv'st ! and makest this world so full of joy—  
But I depart !

MELECH (*approaching her.*)—Moraima ! hence ! Is this  
A place for thee ?

MORAIMA.—Away ! away !  
There is no place but this for me on earth !  
Where should I go ? There is no place but this !  
My soul is bound to it !

MELECH (*to the guards.*)—Back, slaves ! and look not on her ?

(*They retreat to the background.*)

'Twas for this

She drooped to the earth !

AYMER.—Moraima, fare thee well !



Think on me! I have loved thee. I take hence  
That deep love with my soul; for well I know  
It must be deathless.

MORAIMA.—Oh, thou hast not known  
What *woman's* love is! Aymer, Aymer, stay!  
If I could die for thee! My heart is grown  
So strong in its despair!

RAINIER (*turning from them.*)—And all the past  
Forgotten!—our young days! His last thoughts hers,  
The infidel's!

AYMER (*with a violent effort turning his head round.*)—  
Thou art no murderer! Peace  
Between us—peace, my brother! In our deaths  
We shall be joined once more.

RAINIER (*holding the cross of the sword before him.*)—  
Look yet on this!

AYMER.—If thou hadst only told me that she lived!  
But our hearts meet at last!

(*Presses the cross to his lips.*)

Moraima, save my brother! Look on me!  
Joy—there is joy in death!

(*He dies on RAINIER'S arm.*)

MORAIMA.—Speak—speak once more!  
Aymer! how is it that I call on thee,  
And that thou answer'st not? Have we not loved?  
Death! death!—and this is—death!

RAINIER.—So thou art gone,  
Aymer! I never thought to weep again—  
But now—farewell! Thou wert the bravest knight  
That e'er laid lance in rest—and thou didst wear  
The noblest form that ever woman's eye  
Dwelt on with love: and till that fatal dream

Came o'er thee, Aymer ! Aymer ! thou wert still  
 The most true-hearted brother ! There thou art  
 Whose breast was once my shield ! I never thought  
 That foes should see me weep ! but there thou art,  
 Aymer, my brother !——

MORAIMA (*suddenly rising.*)—With his last, last breath  
 He bade me save his brother !

(*Falling at MELECH's feet.*)      Father, spare  
 The Christian—spare him !

MELECH.—For thy sake spare him

That slew thy father's son ! Shame to thy race !  
 Soldiers ! come nearer with your levelled spears !  
 Yet nearer !—gird him in ! My boy's young blood  
 Is on his sword. Christian, abjure thy faith,  
 Or die : thine hour is come !

(RAINIER *turns and throws himself on the weapons of the soldiers.*)

RAINIER.—Thou hast mine answer, infidel ! (*Falls back.*)

Knights of France !

Herman ! De Foix ! Du Mornay ! be ye strong !  
 Your hour will come.—Must the old war-cry cease ?

(*Half raising himself, and waving the Cross triumphantly.*)

For the Cross—De Chatillon ! [Dies.

P O E M S

OF

F E L I C I A    H E M A N S

IN SIX VOLUMES

VOL. III.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS  
EDINBURGH AND LONDON

1851







115170

Hemans, Felicia Dorothea  
Dramatic works.

LE  
H487d

University of Toronto  
Library

DO NOT  
REMOVE  
THE  
CARD  
FROM  
THIS  
POCKET



\* BOUND BY  
REMNANT & EDMONDS  
LONDON \*

