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"Le Comte de Soissons, et le Duc de Bouillon, avaient une bonne armée, et ils savaient la conduire; et pour plus grande sûreté, tandis que cette armée devait s'avancer, on devait assassiner le Cardinal et faire soulever Paris . . . . Les Conjurés faisaient un traité avec l'Espagne pour introduire des troupes en France, et pour y mettre tout en confusion dans une Régence qu'on croyait prochaine, et dont chacun espérait profiter . . . . Richelieu avait perdu toute sa faveur, et ne conservait que l'avantage d'être nécessaire. Le bonheur du Cardinal voulait encore que le complot fut découvert, et qu'une copie du traité lui tombât entre les mains."—*Voltaire, Hist. Gen.*

TO THE MARQUIS OF LANSDOWNE. K.G..

*Sc. &c.*

THIS DRAMA AND THE ACCOMPANYING ODES

ARE INSCRIBED, IN TRIBUTE

TO THE TALENTS WHICH COMMAND,

AND

THE QUALITIES WHICH ENDEAR,

RESPECT.

*London, March 5, 1839.*



## PREFACE TO RICHELIEU.

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THE administration of Cardinal Richelieu, whom (despite all his darker qualities) Voltaire and History justly consider the true architect of the French monarchy, and the great parent of French civilization, is characterised by features alike tragic and comic. A weak king—an ambitious favourite; a despicable conspiracy against the minister, nearly always associated with a dangerous treason against the State—These, with little variety of names and dates, constitute the eventful cycle through which, with a dazzling ease, and an arrogant confidence, the great luminary fulfilled its destinies. Blent together, in startling contrast, we see the grandest achievements and the pettiest agents;—the spy—the mistress—the capuchin;—the destruction of feudalism;—the humiliation of Austria;—the dismemberment of Spain.

Richelieu himself is still what he was in his

own day—a man of two characters. If, on the one hand, he is justly represented as inflexible and vindictive, crafty and unscrupulous; so, on the other, it cannot be denied that he was placed in times in which the long impunity of every license required stern examples—that he was beset by perils and intrigues, which gave a certain excuse to the subtlest inventions of self-defence—that his ambition was inseparably connected with a passionate love for the glory of his country—and that, if he was her dictator, he was not less her benefactor. It has been fairly remarked, by the most impartial historians, that he was no less generous to merit than severe to crime—that, in the various departments of the State, the Army, and the Church, he selected and distinguished the ablest aspirants—that the wars which he conducted were, for the most part, essential to the preservation of France, and Europe itself, from the formidable encroachments of the Austrian House—that, in spite of those wars, the people were not oppressed with exorbitant imposts—and that he left the kingdom he had governed in a more flourishing and vigorous state than at any former period of the French history, or at the decease of Louis XIV.



The cabals formed against this great statesman were not carried on by the patriotism of public virtue, or the emulation of equal talent: they were but court struggles, in which the most worthless agents had recourse to the most desperate means. In each, as I have before observed, we see combined the twofold attempt to murder the minister and to betray the country. Such, then, are the agents, and such the designs, with which truth, in the Drama as in History, requires us to contrast the celebrated Cardinal;—not disguising his foibles or his vices, but not unjust to the grander qualities (especially the love of country), by which they were often dignified, and, at times, redeemed.

The historical drama is the concentration of historical events. In the attempt to place upon the stage the picture of an era, that license with dates and details, which Poetry permits, and which the highest authorities in the Drama of France herself, have sanctioned, has been, though not unsparingly, indulged. The conspiracy of the Duc de Bouillon is, for instance, amalgamated with the dénouement of *The Day of Dupes*;\* and circum-

\* Le Cardinal se croit perdu, et prepare sa retraite. Ses amis lui conseillent de tenter enfin auprès du roi un nouvel effort. Le Cardinal va trouver le roi à Versailles. Le Roi qui avait sacrifié son Ministre par faiblesse, se remit par faiblesse entre ses mains, et il

stances connected with the treason of Cinq Mars (whose brilliant youth and gloomy catastrophe tend to subvert poetic and historic justice, by seducing us to forget his base ingratitude and his perfidious apostacy) are identified with the fate of the earlier favourite Baradas,\* whose sudden rise and as sudden fall passed into a proverb. I ought to add, that the noble romance of Cinq Mars suggested one of the scenes in the fifth act; and that for the conception of some portion of the intrigue connected with De Mauprat and Julie, I am, with great alterations of incident, and considerable if not entire reconstruction of character, indebted to an early and admirable novel by the author of *Picciola*.†

*London, March, 1839.*

lui abandonne ceux qui l'avaient perdu. Ce jour qui est encore à present appelle *la Journée des Dupes*, fut celui du pouvoir absolu du Cardinal.—*Voltaire Hist. Gen.*

\* En six mois il (le Roi) fit (Baradas) premier Ecuier, premier Gentilhomme de la chambre, Capitaine de St. Germain, et Lieutenant de roi, en Champagne. En moins de temps encore, on lui ôta tout, et des debris de sa grandeur, à peine lui resta-t-il de quoi payer ses dettes: de sorte que pour signifier une grande fortune dissipée aussi qu'acquise on disoit en commun proverbe *Fortune de Baradas*.—*Anquetil*.

† It may be as well, however, to caution the English reader against some of the impressions which the eloquence of both the writers I refer to are calculated to leave. They have exaggerated the more evil, and have kept out of sight the nobler, qualities of the Cardinal.

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA,

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRE-ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN,

THURSDAY, MARCH 7, 1839.

### MEN.

|  |                     |              |
|--|---------------------|--------------|
| LOUIS THE THIRTEENTH . . .   | MR. ELTON.          |              |
| GASTON, DUKE OF ORLEANS, <i>brother to Louis XIII.</i> . . .   | MR. DIDDEAR.        |              |
| BARADAS, <i>Favourite of the King, first gentleman of the Chamber, Premier Ecuyer, &amp;c.</i> . . . | MR. WARDE.          |              |
| CARDINAL RICHELIEU . . .   | MR. MACREADY.       |              |
| THE CHEVALIER DE MAUPRAT . . .   | MR. ANDERSON.       |              |
| THE SIEUR DE BERINGHEN ( <i>in attendance on the King,* one of the Conspirators</i> )                | MR. VINING.         |              |
| JOSEPH, <i>a Capuchin, Richelieu's confidant</i>   | MR. PHELPS.         |              |
| HUGUET, <i>an officer of Richelieu's household guard—a Spy</i> . . .                                 | MR. GEORGE BENNETT. |              |
| FRANÇOIS, <i>first Page to Richelieu</i>   | MR. HOWE.           |              |
| <i>First Courtier</i> . . .  | MR. ROBERTS.        |              |
| <i>Captain of the Archers</i> . . .  | MR. MATTHEWS.       |              |
| <i>First,</i> } <i>Secretaries of State</i> . . .  | }                   |              |
| <i>Second,</i> }   |                     | MR. TILBURY. |
| <i>Third</i> }   |                     | MR. YARNOLD. |
| <i>Governor of the Bastile</i> . . .   | MR. PAYNE.          |              |
| <i>Gaoler</i> . . .  | MR. WALDRON.        |              |
| <i>Courtiers, Pages, Conspirators, Officers, Soldiers, &amp;c.</i>                                   | MR. AYLIFFE.        |              |

### WOMEN.

|   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| JULIE DE MORTEMAR, <i>an Orphan, Ward to Richelieu</i> . . .              | MISS HELEN FAUCIT. |
| MARION DE LORME, <i>Mistress to Orleans, but in Richelieu's pay</i> . . . | MISS CHARLES.      |

\* Properly speaking, the King's First Valet de Chambre, a post of great importance at that time.

#### NOTE.

The length of the Play necessarily requires curtailments on the Stage—the principal of which are specified (as they occur) in marginal notes. Many of the passages thus omitted, however immaterial to the audience, must obviously be such as the reader would be least inclined to dispense with—viz., those which, without being absolutely essential to the business of the Stage, contain either the subtler strokes of character, or the more poetical embellishments of description.

# RICHELIEU:

OR,

## THE CONSPIRACY.

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### ACT I.

First Day.

#### SCENE I.

*A room in the house of Marion de Lorme; a table towards the front of the stage (with wine, fruits, &c.), at which are seated Baradas, Four Courtiers, splendidly dressed in the costume of 1641-2;—the Duke of Orleans reclining on a large fauteuil;—Marion de Lorme, standing at the back of his chair, offers him a goblet, and then retires. At another table, De Beringhen, De Mauprat, playing at dice; other Courtiers, of inferior rank to those at the table of the Duke, looking on.*

ORLEANS (*drinking*).

HERE'S to our enterprise!—

BARADAS (*glancing at Marion*).

Hush, Sir!—

ORLEANS (*aside*).

Nay, Count,

You may trust her; she doats on me; no house  
So safe as Marion's.\* At our statelier homes  
The very walls do play the eaves-dropper.  
There's not a sunbeam creeping o'er our floors  
But seems a glance from that malignant eye  
Which reigns o'er France; our fatal greatness lives  
In the sharp glare of one relentless day.  
But Richelieu's self forgets to fear the sword  
The myrtle hides; and Marion's silken robe  
Casts its kind charity o'er fiercer sins  
Than those which haunt the rosy path between

10

\* Omitted in representation, from "At our statelier homes," line 3, to the end of speech line 13.

The lip and eye of beauty.—Oh, no house  
So safe as Marion's.

BARADAS.

Still, we have a secret,  
And oil and water—woman and a secret—  
Are hostile properties.

ORLEANS.

Well—Marion, see  
How the play prospers yonder.

*Marion goes to the next table, looks on for a few moments,  
then Exit.*

BARADAS (*producing a parchment*).

I have now

All the conditions drawn ; it only needs  
Our signatures : upon receipt of this,  
(Whereto is joined the schedule of our treaty  
With the Count-Duke,\* the Richelieu of the Escorial,) 20  
Bouillon will join his army with the Spaniard,  
March on to Paris,—there, dethrone the King :  
You will be Regent ; I, and ye, my Lords,  
Form the new Council. So much for the core  
Of our great scheme.

ORLEANS.

But Richelieu is an Argus ;  
One of his hundred eyes will light upon us,  
And then—good bye to life.

BARADAS.

To gain the prize  
We must destroy the Argus :—ay, my Lords,  
The scroll the core, but blood must fill the veins, 30  
Of our design ;—while this despatched to Bouillon,  
Richelieu despatched to Heaven !—The last *my* charge !  
Meet here to-morrow night. *You*, Sir, as first  
In honour and in hope, meanwhile select  
Some trusty knave to bear the scroll to Bouillon ;  
Midst Richelieu's foes *I'll* find some desperate hand  
To strike for vengeance, while we stride to power.

ORLEANS.

So be it ;—to-morrow, midnight.—Come, my Lords.

*Exeunt Orleans, and the Courtiers in his train. Those at  
the other table rise, salute Orleans, and re-seat themselves.*

\* Olivares, Minister of Spain.

DE BERINGHEN.

Double the stakes.

DE MAUPRAT.

Done.

DE BERINGHEN.

Bravo ; faith it shames me  
To bleed a purse already *in extremis*. 40

DE MAUPRAT.

Nay, as you've had the patient to yourself  
So long, no other doctor should despatch it.

*De Mauprat throws and loses.*

OMNES.

Lost ! Ha, ha—poor De Mauprat !

DE BERINGHEN.

One throw more ?

DE MAUPRAT.

No ; I am bankrupt (*pushing gold*). There goes all—except  
My honour and my sword. (*They rise.*)

DE BERINGHEN.

Long cloaks and honour  
Went out of vogue together, when we found  
We got on much more rapidly without them ;  
The sword, indeed, is never out of fashion,—  
The devil has care of *that*.

FIRST GAMESTER.

Ay, take the sword  
To Cardinal Richelieu :—he gives gold for steel, 50  
When worn by brave men.

DE MAUPRAT.

Richelieu !

DE BERINGHEN (*to Baradas*).

At that name

He changes colour, bites his nether lip.  
Ev'n in his brightest moments whisper " Richelieu,"  
And you cloud all his sunshine.

BARADAS.

I have mark'd it,  
And I will learn the wherefore.

DE MAUPRAT.

The Egyptian  
Dissolved her richest jewel in a draught :  
Would I could so melt time and all its treasures,  
And drain it thus (*drinking*).

DE BERINGHIEN.

Come, gentlemen, what say ye,  
A walk on the Parade ?

OMNES.

Ay ; come, De Mauprat.

DE MAUPRAT.

Pardon me ; we shall meet again ere nightfall.

60

BARADAS.

I'll stay and comfort Mauprat.

DE BERINGHEN.

Comfort !—when  
We gallant fellows have run out a friend  
There's nothing left—except to run him through !  
There's the last act of friendship.

DE MAUPRAT.

Let me keep  
*That* favour in reserve ; in all beside  
Your most obedient servant.

*Exeunt De Beringhen, &c. Manent De Mauprat and  
Baradas.*

BARADAS.

You have lost—

Yet are not sad.

DE MAUPRAT.

Sad !—Life and gold have wings,  
And must fly one day :—open, then, their cages  
And wish them merry.

BARADAS.

You're a strange enigma :—  
Fiery in war—and yet to glory lukewarm ;—  
All mirth in action—in repose all gloom—  
These are extremes in which the unconscious heart  
Betrays the fever of deep-fix'd disease.  
Confide in me ! our young days roll'd together  
In the same river, glassing the same stars  
That smile i' the heaven of hope ;—alike we made  
Bright-winged steeds of our unform'd chimeras,

70



Spurring the fancies upward to the air,  
 Wherein we shaped fair castles from the cloud.  
 Fortune of late has sever'd us—and led  
*Me* to the rank of Courtier, Count, and Favourite,—  
*You* to the titles of the wildest gallant  
 And bravest knight in France ;—are you content ?  
 No ;—trust in me—some gloomy secret—

80

DE MAUPRAT.

Ay :—

A secret that doth haunt me, as, of old,  
 Men were possess'd of fiends !—Where'er I turn,  
 The grave yawns dark before me !—I *will* trust you ;—  
 Hating the Cardinal, and beguiled by Orleans,  
 You know I join'd the Languedoc revolt—  
 Was captured—sent to the Bastile—

BARADAS.

But shared

90

The general pardon, which the Duke of Orleans  
 Won for himself and all in the revolt,  
 Who but obey'd his orders.

DE MAUPRAT.

Note the phrase ;—

“ *Obey'd his orders.* ” Well, when on my way  
 To join the Duke in Languedoc, I (then  
 The down upon my lip—less man than boy)  
 Leading young valours—reckless as myself,  
 Seized on the town of Faviaux, and displaced  
 The Royal banners for the Rebel. Orleans,  
 (Never too daring,) when I reach'd the camp,  
 Blamed me for acting—mark—*without his orders* :  
 Upon this quibble Richelieu razed my name  
 Out of the general pardon.

100

BARADAS.

Yet released you

From the Bastile—

DE MAUPRAT.

To call me to his presence,  
 And thus address me :—“ You have seized a town  
 Of France, without the orders of your leader,  
 And for this treason, but one sentence—**DEATH.** ”

BARADAS.

Death !

DE MAUPRAT.

“ I have pity on your youth and birth,  
 Nor wish to glut the headsman ;—join your troop,  
 Now on the march against the Spaniards ;—change  
 The traitor’s scaffold for the soldier’s grave ;—  
 Your memory stainless—they who shared your crime  
 Exil’d or dead—your king shall never learn it.”

110

BARADAS.

O tender pity !—O most charming prospect !  
 Blown into atoms by a bomb, or drill’d  
 Into a cullender by gunshot !—Well ?—

DE MAUPRAT.

You have heard if I fought bravely.—Death became  
 Desired as Daphne by the eager Daygod.  
 Like him I chas’d the nymph—to grasp the laurel !  
 I could not die !

BARADAS.

Poor fellow !

DE MAUPRAT.

When the Cardinal  
 Review’d the troops—his eye met mine ;—he frown’d,  
 Summon’d me forth—“ How’s this ?” quoth he ; “ you have  
 shunn’d  
 The sword—beware the axe !—’twill fall one day !”  
 He left me thus—we were recall’d to Paris,  
 And—you know all !

120

BARADAS.

And, knowing this, why halt you,  
 Spell’d by the rattle-snake,—while in the breasts  
 Of your firm friends beat hearts, that vow the death  
 Of your grim tyrant ?—Wake !—Be one of us ;  
 The time invites—the King detests the Cardinal,  
 Dares not disgrace—but groans to be deliver’d  
 Of that too great a subject—join your friends,  
 Free France, and save yourself.

130

DE MAUPRAT.

Hush ! Richelieu bears  
 A charmed life :—to all, who have braved his power,  
 One common end—the block.

BARADAS.

Nay, if he live,  
 The block your doom ;—

DE MAUPRAT.

Better the victim, Count,  
Than the assassin.—France requires a Richelieu,  
But does not need a Mauprat. Truce to this;—  
All time one midnight, where my thoughts are spectres.  
What to me fame?—What love?—

BARADAS.

Yet dost thou love *not* ?

DE MAUPRAT.

Love?—I am young——

BARADAS.

And Julie fair! (*Aside*) It is so, 140  
Upon the margin of the grave—his hand  
Would pluck the rose that I would win and wear!  
(*Aloud*)\* Thou lovest—

DE MAUPRAT.

Who, lonely in the midnight tent,  
Gazed on the watch-fires in the sleepless air,  
Nor chose one star amidst the clustering hosts  
To bless it in the name of some fair face  
Set in his spirit, as that star in Heaven?  
For our divine Affections, like the Spheres,  
Move ever, ever musical.

BARADAS.

You speak

As one who fed on poetry.

DE MAUPRAT.

Why, man,

150

The thoughts of lovers stir with poetry  
As leaves with summer-wind.—The heart that loves  
Dwells in an Eden, hearing angel-lutes,  
As Eve in the First Garden. Hast thou seen  
My Julie, and not felt it henceforth dull  
To live in the common world—and talk in words  
That clothe the feelings of the frigid herd?—  
Upon the perfumed pillow of her lips—  
As on his native bed of roses flush'd  
With Paphian skies—Love smiling sleeps:—Her voice 160  
The blest interpreter of thoughts as pure  
As virgin wells where Dian takes delight,  
Or Fairies dip their changelings!—In the maze  
Of her harmonious beauties—Modesty

\* Omitted in representation, from line 142 to line 176.

(Like some severer Grace that leads the choir  
Of her sweet sisters) every airy motion  
Attunes to such chaste charm, that Passion holds  
His burning breath, and will not with a sigh  
Dissolve the spell that binds him !—Oh those eyes  
That woo the earth—shadowing more soul than lurks 170  
Under the lids of Psyche !—Go !—thy lip  
Curls at the purfled phrases of a lover—  
Love thou, and if thy love be deep as mine,  
Thou wilt not laugh at poets.

BARADAS (*aside*).

With each word  
Thou wak'st a jealous demon in my heart,  
And my hand clutches at my hilt—

DE MAUPRAT (*gaily*).

No more !—  
I love !—Your breast holds both my secrets ;—Never  
Unbury either !—Come, while yet we may,  
We'll bask us in the noon of rosy life :—  
Lounge through the gardens,—flaunt it in the taverns,— 180  
Laugh,—game,—drink,—feast :—If so confined my days,  
Faith, I'll enclose the nights.—Pshaw ! not so grave ;  
I'm a true Frenchman !—*Vive la bagatelle !*

(*As they are going out, Enter Huguet, and four arque-  
busiers.*)

HUGUET.

Messire De Mauprat,—I arrest you !—Follow  
To the Lord Cardinal.

DE MAUPRAT.

You see, my friend,  
I'm out of my suspense !—the tiger's play'd  
Long enough with his prey.—Farewell !—Hereafter  
Say, when men name me, “ Adrien de Mauprat  
Lived without hope, and perished without fear !”

[*Exeunt De Mauprat, Huguet, &c.*

BARADAS.

Farewell !—I trust for ever ! I design'd thee  
For Richelieu's murderer— but, as well his martyr ! 190  
In childhood you the stronger—and I cursed you ;  
In youth the fairer—and I cursed you still ;  
And now my rival !—While the name of Julie  
Hung on thy lips—I smiled—for then I saw

In my mind's eye, the cold and grinning Death  
 Hang o'er thy head the pall!—Ambition, Love,  
 Ye twin-born stars of daring destinies,  
 Sit in my house of Life!—By the King's aid  
 I will be Julie's husband—in despite 200  
 Of my Lord Cardinal—By the King's aid  
 I will be minister of France—in spite  
 Of my Lord Cardinal;—and then—what then?  
 The King loves Julie—feeble Prince—false master—

(*Producing and gazing on the parchment.*)

Then, by the aid of Bouillon, and the Spaniard,  
 I will dethrone the King; and all—ha!—ha!—  
 All, in despite of my Lord Cardinal. [Exit.

## SCENE II.

*A room in the Palais Cardinal, the walls hung with arras. A large screen in one corner. A table covered with books, papers, &c. A rude clock in a recess. Busts, statues, bookcases, weapons of different periods, and banners suspended over Richelieu's chair.*

*Richelieu.—Joseph.*

RICHELIEU.

And so you think this new conspiracy  
 The craftiest trap yet laid for the old fox?—  
 Fox!—Well, I like the nickname! What did Plutarch 210  
 Say of the Greek Lysander?

JOSEPH.

I forget.

RICHELIEU.

That where the lion's skin fell short, he eked it  
 Out with the fox's! A great statesman, Joseph,  
 That same Lysander!

JOSEPH.

Orleans heads the traitors.

RICHELIEU.

A very wooden head then! Well?

JOSEPH.

The favourite,

Count Baradas—

RICHELIEU.

A weed of hasty growth ;  
 First gentleman of the chamber—titles, lands,  
 And the King's ear!—it cost me six long winters  
 To mount as high, as in six little moons  
 This painted lizard—But I hold the ladder,  
 And when I shake—he falls! What more ?

220

JOSEPH.

A scheme

To make your orphan-ward an instrument  
 To aid your foes. You placed her with the Queen,  
 One of the royal chamber,—as a watch  
 I th' enemy's quarters—

RICHELIEU.

And the silly child  
 Visits me daily,—calls me "Father,"—prays  
 Kind heaven to bless me—And for all the rest,  
 As well have placed a doll about the Queen!  
 She does not heed who frowns—who smiles ; with whom  
 The King confers in whispers ; notes not when  
 Men who last week were foes, are found in corners  
 Mysteriously affectionate ; words spoken  
 Within closed doors she never hears ;—by chance  
 Taking the air at keyholes—Senseless puppet!  
 No ears—nor eyes!—and yet she says—"She loves me!"  
 Go on—

230

JOSEPH.

Your ward has charm'd the King—

RICHELIEU.

Out on you !

Have I not, one by one, from such fair shoots  
 Pluck'd the insidious ivy of his love ?  
 And shall it creep around my blossoming tree  
 Where innocent thoughts, like happy birds, make music  
 That spirits in Heaven might hear?—They're sinful too,  
 Those passionate surfeits of the rampant flesh,  
 The Church condemns them ; and to us, my Joseph,  
 The props and pillars of the Church, most hurtful.

240

The King is weak—whoever the King loves  
Must rule the King; the lady loves another,  
The other rules the lady—thus we're balked  
Of our own proper sway—The King must have  
No goddess but the State:—the State—That's Richelieu!

JOSEPH.

This not the worst;—Louis, in all decorous,  
And deeming you her least compliant guardian,  
Would veil his suit by marriage with his minion,  
Your prosperous foe, Count Baradas!

250

RICHELIEU.

Ha! ha!

I have another bride for Baradas.

JOSEPH.

You, my Lord?

RICHELIEU.

Ay—more faithful than the love  
Of fickle woman:—when the head lies lowliest,  
Clasping him fondest;—Sorrow never knew  
So sure a soother,—and her bed is stainless!

JOSEPH (*aside*).

If of the grave he speaks, I do not wonder  
That priests are bachelors!

*Enter François.*

FRANÇOIS.

Mademoiselle De Mortemar. 260

RICHELIEU.

Most opportune—admit her.

[*Exit François.*

In my closet

You'll find a rosary, Joseph; ere you tell  
Three hundred beads, I'll summon you.—Stay, Joseph;—  
I did omit an Ave in my matins,—  
A grievous fault;—atone it for me, Joseph;  
There is a scourge within; I am weak, you strong,  
It were but charity to take my sin  
On such broad shoulders. Exercise is healthful.

JOSEPH.

I! guilty of such criminal presumption  
As to mistake myself for you—No, never!

270

Think it not!—(*Aside*) Troth, a pleasant invitation!

[*Exit Joseph.*

*Enter Julie de Mortemar.*

RICHELIEU.

That's my sweet Julie!—why, upon this face  
Blushes such daybreak, one might swear the Morning  
Were come to visit Tithon.

JULIE (*placing herself at his feet*).

Are you gracious?—

May I say "Father?"

RICHELIEU.

Now and ever!

JULIE.

Father!

A sweet word to an orphan.

RICHELIEU.

No; not orphan

While Richelieu lives; thy father loved me well;  
My friend, ere I had flatterers (now, I'm great,  
In other phrase, I'm friendless)—he died young  
In years, not service, and bequeath'd thee to me; 280  
And thou shalt have a dowry, girl, to buy  
Thy mate amidst the mightiest. Drooping?—sighs?—  
Art thou not happy at the court?

JULIE.

Not often.

RICHELIEU (*aside*).

Can she love Baradas?—Ah! at thy heart  
There's what can smile and sigh, blush and grow pale,  
All in a breath!—Thou art admired—art young;  
Does not his Majesty commend thy beauty—  
Ask thee to sing to him?—and swear such sounds  
Had smooth'd the brows of Saul?—

JULIE.

He's very tiresome,

Our worthy King.

RICHELIEU.

Fie; kings are never tiresome, 290  
Save to their ministers.—What courtly gallants  
Charm ladies most?—De Sourdiac, Longueville, or  
The favourite Baradas?

JULIE.

A smileless man—

I fear, and shun him.



RICHELIEU.

Yet he courts thee?

JULIE.

Then

He is more tiresome than his Majesty.

RICHELIEU.

Right, girl, shun Baradas.—Yet of these flowers  
Of France, not one, in whose more honied breath  
Thy heart hears Summer whisper?

*Enter Huguet.*

HUGUET.

The Chevalier

De Mauprat waits below.

JULIE (*starting up*).

De Mauprat!

RICHELIEU.

Hem!

He has been tiresome too!—Anon. [*Exit Huguet.*]

JULIE.

What doth he?—

300

I mean—I—Does your Eminence—that is—  
Know you Messire de Mauprat?

RICHELIEU.

Well!—and you——

Has he address'd you often?

JULIE.

Often! No—

Nine times;—nay, ten;—the last time, by the lattice  
Of the great staircase.—(*In a melancholy tone*) The Court  
sees him rarely.

RICHELIEU.

A bold and forward royster?

JULIE.

*He?*—nay, modest,

Gentle, and sad methinks.

RICHELIEU.

Wears gold and azure?

JULIE.

No; sable.

RICHELIEU.

So you note his colours, Julie ?  
Shame on you, child, look loftier. By the mass  
I have business with this modest gentleman.

310

JULIE.

You're angry with poor Julie. There's no cause.

RICHELIEU.

No cause—you hate my foes ?

JULIE.

I do !

RICHELIEU.

Hate Mauprat ?

JULIE.

Not Mauprat. No, not Adrien, father.

RICHELIEU.

Adrien !

Familiar !—Go, child ; no,—not *that* way ;—wait  
In the tapestry chamber ; I will join you,—go.

JULIE.

His brows are knit ;—I dare not call him father !  
But I *must* speak—Your Eminence—

RICHELIEU (*sternly*).

Well, girl !

JULIE.

Nay

Smile on me—one smile more ; there, now I'm happy.  
Do not rank Mauprat with your foes ; he is not,  
I know he *is* not ; he loves France too well.

320

RICHELIEU.

Not rank De Mauprat with my foes ? So be it.  
I'll blot him from that list.

JULIE.

That's my own father.

[*Exit Julie.*]

RICHELIEU (*ringing a small bell on the table.*)

Huguet !

*Enter Huguet.*

De Mauprat struggled not, nor murmur'd ?

HUGUET.

No; proud and passive.

RICHELIEU.

Bid him enter.—Hold:

Look that he hide no weapon. Humph, despair  
Makes victims sometimes victors. When he has enter'd,  
Glide round unseen;—place thyself yonder (*pointing to the  
screen*); watch him;

If he show violence—(let me see thy carbine;  
So, a good weapon;—if he play the lion,  
Why—the dog's death.

HUGUET.

I never miss my mark.

330

*Exit Huguet; Richelieu seats himself at the table, and  
slowly arranges the papers before him. Enter De Mauprat,  
preceded by Huguet, who then retires behind the screen.*

RICHELIEU.

Approach, Sir.—Can you call to mind the hour,  
Now three years since, when in this room, methinks,  
Your presence honour'd me?

DE MAUPRAT.

It is, my Lord,

One of my most——

RICHELIEU (*drily*).

Delightful recollections.\*

DE MAUPRAT (*aside*).

St. Denis! doth he make a jest of axe  
And headsman?

RICHELIEU (*sternly*).

I did then accord you

A mercy ill requited—you still live?

DE MAUPRAT.

To meet death face to face at last. †

RICHELIEU.

Your words

Are bold.

\* There are many anecdotes of the irony, often so terrible, in which Richelieu indulged. But he had a love for humour in its more hearty and genial shape. He would send for Boisrobert "to make him laugh,"—and grave ministers and magnates waited in the ante-room, while the great Cardinal listened and responded to the sallies of the lively wit.

† Omitted in representation, from line 335 to line 361.

DE MAUPRAT.

My deeds have not belied them.

RICHELIEU.

Deeds !

O miserable delusion of man's pride !  
 Deeds ! cities sack'd, fields ravaged, hearths profaned,  
 Men butcher'd ! In your hour of doom behold  
 The *deeds* you boast of ! From rank showers of blood,  
 And the red light of blazing roofs, you build  
 The Rainbow Glory, and to shuddering Conscience  
 Cry,—Lo, the Bridge to Heaven !

340

DE MAUPRAT.

If war be sinful,

Your hand the gauntlet cast.

RICHELIEU.

It was so, Sir.

Note the distinction :—I weigh'd well the cause  
 Which made the standard holy ; raised the war  
 But to secure the peace. France bled—I groan'd ;  
 But look'd beyond ; and, in the vista, saw  
 France saved, and I exulted. You—but you  
 Were but the tool of slaughter—knowing nought,  
 Foreseeing nought, nought hoping, nought lamenting,  
 And for nought fit,—save cutting throats for hire.  
 Deeds, marry, deeds !

350

DE MAUPRAT.

If you would deign to speak

Thus to your armies ere they march to battle,  
 Perchance your Eminence might have the pain  
 Of the throat-cutting to yourself.

RICHELIEU (*aside*).

He has wit,

This Mauprat—(*Aloud*)—Let it pass ; there is against you  
 What you can less excuse. Messire de Mauprat,  
 Doom'd to sure death, how hast thou since consumed  
 The time allotted thee for serious thought  
 And solemn penitence ?

DE MAUPRAT (*embarrassed*).

The time, my Lord ?

RICHELIEU.

Is not the question plain ? I'll answer for thee.  
 Thou hast sought nor priest nor shrine ; no sackcloth chafed

Thy delicate flesh. The rosary and the death's-head  
 Have not, with pious meditation, purged  
 Earth from the carnal gaze. What thou hast *not* done  
 Brief told; what done, a volume! Wild debauch, 370  
 Turbulent riot:—for the morn the dice-box—  
 Noon claim'd the duel—and the night the wassail;  
 These, your most holy, pure preparatives  
 For death and judgment. Do I wrong you, Sir?

DE MAUPRAT.

I was not always thus:—if changed my nature,  
 Blame that, which changed my fate.—Alas, my Lord,  
 There is a brotherhood which calm-eyed Reason\*  
 Can wot not of betwixt Despair and Mirth.  
 My birth-place mid the vines of sunny Provence,  
 Perchance the stream that sparkles in my veins 380  
 Came from that wine of passionate life which, erst,  
 Glow'd in the wild heart of the Troubadour:  
 And danger, which makes steadier courage wary,  
 But fevers me with an insane delight;  
 As one of old who on the mountain-crags  
 Caught madness from a Mænad's haunting eyes.  
 Were you, my Lord,—whose path imperial power,  
 And the grave cares of reverent wisdom guard  
 From all that tempts to folly meaner men,—  
 Were you accursed with that which you inflicted— 390  
 By bed and board, dogg'd by one ghastly spectre—  
 The while within you youth beat high, and life  
 Grew lovelier from the neighbouring frown of death—  
 The heart no bud, nor fruit—save in those seeds  
 Most worthless, which spring up, bloom, bear, and wither  
 In the same hour—Were this your fate, perchance,  
 You would have err'd like me!

RICHELIEU.

I might, like you,  
 Have been a brawler and a reveller;—not,  
 Like you, a trickster and a thief.—

DE MAUPRAT (*advancing threateningly*).

Lord Cardinal!—

Unsay those words!—

(*Huguet deliberately raises the carbine*).

RICHELIEU (*waving his hand*).

Not quite so quick, friend Huguet: 400

\* Omitted in representation, from line 376 to 389.

Messire de Mauprat is a patient man,  
And he can wait !—

You have outrun your fortune ;—  
I blame you not, that you would be a beggar—  
Each to his taste !—But I do charge you, Sir,  
That, being beggar'd, you would coin false monies  
Out of that crucible, called DEBT.—To live  
On means not yours—be brave in silks and laces,  
Gallant in steeds—splendid in banquets ;—all  
Not *yours*—ungiven—unherited—unpaid for ;—  
*This* is to be a trickster ; and to filch  
Men's art and labour, which to them is wealth, 410  
Life, daily bread,—quitting all scores with—“ Friend,  
You're troublesome ! ”—Why this, forgive me,  
Is what—when done with a less dainty grace—  
Plain folks call “ *Theft!* ”—You owe eight thousand pistoles,  
Minus one crown, two liards !—

DE MAUPRAT (*aside*).

The old conjuror !—  
Sdeath, he'll inform me next how many cups  
I drank at dinner !—

RICHELIEU.

This is scandalous,  
Shaming your birth and blood —I tell you, Sir,  
That you must pay your debts.—

DE MAUPRAT.

With all my heart, 420  
My Lord.—Where shall I borrow, then, the money ?

RICHELIEU (*aside and laughing*).

A humorous dare-devil !—The very man  
To suit my purpose—ready, frank, and bold !

(*Rising, and earnestly*).

Adrien de Mauprat, men have called me cruel ;—  
I am not ;—I am *just!*—I found France rent asunder,—  
The rich men despots, and the poor banditti ;—  
Sloth in the mart, and schism within the temple ;  
Brawls festering to Rebellion ; and weak Laws  
Rotting away with rust in antique sheaths.—  
I have re-created France ; and, from the ashes 430  
Of the old feudal and decrepit carcase,  
Civilization on her luminous wings  
Soars, phoenix-like, to Jove !—What was my art ?

Genius, some say,—some, Fortune,—Witchcraft some.  
 Not so;—my art was JUSTICE!—Force and Fraud  
 Misname it cruelty—you shall confute them!  
 My champion you!—You met me as your foe,  
 Depart my friend—You shall not die.—France needs you.  
 You shall wipe off all stains,—be rich, be honour'd,  
 Be great.—

(*De Mauprat falls on his knee—Richelieu raises him.*)

I ask, Sir, in return, this hand, 440  
 To gift it with a bride, whose dower shall match,  
 Yet not exceed, her beauty.

DE MAUPRAT.

I, my Lord,—(*hesitating*)

I have no wish to marry.

RICHELIEU.

Surely, Sir,

To die were worse.

DE MAUPRAT.

Scarcely; the poorest coward  
 Must die,—but knowingly to march to marriage—  
 My Lord, it asks the courage of a lion!

RICHELIEU.

Traitor, thou triflest with me!—I know *all*!  
 Thou hast dared to love my ward—my charge.

DE MAUPRAT.

As rivers

May love the sunlight—basking in the beams,  
 And hurrying on!—

RICHELIEU.

Thou hast told her of thy love? 450

DE MAUPRAT.

My Lord, if I had dared to love a maid,  
 Lowliest in France, I would not so have wrong'd her,  
 As bid her link rich life and virgin hope  
 With one, the deathman's gripe might, from her side,  
 Pluck at the nuptial altar.

RICHELIEU.

I believe thee;  
 Yet since she knows not of thy love, renounce her;—  
 Take life and fortune with another!—Silent?

DE MAUPRAT.

Your fate has been one triumph—You know not  
 How bless'd a thing it was in my dark hour  
 To nurse the one sweet thought you bid me banish. 460  
 Love hath no need of words ;—nor less within  
 That holiest temple—the heaven-builed soul—  
 Breathes the recorded vow.—Base knight,—false lover  
 Were he, who barter'd all, that brighten'd grief,  
 Or sanctified despair, for life and gold.  
 Revoke your mercy ;—I prefer the fate  
 I look'd for !

RICHELIEU.

Huguet ! to the tapestry chamber  
 Conduct your prisoner.

*(To Mauprat.)*

You will there behold  
 The executioner :—your doom be private—  
 And Heaven have mercy on you !—

DE MAUPRAT.

When I'm dead, 470  
 Tell her, I loved her.

RICHELIEU.

Keep such follies, Sir,  
 For fitter ears ;—go—

DE MAUPRAT.

Does he mock me ?

*Exeunt de Mauprat, Huguet*

RICHELIEU.

Joseph,  
 Come forth.

*Enter Joseph.*

Methinks your cheek hath lost its rubies ;  
 I fear you have been too lavish of the flesh ;  
 The scourge is heavy.

JOSEPH.

Pray you, change the subject.

RICHELIEU.

You good men are so modest !—Well, to business !  
 Go instantly—deeds—notaries !—bid my stewards  
 Arrange my house by the Luxembourg—*my* house



No more!—a bridal present to my ward,  
Who weds to-morrow.

JOSEPH.

Weds, with whom?

RICHELIEU.

De Mauprat. 480

JOSEPH.

Penniless husband!

RICHELIEU.

Bah! the mate for beauty  
Should be a man, and not a money-chest!  
When her brave sire lay on his bed of death,  
I vow'd to be a father to his Julie:—  
And so he died—the smile upon his lips!—  
And when I spared the life of her young lover,  
Methought I saw that smile again!—Who else,  
Look you, in all the court—who else so well,  
Brave, or supplant the favourite;—balk the King—  
Baffle their schemes?—I have tried him:—He has honour 490  
And courage;—qualities that eagle-plume  
Men's souls,—and fit them for the fiercest sun,  
Which ever melted the weak waxen minds  
That flutter in the beams of gaudy Power!  
Besides, he has taste, this Mauprat:—When my play  
Was acted to dull tiers of lifeless gapers,\*  
Who had no soul for poetry, I saw him  
Applaud in the proper places: trust me, Joseph,  
He is a man of an uncommon promise!

JOSEPH.

And yet your foe.

RICHELIEU.

Have I not foes enow? —

500

Great men gain doubly when they make foes friends.

\* The Abbé Arnaud tells us that the Queen was a little avenged on the Cardinal by the ill success of the tragi-comedy of *Mirame*—more than suspected to be his own—though presented to the world under the foster name of Desmarests. Its representation (says Pelisson) cost him 300,000 crowns. He was so transported out of himself by the performance, that at one time he thrust his person half out of his box to show himself to the assembly; at another time he imposed silence on the audience that they might not lose "*des endroits encore plus beaux*." He said afterwards to Desmarests: "Eh bien, les Français n'auront donc jamais de goût. Ils n'ont pas été charqués de *Mirame*!" Arnaud says pithily, "On ne pouvoit alors avoir d'autre satisfaction des offenses d'un homme qui étoit maître de tout, et redoutable à tout le monde." Nevertheless his style in prose, though not devoid of the pedantic affectations of the time, often rises into very noble eloquence.

Remember my grand maxims:—First employ  
All methods to conciliate.\*

JOSEPH.

Failing these ?

RICHELIEU (*fiercely*).

All means to crush : as with the opening, and  
The clenching of this little hand, I will  
Crush the small venom of these stinging courtiers.  
So, so, we've baffled Baradas.

JOSEPH.

And when

Check the conspiracy ?

RICHELIEU.

Check, check ? Full way to it.

Let it bud, ripen, flaunt i' the day, and burst  
To fruit,—the Dead Sea's fruit of ashes ; ashes 510  
Which I will scatter to the winds.

Go, Joseph ;

When you return, I have a feast for you ;  
The last great act of my great play : the verses,  
Methinks, are fine,—ah, very fine.—*You* write  
Verses ! †—(*aside*) *such* verses !—You have wit, discernment.

JOSEPH (*aside*).

Worse than the scourge ! Strange that so great a statesman  
Should be so bad a poet.

RICHELIEU.

What dost say ?

\* “ Vialart remarque une chose qui peut expliquer la conduite de Richelieu en d'autres circonstances :—c'est que les seigneurs à qui leur naissance ou leur mérite pouvoit permettre des prétensions, il avoit pour système, de leur accorder au-delà même de leurs droits et de leurs espérances, mais, aussi, une fois comblés—si, au lieu de reconnoître ses services ils se levoient contre lui, il les traitoit sans miséricorde.”—*Anquetil*. See also the Political Testament, and the Mémoires de Cardinal Richelieu, in Petitot's collection.

† “ Tantôt fanatique—tantôt fourbe—fonder les religieuses de Calvaire—*faire des vers*.” Thus speaks Voltaire of Father Joseph. His talents, and influence with Richelieu, grossly exaggerated in his own day, are now rightly estimated.

“ C'étoit en effet un homme infatigable—portant dans les entreprises, l'activité, la souplesse, l'opiniâtreté propres à les faire réussir.”—*Anquetil*. He wrote a Latin poem, called “ La Turciade,” in which he sought to excite the kingdoms of Christendom against the Turks. But the inspiration of Tyrtæus was denied to Father Joseph.

JOSEPH.

That it is strange so great a statesman should  
Be so sublime a poet.

RICHELIEU.

Ah, you rogue ;  
Laws die, Books never. Of my ministry 520  
I am not vain ! but of my muse, I own it.  
Come, you shall hear the verses now (*Takes up a MS.*).

JOSEPH.

My Lord,  
The deeds, the notaries !

RICHELIEU.

True, I pity you ;  
But business first, then pleasure. [*Exit Joseph.*]

RICHELIEU (*sits himself and reading*).

Ah, sublime !

*Enter De Mauprat and Julie.*

DE MAUPRAT.

Oh, speak, my Lord—I dare not think you mock me,  
And yet——

RICHELIEU.

Hush—hush—This line must be consider'd !

JULIE.

Are we not both your children ?

RICHELIEU.

What a couplet !——  
How now ! Oh ! Sir—you live !

DE MAUPRAT.

Why, no, methinks,  
Elysium is not life !

JULIE.

He smiles !—you smile,  
My father ! From my heart for ever, now, 530  
I'll blot the name of orphan !

RICHELIEU.

Rise, my children,  
For ye are mine—mine both ;—and in your sweet

And young delight—your love—(life's first-born glory)  
My own lost youth breathes musical !

DE MAUPRAT.

I'll seek  
Temple and priest henceforward ;—were it but  
To learn Heaven's choicest blessings.

RICHELIEU.

Thou shalt seek  
Temple and priest right soon ; the morrow's sun  
Shall see across these barren thresholds pass  
The fairest bride in Paris.—Go, my children ;  
Even *I* loved once !—Be lovers while ye may ! 540  
How is it with you, Sir ? You bear it bravely :  
You know, it asks the courage of a lion.

[*Exeunt Julie and De Mauprat.*

RICHELIEU.

Oh ! godlike Power ! Woe, Rapture, Penury, Wealth,—  
Marriage and Death, for one infirm old man  
Through a great empire to dispense—withhold—  
As the will whispers ! And shall things—like motes  
That live in my daylight—lackies of court wages,  
Dwarf'd starvelings—mannikins, upon whose shoulders  
The burthen of a province were a load  
More heavy than the globe on Atlas,—cast 550  
Lots for my robes and sceptre ? France ! I love thee !  
All Earth shall never pluck thee from my heart !  
My mistress France—my wedded wife,—sweet France,  
Who shall proclaim divorce for thee and me !

[*Exit Richelieu.*

## ACT II.

## Second Day.

## SCENE I.

*A splendid Apartment in Mauprat's new House. Casements opening to the Gardens, beyond which the domes of the Luxembourg Palace.*

*Enter Baradas.*

BARADAS.

Mauprat's new home :—too splendid for a soldier !  
 But o'er his floors—the while I stalk—methinks  
 My shadow spreads gigantic to the gloom  
 The old rude towers of the Bastile cast far  
 Along the smoothness of the jocund day.—  
 Well, thou hast scaped the fierce caprice of Richelieu ;  
 But art thou farther from the headsman, fool ?  
 Thy secret I have whisper'd to the King ;—  
 Thy marriage makes the King thy foe.—Thou stand'st  
 On the abyss—and in the pool below  
 I see a ghastly, headless phantom mirror'd ;—  
 Thy likeness ere the marriage moon hath waned.  
 Meanwhile—meanwhile—ha—ha, if thou art wedded.  
 Thou art not wived.

10

*Enter Mauprat (splendidly dressed).*

MAUPRAT.

Was ever fate like mine ?  
 So blest, and yet so wretched !

BARADAS.

Joy, de Mauprat !—  
 Why, what a brow, man, for your wedding-day !

DE MAUPRAT.

Jest not !—Distraction !

BARADAS.

What your wife, a shrew  
 Already ? Courage, man—the common lot !

DE MAUPRAT.

Oh! that she were less lovely, or less loved!

BARADAS.

Riddles again!

DE MAUPRAT.

You know, what chanced between  
The Cardinal and myself.

20

BARADAS.

This morning brought  
Your letter:—faith, a strange account! I laugh'd  
And wept at once for gladness.

DE MAUPRAT.

We were wed  
At noon;—the rite perform'd, came hither;—scarcely  
Arrived, when——

BARADAS.

Well?—

DE MAUPRAT.

Wide flew the doors, and lo,  
Messire de Beringhen, and this epistle!

BARADAS.

'Tis the King's hand!—the royal seal!

DE MAUPRAT.

Read—read—

BARADAS (*reading*).

“Whereas Adrien de Mauprat, Colonel and Chevalier in our armies, being already guilty of High Treason, by the seizure of our town of Faviaux, has presumed, without our knowledge, consent, or sanction, to connect himself by marriage with Julie de Mortemar, a wealthy orphan attached to the person of Her Majesty, without our knowledge or consent—We do hereby proclaim and declare the said marriage contrary to law. On penalty of death, Adrien de Mauprat will not communicate with the said Julie de Mortemar by word or letter, save in the presence of our faithful servant the Sieur de Beringhen, and then with such respect and decorum as are due to a Demoiselle attached to the Court of France, until such time as it may suit our royal pleasure to confer with the Holy Church on the formal annulment of the marriage, and with our Council on the punishment to be awarded to Messire de Mauprat, who is

cautioned for his own sake to preserve silence as to our injunction, more especially to Mademoiselle de Mortemar.

“ Given under our hand and seal at the Louvre.

“ LOUIS.”

BARADAS (*returning the letter*).

Amazement!—Did not Richelieu say, the King  
Knew not your crime?

DE MAUPRAT.

He said so.

BARADAS.

Poor de Mauprat!—

See you the snare, the vengeance worse than death, 30  
Of which you are the victim?

DE MAUPRAT.

Ha!

BARADAS (*aside*).

It works!

(*Julie and De Beringhen in the Gardens.*)

You have not sought the Cardinal yet to—

DE MAUPRAT.

No!

Scarce yet my sense awaken'd from the shock;  
Now I will seek him.

BARADAS.

Hold, beware!—Stir not

Till we confer again.

DE MAUPRAT.

Speak out, man!—

BARADAS.

Hush!

Your wife!—De Beringhen!—Be on your guard—  
Obey the royal orders to the letter.

I'll look around your palace. By my troth  
A princely mansion!

DE MAUPRAT.

Stay—

BARADAS.

So new a bridegroom

Can want no visitors;—Your servant, Madam! 40  
 Oh! happy pair—Oh, charming picture!

[*Exit through a side-door.*]

JULIE.

Adrien,

You left us suddenly—Are you not well?

DE MAUPRAT.

Oh, very well—that is—extremely ill!

JULIE.

Ill, Adrien? (*taking his hand*).

DE MAUPRAT.

Not when I see thee.

(*He is about to lift her hand to his lips when De Beringhen coughs and pulls his mantle. Mauprat drops the hand and walks away.*)

JULIE.

Alas!

Should he not love me?

DE BERINGHEN (*aside*).

Have a care, I must  
 Report each word—each gesture to his Majesty.

DE MAUPRAT.

Sir, if you were not in his Majesty's service,  
 You'd be the most officious, impudent,  
 Damn'd busy-body ever interfering  
 In a man's family affairs.

DE BERINGHEN.

But as

I do belong, Sir, to his Majesty—

DE MAUPRAT.

You're lucky!—Still, were we a story higher,  
 'Twere prudent not to go too near the window.

JULIE.

Adrien, what have I done? Say, am I changed  
 Since yesterday?—or was it but for wealth,  
 Ambition, life—that—that—you swore you loved me?

DE MAUPRAT.

I shall go mad!—I do, indeed I do—



DE BERINGHEN (*aside*).

Not love her ! that were highly disrespectful.

JULIE.

You do—what, Adrien ?

DE MAUPRAT.

Oh ! I do, indeed——

I do think, that this weather is delightful ! 60

A charming day ! the sky is so serene !

And what a prospect !—(*to De Beringhen*) Oh ! you Popinjay !

JULIE.

He jests at me !—he mocks me !—yet I love him,

And every look becomes the lips we love !

Perhaps I am too grave ?—You laugh at Julie ;

If laughter please you, welcome be the music !

Only say, Adrien, that you love me.

DE MAUPRAT (*kissing her hand*).

Ay ;

With my whole heart I love you !——

Now, Sir, go,

And tell that to his Majesty !—Who ever

Heard of its being a state-offence to kiss

The hand of one's own wife ? 70

JULIE.

He says he loves me,

And starts away, as if to say “ I love you ”

Meant something *very* dreadful.—Come, sit by me,—

I place your chair !—fie on your gallantry !

(*They sit down ; as he pushes his chair back, she draws hers nearer.*)

JULIE.

Why must this strange Messire de Beringhen

Be always here ? He never takes a hint.

Do you not wish him gone ?

DE MAUPRAT.

Upon my soul

I do, my Julie !—Send him for your *bouquet*,

Your glove, your—anything—

JULIE.

Messire De Beringhen,

I dropp'd my glove in the gardens by the fountain, 80  
 Or the alcove, or—stay—no, by the statue  
 Of Cupid ; may I ask you to—

DE BERINGHEN.

To send for it ?

Certainly (*ringing a bell on the table*). André, Pierre (your  
 rascals, how  
 Do ye call them?)

*Enter Servants.*

Ah—*Madame* has dropp'd her glove  
 In the gardens, by the fountain,—or the alcove ;  
 Or—stay—no, by the statue—eh?—of Cupid.  
 Bring it.

DE MAUPRAT.

Did ever now one pair of shoulders  
 Carry such waggon-loads of impudence  
 Into a gentleman's drawing-room ?

Dear Julie,

I'm busy—letters—visitors—the devil ! 90  
 I do beseech you leave me—I say—leave me.

JULIE (*weeping*).

You are unkind.

*Exit.* (*As she goes out, Mauprat drops on one knee and  
 kisses the hem of her mantle, unseen by her.*)

DE BERINGHEN.

Ten million of apologies—

DE MAUPRAT.

I'll not take one of them. I have, as yet,  
 Withstood all things—my heart—my love—my rights.  
 But Julie's tears !—When is this farce to end ?

DE BERINGHEN.

Oh ! when you please. His Majesty requests me,  
 As soon as you infringe his gracious orders,  
 To introduce you to the Governor  
 Of the Bastile. I should have had that honour  
 Before, but, gad, my foible is good nature ; 100  
 One can't be hard upon a friend's infirmities.

DE MAUPRAT.

I know the King can send me to the scaffold—

Dark prospect!—but I'm used to it; and if  
The Church and Council, by this hour to-morrow,  
One way or other settle not the matter,  
I will——

DE BERINGHEN.

What, my dear Sir?

DE MAUPRAT.

Show you the door,

My dear, dear Sir; talk as I please, with whom  
I please, in my own house, dear Sir, until  
His Majesty shall condescend to find  
A stouter gentleman than you, dear Sir,  
To take me out; and now you understand me,  
My dear, most dear—Oh, damnably dear Sir!

110

DE BERINGHEN.

What, almost in a passion! you will cool  
Upon reflection. Well, since *Madame's* absent,  
I'll take a small refreshment. Now, don't stir;  
Be careful;—how's your burgundy?—I'll taste it—  
Finish it all before I leave you. Nay,  
No form;—you see I make myself at home.

[*Exit De Beringhen.*]

DE MAUPRAT (*going to the door through which Baradas had passed*).

Baradas! Count!

*Enter Baradas.*

You spoke of snares—of vengeance  
Sharper than death—be plainer.

BARADAS.

What so clear?

120

Richelieu has but two passions——

DE MAUPRAT.

Richelieu!

BARADAS.

Yes!

Ambition and revenge—in you both blended.  
First for ambition—Julie is his ward,  
Innocent—docile—pliant to his will—  
He placed her at the court—foresaw the rest—  
The King loves Julie!

DE MAUPRAT.

Merciful Heaven! The King!

BARADAS.

Such Cupids lend new plumes to Richelieu's wings :  
 But the court etiquette must give such Cupids  
 The veil of Hymen—(Hymen but in name).  
 He look'd abroad—found you his foe :—*thus* served 130  
 Ambition—by the grandeur of his ward,  
 And vengeance—by dishonour to his foe !

DE MAUPRAT.

Prove this.

BARADAS.

You have the proof—the royal Letter :—  
 Your strange exemption from the general pardon,  
 Known but to me and Richelieu ; can you doubt  
 Your friend to acquit your foe ? The truth is glaring—  
 Richelieu alone could tell the princely Lover  
 The tale which sells your life,—or buys your honour !

DE MAUPRAT.

I see it all !—Mock pardon—hurried nuptials—  
 False bounty !—all !—the serpent of that smile ! 140  
 Oh ! it stings home !

BARADAS.

You yet shall crush his malice ;  
 Our plans are sure :—Orleans is at our head ;  
 We meet to night ; join us, and with us triumph.

DE MAUPRAT.

*To night ?—Oh Heaven!—my marriage night !—Revenge !*

BARADAS.

What class of men, whose white lips do not curse\*  
 The grim, insatiate, universal tyrant ?  
 We, noble-born—where are our antique rights—  
 Our feudal seignories—our castled strength,  
 That did divide us from the base Plebeians,  
 And made our swords our law—where are they ?—trod 150  
 To dust—and o'er the graves of our dead power  
 Scaffolds are monuments—the Kingly House  
 Shorn of its beams—the Royal Sun of France  
 'Clips'd by this blood-red comet. Where we turn,  
 Nothing but Richelieu !—Armies—Church—State—Laws,  
 But mirrors that do multiply his beams.

\* Omitted in representation from line 146 to 171.

He sees all—acts all—Argus and Briaræus—  
 Spy at our boards—and deathsmen at our hearths,  
 Under the venom of one laidley nightshade,  
 Wither the lilies of all France.

DE MAUPRAT (*impatiently*).

But Julie— 160

BARADAS (*unheeding him*).

As yet the Fiend that serves hath saved his power  
 From every snare; and in the epitaphs  
 Of many victims dwells a warning moral  
 That preaches caution. Were I not assured  
 That what before was hope is ripen'd now  
 Into most certain safety. trust me, Mauprat,  
 I still could hush my hate and mark thy wrongs,  
 And say "Be patient!"—*Now*, the King himself  
 Smiles kindly when I tell him that his peers  
 Will rid him of his Priest. You knit your brows, 170  
 Noble impatience!—Pass we to our scheme!  
 'Tis Richelieu's wont, each morn, within his chapel,  
 (Hypocrite worship ended,) to dispense  
 Alms to the Mendicant friars,—in that guise  
 A band (yourself the leader) shall surround  
 And seize the despot.

DE MAUPRAT.

But the King? but Julie?

BARADAS.

The King, infirm in health, in mind more feeble,  
 Is but the plaything of a Minister's will.  
 Were Richelieu dead—his power were mine; and Louis 180  
 Soon should forget his passion and your crime.  
 But whither now?

DE MAUPRAT.

I know not; I scarce hear thee;

A little while for thought: anon I'll join thee;  
 But now, all air seems tainted, and I loathe  
 The face of man!

[*Exit De Mauprat through the Gardens.*]

BARADAS.

Start from the chase, my prey,  
 But as thou speed'st the hell-hounds of Revenge  
 Pant in thy track and dog thee down.

*Enter De Beringhen, his mouth full, a napkin in his hand.*

DE BERINGHEN.

Chevalier,  
Your cook's a miracle,—what, my Host gone?  
Faith, Count, my office is a post of danger—  
A fiery fellow, Mauprat!—touch and go,—  
Match and saltpetre,—pr—r—r—r—!

BARADAS.

You  
Will be released ere long. The King resolves  
To call the bride to court this day.

190

DE BERINGHEN.

Poor Mauprat!  
Yet, since *you* love the lady, why so careless  
Of the King's suit?

BARADAS.

Because the lady's virtuous,  
And the King timid. Ere he win the suit  
He'll lose the crown,—the bride will be a widow,—  
And I—the Richelieu of the Regent Orleans.

DE BERINGHEN.

Is Louis still so chafed against the Fox,  
For snatching you fair dainty from the Lion?

BARADAS.

So chafed, that Richelieu totters. Yes, the King  
Is half conspirator against the Cardinal.  
Enough of this. I've found the man we wanted,—  
The man to head the hands that murder Richelieu,—  
The man, whose name the synonym for daring.

200

DE BERINGHEN.

He must mean me!—No, Count, I am—I own  
A valiant dog—but still—

BARADAS.

Whom can I mean  
But Mauprat?—Mark, to-night we meet at Marion's,  
There shall we sign:—thence send this scroll (*showing it*) to  
Bouillon.  
You're in that secret (*affectionately*)—one of our new Council.

DE BERINGHEN.

But to admit the Spaniard—France's foe—

210

Into the heart of France,—dethrone the King,—  
It looks like treason, and I smell the headsman.

BARADAS.

Oh, Sir, too late to falter: when we meet  
We must arrange the separate—coarser scheme,  
For Richelieu's death. Of this despatch De Mauprat  
Must nothing learn. He only bites at vengeance,  
And he would start from treason.—We must post him  
Without the door at Marion's—as a sentry.  
(*Aside*)—So, when his head is on the block—his tongue  
Cannot betray our more august designs!

220

DE BERINGHEN.

I'll meet you, if the King can spare me.—(*Aside.*)—No!  
I am too old a goose to play with foxes.  
I'll roost at home. Meanwhile, in the next room  
There's a delicious pâté, let's discuss it.

BARADAS.

Pshaw! a man fill'd with a sublime ambition  
Has no time to discuss your pâtés.

DE BERINGHEN.

Pshaw!

And a man fill'd with as sublime a pâté  
Has no time to discuss ambition.—Gad,  
I have the best of it!

(*Enter Julie hastily with first Courtier.*)

JULIE (*to Courtier*).

A summons, Sir,

To attend the Louvre?—On *this* day, too?

COURTIER.

*Madame,* 230

The royal carriage waits below.—Messire (*to De Beringhen*),  
You will return with us.

JULIE.

What can this mean?—

Where is my husband?

BARADAS.

He has left the house  
Perhaps till nightfall—so he bade me tell you.  
Alas, were I the lord of such fair treasure—

JULIE (*impatiently*).

Till nightfall?—Strange—my heart misgives me!

COURTIER.

*Madame,*

My orders will not brook delay.

JULIE (*to Baradas*).

You'll see him—

And you will tell him!

BARADAS.

From the flowers of Hybla  
Never more gladly did the bee bear honey,  
Than I take sweetness from those rosiest lips,  
Though to the hive of others!

240

COURTIER (*to De Beringhen*).

Come, Messire.

DE BERINGHEN (*hesitating*).

One moment, just to—

COURTIER.

Come, Sir.

DE BERINGHEN.

I shall not

Discuss the pâté after all. 'Ecod,  
I'm puzzled now. I don't know who's the best of it!

*Exit Julie, De Beringhen, and Courtier.*

BARADAS.

Now will this fire his fever into madness!  
All is made clear: Mauprat *must* murder Richelieu—  
Die for that crime:—I shall console his Julie—  
This will reach Bouillon!—from the wrecks of France  
I shall carve out—who knows—perchance a throne!  
All in despite of my Lord Cardinal.—

250

*Enter De Mauprat from the Gardens.*

DE MAUPRAT.

Speak! can it be?—Methought, that from the terrace  
I saw the carriage of the King—and Julie!  
No!—no!—my frenzy peoples the void air  
With its own phantoms!



BARADAS.

Nay, too true.—Alas!  
Was ever lightning swifter, or more blasting,  
Than Richelieu's forkèd guile?

DE MAUPRAT.

I'll to the Louvre——

BARADAS.

And lose all hope!—The Louvre!—the sure gate  
To the Bastile!

DE MAUPRAT.

The King——

BARADAS.

Is but the wax,  
Which Richelieu stamps! Break the malignant *seal*,  
And I will rase the print! Come, man, take heart! 260  
Her virtue well could brave a sterner trial  
Than a few hours of cold imperious courtship.  
Were Richelieu *dust*—no danger!

DE MAUPRAT.

Ghastly Vengeance!

To thee and thine august and solemn sister  
The unrelenting Death! I dedicate  
The blood of Armand Richelieu! When Dishonour  
Reaches our hearths Law dies, and Murther takes  
The angel shape of Justice!

BARADAS.

Bravely said!

At midnight,—Marion's!—Nay, I cannot leave thee  
To thoughts that——

DE MAUPRAT.

Speak not to me!—I am yours!— 270

But speak not! There's a voice within my soul,  
Whose cry could drown the thunder.—Oh! if men  
Will play dark sorcery with the heart of man,  
Let they, who raise the spell, beware the Fiend! [*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II.

*A room in the Palais Cardinal (as in the First Act).*

*Richelieu.—Joseph.*

*François, writing at a table.*

JOSEPH.

Yes ;—Huguet, taking his accustomed round,—  
Disguised as some plain burgher,—heard these rufflers  
Quoting your name :—he listen'd,—“ Pshaw !” said one,  
“ We are to seize the Cardinal in his palace  
To-morrow !”—“ How ?” the other ask'd ;—“ You'll hear  
The whole design to-night ; the Duke of Orleans 280  
And Baradas have got the map of action  
At their fingers' end.”—“ So be it,” quoth the other,  
“ I will be there,—Marion de Lorme's—at midnight !”

RICHELIEU.

I have them, man, I have them !

JOSEPH.

So they say  
Of you, my Lord ;—believe me, that their plans  
Are mightier than you deem. You must employ  
Means no less vast to meet them !

RICHELIEU.

Bah ! in policy  
We foil gigantic danger, not by giants,  
But dwarfs.—The statues of our stately fortune  
Are sculptured by the chisel—not the axe !\* 290  
Ah ! were I younger—by the knightly heart  
That beats beneath these priestly robes, † I would

\* Richelieu not only employed the lowest, but would often consult men commonly esteemed, the dullest. “ Il disoit que dans des choses de très grande importance, il avoit expérimenté, que les moins sages donnoient souvent les meilleurs expédients.”—*Le Clerc*.

† Both Richelieu and Joseph were originally intended for the profession of arms. Joseph had served before he obeyed the spiritual inspiration to become a Capuchin. The death of his brother opened to Richelieu the Bishopric of Luçon ; but his military propensities were as strong as his priestly ambition. I need scarcely add that the Cardinal, during his brilliant campaign in Italy, marched at the head of his troops in complete armour. It was under his administration that occurs the last example of proclaiming war by the chivalric defiance of herald and cartel. Richelieu valued himself much on his personal activity,—for his vanity was as universal as his ambition. A nobleman of the

Have pastime with these cut-throats!—Yea,—as when,  
Lured to the ambush of the expecting foe,—  
I clove my pathway through the plumed sea!  
Reach me yon falchion, François,—not that bauble  
For carpet-warriors,—yonder—such a blade  
As old Charles Martel might have wielded when  
He drove the Saracen from France.

*(François brings him one of the long two-handed swords worn  
in the Middle Ages.)*

With this

I, at Rochelle, did hand to hand engage 300  
The stalwart Englisher,—no mongrels, boy,  
Those island mastiffs,—mark the notch—a deep one—  
His casque made here,—I shore him to the waist!  
A toy—a feather—then!

*(Tries to wield, and lets it fall.)*

You see a child could

Slay Richelieu, now.

FRANÇOIS *(his hand on his hilt)*.

But now, at your command  
Are other weapons, my good Lord.

RICHELIEU *(who has seated himself as to write, lifts the pen)*.

True,—THIS!

Beneath the rule of men entirely great  
The pen is mightier than the sword. Behold  
The arch-enchanted wand!—itself a nothing!—  
But taking sorcery from the master-hand 310  
To paralyse the Cæsars—and to strike  
The loud earth breathless!—Take away the sword—  
States can be saved without it! †

*(Looking on the clock.)*

'Tis the hour,—

Retire, Sir.

*[Exit François.]*

*(A knock is heard. A door, concealed in the arras opens  
cautiously. Enter Marion de Lorme.)*

house of Grammont one day found him employed in *jumping*, and, with all the *savoir vivre* of a Frenchman and a courtier, offered to jump against him. He suffered the Cardinal to jump higher, and soon after found himself rewarded by an appointment. Yet, strangely enough, this vanity did not lead to a patronage injurious to the state; for never before in France was ability made so essential a requisite in promotion. He was lucky in finding the cleverest fellows among his adroitest flatterers.

JOSEPH (*amazed*).

Marion de Lorme !

RICHELIEU.

Hist !—Joseph,

Keep guard.

(*Joseph retires to the principal entrance.*)

My faithful Marion !

MARION.

Good, my Lord,  
They meet to-night in my poor house. The Duke  
Of Orleans heads them.

RICHELIEU.

Yes—go on.

MARION.

His Highness  
Much question'd if I knew some brave, discreet,  
And vigilant man, whose tongue could keep a secret,  
And who had those twin qualities for service,  
The love of gold, the hate of Richelieu.—

320

RICHELIEU.

You ?—

MARION.

Made answer, “ Yes—my brother ;—bold and trusty ;  
Whose faith, my faith could pledge ;” —the Duke then  
bade me  
Have him equipp'd and arm'd—well-mounted—ready  
This night to part for Italy.

RICHELIEU.

Aha !—

Has Bouillon too turn'd traitor !—So, methought !—  
What part of Italy ?

MARION.

The Piedmont frontier,  
Where Bouillon lies encamp'd.

RICHELIEU.

Now there is danger!

Great danger!—If he tamper with the Spaniard,  
 And Louis list not to my council, as,  
 Without sure proof, he will not,—France is lost.  
 What more?

330

MARION.

Dark hints of some design to seize  
 Your person in your palace. Nothing clear—  
 His Highness trembled while he spoke—the words  
 Did choke each other!

RICHELIEU.

So!—Who is the brother  
 You recommended to the Duke?

MARION.

Whoever  
 Your Eminence may father!—

RICHELIEU.

Darling Marion! \*

*(Goes to the table, and returns with a large bag of gold.)*

There—pshaw—a trifle!—What an eye you have!  
 And what a smile—child!—*(kisses her)*—Ah! you fair per-  
 dition—  
 'Tis well I'm old!

MARION *(aside and seriously)*.

What a great man he is!

340

RICHELIEU.

You are sure they meet?—the hour?

\* Voltaire openly charges Richelieu with being the lover of Marion de Lorme, whom the great poet of France, Victor Hugo, has sacrificed History to adorn with qualities which were certainly not added to her personal charms.—She was not less perfidious than beautiful.—Le Clerc, properly, refutes the accusation of Voltaire, against the discretion of Richelieu; and says, very justly, that if the great minister had the frailties of human nature, he learnt how to veil them,—at least when he obtained the scarlet. In earlier life he had been prone to gallantries which a little prepossessed the King (who was formal and decorous, and threw a singular coldness into the few attachments he permitted to himself) against the aspiring intriguer. But these gayer occupations died away in the engagement of higher pursuits or of darker passions.

MARION.

At midnight.

RICHELIEU.

And

You will engage to give the Duke's despatch  
To whom I send ?

MARION.

Aye, marry !

RICHELIEU (*aside*).

Huguet ? No ;  
He will be wanted elsewhere.—Joseph ?—zealous,  
But too well known—too much the *elder* brother !  
Mauprat—alas—it is his wedding-day !—  
François ?—the Man of Men !—unnoted—young—  
Ambitious—(*goes to the door*)—François !

70

*Enter François.*

RICHELIEU.

Follow this fair lady :

350

(Find him the suiting garments, Marion,) take  
My fleetest steed :—arm thyself to the teeth ;  
A packet will be given you—with orders,  
No matter what !—The instant that your hand  
Closes upon it—clutch *it*, like your honour,  
Which Death alone can steal, or ravish—set  
Spurs to your steed—be breathless, till you stand  
Again before me.—Stay, Sir !—You will find me  
Two short leagues hence—at Ruelle, in my castle.  
Young man, be blithe !—for—note me—from the hour  
I grasp that packet—think your guardian Star  
Rains fortune on you !

80

360

FRANÇOIS.

If I fail—

RICHELIEU.

Fail—fail ?

In the lexicon of youth, which Fate reserves  
For a bright manhood, there is no such word

As—*fail!*—(You will instruct him further, Marion)  
Follow her—but at distance;—speak not to her,  
Till you are housed;—Farewell, boy! Never say  
“*Fail*” again.

90

FRANÇOIS.

I will not!

RICHELIEU (*patting his locks*).

There's my young hero!—

[*Exeunt François—Marion.*]

RICHELIEU.

So, they would seize my person in this palace?—  
I cannot guess their scheme:—but my retinue  
Is here too large!—a single traitor could  
Strike impotent the faith of thousands;—Joseph,  
Art sure of Huguet?—Think—we hang'd his Father!

370

JOSEPH.

But you have bought the Son;—heap'd favours on him!

RICHELIEU.

Trash!—favours past—that's nothing.—In his hours  
Of confidence with you, has he named the favours  
To *come*—he counts on?

JOSEPH.

Yes:—a Colonel's rank,  
And Letters of Nobility.

RICHELIEU.

What, Huguet!—

(*Here Huguet enters, as to address the Cardinal, who does  
not perceive him.*)

HUGUET.

My own name, soft—(*glides behind the screen!*)

RICHELIEU.

Colonel and Nobleman!

My bashful Huguet—that can never be!—  
We have him not the less—we'll *promise it!*

380

And see the King withholds!—Ah, kings are oft  
 A great convenience to a minister!  
 No wrong to Huguet either!—Moralists  
 Say, Hope is sweeter than Possession!—Yes—  
 We'll count on Huguet! Favours *past* do gorge  
 Our dogs; leave service drowsy—dull the scent,  
 Slacken the speed;—favours *to come*, my Joseph,  
 Produce a lusty, hungry gratitude,  
 A ravenous zeal, that of the commonest cur  
 Would make a Cerberus.—You are right, this treason 390  
 Assumes a fearful aspect:—but once crush'd,  
 Its very ashes shall manure the soil  
 Of power; and ripen such full sheaves of greatness,  
 That all the summer of my fate shall seem  
 Fruitless beside the autumn!

(*Huguet holds up his hand menacingly, and creeps out.*)

JOSEPH.

The saints grant it!

RICHELIEU (*solemnly*).

Yes—for sweet France, Heaven grant it!—O my country,  
 For thee—thine only—though men deem it not—  
 Are toil and terror my familiars!—I  
 Have made thee great and fair—upon thy brows  
 Wreath'd the old Roman laurel:—at thy feet 400  
 Bow'd nations down.—No pulse in my ambition  
 Whose beatings were not measured from thy heart!  
 In the old times before us, patriots lived\*  
 And died for liberty—

JOSEPH.

As you would live  
 And die for despotry—

RICHELIEU.

False monk, not so,  
 But for the purple and the power wherein  
 State clothes herself.—I love my native land  
 Not as Venetian, Englisher, or Swiss,  
 But as a Noble and a Priest of France;  
 “All things for France”—lo, my eternal maxim! 410  
 The vital axle of the restless wheels  
 That bear me on! With her, I have entwined

\* Omitted, in representation, from 1. 402 to 419.



My passions and my fate—my crimes, my virtues—  
 Hated and loved \*, and schemed, and shed men's blood,  
 As the calm crafts of Tuscan Sages teach  
 Those who would make their country great. Beyond  
 The Map of France—my heart can travel not,  
 But fills that limit to its farthest verge ;  
 And while I live—Richelieu and France are one.  
 We Priests, to whom the Church forbids in youth 120  
 The plighted one—to manhood's toil denies  
 The soother helpmate—from our wither'd age  
 Shuts the sweet blossoms of the second spring  
 That smiles in the name of Father—We are yet  
 Not holier than Humanity, and must  
 Fulfil Humanity's condition—Love !  
 Debarr'd the Actual, we but breathe a life  
 To the chill Marble of the Ideal—Thus,  
 In thy unseen and abstract Majesty,

\* Richelieu did in fact so thoroughly associate himself with the State, that, in cases where the extreme penalty of the law had been incurred, Le Clerc justly observes that he was more inexorable to those he had favoured—even to his own connections—than to other and more indifferent offenders. It must be remembered as some excuse for his unrelenting sternness that, before his time, the great had been accustomed to commit any disorder with impunity—even the crime of treason, "*auparavant on ne faisoit poser les armes aux rebelles qu'en leur accordant quelque récompense.*" On entering into the administration, he therefore laid it down as a maxim necessary to the existence of the State, that "no crime should be committed with impunity." To carry out this maxim, the long-established licence to crime made even justice seem cruel. But the victims most commiserated from their birth or accomplishments, as Montmorenci, or Cinq Mars, were traitors in actual conspiracy against their country, and would have forfeited life in any land where the punishment of death existed, and the lawgiver was strong enough to vindicate the law. Richelieu was in fact a patriot unsoftened by philanthropy. As in Venice (where the favourite aphorism was, Venice first,\* Christianity next), so, with Richelieu, the primary consideration was, "what will be best for the Country?" He had no abstract principle, whether as a politician or a priest, when applied to the world that lay beyond the boundaries of France. Thus he, whose object was to found in France a splendid and imperious despotism—assisted the Parliamentary party in England, and signed a treaty of alliance and subsidies with the Catalan rebels for the establishment of a Republic in Barcelona ;—to convulse other Monarchies was to consolidate the growing Monarchy of France.—So he, who completely crushed the Protestant party at home, braved all the wrath of the Vatican, and even the resentment of the King, in giving the most essential aid to the Protestants abroad. There was, indeed, a largeness of view in his hostility to the French Huguenots, which must be carefully distinguished from the intolerance of the mere priest. He opposed them, not as a Catholic, but as a Statesman. The Huguenots were strong republicans, and had formed plans for dividing France into provincial commonwealths ; and the existence of Rochelle was absolutely incompatible with the integrity of the French Monarchy. It was a second capital held by the Huguenots, claiming independent authority, and the right to treat with Foreign Powers. Richelieu's final conquest was marked by a humanity, that had nothing of the bigot. The Huguenots obtained a complete amnesty, and had only to regret the loss of privileges and fortifications which could not have existed with any security to the rest of France.

\* *Pria Veneziana, poi Christiane.*"

My France—my Country, I have bodied forth  
 A thing to love. What are these robes of state,  
 This pomp, this palace ? perishable baubles !  
 In this world two things only are immortal—  
 Fame and a People !

430

*Enter Huguet.*

HUGUET.

My Lord Cardinal,  
 Your Eminence bade me seek you at this hour.

RICHELIEU.

Did I ?—True, Huguet.—So—you overheard  
 Strange talk amongst these gallants ? Snares and traps  
 For Richelieu ?—Well—we'll balk them ; let me think—  
 The men at arms you head—how many ?

HUGUET.

Twenty,\*

My Lord.

RICHELIEU.

All trusty ?

HUGUET.

Yes, for ordinary  
 Occasions—if for great ones, I would change  
 Three-fourths at least.

440

RICHELIEU.

Ay, what are great occasions ?

HUGUET.

Great bribes !

RICHELIEU (*to Joseph*).

Good lack, he knows some paragons  
 Superior to great bribes !

HUGUET.

True Gentlemen  
 Who have transgress'd the Laws—and value life  
 And lack not gold ; your Eminence alone  
 Can grant them pardon. *Ergo* you can trust them !

\* The guard attached to Richelieu's person was, in the first instance, fifty arquebussiers, afterwards increased to two companies of cavalry and two hundred musqueteers. Huguet is, therefore, to be considered merely as the lieutenant of a small detachment of this little army. In point of fact, the subdivisions of the guard took it in turns to serve.

RICHELIEU.

Logic!—So be it—let this *honest* twenty  
 Be arm'd and mounted—(*aside.*) So they meet at midnight,  
 The attempt on me to-morrow—Ho! we'll strike 450  
 'Twixt wind and water.—(*Aloud.*) Does it need much time  
 To find these ornaments to Human Nature?

HUGUET.

My Lord—the trustiest of them are not birds  
 That love the daylight.—I do know a haunt  
 Where they meet nightly—

RICHELIEU.

Ere the dawn be grey,  
 All could be arm'd, assembled, and at Ruelle  
 In my old hall?

HUGUET.

By one hour after midnight.

RICHELIEU.

The castle's strong. You know its outlets, Huguet?  
 Would twenty men, well posted, keep such guard 460  
 That not one step—(and Murder's step is stealthy)—  
 Could glide within—unseen?

HUGUET.

A triple wall—  
 A drawbridge and portcullis—twenty men  
 Under my lead, a month might hold that castle  
 Against a host.

RICHELIEU.

They do not strike till morning,  
 Yet I will shift the quarter—Bid the grooms  
 Prepare the litter—I will hence to Ruelle  
 While daylight last—and one hour after midnight  
 You and your twenty saints shall seek me thither!  
 You're made to rise!—You are, Sir;—eyes of lynx,  
 Ears of the stag, a footfall like the snow; 470

You are a valiant fellow ;—yea, a trusty,  
 Religious, exemplary, incorrupt,  
 And precious jewel of a fellow, Huguet !  
 If I live long enough,—ay, mark my words—  
 If I live long enough, you'll be a Colonel—  
 Noble perhaps !—One hour, Sir, after midnight.

HUGUET.

You leave me dumb with gratitude, my Lord ;  
 I'll pick the trustiest (*aside*) Marion's house can furnish !

[*Exit Huguet.*]

RICHELIEU.

How like a spider shall I sit in my hole,  
 And watch the meshes tremble.

JOSEPH.

But, my Lord,  
 Were it not wiser still to man the palace,  
 And seize the traitors in the act ?

480

RICHELIEU.

No ; Louis,  
 Long chafed against me—Julie stolen from him,  
 Will rouse him more.—He'll say I hatch'd the treason,  
 Or scout my charge :—He half desires my death ;  
 But the despatch to Bouillon, some dark scheme  
 Against *his* crown—*there* is our weapon, Joseph !  
 With that all safe—without it, all is peril !  
 Meanwhile to my old castle ; *you* to court,  
 Diving with careless eyes into men's hearts,  
 As ghostly churchmen should do ! See the King,  
 Bid him peruse that sage and holy treatise,  
 Wherein 'tis set forth how a Premier should  
 Be chosen from the Priesthood—how the King  
 Should never listen to a single charge  
 Against his servant, nor conceal one whisper  
 That the rank envies of a court distil  
 Into his ear—to fester the fair name  
 Of my—I mean his Minister !—Oh ! Joseph,

490



RICHELIEU (*after a pause*).

You——

Yes, I believe you—yes—for all men fear you—  
 And the world loves you not.—And I, friend Joseph,  
 I am the only man, who could, my Joseph,  
 Make you a Bishop.\*—Come, we'll go to dinner,  
 And talk the while of methods to advance  
 Our Mother Church. †—Ah, Joseph,—*Bishop Joseph!*

520

\* Joseph's ambition was not, however, so moderate; he refused a bishopric, and desired the Cardinal's Hat, for which favour Richelieu openly supplicated the Holy See, but contrived somehow or other never to effect it, although two ambassadors applied for it at Rome.

† The peculiar religion of Père Joseph may be illustrated by the following anecdote:—An officer, whom he had dismissed upon an expedition into Germany, moved by conscience at the orders he had received, returned for farther explanations, and found the Capucin *disant sa messe*. He approached and whispered "But, my father, if these people defend themselves—" "Kill all" (Qu'on tue tout), answered the good father, continuing his devotions.

END OF ACT II.

## ACT III.

Second Day (Midnight).

## SCENE I.

*Richelieu's Castle at Ruelle — A Gothic chamber — Moonlight at the window, occasionally obscured.*

RICHELIEU (*reading*).\*

“In silence, and at night, the Conscience feels  
That life should soar to nobler ends than Power.”  
So sayest thou, sage and sober moralist!  
But wert thou tried?—Sublime Philosophy,  
Thou art the Patriarch's ladder, reaching heaven,  
And bright with beck'ning angels—but, alas!  
We see thee, like the Patriarch, but in dreams,  
By the first step—dull-slumbering on the earth.  
I am not happy!—with the Titan's lust  
I woo'd a goddess, and I clasp a cloud. 10  
When I am dust, my name shall, like a star,  
Shine through wan space, a glory—and a prophet  
Whereby pale seers shall from their æry towers  
Con all the ominous signs, benign or evil,  
That make the potent astrologue of kings.  
But shall the Future judge me by the ends  
That I have wrought—or by the dubious means  
Through which the stream of my renown hath run  
Into the many-voiced unfathomed Time?  
Foul in its bed lie weeds—and heaps of slime, 20  
And with its waves—when sparkling in the sun,  
Oft times the secret rivulets that swell  
Its might of waters—blend the hues of blood.  
Yet are my sins not those of CIRCUMSTANCE,

\* I need not say that the great length of this soliloquy adapts it only for the closet, and that but few of the lines are preserved on the stage. To the reader, however, the passages omitted in representation will not, perhaps, be the most uninteresting in the play, and may be deemed necessary to the completion of the Cardinal's portrait,—action on the stage supplying so subtly the place of words in the closet. The self-assured sophistries which, in the text, mingle with Richelieu's better-founded arguments in apology for the darker traits of his character, are to be found scattered throughout the writings ascribed to him. The reader will observe that in this self-confession lies the latent poetical justice,—which separates happiness from success.—[Lines retained on the stage from 28 to 40.]

That all-pervading atmosphere, wherein  
 Our spirits, like the unsteady lizard, take  
 The tints that colour, and the food that nurtures?  
 O! ye, whose hour-glass shifts its tranquil sands  
 In the unvex'd silence of a student's cell ;  
 Ye, whose untempted hearts have never toss'd 30  
 Upon the dark and stormy tides where life  
 Gives battle to the elements,—and man  
 Wrestles with man for some slight plank, whose weight  
 Will bear but one—while round the desperate wretch  
 The hungry billows roar—and the fierce Fate,  
 Like some huge monster, dim-seen through the surf,  
 Waits him who drops ;—ye safe and formal men,  
 Who write the deeds, and with unfeverish hand  
 Weigh in nice scales the motives of the Great,  
 Ye cannot know what ye have never tried ! 40  
 History preserves only the fleshless bones  
 Of what we are—and by the mocking skull  
 The would-be wise pretend to guess the features !  
 Without the roundness and the glow of life  
 How hideous is the skeleton ! Without  
 The colourings and humanities that clothe  
 Our errors, the anatomists of schools  
 Can make our memory hideous !

I have wrought

Great uses out of evil tools—and they  
 In the time to come may bask beneath the light 50  
 Which I have stolen from the angry gods,  
 And warn their sons against the glorious theft,  
 Forgetful of the darkness which it broke.  
 I have shed blood—but I have had no foes  
 Save those the State had\*—if my wrath was deadly,  
 'Tis that I felt my country in my veins,  
 And smote her sons as Brutus smote his own. †  
 And yet I am not happy—blanch'd and sear'd  
 Before my time—breathing an air of hate,  
 And seeing daggers in the eyes of men, 60  
 And wasting powers that shake the thrones of earth  
 In contest with the insects—bearding kings  
 And braved by lackies ‡—murder at my bed ;

\* It is well known that when, on his death-bed, Richelieu was asked if he forgave his enemies; he replied, "I never had any, but those of the State." And this was true enough, for Richelieu and the State were one.

† Richelieu's vindication of himself from cruelty will be found in various parts of Petitot's Collection, vols. xxi. xxx. (*bis*.)

‡ Voltaire has a striking passage on the singular fate of Richelieu, recalled every hour from his gigantic schemes to frustrate some miserable cabal of the



And lone amidst the multitudinous web,  
 With the dread Three—that are the Fates who hold  
 The woof and shears—the Monk, the Spy, the Headsman.  
 And this is Power! Alas! I am not happy.

(*After a pause.*)

And yet the Nile is fretted by the weeds  
 Its rising roots not up; but never yet  
 Did one least barrier by a ripple vex 70  
 My onward tide, unswept in sport away.  
 Am I so ruthless then that I do hate  
 Them who hate me? Tush, tush! I do not hate;  
 Nay, I forgive. The Statesman writes the doom.  
 But the Priest sends the blessing. I forgive them,  
 But I destroy; forgiveness is mine own,  
 Destruction is the State's! For private life,  
 Scripture the guide—for public, Machiavel.  
 Would Fortune serve me if the Heaven were wroth?  
 For chance makes half my greatness. I was born 80  
 Beneath the aspect of a bright-eyed star,  
 And my triumphant adamant of soul  
 Is but the fix'd persuasion of success.  
 Ah!—here!—that spasm!—again!—How Life and Death  
 Do wrestle for me momentarily!—And yet  
 The King looks pale. I shall outlive the King!  
 And then, thou insolent Austrian—who didst gibe  
 At the ungainly, gaunt, and daring lover,\*  
 Sleeking thy looks to silken Buckingham,—  
 Thou shalt—no matter!—I have outlived love. 90  
 O! beautiful—all golden—gentle Youth!  
 Making thy palace in the careless front  
 And hopeful eye of man—ere yet the soul  
 Hath lost the memories which (so Plato dream'd)

ante-room. Richelieu would often exclaim, that "Six pieds de terre (as he called the king's cabinet) lui donnaient plus de peine que tout le reste de l'Europe." The death of Wallenstein, sacrificed by the Emperor Ferdinand, produced a most lively impression upon Richelieu. He found many traits of comparison between Ferdinand and Louis—Wallenstein and himself. In the *Memoirs*—now regarded by the best authorities as written by his sanction, and in great part by himself—the great Frenchman bursts (when alluding to Wallenstein's murder) into a touching and pathetic anathema on the *mière de cette vie* of dependence on jealous and timid royalty, which he himself, while he wrote, sustained. It is worthy of remark, that it was precisely at the period of Wallenstein's death that Richelieu obtained from the king an augmentation of his guard.

\* Richelieu was commonly supposed, though I cannot say I find much evidence for it, to have been too presuming in an interview with Anne of Austria (the Queen), and to have bitterly resented the contempt she expressed for him. The Duke of Buckingham's frantic and Quixotic passion for the Queen is well known.

Breath'd glory from the earlier star it dwelt in—  
 O! for one gale from thine exulting morning,  
 Stirring amidst the roses, where of old  
 Love shook the dew-drops from his glancing hair!  
 Could I recall the past—or had not set  
 The prodigal treasures of the bankrupt soul 100  
 In one slight bark upon the shoreless sea;  
 The yoked steer, after his day of toil,  
 Forgets the goad and rests—to me alike  
 Or day or night—Ambition has no rest!  
 Shall I resign—who can resign himself?  
 For custom is ourself;—as drink and food  
 Become our bone and flesh—the aliments  
 Nurturing our nobler part, the mind—thoughts, dreams,  
 Passions, and aims, in the revolving cycle  
 Of the great alchemy—at length are made 110  
 Our mind itself; and yet the sweets of leisure—  
 An honour'd home—far from these base intrigues—  
 An eyrie on the heaven-kiss'd heights of wisdom—

*(Taking up the book.)*

Speak to me, moralist!—I'll heed thy counsel.

Were it not best—

*(Enter François hastily, and in part disguised.)*

RICHELIEU *(flinging away the book.)*

Philosophy, thou liest!

Quick—the despatch!—Power—Empire! Boy—the packet!

FRANCOIS.

Kill me, my Lord.

RICHELIEU.

They knew thee—they suspected—

They gave it not—

FRANCOIS.

He gave it—he—the Count

De Baradas—with his own hand he gave it!

RICHELIEU.

Baradas. Joy! out with it!

FRANCOIS.

Listen,

And then dismiss me to the headsmen. 120

RICHELIEU.

Ha!

Go on.

FRANCOIS.

They led me to a chamber—There  
Orleans and Baradas—and some half-score,  
Whom I know not—were met——

RICHELIEU.

Not more !

FRANCOIS.

But from  
The 'adjoining chamber broke the din of voices,  
'The clattering tread of armed men ;—at times  
A shriller cry, that yell'd out, " Death to Richelieu !"

RICHELIEU.

Speak not of *me* : thy *country* is in danger !  
The 'adjoining room—So, so—a *separate* treason !  
The one thy ruin, France !—the meaner crime,  
Left to their tools, my murder !—

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FRANCOIS.

Baradas  
Questioned me close—demurr'd—until, at last,  
O'erruled by Orleans,—gave the packet—told me  
That life and death were in the scroll—this gold—

RICHELIEU.

Gold is no proof—

FRANCOIS.

And Orleans promised thousands,  
When Bouillon's trumpets in the streets of Paris  
Rang out shrill answer ;—hastening from the house,  
My footstep in the stirrup, Marion stole  
Across the threshold, whispering " Lose no moment,  
Ere Richelieu have the packet : tell him too—  
Murder is in the winds of Night, and Orleans  
Swears, ere the dawn the Cardinal shall be clay."  
She said, and trembling fled within ; when, lo !  
A hand of iron griped me ; thro' the dark  
Gleam'd the dim shadow of an armed man :  
Ere I could draw—the prize was wrested from me,  
And a hoarse voice gasp'd—" Spy, I spare thee, for  
This steel is virgin to thy Lord !" —with that  
He vanish'd.—Scared and trembling for thy safety,  
I mounted, fled, and, kneeling at thy feet,

140

150

Implore thee to acquit my faith—but not,  
Like him, to spare my life.—

RICHELIEU.

Who spake of *life* ?

I bade thee grasp that treasure as thine *honour*—  
A jewel worth whole hecatombs of lives !  
Begone—redeem thine honour—back to Marion—  
Or Baradas—or Orleans—track the robber—  
Regain the packet—or crawl on to Age—  
Age and grey hairs like mine—and know, thou hast lost  
That which had made thee great and saved thy country.—  
See me not till thou'st bought the right to seek me.— 160  
Away !—Nay, cheer thee—thou hast not fail'd yet,—  
*There's no such word as "fail !"*

FRANCOIS.

Bless you, my Lord,  
For that one smile !—I'll wear it on my heart  
To light me back to triumph.\* (*Exit.*)

RICHELIEU.

The poor youth !  
An elder had ask'd life !—I love the young !  
For as great men live not in their own time,  
But the next race,—so in the young, my soul  
Makes many Richelieus.—He will win it yet.  
François !—He's gone. My murder ! Marion's warning !  
This bravo's threat ! O for the morrow's dawn !— 170  
I'll set my spies to work—I'll make all space  
(As does the sun) an Universal Eye—  
Huguet shall track—Joseph confess—ha ! ha !—  
Strange, while I laugh'd I shudder'd, and ev'n now  
Thro' the chill air the beating of my heart  
Sounds like a death-watch by a sick man's pillow ;  
If Huguet *could* deceive me—hoofs without—  
The gates unclose—steps near and nearer !

(*Enter Julie.*)

JULIE.

Cardinal !

My father ! (*falls at his feet.*)

\* The fear and the hatred which Richelieu generally inspired were not shared by his dependants and those about his person, who are said "to have adored him."—*Ses domestiques le regardaient comme le meilleur des maîtres.*—Le Clerc. In fact, although *il étoit orgueilleux et colère*,—he was, *en même temps, affable et plein de douceur dans l'abord* ; and he was no less generous to those who served than severe to those who opposed him.

RICHELIEU.

Julie at this hour!—and tears!  
What ails thee?

180

JULIE.

I am safe; I am with thee!—

RICHELIEU.

Safe! why in all the storms of this wild world  
What wind would mar the violet?

JULIE.

That man—  
Why did I love him?—clinging to a breast  
That knows no shelter?

Listen—late at noon—  
The marriage-day—ev'n then no more a lover—  
He left me coldly,—well,—I sought my chamber  
To weep and wonder—but to hope and dream.  
Sudden a mandate from the king—to attend  
Forthwith his pleasure at the Louvre.

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RICHELIEU.

Ha!—  
You did obey the summons; and the king  
Reproach'd your hasty nuptials.—

JULIE.

Were that all!  
He frown'd and chid;—proclaim'd the bond unlawful:  
Bade me not quit my chamber in the palace,  
And there at night—alone—this night—all still—  
He sought my presence—dared—thou read'st the heart,  
Read mine!—I cannot speak it!

RICHELIEU.

He a king,—  
You—woman; well,—you yielded!

JULIE.

Cardinal—  
Dare you say “yielded?”—Humbled and abash'd,  
*He* from the chamber crept—this mighty Louis;  
Crept like a baffled felon!—yielded! Ah!  
More royalty in woman's honest heart  
Than dwells within the crowned majesty  
And sceptred anger of a hundred kings!  
Yielded!—Heavens!—yielded;

200

RICHELIEU.

To my breast,—close—close !  
 The world would never need a Richelieu, if  
 Men—bearded, mailed men—the Lords of Earth—  
 Resisted flattery, falsehood, avarice, pride,  
 As this poor child with the dove's innocent scorn 210  
 Her sex's tempters, Vanity and Power!—  
 He left you—well!

JULIE.

Then came a sharper trial !  
 At the king's suit the Count de Baradas  
 Sought me to soothe, to fawn, to flatter, while  
 On his smooth lip insult appear'd more hateful  
 For the false mask of pity: letting fall  
 Dark hints of treachery, with a world of sighs  
 That heaven had granted to so base a Lord  
 The heart whose coldest friendship were to him  
 What Mexico to misers! Stung at last 220  
 By my disdain, the dim and glimmering sense  
 Of his cloak'd words broke into bolder light,  
 And THEN—ah! then, my haughty spirit fail'd me !  
 Then I was weak—wept—oh! such bitter tears!  
 For (turn thy face aside, and let me whisper  
 The horror to thine ear) then did I learn  
 That he—that Adrien—that my husband—knew  
 The king's polluting suit, and deemed it *honour!*  
 Then all the terrible and loathsome truth  
 Glared on me ;—coldness—waywardness—reserve— 230  
 Mystery of looks—words—all unravell'd,—and  
 I saw the impostor, where I had loved the God!—

RICHELIEU.

I think thou wrong'st thy husband—but proceed.

JULIE.

Did you say “wrong'd” him?—Cardinal, my father,  
 Did you say “wrong'd?” Prove it, and life shall grow  
 One prayer for thy reward and his forgiveness.

RICHELIEU.

Let me know all.

JULIE.

To the despair he caused  
 The courtier left me ; but amid the chaos  
 Darted one guiding ray—to 'scape—to fly—

Reach Adrien, learn the worst—'twas then near midnight : 240  
 Trembling I left my chamber—sought the queen—  
 Fell at her feet—reveal'd the unholy peril—  
 Implored her aid to flee our joint disgrace.  
 Moved, she embraced and soothed me ; nay, preserved ;  
 Her word sufficed to unlock the palace-gates :  
 I hasten'd home—but home was desolate,—  
 No Adrien there ! Fearing the worst, I fled  
 To thee, directed hither. As my wheels  
 Paused at thy gates—the clang of arms behind—  
 The ring of hoofs—

RICHELIEU.

"Twas but my guards, fair trembler. 250  
 (So Huguet keeps his word, my omens wrong'd him.)

JULIE.

Oh, in one hour what years of anguish crowd !

RICHELIEU.

Nay, there's no danger now. Thou needest rest.  
 Come, thou shalt lodge beside me. Tush ! be cheer'd,  
 My rosiest Amazon—thou wrong'st thy Theseus.  
 All will be well—yes, yet all well.

[*Exeunt through a side door.*]

## SCENE II.

*Enter HUGUET—DE MAUPRAT, in complete armour, his vizor down.*

(*The moonlight obscured at the casement.*)

HUGUET.

Not here !

DE MAUPRAT.

Oh, I will find him, fear not. Hence, and guard  
 The galleries where the menials sleep—plant sentries  
 At every outlet—Chance should throw no shadow  
 Between the vengeance and the victim ! Go !—  
 Ere yon brief vapour that obscures the moon,  
 As doth our deed pale conscience, pass away,  
 The mighty shall be ashes.

HUGUET.

Will you not

A second arm ?

DE MAUPRAT.

To slay one weak old man?—

Away! No lesser wrongs than mine can make  
This murder lawful.—Hence!

HUGUET.

A short farewell!

[Exit HUGUET.]

*Re-enter RICHELIEU (not perceiving DE MAUPRAT).*

RICHELIEU.

How heavy is the air!—the vestal lamp  
Of the sad Moon, weary with vigil, dies  
In the still temple of the solemn heaven!  
The very darkness lends itself to fear—  
To treason—

270

DE MAUPRAT.

And to death!

RICHELIEU.

My omens lied not!

What art thou, wretch?

DE MAUPRAT.

Thy doomsman!

RICHELIEU.

Ho, my guards!

Huguet! Montbrassil! Vermont!

DE MAUPRAT.

Ay, thy spirits

Forsake thee, wizard; thy bold men of mail  
Are *my confederates*. Stir not! but one step,  
And know the next—thy grave!

RICHELIEU.

Thou liest, knave!

I am old, infirm—most feeble—but thou liest!  
Armand de Richelieu dies not by the hand  
Of man—the stars have said it\*—and the voice

280

\* In common with his contemporaries, Richelieu was credulous in astrology and less lawful arts. He was too fortunate a man not to be superstitious.



Of my own prophet and oracular soul  
 Confirms the shining Sibyls! Call them all—  
 Thy brother butchers! Earth has no such fiend—  
 No! as one parricide of his father-land,  
 Who dares in Richelieu murder France!

DE MAUPRAT.

Thy stars

Deceive thee, Cardinal; thy soul of wiles  
 May against kings and armaments avail,  
 And mock the embattled world; but powerless now      290  
 Against the sword of one resolved man,  
 Upon whose forehead thou hast written shame!

RICHELIEU.

I breathe;—he is not a hireling. Have I wronged thee?  
 Beware surmise—suspicion—lies! I am  
 Too great for men to speak the truth of me!

DE MAUPRAT.

Thy *acts* are thy accusers, Cardinal!  
 In his hot youth, a soldier, urged to crime  
 Against the State, placed in your hands his life;—  
 You did not strike the blow—but, o'er his head,  
 Upon the gossamer thread of your caprice,      300  
 Hovered the axe.—His the brave spirit's hell,  
 The twilight terror of suspense;—your death  
 Had set him free:—he purposed not, nor prayed it.  
 One day you summoned—mocked him with smooth pardon—  
 Showered wealth upon him—bade an Angel's face  
 Turn Earth to Paradise——

RICHELIEU.

Well!

DE MAUPRAT.

Was this mercy?

A Cæsar's generous vengeance?—Cardinal, no!  
 Judas, not Cæsar, was the model! You  
 Saved him from death for shame; reserved to grow  
 The scorn of living men—to his dead sires      310  
 Leprous reproach—scoff of the age to come—  
 A kind convenience—a Sir Pandarus  
 To his own bride, and the august adulterer!  
 Then did the first great law of human hearts,  
 Which with the patriot's, not the rebel's, name

Crowned the first Brutus, when the Tarquin fell,  
 Make Misery royal—raise this desperate wretch  
 Into thy destiny ! Expect no mercy !  
 Behold De Mauprat !

(*Lifts his vizor.*)

RICHELIEU.

To thy knees, and crawl  
 For pardon ; or, I tell thee, thou shalt live 320  
 For such remorse, that, did I hate thee, I  
 Would bid thee strike, that I might be avenged !—  
 It was to save my Julie from the King,  
 That in thy valour I forgave thy crime ;—  
 It was, when thou—the rash and ready tool—  
 Yea, of that shame thou loath'st—did'st leave thy hearth  
 To the polluter—in these arms thy bride  
 Found the protecting shelter thine withheld.

(*Goes to the side door.*)

Julie de Mauprat—Julie !

*Enter Julie.*

Lo ! my witness !

DE MAUPRAT.

What marvel's this ?—I dream ! My Julie—*thou* ! 330  
 This, thy beloved hand ?

JULIE.

Henceforth all bond  
 Between us twain is broken. Were it not  
 For this old man, I might, in truth, have lost  
 The right—now mine—to scorn thee !

RICHELIEU.

So, you hear her ?

DE MAUPRAT.

Thou with some slander hast her sense infected !

JULIE.

No, Sir : he did excuse thee in despite  
 Of all that wears the face of truth. Thy *friend*—  
 'Thy *confidant*—familiar—*Baradas*—  
 Himself revealed thy baseness,

DE MAUPRAT.

Baseness !

RICHELIEU.

Ay ;

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That *thou* didst court dishonour.

DE MAUPRAT.

Baradas !

Where is thy thunder, Heaven?—Duped!—snared!—undone!  
 Thou—thou could'st not believe him! Thou dost love me!  
 Love cannot feed on falsehoods!

JULIE (*aside*).

Love him!—Ah!

Be still, my heart! Love you I did:—how fondly,  
 Woman—if women were my listeners now—  
 Alone could tell!—For ever fled my dream:  
 Farewell—all's over!

RICHELIEU.

Nay, my daughter, these

Are but the blinding mists of day-break love  
 Sprung from its very light, and heralding 350  
 A noon of happy summer.—Take her hand  
 And speak the truth, with which your heart runs over—  
 That this Count Judas—this Incarnate Falsehood—  
 Never lied more, than when he told thy Julie  
 That Adrien loved her not—except, indeed,  
 When he told Adrien, Julie could betray him.

JULIE (*embracing De Mauprat*).

You love me, then!—you love me!—and they wrong'd you!

DE MAUPRAT.

Ah! could'st thou doubt it?

RICHELIEU.

Why, the very mole

Less blind than thou! Baradas loves thy wife;—  
 Had hoped her hand—aspired to be that cloak 360  
 To the king's will, which to thy bluntness seems  
 The Centaur's poisonous robe—hopes even now  
 To make thy corpse his footstool to thy bed!  
 Where was thy wit, man?—Ho! these schemes are glass!  
 The very sun shines through them.

DE MAUPRAT.

O, my Lord,

Can you forgive <sup>me</sup> ~~you~~?

RICHELIEU.

Ay, and save you!

DE MAUPRAT.

Save!—

Terrible word!—O, save *thyself*:—these halls  
Swarm with thy foes: already for thy blood  
Pants thirsty Murder!

JULIE.

Murder!

RICHELIEU.

Hush! put by

The woman. Hush! a shriek—a cry—a breath  
Too loud, would startle from its horrent pause  
The swooping Death! Go to the door, and listen!—  
Now for escape!

370

DE MAUPRAT.

None—none! Their blades shall pass  
This heart to thine.

RICHELIEU (*drily*).

An honourable outwork,  
But much too near the citadel. I think  
That I can trust you now (*slowly, and gazing on him*):—yes;  
I can trust you.  
How many of my troop league with you?

DE MAUPRAT.

All!—

We *are* your troop!

RICHELIEU.

And Huguet?—

DE MAUPRAT.

Is our captain.

RICHELIEU.

A retribution Power!—This comes of spies!  
All? then the lion's skin too short to-night,—  
Now for the fox's!—

380

JULIE.

A hoarse, gathering murmur!—  
Hurrying and heavy footsteps!—

RICHELIEU.

Ha!—the posterns?

DE MAUPRAT.

No egress where no sentry!

RICHELIEU.

Follow me—

I have it!—to my chamber—quick! Come, Julie!

Hush! Mauprat, come!

*Murmur at a distance—Death to the Cardinal!*

RICHELIEU.

Bloodhounds, I laugh at ye!—ha! ha!—we will

Baffle them yet.—Ha!—ha!

*Exeunt Julie, Mauprat, Richelieu.*HUGUET (*without*).

This way—this way!

## SCENE III.

*Enter Huguet and the Conspirators.*

HUGUET.

De Mauprat's hand is never slow in battle;—

Strange, if it falter now! Ha! gone!

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

Perchance

The fox had crept to rest; and to his lair

Death, the dark hunter, tracks him.

390

*Enter Mauprat (throwing open the doors of the recess, in which a bed, whereon Richelieu lies extended.)*

MAUPRAT.

Live the King!

Richelieu is dead!

HUGUET (*advancing towards the recess; MAUPRAT following, his hand on his dagger*).

Are his eyes open?

DE MAUPRAT.

Ay.

As if in life!

HUGUET (*turning back*).

I will not look on him.

You have been long.

DE MAUPRAT.

I watch'd him till he slept.

Heed me.—No trace of blood reveals the deed ;—  
Strangled in sleep. His health hath long been broken—  
Found breathless in his bed. So runs our tale,  
Remember ! Back to Paris—Orleans gives  
Ten thousand crowns, and Baradas a lordship,  
To him who first gluts vengeance with the news  
That Richelieu is in heaven ! Quick, that all France  
May share your joy !

400

HUGUET.

And you ?

DE MAUPRAT.

Will stay, to crush

Eager suspicion—to forbid sharp eyes  
To dwell too closely on the clay ; prepare  
The rites, and place him on his bier—this *my* task.  
I leave to you, sirs, the more grateful lot  
Of wealth and honours. Hence !

HUGUET.

I shall be noble !

DE MAUPRAT.

Away !

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

Five thousand crowns !

OMNES.

To horse !—to horse !

[*Exeunt Conspirators.*]

## SCENE IV.

*Still night.—A room in the house of Count De Baradas,  
lighted, &c.*

*Orleans, De Beringhen.*

DE BERINGHEN.

I understand. Mauprat kept guard without :  
Knows nought of the despatch—but heads the troop 410  
Whom the poor Cardinal fancies his protectors.  
Save us from such protection!

ORLEANS.

Yet, if Huguet,  
By whose advice and proffers we renounced  
Our earlier scheme, should still be Richelieu's minion,  
And play us false—

DE BERINGHEN.

The fox must then devour  
The geese he gripes, (I'm out of it, thank Heaven!)  
And you must swear you smelt the trick, but seem'd  
To approve the deed—to render up the doers.

*Enter BARADAS.*

BARADAS.

Julie is fled :—the King, whom now I left  
To a most thorny pillow, vows revenge 420  
On her—on Mauprat—and on Richelieu! Well;  
We loyal men anticipate his wish  
Upon the last—and as for Mauprat, —  
(*Showing a writ.*)

DE BERINGHEN.

Hum!

They say the devil invented printing! Faith,  
He has some hand in writing parchment—eh, Count?  
What mischief now?

BARADAS.

The King, at Julie's flight  
Enraged, will brook no rival in a subject—  
So on this old offence—the affair of Paviaux—  
Ere Mauprat can tell tales of us, we build  
His bridge between the dungeon and the grave. 430

ORLEANS.

Well ; if our courier can but reach the army,  
The cards are ours !—and yet, I own, I tremble.  
Our names are in the scroll—discovery, death !

BARADAS.

Success, a crown !

DE BERINGHEN (*apart to Baradas*).

Our future regent is

No hero.

BARADAS (*to De Beringhen*).

But his rank makes others valiant ;

And on his cowardice I mount to power.

Were Orleans Regent—what were Baradas ?

Oh ! by the way—I had forgot, your highness,

Friend Huguet whisper'd me, “ Beware of Marion :

I've seen her lurking near the Cardinal's palace.”

Upon that hint—I've found her lodgings elsewhere.

440

ORLEANS.

You wrong her, Count :—Poor Marion !—she adores me.

BARADAS (*apologetically*).

Forgive me, but——

*Enter Page.*

PAGE.

My Lord, a rude, strange soldier,

Breathless with haste, demands an audience.

BARADAS.

—So !

'The archers ?

PAGE.

In the ante-room, my Lord,

As you desired.

BARADAS.

'Tis well—admit the soldier.

[*Exit Page.*]

Huguet ! I bade him seek me here !

*Enter Huguet.*

HUGUET.

My Lords,

The deed is done. Now, Count, fulfil your word,  
And make me noble !



BARADAS.

Richelieu dead?—art sure?

How died he?

HUGUET.

Strangled in his sleep:—no blood,

450

No tell-tale violence

BARADAS.

Strangled? monstrous villain!

Reward for murder! Ho, there!

[Stamping.

*Enter Captain, with five Archers.*

HUGUET.

No, thou durst not!

BARADAS.

Seize on the ruffian—bind him—gag him! Off  
To the Bastile!

HUGUET.

Your word—your plighted faith!

BARADAS.

Insolent liar!—ho, away!

HUGUET.

Nay, Count;

I have that about me, which—

BARADAS.

Away with him!

[*Exeunt Huguet and Archers.*Now, then, all's safe; Huguet must die in prison,  
So Mauprat:—coax or force the meaner crew  
To fly the country. Ha, ha! thus, your highness,  
Great men make use of little men.

DE BERINGHEN.

My Lords,

460

Since our suspense is ended—you'll excuse me;  
'Tis late—and, *entre nous*, I have not supp'd yet!  
I'm one of the new Council now, remember;  
I feel the public stirring here already;  
A very craving monster. *Au revoir!*[*Exit de Beringhen.*

ORLEANS.

No fear, now Richelieu's dead.

BARADAS.

And could he come  
 To life again, he could not keep life's life—  
 His power,—nor save De Mauprat from the scaffold,—  
 Nor Julie from these arms—nor Paris from  
 The Spaniard—nor your highness from the throne ! 470  
 All ours ! all ours ! in spite of my Lord Cardinal !

*Enter Page.*

PAGE.

A gentleman, my Lord, of better mien  
 Than he who last—

BARADAS.

Well, he may enter.

*[Exit Page.]*

ORLEANS.

Who

Can this be ?

BARADAS.

One of the conspirators :  
 Mauprat himself, perhaps.

*Enter François.*

FRANCOIS.

My Lord——

BARADAS.

Ha, traitor !

In Paris still ?

FRANCOIS.

The packet—the despatch—  
 Some knave play'd spy without, and reft it from me,  
 Ere I could draw my sword.

BARADAS.

Play'd spy *without* !

Did he wear armour ?

FRANCOIS.

Ay, from head to heel.

ORLEANS.

One of our band. Oh, heavens !

BARADAS.

Could it be Mauprat? 480

Kept guard at the *door*—knew *nought of the despatch*—  
How *HE*?—and yet, who other?

FRANCOIS.

Ha, De Mauprat!

The night was dark—his vizor closed.

BARADAS.

'Twas he!

How could he guess?—'sdeath! if he should betray us.  
His hate to Richelieu dies with Richelieu—and  
He was not great enough for treason.—Hence!  
Find Mauprat—beg, steal, filch, or force it back,  
Or, as I live, the halter—

FRANCOIS.

By the morrow

I will regain it, (*aside*) and redeem my honour!

(*Exit FRANCOIS.*)

ORLEANS.

Oh! we are lost—

BARADAS.

Not so! But cause on cause 490

For Mauprat's seizure—silence—death! Take courage.

ORLEANS.

Should it once reach the King, the Cardinal's arm  
Could smite us from the grave.

BARADAS.

Sir, think it not!

I hold De Mauprat in my grasp. To-morrow  
And France is ours!—Thou dark and fallen Angel,  
Whose name on earth's AMBITION—thou that mak'st  
Thy throne on treasons, stratagems, and murder—  
And with thy fierce and blood-red smile canst quench  
The guiding stars of solemn empire—hear us—  
(For we are thine)—and light us to the goal!

500

END OF ACT III.

## ACT IV.

Third Day.

## SCENE I.

*The Gardens of the Louvre.—Orleans, Baradas, De Berin-  
ghen, Courtiers, &c.*

ORLEANS.

How does my brother bear the Cardinal's death?

BARADAS.

With grief, when thinking of the toils of State ;  
With joy, when thinking on the eyes of Julie :—  
At times he sighs, "Who now shall govern France?"  
Anon exclaims—"Who now shall baffle Louis?"

*(Enter Louis and other Courtiers. They uncover.)*

ORLEANS.

Now, my liege, now, I can embrace a brother.

LOUIS.

Dear Gaston, yes.—I do believe you *love* me ;—  
Richelieu denied it—sever'd us too long.  
A great man, Gaston ! Who shall govern France ?

BARADAS.

Yourself, my liege. That swart and potent star  
Eclipsed your royal orb. He serv'd the country,  
But did he *serve*, or seek to *sway* the King ?

10

LOUIS.

You're right—he was an able politician \*—  
That's all :—between ourselves, Count, I suspect  
The largeness of his learning—specially  
In falcons †—a poor huntsman, too !

\* Omitted in representation from line 13 to 66.

† Louis XIII. is said to have possessed some natural talents, and in earlier youth to have exhibited the germs of noble qualities ; but a blight seems to have passed over his maturer life. Personally brave, but morally timid,—always governed, whether by his mother or his minister, and always repining at the yoke. The only affection amounting to a passion that he betrayed was for

BARADAS.

Ha—ha!

Your Majesty remembers—

LOUIS.

Ay, the blunder

Between the *greffier* and the *sonillard* when—*(Checks and crosses himself.)*

Alas! poor sinners that we are! we laugh

While this great man—a priest, a cardinal.

20

A faithful servant—out upon us!—

BARADAS.

Sire,

If my brow wear no cloud, 'tis that the Cardinal  
No longer shades the King.LOUIS *(looking up at the skies)*.

Oh, Baradas!

Am I not to be pitied?—what a day

For—

BARADAS.

Sorrow?—No, sire!

LOUIS.

Bah! for *hunting*, man.

And Richelieu's dead; 'twould be an indecorum

Till he is buried—*(yawns)*—life is very tedious.

I made a madrigal on life last week:

You do not sing,\* Count?—Pity; you should learn.

Poor Richelieu had no ear—yet a great man.

30

Ah! what a weary weight devolves upon me!

These endless wars—these thankless Parliaments—

the sports of the field; yet it was his craving weakness (and this throws a kind of false interest over his character,) to wish to be loved. He himself loved no one. He suffered the only woman who seems to have been attached to him to wither in a convent—he gave up favourite after favourite to exile or the block. When Richelieu died, he said coldly, "Voilà un grand politique mort!" and when the ill-fated but unprincipled Cinq Mars, whom he called *le cher ami*, was beheaded, he drew out his watch at the fatal hour, and said with a smile, "I think at this moment that *le cher ami fait une vilaine mine.*" Nevertheless his conscience at times (for he was devout and superstitious) made him gentle, and his pride and his honour would often, when least expected, rouse him into haughty but brief resistance to the despotism under which he lived.

\* Louis had some musical taste and accomplishment, wherewith he often communicated to his favourites some of that wearisome ennui under which he himself almost unceasingly languished.

The snares in which he tangled States and Kings,  
 Like the old fisher of the fable, Proteus,  
 Netting great Neptune's wariest tribes, and changing  
 Into all shapes when Craft pursued himself:  
 Oh, a great man!

BARADAS.

Your royal mother said so,  
 And died in exile.

LOUIS (*sadly*).

True: I loved my mother!\*

BARADAS.

The Cardinal dies.—Yet day revives the earth;  
 The rivers run not back. In truth, my liege,  
 Did your high orb on others shine as him,  
 Why, things as dull in their own selves as I am  
 Would glow as brightly with the borrowed beam.†

40

LOUIS.

Ahem!—He was too stern.

ORLEANS.

A very Nero.

BARADAS.

His power was like the Capitol of old—  
 Built on a human skull.

LOUIS.

And, had he lived,  
 I know another head, my Baradas,

\* One of Louis's most bitter complaints against Richelieu was the continued banishment of the Queen Mother. It is impossible, however, not to be convinced that the return of that most worthless intriguante was wholly incompatible with the tranquillity of the kingdom. Yet, on the other hand, the poverty and privation which she endured in exile, are discreditable to the generosity and the gratitude of Richelieu—she was his first patron, though afterwards his most powerful persecutor.

† In his Memoirs Richelieu gives an amusing account of the insolence and arts of Baradas, and observes, with indignant astonishment, that the favourite was never weary of repeating to the King that he (Baradas) would have made just as great a minister as Richelieu. It is on the attachment of Baradas to La Cressias, a maid of honour to the Queen Mother, of whom, according to Baradas, the King was enamoured also, that his love for the Julie de Mortemar of the play has been founded. The secret of Baradas' sudden and extraordinary influence with the King seems to rest in the personal adoration which he professed for Louis, with whom he affected all the jealousy of a lover, but whom he flattered with the ardent chivalry of a knight. Even after his disgrace he placed upon his banner, "Fiat voluntas tua."

That would have propp'd the pile : I've seen him eye thee  
With a most hungry fancy.

BARADAS (*anxiously*).

Sire, I knew

You would protect me.

LOUIS.

Did you so : of course !

50

And yet he had a way with him—a something

That always—But no matter—he is dead.

And, after all, men called his King “The Just,”\*

And so I am. Dear Count, this silliest Julie,

I know not why, she takes my fancy. Many

As fair, and certainly more kind ; but yet

It is so. Count, I am no lustful Tarquin,

And do abhor the bold and frontless vices

Which the Church justly censures ; yet, 'tis sad

On rainy days to drag out weary hours †—

60

Deaf to the music of a woman's voice—

Blind to the sunshine of a woman's eyes.

It is no sin in Kings to seek amusement ;

And that is all I seek. I miss her much—

She has a silver laugh—a rare perfection.

BARADAS.

Richelieu was most disloyal in that marriage.

LOUIS (*querulously*).

He knew that Julie pleased me : —a clear proof

He never loved me !

BARADAS.

Oh, most clear !—But now

No bar between the lady and your will !

This writ makes all secure : a week or two

70

In the Bastile will sober Mauprat's love,

And leave him eager to dissolve a hymen

That brings him such a home.

\* Louis was called *The Just*, but for no other reason than that he was born under the *Libra*.

† Louis XIII. did not resemble either his father or his son in the ardour of his attachments ; if not wholly platonic, they were wholly unimpassioned : yet no man was more jealous, or more unscrupulously tyrannical when the jealousy was aroused.

LOUIS.

See to it, Count ;

*(Exit Baradas.)*

I'll summon Julie back. A word with you.

*(Takes aside First Courtier and De Beringhen, and passes, conversing with them, through the gardens.)**Enter Francois.*

FRANCOIS.

All search, as yet, in vain for Mauprat!—Not  
 At home since yesternoon—a soldier told me  
 He saw him pass this way with hasty strides ;  
 Should he meet Baradas—they'd rend it from him—  
 And then—benignant Fortune smiles upon me— 80  
 I am thy son!—if thou desert'st me now,  
 Come, Death and snatch me from disgrace. But, no,  
 There's a great Spirit ever in the air  
 That from prolific and far-spreading wings  
 Scatters the seeds of honour—yea, the walls  
 And moats of castled forts—the barren seas,  
 The cell wherein the pale-eyed student holds  
 Talk with melodious science—all are sown  
 With everlasting honours, if our souls  
 Will toil for fame as boors for bread—

*(Enter Mauprat.)*

MAUPRAT.

Oh, let me— 90

Let me but meet him foot to foot—I'll dig  
 The Judas from his heart ;—albeit the King  
 Should o'er him cast the purple !

FRANCOIS.

Mauprat ! hold :—

Where is the——

MAUPRAT.

Well ! What would'st thou ?

FRANCOIS.

The despatch !

The packet.—LOOK ON ME—I serve the Cardinal—  
 You know me.—Did you not keep guard last night  
 By Marion's house ?

MAUPRAT.

I did :—no matter now !—

They told me, *he was here* !—



FRANCOIS.

O joy! quick—quick—  
The packet thou didst wrest from me?

MAUPRAT.

The packet?—  
What art thou he, I deem'd the Cardinal's spy 100  
(Dupe that I was)— and overhearing Marion—

FRANCOIS.

The same—restore it!—haste!

MAUPRAT.

I have it not:—  
Methought it but reveal'd our scheme to Richelieu,  
And, as we mounted, gave it to—

*(Enter Baradas.)*

Stand back!

Now, villain! now—I have thee!

*(To François.)—Hence, Sir!—Draw!*

FRANCOIS.

Art mad?—the King's at hand! leave *him* to Richelieu!  
Speak—the despatch—to whom—

MAUPRAT *(dashing him aside and rushing to Baradas).*

Thou triple slanderer!

I'll set my heel upon thy crest!

*(A few passes.)*

FRANCOIS.

Fly—fly!—

The King!—

*Enter at one side Louis, Orleans, De Beringhen, Courtiers,  
&c.—at the other, the Guards hastily.*

LOUIS.

Swords drawn—before our very palace!—  
Have our laws died with Richelieu?

BARADAS.

Pardon, Sire,— 110  
*My* crime but self-defence.\* *(Aside to King.)* It is De  
Mauprat!

\* One of Richelieu's severest and least politic laws was that which made duelling a capital crime. Never was the punishment against the offence more relentlessly enforced; and never were duels so desperate and so numerous. The punishment of death must be evidently ineffectual so long as to refuse a duel is to be dishonoured, and so long as men hold the doctrine, however wrong, that it is better to part with the life that Heaven gave than the honour man makes. In fact, the greater the danger he incurred, the greater was the punctilio of the cavalier of that time in braving it.

LOUIS.

Dare he thus brave us ?

*(Baradas goes to the guard and gives the writ.)*

MAUPRAT.

Sire, in the Cardinal's name—

BARADAS.

Seize him—disarm—to the Bastile !

*(De Mauprat seized, struggles with the guard—François restlessly endeavouring to pacify and speak to him—when the gates open. Enter Richelieu—Joseph—followed by arquebussiers.)*

BARADAS.

The Dead

Return'd to life !

LOUIS.

What a *mock* death ! this tops

The Infinite of Insult.

DE MAUPRAT *(breaking from the guards)*.

Priest and Hero!—

For you are both—protect the truth!—

RICHELIEU *(taking the writ from the guard.)*

What's this ?

DE BERINGHEN.

Fact in Philosophy. Foxes have got  
Nine lives, as well as cats!—

BARADAS.

Be firm, my liege.

LOUIS.

I have assumed the sceptre—I will wield it !

JOSEPH.

The tide runs counter—there'll be shipwreck somewhere. 120  
*(Baradas and Orleans keep close to the King—whispering and prompting him when Richelieu speaks.)*

RICHELIEU.

High treason—Faviaux ! still that stale pretence !  
My liege, bad men (ay, Count, most *knarish* men !)  
Abuse your royal goodness.—For this soldier,  
France hath none braver—and his youth's hot folly,  
Mised—(by whom *your Highness* may conjecture !)—  
Is long since cancell'd by a loyal manhood.—  
I, Sire, have pardoned him.

LOUIS.

And we do give  
Your pardon to the winds.—Sir, do your duty!

RICHELIEU.

What, Sire?—you do not know—Oh, pardon me—  
You know not yet, that this brave, honest, heart 130  
Stood between mine and murder!—Sire! for my sake—  
For your old servant's sake—undo this wrong.  
See, let me rend the sentence.

LOUIS.

At your peril!  
This is too much :—Again, Sir, do your duty!

RICHELIEU.

Speak not, but go :—I would not see young Valour  
So humbled as grey Service!

DE MAUPRAT.

Fare you well!  
Save Julie, and console her.

FRANCOIS (*aside to Mauprat*).

The despatch!  
Your fate, foes, life, hang on a word!—to whom?

DE MAUPRAT.

To Huguet.

FRANCOIS.

Hush—keep council!—silence—hope!  
(*Exit Mauprat and Guard.*)

BARADAS (*aside to François*).

Has he the packet?

FRANCOIS.

He will not reveal— 140  
(*Aside.*) Work, brain!—beat, heart!—“*There's no such word  
as fail.*”

(*Exit François.*)RICHELIEU (*fiercely*).

Room, my Lords, room!—The minister of France  
Can need no intercession with the King.

(*They fall back.*)

LOUIS.

What means this false report of death, Lord Cardinal?

RICHELIEU.

Are you then anger'd, Sire, that I live still?

LOUIS.

No ; but such artifice—

RICHELIEU.

Not mine :—look elsewhere !

Louis—my castle swarm'd with the assassins.

BARADAS (*advancing*).

We have punish'd them already. Huguet now  
In the Bastile.—Oh ! my Lord, *we* were prompt  
To avenge you—*we* were—

RICHELIEU.

WE ?—Ha ! ha ! you hear, 150

My liege ! What page, man, in the last court grammar  
Made you a plural ?—Count, you have seized the *hireling* :—  
Sire, shall I name the *master* !

LOUIS.

Tush ! my Lord,

The old contrivance :—ever does your wit  
Invent assassins,—that ambition may  
Slay rivals—

RICHELIEU.

Rivals, sire !—in what ?

Service to France ? *I have none* ! Lives the man  
Whom Europe, paled before your glory, deems  
Rival to Armand Richelieu ?

LOUIS.

What, so haughty !

Remember, he who made, can unmake.

160

RICHELIEU.

Never !

Never ! Your anger can recall your trust,  
Annul my office, spoil me of my lands,  
Rifle my coffers,—but my name—my deeds,  
Are royal in a land beyond your sceptre !  
Pass sentence on me, if you will ; from Kings,  
Lo, I appeal to Time ! \*Be just, my liege—  
I found your kingdom rent with heresies  
And bristling with rebellion ; lawless nobles  
And breadless serfs ; England fomenting discord ;  
Austria—her clutch on your dominion ; Spain  
Forging the prodigal gold of either Ind  
To armed thunderbolts. The Arts lay dead,  
Trade rotted in your marts, your Armies mutinous,  
Your Treasury bankrupt. Would you now revoke

170

\* Omitted in representation, from "Be just," &amp;c., line 167, to line 188.

Your trust, so be it! and I leave you, sole  
 Supremest Monarch of the mightiest realm,  
 From Ganges to the Icebergs:—Look without  
 No foe not humbled!—Look within; the Arts  
 Quit for your schools—their old Hesperides  
 The golden Italy! while through the veins  
 Of your vast empire flows in strengthening tides  
 TRADE, the calm health of nations!

180

Sire, I know  
 Your smoother courtiers please you best—nor measure  
 Myself with them,—yet sometimes I would doubt  
 If Statesmen rock'd and dandled into power  
 Could leave such legacies to kings!

(*Louis appears irresolute.*)

BARADAS (*passing him, whispers*).

But Julie,

Shall I not summon her to Court?

LOUIS (*motions to Baradas and turns haughtily to the  
 Cardinal*).

Enough!

Your Eminence must excuse a longer audience.  
 To your own palace:—For our conference, this  
 Nor place—nor season.

190

RICHELIEU.

Good my liege, for *Justice*

All place a temple, and all season, summer!—

Do you deny me justice?—Saints of Heaven!

He turns from me!—*Do you deny me justice?*

For fifteen years, while in these hands dwelt Empire,

The humblest craftsman—the obscurest vassal—

The very leper shrinking from the sun,

Tho' loathed by Charity, might ask for justice!—

Not with the fawning tone and crawling mien

Of some I see around you—Counts and Princes—

200

Kneeling for *favours*;—but, erect and loud,

As men who ask man's rights!—my liege, my Louis,

Do you refuse me justice—audience even—

In the pale presence of the baffled Murder?\*

\* For the haughty and rebuking tone which Richelieu assumed in his ex-  
 postulations with the King, see his *Memoirs* (passim) in Peritot's collection,  
 vols. 22—30 (*bis*). Montesquieu, in one of his brilliant antitheses, says well of  
 Richelieu, "Il avila le roi, mais il ilustra le règne."

LOUIS.

Lord Cardinal—one by one you have sever'd from me  
 The bonds of human love. All near and dear  
 Mark'd out for vengeance—exile or the scaffold.  
 You find me now amidst my trustiest friends,  
 My closest kindred ;—you would tear them from me ;  
 They murder *you* forsooth, since *me* they love. 210  
 Eno' of plots and treasons for one reign !  
 Home !—Home ! and sleep away these phantoms !

RICHELIEU.

Sire !

I—patience, Heaven !—sweet Heaven !—Sire, from the foot  
 Of that Great Throne, these hands have raised aloft  
 On an Olympus, looking down on mortals  
 And worshipp'd by their awe—before the foot  
 Of that high throne,—spurn you the grey-hair'd man,  
 Who gave you empire—and now sues for safety ?

LOUIS.

No :—when we see your Eminence in truth  
 At the *foot* of the throne—we'll listen to you. 220  
[Exit Louis.]

ORLEANS.

Saved !

BARADAS.

For this deep thanks to Julie and to Mauprat !

RICHELIEU.

My Lord de Baradas—I pray your pardon—  
 You are to be my successor !—your hand, sir !

BARADAS (*aside*).

What can this mean !—

RICHELIEU.

It trembles, see ! it trembles !  
 The hand that holds the destinies of nations  
 Ought to shake less !—poor Baradas !—poor France !

BARADAS.

Insolent—

[Exeunt Baradas and Orleans.]

## SCENE IV.

RICHELIEU.

Joseph—Did you hear the king?

JOSEPH.

I did—there's danger! Had you been less haughty\*—

RICHELIEU.

And suffer'd slaves to chuckle—"see the Cardinal—  
How meek his Eminence is to-day"—I tell thee  
This is a strife in which the loftiest look  
Is the most subtle armour—

230

JOSEPH.

But—

RICHELIEU.

No time

For ifs and buts. I will accuse these traitors!  
François shall witness that De Baradas  
Gave him the secret missive for De Bouillon.  
And told him life and death were in the scroll.  
I will—I will—

JOSEPH.

Tush! François is your creature;  
So they will say, and laugh at you!—*your witness*  
*Must be that same Despatch.*

RICHELIEU.

Away to Marion!

JOSEPH.

I have been there—she is seized—removed—imprison'd—  
By the Count's orders. 240

\* However "*orgueilleux*" and "*colère*" in his disputes with Louis, the Cardinal did not always disdain recourse to the arts of the courtier;—once, after an angry discussion with the king, in which, as usual, Richelieu got the better, Louis, as they quitted the palace together, said, rudely, "*Sortez le premier; vous êtes bien le roi de France.*" "*Si je passe le premier,*" replied the minister, after a moment's hesitation, and with great adroitness, "*ce ne peut être que comme le plus humble de vos serviteurs;*" and he took a flambeau from one of the pages, to light the king as he walked before him—"en reculant et sans tourner le dos."

RICHELIEU.

Goddess of bright dreams,  
My Country—shalt thou lose me now, when most  
Thou need'st thy worshipper? My native land!  
Let me but ward this dagger from thy heart,  
And die—but on thy bosom!

*Enter JULIE.*

JULIE.

Heaven! I thank thee!  
I cannot be, or this all-powerful man  
Would not stand idly thus.

RICHELIEU.

What dost *thou* here?  
Home!

JULIE.

Home!—is *Adrien there?*—you're dumb—yet strive  
For words; I see them trembling on your lip, 250  
But choked by pity. *It was truth—all truth!*  
Seized—the Bastile—and in your presence too!  
Cardinal, where is *Adrien?* Think—he saved  
Your life:—your name is infamy, if wrong  
Should come to his!

RICHELIEU.

Be sooth'd, child.

JULIE.

Child no more;  
I love, and I am woman! Hope and suffer—  
Love, suffering, hope,—what else doth make the strength  
And majesty of woman?—Where is *Adrien?*

RICHELIEU *to* JOSEPH.

Your youth was never young—*you* never loved:—  
Speak to her—

260

JOSEPH.

Nay, take heed—the king's command,  
'Tis true—I mean—the—

JULIE *to* RICHELIEU.

Let thine eyes meet mine;  
Answer me but one word—I am a wife—  
I ask thee for my *home*—my FATE—my ALL!  
Where is my *husband?*



RICHELIEU.

You are Richelieu's ward,  
A soldier's bride: they who insist on truth  
Must out-face fear;—you ask me for your husband?  
*There*—where the clouds of heaven look darkest, o'er  
The domes of the Bastile!

JULIE.

I thank you, father,  
You see I do not shudder. Heaven forgive you  
The sin of this desertion! 270

RICHELIEU (*detaining her*).

Whither wouldst thou?

JULIE.

Stay me not. Fie! I should be there already.  
I am thy ward, and haply he may think  
Thou'st taught *me* also to forsake the wretched!

RICHELIEU.

I've fill'd those cells—with many—traitors all.  
Had *they* wives too?—Thy memories, Power, are solemn!  
Poor sufferer!—think'st thou that yon gates of woe  
Unbar to love? Alas! if love once enter,  
'Tis for the last farewell; between those walls  
And the mute grave\*—the blessed household sounds 280  
Only heard once—while, hungering at the door,  
The headsman whets the axe.

JULIE.

O, mercy! mercy!  
Save him, restore him, father! Art thou not  
The Cardinal-King?—the Lord of life and death—  
Beneath whose light, as deeps beneath the moon,  
The solemn tides of Empire ebb and flow?—  
Art thou not Richelieu?

RICHELIEU.

Yesterday I was!--  
To-day, a very weak old man!--To-morrow,  
I know not what!

JULIE.

Do you conceive his meaning?  
Alas! I cannot. But, methinks, my senses 290  
Are duller than they were!

\* Selon l'usage de Louis XIII., faire arrêter quelqu'un pour crime d'état, et le faire mourir, l'était à peu près le même chose.—*Le Clerc*.

JOSEPH.

The King is chafed  
Against his servant. Lady, while we speak,  
The lackey of the ante-room is not  
More powerless than the Minister of France.

RICHELIEU.

And yet the air is still ; Heaven wears no cloud ;\*  
From Nature's silent orbit starts no portent  
To warn the unconscious world ;—albeit, this night  
May with a morrow teem which, in my fall,  
Would carry earthquake to remotest lands,  
And change the Christian globe. What would'st thou, woman ?  
Thy fate and his, with mine, for good or ill, [300  
Are woven threads. In my vast sum of life  
Millions such units merge.

*Enter First Courtier.*

FIRST COURTIER.

Madame de Mauprat !  
Pardon, your Eminence—even now I seek  
This lady's home—commanded by the King  
To pray her presence.

JULIE (*clinging to Richelieu*).

Think of my dead father !—  
Think, how, an infant, clinging to your knees,  
And looking to your eyes, the wrinkled care  
Fled from your brow before the smile of childhood,  
Fresh from the dews of heaven ! Think of this,  
And take me to your breast. 310

RICHELIEU.

To those who sent you !—  
And say you found the virtue they would slay  
Here—couch'd upon this heart, as at an altar,  
And shelter'd by the wings of sacred Rome !  
Begone !

FIRST COURTIER.

My Lord, I am your friend and servant—  
Misjudge me not ; but never yet was Louis  
So roused against you :—shall I take this answer ?—  
It were to be your foe.

\* Omitted in representation from line 295 to 302.

RICHELIEU.

All time my foe,  
If I, a Priest, could cast this holy Sorrow  
Forth from her last asylum!

FIRST COURTIER.

He is lost!

320

*(Exit First Courtier.)*

RICHELIEU.

God help thee, child!—she hears not! Look upon her!  
The storm, that rends the oak, uproots the flower.  
Her father loved me so! and in that age  
When friends are brothers! She has been to me  
Soother, nurse, plaything, daughter. Are these tears?\*

Oh! shame, shame!—dotage!

JOSEPH.

Tears are not for eyes  
That rather need the lightning, which can pierce  
Through barred gates and triple walls, to smite  
Crime, where it cowers in secret!—The Despatch!  
Set every spy to work;—the morrow's sun  
Must see that written treason in your hands,  
Or rise upon your ruin.

330

RICHELIEU.

Ay—and close

Upon my corpse!—I am not made to live—  
Friends, glory, France, all rest from me;—my star  
Like some vain holiday mimicry of fire,  
Piercing imperial heaven, and falling down  
Rayless and blacken'd, to the dust—a thing  
For all men's feet to trample! Yea!—to-morrow  
Triumph or death! Look up, child!—Lead us, Joseph.

*As they are going out, enter Baradas and De Beringhen.*

BARADAS.

My Lord, the King cannot believe your Eminence  
So far forgets your duty, and his greatness,  
As to resist his mandate! Pray you, Madam,  
Obey the King—no cause for fear!

340

\* Like Cromwell and Rienzi, Richelieu appears to have been easily moved to tears. The Queen Mother, who put the hardest interpretation on that humane weakness, which is natural with very excitable temperaments, said that "Il pleurait quand il voulait."

JULIE.

My father!

RICHELIEU.

She shall not stir!

BARADAS.

You are not of her kindred—

An orphan—

RICHELIEU.

And her country is her mother!

BARADAS.

The country is the King!

RICHELIEU.

Ay, is it so;—

Then wakes the power which in the age of iron  
 Burst forth to curb the great, and raise the low.  
 Mark, where she stands!—around her form I draw  
 The awful circle of our solemn church!  
 Set but a foot within that holy ground,  
 And on thy head—yea, though it wore a crown—  
 I launch the curse of Rome!

350

BARADAS.

I dare not brave you!

I do but speak the orders of my King.  
 The church, your rank, power, very word, my Lord,  
 Suffice you for resistance:—blame yourself,  
 If it should cost you power!

RICHELIEU.

That *my* stake.—Ah!

Dark gamester! *what is thine?* Look to it well!—  
 Lose not a trick.—By this same hour to-morrow  
 Thou shalt have France, or I thy head!

BARADAS (*aside to De Beringhen*).

He cannot

360

Have the despatch?

DE BERINGHEN.

No: were it so, your stake

Were lost already.

JOSEPH (*aside*).

Patience is your game:

Reflect you have not the Despatch!

RICHELIEU.

O! monk!

Leave patience to the saints—for *I* am human!  
 Did not thy father die for France, poor orphan?  
 And now they say thou hast *no* father!—Fie!  
 Art thou not pure and good?—if so, thou art  
 A part of that—the Beautiful, the Sacred—  
 Which in all climes, men that have hearts adore,  
 By the great title of their mother country!

370

BARADAS (*aside*).

He wanders!

RICHELIEU.

So cling close unto my breast,  
 Here where thou droop'st—lies France! I am very feeble—  
 Of little use it seems to either now.  
 Well, well—we will go home.

BARADAS.

In sooth, my Lord,  
 You do need rest—the burthens of the state  
 O'ertask your health!

RICHELIEU (*to Joseph*).

I'm patient, see!

BARADAS (*aside*).

His mind

And life are breaking fast!

RICHELIEU (*overhearing him*).

Irreverent ribbald!

If so, beware the falling ruins! Hark!  
 I tell thee, scorner of these whitening hairs,  
 When this snow melteth there shall come a flood! 380  
 Avaunt! my name is Richelieu—I defy thee!  
 Walk blindfold on; behind thee stalks the headsman.  
 Ha! ha!—how pale he is! Heaven save my country!

[*Falls back in Joseph's arms.*

(*Baradas exit, followed by De Beringhen, betraying his  
 exultation by his gestures.*)

END OF ACT IV.

## ACT V.

## Fourth Day.

## SCENE I.

*The Bastile—a corridor—in the back-ground the door of one of the condemned cells.*

*Enter Joseph and Gaoler.*

GAOLER.

Stay, father, I will call the governor.

[*Exit Gaoler.*]

JOSEPH.

He has it, then—this Huguet ;—so we learn  
From François ;—Humph ! Now if I can but gain  
One moment's access, all is ours ! The Cardinal  
Trembles 'tween life and death. His life is power :—  
Smite one—slay both ! No Æsculapian drugs,  
By learned quacks baptised with Latin jargon,  
E'er bore the healing which that scrap of parchment  
Will medicine to Ambition's flagging heart.  
France shall be saved—and Joseph be a bishop !

10

*Enter Governor and Joseph.*

GOVERNOR.

Father, you wish to see the prisoners Huguet  
And the young knight De Mauprat ?

JOSEPH.

So my office,  
And the Lord Cardinal's order warrant, son !

GOVERNOR.

Father, it cannot be : Count Baradas  
Has summon'd to the Louvre Sieur De Mauprat.

JOSEPH.

Well, well ! But Huguet—

GOVERNOR.

Dies at noon.

JOSEPH.

At noon!

No moment to delay the pious rites  
Which fit the soul for death—quick, quick—admit me!

GOVERNOR.

You cannot enter, monk! Such are my orders!

JOSEPH.

Orders! vain man!—the Cardinal still is minister. 20  
His orders crush all others!

GOVERNOR (*lifting his hat*).

Save his king's!

See, monk, the royal sign and seal affix'd  
To the count's mandate. None may have access  
To either prisoner, Huguet or De Mauprat,  
Not even a priest, without the special passport  
Of Count de Baradas. I'll hear no more!

JOSEPH.

Just Heaven! and are we baffled thus!—Despair!!  
Think on the Cardinal's power—beware his anger.

GOVERNOR.

I'll not be menaced, Priest! Besides, the Cardinal 30  
Is dying and disgraced—all Paris knows it.  
You hear the prisoner's knell. [*Bell tolls.*]

JOSEPH.

I do beseech you—

The Cardinal is *not* dying—But one moment  
And—hist!—five thousand pistoles!—

GOVERNOR.

How! a bribe!

And to a soldier, grey with years of honour!  
Begone!—

JOSEPH.

Ten thousand—twenty!—

GOVERNOR.

Gaoler—put

This monk without our walls.

JOSEPH.

By those grey hairs,  
 Yea, by this badge (*touching the cross of St. Louis worn by  
 the Governor*)—  
 the guerdon of your valour—  
 By all your toils—hard days and sleepless nights—  
 Borne in your country's service, noble son—  
 Let me but see the prisoner!—

GOVERNOR.

No!—

40

JOSEPH.

He hath  
 Secrets of state—papers in which—

GOVERNOR (*interrupting*).

I know—

Such was his message to Count Baradas,  
 Doubtless the Count will see to it—

JOSEPH.

The Count!

Then not a hope!—You shall—

GOVERNOR.

Betray my trust!

Never—not one word more—you heard me, gaoler!

JOSEPH.

What can be done?—distraction!—Richelieu yet  
 Must—what?—I know not—thought, nerve, strength, forsake  
 me.

Dare you refuse the Church her holiest rights?

GOVERNOR.

I refuse nothing—I obey my orders—

50

JOSEPH.

And sell your country to her parricides!  
 Oh, tremble yet!—Richelieu—

GOVERNOR.

Begone!

JOSEPH.

Undone!

*(Exit Joseph.)*



GOVERNOR.

A most audacious shaveling—interdicted  
Above all others by the Count—

GAOLER.

I hope, Sir,  
I shall not lose my perquisites. The Sieur  
De Mauprat will not be reprieved?

GOVERNOR.

Oh, fear not :  
The Count's commands by him who came for Mauprat  
Are to prepare headsmen and axe by noon ;  
The Count will give you perquisites enough ;  
Two deaths in one day !

GAOLER.

Sir, may Heaven reward him ! 60  
Oh, by the way, that troublesome young fellow,  
Who calls himself the prisoner Huguet's son,  
Is here again—implores, weeps, raves, to see him.

GOVERNOR.

Poor youth, I pity him !

*Enter De Beringhen, followed by François.*

DE BERINGHEN (*to François*).

Now, prithee, friend,  
Let go my cloak ; you really discompose me.

FRANCOIS.

No, they will drive me hence : my father ! Oh !  
Let me but see him once—but once—one moment !

DE BERINGHEN (*to Governor*).

Your servant, Messire,—this poor rascal, Huguet,  
Has sent to see the Count de Baradas  
Upon state secrets, that afflict his conscience. 70  
The Count can't leave his Majesty an instant :  
I am his proxy.

GOVERNOR.

The Count's word is law !  
Again, young scapegrace ! How com'st thou admitted ?

DE BERINGHEN.

Oh ! a most filial fellow : Huguet's son !

I found him whimpering in the court below.  
I pray his leave to say good bye to father,  
Before that very long unpleasant journey  
Father's about to take. Let him wait here  
Till I return.

FRANCOIS.

No; take me with you.

DE BERINGHEN.

Nay;

After *me*, friend—the Public first !

GOVERNOR.

The Count's

80

Commands are strict. No one must visit Huguet  
Without his passport.

DE BERINGHEN.

Here it is! Pshaw! nonsense!

I'll be your surety. See, my Cerberus,  
He is no Hercules!

GOVERNOR.

Well, you're responsible.

Stand there, friend. If, when you come out, my Lord,  
The youth slip in, 'tis *your* fault.

DE BERINGHEN.

So it is!

[*Exit through the door of the cell, followed by the Gaoler.*]

GOVERNOR.

Be calm, my lad. Don't fret so. I had once  
A father too! I'll not be hard upon you,  
And so stand close. I must not *see* you enter:  
You understand. Between this innocent youth  
And that intriguing monk there is, in truth,  
A wide distinction.

90

*Re-enter GAOLER.*

Come, we'll go our rounds;  
I'll give you just one quarter of an hour;  
And if my Lord leave first, make my excuse.  
Yet stay, the gallery's long and dark; no sentry  
Until he reach the grate below. He'd best  
Wait till I come. If he should lose the way,  
We may not be in call.

FRANCOIS.

I'll tell him, Sir,—

[*Exeunt Governor and Gaoler.*

He's a wise son that knoweth his own father.

I've forged a precious one! So far, so well! 100

Alas, what then? this wretch has sent to Baradas—

Will sell the scroll to ransom life. Oh, Heaven!

On what a thread hangs hope!

[*Listens at the door.*

Loud words—a cry!

[*Looks through the key-hole.*

They struggle! Ho!—the packet!!!

[*Tries to open the door.*

Lost! He has it—

The courtier has it—Huguet, spite his chains,

Grapples!—well done! Now—now!

[*Draws back.*

The gallery's long!

And this is left us!

[*Drawing his dagger, and standing behind the door.**Re-enter De Beringhen, with the packet.*

Victory!

Yield it, robber—

Yield it—or die—

[*A short struggle.*

DE BERINGHEN.

Off! ho!—there!—

FRANCOIS (*grappling with him*).

Death or honour!—

[*Exeunt struggling.*

## SCENE II.

*The King's closet at the Louvre. A suite of rooms in perspective at one side.**Baradas—Orleans.*

BARADAS.

All smiles! the Cardinal's swoon of yesterday

Heralds his death to-day;—could he survive,

110

It would not be as minister—so great  
 The king's resentment at the priest's defiance !  
*All smiles !*—and yet, should this accurs'd De Mauprat  
 Have given our packet to another—'Sdeath !  
 I dare not think of it !

ORLEANS.

You've sent to search him ?

BARADAS.

Sent, Sir, to search ?—that hireling hands may find  
 Upon him, naked, with its broken seal,  
 That scroll, whose every word is death ! No—no—  
 These hands alone must clutch that awful secret.  
 I dare not leave the palace, night or day,  
 While Richelieu lives—his minions—creatures—spies—  
 Not one must reach the king !

120

ORLEANS.

What hast thou done ?

BARADAS.

Summon'd De Mauprat hither ?

ORLEANS.

Could this Huguet,  
 Who pray'd thy presence with so fierce a fervour,  
 Have thieved the scroll ?

BARADAS.

Huguet was housed with us,  
 The very moment we dismiss'd the courier.  
 It cannot be ! a stale trick for reprieve.  
 But, to make sure, I've sent our trustiest friend  
 To see and sift him.—Hist ! here comes the King—  
 How fare you, Sire ?

*Enter Louis.*

LOUIS.

In the same mind I have  
 Decided ! yes, he would forbid your presence,  
 My brother,—your's, my friend,—then Julie, too ;  
 'Thwarts—braves—defies—(*suddenly turning to Baradas*) We  
 make you minister.  
 Gaston, for you—the baton of our armies.  
 You love me, do you not ?

130

ORLEANS.

Oh, love you, Sire?

*(aside.)*—Never so much as now.

BARADAS.

May I deserve

Your trust *(aside)*—until you sign your abdication!

My liege, but one way left to daunt De Mauprat,

And Julie to divorce.—We must prepare

The death-writ; what, tho' sign'd and seal'd? we can 140

Withhold the enforcement.

LOUIS.

Ah, you may prepare it;

We need not urge it to effect.

BARADAS.

Exactly!

No haste, my liege *(looking at his watch, and aside)*. He  
may live one hour longer.*(Enter Courtier)*.

COURTIER.

The Lady Julie, Sire, implores an audience.

LOUIS.

Aha! repentant of her folly!—Well,  
Admit her.

BARADAS.

Sire, she comes for Mauprat's pardon,  
And the conditions——

LOUIS.

You are minister,  
We leave to you our answer.*(As Julie enters,—the Captain of the Archers, by another  
door,—and whispers Baradas).*

CAPTAIN.

The Chevalier

De Mauprat waits below.

BARADAS *(aside)*.Now the despatch! *[Exit with Officer.*

*Enter Julie.*

JULIE

My liege, you sent for me. I come where Grief  
*Should* come when guiltless, while the name of King  
Is holy on the earth!—Here, at the feet  
Of Power, I kneel for mercy.

150

LOUIS.

Mercy, Julie,  
Is an affair of state. The Cardinal should  
In this be your interpreter.

JULIE.

Alas!

I know not if that mighty spirit now  
Stoop to the things of earth. Nay, while I speak,  
Perchance he hears the orphan by the throne  
Where Kings themselves need pardon; O my liege,  
Be father to the fatherless; in you  
Dwells my last hope!

160

*Enter Baradas.*

BARADAS (*aside*).

He has not the despatch;  
Smiled, while we search'd, and braves me.—Oh!

LOUIS (*gently*).

What would'st thou?

JULIE.

A single life.—You reign o'er millions.—What  
Is *one man's* life to you?—and yet to *me*  
'Tis France—'tis earth—'tis everything!—a life—  
A human life—my husband's.

LOUIS (*aside*).

Speak to her,  
I am not marble,—give her hope—or—

BARADAS.

Madam,  
Vex not your King, whose heart, too soft for justice,  
Leaves to his ministers that solemn charge.

[*Louis walks up the stage.*]

JULIE.

You *were* his friend.

BARADAS.

I *was* before I loved thee.

170

JULIE.

Loved me!

BARADAS.

Hush, Julie: could'st thou misinterpret  
My acts, thoughts, motives, nay, my very words,  
Here—in this palace?

JULIE.

Now I know I'm mad;  
Even that memory fail'd me.

BARADAS.

I am young,  
Well-born and brave as Mauprat:—for thy sake  
I peril what he has not—fortune—power;  
All to great souls most dazzling. I alone  
Can save thee from yon tyrant, now my puppet!  
Be mine; annul the mockery of this marriage,  
And on the day I clasp thee to my breast  
De Mauprat shall be free.

180

JULIE.

Thou durst not speak  
Thus in *his* ear (*pointing to Louis*). Thou double traitor!—  
tremble.  
I will unmask thee.

BARADAS.

I will say thou ravest.  
And see this scroll! its letters shall be blood!  
Go to the King, count with me word for word;  
And while you pray the life—I write the sentence!

JULIE.

Stay, stay (*rushing to the King*). You have a kind and  
princely heart,

Tho' sometimes it is silent: you were born  
To power—it has not flush'd you into madness,  
As it doth meaner men. Banish my husband—

190

Dissolve our marriage—cast me to that grave  
Of human ties, where hearts congeal to ice,  
In the dark convent's everlasting winter—  
(Surely eno' for justice—hate—revenge)—

But spare this life, thus lonely, seathed, and bloomless ;  
 And when thou stand'st for judgment on thine own,  
 The deed shall shine beside thee as an angel.

LOUIS (*much affected*).

Go, go, to Baradas : annul thy marriage,  
 And——

JULIE (*anxiously, and watching his countenance*).

Be his bride !

LOUIS.

A form, a mere decorum,  
 Thou know'st I love thee.

JULIE.

O thou sea of shame,

200

And not one star.

(*The King goes up the stage, and passes through the suite of  
 rooms at the side in evident emotion.*)

BARADAS.

Well, thy election, Julie ;  
 This hand—his grave !

JULIE.

His grave ! and I—

BARADAS.

Can save him.—

Swear to be mine.

JULIE.

That were a bitterer death !  
 Avaunt, thou tempter ! I did ask his life  
 A boon, and not the barter of dishonour.  
 The heart can break, and scorn you : wreak your malice ;  
 Adrien and I will leave you this sad earth,  
 And pass together hand in hand to Heaven !

BARADAS.

You have decided.

[*Withdraws to the side scene for a moment, and returns.*]

Listen to me, Lady ;  
 I am no base intriguer. I adored thee  
 From the first glance of those inspiring eyes ;  
 With thee entwined ambition, hope, the future.  
 I will not lose thee ! I can place thee nearest—

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Ay, to the throne—nay, on the throne, perchance;  
My star is at its zenith. Look upon me;  
Hast thou decided?

JULIE.

No, no; you can see  
How weak I am: be human, Sir—one moment.

BARADAS (*stamping his foot, De Mauprat appears at the side of the stage, guarded*).

Behold thy husband!—Shall he pass to death,  
And know thou could'st have saved him?

JULIE.

Adrien, speak!

But say you wish to *live*!—if not your wife, 220  
Your slave,—do with me as you will?

DE MAUPRAT.

Once more!—

Why this is mercy, Count! Oh, think, my Julie,  
Life, at the best, is short,—but love immortal!

BARADAS (*taking Julie's hand*).

Ah, loveliest—

JULIE.

Go, that touch has made me iron.  
*We* have decided—death!

BARADAS (*to De Mauprat*).

Now, say to whom  
Thou gavest the packet, and thou yet shalt live.

DE MAUPRAT.

I'll tell thee nothing!

BARADAS.

Hark,—the rack!

DE MAUPRAT.

Thy penance  
For ever, wretch!—What rack is like the conscience?

JULIE.

I shall be with thee soon.

BARADAS (*giving the writ to the Officer*).

Hence, to the headsman.

*The doors are thrown open. The Huissier announces "His Eminence the Cardinal Duke de Richelieu."*

*Enter Richelieu, attended by Gentlemen, Pages, &c., pale, feeble, and leaning on Joseph, followed by three Secretaries of State, attended by Sub-secretaries with papers, &c.*

JULIE (*rushing to Richelieu*).

You live—you live—and Adrien shall not die !

230

RICHELIEU.

Not if an old man's prayers, himself near death,  
Can aught avail thee, daughter ! Count, you now  
Hold what I held on earth :—one boon, my Lord,  
This soldier's life.

BARADAS.

The stake,—my head !—you said it.  
I cannot lose one trick.—Remove your prisoner.

JULIE.

No !—No !—

*Enter Louis from the rooms beyond.*

RICHELIEU (*to Officer*).

Stay, Sir, one moment. My good liege,  
Your worn-out servant, willing, Sire, to spare you  
Some pain of conscience, would forestall your wishes.  
I do resign my office.

DE MAUPRAT.

You !

JULIE.

All's over !

RICHELIEU.

My end draws near. These sad ones, Sire, I love them, 240  
I do not ask his life ; but suffer justice  
To halt, until I can dismiss his soul,  
Charged with an old man's blessing.

LOUIS.

Surely !

BARADAS.

Sire—

LOUIS.

Silence—small favour to a dying servant.

RICHELIEU.

You would consign your armies to the baton  
 Of your most honour'd brother. Sire, so be it !  
 Your minister, the Count de Baradas ;  
 A most sagacious choice !—Your Secretaries  
 Of State attend me, Sire, to render up  
 The ledgers of a realm.—I do beseech you. 250  
 Suffer these noble gentlemen to learn  
 The nature of the glorious task that waits them,  
 Here, in my presence.

LOUIS.

You say well, my Lord.

*(To Secretaries, as he seats himself.)*

Approach, Sirs.

RICHELIEU.

I—I—faint !—air—air—

*(Joseph and a gentleman assist him to a sofa, placed beneath  
 a window.)*

I thank you—

Draw near, my children.

BARADAS.

He's too weak to question,

Nay, scarce to speak ; all's safe.

## SCENE III.

*Manent Richelieu, Mauprat, and Julie, the last kneeling beside the Cardinal ; the Officer of the Guard behind Mauprat. Joseph near Richelieu, watching the King. Louis. Baradas at the back of the King's chair, anxious and disturbed. Orleans at a greater distance, careless and triumphant. The Secretaries. As each Secretary advances in his turn, he takes the portfolios from the Sub-secretaries.*

FIRST SECRETARY.

The affairs of Portugal,  
 Most urgent, Sire ;—One short month since the Duke  
 Braganza was a rebel.

LOUIS.

And is still !

FIRST SECRETARY.

No, Sire, *he has succeeded !* He is now  
Crown'd King of Portugal—craves instant succour 260  
Against the arms of Spain.

LOUIS.

We will not grant it  
Against his lawful king. Eh, Count ?

BARADAS.

No, Sire.

FIRST SECRETARY.

But Spain's your deadliest foe : whatever  
Can weaken Spain must strengthen France. The Cardinal  
*Would send* the succours :—(*solemnly*)—balance, Sire, of  
Europe !

LOUIS.

The Cardinal !—balance !—We'll consider.—Eh, Count ?

BARADAS.

Yes, Sire ;—fall back.

FIRST SECRETARY.

But——

BARADAS.

Oh ! fall back, Sir.

JOSEPH.

Humph !

SECOND SECRETARY.

The affairs of England, Sire, most urgent : Charles  
The First has lost a battle that decides  
One half his realm,—craves moneys, Sire, and succour. 270

LOUIS.

He shall have both.—Eh, Baradas ?

BARADAS.

Yes, Sire.

(Oh that despatch !—my veins are fire !)

RICHELIEU (*feebly, but with great distinctness.*)

My liege—  
 Forgive me—Charles's cause is lost! A man,  
 Named Cromwell, risen—a great man!—your succour  
 Would fail—your loans be squander'd!—Pause—reflect.\*

LOUIS.

Reflect.—Eh, Baradas?

BARADAS.

Reflect, Sire.

JOSEPH.

Humph!

LOUIS (*aside*).

I half repent!—No successor to Richelieu!—  
 Round me thrones totter!—dynasties dissolve!—  
 The soil he guards alone escapes the earthquake!

JOSEPH.

Our star not yet eclipsed!—you mark the King?  
 Oh! had we the despatch!

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RICHELIEU,

Ah! Joseph!—Child—  
 Would I could help thee!

*Enter Gentleman, whispers Joseph, who exit hastily.*

BARADAS (*to Secretary*).

Sir, fall back.

SECOND SECRETARY.

But——

BARADAS.

Pshaw, Sir!

THIRD SECRETARY (*mysteriously*).

The secret correspondence, Sire, most urgent,—  
 Accounts of spies—deserters—heretics—  
 Assassins—poisoners—schemes against yourself!——

LOUIS.

*Myself!*—most urgent!—(*looking on the documents.*)

\* See in "Cinq Mars," vol. v., the striking and brilliant chapter from which the interlude of the Secretaries is borrowed.

*Re-enter Joseph with François, whose pourpoint is streaked with blood. François passes behind the Cardinal's attendants, and, sheltered by them from the sight of Baradas, &c., falls at Richelieu's feet.*

FRANÇOIS.

O! my Lord!

RICHELIEU.

Thou art bleeding!

FRANÇOIS.

A scratch—I have not fail'd!—(*gives the packet.*)

RICHELIEU.

Hush!—(*looking at the contents.*)

THIRD SECRETARY (*to King*).

Sire, the Spaniards

Have reinforced their army on the frontiers.

The Duc de Bouillon—

RICHELIEU.

Hold!—In this department—

A paper—here, Sire,—read yourself—then take  
The Count's advice in't.

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*Enter De Beringhen hastily, and draws aside Baradas.*

*(Richelieu, to Secretary, giving an open parchment.)*

BARADAS (*bursting from De Beringhen*).

What! and reft it from thee!

Ha!—hold!

JOSEPH.

Fall back, son,—it is your turn now!

BARADAS.

Death!—the Despatch!

LOUIS (*reading*).

To Bouillon—and sign'd Orleans!—  
Baradas, too!—league with our foes of Spain!—  
Lead our Italian armies—what! to Paris!—  
Capture the King—my health require repose—

Make me subscribe my proper abdication—  
Orleans, my brother, Regent!—Saints of Heaven!  
These are the men I loved!

(*Baradas draws,—attempts to rush out,—is arrested.*  
*Orleans, endeavouring to escape more quickly, meets*  
*Josephs eye, and stops short.*)

(*Richelieu falls back.*)

JOSEPH.

See to the Cardinal!

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BARADAS.

He's dying!—and I yet shall dupe the King!

LOUIS (*rushing to Richelieu*).

Richelieu!—Lord Cardinal!—'tis I resign!—  
Reign thou!

JOSEPH.

Alas! too late!—he faints!

LOUIS.

Reign, Richelieu!

RICHELIEU (*feebly*).

With absolute power?—

LOUIS.

Most absolute!—Oh! live!—

If not for me—for France!

RICHELIEU.

FRANCE!

LOUIS.

Oh! this treason!—

The army—Orleans—Bouillon—Heavens!—the Spaniard!—  
Where will they be next week?—

RICHELIEU (*starting up*).

There,—at my feet!

(*To First and Second Secretary.*)

At the clock strike!—The Envoys have their answer!

(*To Third Secretary, with a ring.*)

This to De Chavigny—he knows the rest—

No need of parchment here—he must not halt  
 For sleep—for food.—In *my* name,—MINE!—he will 310  
 Arrest the Duc de Bouillon at the head  
 Of his army!—Ho! there, Count de Baradas  
 Thou hast lost the stake!—Away with him!\*

(*As the Guards open the folding-doors, a view of the ante-room  
 beyond, lined with Courtiers. Baradas passes through  
 the line.*)

Ha!—ha!—

(*Snatching De Mauprat's death-warrant from the officer.*)

See here De Mauprat's death-writ, Julie!—  
 Parchment for battledores!—Embrace your husband!—  
 At last the old man blesses you!

JULIE.

O joy!  
 You are saved; you live—I hold you in these arms.

MAUPRAT.

Never to part—

JULIE.

No—never, Adrien—never!

LOUIS (*peevishly*).

One moment makes a startling cure, Lord Cardinal; † 320

RICHELIEU.

Ay, Sire, for in one moment there did pass  
 Into this wither'd frame the might of France!—  
 My own dear France—I have thee yet—I have saved thee!  
 I clasp thee still!—it was thy voice that call'd me  
 Back from the tomb!—What mistress like our country?

\* The passion of the drama requires this catastrophe for Baradas. He, however, survived his disgrace,—though stripped of all his rapidly-acquired fortunes—and the daring that belonged to his character won him distinction in foreign service. He returned to France after Richelieu's death, but never regained the same court influence. He had taken the vows of a knight of Malta, and Louis made him a Prior!

† The sudden resuscitation of Richelieu (not to strain too much on the real passion which supports him in this scene) is in conformance with the more dissimulating part of his character. The extraordinary mobility of his countenance (latterly so deathlike, save when the mind spoke in the features) always lent itself to stage effect of this nature. The queen mother said of him, that she had seen him one moment so feeble, cast down, and "semi-mort," that he seemed on the point of giving up the ghost—and the next moment he would start up full of animation, energy, and life.



LOUIS.

For Mauprat's pardon—well! But Julie,—Richelieu,  
Leave me one thing to love!—

RICHELIEU.

A subject's luxury!  
Yet, if you must love something, Sire,—*love me!*

LOUIS (*smiling in spite of himself*).

Fair proxy for a young fresh Demoiselle!

RICHELIEU.

Your heart speaks for my clients:—Kneel, my children, 330  
And thank your King—

JULIE.

Ah, tears like these, my liege,  
Are dews that mount to Heaven.

LOUIS.

Rise—rise—be happy.

(*Richelieu beckons to De Beringhen.*)

DE BERINGHEN (*falteringly*).

My Lord—you are—most—happily—recover'd.

RICHELIEU.

But you are pale, dear Beringhen:—this air  
Suits not your delicate frame—I long have thought so:—  
Sleep not another night in Paris:—Go,—  
Or else your precious life may be in danger.  
Leave France, dear Beringhen!

DE BERINGHEN.

I shall have time,  
More than I ask'd for,—to discuss the pâté.

[*Exit De Beringhen.*

RICHELIEU (*to Orleans*).

For you, repentance—absence—and confession! 340

(*To François.*)

Never say *fail* again.—Brave Boy!

(*To Joseph.*)

He'll be—

A Bishop first.

JOSEPH.

Ah, Cardinal—

RICHELIEU.

Ah, Joseph!

*(To Louis—as De Mauprat and Julie converse apart).*

See, my liege—see thro' plots and counterplots—  
 Thro' gain and loss—thro' glory and disgrace—  
 Along the plains, where passionate Discord rears  
 Eternal Babel—still the holy stream  
 Of human happiness glides on!

LOUIS.

And must we  
 Thank for *that* also—our prime Minister?

RICHELIEU.

No—let us own it:—there is ONE above  
 Sways the harmonious mystery of the world  
 Ev'n better than prime ministers;—

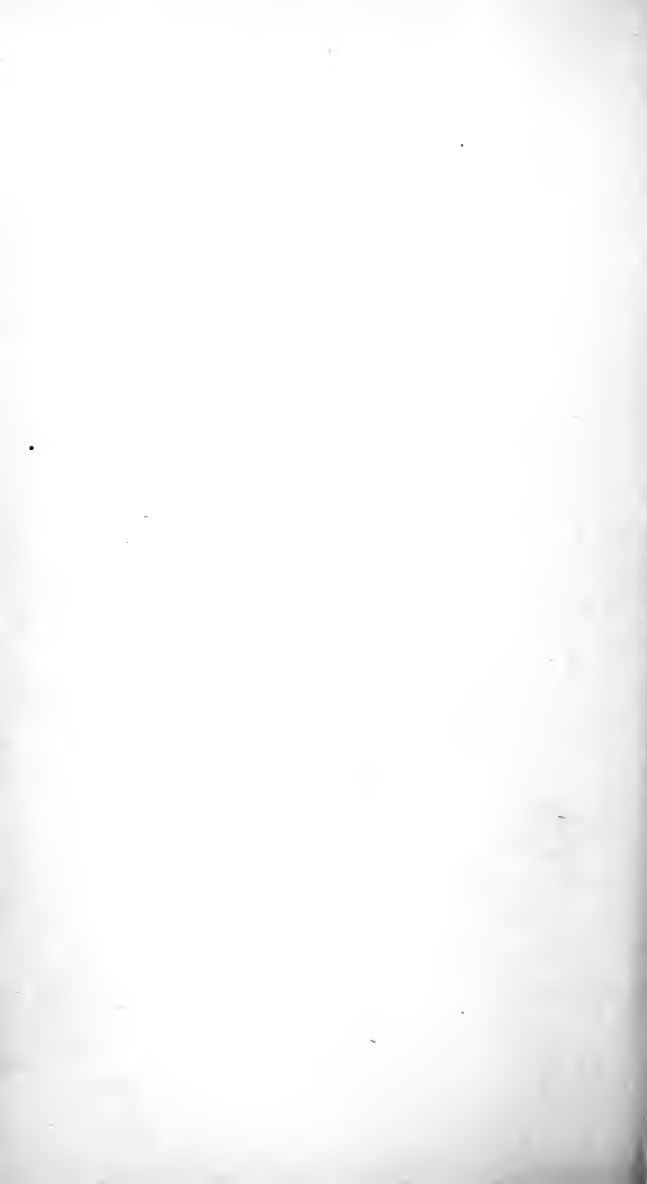
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Alas!  
 Our glories float between the earth and heaven  
 Like clouds which seem pavilions of the sun,  
 And are the playthings of the casual wind;  
 Still, like the cloud which drops on unseen crags  
 The dews the wild flower feeds on, our ambition  
 May from its airy height drop gladness down  
 On unsuspected virtue;—and the flower  
 May bless the cloud when it hath pass'd away!\*

THE END OF RICHELIEU.

\* The image and the sentiment in the concluding lines are borrowed from a passage in one of the writings attributed to the Cardinal.

O D E S.



## ADVERTISEMENT TO THE ODES.

THE connexion between the Lyric and Dramatic forms of poetical composition is sufficiently ancient and established to warrant me, I trust, in subjoining to an Historical Play three attempts, equally elaborate, in the less cultivated art of the Historical Ode. Written at least, with the advantage of mature experience, I venture to express a hope that these Odes may, in some degree, redeem the faults of poems put forth, a few years since, in the rashness of early youth:— If I require an additional apology for associating them with the Drama of “Richelieu,” let me frankly acknowledge that I am not uninfluenced by the belief, that, should their more obtrusive companion meet with any success, they are likely to obtain a larger circle of readers, and therefore a fairer judgment, than, in the present indisposition to poetry, an author whose reputation, such as it may be, lies in other departments of literature, could reasonably expect for a volume exclusively devoted to lyrical compositions: and, on the other hand, if impartial judges should pass an unfavourable verdict on their pretensions, I have, at least, put them forward in a more unassuming shape than that of a separate publication.

*London, March 5, 1839.*



## ODE I.

THE

### LAST DAYS OF QUEEN ELIZABETH.

---

" Her delight is to sit in the dark, and sometimes, with shedding tears, to bewail Essex."—*Contemporaneous Correspondence.*

" She refused all consolation; few words she uttered, and they were all expressive of some hidden grief which she cared not to reveal. But sighs and groans were the chief vent which she gave to her despondency, and which tho' they discovered her sorrows were never able to ease or assuage them. Ten days and nights she lay upon the carpet leaning on cushions which her maids brought her, &c."—*Hume.*

#### I.

Rise from thy bloody grave

Thou soft Medusa of the Fated Line \*

Whose evil beauty look'd to death the Brave;—

Discrowned Queen, around whose passionate shame

Terror and Grief the palest flowers entwine,

That ever veil'd the ruins of a Name

With the sweet parasites of song divine!—

Arise, sad Ghost, arise,

And, if Revenge outlive the Tomb,

Thou art avenged—Behold the Doomer brought to Doom!

\* Mary Stuart—"The soft Medusa" is an expression strikingly applied to her in her own day.

Lo, where thy mighty Murderess lies,  
 The sleepless couch—the sunless room,  
 And, quell'd the eagle eye and lion mien,  
 The woe-worn shadow of the Titan Queen!

## II.

There, sorrow-stricken, to the ground,  
 Alike by night and day,  
 The heart's-blood from the inward wound  
 Ebbs silently away.  
 And oft she turns from face to face  
 A sharp and eager gaze,  
 As if the Memory sought to trace  
 The sign of some lost dwelling-place  
 Belov'd in happier Days;—  
 Ah, what the clue supplies  
 In the cold vigil of a hireling's eyes?  
 Ah, sad in childless age to weep alone,  
 And start and gaze, to find no sorrow save our own!—  
 O Soul, thou speedest to thy rest away,  
 But *not* upon the pinions of the Dove;  
 When Death draws nigh, how miserable they  
 Who have outlived all Love!  
 As on the solemn verge of Night  
 Lingers a weary Moon,  
 She wanes, the last of every glorious light  
 That bath'd with splendour her majestic noon:—  
 The stately stars that clustering o'er the isle  
 Lull'd into glittering rest the subject sea;—  
 Gone the great Masters of Italian wile  
 False to the world beside, but true to thee!—  
 Burleigh, the subtlest builder of thy fame,—



The gliding craft of winding Walsingham ;—  
 They who exalted yet before thee bowed ;—  
 And that more dazzling chivalry—the Band  
 That made thy Court a Faëry Land,  
 In which thou wert enshrin'd to reign alone—  
 The Gloriana of the Diamond Throne ;—  
 All gone,—and left thee sad amidst the cloud !

## III.

To their great Sires, to whom thy youth was known,  
 Who from thy smile, as laurels from the Sun,  
 Drank the immortal greenness of renown,  
 Succeeds the cold lip-homage scantily won  
 From the new race whose hearts already bear  
 The Wise-man's offerings to the unworthy Heir.  
 There, specious Bacon's\* unimpassion'd brow,  
 And crook-back Cecil's ever earthward eyes  
 Watching the glass in which the sands run low ;—  
 But deem not fondly there  
 To weep the fate or pour the averting prayer  
 Have come those solemn spies !  
 Lo, at the Regal Gate  
 The impatient Couriers wait ;  
 To speed from hour to hour the nice account  
 That registers the grudg'd unpitied sighs  
 Which yet must joy delay, before  
 The Stuart's tottering step shall mount  
 The last great Tudor's throne, red with his Mother's gore !

\* See the servile and heart-sickening correspondence maintained by Francis Bacon and Robert Cecil (the sons of Elizabeth's most faithful friends) with the Scottish Court, during the Queen's last illness.

## IV.

O piteous mockery of all pomp thou art,  
 Poor Child of Clay, worn out with toil and years!

As, layer by layer, the granite of the heart  
 Dissolving, melteth to the weakest tears  
 That ever Village Maiden shed above  
 The grave that robb'd her quiet world of love.

Ten days and nights upon that floor

Those weary limbs have lain;  
 And every hour but added more

Of heaviness to pain.

As gazing into dismal air

She sees the headless phantom there,  
 The victim round whose image twined  
 The last wild love of woman-kind;  
 That love which in its dire excess  
 Will blast where it can fail to bless,

And, like the lightning, flash, and fade  
 In gloom along the ruins it has made.

'Twere sad to see from those stern eyes

The' unheeded anguish feebly flow;  
 And hear the broken word that dies

In moanings faint and low;—  
 But sadder still to mark the while,  
 The vacant stare—the marble smile,  
 And think, that goal of glory won.

How slight a shade between

The idiot moping in the sun

And England's Giant Queen!\*

\* " It was after labouring for nearly three weeks under a morbid melancholy, which brought on a stupor not unmixed with some indications of a disordered

## V.

Call back the gorgeous Past !  
 Lo, England white-robed for a holyday !  
 While, choral to the clarion's kingly blast,  
 Peals shout on shout along the Virgin's way,  
 As thro' the swarming streets rolls on the long array.  
 Mary is dead !—Look from your fire-won homes,  
 Exulting Martyrs !—on the mount shall rest  
 Truth's ark at last ! the' avenging Lutheran comes  
 And clasps THE BOOK ye died for to her breast !\*  
 With her, the flower of all the Land,  
 The high-born gallants ride,  
 And, ever nearest of the band,  
 With watchful eye and ready hand,  
 Young Dudley's form of pride !†

fancy, that the Queen expired.—*Aikin's translation of a Latin letter (author unknown) to Edmund Lambert.*

Robert Carey, who was admitted to an interview with Elizabeth in her last illness, after describing the passionate anguish of her sighs, observes, "that, in all his lifetime before, he never knew her fetch a sigh but when the Queen of Scots was beheaded." Yet this Robert Carey, the well-born mendicant of her bounty, was the first whose eager haste and joyous countenance told James that the throne of the Tudors was at last vacant.

\* "When she (Elizabeth) was conducted thro' London amidst the joyful acclamations of her subjects, a boy, who personated Truth, was let down from one of the triumphal arches, and presented to her a copy of the Bible. She received the book with the most gracious deportment, placed it next her bosom," &c.—*Hume.*

† Robert Dudley, afterwards the Leicester of doubtful fame, attended Elizabeth in her passage to the Tower. The streets, as she passed along, were spread with the finest gravel ; banners and pennons, hangings of silk, of velvet, of cloth of gold, were suspended from the balconies, musicians and singers were stationed amidst the populace ; as she rode along in her purple robes, preceded by her heralds, &c.

Ah, ev'n in that exulting hour,  
 Love half allures the soul from Power,—  
 And blushes, half suppress'd, betray  
     The woman's hope and fear ;  
 Like blooms which in the early May  
 Bud forth beneath a timorous ray,  
     And mark the mellowing year .  
 While steals the sweetest of all worship, paid  
     Less to the Monarch than the Maid,  
     Melodious on the ear !

## VI.

Call back the gorgeous Past !  
 The lists are set, the trumpets sound,  
 Bright eyes—sweet judges—thron'd around ;  
 And stately on the glittering ground  
     The Old Chivalric Life !  
 “ Forward\*.”—The signal word is given—  
 Beneath the shock the greensward shakes—  
 The lusty cheer, the gleaming spear—  
     The snow-plume's falling flakes —  
     The fiery joy of strife !  
 Thus, when, from out a changeful heaven  
 O'er waves in eddying tumult driven  
 A stormy smile is cast,  
 Alike the gladsome anger takes  
 The sunshine and the blast !—  
 Who is the Victor of the Day ?  
 Thou of the delicate form, and golden hair,  
 And Manhood glorious in its midst of May ;—

\* The customary phrase was “ *Laissez aller.*”

Thou who upon thy shield of argent, bearest  
 The bold device, "The Loftiest is the Fairest!"  
 As bending low thy stainless crest,  
 'The Vestal throned by the West'  
 Accords the old Provençal crown  
 Which blends her own with thy renown;—  
 Arcadian Sidney—Nursling of the Muse,  
 Flower of Fair Chivalry, whose bloom was fed  
 With daintiest Castaly's most silver dew,  
 Alas! how soon thy amaranth leaves were shed—  
 Born, what, the 'Ausonian Minstrel *dream'd*, to be\*  
 Time's knightly Epic pass'd from Earth with thee!

## VII.

Call back the gorgeous Past!  
 Where, bright and broadening to the main,  
 Rolls on the scornful River,—  
 Stout hearts beat high on Tilbury's plain,—  
 Our Marathon for ever!  
 No breeze above, but on the mast  
 The pennon shook as with the blast.  
 Forth from the cloud the day-god strode,  
 O'er bristling helms the splendour glow'd,—  
 Leapt the loud joy from Earth to Heaven,  
 As, thro' the ranks asunder riven,  
 The Warrior-Woman rode!

\* What difference between the Tancred of Tasso and the Sidney of England,—except that the last was of bone and flesh? "The Life of Sir Philip Sidney," as Campbell finely expresses it, "was Poetry put in action." With him died the Provençal and the Norman—the Ideal of the Middle Ages.

Hark, thrilling thro' the armèd Line  
 The martial accents ring,  
 " 'Though mine the Woman's form—yet mine,  
 " The Heart of England's King!"\*  
 Woe to the Island and the Maid!  
 The Pope has preach'd the New Crusade, †  
 His sons have caught the fiery zeal;—  
 The Monks are merry in Castile;  
 Bold Parma on the Main;  
 And thro' the deep exulting sweep  
 The Thunder-Steeds of Spain. ‡—  
 What meteor rides the sulphurous gale?  
 The Flames have caught the giant sail!  
 Fierce Drake is grappling prow to prow;  
 God and St. George for Victory now!  
 Death in the Battle and the Wind—  
 Carnage before and Storm behind—  
 Wild shrieks are heard above the hurtling roar  
 By Orkneys' rugged strands, and Erin's ruthless shore.  
 Joy to the Island and the Maid!  
 Pope Sixtus wept the Last Crusade;

\* "I know I have but the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart of a king, and of a king of England too."—*Elizabeth's harangue at Tilbury Camp.*

She rode bareheaded thro' the ranks, a page bearing her helmet, mounted on a war-horse, clad in steel,—and wielding a general's truncheon in her hand. Nothing in Napoleon's speeches excels the simple and grand eloquence of her imperishable address to her soldiery.

† "Sextus Quintus, the present Pope, famous for his capacity and his tyranny, had published a crusade against England, and had granted plenary indulgences to every one engaged in the present invasion."—*Hume.* This Pope was nevertheless Elizabeth's admirer as well as foe, and said, not very clerically, "If a son could be born from us two, he would be master of the world."

‡ "Steeds of the Sea,"—was the poetic synonym for ships with the old Runic bards.

His sons consum'd before his zeal,—  
 The Monks are woeful in Castile ;—  
 Your Monument the Main,  
 The glaive and gale Record your tale,  
 Ye Thunder-Steeds of Spain !

## VIII.

*Turn from the gorgeous Past ;—*  
 Its lonely Ghost thou art !  
 A tree, that, in a world of bloom,  
 Droops, spectral in its leafless gloom,  
 Before the griding blast ;—  
 But art thou fallen then so low—  
 Art thou so desolate ? wan Shadow, No !  
 Crouch'd, suppliant by the Grave's unclosing portal,  
 Love which proclaims thee human, bids thee know  
 A truth more lofty in thy lowliest hour  
 Than shallowest Glory taught to deafened Power,  
 "WHAT'S HUMAN IS IMMORTAL !"  
 'Tis sympathy which makes sublime !—  
 Never so reverent in thy noon of Time  
 As now—when o'er thee hangs the midnight pall—  
 No comfort, Pomp ; and Wisdom no protection—  
 Hope's 'cloud-capt towers and solemn temples' gone—  
 Mid Memory's wrecks, eternal and alone,—  
 Type of the Woman-Deity AFFECTION ;  
 That only Eve which never knew a fall—  
 Sad as the Dove, but, like the Dove, surviving all !

## ODE II.

## CROMWELL'S DREAM.

[The conception of this Ode originated in a popular tradition of Cromwell's earlier days. It is thus strikingly related by Mr. Forster, in his recent and very valuable *Life of Cromwell*:—"He had laid himself down, too fatigued to hope for sleep, when suddenly the curtains of his bed were slowly withdrawn by a gigantic figure, which bore the aspect of a woman, and which, gazing at him silently for a while, told him that he should, before his death, be the greatest man in England. He remembered when he told the story, and the recollection marked the current of his thoughts, *that the figure had not made mention of the word King.*" Alteration has been made in the scene of the vision, and the age of Cromwell.]

THE Moor spread wild and far  
 In the sharp whiteness of a wintry shroud,  
 Midnight yet moonless; and the winds ice-bound,  
 And a grey dusk—not darkness—reign'd around,  
 Save where the paleness of a sudden star  
 Peer'd o'er some haggard precipice of cloud.—  
 Where on the wold, the triple pathway crost,  
 A sturdy wanderer wearied, lone, and lost,  
 Paus'd and gaz'd round; a dwarf'd but aged yew  
 O'er the wan rime its guome-like shadow threw;  
 The spot invited, and by sleep opprest,  
 Beneath the boughs he laid him down to rest.  
 A man of stalwart limbs and hardy frame,  
 Meet for the antique time when force was fame,  
 Youthful in years—the features yet betray  
 Thoughts rarely mellow'd till the locks are grey;  
 Round the firm lips the lines of solemn wile  
 Might warn the wise of danger in the smile;



But the blunt aspect spoke more sternly still  
 That craft of craft—THE STUBBORN WILL :  
 That which,—let what may betide—  
 Never halts nor swerves aside ;  
 From afar its victim viewing,  
 Slow of speed, but sure-pursuing ;  
 Thro' maze, up mount, still hounding on its way,  
 Till it is grimly couch'd beside the conquered prey !

## II.

The loftiest fate will longest lie  
 In unrevealing sleep ;—  
 And yet unknown the destined race,  
 Nor yet his Soul had walk'd with Grace ;  
 Still, on the seas of Time  
 Drifted the ever-careless prime,—  
 But many a blast that o'er the sky  
 All idly seems to sweep,—  
 Still while it speeds, may spread the seeds,  
 The toils of autumn reap :—  
 And we must blame the soil, and not the wind,  
 If hurrying passion leave no golden grain behind.

## III.

Seize—seize—seize !\*  
 Bind him strong in the chain,  
 On his heart, on his brain,  
 Clasp the gyves of the iron Sleep.  
 Seize—seize—seize—  
 Ye fiends that dimly sweep  
 Up from the cloudy deep,  
 Where Death holds ghastly watch beside his brother.

\* Λάβει, λάβει, λάβει, λάβει, (seize, seize, seize).—*i. schyl. Eumen.* 125.

Ye pale Impalpables, that are  
 Shadows of Truths afar,  
 Prophets that men call DREAMS—  
 The phantom birth of that mysterious Mother,  
 Who, by the Ebon Gate,  
 Beyond the shore where Daylight streams,  
 Sits, muttering spells for mortal state,  
 Young with eternal years,—the Titan-Sibyl FATE!  
 Prophets that men call Dreams!—

Seize—seize—seize—

Bind him strong in the chain,  
 On his heart, on his brain,  
 Clasp the gyves of the iron Sleep!  
 Awakes or dreams he still?

His eyes are open with a glassy stare,  
 On the fix'd brow the large drops gather chill,  
 And Horror like a Wind stirs thro' the lifted hair\*.

Before him stands the Thing of Dread—  
 A Giant Shadow motionless and pale!  
 As those dim Lemur-Vapours † that exhale  
 From the rank grasses rotting o'er the Dead,  
 And startle midnight with the mocking shew  
 Of the still, shrouded bones that sleep below—

So the wan image which the Vision bore  
 Was outlined from the air, no more  
 Than served to make the loathing sense a bond  
 Between the World of Life, and grieslier worlds beyond.

\* —ἰς ἄκραν

Δεῖμ' ὑπὸ λείδῃ κρατὸς φόβαν.

Soph. Œdip. Col. 1465.

† The Lemures or Larvæ, the evil spirits of the dead, as the Lares were the good.—They haunted sepulchres—“loath to leave the bodies that they loved.”

## V.

“ Behold !” the Shadow said, and lo,

Where the blank heath had spread, a smiling scene ;

Soft woodlands sloping from a village green,\*

And, waving to blue Heaven, the happy cornfields glow :

A modest roof, with ivy clustered o’er,

And Childhood’s busy mirth beside the door.

But, yonder, sunset sleeping on the sod,

Bow Labour’s rustic sons in solemn prayer ;

And, self-made Teacher of the truths of God.

The Dreamer sees the Phantom-Cromwell there !

“ Art thou content, of these the greatest *Thou*,”

Murmured the Fiend, “ the Master and the Priest ?”

A sullen anger knit the Dreamer’s brow,

And from his scornful lips the words came slow,

“ The greatest of the Hamlet, Demon, No !”

Loud laugh’d the Fiend—then trembled thro’ the sky,

Where haply angels watch’d, a warning sigh ;—

And Darkness swept the scene, and golden Quiet ceas’d.

## VI.

“ Behold !” the Shadow said—a hell-born ray

Shoots thro’ the Night, up-leaps the unblessed Day,

Spring from the earth the Dragon’s armèd seed,

The ghastly squadron wheels, and neighs the spectre-steed.

\* The farm of St. Ives, where Cromwell spent three years, afterwards recalled with regret—though not unafflicted with dark hypochondria and sullen discontent. Here, as Mr. Forster impressively observes, “ in the tenants that rented from him, in the labourers that served under him, he sought to sow the seeds of his after troop of Ironsides. . . . *All the famous doctrines of his later and more celebrated years were tried and tested in the little farm of St. Ives. . . .* Before going to their fieldwork in the morning, they (his servants) knelt down with their master in the touching equality of prayer ; in the evening they shared with him again the comfort and exaltation of divine precepts.”—*Forster’s Cromwell*.

Unnatural sounds the Mother-tongue  
 As loud from host to host the English warery rung ;  
 Kindred with kindred blent in slaughter, lo  
 The dark phantasma of the Prophet-Woe !

A gay and glittering band !  
 Apollo's lovelocks in the crest of Mars—  
 Light-hearted Valour, laughing scorn to scars—  
 A gay and glittering band,  
 Unwitting of the scythe—the Lilies of the Land !  
 Pale in the midst, that stately squadron boast  
 A princely form, a mournful brow ;  
 And still, where plumes are proudest, seen,  
 With sparkling eye and dauntless mien,  
 The young Achilles \* of the host.  
 On rolls the surging war—and now  
 Along the closing columns ring—  
 “ Rupert ” and “ Charles ”—“ The Lady of the Crown †,”  
 “ Down with the Roundhead Rebels, down ! ”  
 “ St. George and England's king.”

A stalwart and a sturdy band,—  
 Whose souls of sullen zeal  
 Are made by the Immortal Hand,  
 Invulnerable steel !  
 A kneeling host,—a pause of prayer,  
 A single voice thrills through the air  
 “ They come. Up Ironsides !  
 “ For TRUTH and PEACE unsparing smite !  
 “ Behold the accurs'd Amalekite ! ”

\* Prince Rupert.

† Henrietta Maria was the popular watchword of the Cavaliers.

The Dreamer's heart beat high and loud,  
 For, calmly through the carnage-cloud,  
 The Scourge and Servant of the Lord,  
 This hand the Bible—that the Sword—  
 The Phantom-Cromwell rides!

A lurid darkness swallows the array,  
 One moment lost—the darkness rolls away,  
 And, o'er the slaughter done,  
 Smiles, with his eyes of love, the setting Sun.  
 Death makes our Foe our Brother ;  
 And, meekly, side by side,  
 Sleep scowling Hate, and sternly smiling Pride,  
 On the kind breast of Earth, the quiet Mother !  
 Lo, where the Victor sweeps along,  
 The Gideon of the gory throng,  
 Beneath his hoofs the harmless dead—  
 The sunlight glory on his helmèd head—  
 Before him steel-clad Victory bending,  
 Around, from earth to heaven ascending—  
 The fiery incense of triumphant song.  
 So, as some orb above a mighty stream  
 Sway'd by its law—and sparkling in its beam,—  
 A Power apart from that tempestuous tide,  
 Calm and aloft behold the Phantom-Conqueror ride !  
 “ Art thou content—of these the greatest Thou,  
 “ Hero and Patriot ?” murmured then the Fiend.  
 The unsleeping Dreamer answered, “ Tempter, nay,  
 “ My soul stands breathless on the mountain's brow  
 And looks *beyond* !” Again swift darkness screen'd  
 The solemn Chieftain and the fierce array,  
 And armed Glory pass'd, like happier Peace, away.

## VII.

He looked again, and saw  
 A chamber with funereal sables hung  
 Wherein there lay a ghastly headless thing  
     That once had been a king—  
 And by the corpse a living man, whose doom,  
     Had both been left to Nature's quiet Law,  
     Were riper for the Garner-House of Gloom.\*  
 Rudely beside the gory clay were flung  
     A broken sceptre and an antique crown,  
 So, after some imperial Tragedy  
     August alike with sorrow and renown,  
 We smile to see the gauds that mov'd our awe,  
     Purple and orb; in dusty lumber lie,—  
 Alas; what thousands, on the stage of Time,  
 Envied the baubles, and revered the Mime!  
     Placed by the trunk—with long and whitening hair  
     By dark-red gouts besprent, the severed head  
     Up to the Gazer's musing eyes, the while,  
     Look'd with its livid brow and stony smile.  
 On that sad scene, his gaze the Dreamer fed,  
 Familiar both the Living and the Dead;  
 Terror, and hate, and strife concluded there,  
     Calm in his six-feet realm † the monarch lay;  
 And by the warning victim's mangled clay

\* The reader will recall the well known story of Cromwell opening the coffin of Charles with *the hilt of a private soldier's sword*, and, after gazing on the body some time, observing calmly, that it seemed made for long life.—

“ Had Nature been his Executioner,

He would have outlived Me!”—*Cromwell*, a MS. tragedy.

† A whole epic was in the stern epigram of the Saxon when asked by the rival to his throne—“ What share of territory wilt thou give me?”—“ Six feet of land for a grave!”

The Phantom-Cromwell smil'd,—and bending down  
With shadowy fingers toy'd about the shadowy crown.

“ Art thou content, at last, a Greater thou

“ Than one to whom the loftiest bent the knee.

“ Brand to the False—but Banner to the Free—

“ Avenger and Deliverer !”

“ Fiend,” replied

The Dreamer, “ who shall palter with the tide?—

“ *Deliverer !* Pilots who the vessel save

“ Leave not the helm while winds are on the wave.

“ **THE FUTURE** is the **Haven of THE NOW !**”

“ True,” quoth the Fiend—Again the darkness spread,

And Night gave back to Air the Doomsman and the  
Dead !

## VIII.

He look'd again ; and now

A lofty Senate stern with many a Form,

Not unfamiliar to the former strife ;

An anxious passion knit each gathered brow ;

O'er all, that hush deep not serene, in life,

As in the air, prophetic of wild storm.

Uprose a stately shape\* with dark-bright eye

And worn cheek lighted with a feverish glow ;—

It spoke—and at the aspect and the sound

The Dreamer breath'd a fierce and restless sigh ;

An instinct bade him hate and fear

That unknown shape—as if a foe were near—

\* When Cromwell came down (leaving his musqueteers without the door) to dissolve the Long Parliament, Vane was in the act of urging through the last stage the Bill that would have saved the republic. See Forster's spirited account of this scene, *Life of Vane*, 152.

For, mighty in that mien of thoughtful youth,  
 Spoke Fraud's most deadly foe—a soul on fire with  
 Truth;—

A soul without one stain  
 Save England's hallowing tears;—the sad and starry Vane!  
 There enters on that conclave high  
 A solitary Man;  
 And rustling thro' the conclave high  
 A troubled murmur ran;  
 A moment more—loud riot all—  
 With pike and morion gleam the startled hall:  
 And there, where, since the primal date  
 Of Freedom's glorious morn,  
 The Eternal People solemn sate  
 The People's Champion spat his ribald scorn!  
 Dark moral to all ages!—Blent in one  
 The broken fasces and the shattered throne;  
 The deed that damns immortally is done;  
 And FORCE, the Cain of Nations—reigns alone!  
 The veil is rent—the crafty soul lies bare!  
 “Behold,” the Demon cried, “the *Future Cromwell*, there!  
 “Art thou content, *on Earth* the Greatest thou,  
 “APOSTATE AND USURPER?”—From his rest  
 The Dreamer started with a heaving breast,  
 The better angels of the human heart  
 Not dumb to his,—The Hell-Born laugh'd aloud  
 And o'er the Evil Vision rush'd the Cloud!



## ODE III

### THE DEATH OF NELSON.

---

#### I.

THE wind comes gently from the west,\*  
The smile is on the face of day;  
And gaily o'er the ocean's breast,  
The breezes are at play;  
Along the deep—upon the foe,  
The sails of England bear;  
Above, the busy murmurs glow,†  
Hush'd in the cabin, kneels below,  
A lonely man in prayer.  
He pray'd as ought to pray the brav  
Before the seraph-guarded throne;  
He pray'd to conquer and to save.—  
The morn of that immortal strife,  
More anxious for a foeman's life,‡  
Than hopeful for his own.

\* The wind was now from the west, light breezes, &c. Having seen that all was as it should be, Nelson retired to his cabin and wrote the following prayer, &c.—*Southey's Nelson*.

† "The busy murmur glows."—*Gray*.

‡ "May humanity after victory be the predominant feature in the British fleet. For myself, individually, I commit my life to Him that made me," &c.—*Nelson's last prayer*.

## II.

He rose;—Before him glow'd.  
 In limned loveliness, that haunting face,\*  
 Where, through the roscate bloom of its abode  
 Look'd out the starry soul!—Celestial, thus,  
 Thro' sunset clouds, Idalian Hesperus,  
 Breaks on the lover, loitering by the sea,  
 That laves the passionate shores of soft Parthenope.†  
 The youngest-born of the Olympian race,  
 The Hebe of the Martyr-Demigod,  
 Never,‡ with looks of more voluptuous light  
 The golden Ether trod;  
 Slow-stealing where at length from earth reposed,  
 Her hero-bridegroom, as more blandly bright,  
 Grew with her blush, the glory-purpled skies,  
 Grim by the throne of Zeus‡ the Eagle closed  
 At her melodious step his charmed eyes,  
 And worn Alcides, of his woes beguil'd,  
 Turn'd from the whispering Mars, and Love ambrosial  
 smil'd.

## III.

What thoughts were his, the doomed and lonely one,  
 Feeding the last look on that fatal face?  
 Did conscience darken o'er the evil done,  
 Or deem that love so deep could be disgrace?

\* A portrait of Lady Hamilton hung in his cabin. The undisguised and romantic passion with which he regarded it, amounted almost to superstition.—*Southey's Nelson*.

† Parthenope, the poetical name of Naples. It was in that city that Nelson first saw Lady Hamilton.

‡ Pind. Pyth. l. I need scarcely perhaps inform even the general reader, that Zeus, in an application of Greek mythology, is a more appropriate name for the Thunder-God than that of Jupiter.

Did that sole deed of vengeance wild and weak,  
 Which bow'd the Warrior to the Woman's slave,  
 Ghastly and mournful o'er his memory break?—  
 Mark'd he the corpse, rejected by the wave,  
 Floating once more upon the accusing sea;—  
 The livid aspect and the snow-white hair;—  
 The fix'd eyes fearful with a stony glare;—  
 Life-like in death, the wrong'd Caraccioli? \*  
 Saw he the dark-wing'd Malice cower above  
 The doubtful bowers of his Armida-love?  
 Heard he the sighs which gentler spirits breathe  
 O'er the one rose-leaf in the laurel-wreath?  
 For Envy harmless o'er the laurel blows,  
 But when did worm forego, or canker spare the rose?  
 Away; the centered soul, in hours like these,  
 Daunts not itself with phantom images;  
 One voice alone is heard within the heart,  
 " We loved, and we must part !"  
 Yet while the voice was heard; and heavily  
 Round that low cell boom'd the voice-echoing sea,  
 As clouds obscure the unswerving planet,—fast  
 Across the luminous spirit rush'd the Past.

\* Prince Francesco Caraccioli was at the head of the marine;—nearly seventy years of age;—served under the Neapolitan or Parthenopæan republic against his late Sovereign. When the recovery of Naples was evidently near, he applied to Cardinal Ruffo and the Duke of Calvirrano for protection,—afterwards endeavoured to secret himself,—was discovered in the disguise of a peasant, and carried on board Lord Nelson's ship. He was tried,—found guilty,—sentenced to death by hanging, the evening of his apprehension,—the President (Count Thurn) of the court-martial was his personal enemy. . . . He entreated that he might be shot—in vain. It was obvious, says Mr. Southey, from whom this account is abridged, that Nelson was influenced by an infatuated attachment to Lady Hamilton, then on board, whose hatred against those whom she regarded the enemies of the Neapolitan

## IV.

The Boy—once more—he was the lonely boy.\*

Dreaming oracular sounds and weird, to hear  
Where the Brook murmur'd in a restless joy—

Or asking anxious Age with wonder—"What is Fear?"  
Away, upon the Warrior Seas,

Amidst the icebergs of the death-like Main

Where daylight bleaches in the dreary air ;—†  
The broken frame, the fell disease

And the dull anguish of the bed of pain ;—

The Hour when Youth first wrestles with Despair‡

When the far Alps of Fame, more giant seem  
Seen thro' the morning mists that struggle with the beam ;—

Court, made her forget what was due to the character of her sex as well as of her country. The body was carried out to a considerable distance and sunk in the bay, with three double-headed shot, weighing 250 pounds, tied to its legs. Between two and three weeks afterwards, when the King was on board the *Foudroyant*, a Neapolitan fisherman came to the ship, and solemnly declared that Caraccioli had risen from the bottom of the sea, and was coming as fast as he could to Naples, swimming half out of the water. The day being fair, Nelson, to please the King, stood out to sea ; but the ship had not proceeded far, before a body was distinctly seen upright in the water, and approaching them. It was soon recognized to be, indeed, the corpse of Caraccioli, which had risen and floated, while the great weights attached to the legs kept the body in a position like that of a living man.—*Southey's Nelson*.

\* When a mere child he stray'd a bird's nesting, from his grandmother's house—the dinner-hour elapsed – he was absent and could not be found—the alarm of the family was very great, &c. At length, after search had been made for him in various directions, he was discovered alone sitting composedly by the side of a brook which he could not get over. "I wonder, child," said the old lady, when she saw him, "that hunger and fear did not drive you home." "Fear," replied the future hero. "I never saw Fear, what is it?"—*Ibid*.

† The voyage of discovery towards the North Pole, in which Nelson served. "The sky was generally loaded with hard white clouds, from which it was never entirely free, even in the clearest weather."—*Ibid*.

‡ "The disease baffled all power of medicine ; he was reduced almost to a

Till sudden o'er the spiritual eye there broke  
 The Radiant Orb of the to-come Renown,  
 And from the nightmare-sleep, prophetic woke  
 Genius—which is but Hope to Action grown,—  
 And hail'd in Titan crags the footstool to its throne !  
 Yet ever in that high career  
 What stinging Doubts pursued !  
 Hiss'd Hydra Envies in his ear  
 And, round the steps of bleeding Toil,  
 The creeping things that clog the soil,  
 And, while they cumber, wound, in thorny fetters coil.  
 O Fountain heard afar—but rarely view'd,  
 As the Hart panteth for the water-brook,  
 So, in the burning waste doth Glory look  
 For thy life-giving well, melodious Gratitude !

## V.

Fast flashing, like the phosphor gleam  
 Upon the southern seas ;  
 Shine, rippling o'er his waking dream,  
 The wavelike memories.  
 They rush'd—the triumphs of that crowded life—  
 The hot Delight of Strife.

skeleton ; the use of his limbs was for some time entirely lost, &c. \* \* \*  
 Long afterwards, when the name of Nelson was known as widely as that of  
 England itself, he spoke of the feelings which he at this time endured. " I felt  
 impressed," said he, " with a feeling that I should never rise in my profession.  
 My mind was staggered with a view of the difficulties I had to surmount. I  
 could discover no means of reaching the object of my ambition. After a  
 long and gloomy reverie, in which I almost wished to throw myself overboard,  
 a sudden glow of patriotism was kindled within me, &c." From that time  
 he often said, a *radiant orb* was suspended in his mind's eye, which urged  
 him onward to renown."—*Ibid.*

The Nile's avenging day,  
Aboukir's reddening Bay,

The thunder-sceptre ravish'd from the Gaul,—  
They rush'd—the visions and the victories ;

The swarming streets—the festive hall ;  
A nation's choral and sublime acclaim ;

And—as the air with one orb's arrowy light,  
Earth radiant with one name !

From these he turn'd to holier thoughts, away,

Sad with the wisdom of the Preacher's song ;

For he had felt how loud applauses die,

As custom hacknies to the vulgar eye

The Fame,—not so the Wrong !

For Slander is the echo of Repute,

And strikes from hill to hill when Glory's tromp is mute.

To the calm spot in this loud world, he turn'd

Where laugh'd the eyes too young his loss to weep ;

Oh, how, once more, the boding Father yearn'd

To watch one fair face in the happy sleep,—

As, when (that parting hour) in pious care

By his child's couch he knelt\*—she did not hear his prayer !

## VI.

The Phantom shapes are flown !

As ghosts before the day,

The unsubstantial memories glide away,

Into their closing grave.

\* Horatia Nelson Thompson, believed to be his daughter, and so indeed he called her the last time that he pronounced her name. The last minutes which Nelson passed at Merton were employed in praying over this child as she lay sleeping.—*Southey's Nelson*.

The Hour has claimed its own !  
 Aloft, the hurrying tread, the gathering hum ;  
 Around, the brightening sky, the fresh'ning water—  
 More near and near the fated squadrons come—  
 Fast o'er the dread suspense rushes the storm of slaughter—  
 And the heart bounds forth from its gloom.  
 Over the tides of its solemn doom,  
 As the hero's bark, when the rousing gale  
 Shakes the sullen sleep from its gladdening sail.  
 Bounds over the roaring wave !

## VII.

Hurrah ! hurrah ! from wave to sky,  
 Arose the Sea-Queen's signal-cry ;  
 From heart to heart electric ran  
 Those words of simple beauty,—  
 ENGLAND EXPECTS THAT EVERY MAN  
 THIS DAY SHALL DO HIS DUTY !

## VIII.

Full on the foe the sunbeams shine,  
 And our seamen gaze on the glittering line,  
 Thirty and three, their numbers be,  
 Like giants they stride thro' the groaning sea.  
 Our seamen gazed with a glad delight—  
 Ne'er had they seen such a goodly sight ;  
 Then they glanc'd at each other, and " Oh," they said,  
 " How well they will look at our own ' Spithead.' " \*

\* The sun shone on the sails of the enemy, and their well-formed line, with their numerous three-deckers, made an appearance which any other assailants would have thought formidable. But the British sailors only admired the beauty and the splendour of the spectacle ; and, in full confidence of winning what they saw, remarked to each other, " What a fine sight yonder ships would make at Spithead !" *Ibid.*

## IX.

At the head of the line goes the "Victory"\*

With Nelson on the deck;

And on his breast the orders shinet†

Like the stars on a shattered wreck.

For ruthless had the lightning been

That flash'd from the stormy fame;

And only spar'd the laurels, green‡

O'er the rents of the ruin'd frame.

"Look out, look out," cried Nelson, "see

(For so the fight began)

"How 'the Sovereign'§ steers thro' the Frenchman's line

"Astern o' the Santa Ann."

"Look out, look out," cried Collingwood,

As he burst thro' the Frenchman's line,

"If Nelson cou'd, in our place have stood,

"And have been but here, the first to steer

"Thro' the midst of the Frenchman's line."||

Now from the fleet of the foemen past

Ahead of "the Victory,"

A four-deck'd ship with a flagless mast—

An Anak of the sea—

His gaze on the ship, Lord Nelson cast,

"Oho, my old friend," quoth he,

\* "The Victory," Nelson's ship.

† He wore that day, as usual, his admiral's frock coat, bearing on the left breast four stars of the different orders with which he was invested.—*Southey's Nelson*.

‡ I need scarcely observe that according to the poetical superstition of the ancients the lightning never scathed the laurel.

§ The Royal Sovereign, commanded by Collingwood.

|| "What would Nelson give to be here!" said Collingwood, delighted at being first in the heat of the fire.—*Southey's Nelson*.



“ Since again we have met, we must all be glad  
To pay our respects to the Trinidad !”\*

Full on the bow, of the giant foe,

Our gallant “ Victory” runs ;

Thro’ the dark’ning smoke, the thunder broke

O’er her deck from a hundred guns :—

But we answer’d not, by a single shot,

Though our booms and the maintop fell,

Until we were suited with two to one,

For we liked the odds we had always won.—

Here, to the left, at length we had

The saint of the ocean—Trinidad ;

There, to the right, loom’d the bulky might

Of the grim Redoutable.

Then out in her pride, and from either side

Spoke the wrath of the “ Victory.”

Cries Hardy, “ My Lord, we must run on board

“ One of their braggarts to break the line,

“ Which shall it be ?” — Saith our King of the Sea,

(And we heard through the roar his careless voice,)

“ It matters not much, you may take your choice.” †

So the helm to port ; — O’er the bounding brine

With a shout we burst, where the shot came worst

From the grim Redoutable.

As swarms of bees on the summer trees,

Her tops were filled with the Tyrolese, ‡

And their bullets came with a dastard aim

\* The Santissima Trinidad, Nelson’s old acquaintance as he used to call her, was distinguishable only by her four decks.

† “ Take your choice, Hardy, it does not signify much.” — *Southey’s Nelson*.

‡ “ Her tops, like those of all the enemy’s ships, were filled with riflemen (the Tyrolese).” — *Southey’s Nelson*.

Round the mark which the Brave would have deemed divine ;—

Where, o'er the gentlest heart that e'er  
Bade carnage cease or conquest spare,  
The stars of glory shine.

On the other side of the foeman prest

Our dauntless Temeraire ;  
Boarded in turn—for the ships were four,—  
And the huge guns plied with a slackened roar,  
As, breast to breast, the vessels rest,—  
We fought like landmen there !  
The Redoubtable no more replied  
To our guns—" She has struck," our Nelson cried,  
" No pennon waves on her sullen mast,  
" She has struck and the time to destroy is past ;\*  
" I have prayed our Lord with a Christian's prayer,  
" Though our arms may win, that our hearts may spare."  
Scarce the words were spoke, through the lurid smoke,  
O God, we saw him fall ;  
From the ship he had bid our guns forbear,  
Came the murderous rifle-ball.

## XII.

As down Sicilian Etna's burning side,  
The waning terrors of the liquid hell  
Fainter and dimlier grow !  
So the spent rage of Battle grimly died  
O'er the far-booming ocean's labouring swell—  
But, ever and anon, the sudden flame  
Shot from some flying sail,

\* " He twice gave orders to cease firing upon the Redoubtable, supposing that she had struck, because her great guns were silent. From this ship, which he had thus twice spared, he received his death. A ball, &c."—*Southey's Nelson.*

And the last vengeance of the vanquish'd came  
 In loud despair upon the cloudy gale.  
 They fly—still dealing death—they fly—the Foe!  
 So lions from the circling spears retire,  
 With horrent jaws that menace as they go;  
 So hurrying comets that depart in ire,  
 Shake from their demon-urns the swart malignant fire!

## XIII.

But where was he—the noblest son  
 Of the Triumphant Isle,—  
 Where—England's loftiest victory won—  
 Her Hero of the Nile?—  
 Lo, on his couch, the Victor-Victim lying,  
 Save to the few—the fatal stroke unknown—  
 Above—his gladsome crew—his pennon flying,  
 And he, with that dark Angel—Death, alone!  
 But ever as the loud hurra,\*  
 Tim'd with triumphant peal his latest day,  
 By each new conquest o'er the scattering Foe,  
 Flash'd on the ashen cheek the flickering glow.  
 And, like a star that pales beneath the morn,  
 When gradual broadening o'er the solemn sky,  
 So life grew dark as glory drew more nigh!  
 Vain on that gentle heart the levin came;  
 Nor bays nor mingling myrtle there uptorn;  
 And thoughts, like echoes in a shrine, repeat

\* As often as a ship struck, the crew of the Victory hurra'd, and at every hurra a visible expression of joy gleamed in the eyes, and marked the countenance of the dying hero.—*Southey's Nelson.*

Familiar memories indistinctly sweet,  
That blend his England's with his Emma's name.\*

## XIV.

The last guns heard that famous day  
Along the Deep were dying ;  
No flag, save ours, within the bay  
On a single mast was flying :—  
When the Captain came where Nelson lay,  
The chaplain by his side ;  
His hand he press'd,—his cheek he kiss'd,  
“ Look up,” the Captain cried ;—  
“ Twenty have struck, and the rest have fled,  
“ We have won the victory !”  
“ Thank God—thank God,” then feebly said  
The Sydney of the Sea—†  
“ My duty is done,”‡—So the race was run,  
And thus our Nelson died.

\* “ Next to his country she occupied his thoughts.”—*Southey's Nelson*.

† Nelson resembled Sydney in his fate but yet more in his humanity. Each insisted, at the last, that the surgeon should leave him and attend to those to whom he might be useful.

‡ “ Thank God, I have done my duty !” These words he repeatedly pronounced, and they were the last words which he uttered.—*Southey's Nelson*.

THE END.

# THE SEA-CAPTAIN;

OR,

## THE BIRTHRIGHT:

A Drama

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE LADY OF LYONS," "RICHELIEU," &c.

---

"The Son of Fortune, she has sent him forth  
To thrive by the red sweat of his own merits."

MIDDLETON

"Then triumph, Leon, richer in thy love  
Than all the hopes of treasure."

CHAPMAN.

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LONDON :

SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

1839.

LONDON :  
Printed by WILLIAM CLOWES and SONS,  
Stamford Street.

TO THE  
EARL OF DURHAM

THE AUTHOR DEDICATES

THIS DRAMA;

A SLIGHT TRIBUTE OF ADMIRATION FOR  
A CLASSICAL AND ACCOMPLISHED JUDGE  
IN ARTS AND LETTERS;  
AND A SINCERE MEMORIAL  
OF PERSONAL RESPECT AND REGARD.

*October 23, 1839.*





P R E F A C E.

---

As in the "Lady of Lyons" an attempt was made to illustrate the Republican soldier of the Italian campaign, a character peculiarly French—so in this play the Author has sought to delineate a character not less especially English, viz., the early, and, if I may so speak, the aboriginal, Sea-Captain, with the same gay and prodigal contempt of the commonplace objects which landsmen covet and scheme for, that is still popularly attributed to his brethren, but with something also of the adventurous romance and poetic fancy with which the lingering chivalry of the Old World, and the first glimpses of the New, inspired the wild and gallant contemporaries of Walter Raleigh. The varieties of our peculiar civilisation can exhibit no individuality so strikingly and imperishably national as that which has been formed by the maritime spirit, and devoted to the maritime service, of our people. Perhaps, too, in no aspect is the English character so attractive and so noble as in the great exemplars and maintainers of our naval glory. Collingwood and Nelson were not more in deed than in thought the representatives and mirrors of

a heroism loftier than that which is to be found in the portraits that, with harder outlines and half-fictitious colours, adorn the gallery of Plutarch. If the character I attempt to sketch is necessarily idealized by the poetry that belongs to the Drama, I trust that it is not the less essentially true to Nature; and that the Sea-Captain of Elizabeth's day will not be deemed an unworthy likeness of the forerunners and heralds of the glorious race that commenced with Blake, and found their most illustrious archetype in the gentle and daring heart—in the patriotism, disinterested and sublime—in the valour that was ever merciful—in the ambition that was never base—in all the memories of devoted life and heroic death, which, age after age, shall render not less holy than unfading the laurel and the cypress upon the tomb of Nelson.

*October 23rd, 1839.*

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA,

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRE ROYAL, HAYMARKET, OCTOBER 31<sup>st</sup>, 1839.

### MEN.

|   |       |                 |
|---|-------|-----------------|
| LORD ASHDALE, son to <i>Lady Arundel</i>  | . . . | MR. J. WEBSTER. |
| SIR MAURICE BEEVOR, a reputed Miser, and<br>though but distantly related to <i>Lady Arundel</i> ,<br>the Heir-at-Law to the Titles and Es-<br>tates, failing the children of the Countess | . . . | MR. STRICKLAND. |
| NORMAN, the Captain of a Ship-of-War  | . . . | MR. MACREADY.   |
| FALKNER, his friend and Lieutenant  | . . . | MR. HOWE.       |
| ONSLow, a Village Priest  | . . . | MR. PHELPS.     |
| GAUSSEN, a Pirate   | . . . | MR. O. SMITH.   |
| LUKE, a Pirate  | . . . | MR. GALLOTT.    |
| Servants, Sailors, Pirates, &c.   |       |                 |

### WOMEN.

|  |       |                 |
|--|-------|-----------------|
| LADY ARUNDEL, a Countess in her own right                              | . . . | MRS. WARNER.    |
| VIOLET, her Ward, and cousin to Lord Ash-<br>dale by his father's side | . . . | MISS H. FAUCIT. |
| MISTRESS PRUDENCE  | . . . | MRS. CLIFFORD.  |

SCENE,—*The North of Devon.*

COSTUME,—*Towards the end of Elizabeth's reign.*

Time occupied by the action, one day.



# THE SEA-CAPTAIN;

OR,

## THE BIRTHRIGHT.

---

### ACT I.

#### SCENE I.

*The exterior of a small inn by the sea-coast; the Castle of Arundel at a distance; a boat drawn on the beach; a ship at anchor. The door of the inn is open, and discovers FALKNER and Sailors carousing within. Before a table in front of the stage—GILES GAUSSEN seated. Time, forenoon.*

LANDLORD (*serving GAUSSEN, with a flask, &c.*)

IF this be not the best Canaries on the coast, I give thee leave to drown me in my own butt. But it is dull work drinking alone, master;—wilt join the jolly fellows within?

GAUSSEN.

No.

LANDLORD.

A bluff customer. If his reckonings be as short as

his answers, he is not likely to die in debt to his landlord.

[*Exit Landlord within the inn.*]

GAUSSEN.

Luke should be returned ere this; Sir Maurice would be eager eno' to see his old friend if he knew what news in the way of shot I carry in my locker. Humph! Sir Walter Raleigh is a great man—and introduced tobacco! (*smokes.*)

SAILORS (*within*).

Ha, ha!

GAUSSEN.

To the foul fiend with those drunken sailors! Had I known what kind of guests my fat landlord harboured I should hardly have put into this port: I hate honest men: what right have men to be honest and spoil other men's trade?

*Enter* LUKE.

Ha, Luke! what says the old knight?

LUKE.

Mighty little, but he is close at my heels. He carries back his own answer, to save porterage, I suppose. Thou mightst well call him a miser—not a tester for my trouble. His very face is like a board to warn men off the premises of his breeches' pockets.

GAUSSEN.

Where are our crew?

LUKE.

Rambling through the town yonder, and picking up

stray news of what ships sail and what their cargo. They are keen scouts.

GAUSSEN.

Go, select twelve of the stoutest; stow them away in the sea-cave that I told thee of, below the castle yonder. I may find work for them ere nightfall.—Hark ye, Luke. If thou hadst done a man such wrong that thy life lay at his mercy, what wouldst thou?

LUKE.

Take the first dark night for a spring from the bush, and keep my knife ground.

GAUSSEN.

I like thy advice.—Hence!

[*Exit* LUKE.]

*Enter* SIR MAURICE.

SIR MAURICE.

What, Giles Gaussen—bully Gaussen, my heart of oak; how fares it? Why, it is ten years since we met. I thought thou wert in another land.—(*Aside*) I wish thou wert in another world. You are a little altered—warlike wounds, eh? All for the better—more grim, terrible, manly, and seamanlike.

GAUSSEN.

I must thank the boy whom I took out to please thee for this gash across the brow.

SIR MAURICE.

Ugh! it is by no means a handsome keepsake, bully Gaussen. What, then? you are quits with him. You

gave him a very large winding-sheet,—one that will not wear out this many a day, eh?

GAUSSEN.

No; he has escaped—he lives! I saw him yesterday—a day's journey hence. It is this which brings me hither. I have tracked news of him. He bears another name—Norman! He has a goodly ship of his own. Look yonder (*pointing to the ship*). Does this news open your purse-strings, Sir Maurice?

SIR MAURICE.

Thou traitor! Hadst thou not five hundred broad pieces—bright, new, gold broad pieces? I recollect the face of every one of them as if it were my own child's;—and all, all that thou mightst never say to me “He lives.”

GAUSSEN.

Hist!

*Enter FALKNER and Sailors from the inn.*

FALKNER.

Yes, steady, lads, steady. The Captain will be here anon—it is the hour he fixed. Avast there, messmate! Thou seem'st one of our cloth. Dost want a berth in the Royal Eliza, under the bold Captain Norman?

GAUSSEN (*aside to SIR MAURICE*).

Norman—you hear?

SIR MAURICE.

You serve under Captain Norman, worthy sir?—Do you expect him soon this way, worthy sir?



FALKNER.

This instant, worthy sir! I am his lieutenant, worthy sir. Faith, you shall drink his health.

SIR MAURICE.

Zounds, sir! what is his health to me? It is as much as a man of my age can do to drink his own health. This way, Gausсен; quick—tell me more—tell me more. Good day to you, master lieutenant.

[*Exeunt* SIR M. and GAUSSEN.

FALKNER.

Good day to you both—and an ill wind go with you! By the Lord, messmates, a man who refuses to drink, without a satisfactory explanation, is to my mind a very suspicious character.

SAILOR.

Hurrah for the Captain! hurrah!

*Enter* NORMAN.

NORMAN.

Well met, lads! beshrew me but the sound of your jolly welcome is the merriest music I've heard since we parted. Have ye spent all your doubloons?

FIRST SAILOR.

Pretty nearly, Captain.

NORMAN.

That's right—we shall be all the lighter in sailing! Away to the town—and get rid of these pieces for me. Off; but be back an hour before sunset.

[*Exeunt* Sailors.

What should I do with all this prize-money  
 If it were not for those brave fellows?—faith,  
 They take a world of trouble off one's hands!  
 How fares it, Falkner?—thou hast seen thy home?—  
 All well?—

FALKNER.

All well! my poor old father, bless him,  
 Had known reverse—he tills another's land,  
 And crops had fail'd. Oh, man, I was so happy  
 To pour my Indian gold into his lap,  
 And cry "Your sailor son has come to drive  
 Want from his father's door!"

NORMAN.

That hour were worth  
 A life of toil!—well, and thy mother?—I  
 Have never known one—but I love to see  
 A man's eyes moisten and his colour change  
 When on his lips lingers the sweet name "MOTHER!"  
 Thy mother bless'd thee!

FALKNER.

Scarce with words;—but tears  
 And lifted hands, and lips that smiled dear thanks  
 To the protecting Heaven—*these* bless'd me!

NORMAN.

Friend,  
 I envy thee!—

FALKNER.

Eno' of me—now for thyself, what news?  
 Thy Floweret of the West—thy fair betroth'd—  
 The maid we rescued from the Afric corsair

With her brave father—in the Indian seas—  
Thou'st seen her?—

NORMAN.

No!—I had more wisely, saved  
My time and speed. Her sire is dead—the stranger  
Sits at his hearth; and with her next of kin  
Hard by this spot—this very spot—dear Falkner,  
My Violet dwells: look where the sunlight gilds  
The time-worn towers of stately Arundel—  
Thither my steps are bound;—a happy chance  
Our trysting-place should have been chosen here!—  
I'd not have gone one bowshot from the path  
That leads my soul to bask in Violet's eyes—  
No, not for all the lands my journey traversed,  
Nor—what is more—for the best ship that ever  
Bore the plumed Victory o'er the joyous main.

[*Going out.*]

FALKNER.

Hold—but the priest, thy foster-father, Onslow—  
Hast thou sought *him*?

NORMAN.

Thou dear old man, forgive me!  
I do believe as whirlpools to the sea  
Love is to life!—Since first I leapt on land  
I have had no thought—no dream—no fear—no hope  
Which the absorbing waves of one strong passion  
Have not engulfed!—Wilt serve me Falkner?—Bear  
This letter to the priest—the place inscribed  
Scarce two hours' journey hence;—say I will seek him  
Perchance this night—if not, the morrow's dawn.

Let all good news be glad upon thy tongue—  
 How I am well—strong—gay—how every night—  
 Mark—tell him this—(good men at home are apt  
 To judge us seamen harshly)—every night  
 On the far seas 'his foster-son recall'd  
 The words he taught my infant lips,—and pray'd  
 Blessings on that grey head.

FALKNER.

I'll do thy bidding.

NORMAN.

So now to Violet.

FALKNER.

Hark!—thy men are true—  
 Thy ship at hand : if she say “ ay ”—hoist sail,  
 Off with the prize. I prithee, is she rich?—

NORMAN.

Her sire died poor—thank Heaven, she is *not* rich !

FALKNER.

I'm glad to hear it—Had she lands and beeves,  
 And gold, you might forswear the sea.

NORMAN.

The sea !

No—not for Beauty's self ! the glorious sea—  
 Where England grasps the trident of a god,  
 And every breeze pays homage to her flag,  
 And every wave hears Neptune's choral nymphs  
 Hymn with immortal music England's name !—  
 Forswear the sea ! My bark shall be our home ;—  
 The gale shall chaunt our bridal melodies ;—

The stars that light the angel palaces  
 Of air, our lamps;—our floors the crystal deep  
 Studded with sapphires sparkling as we pass;—  
 Our roof—all Heaven!—my Beautiful, my Own!  
 Never did sail more gladly glide to port  
 Than I to thee! my anchor in thy faith,  
 And in thine eyes my haven.—

Farewell, Falkner.

[*Exeunt* NORMAN and FALKNER at opposite sides.]

## SCENE III.

*The Gardens of the Castle of Arundel.*

*Enter* LADY ARUNDEL.

It is the day—now five-and-twenty years  
 Elapsed—the anniversary day of woe!  
 O Sun, thou art the all-piercing eye of Heaven,  
 And to thy gaze my heart's dark caves lie bare  
 With their unnatural secret.—Silence, Conscience!  
 Have I not rank—power—wealth—unstain'd repute?  
 So will I wrap my ermine round the past,  
 And—Ah—he comes! my son—my noble boy,  
 I see thee, and air brightens!—

LORD ASHDALE (*speaking without to Servants*).

Yes—old Rowland!—

And, stay, be sure the falcon which my Lord  
 Of Leicester sent me. We will try his metal.

*Enter* ASHDALE.

Good morrow, mother—Hum—methought that Violet  
Were here. Well! what with *you* and Mistress  
Prudence,  
That virgin legacy of starch and buckram  
Which Violet's father (rest his soul!) bequeath'd her,  
I might as well be cousinless.

LADY ARUNDEL.

My son,  
She is no bride for Arundel's young heir.

ASHDALE.

Who spoke of brides?—Can we not gaze on Beauty  
Save by the torch of Hymen?—To be gallant—  
Breathe out a score of sighs, or vows, or sonnets—  
Mirror the changes in that Heaven called "Woman"—  
And smooth our language to a dainty sadness;—  
All this—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Is love!—

ASHDALE.

No—No—*amusement*, mother.

The pastoral recreation of the groves  
Where birds and shepherds dissipate their dulness  
By the sweet pastime amorous poets sing of.  
You take this matter far too solemnly ;  
I own I would abridge the days—the days (*yawning*)  
Are wondrous lengthy in the country, mother—  
By practising the bow of Cupid, just

To keep one's hand in, with my blush-faced cousin !  
How does this plume become me ?

LADY ARUNDEL.

Well ! yet I  
Would have it sweep less loosely.

ASHDALE.

Now-a-days  
Our love is worn just as I wear this plume,  
A glancing feather, gay with every wind,  
And playing o'er a light and giddy brain  
Such as your son's—(*kissing her hand*)—Let the  
plume play, sweet mother !

LADY ARUNDEL (*fondly*).

Ah ! Percy, Percy !

ASHDALE.

Well, I hear my steed  
Neighing impatience, and the silver bells  
On my dark falcon shaking their own gladness  
Into the limber air ;—the sun will halt  
Midway in heaven ere my return ; meanwhile,  
If you would keep me faithful to your hand,  
Give me my wings—in other words (*now, frown not*),  
The court, the camp, or any life but this,  
If my fair cousin saddens all my sunshine  
With eyes so coldly gentle ;—fare you well.

[*Exit* ASHDALE.]

LADY ARUNDEL.

Too light,—too vain for his ancestral honours—

And yet, what mother does not love her son  
Best for the faults she chides in him ?

*Enter VIOLET and MISTRESS PRUDENCE.*

My Violet,  
Why still this pensive brow—this garb of grief ?

VIOLET.

Lady, I am an orphan !

LADY ARUNDEL.

Nay, take comfort.—  
Yet is there not a softer sorrow, Violet,  
In thy meek eyes than that which bathes with tears  
A father's holy urn ? Thou turn'st away—  
(*Angrily*)—Does thy gaze rove for Ashdale ?

Girl, beware—  
The love that trifles round the charms it gilds  
Oft ruins while it shines.

VIOLET.

You can speak thus,  
Yet bid me grieve not that I am an orphan !

LADY ARUNDEL (*touched*).

Forgive me, I was hasty !—No, you do not—  
Say it—you do not love my graceless Percy ?

VIOLET.

You know that I have shunn'd him !—I am poor ;  
But Poverty is proud (*aside*), and Memory faithful.

LADY ARUNDEL (*as to herself*).

I have high hopes for Ashdale—bright desires—  
Wild schemes—the last son of a race whose lords



Have sought their mates beside the hearth of kings,  
He stands before me as a dream of glory,  
Haunting some young ambition ; and mine eyes  
Pierce to the future, when these bones are dust,  
And see him princeliest of the lion tribe  
Whose swords and coronals gleam around the throne,  
The guardian stars of the Imperial Isle.  
Kings shall revere his mother !

*Enter SIR MAURICE.*

SIR MAURICE (*aside to* LADY ARUNDEL).

Hark ! he lives !

LADY ARUNDEL.

He ! who ?

SIR MAURICE.

The young gentleman who stands<sup>d</sup> between your Percy and his inheritance ! Ugh, ugh ! (*coughing*). It is very cold. (*To* MISTRESS PRUDENCE.) Suppose you take a walk with your fair charge, Mistress Prudence ; and, not to waste your time, you can pray for grace to spin me a pair of lambs-wool stockings against Michaelmas.

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

Stockings, Sir Maurice ! Marry, come up ; *is* that a delicate allusion ?

[*Walks up the stage with* VIOLET.

SIR MAURICE (*to* LADY ARUNDEL).

I tell thee,—he lives ; he is at hand ; no longer a babe, a child, a helpless boy ; but a stout man, with a

ship, and a name, and a crew,—and money, for what I know. Your son Percy is a fine youth. It is a pity his father married before, and had other sons. But for your Lordships of Ashdale and Arundel, your Percy would be as poor—as poor as old Maurice Beevor. The air is very keen. Poverty is subject to ague (*shivers*), and to asthma (*wheezes*), and to cold rheums and catarrhs (*sneezes*), and to pains in the loins, lumbago, and sciatica (*rubs himself*); and when Poverty begs, the dogs bark at it; and when Poverty is ill, the doctors mangle it; and when Poverty is dying, the priests scold at it; and when Poverty is dead, nobody weeps for it. If this young man prove his case, your son, Percy Ashdale, will be very poor!

LADY ARUNDEL.

My son, my Percy! but the priest is faithful. He has sworn——

SIR MAURICE.

To keep thy secret only while thy father and thy spouse lived: they are dead. But the priest has no proofs to back his tale?

LADY ARUNDEL.

Alas! he has.

SIR MAURICE.

He has! Why did you never tell me that before?

LADY ARUNDEL.

Because—because (*aside*) I feared thy avarice more than the priest's conscience.

SIR MAURICE (*aside*).

Hum! she must come to me for aid now. I will get these proofs. Under the surface of this business I see a great many gold and silver fishes. Hum! I will begin to angle!

LADY ARUNDEL.

My own thoughts confuse me. What should be done?

SIR MAURICE.

I know a nice little farm to be sold on the other side of the river Ex; but I am very poor—a very poor old knight.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Do you trifle with me? What is your counsel?

SIR MAURICE.

There is a great deal of game on it; partridges, hares, wild geese, snipes, and plovers (*smacking his lips*); besides a magnificent preserve of sparrows, which I can always sell to the little blackguards in the streets for a penny a hundred. But I am very poor—a very poor old knight.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Within, within! You shall have gold—what you will; we must meet this danger!

SIR MAURICE.

If she had said "gold" at first, I should have saved

exactly one minute and three quarters ! Madam, I follow you. Never fear, I will secure the proofs.

LADY ARUNDEL.

I dreamed of him last night ; a fearful dream !

[*Exit* LADY ARUNDEL *within the house.*

MISTRESS PRUDENCE *and* VIOLET *advance.*

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

The old miser ! See how I will chafe him. (*To* SIR MAURICE, *curtsying very low.*) Worshipful Sir Maurice, may I crave your blessing ?

SIR MAURICE (*aside*).

I never heard of a man being asked to give his blessing who was not expected to give something else along with it. (*Aloud.*) Chut, chut ! what do you want with a blessing, you elderly heathen ?

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

Why, it does not cost anything.

SIR MAURICE (*aside*).

That's a jibe at my poverty. Every fool has a stone for the poor. (*Aloud.*) Does not cost anything ! Does it *bring in* anything ? What will you give for it ?

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

This ribbon.

SIR MAURICE (*taking the ribbon*).

Hum ! it will do for a shoe-tie. There, bless you,

and mend you, and incline your sinful old heart to my lambs'-wool stockings! Do you want to be blessed too, child?

VIOLET.

Nay, indeed, sir!

SIR MAURICE.

The girls grow penter every day! That hypocritical Jezebel looks all the merrier for my benediction. I am afraid she has got a bargain out of me.

*[Exit within the house.]*

*Manent* VIOLET—MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

Now would I give my best peach-coloured padusoy to know why that malicious old miser has so mighty an influence with the Lady of Arundel.

VIOLET.

You forget he is her relative; nay, failing Lord Ashdale, the heir-at-law to the estates of Arundel.—Ah, Mistress Prudence, how shall I thank thee for aiding me to baffle the unwelcome suit of this young lord?

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

Dear child, I am amply repaid for it by my own conscience—(*aside*) and the young lord's mother. You sigh, sweetheart—thinking still of your absent sailor?

VIOLET.

When do I cease to think of him?—and now that my poor father is gone, more than ever. His pride

might have forbid my union with one of obscure birth—  
but now—

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

He is indeed a cavalier of very comely presence !  
How noble he looked the day he leaped on board the  
Corsair—with his bold crew shouting round him—  
“ England and Elizabeth—Norman to the rescue !” I  
think I see him now—his eyes flashing through the  
smoke. Ah, lady-bird, but for him we two innocent  
virgins would have been put up for sale in the Beauty-  
Market at Tunis ! Why, you don’t hear a word I say.  
Well, if you like solitude, as the young lord is abroad  
for the forenoon, I will leave you awhile ; I have my  
great tapestry-work of the loves of King Solomon and  
Queen Sheba to finish ; and when one has ceased to feel  
love it is a comfort at least to create it—in tent-stitch.

[*Exit.*

VIOLET.

O for some fairy talisman to conjure  
Up to these longing eyes the form they pine for !  
And yet in love there’s no such word as absence !  
The loved one, like our guardian spirit, walks  
Beside us ever,—shines upon the beam—  
Perfumes the flower—and sighs in every breeze !  
Its presence gave such beauty to the world  
That all things beautiful its likeness are ;  
And aught in sound most sweet, to sight most fair,  
Breathes with its voice, or like its aspect smiles.

*Enter* NORMAN.

There spoke my fancy, not my heart !—Where art thou,  
My unforgotten Norman ?

NORMAN.

At thy feet !

Oh, have I lived to see thee once again ?  
Breathe the same air ?—my own, my blessed one !  
Look up—look up—these are the arms which shelter'd  
When the storm howl'd around ; and these the lips  
Where, till this hour, the sad and holy kiss  
Of parting linger'd—as the fragrance left  
By angels when they touch the earth and vanish.  
Look up—Night never panted for the sun  
As for thine eyes, my soul !—

VIOLET.

Thrice joyous day !

My Norman !—is it thou, indeed ?—my Norman !

NORMAN.

Look up, look up, my Violet—weeping ? fie !  
And trembling too—yet leaning on my breast.  
In truth thou art too soft for such rude shelter !  
Look up—I come to woo thee to the seas,  
My sailor's bride—hast thou no voice but blushes ?  
Nay—from those roses let me, like the bee,  
Drag forth the secret sweetness !—

VIOLET.

Oh, what thoughts

Were kept for speech when we once more should meet,  
Now blotted from the page—and all I feel  
Is—*Thou* art with me !—

NORMAN.

Not to part again.

*Enter* MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

What do I see?—I thought that I heard voices!  
Why, Captain Norman!—It must be his ghost!

NORMAN.

Ah, my fair governante!—By this hand,  
And this most chaste salute, I'm flesh and blood!

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

Fie, Captain, fie! But pray be gone—The Countess—  
If she should come—

NORMAN.

Oh, then I am a ghost!

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

Still the same merry gentleman! But think  
Of my responsibilities. What would  
The Countess say, if I allowed myself  
To see a stranger speaking to her ward?

NORMAN.

See, Mistress Prudence?—oh, if that be all,  
What see you *now*?

*[Clapping a piece of gold to the left eye.]*

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

Why, nothing with the left eye—  
The right has still a morbid sensibility!

NORMAN.

Poor thing!—this golden ointment soon will cure it!

*[Clapping another piece of gold to the right eye.]*

What see you now, my Prudence?



MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

Not a soul!

NORMAN (*aside*).

Faith, 'tis a mercy on a poor man's purse  
That some old ladies were not born with three eyes!  
[PRUDENCE *goes up the stage*.

VIOLET.

Nay, my own Norman—nay!—You heard no step?  
This awful woman—

NORMAN.

Woman! a sweet word!  
Too sweet for terror, Violet!—

VIOLET.

You know not  
The Dame of Arundel—her *name* has terror!  
Men whisper sorcery where her dark eye falls;  
Her lonely lamp outlives Night's latest star,  
And o'er her beauty some dark memory glooms,  
Too proud for penitence—too stern for sorrow.—  
Ah! my lost father!—

NORMAN.

Violet, thou and I  
Perchance are orphans *both* upon the earth:  
So turn we both from earth to that great mother  
(The only parent I have known), whose face  
Is bright with gazing ever on the stars—  
The Mother Sea;—and for our Father, Violet,  
We'll look for *Him* in heaven!

[*They go up the stage*.

*Enter* LADY ARUNDEL *and* SIR MAURICE.

[MISTRESS PRUDENCE *creeps off*.

LADY ARUNDEL.

It must be so!—

There is no other course!

SIR MAURICE.

Without the proofs

The old man's story were but idle wind—

This rude but hunger-witted rascal shall

To Onslow's house—seize on the proofs—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Quick!—quick!—

See to it quick, good kinsman!

[*Exit* SIR MAURICE.]

*Re-enter* NORMAN *and* VIOLET.

VIOLET.

It is she!

Meet her not—nay, you know not her proud temper!

NORMAN.

Pshaw for her pride!—present me boldly!—'Sdeath!

Blush you for me?—He who's a king on deck

Is every subject's equal on the land.

I will advance!

LADY ARUNDEL (*turning suddenly*).

Avenging angels, spare me!

NORMAN.

Pardon the seeming boldness of my presence.

VIOLET.

Our gallant countryman, of whom my father  
So often spoke, who from the Algerine  
Rescued our lives and freedom.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Ah!—your name, sir

NORMAN.

A humble name, fair lady;—Norman.

LADY ARUNDEL.

So!

Arm me, thou genius of all women—Craft!  
Sir, you are welcome. Walk within and hold  
Our home a hostel while it lists you.

NORMAN.

Madam,

'Twill be a thought for pride in distant times  
To have been your guest.

LADY ARUNDEL.

He knows not what I am.

I will forfend all peril. Fair sir, follow.

*[Re-enters the Castle.]*

VIOLET.

Strange—Norman!

NORMAN.

What?

VIOLET.

I never knew her yet  
So courteous to a stranger.

NORMAN.

Ah, sweet lass !

I told thee right. We Princes of the Sea  
Are no such despicable gallants, eh ?  
O thought of joy !—one roof to shelter both,—  
To see thee, hear thee, touch thy hand, and glide  
By thy dear side adown the blessed time !  
A most majestic lady !—her sweet face  
Made my heart tremble, and call'd back old dreams  
Of——Well——Has she a son ?

VIOLET.

Ah, yes !

NORMAN.

In truth

A happy man !

VIOLET.

Yet he might envy thee !

NORMAN.

Most arch reprover, yes !—as kings themselves  
Might envy one whose arm entwines thee thus !

*[Exeunt within the Castle.]*

END OF ACT I.

## ACT II.

## SCENE I.

*A room in the Castle.*

*Enter* Servant, *preceding* SIR MAURICE.

SERVANT (*insolently*).

You can take a seat, Sir Maurice; my Lady is engaged. She will see you when her leisure suits.

SIR MAURICE.

What a modest, respectful, civil fellow it is! you know behaviour to a man of quality, I see; if I did not fear to corrupt thy morals, by this light I would give thee a penny.

SERVANT (*half aside*).

“A man of quality!”—a beggarly poor cousin—marry, come up! [*Exit.*

SIR MAURICE.

Ah, there it is, a beggarly poor cousin!  
Up from my cradle, a poor beggarly cousin!  
Butt for my Lord—convenience for my Lady—  
Jibe for the lackey. And men blame Sir Maurice  
For loving gold!—My youth was drudged away  
In penury and dependence—manhood went  
In piling wealth that age might mount to power.  
How the sleek rogues would fawn on the poor cousin

If they could peep into his money-chest !  
 Let Gausen get the proofs, and half the lands  
 Of this proud Countess scarce shall wring them from  
 me !

Then let the spendthrift Percy be the heir,  
 I'll get the other half in mortgages,  
 Loans, and *post obits*. Ha, ha ! who will then be  
 The beggarly poor cousin ?

*Enter* LADY ARUNDEL.

I've despatch'd  
 Gausen to Onslow's house—Well, why so pale ?

LADY ARUNDEL.

He is beneath my roof—this youth, this Norman—  
 My guest !

SIR MAURICE.

Your guest ! (*vindictively*)—The fly is in the web !

LADY ARUNDEL.

Scarce had you left, when, lo ! he stood before me.  
 I knew him ere he spoke—his father's eyes  
 Look'd me to stone in his—I did not swoon,  
 I did not tremble !

SIR MAURICE.

Chut, chut ! you dissembled  
 Of course—you are a woman !

LADY ARUNDEL.

What dark perils  
 Gather around me now !

SIR MAURICE (*whispering*).

Remove him then  
While yet 'tis time.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Remove?—thy stealthy voice  
Curdles my veins. Remove him?—yes; I have  
A scheme to make all safe. I learn, thro' Prudence,  
That he loves Violet—woo'd her months ago  
In the far Indian seas. 'Twas he who saved her  
When, homeward from the isle her father govern'd,  
Their ship was captured by the Algerine.

SIR MAURICE (*impatiently*).

Well, well;—I see—you will befriend the suit?

LADY ARUNDEL.

Ay, and promote the flight!—To some fair clime  
In the New World the hurrying seas shall waft them,  
And I shall sleep in peace.

SIR MAURICE.

He loves the girl!  
What will thy Percy say—Hotspur the Second—  
When he discovers——

LADY ARUNDEL.

Ere he learn the love,  
Their bark is on the deep. I dare not tarry.  
He is return'd—is with them now—a spark  
Would fire his jealous humour. Be at hand,  
Lest I may need thy aid.

SIR MAURICE.

Thou'rt on the abyss!

LADY ARUNDEL.

But my brain reels not, and my step is firm!

[*Exit.*]

SIR MAURICE.

In love with Violet! I see, I see;  
 I'll set this fiery Percy on his rival.  
 If one should perish by the sword, the other  
 Dies by the law. Thanks to these proofs, I'll make  
 The rival's contest seem the assassin's snare.  
 Ha, ha! were these men dead, I should be heir  
 To Arundel and Ashdale. For the Countess—  
 The worm's already at her heart! Ah, shall I  
 Then be a miser?—Ho, there! my Lord's lackeys!—  
 Room for the Earl of Arundel! You dined  
 With the Earl yesterday? A worthy Lord!  
 I'll marry a young bride, get heirs, and keep  
 A lean poor cousin of my own to play  
 At leapfrog with the little Maurices.

*Enter* LORD ASHDALE (*in disorder*).

ASHDALE.

By Heavens! this stranger's insolence would fire  
 An anchorite's patience. 'Sdeath! his hand press'd hers,  
 His breathing fann'd her locks.

SIR MAURICE.

How now, my Hector,  
 My diamond, apple of my eye? How now?—  
 Chafed, vexed?



ASHDALE.

Home, home, Anatomy, and drive  
The mice from thy larder.

SIR MAURICE.

Mice!—Zounds, how can I  
Keep mice?—I can't afford it—they were starved  
To death an age ago!—the last was found,  
Come Christmas three years, stretched beside a bone  
In that same larder—so consumed and worn  
By pious fast—'twas awful to behold it!  
I canonized its corpse in spirits of wine,  
And set it in the porch—a solemn warning  
To thieves and beggars. (*Aside*) Shall I be avenged—  
Shall I—for this? Come, come, my pretty Percy;  
I'll tell thee why thou strid'st about a lion:—  
Dogs would invade thy bone. This stranger loves  
Thy Violet.

ASHDALE.

Loves her!

SIR MAURICE.

And will win her too—

Unless I help thee—for (but mum!—no word of it)  
Thy mother backs his suit.—Thou art no match  
My innocent Percy, for a single woman;  
But two—a virgin and a widow—would  
Have made King Solomon himself a ninny.

ASHDALE.

All Egypt's plagues confound this fellow! Deaf  
Ev'n to affront.—He wards off all my taunts

With a blunt, sailorlike, and damn'd good humour  
That makes me seem, ev'n to myself, less like  
An angry rival than a saucy clown.

SIR MAURICE.

Be cool—be cool now—take a walk with me,  
And talk upon it.

ASHDALE.

Wilt thou really serve me ?

SIR MAURICE.

Ay, and for nothing too!—you patient saints  
Make miracles. Ha, ha! you like a jest  
On old Sir Maurice. All men joke upon  
The poor old cousin—ha, ha, ha!—Come, Hotspur.

[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II.

*A Gothic hall.—On one side a huge hearth, over which  
a scutcheon and old banners; the walls hung  
with armour and ancient portraits.—In the front of  
the stage a table spread with fruits and wine.*

LADY ARUNDEL—NORMAN—VIOLET.

NORMAN.

Ha, ha! in truth we made a scurvy figure  
After our shipwreck.

LADY ARUNDEL.

You jest merrily  
At your misfortunes!

NORMAN.

'Tis the way with sailors ;  
Still in extremes. I can be sad sometimes.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Your wanderings have been long : your sight will bless  
Your parents ?

NORMAN.

Ah ! I never knew that word.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Your voice has sorrow in its calm. If I  
In aught could serve you, trust me !

VIOLET.

Trust her, Norman.

Methinks in the sad tale of thy young years  
There's that which makes a friend, wherever Pity  
Lives, in the heart of woman.

NORMAN (*to* LADY ARUNDEL).

Gentle lady,  
The key of some charm'd music in your voice  
Unlocks a long-closed chamber in my soul ;  
And would you listen to an outcast's tale,  
'Tis briefly told. Until my fourteenth year,  
Beneath the roof of an old village priest,  
Nor far from hence, my childhood wore away.

Then waked within me anxious thoughts and deep.  
 Throughout the liberal and melodious nature  
 Something seem'd absent—what I scarcely knew—  
 Till one calm night, when over earth and wave  
 Heaven look'd its love from all its numberless stars—  
 Watchful yet breathless—suddenly the sense  
 Of my sweet want swell'd in me, and I ask'd  
 The priest, *why I was motherless!*

LADY ARUNDEL.

And he?

NORMAN.

Wept as he answered, "I was nobly born!"

LADY ARUNDEL (*aside*).

The traitor!

NORMAN.

And that time would bring the hour,  
 As yet denied, when from a dismal past  
 Would dawn a luminous future. As he spake  
 There gleam'd across my soul a dim remembrance  
 Of a pale face in infancy beheld—  
 A shadowy face, but from whose lips there breathed  
 The words that none but mothers murmur!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Oh,

My heart, be still!

NORMAN.

'Twas at that time there came  
 Into our hamlet a rude, jovial seaman,

With the frank mien boys welcome, and wild tales  
 Of the far Indian lands, from which mine ear  
 Drank envious wonder. Brief—his legends fired me,  
 And from the deep, whose billows wash'd the shore  
 On which our casements look'd, I heard a voice  
 That woo'd me to its bosom: Raleigh's fame,  
 The New World's marvels, then made old men heroes,  
 And young men dreamers! So I left my home  
 With that wild seaman.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Ere you left, the priest  
 Said nought to make less dark your lineage?

NORMAN.

No;  
 Nor did he chide my ardour. "Go," he said;  
 "Win for thyself a name that pride may envy,  
 And pride, which is thy foe, will own thee yet!"

LADY ARUNDEL.

I breathe more freely!

NORMAN.

Can you heed thus gently  
 The stranger's tale? Your colour comes and goes.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Your story moves me much: pray you, resume.

NORMAN.

The villain whom I trusted, when we reached  
 The bark he ruled, cast me to chains and darkness,

And so to sea. At length, no land in sight,  
 His crew, dark swarthy men—the refuse crimes  
 Of many lands—(for he, it seems, a pirate)—  
 Call'd me on deck—struck off my fetters: “Boy,”  
 He said, and grimly smiled; “not mine the wrong:  
 Thy chains are forged from gold, the gold of those  
 Who gave thee birth!”

LADY ARUNDEL.

A lie! a hideous lie!

Be sure a lie!

NORMAN.

I answer'd so, and wrench'd  
 From his own hand the blade it bore, and struck  
 The slanderer to my feet. With that a shout,  
 A hundred knives gleam'd round me; but the pirate,  
 Wiping the gore from his gash'd brow, cried, “Hold;  
 Such death were mercy.”—Then they grip'd and bound  
 me  
 To a slight plank; spread to the wind their sails;  
 And left me on the waves alone with God!

VIOLET (*taking his hand*).

My heart melts in my eyes:—and HE preserved thee!

NORMAN.

That day, and all that night, upon the seas  
 Toss'd the frail barrier between life and death.  
 Heaven lull'd the gales; and, when the stars came forth,  
 All look'd so bland and gentle that I wept,  
 Recall'd that wretch's words, and murmur'd, “Wave

And wind are kinder than a parent." Lady,  
Dost *thou* weep also ?

LADY ARUNDEL.

Do I? Nay, go on!

NORMAN.

Day dawn'd, and, glittering in the sun, behold  
A sail—a flag!

VIOLET.

Well, well.

NORMAN.

It pass'd away,

And saw me not. Noon, and then thirst and famine ;  
And, with parch'd lips, I call'd on death, and sought  
To wrench my limbs from the stiff cords that gnaw'd  
Into the flesh, and drop into the deep ;  
And then methought I saw, beneath the clear  
And crystal lymph, a dark, swift-moving thing,  
With watchful glassy eyes,—the ocean-monster  
That follows ships for prey. Then life once more  
Grew sweet, and with a strain'd and horrent gaze,  
And lifted hair, I floated on, till sense  
Grew dim and dimlier, and a terrible sleep—  
In which still—still—those livid eyes met mine—  
Fell on me, and——

VIOLET.

Go on!

NORMAN.

I woke, and heard  
My native tongue. Kind looks were bent upon me :  
I lay on deck—escaped the ghastly death ;  
For God had watch'd the sleeper !

VIOLET (*half aside*).

My own Norman !

NORMAN.

'Twas a brave seaman, who with Raleigh served,  
That own'd the ship. Beneath his fostering eyes  
I fought and labour'd upward. At his death—  
[A death, may such be mine !—a hero's death !—  
The blue flag waving o'er the victory won !]—  
He left me the sole heir to all his wealth,—  
Some sacks of pistoles—his good frigate—and  
His honest name ! (*To VIOLET.*) Fair maid, the  
happiest deed  
That decks my life *thou* knowest !

LADY ARUNDEL.

And the priest :  
Hast thou not seen him since ye parted ?

NORMAN.

No ;  
But two short days return'd to these dear shores.  
(*Aside to VIOLET.*) Those eyes the guiding stars by  
which I steer'd.



[VIOLET *and* NORMAN *converse apart.*

LADY ARUNDEL (*gazing on them*).

He loves—yes, *there* my hope! Ha! Percy's voice!  
I must beguile or blind *him*. One day more,  
And all is safe. Fair Sir, anon I join you.

[*Exit.*

VIOLET.

And thou hast loved me thus?

NORMAN.

*Thus, Violet; nay,—*

For when had true love words for *all* its secrets?  
In some sweet night, becalm'd upon the deep,  
The blue air breathless in the starry peace,  
After long silence, hush'd as heaven, but fill'd  
With happy thoughts as heaven with angels, thou  
Shalt lift thine eyes to mine, and with a glance  
Learn how the lonely love!

VIOLET.

Not lonely, Norman:

*Not* lonely, henceforth: *I* shall be with thee!  
Where'er thou goest, my soul is; and thy love  
Has grown life's life. To see thee, hear thee, dream  
Of thee when absent—to bear all—brave all—  
By thy dear side;—*this* has become my nature—  
Thy shadow, deepening as thy day declines,  
And dying when thou settest.

NORMAN.

Heaven desert me  
If by one cold look I should ever chill  
The woman heart within thee !

VIOLET.

So, my Norman,  
In cloud, or sunshine—labour as repose—  
Meek tho' I be, and lowly,—thou shalt find  
*This* courage of my sex, that bears all change  
Save change in thee—and never breathes one murmur,  
Unless it be a prayer to guard my Norman !

NORMAN.

My bride—my blessing—my adored !

*Enter* ASHDALE.

ASHDALE.

Gramercy !  
I well escaped to meet my lady mother !  
This tale of the old knight has fired my blood.  
I would not see her in this mood—

*(turning and perceiving VIOLET and NORMAN)*

By heavens !  
Whispering !—so close !—  
*(approaching)* Familiar sir—excuse me :  
I do not see the golden spurs of knighthood—

NORMAN *(aside)*.

These landsmen, who would shake if the wind blew,  
Are mighty quarrelsome. The golden spurs !

He thinks we ride on horseback thro' the seas!  
Alas! we sailors have not so much gold  
That we should waste it on our heels.

ASHDALE.

D'ye jest, sir?

VIOLET.

Oh cousin, fie!

ASHDALE (*mimicking her*).

Oh cousin, fie!—sir, mark me:  
There's one too many present—

NORMAN (*aside*).

On my life  
I think with him!—he might remove the objection!—

ASHDALE.

Good Master Norman, in the seneschal's hall  
You'll find your equals.

NORMAN.

Haughty lord, not so.  
He who calls me his equal first must prove  
His arm as strong—his blade as keen—his heart  
As calm in peril!—tush! put up thy sword.  
He *not* my equal who insults his guest,  
And seeks his safety in the eyes of woman.

*Enter* LADY ARUNDEL.

VIOLET.

Protect your guest from your rash son !

LADY ARUNDEL.

Lord Ashdale—

These humours wrong your birth. To you, sir stranger,  
Have I in aught so fail'd that in the son  
You should rebuke the mother ?

NORMAN.

Ask your son

If I was prompt to answer scorn by strife !

ASHDALE.

Nay, it is true, more prompt in taking licences  
Than courting chastisement !

NORMAN.

You hear him, lady.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Ashdale, be ruled—my best beloved—my child,  
Forbear—you—

ASHDALE (*quickly*).

Learn'd in childhood from my mother  
To brook no rival, and to fear no foe !  
I am too old to alter now. Observe me :  
You thwart my suit to Violet—you defend  
This insolent stranger. Mother, take my counsel :  
Despatch him hence and straight, or, by mine honour,  
Blood will be shed.—Beware !

LADY ASHDALE.

Blood ! blood ! whose blood ?

ASHDALE.

Not mine—for noble knighthood is too holy  
For varlet weapons !—not your son's—

LADY ARUNDEL.

My son's !

ASHDALE.

Look to it, mother !—We may meet again, sir.  
Fie, mother ! pale ?—Beshrew me, but those eyes  
Look fondly on the knave !

[*Exit.*

LADY ARUNDEL.

O, sharper than

The serpent's tooth !—

NORMAN.

Sweet hostess, do not fear me ;  
There is a something in your looks that melts  
The manhood in me back to second childhood.  
Let him rail on—he *is* your son, and safe  
From the poor stranger's sword.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Go, Violet,—

No, stay—come back—I know thy secret, girl—  
Thou lovest this Norman ?

VIOLET.

Lady—I—he saved  
My life and honour—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Joy!—oh, joy! retire  
And trust in me—

[*Exit* VIOLET.]

LADY ARUNDEL.

Now, sir—(*aside*) Alas! alas!  
How like to his dead father!

NORMAN.

Speak—command,  
And learn how thou canst move me!

LADY ARUNDEL.

I'm a mother!  
I live but for this boy—heart, life, and soul,  
Are interweaved with his!

NORMAN.

How sweet to hear  
How mothers love their sons!

LADY ARUNDEL.

He is proud and fiery,  
Quick to affront, slow to forgive. Nay, more:  
Ashdale hath set his heart where thine is placed;  
The air both breathe seems blood-red to my eyes.  
Fly with her!—fly, this night!

NORMAN.

This night, with her?

Rapture! With Violet?

LADY ARUNDEL.

You consent?

NORMAN.

And yet

My birth untrack'd—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Oh, lose not for a doubt  
Your certain bliss ;—and, heed me—I have wealth  
To sharpen law, and power to ripen justice ;—  
I will explore the mazes of this mystery—  
I—I will track your parents!

NORMAN.

Blessed lady!

What have I done, that thou shouldst care for Norman?  
My parents!—find me one with eyes like thine,  
And, were she lowliest of the hamlet born,  
I would not change with monarchs.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Mighty Nature!

Why speak'st thou thus to him, yet dumb to me?  
What is there in these haggard looks to charm thee,  
Young stranger?

NORMAN.

Madam, when I gaze upon thee,  
Methinks an angel's hand lifts up the veil  
Of Time—the Great Magician ; and I see  
A face like thine bent o'er my infant couch,  
And—pardon me—it is a vain, wild thought—  
I know it is—but on my faith, I think  
My mother was like thee !

LADY ARUNDEL.

Like me ! ha, ha !  
Most foolish thought. (*Aside*) I shall go mad with  
terror  
If here he linger longer. Well, your ship  
Is nigh at hand ; you can embark to-night.

NORMAN.

So soon—so soon all mine !—In distant years,  
'Tho' *we* may meet no more—when thou, fair dame,  
Hast lost ev'n memory of the stranger—o'er  
The lonely deep, morning and night, shall rise  
His prayer for thee.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Thou, thou !—a prayer for me ?  
Will Heaven record it ? Nature rushes on me—  
I cannot—I—forgive me ; ere you part  
We meet again, and—

[*Rushes out.*]



NORMAN.

When I spoke of prayer  
Her lip grew white. What is there in this woman  
That half divides my thoughts with Violet's love?  
Strange, while I muse, a chill and solemn awe  
Creeps to my heart. Away, ye ill-timed omens!  
Violet, at thy dear name the phantoms vanish,  
And the glad Future breaks, a Fairy Isle,—  
Thy voice its music, and thy smile its heaven!

END OF ACT II.

## ACT III.

## SCENE I.

*The Gardens of the Castle—a different part from that in Act I.*

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

Who would have thought the proud Countess would have been so pleased with the love of this wild Captain for my young lady? I think he must have given her some of the golden ointment too! But anything to thwart the suit of the young Lord. She expects him to marry no one less than a princess I suppose.

*Enter* SIR MAURICE.

SIR MAURICE.

Ugh! ugh! Have you seen Lord Ashdale pass this way?

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

No, your Worship!

SIR MAURICE (*caressingly*).

So this sea-Captain is making love to your pretty charge, Mistress Prudence! I suppose, between you and me, there will be a marriage in the family.

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

I am sure, Sir Maurice, I shall not say you nay.

SIR MAURICE.

Say me nay? I never offered thee anything.

## MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

I thought you said "between you and me there was to be a marriage in the family." We might do a sillier thing, Sir Maurice. Better marry than do worse.

## SIR MAURICE.

Worse!—Go and do your worst. I defy your seductions, you antiquated Dalilah. Hence; and if you chance on Lord Ashdale, say I would see him.

## MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

If you should be serious, Sir Maurice, in your proposal—

## SIR MAURICE.

Pish!—am I to be *your* jibe too?—[*Exit* MRS. PRUDENCE, *laughing.*] Every new slight I receive in this household I treasure up *here—here!*

*Enter* GAUSSEN.

Ha—so soon returned! hast thou seen the priest?—hast thou got the proofs?—hast thou—

## GAUSSEN.

The priest left his house this morning an hour ere I arrived, in company with a stranger, who, from what I could learn, is a seaman: but the description does not suit the one we look after.

## SIR MAURICE.

I see the lands of Arundel dropping from my gripe—but, no—no! if I miss the proofs, I will secure the claimant. Giles GausSEN, this day five-and-twenty

years ago, didst thou not commit a crime that, if told, would bring thee to the scaffold?—Go to!—unless this Norman die, the hemp is spun that will fit thee with a halter.

GAUSSEN.

I would I had the boy once more in my clutches. Think you I have forgiven him for this gash? Till then, the wenches (curse them!) did not mock at me—and—no matter! But what is he to the dead man? Thou told'st me it was his parents who paid me the gold to rid them of him.

SIR MAURICE.

Why, hark, I will tell thee—hush! what's that?—get aside—it is he himself—quick!—

*[They hide amidst the trees.]*

*Enter* NORMAN *and* VIOLET.

VIOLET.

What, Norman, she consents?

NORMAN.

Yes, tremble not,

My best beloved.

VIOLET.

I tremble lest hereafter

Thou deem'st me over bold.

NORMAN.

Not bold, but trustful  
As love is ever!—Nay, be soothed, and think

Of the bright lands within the western main,  
Where we will build our home, what time the seas  
Weary thy gaze ;—there the broad palm-tree shades  
The soft and delicate light of skies as fair  
As those that slept on Eden ;—Nature, there,  
Like a gay spendthrift in his flush of youth,  
Flings her whole treasure in the lap of Time.—  
On turfs by fairies trod, the eternal Flora  
Spreads all her blooms ; and from a lake-like sea  
Wooes to her odorous haunts the western wind !  
While, circling round and upward from the boughs,  
Golden with fruits that lure the joyous birds,  
Melody, like a happy soul released,  
Hangs in the air, and from invisible plumes  
Shakes sweetness down !—

*Enter* LADY ARUNDEL.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Ye have fix'd the hour and place  
For flight—this night ?

NORMAN.

Why, Lady, no ; as yet  
The blush upon her cheek at *thought* of flight  
Lingers like dawn in heaven,—but like the dawn  
The blush foretells the smile the heaven shall wear !

LADY ARUNDEL.

Trifle not—Ashdale is no dull-eyed rival ;—  
If he suspect—

NORMAN (*fiercely.*)

What then?

LADY ARUNDEL.

So hot! forget you  
Your word to waive all contest?—No—that glance  
Does answer “No.”—And now, fair sir—this letter  
To the Venetian goldsmith, Paolo Trezzi,  
Yields you this lady’s dower; for from these halls  
Never went bride without her portion.

NORMAN.

Lady,

Ye who have dwelt upon the sordid land,  
Amidst the everlasting gloomy war  
Of Poverty with Wealth—ye cannot know  
How we, the wild sons of the Ocean, mock  
At men who fret out life with care for gold.  
O! the fierce sickness of the soul—to see  
Love bought and sold—and all the heaven-roof’d  
temple  
Of God’s great globe, the money-change of Mammon!  
I dream of love, enduring faith, a heart  
Mingled with mine—a deathless heritage  
Which I can take unsullied to the stars,  
When the Great Father calls his children home;—  
And in the midst of this Elysian dream,  
Lo, Gold—the demon Gold!—alas! the creeds  
Of the false land!—

LADY ARUNDEL.

And once I thought like him!

Ah! happy Violet!—(*more coldly*) well—of this here—  
after.

What hour can boat and boatmen wait your orders?

NORMAN.

The favouring moon breaks one hour ere the midnight.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Meet where the Castle chase, by the last gate,  
Slopes to the ocean-beach—

NORMAN.

Ay—as I took  
That path this morn, I saw the scathed ruins  
Of an old chapel on the spot you name;—  
Meet me there, Violet—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Ha—within that chapel!

NORMAN.

Is it not holy ground?

LADY ARUNDEL (*impatently*).

Well, well—begone,  
And meet one hour ere midnight—

VIOLET.

Let us wait  
And hope, dear Norman—

LADY ARUNDEL.

“Hope,” girl! he must quit  
These halls this day—would you his blood?—

VIOLET.

The love

I bear thee steals so little from the earth,  
I cannot think it err because its faith  
Will not nurse fear;—to-night, then—but, alas!  
See the sky lowers—the nights are dark—

NORMAN.

Nay, then;

Streams o'er our path the Planet Saint of lovers:  
And mark this white plume with the sparkling gem,  
Pluck'd from the turban of the Algerine  
That happy day—so thou shalt see the token  
Gleam thro' the shadows.

VIOLET.

Yet—

NORMAN.

On board my bark

We boast a reverend priest—who shall attend  
To consecrate our vows!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Come! to your chamber

I'll with thee and allay all fear; hark! steps!  
Go, sir—let Ashdale find thee not!—remember  
My word; and so farewell and prosper.



NORMAN.

Ah!

Shall *we* not meet again?—God's blessing on thee!  
Wilt *thou* not bless me too?

(*Kissing her hand.*)

LADY ASHDALE.

I!—Heaven will bless thee.

(*Pressing his hand convulsively.*)

[*Exeunt* LADY ASHDALE    *∧* VIOLET.]

NORMAN.

Now could I linger here whole hours; and dream—  
Of what?—well, Falkner has return'd ere this.

*Enter* Servant.

SERVANT.

A cavalier, arrived in haste, demands  
An audience, sir.

NORMAN.

Of me?

SERVANT.

Upon the instant.

He bade me name him "Falkner."

NORMAN.

Falkner! Ever

Ready in need—admit him: sure true Friendship  
Is a magician—and foretels our wishes.

*Enter* FALKNER.

Welcome, thrice welcome. Listen to me—bid  
Our boat attend me on the beach below,

Close by a ruin'd chapel—where the sea  
Washes the forest's farthest verge—one hour  
Before night's last: our chaplain too is needed.  
See to it—quick!—away!

FALKNER.

*Piano*, friend—

As the Italians phrase it—slow and sure.  
I've famous news;—the priest I sought and found,  
And left him near these halls. He has the proofs  
(And will reveal them) of thy birth—thy name.  
Well; art thou dumb?

NORMAN.

O Heavens! for this one day  
Thou mak'st life bankrupt in its blessings!—He?  
Onslow—art sure?—

FALKNER.

Some men may know their names,  
Tho' *you* do not. He *told* me *his* was Onslow.

NORMAN.

Where shall I seek him?

FALKNER.

By the very chapel  
Thou spok'st of!—

NORMAN.

Is this destiny?

FALKNER.

And wouldst thou  
Have me still see thine orders—

NORMAN.

To the letter.  
The boat—the chaplain—send to the ship and bid it  
Veer round—in sight of the beach—before the hour.

FALKNER.

Explain—

NORMAN.

No time for words, dear Falkner—go!  
[*Exit* FALKNER.]

*Enter* MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

Sir Maurice!—Where's Sir Maurice?—Have you seen  
Sir Maurice here?

NORMAN.

A fico for Sir Maurice!

Ah! Mistress Prudence, when we meet again,  
Poor Captain Norman may be Captain Crœsus!  
Oh, Violet! birth and wealth were sweet indeed,  
If they could make me worthier to possess thee.

[*Exit.*[SIR MAURICE *comes forth.*

MISTRESS PRUDENCE

Where have you hid yourself, sir?

SIR MAURICE.

Hid myself!

Am I a man to hide myself?

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

The Countess

Requires your presence on the instant; I

Said you were—Ah, she comes.

[*Exit.*]

SIR MAURICE (*to GAUSSEN, who is stealing out*).

Keep close—keep close!

*Enter* LADY ARUNDEL.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Dost thou not dread to look upon me?—What!

I gave thee gold—gold to thy heart's content—

To waft young Arthur to a distant land;—

Gold for his future lot—not bribes for murder!

Sold to the pirate!—cast on the wild seas!

O traitor!—traitor!

SIR MAURICE.

I knew nought of this.

Hush!—hush!—Speak low! He I employed the traitor,

Not your poor trusty knight;—but mark me, cousin;

Not then your danger half so dark as now.

Time flies the while I speak.—Thou scarce wert gone

When came a stranger with such news!—Old Onslow

At hand—he has the proofs!—I—I can save thee,

And I alone!—Who is the traitor now?

LADY ARUNDEL.

Terror on terror crowds upon me, like  
Waters above a drowning wretch!

SIR MAURICE.

Be quick!

And, hark! I must bribe high!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Get me the proofs,  
Silence the priest, and whatso'er thou ask'st  
Is thine.

SIR MAURICE.

The farms and manor-house of Bothleigh—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Thine—thine!

SIR MAURICE.

Agreed!—now go in peace and safety—  
Leave me to work.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Oh, Percy! for thy sake—

For thy sake this—not mine—bear witness, Heaven!  
I will go pray.

[*Exit.*

SIR MAURICE.

Ay, pray! when weak bad women  
Gorge some huge crime, they always after it  
Nibble a bit of prayer, just to digest it!

So gluttons cram a hecatomb of meat,  
 And then correct it with a crumb of cheese.  
 Come from thy lair, my jackal of the sea.

[GAUSSEN *comes forth.*

Fly to the chapel. Ah, thou know'st those ruins!—  
 Swoop on the grey-hair'd man thou findest there:  
 Seize, and conceal, and gag him in some cave.  
 Tear from him all—papers and parchments—all!  
 Bring them to me—a thousand bright broad pieces.—  
 The seaman took the longer path;—this way—  
 You see the track, it halves the distance.

GAUSSEN.

If

He struggle, must I—

SIR MAURICE.

Prate thou not of struggles;  
 I give thee orders but to seize the papers.  
 Fail, and thou know'st I have thy secret!—Win,  
 And thou art rich for life—away!

[*Exit* GAUSSEN.

At worst

I am a thousand pounds a-year the warmer;  
 At best—why, that's to come. I know a tame,  
 Patient, poor cousin—Gods, how I will plague him!

*As he goes out enter* LORD ASHDALE.

Hadst thou come sooner, thou hadst spoil'd a love-  
 scene.

ASHDALE.

Wert thou its witness, then?

SIR MAURICE.

Ay, in the corner,  
Like peeping Tom. You've been at Coventry?

ASHDALE.

Jest not—thou madden'st me.

SIR MAURICE.

Thou'lt swear to keep  
Our counsel from thy mother?

ASHDALE.

By my honour.

SIR MAURICE.

They fly this night—they meet one hour ere midnight  
By the old chapel. Boat and priest await—  
She'll know him by the jewel in his plume :  
Put one in thine—I'll sell thee one a bargain.

ASHDALE.

This night! the chapel! Oh, by earth and heaven,  
I will not lose this girl! I thank thee, Knight.

[*Exit.*

SIR MAURICE.

*Both* flies are in the web! I know a spider  
Who shall *eat* both. When shall I wake an earl?

[*Exit.*

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## SCENE II.

*In the background a Gothic chapel partially in ruins ;  
—through a broken arch the sea seen at a little distance. In front, broken forest-ground, a small brook running to the sea. At the side, a small tower that admits to the demesnes of the Castle. Sunset.*

ON SLOW (*in front of the chapel*).

More than ten years have pass'd since I beheld him—  
The noble boy ;—now time annuls my oath,  
And cancels all his wrongs ! Ye dismal wrecks—  
Well might the lightning scathe your bloodstain'd  
walls,

To death and marriage consecrate alike,  
As is the tale that trembles on my lips !  
Lo, the toad battening where the altar stood,  
But ruin spares the tomb ! So thro' the earth  
How many altars vow'd to human love  
A single tomb outlasts !

*Enter GAUSSEN from the tower.*

GAUSSEN.

What, in time ?

Alone, too ?

[*Rushing upon* ON SLOW.]

Speak not, stir not, or thou diest !  
The scrolls—the papers that thou bear'st about thee !

ON SLOW.

Avaunt, I know thee, murderer ! On this spot  
The dead rise up against thee.



GAUSSEN.

Dost thou know me ?

Then know thy doom and doomsman !

ONSLOW.

Villain ! off !

[*Breaks from him and passes through the arches of the chapel.*]

GAUSSEN (*following*).

Thy blood on thine own head !

*Enter* NORMAN.

NORMAN.

A human cry !

Ha ! ruffian,—hold !

[*Rushes through the arches.*]

*Re-enter* GAUSSEN *disarmed.*

GAUSSEN.

Disarm'd ! my hand is palsied !

[*NORMAN appears as in pursuit—GAUSSEN, creeping along the ruins, enters the tower unperceived.*]

NORMAN.

Is it a fiend, that earth should swallow ?

ONSLOW (*within, groaning*).

Oh !

[*NORMAN re-enters the Chapel.*]

GAUSSEN (*from the tower*).

We meet again !—

*Enter* NORMAN, *bearing* ONSLOW, *wounded.*

ONSLow.

Ah! life is fading fast!—  
Let me look on thee—once more I behold thee,  
And can depart in peace!—

NORMAN.

Hush—do not speak!—

ONSLow.

Nay, words grow few. I bade thee meet me here;  
Yonder where Murder found me—on this day  
Twenty and five years back—thy father—

NORMAN.

Father!

Say on! my father?

ONSLow.

Died, most foully murder'd

NORMAN.

Blood—blood for blood—the murderer—name him!

ONSLow.

Listen.—

There was a page, fair, gentle, brave, but lowborn;—  
The daughter of the lordly House he served  
Saw him and loved:—they wed in stealth;—these hands  
Join'd them together in yon holy walls;  
They met in secret. I—I—my voice fails me!

[NORMAN goes to the brook, brings water in the hollow  
of his hand, and sprinkles the face of the old man.]

ONSLow.

The father learn'd the love—not wedlock—deem'd  
His child dishonour'd.—On this spot the lovers  
Met, with design to fly. I loved the youth—  
His foster-sire—I was to share their flight.—

NORMAN.

Speak on—speak on.

ONSLow.

'Twas night—a fearful night—  
Lightning and storm!—They met—and murderous  
hands  
Seized on thy father—dragg'd him from her breast!—  
Oh!—that wild shriek—I hear it still!—he died  
By the same wretch that is my murderer now.

NORMAN.

Thy murderer now? O thanks, revealing Heaven!  
One death, one deed—one arm avenges both!

ONSLow.

Died in these arms—three flagstones from the altar—  
Near the lone tomb where the first Baron sleeps;—  
Still mark the gore-stains where his bones are buried.

NORMAN.

Oh!—horror—horror!

ONSLow.

Three nights thence thy mother  
Gave birth to thee;—a kinsman, whose cold heart  
Promise of gold had soften'd to her grief,  
Bore to my home the babe!

NORMAN.

And she, my mother ?  
Does she live still ?—my mother ?

ONSLOW.

She survived—  
Forced to a lordlier husband's arms. The tale  
Of the sad past unknown !

NORMAN.

It *was* her face  
Mine infant eyes beheld ?—

ONSLOW.

In stealth a wife ;  
In stealth a mother—yes !—But with new ties  
Came new affections.—To the second nuptials  
A second son was born.—She loved him well ;  
Better than thee—than her own soul.

NORMAN.

Poor mother !—

ONSLOW.

But few words more.—I—I—Oh—

NORMAN.

Breathe less loud,  
My soul is in my ears.

ONSLOW.

Too moved by pity—  
Too sway'd by fear—lest they should rend thee from me,

I took a solemn oath to veil the secret—  
 Conceal thy rights—while lived her sire, and he,  
 Her second lord ; and thus allow'd thy youth  
 To quit my roof :—they died,—the sire and husband,—  
 Some two years since ;—thou still afar. I sought  
 Thy mother, and her heart was marble ;—Oh !  
 Here—here (*gives papers*). Go, seek thy shelter in  
                   the law ;  
 But shun yon towers !—thy mother—

NORMAN.

But one word !

My mother's name !—

ONslow (*pointing to papers*).

There !

[*Raises himself to his feet with a sudden effort.*

Hear my last words, Heaven !

Protect the wrong'd !—upon this head I lay  
 An old man's blessing—Now, farewell !

[*Dies.*

NORMAN.

Stay—stay

Thy flight, thou gentlest spirit ! Dumb ! He breathes  
                   not !

Dead—dead—my second sire ! O hell-born deed !  
 Could not these white hairs plead for thee ?

—Revenge !

Earth give no shelter to the man of blood !  
 Conduct his feet, Ordainer of all doom,  
 To retributive slaughter ; and vouchsafe

This arm thine instrument ! Mine eyes deceived me,  
 Or the red beam, streaking the vaulted gloom,  
 Show'd me the face of—Well ! the Heavens are just,  
 AND WE SHALL MEET AGAIN !—Farewell, farewell !  
 Heaven gains a saint in thee !—My mother lives !  
 What tho' she has another child to love ?  
 Is not a mother's heart a mighty space,  
 Embracing all her children ? Of that realm  
 How little will content me !—She will fold  
 Her arms around me, and from out her breast  
 The eyes that look to hers shall melt away  
 With passionate tears the past and all its sorrows !  
 What—what ! her son—her son ! Mysterious Nature,  
 At the first glance I loved her ! Wealth, lands, titles,  
 A name that glitters, like a star, amidst  
 The galaxy of England's loftiest born !  
 O Violet—O my bride—and O my mother !  
 Out from my heart henceforth each low desire,  
 Each meaner hope my wilder youth conceived !  
 Be my soul instinct with such glorious thoughts  
 As, springing to great deeds, shall leave my land  
 A bright heroic lesson of the things  
 In which true nobleness endures for ever !  
 And while I told my woes she wept, she did !  
 'Tis her sweet writing ! bless her ! See, she calls me  
 Arthur, and child (*kissing the papers*), and child, her  
     precious one,  
 Her hope, her darling ! Mother—my own mother !  
     [*Opens the papers—Scene closes.*]

END OF ACT III.

## ACT IV.

## SCENE I.

*The hall in the Castle of Arundel.—Night—lights.*

SIR MAURICE—GAUSSEN.

SIR MAURICE.

Thou hast not got the papers; and thou hast committed a murder; and, what is worse, thou hast slain the wrong man!

GAUSSEN.

But——

SIR MAURICE.

But me no buts: thou hast ruined me. Stand back, and let me think. (*Aside.*) The heir has the proofs—clear! He will not come back to this house, the very den of his unnatural foe—clear! He will seek the law for redress—clear, clear! But he loves Violet. He will keep his assignation; carry away the girl; and then off to London, to assert his rights:—all this is clear as noon-day! Gausсен, thou canst repair all. The sea-captain will be at the ruins to-night—eleven of the clock—to be married in the chapel by stealth.

GAUSSEN.

I overheard all that in the gardens (*aside*—and more too perhaps), and am already prepared. My bold fellows shall seize priest and boatmen, and I will await the bridegroom.

SIR MAURICE.

And that thy cutlass may not fail thee this time, I will brace thy hand by refreshing thy memory. Five-and-twenty years ago—thou then but a young fellow, caught in thy first desperate piracy on the high seas—wert placed in the dungeons of this castle, in order to be marched off the next day to the county gaol, with a rope for thy journey's end. Thou wert released that night: at day-break thou wert on the merry waves again, with a sack of pistoles in thy pouch. What was the price of thy life and liberty?

GAUSSEN.

The blood of a man whom the stern old Lord bade me strike as his worst foe.

SIR MAURICE.

Right! and the son of that man is the boy thou didst cast on the seas! Thou sayest that Onslow recognised thee. Be sure the dying man told the son in what face to look for his father's murderer. If thou make not sure work to-night, thou art meat for the crows!

GAUSSEN.

Trust me. I will fasten to him as a panther on the stag!

SIR MAURICE.

And—stand back!—let me think!—let me think! I see it!—I see! Thou shalt not only do the deed, but thou shalt find another to bear the blame! This crack-brain, Ashdale, the young Lord, will be on the spot. He



loves the girl Norman would wed: they will have words, perhaps blows. Be on the watch with thy fellows—ten, twenty of them: rush in, under pretence of separating—stab—stab both! Dead men tell no tales: and ye and your men can bear witness that they fell by each other's hands!

GAUSSEN.

'Tis a death more than I bargained for. The price?

SIR MAURICE.

Shall be doubled—two thousand pieces!

GAUSSEN.

Touch hands. Bring five hundred to-night—by the old chapel—for my men. I will come for the rest to thine own house to-morrow eve at dusk.

SIR MAURICE.

Five hundred to-night! Five hundred, Bully Gausсен, beforehand! Premiums are an abomination in law—usury, rank usury!

GAUSSEN.

I must have them: my men want pay, and are half mutinous as it is. Blood and wounds, old knight! this is sharp work you set them at—to net a covey of sailors, who will fight like devils, and to stab a lord—to say nothing of the other man—that's my quarrel—five hundred pieces, or I hoist sail, and you may catch the sailors and stab the Lord for yourself.

SIR MAURICE (*groaning*).

Five hundred little, pretty, smiling, golden-faced

cherubim: 'tis a second Massacre of the Innocents! Well, thou shalt have them (*aside*—and the Countess must repay me). Before eleven I will be with thee: but you will smite both—both the Lord and the Captain: no time for death-bed explanations.

GAUSSEN.

They shall never hear the bell toll midnight!

[*Exit.*]

SIR MAURICE.

Then, ere matins, I shall be Baron Ashdale and heir of Arundel. The lordship and lands of Ashdale are so settled that they go at once to the male heir. Yes, I can trust this man to do the deed! but can I trust him after it? A pretty acquaintance Giles GausSEN for a great lord!—Well, time enough to be rid of him.

ASHDALE (*speaking without*).

Yes—the dun and sorrell.

*Enter* LORD ASHDALE.

SIR MAURICE.

Hast thou prepared thy plans, my Hotspur?—

ASHDALE.

Yes;

My steeds and grooms will wait me in the forest:  
And, for the rest,—I wear my father's sword.

SIR MAURICE.

Oh, I could hug thee! By my golden spurs,  
I doat on valour!—Thou wilt win the maid,

I know thou wilt.—Faith, how a frown becomes thee !  
 Yet he's no carpet warrior—thou must use  
 All thy address !—

ASHDALE.

'Thou need'st not urge me to it.

SIR MAURICE.

Good night, and luck to thee. (*Aside.*) Now, now I  
 have him !

I feel myself a lord already !—lights there !

*Enter* Servant.

Light me, good knave ; there is a pistole for thee.

(*Aside*) A great man should be generous.—'Bye, my  
 Hector (*hums a tune*).

Is my state-coach below ?—Oh, I forgot. [*Exit.*]

LORD ASHDALE (*looking after him in great surprise*).

'Touch'd, crazed !—the old knight has so starved his  
 body,

The brains have taken fright, and given him warning.

Ha, ha ! adventure is the gale to love ;

And stratagem the salt of its tide ! ha, ha !

I think I never loved this maid so well

As now, 'twixt fear of loss and hope of triumph.

*Enter* LADY ARUNDEL.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Percy—

ASHDALE.

Well, madam, I am press'd—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Oh, Percy!

Speak kindly, Percy!

ASHDALE.

Mother, if my mood  
 Be chafed to-day, forgive it!—shall I speak?  
 Your sudden care for this ignoble stranger,  
 Coupled with memory of wild words your lips  
 Oftimes let fall—your penances and fasts—  
 Your midnight vigils—your habitual gloom;—  
 Weaving all this, to form a likelihood,  
 Why, harsher judgment than your son's, my mother,  
 Might half suspect—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Speak on, sir—

ASHDALE.

That your past  
 Was darken'd by some unatoned-for sin,  
 Whose veil this stranger's hand had lifted.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Percy,  
 Your words are daggers—if the unstrung brain  
 At times gives discord—if the insane phantoms  
 That haunt all hearts vex'd by the storms of life—  
 (And *I* have suffer'd, Percy, sadly suffer'd)—  
 Do mock and gibber in my dreary path—  
 'Tis thine to pity, to forbear, to soothe,  
 Never to doubt. Where should that angel men

Call "CHARITY" abide—but in the hearts  
Of our own children ?

ASHDALE.

Mother—oh, forgive me !

If the unquiet, cavilling spirit born  
Within me, of the race that, like the ermine,  
Would pine to death when sullied by one stain,  
Makes me seem harsh—forgive me !

LADY ARUNDEL (*approaching him*).

Never know

Till I am dead how deeply I have loved thee !  
Thy father—tho' an earl in rank—and near  
To the royal house in blood and martial fame—  
Had wed before—had other sons—on *me*  
Alone depends thy heritage—from me  
Thy lordship and thy fortunes.

ASHDALE.

True, what then ?

LADY ARUNDEL.

You have loved pomp and state ; and I have pinch'd  
To feed the lavish wants of your wild youth—  
Have I not, Percy ?

ASHDALE.

You have been to me  
Ever most bounteous, mother.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Yet, in truth,  
You prize too much the outward show of things.

Could you not bear—for you have youth and health,  
 Beauty and strength—the golden wealth of Nature :—  
 Could you not bear descent from that vain height  
 Of fortune, where poor Vanity builds towers  
 The heart inhabits not—to live less proud—  
 To feast less gorgeously—to curb thy wants  
 Within the state—not of the heir to earls,  
 But of a simple gentleman, whose station  
 Lies in his worth and valour ?—Could you ?

ASHDALE.

Never !

Such as I am, my sire and you have made me,—  
 Ambitious, haughty, prodigal!—my hopes  
 A part of my very life ! If I could fall  
 From my high state, it were as Romans fell—  
 On their sword's point. Why is your cheek so hueless ?  
 Why daunt yourself with air-drawn phantasies ?  
 Who can deprive me of mine heritage ?  
 The titles of the antique seignory—  
 That will be mine, in trust for sons unborn,  
 When time (from this day may the date be far !)  
 Transfers the ancestral coronal that gems  
 Thy stately brows to no unworthy heir ?

LADY ARUNDEL (*aside*).

My proud soul speaks in his, my lion boy !  
 Come shame—come crime—come death and doom  
 hereafter—  
 I'll know no son but him !

*Enter* Servant.

SERVANT.

Most honour'd madam,  
The cavalier you entertained this morning  
Is here.

LADY ARUNDEL.

I will not see him!

*Enter* NORMAN.

NORMAN.

Gracious lady!  
My business—grant me but your private ear—  
Will plead for my intrusion.

LADY ARUNDEL (*aside*).

All else fails!  
My own stern heart support me!

NORMAN (*aside*).

How like strangers  
They look upon me, both, the while I yearn  
To rush into their arms!

ASHDALE.

Why parley with him?  
Who is he?—What?

LADY ASHDALE.

Hush!—I attend you, sir;  
Be seated—Ashdale, leave us.

[NORMAN *places his cloak and hat on a table  
and draws a seat near to* LADY ARUNDEL.

ASHDALE (*carelessly*).

By my troth,

I have no wish to mar good company.  
Fair sir, I owe you back disdainful words  
Repaid you later.

NORMAN (*aside*).

I love that warm spirit!—  
'Twas mine at *his* age—my dear brother!

ASHDALE (*going to the table and exchanging the  
cloak and hat*).

Ho!

The signal plume—a fair exchange,—so please you,  
The cloak too. Tarry now as long as lists you;  
I'll be your likeness elsewhere.

[*Exit.*

NORMAN.

How to break it—  
And not to give overwrought joy the shock  
Of grief—

LADY ARUNDEL.

I listen, sir.

NORMAN (*with great emotion*).

You love your son?

LADY ARUNDEL.

Better than life, I love him!



NORMAN.

Have you not  
Another son—a first-born ?

LADY ARUNDEL.

Sir !

NORMAN.

A son  
On whom those eyes dwelt first, whose infant cry  
Struck first on that divine and holy chord,  
In the deep heart of woman, which awakes  
All nature's tenderest music ? Turn not from me.  
I know the secret of thy mournful life.  
Will it displease thee—will it—to believe  
That son is living still ?

LADY ARUNDEL.

How, sir—such licence ?  
I will not brook it !

[*Rises to go.*

NORMAN.

No, thou wilt not leave me !  
I say, thou wilt not leave me ! On my knees,  
I say thou *shalt* not leave me !

LADY ARUNDEL.

Loose thine hold,  
Or I will call my menials, to chastise  
This most unmanner'd freedom !

NORMAN.

Mother, mother!

I am thy son—thine Arthur—thine own child!  
Do you deny your own?

LADY ARUNDEL.

I have no son,  
Save Percy Ashdale!

NORMAN.

Do not—do not hear her,  
Thou everlasting and all-righteous Judge!  
Thou, who, amidst the seraph hosts of heaven,  
Dost take no holier name than that of “Father!”  
Hush, hush! Behold these proofs—the deed of marriage!  
The attesting oaths of them who witness’d, and  
Of him who sanctified, thy nuptial vow!  
Behold these letters!—see, the words are still  
By years unfaded!—to my sire, your lover!  
Read how you loved him then. By all that love—  
Yea, by himself, the wrong’d and murder’d one,  
Who hears thee now above—by these, my mother,  
Do not reject thy son!

LADY ARUNDEL.

The worst is past.

*(Re-seats herself.)*

And were this so—own that I had a son—  
What proof that you are he?

NORMAN.

What proof? There, there!  
In your own heart—your eyes—that dare not face me;

Your trembling limbs—there—there my witness! Nature  
 Blanches your cheek, and heaves your struggling breast!  
 Thou know'st I am thy son!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Oh, while he speaks,  
 My courage melts away! And yet, my Percy,  
 My son, whose years blossom'd beneath my eyes—  
 All *his* hopes blasted! No, no!

NORMAN.

See—you falter!

Ah——

LADY ARUNDEL.

Sir, if you, a stranger till this day,  
 Have, by suborning most unworthy spies,  
 Glean'd from the tragic tale of my gone life  
 Some hints to build this wild and monstrous fable,  
 Go, seek the laws to weave them into shape  
 More cunning and less airy. Quit my presence!

NORMAN.

I will not!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Will not? Ho, there!

NORMAN.

Call your hirelings;  
 And let them hear me!

[*Goes to the hearth.*

In these halls—upon  
 The sacred hearth-stone of my sires—beneath

Their knightly scutcheon—and before their forms,  
 Which, from the ghostly canvass, I invoke  
 To hail their son—I take my stand ! I claim  
 My rights ! They come—your menials ! bid them thrust  
 From his own hearth the heir of Arundel !

*Enter Servants.*

LADY ARUNDEL.

Seize on !—No ! no !—My father's lordly mien  
 Is his ! *I dare not !*

FIRST SERVANT.

Did you summon us,  
 My gracious lady ?

NORMAN.

*Yes !* she summon'd ! Now,  
 Lady of Arundel, your mandates !

LADY ARUNDEL (*sinking into a seat*).

Leave us ;  
 We do not need you now !

[*Exeunt Servants.*]

LADY ARUNDEL (*rising, and hastily approaching*).

Oh, Arthur !—son !—  
 If so you be—have mercy !

NORMAN.

Do not kneel—  
 No, do not kneel—that, *my* place !

LADY ARUNDEL.

Listen to me.

Grant that you are my son—the unhappy pledge  
 Of a most mournful nuptials :—grant that I,  
 Scarce on the verge when child-born fancy glides  
 Into the dreaming youth, misplaced my heart—  
 Forgot the duties which the noble owe  
 The past and future :—that a deed was done  
 Which, told, would blacken with a murderer's crime  
 My father's memory—stain *thy* mother's name—  
 Bid the hot blush, rank in the vulgar eye,  
 Blister my cheek, and gnaw into my heart :—  
 Grant this—and you, my son! will you return  
 The life I gave, for that, more vile than death,  
 The everlasting shame? NOW, SPEAK!

NORMAN.

Go on!

Go on! I cannot speak!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Heaven witness for me,

With what reluctant and remorseful soul,  
 After what threats endured and horrors done,  
 I yielded to my ruthless father's will,  
 And with false lips profaned a second vow!  
 I had a child! I was a mother! true:  
 But did I dare to dwell upon that thought?  
 In darkness and in secret—if I sought  
 The couch it hallow'd—did not my steps creep  
 Fearful and shuddering as the tread of crime,

Which starts at its own shadow? With that son  
Were woven, not the proud, self-glorious joys  
Which mothers know; but memory, shame, the dread  
And agony of those who live between  
Evil and its detection. Yet I loved thee—  
I loved thee once!

NORMAN.

I knew it—Heaven, I knew it!

LADY ARUNDEL.

I loved thee till another son was born—  
One who, amidst the sad and desolate world,  
Seem'd sent from Heaven by Mercy. Think, thou wert  
Alien—afar—seen rarely—on strange love  
Leaning for life;—but this thrice-precious one  
Smiled to my eyes—drew being from my breast—  
Slept in my arms;—the very tears I shed  
Above my treasure were to men and angels  
Alike such holy sweetness!—food, health, life,  
It clung to me for all!—mother and child,  
Each was the all to each!

NORMAN.

I am not jealous—  
I weep with thee, my mother—see, I weep!  
Oh, so much love, and has it nought to spare?

LADY ARUNDEL.

My boy grew up—my Percy. Looking on him,  
Men prized his mother more. So fair and stately,

And the world deem'd to such bright hopes the heir.  
 I did not love thee *then*—for, like a cloud,  
 Thy dark thought hung between him and the future.  
 And so—

NORMAN.

Thou didst not—O the unnatural horror!—  
 Thou didst not—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Doom thee to the pirate?—No,  
 No—not so ruthless, Arthur. But design'd  
 To rear thee up in ignorance of thy rights—  
 A crime—'tis punish'd. So, my tale is done.  
 Reclaim thy rights—on me and on my son  
 Avenge thy father's wrongs and thine;—I ask not  
 Mercy from thee—and from the hated earth  
 I pass for ever to the tomb, which hath  
 Even for shame a shelter!

NORMAN.

Oh, my mother!

You do not know the heart your words have pierced!  
 I—I—thy son—thine Arthur—I avenge?  
 Never on thee. Live happy—love my brother—  
 Forget that I was born. Here, here—these proofs—  
 These—these (*giving the papers*). Oh, see you where  
 the words are blister'd  
 With my hot tears? I wept—it was for joy:  
 I did not think of lands, of fame, of birthright—  
 I did but think these arms should clasp a mother!  
 Now they are worthless—take them—you can deem not

How in my orphan youth my lonely heart  
 Pined for the love you will not give me!—Mother,  
 Put but thine arms around me—let me feel  
 Thy kisses on my brow;—but once—but once!  
 Let me remember in the years to come  
 That I have lived to say “A mother bless’d me!”

LADY ARUNDEL.

Oh, could I speak—could I embrace him—all  
 My heart would gush forth in one passionate burst,  
 And I should bid him stay; and—Percy, Percy,  
 My love for thee has made me less than human!

NORMAN.

She turns away—she will not bless the outcast!  
 She trembles with a fear that I should shame her!  
 Farewell—farewell for ever! Peace be with thee—  
 Heaven soothe thy griefs, and make the happy son  
 Thou lovest so well the source of every solace.  
 For me (since it will please thee so to deem),  
 Think I am in my grave!—for never more,  
 Save in thy dreams, shalt thou behold me!—Mother,  
 For the last time I call thee so!—I—I  
 Cannot speak more—I—

[*Rushes from the room.*]

LADY ARUNDEL.

Arthur! O, my son!  
 Come back, come back, my son!—my blessed son!  
 [*Falls by the threshold.*]

END OF ACT IV.



## ACT V.

## SCENE I.

*The Hall in the Castle of Arundel, as in the last Scene.*

LADY ARUNDEL.

Gone—gone!—and here he stood, and bless'd the mother  
Who did not bless her son!—Ah, Heaven forgive me!  
These are the deeds in which I placed my safety,  
Now won and worthless!—Oh, how human hearts  
Do feed on fire, till, when the flame is slaked  
Ashes alone are left!

*Enter SIR MAURICE.—(Lady Arundel conceals the papers.)*

SIR MAURICE.

Well, cousin, fear not:  
All is arranged.—Ere cockerow thou shalt be  
Free of thy terrors!—old Sir Maurice still  
Is good for something, eh?

LADY ARUNDEL.

What guilty thought  
Speaks in thy ominous smile?

SIR MAURICE.

If thus you wrong me  
I'm mute;—and yet thou know'st I live to serve thee.

I can secure thee all—glad days—calm nights :  
 But in this world there are such covetous knaves,  
 That, la you now,—I am ashamed to tell thee—  
 The rogue I have hired wants two thousand pieces  
 This very night to—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Silence !—I abhor  
 Thy crooked counsels—thy rapacious guile :—  
 I've been too long benighted, and pursued  
 Meteors for guides ! Now the cloud rolls away,  
 And on my terror breaks the morning star.  
 I'll nought of thee !

SIR MAURICE.

Thou wilt not !

LADY ARUNDEL.

Miser, no !  
 Thy black and hideous guilt, out-darkening mine,  
 Had well nigh drowned my soul beneath a sea  
 Deeper than that to which thy trait'rous craft  
 Consign'd my first-born ! Quit these halls for ever,  
 And starve beside the chests whose every coin  
 At the Last Day shall in the Court of Heaven  
 Witness against thee, Judas !

SIR MAURICE.

Miser ! Judas !  
 I thank thee—no, to-morrow I will thank thee.  
 This crowns the cup of insult ! You and yours,  
 Your dull-soul'd father, and your lowborn lover—

Your coxcomb son—your veriest varlet, down  
 To the gross scullion, fattening on your offal—  
 All—all have broke their idiot jests on me—  
 Me, but for you, the Lord of Arundel!  
 Yet all, at need, could fawn on old Sir Maurice—  
 Eke from his wits their poverty of brain—  
 And——plague upon this wrath!—thou art not worth it!  
 I leave these halls. When next we meet, proud dame,  
 Thy crest may be less lofty! Miser! Judas!

[*Exit.*

LADY ARUNDEL.

There's meaning in this frontless insolence :  
 "When next we meet," said he ; "When next we  
 meet!"

Broods he some new and deadlier mischief?—Ha!  
 Time wanes—Within there!—

*Enter* Servant.

What's the hour?

SERVANT.

The chime

Just told the quarter, Madam!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Ah! so late?

Where is my son, Lord Ashdale?

SERVANT.

Left the castle

Some minutes since : his grooms and steeds preceded.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Whither?—

SERVANT.

I know not, madam, but he bade me  
Say, that he might return not ere the morning.

LADY ARUNDEL.

The morning!—now the danger glares upon me.  
He has whisper'd Percy of the lovers' flight;  
And they will meet—the brothers—meet as foes!  
Quick—torches—quick—let every menial arm!  
Quick—follow—lights here!—Heaven avert this woe—  
Forgive the mother—Save, oh, save the sons!

[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II.

*The exterior of a ruined Chapel—the Tower of the  
Chapel, with large Gothic doors, for the background.*

*Night—the stage darkened.*

GAUSSEN and Two Pirates.

GAUSSEN.

All our men posted?—

1ST PIRATE.

Ay, my Captain;—Luke,

With ten stout fellows, hid beneath the rock,  
Will seize the boatmen when they run ashore.

GAUSSEN.

Good.

*Enter* LUKE.

LUKE.

We have nabb'd the rogues—four sailors and  
A jolly chaplain—only one, their leader,  
Cut his way through, and fled!

GAUSSEN.

A murrain on him!

It matters not—all done ere he can peach!

*Enter* SIR MAURICE.

SIR MAURICE.

That woman's taunts put me beside my temper;  
But I am on the threshold of my greatness.  
Sir Maurice Beevor shall be merged to-morrow  
Into Lord Ashdale;—like a drop of water  
Into a glass of aqua vitæ.

GAUSSEN.

Well, Knight!

You have the monies?

SIR MAURICE (*giving a bag*).

Little dears! you see them  
Tuck'd up in bed and fast asleep—my heart aches

That such a happy and united family  
Should be dispersed upon the world, and never  
Come home again!—Poor things!—Now, prithee man,  
Don't be so rough with them!—

GAUSSEN.

Since last we met  
My scouts inform me that the dogs of law  
Are on my track.—'Twere best when all is done  
To put to sea.

SIR MAURICE.

Right, right.

GAUSSEN.

So bring the rest  
Of the gold to-night;—one half-hour hence I reckon  
*My* part o' the compact will be sign'd and seal'd.

SIR MAURICE.

So soon?—'Gad how impatient, fierce, and fiery  
My monies make him! Well, it shall be so;  
I'll bring the rest—

GAUSSEN.

Stay; when I've slain this Norman,  
The papers on him—

SIR MAURICE.

Thou wilt give to me—  
'Tis in the bargain.

GAUSSEN.

What, Knight, if I took them  
To the great Countess, yonder?—

SIR MAURICE.

To the countess,  
 Villain!—I would—I would—(How black he looks!  
 I'd best be civil)—I would think it, Giles,  
 Not quite the conduct that becomes an honest,  
 Kind-hearted friend, like you.—

GAUSSEN.

(*Aside*) As I suspected:  
 The Dame of Arundel's concerned in this.  
 I'll see what's in these papers ere I give them  
 To the old hunks. (*Aloud*) You may depend upon  
 me—  
 Bring but the gold in time. Good night.

SIR MAURICE.

I' faith,  
 The pleasantest thing the rogue has said.—Good night!  
 Look sharp! remember both must be despatch'd.  
 A thousand each!—What shall I be to-morrow?

[*Exit.*

GAUSSEN.

*Both!*—baugh! what feud have I with the young Lord,  
 That he should die to please thee?—*Each* a thousand!  
 Why, when thou bring'st two thousand to my lair,  
 Think'st thou one thousand shall go back again?  
 The Lord shall live:—but for the other—he  
 Who set this mark upon my brow—the son  
 Of the dead man—one blow wipes off old scores,  
 And saves new debts. None but myself must know  
 What worth there may be in those papers!—Yet

The lad is cunning with his weapon.—Well,  
 He shall not draw it!—So,—an ambush!—Luke,  
 Lend me thy cutlass,—I lost mine to-day,  
 And will not trust to my knife alone—the lanthorn!—  
 Watch for the gallant with the sparkling plume  
 And snow-white cloak, a damsel on his arm;—  
 Tell him the priest awaits him in the chapel,  
 His boatmen in the creek below—and vanish,  
 That message said. Keep i' the dark, nor let him  
 Note a strange face—thy hat and cloak good mufflers.

LUKE.

I'm an old hand—ne'er fear!

GAUSSEN.

And if another,  
 Of gayer dress, the young Lord, come this way,  
 Do *him* no harm—but seize; his life will be  
 Well worth the ransoming. Now for this scar  
 Will I have vengeance—where the father fell  
 Shall the son bleed.

[*Exit within the chapel.*]

LUKE.

Old Mother Moon is lazy,  
 Still in her nightcap!—Dark and hush'd; but men  
 Who live 'twixt knife and halter have sharp senses—  
 The owl's eye and the hare's ear. Hist!—what's that?  
 A hinge creaks yonder—ah! a footfall!



*Enter LORD ASHDALE (in NORMAN'S hat and cloak)  
and VIOLET.*

VIOLET.

Speak!

The silence and the darkness chill me.

ASHDALE.

Dearest,

No cause for fear!

VIOLET.

Thy voice sounds sharp and strange.

Ah, my heart fails me!

ASHDALE (*aside*).

Yet, I'd swear her Norman

Would have said just what I did.

LUKE.

In the chapel

The priest awaits—your boatmen in the creek

Behind yon rock.

ASHDALE.

Aha! the priest—stay, fellow,—

The priest—the chapel?—marriage, eh?

LUKE.

What else, sir?

ASHDALE.

What light in the chapel?

LUKE.

Only a dark lanthorn.

[*Exit.*]

ASHDALE.

All favours—this is luckier than I hoped for !  
I see!—the marriage first—then flight ! Decorous !  
Sweet one, within !—hush !—come !

VIOLET.

Mine ear does mock me ;  
But terror plays sad tricks with the senses ! Norman,  
My frame may tremble, but my heart is brave—  
For *that* can never doubt thee.

[*Exeunt ASHDALE and VIOLET through the  
doors of the chapel.*]

*Enter FALKNER (his sword drawn).*

FALKNER (*in a whisper*).

Norman !—Captain !  
I dare not call aloud.—None here ?—these rascals—  
Have they laid hands on Norman, too ? Who comes ?

*Enter NORMAN.*

NORMAN.

I see her not. What, Violet ?

FALKNER.

Art thou Norman ?

NORMAN.

Falkner !

FALKNER.

Some villany is in the wind !

Scarcely landed, when a rude band swept upon us ;  
 Thy boatmen seized—the priest too ;—I alone,  
 With my good sword, open'd a path for flight,  
 And, hurrying to thee with the news—

[*A shriek within the chapel.*

NORMAN.

That voice !—

[*Exit NORMAN within the chapel.*

FALKNER.

More sport !—egad, I feel at home to-night !

[*Exit FALKNER after NORMAN.*

*Enter LUKE.*

LUKE.

Who spoke ?—Avast there !—Sure I heard—

*Enter LADY ARUNDEL and Servants, bearing torches,  
 from the cave.*

LADY ARUNDEL.

Look round !

They must be here—Violet has left the castle.

It is the hour !—Who skulks there ?—seize him !

[*Servants seize LUKE.*

*Enter VIOLET from the chapel, and falls at LADY ARUNDEL'S feet.*

VIOLET.

Save me!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Girl, girl—what means this?—where is HE—my—Norman?

VIOLET.

Stir not—the spot is desecrate. Methinks Witchcraft and Murder reign there!—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Ha!—I dare not Set foot beyond that threshold.

VIOLET.

By mine honour—  
Tho' thou wilt mock me—I do think to have seen  
*Two* Normans by the altar!—

LADY ARUNDEL.

His dead father  
Has left his grave!

VIOLET.

We crept through the dim aisles:  
Sudden, a light—a form—a gleaming knife—  
I shriek'd, and clung upon the murderous arm—  
When, lo!—a second Norman:—on the floor  
*This* lay—and there—avenging, stern, unearthly—  
*The other* rose, gigantic, thro' the darkness!

FIRST SERVANT.

Help to our lady!—

LADY ARUNDEL (*waving him back*).

Sirs, I need ye not.

Fall back!—what more?

VIOLET.

I know no more—I fled,  
Darkling and blind with supernatural horror,  
Along the dismal aisles.—

(*After a pause.*)

Oh! mad—mad wretch!  
Why rave I thus?—danger and murder near him!  
In—in!—your lights—your swords!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Open the tomb,  
And I will front the Dead One!  
[*The chapel doors are thrown open—the torch-bearers enter—NORMAN discovered near an old Gothic tomb, his sword drawn, standing before the body of GAUSSEN.*

It is the spot  
On which the bridegroom fell before my eyes—  
And now he stands as if in life!

VIOLET.

O Norman!—  
You live—you live!

NORMAN.

Lo, where the father bled  
The son has slain the slaughterer!—

LORD ASHDALE *and* FALKNER *advance*.

ASHDALE.

Thou!—my mother!  
Where is the saviour of my life?—The stranger?

NORMAN (*coming in front of the stage*).  
Embrace thy son—hear him! *I saved his life!*

ASHDALE.

Yes, when the knife was at my throat, his hand  
Palsied the caitiff blow. I had well nigh fallen  
Into the pit myself had dug. Thy plume  
Deceived the blade design'd for thee. Nay, mother,  
I am unscathed.

LADY ARUNDEL.

*He saved thee—He!*

[*The Servants remove the body.*]

LUKE.

Your Worships,  
If we have sinn'd, it was Sir Maurice Beevor  
Whose monies bribed our chief.—The Knight desired  
The blood of both—your Lordship and the stranger.

LORD ASHDALE.

Can this be true?

LADY ARUNDEL.

I can believe it. Now  
His dark designs are clear!

FALKNER (*to* LUKE).

Our honest messmates—  
Thou black-brow'd cutthroat—speak, where are they?—  
speak!  
If a hair on their heads be hurt—

LUKE.

Our leader dead,  
Our business done—your men are safe!

FALKNER.

Lead on, then;  
Advance the torches—follow.

NORMAN.

All the menials—  
Take all—(*aside*) no hireling witness to the conference,  
The last on earth, between the son and mother!

[*The Servants place torches on the crags of the  
forest-ground, and exeunt with FALKNER and  
LUKE.*

*Manent* LADY ARUNDEL—LORD ASHDALE—NOR-  
MAN—VIOLET.

LADY ARUNDEL (*advancing towards the chapel*).  
There rests what once was love, now dust! Perchance

The love still lives in heaven—and penitent prayer  
The charm that spells the angels.

*[Enters and kneels by the old tomb.—The moon  
breaks forth.]*

NORMAN.

Violet!

Wert thou deceived, too?

VIOLET.

Shame upon thee, cousin!

ASHDALE.

Fair stranger, stratagem in love all fair:—  
Forgive my this day's frowardness—your hand—  
'Tis well—you have saved my life; do more—resign  
With a good grace this lady—she is highborn,  
Of our own house;—too young to know her heart.  
Your worth might make you noble;—but as yet  
You have your spurs to win. Resign the maid,  
But take the dower thrice told.

NORMAN.

Name, fortune, lands,  
A mother's love—and now the only heart  
That clings to mine—all! he takes all!—the ewe-lamb!

ASHDALE.

Thy silence gives consent. Oh, Violet, hear me!  
I have too far presumed on my high fortunes—  
Woo'd thee too rashly. Pardon me: renounce  
This stranger—brave, but of no fitting birth—



And stand amidst the noblest dames in England,  
The first in state as beauty!

VIOLET.

Norman, Norman!

Why art thou mute?—why dost thou gaze upon me?—  
Why rest thy arms gather'd above thy breast,  
As if to ward me thence?

NORMAN.

Go, look upon him!

His form more fair than mine, his hopes more high.  
I have lost faith in human love! When mothers  
Forsake their sons, why not the maid her lover?

VIOLET.

Methinks you mock me. Hear me, thou, Lord Ash-  
dale.

You ask my hand—you proffer wealth, pomp, power,  
And he but toil and danger!

NORMAN.

Thou hast said it.

VIOLET.

Behold my choice! There, where he stands, my fate is!  
Take me, Oh, take me, Norman! Woman's love,  
Once given, may break the heart that holds—but never  
Melts into air, save with her latest sigh.

NORMAN.

Faithful amidst the faithless! Hope again

Blooms through the desert. Hither, and let me hear  
The music of one heart that answers mine!

ASHDALE.

It shall not be! Ignoble one! The life  
Thou sav'dst is nothing without her!—the boon  
Is cancell'd. To thy weapon—foot to foot—  
Let valour win the prize!

NORMAN.

I will not harm thee.

ASHDALE.

Insolent boaster! "*Harm!*"—what! neither yield  
Nor yet defend? What would'st thou?

NORMAN.

What? why, stab me  
Here, in these arms, and I'll forgive thee! Do it;  
And tell thy mother, when thy holiday blade  
Was raised to smite, my warrior sword fell—thus!

ASHDALE.

Saints, give me patience!

LADY ARUNDEL (*advancing from the chapel*).

Ay, upon the stone  
Where his bones sleep I have pray'd; and I have gain'd  
The strength that is not of the world! How, Percy?  
Thy sword drawn on thy—

NORMAN.

Hush! I have kept thy secret!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Unhappy boy!

ASHDALE.

Why turn thine eyes from him  
To me? and straight again to him?

LADY ARUNDEL.

Approach,  
Percy, my son!—Lord Ashdale now no more—  
Behold thy brother! Ay, the conscience wrings  
Out truth at last:—Thine elder, the sole heir  
To this ill-fated house!

ASHDALE.

This is delirium!

LADY ARUNDEL.

It is not so, irreverent one! Here, Arthur,  
Into thy hands I do restore the proofs  
That re-assert thy rights—my eldest born,  
By long-conceal'd, but holiest wedlock with  
Arthur Le Mesnil! To his breast, my Percy!  
There is none nobler!

NORMAN.

Wilt thou not, my brother?

Whate'er is mine——

ASHDALE.

Is *thine*—And dost thou deem  
That I will fawn, a beggar, on thy bounty?  
Lackey thy heels, and crawl for crumbs that fall  
From the rich, bounteous, elder brother's board?  
Ha, ha! I'd rather couch with the wild boar,  
And starve on acorns, than the world should cry,  
“ See once proud Ashdale, the meek younger brother !”

LADY ARUNDEL.

Percy, my best-loved !

ASHDALE.

Mother, is it so ?  
Say that thou didst but sport upon my pride ;  
That thou wouldst try me ! Speak !

LADY ARUNDEL.

Alas, alas !

It is the truth !

ASHDALE.

All is unravell'd now !  
I ask no proofs—thy looks suffice for proof !  
I will not hear a tale, perhaps of shame !  
So, a long farewell, mother !

LADY ARUNDEL.

Do not leave me !  
Oh, do not leave me ! Think how I have loved thee !  
How, for thy sake, I sinn'd against my soul,

And veil'd, and barr'd, and would have crush'd his rights,  
All, all for thee!

VIOLET (*timidly*).

We are young—we love each other!

We do not want titles and gold, my Norman!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Say you forgive—and yet, what have *you* to pardon?

ASHDALE.

Everything, madam. Had you shaped my youth  
Unto the pauper lot which waits me now,  
I had not nursed desires, and pamper'd wants,  
Into a second nature: my good sword,  
And my free heart, the genii of my fortunes.  
Oh, thou hast wrong'd me foully!

NORMAN.

Shame, boy, shame!

Dost thou with ruthless and ungrateful taunts  
Answer those agonizing tears! Ah, mother,  
I loved thee more than he does!—Thou repentest!  
Thou tak'st her hand!—Forgive him!

(*Solemnly.*)

My dead father!

I never saw thee living; but methinks  
Thy presence fills my soul!—Poor trembling mourner!  
If, as I feel, that low-born father loved thee  
Not for thy gold and lands—from yonder grave  
His spirit would chide the son who for such gauds

Would make the bond and pledge of the love he bore  
thee

A source of shame and sorrow—not of solace!—

Hear him then speak in me!—as lightly as

I, from this mantle, shake the glistening dews,

So my soul shakes off the unwholesome thoughts

Born of the cloud and earth.—

*(Goes to the torches.)*

Look ye—all dead!

My sire—the priest—all who attest my rights!

With a calm hand, unto this flame I yield

What rest, these scrolls!—and as the fire consumes  
them,

So wither all that henceforth can dismay

Or haunt thy heart, my mother!—

ASHDALE.

Hold—hold—no!

I am not so base—'twas but a moment's weakness.

Hail the true heir!

*(Falling on his breast.)*

My brother—oh, my brother!

NORMAN,

A mother and a brother, both!—O joy!

LADY ARUNDEL.

My children in each other's arms!—

ASHDALE.

Now summon

All friends, and let them know the rightful heir.

LADY ARUNDEL.

True—be the justice done—an awful tale :  
 But ye shall hear me speak it. (*falteringly*) My poor  
     Percy!  
 My father's erime too—well—

NORMAN.

You mark her, brother.

Shall we bring this upon her?—

[*Holding the papers over the torches till they are  
 consumed.*]

It is past !

Now, never more a bar betwixt *your* hearts  
 And mine—ah, mother! *now* thine arms embrace me—  
 Now thy kiss melts into my soul!—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Oh, bless thee!—

NORMAN.

Hark! she has bless'd her son—I bid ye witness,  
 Ye listening Heavens—thou circumambient air :  
 'The ocean sighs it back—and with the murmur  
 Rustle the happy leaves. All Nature breathes  
 Aloud—aloft—to the Great Parent's ear,  
 The blessing of the mother on her child.

ASHDALE,

How nobler this than our nobility !

NORMAN.

Each to his element!—the land has form'd

Thy nature as the hardy ocean mine.  
 It is no sacrifice. By men and angels !  
 Better one laurel-leaf the brave hand gathers  
 Than all the diadems pluck'd from dead men's brows—  
 So speaks my father's son !—Were there before us  
 All—all who in this busy and vast mart  
 Of merchant traffickers—this land of England—  
 Worship the yellow god—how one great truth  
 Should shake the sceptred Mammon on his throne !  
 Here, in our souls, we treasure up the wealth  
 Fraud cannot filch, nor waste destroy ;—the more  
 'Tis spent, the more we have ;—the sweet affections—  
 The heart's religion—the diviner instincts  
 Of what we *shall* be when the world is dust !  
 Is it so, Violet ?

VIOLET.

I never loved thee—  
 No, never—till this hour ! A moment since,  
 When thou wert what the wrong world calls more great,  
 Methought thou wert less Norman !

ASHDALE.

It must *not* be.  
 Fire cannot quench thy claims—at least together  
 We'll live, and share alike.

NORMAN.

Thou shalt find vent  
 For generous thoughts. Give me what dower thou wilt  
 With Violet, if ungrieving thou canst yield  
 That priceless treasure to me now, my brother !



LADY ARUNDEL.

The dower shall halve the heritage.

ASHDALE.

Sweet cousin,

Forgive me!—All the heat of my wild will  
Melts in the light of that bright soul,—and never  
Did knight upon the hand of some fair queen  
Press lips of holier and more loyal homage,  
Than this pure kiss which hails a brother's bride.

*Enter SIR MAURICE (with a bag).*

SIR MAURICE.

All done ere this!—My patent is made out.  
Ugh! but the fees are heavy!—Ha, these torches!  
Confusion!—(*drops the bag.*)

ASHDALE.

Knave, thy hireling is no more!

Take up thy bribe!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Was it for this, base ingrate,  
Thou didst ask gold?—a double murder!

SIR MAURICE.

Hush!

He'll hear.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Begone!

SIR MAURICE (*clinging to LORD ASHDALE*).

'Twas meant in kindness, Hotspur.

ASHDALE.

Off, or I spurn thee, hang-dog!

SIR MAURICE.

Spurn me!—Thou  
Shalt live to crawl to me for pence!—All hail,  
Arthur, the heir of Arundel!—thy claims—

NORMAN.

Are nought.

SIR MAURICE.

How?—but the proofs—

NORMAN.

No proofs, but of thy guilt!

SIR MAURICE.

O, wrong'd young man!

[NORMAN *points significantly to the torches.*

I see it—I'm robb'd and murder'd!

NORMAN.

Hence! and be mute on what concerns thee not—  
Or——But I will not threaten thy grey hairs.—  
Hence, and repent!

SIR MAURICE.

I thank you kindly, sir:  
I am a very poor old Knight!—My Lord,  
Your very humble cousin!—To my grave  
A sordid, spat-upon, revengeless, worthless,

And rascally poor cousin !—Yes, I'll go  
Bury my monies—hang myself—and make  
The parish pay the funeral !—Ugh !—I'll spite them !  
[*Exit.*

*Enter* FALKNER, Chaplain, Sailors, &c.

FALKNER.

Captain—the priest—and now the ship's in sight—  
Wind and tide serve.

LADY ARUNDEL.

I cannot part from thee,  
My long-lost—my beloved !

NORMAN.

We will not part !  
Violet the link that binds me to thy hearth,  
And makes thy love (tho' secret the true cause)  
Not in the world's eye strange ;—we will not part  
Till the first moon of wedded love be o'er ;  
And then, if glory call me to the seas,  
Thine eyes shall lure me back from year to year.

LADY ARUNDEL.

If ever thou repent'st—

ASHDALE.

The half I hold  
Thine with the birthright.

NORMAN.

Nay, your love my birthright ;  
And for the rest, who can aspire to more  
Than a true heart for ever blent with his—  
Blessings when absent—welcome when return'd ;—  
His merry bark with England's flag to crown her,  
Fame for his hopes, and woman in his cares ?

THE END.

# LOVE :

A Play.

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES,

AUTHOR OF "THE HUNCHBACK," ETC. ETC

LONDON :

EDWARD MOXON, DOVER STREET.

MDCCCXI.

LONDON :  
BRADBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS TO THE QUEEN,  
WHITEFRIARS.

to  
JAMES MUSPRATT, ESQ.  
OF LIVERPOOL.

My Dear Friend,

A few honest words may convey a great deal. This PLAY  
is justly and joyfully dedicated to you.

With affection and gratitude,

Yours,

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES.





## ADVERTISEMENT.

---

UPON the pleasant borders of the beautiful Loch Ard, and of its appropriate neighbours, the Dhu Lochan and Loch Kolm, the greater portion of this drama was composed. It was a delightful task;—cheered, as it was, by the kind solicitude of my friend, Robert Dick, Esq., and of his family. Never shall I forget the time I passed under their hospitable roof—to the calm and content afforded me by which I attribute no small portion of the success—if I may say “success”—that attended my labours. Never shall I forget the anxious, warm-hearted host, who one day laughingly snatched my fishing-rod from my hand when I was going to play truant; and, admonishing me that school hours were not over yet—for it was noon, and I had limited myself to the evening for indulgence in “the angle”—set me to my book and pencil; on which occasion the fruit of my compelled industry was one of the best scenes in the play.

My friend, John Forster, Esq., of Lincoln’s-Inn Fields, must accept my thanks for service and kindness similar to what he has frequently rendered me before; and for

suggesting several important improvements in the conduct of the plot—particularly with regard to the last act.

Planchè, my brother-dramatist, has laid me under obligations, which I have great pleasure in acknowledging. Had the drama been his own, he could not have shown more anxiety for its success. He has rendered me essential service where I stood very much in need of it, and I cordially thank him.

My friend, George Bartley, Esq., has added to his claims upon my gratitude, on the score of “The Hunchback” and “The Wife.”

I owe it to Mr. and Mrs. Mathews to acknowledge that, besides having granted me the highest terms I ever yet received for a play—they have displayed the most unstinted liberality in preparing my drama for representation.

## CHARACTERS.

*First performed at Covent Garden Theatre 2<sup>d</sup> Sept 1839*

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|                            |                         |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| DUKE . . . . .             | <i>Mr. Cooper.</i>      |
| PRINCE FREDERICK . . . . . | <i>Mr. Selby.</i>       |
| ULRICK . . . . .           | <i>Mr. Diddcar.</i>     |
| SIR RUPERT . . . . .       | <i>Mr. J. Vining.</i>   |
| SIR OTTO . . . . .         | <i>Mr. Fitzjames.</i>   |
| SIR CONRAD . . . . .       | <i>Mr. Wigan.</i>       |
| HUON . . . . .             | <i>Mr. Anderson.</i>    |
| NICHOLAS . . . . .         | <i>Mr. Ayliffe.</i>     |
| STEPHEN . . . . .          | <i>Mr. W. H. Payne.</i> |
| FALCONER . . . . .         | <i>Mr. Collett.</i>     |
| HERALD . . . . .           | <i>Mr. C. J. Smith.</i> |
|                            |                         |
| EMPRESS . . . . .          | <i>Mrs. Brougham.</i>   |
| COUNTESS . . . . .         | <i>Miss E. Tree.</i>    |
| CATHERINE . . . . .        | <i>Madame Vestris.</i>  |
| CHRISTINA . . . . .        | <i>Miss Lee.</i>        |



# LOVE.

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## ACT I.

### SCENE I.

*A Room in CATHERINE'S House.*

*Enter CHRISTINA and NICHOLAS.*

CHRISTINA.

As thou lov'st thine ease, Nicholas, restrain curiosity. It is a steed that runs away with a man, without his knowing it, until it has thrown him. The danger is never found out until the mischief is done. Besides, it is a woman's palfrey, which it befits not a man to ride. What signifies it to thee, who comes into the house, whatsoever be the hour, so it is I that let him in?

NICHOLAS.

Doubtless, Mistress Christina; yet a knock at the door, at two o'clock in the morning—and the door opening at that hour, to let a man into the house—and that man a gay young spark—may make a body wonder, tho' he have no more than the ordinary stock of curiosity.

CHRISTINA.

Propriety, Nicholas, belongs to no one hour out of the twenty-four, more than to any other hour. It was fit that the young spark should come into the house, or I should not have let him in. And now mark what I say to you.

Play not the house-dog any more. Do you mind? Let not your watchfulness interfere with your sleep, else, besides your sleep, it may peril your bed and board; but, if thou hearest a knock when thou liest on the weary side of thee, and wakest, draw thy night-cap over thine ears and turn on the other side; and so, to sleep again—yea, tho' it be four o'clock in the morning, good Nicholas!

NICHOLAS.

I shall mind.

CHRISTINA.

Do so, and thou shalt be wise. Duty, that becomes a busy-body, ever turns itself at last out of doors. Hast thou a good place, friend Nicholas?

NICHOLAS.

Not a better in all Germany!

CHRISTINA.

Then take my advice, and keep it.

NICHOLAS.

I will.

CHRISTINA.

Do! (NICHOLAS *goes out.*) My mistress will be discovered at last, well as she disguises herself, and plays the man. I wish she had not taken this fancy into her head; it may bring her into trouble. Ha! here she is; returned to her proper self. Who would believe that this was the spark I let into the house, at two o'clock in the morning!

*Enter* CATHERINE.

CATHERINE—(*speaking as she enters.*)

Christina!

CHRISTINA.

Madam!

CATHERINE.

O, here you are ! Was not Nicholas with you, just now ?

CHRISTINA.

Yes ; he is only this moment gone. I have just been giving him a lesson. He saw you when you came home last night.

CATHERINE.

Hush ! secrets should be dumb to very walls !  
A chink may change a nation's destinies,  
And where are walls without one—that have doors ?  
Voice hath a giant's might, not a dwarf's bulk ;  
It passeth where a tiny fly must stop ;  
Conspiracy that does not lock it out  
Fastens the door in vain. Let's talk in whispers,  
And then, with mouth to ear. 'Tis strange, Christina,  
So long I practise this deceit, and still  
Pass for the thing I am not—ne'er suspected  
The thing I am—'mongst those who know me best, too.  
Yet would that all dissemblers meant as fair !  
I play the cheat for very honesty,  
To find a worthy heart out and reward it.  
Far as the poles asunder are two things,  
Self-interest and undesigning love ;  
Yet no two things more like, to see them smile.  
He is a conjuror, Christina, then,  
Can tell you which is which ! Shall I be won,  
Because I'm valued as a money-bag,  
For that I bring to him who winneth me ?  
No !—sooner matins in a cloister than  
Marriage like that in open church ! 'Tis hard  
To find men out ; they are such simple things !  
Heaven help you ! they are mostly bird-catchers,

That hold aloof until you're in their nets,  
 And then they are down upon you and you're caged,  
 Nor more your wings your own. I have scarcely slept!

CHRISTINA.

You run great risk, methinks, for doubtful gain.  
 I wonder oft, when thus you play the man,  
 You should escape offence; for men there are,  
 By nature brawlers, and of stalwart limb,  
 Who of their fellows take advantage when  
 Of slight and stunted frame; and you do make  
 But, at the best, a green and osier man!

CATHERINE.

And there's a little airy, fairy thing,  
 Call'd spirit; equalises statures, thews,  
 Ay, between dwarfs and giants, my Christina;  
 Whereof, altho' a woman, I have a share  
 Ekes my dimensions out, beyond what, else,  
 Might suffer those o'erbear, that do o'ertower me.  
 Besides, I have full pockets! That's enough!  
 They call me "The young Stranger," and forbear  
 All question, since admonish'd 'twas my mood  
 To see the world *incognito*; which I vouch'd  
 With a full purse, that made the table ring,  
 As I cast it down; and startled some to see,  
 As Fortune's loaded horn had leaped among them.

CHRISTINA.

And think you none did e'er suspect your sex?

CATHERINE.

Sure on't; for once suspected, 'twere found out.

CHRISTINA.

How do you hide the woman?



CATHERINE.

With the man !

It was my girlhood's study. Bless thee, child,

Good shows do beggar bad realities !

When I have dress'd my brows, my upper lip

And chin *en cavalier*, I take an oath,

From such a time to such, I am a man.

And so I am ! One quarrell'd with me once—

'Twas when I first began this masquerade.

"Look you," quoth I, "I never quarrel but

"To fight, nor fight except to kill ; and so

"I make my mind up, sir, to die myself ;

"So spare your *carte* and *tierce*. Set points to hearts,

"And at the signal, in !" His fire I quench'd,

As water turneth iron cinder-black,

In a white heat duck'd sudden into it !

CHRISTINA.

But of your lovers ?

CATHERINE.

Tell me who they are ?

Alas, to have a rival in one's gown !

For 'tis the same thing—'tis your property.

The fabric of the sempstress to outdo

Heaven's fashioning—your body and your face ;

A piece of web, a needle and a thread,

Give value to them that themselves have not !

Yet so it is with dames of noble birth,

And how much more, then, with a wretched serf,

For, tho' ten times enfranchised, such I am.

But what my betters stoop to, day by day,

I spurn, Christina, spurn ! nor deign to wed,

Except a man that loves me for myself !

CHRISTINA.

And such a man, methinks, Sir Rupert seems.

CATHERINE.

Ah! he is poor!

CHRISTINA.

And what of that? He is proud,  
And seems as jealous of his poverty  
Almost as you are.

CATHERINE.

Yes! He makes no suit.  
He ever follows me, yet stands aloof,  
While others lay close siege.

CHRISTINA.

And of his rivals,  
Prefer you any?

CATHERINE.

No. Have I not said,  
When tax'd with paying court to me, the rest—  
Yea one and all—instead of boasting me,  
My person, or my mind, for their excuse,  
Set forth my wealth; and ask if there 's a man,  
Who would not wed a serf, with such a mine?

CHRISTINA.

Sir Rupert sins not thus.

CATHERINE.

Sir Rupert? No!  
I bear him hard when I enact the man,  
Which yet he suffers for the sake of Catherine,  
My mad-cap cousin, as I call myself.  
He is jealous of me; eyes me thus, as he'd

A spaniel that may bite as soon as fawn.  
 He never speaks of me—I mean myself—  
 Unless enforced, and then, to end the theme.  
 “Sir Rupert,” said I to him once, with more  
 Than wont civility—O, could you see  
 What a fire-imp I am when I’m a man—  
 “Sir Rupert,” said I to him once, “methinks  
 “Your friends are sorry judges of good fruit ;  
 “And for an apple like to get a crab.  
 “Deal frankly with me, kin you know are kin  
 “All the world over ; now a hug and kiss,  
 “And boxing faces next ! It follows not,  
 “You know, since I am coz to Catherine,  
 “Because she has the tooth-ache, I have one ?  
 “So, tell me, fair Sir Rupert,—for, indeed,  
 “Altho’ a spoil’d boy, as ’tis lawful for  
 “A mother’s pet to be, I wish you well,—  
 “What think you of my cousin Catherine ?”  
 And what was his reply ? Beginning, middle,  
 And end, as much as this,—“She is a woman.”  
 But, faith, the answer came in such a tone,  
 Each single word might pass for a whole book.

CHRISTINA.

I am sure Sir Rupert loves you : he has all  
 The signs of a lover.

CATHERINE.

What are they ?

CHRISTINA.

He sighs.

CATHERINE.

Sighs ! Listen to me ! (*drawing a deep sigh.*) There, girl !  
 what think you now

Of that, for a sigh! and say you I'm in love?  
I will coin sighs for you, fast as the mint  
Coins ducats. Shows are all uncertain things,  
Unless the cheek indeed grows lank and pale—  
Yet that may be with frequent lack of dinner.  
So, 'tis betwixt the heart and appetite!  
O for a sign would be infallible,  
And him to show it, I would see it on!

CHRISTINA.

Sir Rupert?

CATHERINE.

What is that to you? Dear girl,  
Whoe'er it be, I pray that I may love him!  
The countess flies her hawk to-day. I'll make  
Essay of mine.

CHRISTINA.

A most strange lady, she!  
A form of flesh, and heart of ice.

CATHERINE.

Not so.  
A heart, Christina, all possess'd of pride—  
That hath no place for any passion else.  
Suitors pursue her, still she yields to none,  
But, hard requital! pays their love with scorn;  
That, out of troops, remains at last but one,  
The Prince of Milan.

CHRISTINA.

Will she ever love?  
Her heart is scarce the soil to root love's flower!

## CATHERINE.

No telling how love thrives ! to what it comes !  
Whence grows ! 'Tis e'en of as mysterious root,  
As the pine that makes its lodging of the rock,  
Yet there it lives, a huge tree, flourishing,  
Where you would think a blade of grass would die !  
What is love's poison, if it be not hate ?  
Yet in that poison, oft is found love's food.  
Frowns that are clouds to us, are sun to him !  
He finds a music in a scornful tongue,  
That melts him more than softest melody—  
Passion perverting all things to its mood,  
And, spite of nature, matching opposites !  
But, come, we must attire us for the field.  
The field—the field—Christina, were't to take  
The field in love ?—a fair and honest fight !  
I wonder, be there one true man on the earth ?  
But if there be, I one true woman know  
To match him—were he true as native gold.

## CHRISTINA.

I think Sir Rupert one.

## CATHERINE.

Sir Rupert ?—Umph !  
If he were rich, and I as poor as he,  
I'd tell you "yes," or "no," within the week.  
Heaven keep me from the proof !—I should not like  
To find Sir Rupert out. Come. Let me wed  
The man that loves me, or else die a maid ! [*They go out.*]

---

## SCENE II.

*An Apartment in the Duke's Castle.*

---

*The COUNTESS—HUON reading to her.*

COUNTESS.

Give o'er ! I hate the poet's argument !  
'Tis falsehood—'tis offence. A noble maid  
Stoop to a peasant !—Ancestry, sire, dam,  
Kindred and all, of perfect blood, despised  
For love !

HUON.

The peasant, tho' of humble stock,  
High nature did ennoble—

COUNTESS.

What was that ?  
Mean you to justify it ? But, go on.

HUON.

Not to offend.

COUNTESS.

Offend !—No fear of that,  
I hope, 'twixt thee and me ! I pray you, sir,  
'To recollect yourself, and be at ease,  
And as I bid you, do. Go on.

HUON.

Descent,  
You'll grant, is not alone nobility,

Will you not? Never yet was line so long,  
 But it beginning had: and that was found  
 In rarity of nature, giving one  
 Advantage over many; aptitude  
 For arms, for counsel, so superlative  
 As baffled all competitors, and made  
 The many glad to follow him as guide  
 Or safeguard; and with title to endow him,  
 For his high honour or to gain some end  
 Supposed propitious to the general weal,  
 On those who should descend from him entail'd.  
 Not in descent alone, then, lies degree,  
 Which from descent to nature may be traced,  
 Its proper fount! And that, which nature did,  
 You'll grant she may be like to do again;  
 And in a very peasant, yea, a slave,  
 Enlodge the worth that roots the noble tree.  
 I trust I seem not bold, to argue so.

COUNTESS.

Sir, when to me it matters what you seem,  
 Make question on't. If you have more to say,  
 Proceed—yet mark you how the poet mocks  
 Himself your advocacy; in the sequel  
 His hero is a hind in masquerade!  
 He proves to be a lord.

HUON.

The poet sinn'd  
 Against himself, in that! He should have known  
 A better trick, who had at hand his own  
 Excelling nature to admonish him,  
 Than the low cunning of the common craft.  
 A hind, his hero, won the lady's love:  
 He had worth enough for that! Her heart was his.

Wedlock joins nothing, if it joins not hearts.  
 Marriage was never meant for coats of arms.  
 Heraldry flourishes on metal, silk,  
 Or wood. Examine as you will the blood,  
 No painting on't is there!—as red, as warm,  
 The peasant's as the noble's!

COUNTESS.

Dost thou know  
 Thou speak'st to me?

HUON.

'Tis therefore so I speak.

COUNTESS.

And know'st thy duty to me?

HUON.

Yes.

COUNTESS.

And see'st  
 My station, and thine own?

HUON.

I see my own.

COUNTESS.

Not mine?

HUON.

I cannot, for the fair  
 O'ertopping height before.

COUNTESS.

What height?

HUON.

Thyself!  
 That towerest 'bove thy station!—Pardon me!  
 O, wouldst thou set thy rank before thyself?  
 Wouldst thou be honour'd for thyself, or that?



Rank that excels its wearer, doth degrade,  
 Riches impoverish, that divide respect,  
 O, to be cherish'd for oneself alone!  
 To owe the love that cleaves to us to nought  
 Which fortune's summer—winter—gives or takes!  
 To know that while we wear the heart and mind,  
 Feature and form, high Heaven endow'd us with,  
 Let the storm pelt us, or fair weather warm,  
 We shall be loved! Kings, from their thrones cast down,  
 Have bless'd their fate, that they were valued for  
 Themselves and not their stations, when some knee,  
 That hardly bow'd to them in plenitude,  
 Has kiss'd the dust before them, stripp'd of all.

COUNTESS (*confused*).

I nothing see that's relative in this,  
 That bears upon the argument.

HUON.

O, much,  
 Durst but my heart explain.

COUNTESS.

Hast thou a heart?  
 I thought thou wast a serf; and, as a serf.  
 Hadst thought and will, none other than thy lord's;  
 And so no heart—that is, no heart of thine own.  
 But since thou say'st thou hast a heart, 'tis well  
 Keep it a secret;—let me not suspect  
 What, were it e'en suspicion, were thy death.  
 Sir, did I name a banquet to thee now,  
 Thou lookedst so?

HUON.

To die, for thee, were such.

COUNTESS.

Sir ?

HUON.

For his master oft a serf has died,  
And thought it sweet,—and may not, then, a serf  
Say for his mistress, 'twere a feast to die ?

COUNTESS.

Thou art presumptuous—very—so no wonder  
If I misunderstood thee. Thou'dst do well  
To be thyself, and nothing more.

HUON.

Myself—

COUNTESS.

Why, art thou not a serf ! What right hast thou  
To set thy person off with such a bearing ?  
And move with such a gait ?—to give thy brow  
The set of noble's, and thy tongue his phrase ?  
Thy betters' clothes sit fairer upon thee  
Than on themselves, and they were made for them.  
I have no patience with thee—can't abide thee !  
There are no bounds to thy ambition, none !  
How durst thou e'er adventure to bestride  
The war-horse—sitting him, that people say  
Thou, not the knight, appear'st his proper load ?  
How durst thou touch the lance, the battle-axe,  
And wheel the flaming falchion round thy head,  
As thou wouldst blaze the sun of chivalry ?  
I know !—my father found thy aptitude,  
And humour'd it, to boast thee off ? He may chance  
To rue it ; and no wonder if he should ;  
If others' eyes see that they should not see  
Shown to them by his own.

HUON.

O, lady—

COUNTESS.

What?

HUON.

Heard I aright?

COUNTESS.

Aright—what heard'st thou, then?

I would not think thee so presumptuous

As through thy pride to misinterpret me.

It were not for thy health,—yea, for thy life!

Beware, sir. It would set my quiet blood,

On haste for mischief to thee, rushing thro'

My veins, did I believe—! Thou art not mad;

Knowing thy vanity, I aggravate it.

Thou know'st 'twere shame, the lowest free-woman

That follows in my train should think of thee?

HUON.

I know it, lady.

COUNTESS.

That I meant to say,

No more. Don't read such books to me again.

I would you had not learn'd to read so well,

I had been spared your annotations.

For the future, no reply, when I remark.

Hear, but don't speak—unless you're told—and then

No more than you're told;—what makes the answer up,

No syllable beyond. [*Enter FALCONER, with hawk.*]

My falconer! So.

An hour I'll fly my hawk.

FALCONER.

A noble bird,

My lady, knows his bells, is proud of them.

COUNTESS.

They are no portion of his excellence;  
It is his own ! 'Tis not by them he makes  
His ample wheel ; mounts up, and up, and up  
In spiry rings, piercing the firmament,  
'Till he o'ertops his prey ; then gives his stoop  
More fleet and sure than ever arrow sped !  
How nature fashion'd him for his bold trade !  
Gave him his stars of eyes to range abroad,  
His wings of glorious spread to mow the air,  
And breast of might to use them ! I delight  
To fly my hawk. The hawk's a glorious bird ;  
Obedient—yet a daring, dauntless bird !  
You may be useful, sir ; wait upon me.

*[They go out.]*

END OF ACT I.

## ACT II.

## SCENE I.

*The Country. On one side a Ruin, on the other a clump of lofty trees.*

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*Enter* PRINCE FREDERICK *and* ULRICK.

FREDERICK.

Now thou hast seen her, tell me what thou think'st.  
Has she a heart?

ULRICK.

I think her flesh and blood.

FREDERICK.

Ay, most sweet flesh, and blood most rich!

ULRICK.

Then sure  
She has a heart.

FREDERICK.

But where is it? None yet  
Have found it out.

ULRICK.

You mean, a heart to love?

FREDERICK.

If not such heart, as well no heart at all!

ULRICK.

Men tell a mine a hundred fathoms deep,  
By certain signs that near the surface lie:  
Are flesh and blood more fallible than clay?

Take but her face—there's not a feature on't,  
 But vouches for the mood. Require you more?  
 Her limbs and body give you proof on proof.  
 If these convince you not, essay her voice;  
 'Tis of the stop befits the melting vein.  
 There's nought without but with her sex consists,  
 Pronouncing her its pattern, passing rich!  
 And can she lack the heart, the want of which  
 Would turn such affluence to poverty?  
 Prove nature but a niggard, after all,  
 Where she should seem to be most beautiful?  
 She has a heart, sir; and a heart to love!

FREDERICK.

How comes it, then, I plead a bootless suit,  
 And not a boy at wooing? Had I a chance  
 With a heart, were it not wholly occupied,  
 I never fail'd to find some footing in it  
 If not instate myself with ease;—with dames,  
 I own, less lofty, tho' on lighter terms  
 Than gift of hand for life. Why fail I here?

ULRICK.

Hast thou no rival?

FREDERICK.

None.

ULRICK.

Thou art sure?

FREDERICK.

I am.

Dishearten'd at a race that hath no goal,  
 Or one that seems to distance on approach,  
 My rivals leave the field to me alone.

ULRICK.

Thou may'st have rivals whom thou know'st not of.

FREDERICK.

No! I have press'd her father oft thereon,  
And learn'd the history, beginning, close  
Of every siege of wooing; ending each  
In mortified retreat.

ULRICK.

You may have rivals  
Unknown to him. Love joys in mystery;  
And when you think it countless miles away,  
Is lurking close at hand.

FREDERICK.

You are still at fault.  
She has no favour'd lover—cannot have.  
The thing is out of chance, impossible!

ULRICK.

Call nought impossible, till thou hast proved  
That passion hath essay'd it, and been foil'd;  
And set this down—nature is nature still,  
And, thought to swerve, is at the bottom true.  
Thy mistress is not stone, but flesh and blood,  
Wherein doth lodge the juice of sympathy;  
Which, more refined in woman than in man,  
In woman, sways it measurelessly stronger!  
The essence of the sex is that wherein  
We win a gift of their sweet forms and souls—  
The tenderness for some especial one  
Who then, 'midst millions, seems to stand alone.  
That being absent, then there is no sex!  
So where sex is, that also must be there—  
As where the sun, also the light and heat.

So of two issues, set thy mind to one—  
 She has found the man, who stands 'mongst millions sole,  
 Or he is yet to find, and thou not he.

FREDERICK.

Thou nam'st two issues—I can find a third.

ULRICK.

Where is it ?

FREDERICK.

Here. As many streams will go  
 To make one river up, one passion oft  
 Predominant, all others will absorb.

ULRICK.

What passion, swoln in her, drinks up the rest ?

FREDERICK.

Pride.

ULRICK.

Of her beauty, or her rank, or what ?

FREDERICK.

Pride of herself! intolerant of all  
 Equality—nor that its bounds alone—  
 Oppressive to the thing that is beneath her.  
 Say that she waves me off when I advance,  
 She spurns the serf that bows to her at distance.  
 Suitor and secretary fare alike.  
 I woo for scorn, he for no better serves—  
 Nay, rather worse comes off.

ULRICK.

Her secretary ?

FREDERICK.

The only one of all his wretched class  
 Her presence brooks ; for he is useful to her,



Reads with a music, as a lute did talk :  
 Writes, as a graver did the letters trace :  
 Translates dark languages—for learning which  
 She hath a strange conceit : is wise in rare  
 Philosophy : hath mastery besides  
 Of all sweet instruments that men essay—  
 The hautboy, viol, lute.

ULRICK.

A useful man  
 Your highness draws ! What kind of thing is he  
 To look upon ?

FREDERICK.

'Faith, proper, sir, in trunk,  
 Feature, and limb ; to envy, though a serf.  
 But, err I not, a most unhappy man,  
 And, for his service, weary of his life.

ULRICK.

O love, a wilful, wayward thing thou art !  
 'Twere strange ! 'twere very strange !

FREDERICK.

What ? what were strange ?  
 What said'st thou now, apostrophising love ?

ULRICK.

I said it was a wilful, wayward thing,  
 And so it is—fantastic and perverse !  
 Which makes its sport of persons and of seasons,  
 Takes its own way, no matter right or wrong.  
 It is the bee that finds the honey out,  
 Where least you'd dream 'twould seek the nectarous store.  
 And 'tis an arrant masquer—this same love—  
 That most outlandish, freakish faces wears

To hide its own ! Looks a proud Spaniard now ;  
 Now a grave Turk ; hot Ethiopian next ;  
 And then phlegmatic Englishman ; and then  
 Gay Frenchman ; by and by, Italian, at  
 All things a song ; and in another skip,  
 Gruff Dutchman ;—still is love behind the masque !  
 It is a hypocrite !—looks every way  
 But that where lie its thoughts !—will openly  
 Frown at the thing it smiles in secret on ;  
 Shows most like hate, e'en when it most is love ;  
 Would fain convince you it is very rock  
 When it is water ! ice when it is fire !  
 Is oft its own dupe, like a thorough cheat ;  
 Persuades itself 'tis not the thing it is ;  
 Holds up its head, purses its brows, and looks  
 Askant, with scornful lip, hugging itself  
 That it is high disdain—till suddenly  
 It falls on its knees, making most piteous suit  
 With hail of tears, and hurricane of sighs,  
 Calling on heaven and earth for witnesses  
 'That it is love, true love, nothing but love !

FREDERICK.

You would not say the lady loves the serf ?

ULRICK.

I would say nothing in particular,  
 Save upon proof. Let me together note  
 The serf and lady, I will speak to the point,  
 Or, baffled, hold my peace.

FREDERICK.

To that intent  
 I sent for thee,—for thou art keen of sight  
 To pry into the inmost thoughts of men,

And find the proper ends towards which they aim,  
Howe'er dissembled by assumed purpose.

ULRICK.

Your pardon, sir; your father bade me come  
To warn you, in these times of turbulence,  
He means to stand aloof, and take no part  
Between the barons and the empress,—so  
Your course you know to shape. What company  
Is this?

FREDERICK.

The countess flies her hawk to-day,  
And these are falconers in advance of her.  
Those nearest us, observe. The lady first,  
Is a rich serf, supposed love-daughter to  
The former duke, who left her well endow'd.  
Those with her are her suitors; but with none  
She'll mate, believing that her wealth is prized  
Beyond herself,—nor does she widely err,  
Though some might think her beauty dower enough!  
There is one who follows her indeed for love,  
A man of heart; a gentleman, but poor,  
Who his revenue spends upon his back;  
I say he follows her: he woos her not,  
Through pride, 'tis said, lest he be thought to hunt  
The dross so much he needs;—whence I esteem  
His chance the best. Mark! he is last of all.  
Let us retire a space; there's company  
Enough without us here. Some minutes yet  
Before the countess will alight, and then  
Remains the hill to climb. So bright a day,  
Methinks, will scarce go by without a frown.

[*They retire.*]

*Enter CATHERINE, SIR CONRAD, SIR OTTO, and SIR RUPERT.*

CATHERINE.

Spy you my hawk? 'Twas here he struck his bird,  
And vanish'd from my sight.

SIR OTTO.

Or I mistake,  
Or from his stoop he rose again, and skimm'd  
The brow of yonder copse.

SIR CONRAD.

I mark'd not if  
He soar'd a second time.

CATHERINE.

Were I a man,  
And waited on a lady that did hawk,  
I'd keep her bird in sight! Sir Rupert, what  
Say you? Where shall we go and seek my hawk,  
Or lurks he hereabouts?

SIR RUPERT.

I saw him not  
At all.

CATHERINE.

Not see my hawk at all? You'll do  
For a falconer; so! Had I that boy,  
My hair-brain'd cousin, whom you say you know,  
And fair Sir Rupert hath such fancy for,  
He plays the wasp so well—(a novel taste!  
As I can vouch he is indeed no bee,  
To pay you with his honey for his sting!)—  
Had I that scape-grace with me, he would find  
My hawk ere you began to look for it.—

How loth these friends are to part company !  
 Now will I scatter them (*aside*). Who finds my hawk  
 Deserves to kiss my hand, and he shall do it.

[SIR OTTO *and* SIR CONRAD *run off*.]

What ! like you not my wages, sir, you stand  
 Nor make a proffer of your services !

SIR RUPERT.

To kiss your hand would be most rich reward,  
 If love's sweet gift to him who sought your love ;  
 But, if love's gift, to one alone 'twere made  
 And not to any one !

CATHERINE.

Love's gift—what's that ?  
 Most thankless proffer made by empty hand.  
 Give me bright diamonds, I shall have bright eyes.  
 When fetch'd desert its value and was poor ?—  
 A hundred years ago ?—but it was left  
 A legacy, and then they found it out !  
 The world, they say, is an old churl,—'tis not.  
 Can you afford to feast, you shall be feasted ;  
 You shall not dine at home one day out of three ;  
 Nay, you may shut up house, for bed and board.

SIR RUPERT.

You are a young ascetic.

CATHERINE.

Am I so ?  
 Well, if I am 'tis in the family—  
 Witness my cousin whom you love so well.  
 A young ascetic say you ? Sir, I am  
 A young Diogenes in petticoats.  
 I have strings of axioms. Here are more for you.  
 They say that beauty needs not ornament ;

But sooth she fares the better having it,  
Although she keeps it in her drawer.

SIR RUPERT.

Indeed?

CATHERINE.

Indeed, and very deed. For I have known  
Bracelets and rings do miracles, where nature  
Play'd niggard, and did nothing, or next to it;  
Beat lotions in improving of the skin,  
And mend a curve the surgeon had given up  
As hopeless.

SIR RUPERT.

Nay, you speak in irony.

CATHERINE.

I speak in truth, speaking in irony;  
For irony is but a laughing truth  
Told of a worthless thing. Will you have more?  
You shall then. Have you never heard it said,  
Or never dream'd you such a thing as this—  
That fortune's children never yet lack'd wit,  
Virtue, grace, beauty, tho' it tax'd the owners  
To find them out? Once an exception chanced,  
I know not in what year or part of the world,  
But, while men stared at the anomaly,  
One parasite, less comet-struck than the rest,  
Turn'd up a heap of rubbish of all things  
Good men and wise and men of taste eschew,  
And found them underneath! Take this along, tho',  
The owner never knew their value, for  
He ne'er had need to go to market with them.  
Why, what a man you are, Sir Rupert! Fie!  
What! not a word to say? Let's change the theme then:

The argument shall be, that you're in love;  
The which shall I affirm while you deny.  
I say you are in love. Come, prove me wrong!

SIR RUPERT.

I never argue only for the sake  
Of argument.

CATHERINE.

Come, come, you have a tongue!  
You are in love—I'll prove it by fifty things.  
And first and foremost, you deny it, sir;  
A certain sign, with certain accidents—  
As dulness, moodiness, moroseness, shyness.  
I'd stake my credit on one single fact  
Thou bearest out to admiration—  
A lover is the dullest thing on earth.  
Who but a lover—or his antipodes,  
A wise man—ever found out that the use  
Of his tongue was to hold it? Thou must be in love,  
And for one sovereign reason, after which  
I'll give no other—thou dost follow me!

SIR RUPERT.

Madam, altho' I may not use my tongue,  
I do my eyes and ears.

CATHERINE.

But not your feet.  
Will you not seek my hawk, and run a chance  
To kiss my hand—or would it trouble you,  
In case you found my hawk, to use your lips?  
But I forget 'tis now your turn to speak,  
And prove my oaks of arguments are reeds.  
Have you no word?—or am not I worth one?  
Or must I take your side, and beat myself?

I'll take your side, then. You are not in love,  
Loving yourself too well!

SIR RUPERT.

You wrong me there.

CATHERINE.

Why, see what pains you take with your person! How  
You dress!

SIR RUPERT.

'Tis not my vanity, but pride.  
I am too poor to put mean habit on.  
Whose garments wither shall meet faded smiles  
Even from the worthy, so example sways,  
So the plague poverty is loath'd, and shunn'd  
The luckless wight who wears her fatal spot!  
Want, but look full; else you may chance to starve,  
Unless you'll stoop to beg. You force me, lady,  
To make you my severe confessional.  
From such prostration never can I rise  
The thing I was before. Farewell—

CATHERINE (*looks out*).

Farewell!

What! go not to fetch my hawk, and there  
He sits upon his quarry, new alit?  
Or want you earnest of your wages? Well,  
There, kiss my hand, and go and fetch my hawk,  
And then be paid in full.

SIR RUPERT.

If I could speak—

CATHERINE.

My hawk were off again, ere you had done;  
So I would lose his service—thou my thanks!



SIR RUPERT.

I will secure him straight.

[*Goes out.*]

CATHERINE.

I gave him pain,  
 Tho' he has borne it with a noble heart!  
 I hope he will not make me weep in turn.  
 Symptoms I feel of something like a shower—  
 A slight one—but it must not fall. They are gone.  
 A noble heart! a very noble heart!

*Enter* SIR RUPERT.

SIR RUPERT.

I have miss'd the hawk—he has taken wing again.

CATHERINE.

'Twas not your fault—you did the best you could.  
 I am not angry. There's my hand for you.  
 Mark'd you which course he took? Then, come along,  
 We'll hunt for him together.

SIR RUPERT.

Stop—it lowers!  
 There's shelter here.

[SIR RUPERT and CATHERINE approach the Ruins—  
*Enter the* COUNTESS and HUON, with Attendants  
 —PRINCE FREDERICK and ULRICK come forward a little, but so as not to be noticed.

COUNTESS (*to* SIR RUPERT).

Will there not be a storm?

HUON.

I am sure there will.

COUNTESS.

I ask'd not you to speak! When you should speak

It shall be shown—it shall be plain. Be sure  
It is so, ere you give your counsel, sir.

[HUON retires to the group of trees, and leans against  
one of them.

Do you not think there's threatening of a storm?

SIR RUPERT.

Yes, lady. When the Heavens look troubled thus,  
Earth can't be long at peace.

FREDERICK.

The only man  
She brooketh speech from, with complacency.  
Observe her now when I accost her. Madam,  
Wilt please you take my escort to your coach,  
At the hill foot I see attending on you?

COUNTESS (*haughtily*).

The rain is on, sir; I am better here.

SIR OTTO and SIR CONRAD enter in haste.

SIR OTTO.

A storm! a storm! Those pitch-black clouds that speed  
In wild career to meet the sun, as though  
In envy of his light to blot him out,  
Come right against the wind—a token they  
Bring thunder!

SIR CONRAD.

Yes; I saw a forked flash,  
And while I held my breath and listen'd, heard  
The distant clap. [*To SIR OTTO*] Avoid the trees; their tops  
With boastful towering, dare the threat'ning bolt  
To strike them!

[SIR OTTO and SIR CONRAD approach the ruins.]

ULRICK.

Do you note? She does not move—

What keeps her there? Is that the scorned serf,  
Leans drooping 'gainst the trunk of the tall tree,  
Lends him pernicious shelter?—Clear as day!

FREDERICK.

'Tis dark as night!

ULRICK.

What?—O, the storm! My lord,  
I meant not that—your doubts are clearing up.  
Look at the serf and lady.

CATHERINE (*to* SIR RUPERT).

Pray you speak  
To the Countess—tell her she's in danger there  
To stand so near the trees.

SIR RUPERT.

Madam—

CATHERINE.

Apace  
The storm comes on! 'Twill soon be overhead—  
Ay! there's the thunder now, and loud enough.  
She heard not. Call to her again. She bears  
That you accost her.

SIR RUPERT.

She is fond of you.

CATHERINE.

Yes; but you mark'd her scorn of Huon, now!

SIR RUPERT.

Madam! Madam! Pray you  
Come from beneath the trees. It lightens fast—  
A bolt may strike you, madam!

COUNTESS.

I do hear you, sir.

ULRICK.

The peril of the serf transfixes her !  
 Her life, be sure, is only part of his !  
 A common act of charity it were  
 Command him thence ; but, conscious of the cause,  
 Stronger than charity, would prompt the act,  
 And fearing to betray it worse than death,  
 She perils her own life ! It is not right  
 To leave her there—go to her—take her thence !

FREDERICK.

Your pardon, lady, but you must not brave  
 The lightning. Come into the open space :  
 There's shelter, with less chance of penalty,  
 Beneath this time-worn ruin. (*Thunder and lightning.*)  
 Heavens, how near !

Almost together came the clap and flash !  
 The trees are all on fire—the serf is struck !

[HUON *staggers from the tree—the COUNTESS rushes to him, clasping him.*

COUNTESS.

No ! no !—O Heaven, he's dead ! why would he stand  
 Beneath the trees !—What, Huon !—speak to me !  
 Show me thou hear'st me ! Let me see some signs  
 Of life ! Why, Huon ! Huon !—He is dead !

ULRICK.

Lady, he is not dead, but only stunn'd.  
 'Twas but a shock, altho' a heavy one.  
 His colour comes—you see his eye-lids ope'—  
 So please you, leave the charge of him to me.

COUNTESS.

I thank you, sir—am sorry such a load  
 Should burden you. Would some of my attendants

Were here, to ease you on't. How dread a thing  
Is death, when sight on't makes one not oneself!  
Grows it not lighter, sirs?—Ay, there's the sky.  
Almost as soon as come the storm is gone.  
Pray leave him to himself. 'Twas but a shock;  
It shames me, such a load should burthen you.

ULRICK.

As yet, he cannot stand.

COUNTESS.

Indeed?—O!—ay!—  
It was a heavy shock. I have a horror,  
And always had, of lightning. Do you know  
It takes away my wits? Did you not feel  
As I did, Catherine, when they thought the lightning  
Had kill'd the serf? A dreadful thing is death!  
And most of all, by lightning! where is my hawk?  
O, they had charge to bring him after me,  
And here they come. Let's meet them, Catherine.

[*Going, stops and turns to look at HUON.*]

ULRICK.

He still grows better, madam.

COUNTESS.

Who, sir?—O,  
The serf?—Why, Catherine, where's your hawk?

CATHERINE.

I have lost him.

COUNTESS.

I hope the lightning has not struck him. Come:  
We'll have fair weather yet.

*Enter two or three Attendants.*

Go, some of you,  
Relieve his lordship from his load.

*[Two of the Attendants take HUON, and lead him off,  
the COUNTESS watching.]*

ULRICK.

You see  
He is unhurt.

COUNTESS.

My lord?—I see.—You take  
Great interest in my serf. The sun is out ;  
My hawk against the field ! Come, Catherine.

*[All go out, except FREDERICK and ULRICK.]*

ULRICK.

You see, my lord ; and seeing, comprehend.  
Straight will I to the Duke, and tell him this.  
A kingdom to a hawk, she loves the serf !

*[They go out, severally.]*

END OF ACT II.

## ACT III.

## SCENE I.

*A Chamber in the Castle.*

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*Enter DUKE and ULRICK.*

DUKE.

SHE loves the serf? Impossible!

ULRICK.

My lord,  
'Tis true.

DUKE.

It cannot be! Her pride alone  
Forbids belief. More loftily, my lord,  
The stateliest of all her ancestors  
Ne'er wore his rank, than she.

ULRICK.

She loves the serf.

DUKE.

Give me some reason stronger than averment.

ULRICK.

Such I have given already. What, my liege,  
But love, such contradiction could beget?  
When did cold scorn look, speak, and act like love?  
Woman or man is known by fits and starts,  
More than by habits, which may be put on;  
For those so take the judgment off its guard,  
That inmost thoughts are shown. With care for him,  
She all forgot herself. Had doubt remain'd,

It had vanish'd when assurance of his safety  
 Restored collectedness, which brought with it  
 Slight of the thing that, but a moment gone,  
 Seem'd essence of her being.

DUKE.

You are right.  
 'Tis the solution of the mystery,  
 That with the progress of the season, comes not  
 The fruit it promised; and no sign of blight,  
 Canker, or mildew, but the blossom rich  
 As ever knit into the perfect fruit  
 Fulfilled its pride in the crowning. Yes; her girlhood—  
 Now longer past than some would choose to own—  
 Put forth a bloom like many another's prime,  
 That often then I fancied love would come.  
 When her prime came nor love along with it,  
 With many a suitor have I sigh'd to think  
 Her breast was ne'er intended lodge for him  
 It seem'd most fitted for, and little dream'd  
 The guest we miss'd, already was within.

ULRICK.

And never fear'd the serf?

DUKE.

No.

ULRICK.

Was't not strange?

DUKE.

Not to consider him as I did; creature  
 Made for her pride to vent its mood upon—  
 Her pride insufferable—which alone  
 Seem'd fruit of her capricious womanhood.



ULRICK.

That foil'd you.

DUKE.

When the serf was but a boy—  
His mistress then an infant—taken with  
His forward parts, I put them to the test  
Of scholarship, which they robustly stood,  
A hundred-fold repaying cultivation.  
Nor stopp'd I there; but, as he grew to manhood,  
Gave training to him in those exercises,  
Wherein our youths of gentle blood indulge—  
Preludes to feats in peace, and deeds in war—  
That I might boast a serf supreme in arms;  
As many a knight unwillingly has own'd,  
Accepting challenge to make proof of him.

ULRICK.

What didst propose him for?

DUKE.

Instructor first,  
Then page and secretary to my child.

ULRICK.

Instructor, didst thou say? Companion of  
Her hours of privacy? Her age was then—

DUKE.

Twelve, if I err not.—Yes; 'Twelve times I then  
Had bless'd the day that gave my daughter birth.

ULRICK.

Her spring was mellowing into summer then,  
Young summer! at whose genial glow, the heart  
Finds wishes and affections shooting up,  
Known but by name before, and thrills and swells

With rapture of the strange and plenteous verdure.  
She prosper'd with his aid ?

DUKE.

O, wond'rously.

ULRICK.

And loved at first her tutor ?

DUKE.

Much ; but soon  
A change, which grew with her, the nearer she  
Approach'd to womanhood. 'Twas distance first ;  
Then sullenness ; then scorn, which she gave sway to  
Incontinent, and chiefly of those feats  
Of high address wherein he match'd the noble,  
And which it seem'd her pastime he should practise  
For recompense of aggravated spite.

ULRICK.

Which he endured for love !

DUKE.

He dies ! That ends it.

ULRICK.

Yes ; confirming it  
Perhaps. Beware, sir, of a tragedy  
So deep ! Her scorn may melt at it, and help  
Her tears to keep them flowing on, until  
She weeps her life away. You must not play  
With a first passion, once it has taken root.  
For it strikes deep—to the foundations even  
Of the heart—entwining with the fibres, there,  
Of life itself, that, pluck the other up,  
These haply come along.

DUKE.

He shall to exile,  
Thousands of miles away, 'midst snows and deserts !

ULRICK.

So may you tempt her, sir, with pity for him,  
To turn a pilgrim—take up staff and scrip,  
And follow him. She scorns him for the scorn  
Which others' eyes behold his station with.  
Removed from their regards, her rank unknown,  
For her rich charms were his embraces, lodge  
She'd change your palace for.

DUKE.

Impossible !

ULRICK.

O, never did achievement rival Love's,  
For daring enterprise and execution.  
It will do miracles ; attempt such things  
As make ambition, fiery as it is,  
Dull plodding tameness, in comparison.  
Talk of the miser's passion for his store—  
'Tis milk and water to the lover's, which  
Defies the mines of earth and caves of ocean  
To match its treasure ! Talk of height, breadth, depth—  
There is no measure for the lover's passion,  
No bounds to what 'twill do !

DUKE.

Advise me, then,  
What's best.

ULRICK.

Induce the serf to marry. That  
Were cure, in the end, for your fair daughter's passion ;  
Whose wound were his aggression, so resentment

Would blunt the edge of disappointed love.  
 For, doubt not, though she ne'er espouses him,  
 She trusts so far to keep him to herself,  
 As that he ne'er shall pillow with another.

DUKE.

'Tis done. I have a bride for him, at once.  
 One of his class, enfranchised by the will  
 Of my cousin, who preceded me; indeed,  
 Supposed love-daughter to him, and endowed  
 With wealth of his, that makes her coveted,  
 As fitting mate, by men of gentle blood.  
 Her humour 'tis to keep her freedom still;  
 But to my wish, as soon as known, she'll bend,  
 Aware I may encoil her in the mesh  
 My cousin's love or bounty freed her from.  
 But say I wed the serf to Catherine,  
 What profit then? My child may still persist  
 To keep her virgin state.

ULRICK.

I should commit  
 To Heaven the election of her husband;—let  
 The tournament determine who shall wed her.

DUKE.

Thereto I have made provision in my will;  
 And further, sir, as I am due to death  
 Now many a year, and momentarily  
 Expect his summons, pray you keep by me  
 The little space I have to tarry yet—  
 For on your wisdom I have all reliance.  
 Your prince, I know, will not gainsay me here.  
 And when it pleaseth Heaven to leave my body  
 Without the breath it has inherited

So long, no minute lose, but take occasion  
Of the fresh flow of sorrow in my child—  
When her young heart is soften'd, and will mould  
Itself into his will, who is no more—  
To break to her, on this particular head,  
My dying testament.

ULRICK.

I shall remember.

DUKE.

So please you I shall join you with the empress,  
Liege lady and good cousin to my child,  
Executor.

ULRICK.

I will discharge the trust.

DUKE.

My lord, send Huon to me. Question not,  
Advise me not. He marries, or he dies.

[ULRICK goes out.

Life spent to waste! My pride become my shame!  
For this I rear'd her—rear'd to tow'ring thoughts.  
A gasp of being only left, and that  
To sigh that being has been spent in vain  
For her, last shoot of an illustrious tree!  
I loved my serf, was vain of him, and made  
My vanity to smile through his deserts;  
And now, their light is cloud to all my hopes.  
Through mine own pride my high aspirings fall.  
They shall not fall! Good bye to ruth! He dares  
To love my child—to covet her I grudged  
Surrender of to those could boast estate  
Equal to mine! Born at my very foot,  
How durst he lift his eyes so giddy high!  
He comes. I see! The passion, never yet

I dream'd of, stares upon me, in his look,  
His air, his gait. 'Tis dead—or he must die !

*Enter HUON.*

Huon !

HUON.

My lord ?

DUKE.

I have been thinking of thee.

HUON.

My lord is ever good.

DUKE.

I have a notion

'Twould profit thee to marry.

HUON.

Marry !

DUKE.

Yes.

HUON.

I first must love.

DUKE.

And hast thou never loved ?

Why art thou silent ? Wherefore holds thy tongue  
Its peace, and not thy cheek ?

HUON.

My cheek !

DUKE.

It talks !

A flush pass'd o'er it as I spoke to thee :

And now it talks again—and on the ground

Thou cast'st thine eye. "Thou first must love"—My  
friend,

Thou art in love already. Art thou not ?  
 Art thou not, Huon ?—Never mind, but keep  
 Thy secret.—I have fix'd that thou shalt marry.

HUON.

My lord—

DUKE (*interrupting him*).

I know it will advantage thee,  
 And I have look'd around my court to find  
 A partner for thee, and have lit on one.

HUON (*more earnestly*).

My lord—

DUKE (*interrupting him again*).

She has beauty, Huon, she has wealth ;  
 And what doth qualify her better still—  
 As of unequal matches discords grow—  
 She's of thy own class, Huon, she is a serf.

HUON (*impetuously*).

My lord—

DUKE (*interrupting, indignantly*).

My serf !—How now ?—Wouldst thou rebel ?

HUON.

Rebel, my lord.

DUKE.

I trust I was deceived !  
 I did not see defiance in thine eye,  
 And hear it on thy tongue ? Thou wouldst not dare  
 So much as harbour wish to thwart thy lord,  
 Much less intent ? Thou know'st him ! know'st thyself !  
 Thou may'st have scruples—that thou canst not help ;  
 But thou canst help indulging them in the face  
 Of thy lord's will. And so, as 'tis my will

Thou marry straight, and I have found thy match,  
 I'll draw a paper up, where thou shalt make  
 The proffer of thy hand to Catherine,  
 And thou shalt sign it, Huon.

[*Writes.*]

HUON.

'That I were dead!  
 O, what is death, compared to slavery!  
 Brutes may bear bondage—they were made for it,  
 When Heaven set man above them; but no mark,  
 Definite and indelible, it put  
 Upon one man to mark him from another,  
 That he should live his slave. O heavy curse!  
 To have thought, reason, judgment, feelings, tastes,  
 Passions, and conscience, like another man,  
 And not have equal liberty to use them,  
 But call his mood their master! Why was I born  
 With passion to be free—with faculties  
 To use enlargement—with desires that cleave  
 To high achievements—and with sympathies  
 Attracting me to objects fair and noble,—  
 And yet with power over myself as little  
 As any beast of burden? Why should I live?  
 There are of brutes themselves that will not tame,  
 So high in them is nature;—whom the spur  
 And lash, instead of curbing, only chafe  
 Into prouder mettle;—that will let you kill them,  
 Ere they will suffer you to master them.  
 I am a man, and live!

DUKE.

Here, Huon, sign,  
 And Catherine is your wife,

HUON.

I will not sign.



How now, my serf!

DUKE.

My lord, I am a man;

And, as a man, owe duty higher far

Than that I owe to thee, which Heaven expects

That I discharge. Didst thou command me murder,

Steal, commit perjury, or even lie,—

Should I do it, though thy serf? No! To espouse her,

Not loving her, were murder of her peace.

I will not sign for that! With like default,

To compass mastery of her effects,

Were robbery. I will not sign for that!

To swear what I must swear to make her mine,

Were perjury at the very altar. Therefore

I will not sign! To put forth plea of love,

Which not a touch of love bears witness to,

Were uttering a lie. And so, my lord,

I will not sign at all!—O, good my liege,

My lord, my master, ask me not to sign!

My sweat, my blood, use without sparing; but

Leave me my heart—a miserable one

Although it be! Coerce me not in that,

To make me do the thing my heart abhors!

I beg no more!

[*The DUKE draws his sword, and resolutely approaches*

HUON. *At the same minute the COUNTESS*

*enters, unperceived, and stops short.*

DUKE.

Huon, I love thee,

And would not do thee harm, unless compell'd.

Thou shouldst not play with me, and shalt not. Take,

Therefore, thy choice—death, or the paper.

HUON.

Death !

DUKE.

'Thou makest thy mind up quickly, in a strait.

HUON.

I do not wish to live.

*[Opens his vest, takes the point of the DUKE'S sword,  
and places it opposite his heart.]*

Set here thy point ;

'Tis right against my heart ! Press firm and straight ;

The more, the kinder !

*[A pause]*

DUKE.

As thou wishest death,

I will not kill thee for thy disobedience.

An hour I grant for calm reflection. Use it.

If, on the lapse of that brief space, I find

The page without addition, thou may'st learn

That even slavery hath its degrees,

Which make it sometimes sweet. Our felons throng

The galleys ; but 'tis hard, or we shall find

A bench and oar for thee.

*[He goes out.]*

HUON.

My lord, come back !

My lord ! What now my mind, be sure 'twill be

At the end of the hour ! of the day ! of my life !—My  
lord !

He does not hear, or will not. Most sweet cause

Of most insufferable misery,

Wouldst thou not weep at this ? Couldst thou look on,

And keep pride sitting in thy woman's eye—

The proper throne of pity—which for me,

The melting queen has yet refused to fill,

But to a stern usurper all abandon'd!  
 Wouldst thou not weep? Or would my name alone—  
 My sole condition set 'gainst all myself;  
 The vivid thoughts, the feelings sensitive,  
 The quick affections, passions of a man,  
 Despite his misery of birthright; flesh,  
 Warm, warm; of as high vitality as tho'  
 His lot had been an heirdom to a throne—  
 Would that, prevailing 'gainst such odds as these,  
 Prevent thee? Yes! Thou wouldst not weep for me.  
 O, knew I what would make thee! Would my corpse?  
 Then to thy father! own my passion for thee,  
 Tell him his serf aspires to love his daughter,  
 Boasts of it, tho' he sends him to the galleys,  
 Will glory in it, chain'd beside the felon,  
 Ay, with the tasker's whip whirling above him,  
 Reiterate it, when he threatens me,  
 And when again he threatens, justify it,  
 On the broad rights of common human nature,  
 Till with his own hand he transfixes me!

[ *Following the DUKE.*

COUNTESS (*interposing*).

Stop, Huon!—What's the matter?

HUON.

Huon—Huon!

Didst thou say Huon—and with gentleness?

Madam—my mistress—I am your slave!—I am nothing  
 But the poor serf!

COUNTESS.

See if that door is free  
 From list'ners.

HUON (*going to the door*).

There is no one here.

COUNTESS.

Come in,  
And shut it again.

HUON.

'Tis shut.

COUNTESS.

Now, what's the matter  
With my father and you ?

HUON.

He bade me sign that paper,  
And I refused.

COUNTESS.

What is it? Let me see it.

HUON (*hands the paper, and watches the COUNTESS while she reads*).

How her eye fastens on the writing—seems  
To grasp it, as her hand the paper! What!  
Did she start? She did! O, wherefore?—What is this?  
Her sweet face, that just now was all a calm,  
Shows signs of brooding tempest! Yes, 'tis on—  
Lowers on her brow, and flashes on her cheek,  
Like cloud and lightning. How her bosom heaves!  
What makes it heave? She has let the paper drop,  
Yet there she stands as tho' she held it yet!  
And where but now all was astir—now, all  
Again is stillness! Dare I speak to her?  
She is not like to faint—no—no—she breathes!  
Her haughty spirit wakes in her again,  
Towering, alas! as ne'er it did before.

COUNTESS (*after a violent struggle, giving way*).

Huon, I die!

HUON.

Heavens!—Mercy!

COUNTESS (*bursting into tears*).

It is over.

Do not speak to me! Let my tears flow on!

HUON.

Flow they for me?

COUNTESS.

I told you not to speak.

HUON.

Sweet Heaven! your voice is tears;  
 Your looks are tears; your air, your motions, all  
 Are tears! floods! floods! to those that course your cheeks,  
 And fall more bright than diamonds on the hands  
 Which now I clasp to thee in supplication,  
 That thou wilt deign this once vouchsafe me audience,  
 To give my fatal passion vent before thee—  
 For years pent up within my wretched breast—  
 And then I'm mute for ever!

COUNTESS.

Huon, peace—

I know thou lov'st me.

HUON.

Thou know'st it, dost thou?  
 And say'st it!—and mildly say'st it!  
 Not with a tone of scorn, not with a threat,  
 Nor accent yet of cold indifference  
 For the poor serf, who, body, soul, and all,  
 Not being worth a tithe of thee, yet dares  
 To love thee!—dares to wish for thee!—yes, wish,  
 Altho' he knows thee out of reach of him,  
 As the sun!—as the stars—a million, million times

Beyond the sun ! The poor despised serf,  
 Despised of himself—of thee—of every one—  
 Thou see'st he loves thee, and thou deign'st to say it !  
 Say it with pity—with most tender pity !  
 Behold'st him kneeling at thy feet, and know'st  
 The passion throws him there, and suffer'st him  
 To stay there !—Let him die there ! Let him die  
 At thy feet ! [ *Falls at her feet.*

COUNTESS.

Rise, Huon !—Huon !—Hear'st thou me ?  
 And dost thou not obey me ? Wilt thou not ?  
 Listen to me !—I do entreat thee, Huon,  
 As thou dost love me, rise !

HUON (*rising to his knee*).

Again ! “ As thou dost love me, Huon ! ” And thy voice did  
 sound  
 As 'twere the voice of one that loved again !  
 Thou start'st at that ! and terror all at once  
 Looks from the eyes, whence something look'd before  
 I 'd give the vision of my own to see there  
 But for one other moment, so it set  
 My soul ablaze with hope !—Can I believe it,  
 My arm encircles thee !

COUNTESS (*with dignity*).

Remove it.

HUON.

Heaven !  
 Thou changest ?—Yes !—Thou art returning fast  
 To what thou wast before.

COUNTESS.

No, Huon—but  
 Obey me—kneel no longer at my feet,

But rise. It pleaseth me thou dost my will.  
Huon, wilt do my will?

HUON.

Wilt do thy will?

It is the nature of my blood as much  
As its colour—current! In thy every mood,  
I will obey thee, lady.

COUNTESS.

Promise me

Thou'lt do the thing I bid thee.

HUON.

What is it?

COUNTESS.

Promise me first, and then I'll name it to thee.  
Huon, wilt do the thing I wish?

HUON.

I will.

COUNTESS.

But swear thou'lt do it.

HUON.

Yes. What shall I swear by?

COUNTESS.

Thy love for me.

HUON.

Then, by my love for thee,  
I'll do the thing thou bidd'st me.

COUNTESS.

Sign the paper!—

'Thou art about to speak—but don't—don't, Huon,  
As thou wouldst not offend me; as 'twould grieve me—  
I won't say, anger me—thou shouldst offend me.

Listen! I'll bear that thou shouldst love me, if  
 Thou signest—else command thee ever from me.  
 Wilt thou not? Speak not—give me acts, not words.  
 Or sign it, or begone!

HUON.

I'll keep my word,  
 And so do both. [Takes paper to table, and peruses it.

*Enter Attendant.*

COUNTESS (*to Attendant*).

Is Catherine in the castle?  
 If not, go to her house, and bring her hither.

ATTENDANT.

She is in the castle. Now she enter'd it.

COUNTESS.

Conduct her to my chamber. Stay. My chaplain—  
 Tell him, and do it straight, to wait me in  
 The chapel. Tarry. See that the chapel else  
 Is clear—make sure of it. That ascertain'd,  
 Take post at the door, and mind that none do enter,  
 Except the serf and the two ladies that  
 Shall follow him. I shall be one. A mouse  
 Besides, thou diest! [Exit Attendant.

HUON (*signs paper*).

It is sign'd—Farewell! [Going.

COUNTESS.

Stay!—To the full thou must redeem thy pledge.  
 Unless thou marriest, it is not sign'd.  
 The paper is but air, the ink but water,  
 Without fulfilling of the written deed;  
 And thou dost juggle with me shamefully,  
 Saying thou lovest me, and for thy oath



Staking thy love, and leaving all undone  
As thou hadst sworn by nothing. Thou art bound  
To marry Catherine, which doing not,  
Thou dost not love me,—thou art not a man.

HUON.

I am indifferent to what I do.  
All things of earth are now the same to me ;  
Good, bad, love, hate, wrong, kindness, life or death.  
What hour you please, I'll marry Catherine. [*Going.*

COUNTESS.

Now ! [*Stopping him.*  
This very moment ! She will meet thee in  
The chapel, whither thou must straight repair.  
Thou wilt ?

HUON.

I will.

COUNTESS.

The chaplain thou wilt find  
Expecting thee—and, if he be not come  
Already, still he will be sure to come.  
Thou wilt not juggle with me ?

HUON.

No.

COUNTESS.

Thou darest not—  
I mean, thou darest not but respect thine oath.

HUON.

I'll keep it, madam.—Then, farewell for ever ! [*Aside.*  
[*Goes out.*

COUNTESS.

'Tis done ! [*Sinks into a chair.*

*Enter DUKE.*

DUKE.

Where's Huon ?

COUNTESS.

Gone to do thy will.

DUKE.

Who work'd this miracle ? I never dream'd  
He would conform to it ! Who work'd it ?

COUNTESS.

I.

DUKE.

Thou ?

COUNTESS (*giving him the paper*).

There.

DUKE.

My child ! Thou art thy father's child,  
My proud child still ! Where is he ?

COUNTESS.

In the chapel,  
By this. The chaplain waits upon him there.  
Catherine is in my room, expecting me.  
So please you, sir, since I have help'd the match  
Thus far, I'll e'en o'erlook the ceremony.

DUKE.

Do so.

My barque no more is fit for sea ;  
A ripple threatens it with foundering,  
Almost 'tis founder'd now. Did Huon tell thee  
How he withstood me ?

COUNTESS.

All is known to me.  
But pray you, for the sake of Catherine,

Grant him his freedom. 'Tis not meet her husband  
Should drag the chain hath been unloosed from her.

DUKE.

This document accomplishes your wish,  
E'en now prepared to win him to my purpose.  
I give it freely, for I love the boy ;  
Ay, now entirely love him ! See him married ;  
And may he plight a happy, happy troth  
To her he weds ! My child, I am failing fast.  
'Tis time—don't heed !—go to the chapel—and  
My blessing on the errand takes thee thither.

*Enter Attendant.*

Ha !—you are come in time, sir ! I shall need  
Your help to my chamber. Tell the boy, I bless him !  
Come hither, bless thee, too ! And bless the work  
Thou goest to do ! While I remember it,  
Regard Count Ulrick as thy father's friend,  
One of his household now, with sanction of  
The Prince of Milan. I am very feeble !  
'Must to my chamber !

COUNTESS (*rushing towards him, and kneeling*).

Bless me again ! my father !

DUKE.

Again, my child ?—Again ! [*Blessing her.*  
Heaven bless thee ! It is wiser—better knows  
Thy good—can better help thee to't—ay !  
Better than thy father ! May it bless thee, then,  
And be its will, before thy father's, done ! [*Goes out.*

COUNTESS.

Now, fail not Catherine, and the die is cast ! [*Goes out.*

## SCENE II.

*The Corridor of the Castle.*

*Enter SIR CONRAD.*

SIR CONRAD.

What calls the chaplain to his sacred post,  
And why this privacy? About to pass  
The porch, I was admonish'd 'twas forbid  
To all to enter! 'Tis no day of fast,  
No hour of customary rites! 'Tis nought  
To me. I only wonder at its strangeness.

SIR RUPERT (*entering*).

Where is the Prince of Milan?

SIR CONRAD.

In the court-yard—  
Unless departed thence this moment.

SIR RUPERT.

Find him,  
And bring him to the chamber of the duke.  
If on your way you meet the duke's physician,  
In search of whom I go, he, too, is summon'd,  
And tell him so.

SIR CONRAD.

Why, what's the matter?

SIR RUPERT.

Woe!  
The duke!—the duke!—No question, but away!

## SCENE III.

*Chamber of the Countess.**Enter CHRISTINA and the COUNTESS'S Maid.*

CHRISTINA.

My mistress marry Huon ?

MAID.

Even so !

Now hand in hand with him before the priest ;

Unless the knot be tied already—said

The blessing and amen.

CHRISTINA.

No bridemaïd ?

MAID.

Yes,

My lady.

CHRISTINA.

What ! the Countess ! bridemaïd she

To Catherine that was before a serf !

Yet she was ever fond of Catherine.

MAID.

You should have seen them both as forth they went,

Like two sweet sisters for the altar veil'd.

CHRISTINA.

A sudden marriage this !

MAID.

And lonely, too ;

None but the principals admitted—friends

Nor attendants !

CHRISTINA.

It is strange ! Well. Huon gets

A wealthy wife—a freewoman, to boot ;

And, sooth to say, a worthy husband, she—  
 Ay, were she better still—for many a prince  
 Looks not his rank so well as Huon would  
 Were he one. Softly—they return—yes.

MAID.

No;  
 My mistress comes alone. How slow she moves!

*Enter the COUNTESS faint, her Maid runs to support her.*

COUNTESS.

Help to untie me, girl. I cannot lift  
 My hand to my head—and I want air! Remove  
 My veil. There! Now I breathe!—A minute only  
 And all the world seems changed. Is this my room?  
 Art thou my waiting-maid?—Am I myself?  
 Where is my father?

MAID.

In his chamber, lady.  
 He is complaining.

COUNTESS.

He is very old.  
 His life spun out into a very film.  
 I did not gainsay him! Thank Heaven for that!  
 I would that I could go to him, but 'faith  
 My limbs have done their best to bring me hither.  
 I am next to dead; almost dissolved to nothing.  
 Is that Christina? Girl, what do you here?  
 Home with all haste; your mistress there before you  
 Waits your assistance with most instant need.

CHRISTINA.

It is all wonder.

COUNTESS.

Art thou gone?

CHRISTINA.

I am.

[*Courtsies and goes out.*]COUNT ULRICK *enters.*

ULRICK.

Madam !

COUNTESS.

Count Ulrick, is it you ? I am glad  
To see you, sir ; my father told me, or  
I dreamt it, he designed to take you, sir,  
Into his service. If 'tis so, I'm glad of it.

ULRICK.

I grieve to think my office was a brief one !

COUNTESS.

Your office was a brief one !—Speak !—alas !  
When silence is a substitute for speech  
The heart must be o'er full of joy or pain !  
Enough. I read your errand in your looks—  
I am an orphan.

ULRICK.

Madam, 'twas a debt  
Long due to nature.

COUNTESS.

Still, sir, we must grieve  
To see it paid. At what a time to leave me !  
I cannot pay him half his dues of sorrow.  
My heart is spent !—benumbed ! this shaft of Fate  
Lights on a corpse !—a corpse ! Alas, my father !

[*A pause—Enter Attendant, hastily.*]

ATTENDANT.

Madam !

ULRICK.

Keep silence ! Do not interrupt  
The sacred flow of sorrow for the dead.

COUNTESS.

No ; let him speak ; there's matter in his looks.

ATTENDANT.

The banquet, as you ordered, is prepared,  
But neither bride nor bridegroom can be found.

COUNTESS.

You mean the bride cannot be found !

ATTENDANT.

Nor yet  
The bridegroom.

COUNTESS.

Search for him, and you will find him—  
Must find him !

[Attendant goes out.]

What a cross ! at what a time !

When all my thoughts should be with him that's gone !  
My father ! I did love my father, sir :  
Indeed, I did !

ULRICK.

Then let me now fulfil  
His last behest, whereof the substance this,  
At length recorded here—which he enjoin'd  
You should be instantly possessed of—proof  
Of his most fatherly regard and care.  
Of those who seek your hand you must make choice  
Of one to share the labours of the dukedom,  
Or else abide the issue of the lists—  
Your suitors summon'd to a tournament—  
When he who rests the victor wins your hand.



COUNTESS.

I am content! I'll do my father's will,  
And bide the issue of the tournament,  
Or choose myself the man shall take my hand.

ULRICK.

Jointly the Empress and myself are named  
Executors, to give the will effect.

COUNTESS.

It was not needed. It had been respected  
Without o'erlooking, how much less enforcement!  
My brain and heart are here and there!—I haven't  
The use of them. Some one did tell me now  
Of something—what was it?

ULRICK.

One said the serf—

COUNTESS.

Call him that name again! Whom speak'st thou of?  
Huong?

ATTENDANT (*entering*).

This letter is from Huong, madam.  
Mounted upon a steed, your father's gift,  
He threw it me, and fled.

COUNTESS (*reading*).

“Eternally  
Farewell—your will is done—I use my freedom.  
Fortune my mistress hence—the richest boon  
She can award me, death!—One more farewell!”  
O rashness most perverse and ruinous!  
Let them pursue him; and provide them with  
The fleetest of the stud, and gold beside,  
For new relays. If they o'ertake him—if—  
They must!—'tis an affair of life or death!  
They must not quit him, but return with him—

ATTENDANT.

The bride—

COUNTESS.

No heed of her. Bring Huon back  
By fair means or by foul—persuasion lost,  
Let them resort to force—but not to harm  
A hair of his head. So be their numbers such  
As makes resistance idle. They are sure  
To track him, so they lose not time—and see  
They do not ! If they waste a moment only,  
They answer for't. Stay, sir ! a purse of gold  
To every one of them—of gold, you mark—  
So that they bring him back ; and one for you  
In like event. A minute hence, observe,  
I look into the court-yard, and expect  
To see them in their saddles, and away !  
Upon their lives I charge them bring him back !

*[They go out.]*

END OF ACT III.

## ACT IV.

## SCENE I.

*The Garden of the Castle.*

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*Enter SIR RUPERT and SIR CONRAD.*

SIR RUPERT.

TIME is the same. 'Tis our condition's changed.  
The hours hang weary-heavy on our hands :  
We scarce could catch when Catherine was here,  
They went so fleetly by us. Then the death  
Of the duke hath left a blank, which, while he lived,  
Light offices, with grateful tasks fill'd up,  
Forbade our spirits flag.

SIR CONRAD.

Eventful day,  
The day he died ! Eventful day to us !  
Our Catherine married Huon then, and fled ;  
And Huon fled, avoiding Catherine ;  
Nor since of either tidings—though for him  
Almost the world was search'd. Strange, loathing him  
As she did, with hate almost unnatural,  
How much to heart the Countess took his flight.

SIR RUPERT.

Ay, as a gentle stream would take a rock,  
Suppose one suddenly cast into it,  
Damming its channel up, and making foam,  
Where all before went crystal, without ripple,  
But such as noteth gliding. Yes, 'twas strange.

SIR CONRAD.

'Twas very strange.

SIR RUPERT.

'Twas one of certain things  
We see, yet question that we see, yet there  
We know they are.

SIR CONRAD.

She pines for loss of him.

SIR RUPERT.

No, sir ; she takes to heart her father's will,  
Compelling her to choose a husband, or  
Accept of him the tournament may send her.  
And so, she keeps alone ; to all forbidding  
Approach to her, except this youth, who sits  
In Huon's place, her secretary now,  
The forward cousin of fair Catherine.

SIR CONRAD.

Strange, Catherine should fly, and Huon too !  
That each should purpose, what, if known to each,  
Had one accomplish'd, had sufficed for both,  
To shun the consummation of the rites !  
Strange, that the Duke that very day should die !

SIR RUPERT.

Untimely was the Duke's decease for us—  
Prevented by his death from profiting  
By the fair opening which the turbulent  
And wild Bohemians for our lances made.  
We could not take the field ; and, lo, the war,  
Ere well commenced, is done ; concluded too  
By single combat, and the conqueror  
A knight unknown till now, whose championship  
Had graced the proudest days of chivalry :

Of presence noble as his deeds are lofty,  
 By that confirming what by these he won—  
 The favour of the Empress. Yonder comes  
 The secretary.

SIR CONRAD.

Ay, 'tis he.

SIR RUPERT.

I fear  
 He laughs at us to give us hopes, as still  
 You know he does, that one of us shall yet  
 Make wife of Catherine. A forward spark !  
 I hate a stripling that's so much the man ;  
 It shows like aping. He grows worse and worse,  
 Since he hath got his office. For the sake  
 Of Catherine, alone, I bear with him.

SIR CONRAD.

He is like her ; never brother more like sister.  
 I have a word to say to you anon,  
 Touching to-morrow, when the tournament  
 Decides who weds the Countess, she declining  
 To choose a mate herself.

CATHERINE (*without. very loud*).

Ho ! holloa !

SIR RUPERT.

Ho !

[CATHERINE *enters*.

Why call you, sir, so loud ?

CATHERINE.

To make you hear  
 News, sirs, from Catherine ! Shall I whisper it ?  
 She is coming !

SIR RUPERT.

So you told us months ago.

CATHERINE.

Well, when she comes she'll be the welcomer !

SIR CONRAD.

I'll wait for her no longer.

CATHERINE.

Wait for her ?

O! ay! a man may wait, and wait in vain.

I wait for a wife; though the odds are ten to one,

As I'm a man, I'll die a bachelor.

Do you know the signs of one ?

SIR CONRAD.

No; what are they ?

CATHERINE.

O, various; but the chief, a cautious eye,

And calculating. He that scans a fence,

Doth seldom make a clever leap of it;

Nine times in ten he balks his spring, and falls

In the ditch; while he who takes it at a glance,

Goes flying over. Women are shrewd imps!

Behoves a man he thinks not of their pockets,

When he is looking in their faces; for,

Wear he his eye ever so languishingly,

They'll find he's only working at a sum

In arithmetic. Sir Rupert, let me see

Your face! Don't look so sullen at me. Who

Can see the sun if he's behind a cloud?

That's right. I would not say, but when the woman

Kind heaven intends for wife to you shall come,

You'll marry her.

SIR CONRAD.

What say you of my face ?

CATHERINE.

The same I say of his. By my honour, sirs!

Though I may pass for an astrologer,

I never yet, believe me, made pretence

To read the stars ; nor am I adept yet  
 In palmistry ; nor have I studied signs  
 As lucky or unlucky omens ; yet  
 Things can I tell before they come to pass.

SIR CONRAD.

But shall I die a bachelor ?

CATHERINE.

You will,  
 Unless it chance, upon a certain day,  
 In a certain month, in such or such a year—  
 At present which is doubtful, but as sure  
 As time doth run 'twill come—you get a wife!  
 Now, there's a puzzle for you ; make it out,  
 And tell it me ; and then I'll tell it you,  
 If you are in the right. Your lot is cast  
 In mystery ; but, for Sir Rupert, his  
 Is plain ; 'tis right before me : I can tell  
 The year, the month, the week, the day, almost  
 The very hour, he will be married, or—  
 Not married ! yet am I no conjuror.  
 Where is Sir Otto ?

SIR CONRAD.

We are going to his house ;  
 He waits for us.

CATHERINE.

I'll follow. News wait I  
 From Catherine ; I'll bring it, if it comes.  
 Nay, sirs, beseech you, look not thus upon me  
 With eyes of marvel. On my word ! indeed,  
 And by my honour,—and, if nothing else  
 Will satisfy you, though I have ta'en an oath  
 'Gainst swearing, I will give it on my oath—  
 I am no conjuror ! Another word :

What I have told you, tell not, as you love me,  
 Lest I should pay for it by flood or faggot!  
 Upon my life, sirs, I am no conjuror!

[*They go out severally.*]

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SCENE II.

*A Room in the Castle.*

*Enter ULRICK.*

ULRICK.

At length—the day almost arrived that brings  
 The tournament, whose issue brings to her  
 A consort for her state—she yields me audience.  
 Is it for loss of Huon she has pined,  
 And kept herself forbiddingly alone?  
 If so, why give his hand to Catherine?  
 This is a mystery, the which the more  
 I try to sound, the deeper doth it grow;  
 While surmise after surmise rises, as  
 Report succeeds report of high exploits  
 Achieved by this unknown adventurer,  
 Who now stands next the Empress chief in place,  
 That even he and Huon are the same!  
 Should it be so, and he should come along,  
 What then the issue of her meeting with him?  
 This I revolve, and with a troubled heart,  
 That sees no end to its perplexity. [Looks off.]  
 How changed she is! Her fiery eye is quenched!  
 Her head its haughty carriage hath abated,  
 Her cheek is beggared of its prideful flush.

*Enter COUNTESS (a parchment in her hand).*

COUNTESS.

I have perused the testament, my lord,



Carefully, word for word, and see no mention,  
Either directly or by implication,  
Touching the quality of him may win me.

ULRICK.

No, none is made; a slight omission only.

COUNTESS.

Yet space enough to let my will creep through.  
You say, my lord, you have made proclamation  
Of this fair passage far and wide?

ULRICK.

I have.

COUNTESS.

And now expect the Empress?

ULRICK.

Yes.

COUNTESS.

And with her?

ULRICK.

The noblest of her court; a glorious crowd;  
Among the rest, her favourite; that youth  
With whose exploits the wondering realm resounds,  
Who, in so brief a space, without a name,  
Has made himself the noblest which the tongue  
Of high renown rings out.

COUNTESS.

That youth! what youth?

ULRICK.

A young adventurer, of whom it seems  
Fair fortune is enamour'd—gives him all  
He asks!

COUNTESS.

I never heard of him before.

ULRICK.

So please you, madam, you forget till now,

Since that your father died and Huon fled,  
 Save your new secretary, you have deign'd  
 With none vouchsafe communing.

COUNTESS.

You are right.  
 I have forgot the world, time, everything !  
 What is this favourite called ?

ULRICK.

His titles change  
 So fast—the former almost new as its  
 Successor—scarce I know now his present style.

COUNTESS.

His name I mean.

ULRICK.

His name I know not, madam.

COUNTESS.

What moves my heart, so leaden-dull before ?  
 Why did it leap at mention of the stranger ?  
 Has he been seen by any whom we know,  
 Any of our vassals, chiefs, or friends ?

[*Aside.*]

ULRICK.

I have met  
 With none of these have seen him.

COUNTESS (*abstractedly*).

Happy woman !

ULRICK.

Madam ?

COUNTESS.

The Empress is a happy woman.  
 She can reward desert, ennoble it.

ULRICK.

So in this instance hath her highness done  
 With such profusion of munificence,

There are not wanting those who think she sees  
 Less with an empress' than a woman's eyes,  
 And means her bounties but as costly heralds,  
 Poor to the costlier comer they forerun.

COUNTESS.

What ! means she to espouse him ?

ULRICK.

'Tis surmised.

Matter to wonder at, yet justified.

For they report him of a presence noble,  
 As e'er bespoke a man to challenge honour.

COUNTESS.

I never dreamt of an abyss so hideous—  
 And to be standing on the very brink on't !

ULRICK (*alarmed at her vehemence*).

Madam !

COUNTESS.

Ay ! what's the matter ? (*Aside.*) I am frighten'd  
 At myself ! (*Aloud.*) My lord, my spirits are so dreamy,  
 Things which are not, I see—which are, see not !

Pray do not heed me. For this tournament,  
 Thus near without obstruction on my part  
 Hath it approached, but pray you keep in mind

On what condition ; that at any time  
 The husband it awards, revolting to me,

I am at liberty to make a choice

Between a husband and the cloister. So !

I'll read the will again.

[*Sits down and reads.*]

STEPHEN (*entering hastily*).

News ! news ! my lord.

ULRICK.

What is it ?

STEPHEN.

\_Huon !

COUNTESS.

Ha !

Well, what of Huon, is he found ?

STEPHEN.

He is.

COUNTESS.

Propitious Heaven, at what a time ! where is he ?

STEPHEN.

In the suite of the Empress.

COUNTESS.

Well,—go on !

STEPHEN.

I saw him ! More. That sun of chivalry  
 Hath suddenly blazed forth in the brief war  
 So late gone by and dazzled friends and foes—  
 The fav'rite of the Empress—

COUNTESS.

Well ? Go on !

STEPHEN.

—Huon and he are one.

COUNTESS.

I was sure of it !

Send him away. [*She staggers to a seat, ULRICK supports her.*]

ULRICK.

Hence, sir.

[STEPHEN goes out.]

COUNTESS.

Don't wonder at me ! Don't !

Nor question me, what'er I say or do !

Listen and do my bidding. I prepare

To give reception to the Empress,—thou

See Huon. Tell him I would speak with him

Soon as occasion serves; or let him make

Occasion, and at once—at once, my lord!

(*Aside.*) Where shall we meet? In the garden? No: the  
garden

Is overlook'd. In the library? No;

We may be subject to intrusion there.

What should prevent his coming to my closet?

What place so fit? Why think of any other?

(*Aloud.*) My lord, bring Huon to my closet. Huon!

The favourite of the Empress I should say.

[*The COUNTESS and ULRICK go out severally.*]

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SCENE III.

*Sir Otto's House.*

*Enter SIR OTTO, SIR CONRAD, and SIR RUPERT.*

SIR OTTO.

'Tis slight of fortune not to take the chance  
She proffers; since the lists must open, sirs,  
To every lance, why not adventure ours,  
With such a prize? Wait you for Catherine.  
I'm for the tournament.

SIR CONRAD.

And so am I.

This secretary is a subtle spark.

He has harp'd upon our suit to Catherine,

Awaken'd hopes we had given o'er as dead,

And pledged himself with oaths she would return

Free, as she ne'er had plighted troth to Huon,

And yet she comes not. What we take in earnest,

Be sure he only gives in mockery.

SIR OTTO.

I'm of your counsel, and will break a lance  
To-morrow for the Countess.

SIR RUPERT.

Do so, sir.  
I break no lance except for Catherine.

CATHERINE (*entering disguised as a man*).

CATHERINE.

Who talks of breaking lances ?

SIR OTTO.

Ha ! our friend  
The Secretary.

SIR CONRAD.

Well sir, what's your news ?  
Where 's Catherine ?

CATHERINE.

Absorbed in solving, sir,  
A knotty point.

SIR CONRAD.

A knotty point ; what is't ?

CATHERINE.

The measure of a lover's patience, sir.

SIR OTTO.

Does she not come ?

CATHERINE.

Not till that point is solved.  
Now, could you solve it for her, she might come  
The sooner.

SIR OTTO.

'Tis an hour.

SIR CONRAD.

A day.

SIR OTTO.

A week.

SIR CONRAD.

A month.

SIR OTTO.

A year.

CATHERINE (*to* SIR RUPERT).

Will you not make a guess?

SIR RUPERT (*sighing*).

It is a life!

CATHERINE.

Can't you go further, sir?

Try if you can. Lovers do miracles:

'Tis said they do, I never saw them though,

Nor met with those that did.

SIR OTTO.

Where is our mistress?

CATHERINE.

Here,

Where'er she is; or nowhere, where you are.

Have you a mistress, there your mistress is,

Were she at one end of the world and you

At the other.

SIR RUPERT.

Ay, were she in another world!

CATHERINE.

Why what's the matter with Sir Rupert? Is

The gentleman gone mad? I think myself

A sterling lover, but I take no oath,

Except to flesh and blood. Sir Rupert, what's

Your thought of a mistress?

SIR RUPERT.

A vitality

Precious, peculiar, not to be supplied ;  
Once with your being joined, a part of it  
For ever !

CATHERINE.

Humph ! and you believe, Sir Rupert,  
You have met with such a thing ?

SIR RUPERT.

I have.

CATHERINE.

And where ?

SIR RUPERT.

In Catherine.

CATHERINE.

Heaven help the man, he speaks  
As if he thought himself in earnest, sirs.  
Whom said he now he'd break a lance for ?

SIR CONRAD *and* SIR OTTO.

Her.

CATHERINE.

For Catherine, poor man ! far better break  
A lance for the Countess ; as the lists, they say,  
Are open to all challengers that bear  
The rank of knighthood.

SIR OTTO.

So they are, and we  
Design to try our fortune, and lament  
Not to find Sir Rupert of our mind.

CATHERINE.

That mortifies you, does it ? So, Sir Rupert,  
Will you make suit again to Catherine,



Say she comes back again, released from her  
Enforced vow ?

SIR RUPERT.

Will I make suit to her ?  
My heart is ever lying at her feet.

CATHERINE.

'Tis neighbour then, to an ungainly shoe.  
She has broken her ancle, and the awkward leech  
Who set it for her made a botch of it.  
Her foot 's awry ; she limps ; her taper waist,  
So straight before when she moved, goes zig-zag now.  
Give your heart joy, sir, of its pleasant seat.

SIR RUPERT.

The gait and shape of gentle Catherine  
Are in her heart, no fracture warping there.

SIR OTTO.

With what a serious face you play the cheat.

CATHERINE.

Sir, I look serious at a serious thing.

SIR CONRAD.

It is not as you say ?

CATHERINE.

Believe 'tis not ;  
But take this with you, I should be more grieved  
Than you would, to disparage Catherine.

SIR OTTO.

So Catherine doth halt ?

SIR CONRAD.

My love doth halt.

SIR OTTO.

And so doth mine.

CATHERINE.

I have not told him all.

SIR OTTO.

What, is there more to come ?

CATHERINE.

Listen—you'll hear.

So sir, you make retainers of your eyes, [*To SIR RUPERT.*  
Nor feast at the same table, but eschew  
Their homely fare, though men as noble deem  
A well-turn'd leg a dainty, let that pass ;  
But give not me a mistress with a fair  
Transparent skin, that you can see beneath  
Tracery costlier than veins of gold  
Suppose they lay in bed of alabaster ;  
It never stands the weather.

SIR OTTO.

Is she changed  
In her complexion ?

CATHERINE.

Do not urge me, sir,  
To speak more than I do speak, speaking that  
With pain.

SIR CONRAD.

What ! has she turn'd from ivory to—

CATHERINE.

Anything you please.

SIR CONRAD.

Mahogany ?

CATHERINE.

You say it for me, I'm beholden to you ;  
'Tis hard to speak unwelcome things of friends.

SIR OTTO.

And hard to hear them too. Sir Rupert.

SIR RUPERT.

Well.

SIR OTTO.

Hear ye?

SIR RUPERT.

I do.

SIR OTTO.

And what resolve you?

SIR RUPERT.

What

I did resolve before—to break no lance  
 Except for Catherine. Her maiden thoughts—  
 Test to the daintiest conceit of love—  
 And generous affections, might unveil  
 Themselves to modesty without its blush,  
 Are Catherine's complexion!

[Retires.]

CATHERINE.

He is mad!

Isn't he, sir? Have twenty masses said,  
 That you preserve your wits! seeing the thing  
 That turn'd his brain for him, you all affect.  
 Think you 'twill bring him to his senses, sirs,  
 To tell him she hath squandered all her wealth?

SIR OTTO.

Better she halted in her gait than that!

SIR CONRAD.

Or cast her white skin for an Ethiop's!  
 You do not tell us so?

CATHERINE.

I'll tell it him.

SIR OTTO.

But is it so?

She was a prudent girl  
Before she went.

CATHERINE.

Man, sir, is but a plant,  
Although he holds no rank in botany ;  
And as with change of climate plants will change,  
Thrive more less, or take no root at all,  
So man discovers strange diversity  
Transferr'd to sun and soil not native to him.

SIR OTTO.

But are her riches dwindled ?

SIR CONRAD.

Has she shrunk,  
Indeed, from affluence to poverty ?

CATHERINE

Sirs, you shall judge from one particular.  
From morn till night she is in masquerade.  
You wouldn't know her, though you look'd upon her,  
Walk'd with her, talk'd with her. Can this be done  
At light expense ? Moreover, sirs, she keeps  
Bad company ; nor that of her own sex ;  
Two arrant knaves especially, that stick  
Like leeches to her, and will ne'er fall off  
Long as she suffers them, while there's a drop  
To gorge.

SIR OTTO.

She is ruin'd utterly.

SIR CONRAD.

Undone,  
Beyond redemption. Look, Sir Rupert.

SIR RUPERT.

Well ?

SIR CONRAD.

Catherine 's for hire ; she must take service ! All  
Her wealth is gone.

SIR RUPERT.

(*Cheerfully*) Is gone ?

SIR CONRAD.

It makes you glad !

SIR RUPERT.

Now could I woo her with the best of ye.  
Her match in fortune, I could praise her now  
Dreading no charge of venal flattery.  
Fair sir, take pity on an honest heart  
And loving one, and as you know the haunt  
This gentle fawn hath slunk to, tell it me  
That I may straight o'ertake and make her mine.

SIR OTTO.

Better you wait to-morrow's tournament,  
As we shall.

CATHERINE.

Gentlemen, you do not know  
Your man ! Tell me a linsey-woolsey maid,  
With halting gait and saffron-colour'd skin,  
And not a doit to make a market with them,  
Could for a moment in comparison  
Stand with the Countess ! who could credit it ?  
The simple truth is this, your friend lacks mettle.

SIR RUPERT.

Sir !

CATHERINE.

He can bluster, that is evident.  
See what a giant,—he would eat me up  
If he could : but think you, sirs, I heed his club ?  
Give me a straw, I'll face him. You mistake

Your friend ! his frame 's robust enough, but, 'faith,  
His spirit is a lean one.

SIR RUPERT.

'Sdeath, sir !

CATHERINE.

Ho !

If you have sworn men into agues, sir,  
Don't try your skill on me. My parrot swears  
As well as you, and just as much I heed him.

SIR RUPERT (*drawing*).

It passeth all endurance—pshaw, a stripling !

CATHERINE.

A stripling, sir, to make an oak afeard.

SIR RUPERT (*again drawing*).

Indeed !

CATHERINE.

As I do live his sword is out !

But he's a spaniel, as I'll prove to you,  
Who thinks he bites by showing you his teeth.  
Here's for you, sir—(*draws*)—but hold, what day is this ?

SIR CONRAD.

Friday.

CATHERINE.

I never fight on Fridays, sirs.

My killing days are all the rest of the week,

E'en Sundays not excepted. Sirs, your friend

Is a coward.

[*Coolly puts up her sword.*]

SIR RUPERT.

Furies !

CATHERINE.

Fiends and all sorts of imps !

Swearing won't save you, sir. I'll prove my words.

I dare you, at the tournament to-morrow,

To break a lance with me. Observe you, sirs,  
 He shakes from head to foot at the thought of it,  
 Though now he pass it off with swaggerings.  
 He dares as soon confront stout Charlemagne,  
 Were he alive, as me. I'll wager you  
 My sword to your dagger, he takes flight to-day,  
 And waits not for to-morrow.

SIR RUPERT.

Will I not!  
 I will have satisfaction. I accept  
 His challenge. I will have satisfaction, sirs.

CATHERINE.

You shall, and have it to your heart's content.  
 Take linsey-woolsey with a halt, and the skin  
 Of a negro, rather than essay a tilt  
 With chance to win a Countess! I could laugh  
 To scorn the man that would believe him. Oh!  
 He shall have satisfaction. I could beat him  
 With a rush in rest. He shall have satisfaction!  
 Sirs, he will cower at very sight of me;  
 Fall on his knees, and beg his of me  
 With clasped hands. He shall have satisfaction!  
 [*They go out severally.*]

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SCENE LAST.

*A Room in the Castle.*

*Enter* COUNTESS.

COUNTESS.

It is confirm'd—the place he holds beside her  
 Her every action speaks. Of all her court,  
 He is the only one, whose duties to her

She takes as favours, not as things of course.  
 He comes ! Who stops him thus untimely ? Oh,  
 How changed he is !—The fiery hardihood  
 Of the life he hath of late made consort of,  
 Hath given another spirit to his eyes.  
 His face is cast anew, as circumstance  
 Could alter Nature's modelling and work,  
 Improving on her mould. Is that the man  
 Was once my father's serf, and I did scorn ?  
 Fell ever at my wayward frown that brow ?  
 Or stoop'd that knee, for me, to kiss the ground ?  
 Would they do it now ? Fell ever at my feet  
 That form, as prostrate as the hand of death  
 Had struck it to the floor ? 'Twould take that hand  
 To lay it now there—and a wave of mine  
 Had done it once ! If he confesses hold  
 Of any other, never shall he learn  
 His hold of me ! but, if he strives in love,  
 I bless my stars I have the vantage ground.

[HUON enters, and remains standing at a distance, with  
 his eyes on the ground.]

COUNTESS.

Is Huon here, and does not Huon speak ? [Pauses.  
 Absent so long, no greeting for a friend— [Pauses.  
 A woman, too ! (Pauses)—no salutation kind,  
 Prelude of happy news she'd joy to hear,—  
 Relation of adventures she would thrill  
 To listen to,—exploits she would wonder at  
 And the next moment at her wonder blush,  
 Knowing whose arm achieved them !

HUON.

I am glad  
 To find you well.



COUNTESS.

You are glad to find me well?

I hope you are! It were not saying much,  
I trust, to say I know you are! You are glad  
'To find me well! Is that your news for me?  
If 'tis, it is strange news.

HUON.

You wish'd to see me,  
And I am here to learn your will.

COUNTESS.

More news!

You are a friend worth parting with, you bring  
Such marvels home with you. Sometime methinks  
Since last we met together, and you are glad  
'To find me well; and, as I wished to see you,  
You are here to learn my will! You were not here  
Had not I sent for you.

HUON.

It would have been  
Presumptuous.

COUNTESS.

Presumptuous!

HUON.

Yes, madam,  
In the serf.

COUNTESS (*with sudden indignation*).

No, sir, not in the favourite  
Of the Empress!—Huon, this is not the way  
We ought to meet! It should not be in anger.  
You are come home, and you are welcome home.  
Requires my tongue a backer to get credence?  
Well! there's my hand beside. Do you not take  
My hand?

HUON.

You are a noble lady, madam,  
Whose father was my lord, by leave of whom  
I thought and had a will—did what I did—  
Yea, kept the very blood within my veins.  
Behoves it I should take his daughter's hand?

COUNTESS.

You mock me.

HUON.

Would I did, and 'twere a dream!  
But dreams are not repeated day by day,  
And day by day reminds me of a time  
I was your father's serf.

COUNTESS.

No more of this.

HUON.

Oh! would no more! The wounded body heals,  
The pain is over, all is sound again,  
A scar reminds you of it—nothing more!  
Not so the heart, you lacerate it once!  
Habit may dull, pursuit engross—divert—  
But never are you ransom'd from the throe.  
Live your meridian out it comes again,  
Fresh as at first, to make you writhe anew.

COUNTESS.

We do not meet to talk of grievances,  
Huon. I offer'd you my hand just now.  
Why do you weep? I did not give it you  
To kiss it with your tears!

HUON.

O, 'tis a hand  
Thou hast forbidden mine to meet.

COUNTESS.

No, Huon,

Not as friends!—(*recovering herself*)—I'll see him clearly  
 first— [*Aside.*

Sit down and let us talk. I have fifty things  
 I want to say to you, yet know not which  
 To begin with. Huon, do you like the Empress?

HUON.

Like her!

COUNTESS.

Yes; like her,—that's the word I said.  
 Perhaps it should be "love her"?

HUON.

Love her, madam!—

COUNTESS (*interrupting him*).

I see you do! Go on? What were you going  
 To say?

HUON.

O, contrast marvellous! beyond  
 Belief of nature!

COUNTESS.

Ay! 'twixt her and me!  
 Go on! The contrast? Best we understand  
 Each other! Well? The contrast?

HUON.

'Twere as one  
 Should find the sun by following the night!  
 Should plunge into her regions, and for chill,  
 And gloom, and sterileness, find light, and warmth,  
 And verdure,—such as should belong to day!  
 'Twere as death owned a heart, and life had none  
 But with the shows of animation

Did lodge within its breast a core of stone,  
While the still ribs of death had pulse within them!

## COUNTESS.

Am I that day, that life, compared to which  
Death, night, are e'en so rich? Is she thou servest  
That death, that night, preferr'd to life and day?

## HUON.

O, I did love thee to oblivion  
Of myself! What Nature gave me to assert  
The man neglecting, as despised things  
Compared to thee! That she intended me  
For deeds of nobleness I may confess,  
Seeing that others own I have achieved them.  
Yet I abused her bounties,—and, for what?  
Scorns—wrongs—through love of thee preferr'd them!  
And which I bore; until the cause itself,  
That made me bear them, thou didst make a means  
Of yet unknown oppression. *That* I bore!  
But there did patience cease. Yes! not, until  
Coerced there, where, spared, I were content  
To last the thrall of passion's lethargy,  
Did I rebel! But when I was struck down  
Prostrate, as, for the sake of flesh and blood,  
Behoves not slaves to lie,—with marvel on't  
I waked to sense of what I ought to be!  
Of what, against my will, 'twas past the sport  
Of power to change me from! A MAN!—and straight  
A man I started up! a man, resolved  
To use his attributes as fits a man  
To vindicate the ancient, common birth-right,  
And answer the design of Him that framed him!

## COUNTESS.

So! you have register'd your debts to me,  
No item overlooked thou knowest of.  
What, now, if I could name to thee one debt  
Would blot out all the rest?—not known to thee,  
A debt thy dreams did never give thee glimpse of,—  
Thy dreams where thou didst soar, didst cast away  
The clog, last morn put on, and mount as high  
As e'er ambition left at large could wing,  
Daring the eagle to come up to thee!

## HUON.

No debt that thou couldst name were gain to me.  
I keep no register of aught between us.  
Or, if I do, I never turn to it,  
Unless enforced, as now. Whate'er has pass'd,  
Is pass'd, and, profitless to memory,  
Were better be forgotten.

## COUNTESS.

Ay? Indeed!  
So easily done? Well, be it so! 'Tis past,  
And so should be forgotten. Please you, now  
Turn to the Empress. You have painted me;  
Proceed to her. Come, let me see what hand  
You will make of her picture. When I ask'd you now  
If you liked her, you did echo me!—and then  
I ask'd you if you loved her, and again  
You echo'd me! I want an answer, not  
An echo. Well, sir? well?

## HUON.

Madam, I love  
And honour her. (*She starts from her seat; he rises also.*)

## COUNTESS.

Thou art rewarded, pride !  
Meet'st thy deserts ! Show thy high breeding now !  
Tread stately ! throw thy spurning glances round !  
And talk as mighty things as though the earth  
Were made for thee alone ! Where 's thy domain ?  
Gone ! And thy palace, what is it ? a ruin !  
And what art thou thyself ? a beggar now !  
Huon, you loved me once ! (*Bursting into tears.*)

## HUON.

I loved thee once !  
Oh, tell me, when was it I loved thee not ?  
Was't in my childhood, boyhood, manhood ? Oh !  
In all of them I loved thee ! And were I now  
To live the span of my first life, twice told,  
And then to wither, thou surviving me,  
And yet I lived in thy sweet memory,  
Then might'st thou say of me, " He loved me once ;  
But that was all his life !"

## COUNTESS.

'Twas heart for heart !  
I loved thee ever ! Yes ! the passion now  
Thrills on the woman's tongue ; the girl's had told thee,  
Had I been bold as fond ; for even then  
I saw thy worth, but did not see thy station,  
'Till others, not so well affected towards thee,  
Reveal'd it to me by their cold regards.  
I could not help my nature. From that time  
Two passions strove in my divided soul  
For mastery—scorn of thy station, love  
For thee—each feeding on the other's hate,  
And growing stronger ; till I thought their strife

Would shake my frame to dissolution ! Yes !  
Oh, Huon ! when my brow sat cloudy oft  
O'er my cold eye, that look'd askant at thee,  
Thou little thought what friend there was within  
Would make that brow clear as a summer sky,  
That eye bright, glowing as a summer's sun,  
To kindle thee—as they, their world, with life,  
And health, and wealth, and gladness !

HUON.

Say'st thou this  
To me ? or do I dream I hear thee say it ?  
Or is the past a dream ? I did not yield  
At thy command, to marry Catherine ?  
Thou didst not see me wed her ? Fancy forged  
The ring I thought I put upon her finger ?  
Thou wast not by at all ? From first to last,  
Hadst not a hand in it ? or, if thou hadst,  
Why then untimely this unfold to me ?  
For I do know thee to be pride of all  
Proud honour's children ! Art thou offspring prime  
Of cruelty as well ? O, Heaven, to think  
She loved me, and could give me to another,  
Nor yet to her alone !—another !—

COUNTESS.

Ha ! Well ?

HUON.

—One who ne'er set eyes on me until  
An outcast, by her deed of hate who loved me !  
To one, a stranger, saw me seeking fortune,  
And gave the hand to me could help me to her !  
Lavish'd her favours on me !—lit me up

With honours, till beside the bright themselves  
I lost no brightness !

COUNTESS.

To the Empress ?

HUON.

Yes !  
Thou lovest me ?—O, fate ! There was a time,  
'Twere more than bliss, if more could be, to know it ;  
But now 'tis misery !

COUNTESS.

'Tis misery ! [*COUNTESS starts up again, HUON also rising.*  
Art thou in such a strait indeed as that,  
To give my love for thee so harsh a name ?  
What shall I call it then ? Gain me a name  
Will stand for something worse than misery—  
Will paint the case of a high, noble maid,  
Who stoop'd to love a serf ; nay, stopp'd not there,  
But told her passion to him—Misery !

HUON.

I am no more a serf.

COUNTESS.

Thou art ennobled ;  
Yet art thou still the same, thou hast won honours ;  
Rewards of deeds, in spite of thy base blood  
Achieved by thee !

HUON.

Nay, madam, spare my blood,  
And pardon me, its owner, if I say  
It is not base.

COUNTESS.

It is ! what should it be  
But base ? A serf did give it thee, a serf



Gave him his blood ! Trace back the current, sir,  
Far as you can, and you will find it base,  
Nothing but base.

HUON.

Madam, men's natures are  
Their blood ; they have no other—high or low.  
If base the current hitherto of mine,  
It ceased with me. Born in thy father's house  
A serf, I left it one, to seek my fortune,  
Make it or mar it, for promotion having  
No other patron than my own right arm,  
And my own heart and head to guide and nerve it ;  
And with their help, I see that house again,  
An independent, self-exalted man,  
While many a son, who left a noble home  
With blood untainted for a thousand years,  
Returns to it no better than he left it.  
Is my blood base ?

COUNTESS.

No, Huon ! mine was base  
To let me call it so. Alas ! alas !  
And hast no better welcome for my love  
Than that sad word thou spok'st ?

HUON.

What word so fit ?  
What is it to a man condemn'd to die,  
To tell him of a treasure left to him ?  
Shall he be glad and thank his lucky stars,  
Or shall not that, their bounty, aggravate  
The ruin, makes it vain !

COUNTESS.

Condemn'd to die ?  
Resemblest thou a man condemn'd to die ?

HUON.

Why didst thou drive me from thee by that act?

COUNTESS.

That act was nothing; 'twas thy flight,  
And that which follow'd it. Thou art entangled—  
And thank thy flight. Oh! Huon, were thy love  
In daring enterprise the tithe of mine,  
'Twould attempt something to enlarge thee from  
The cause thou art prisoner to!

HUON.

It cannot cease,  
Except with life.

COUNTESS.

The Empress loves thee, Huon!

HUON.

No.

COUNTESS.

But she does.  
Thou art her favourite. She  
Hath chain'd thee to her throne.

HUON.

No.

COUNTESS.

But she has!  
Thou hast made merchandise,  
Most shameful, merchandise, of thy allegiance!  
Broken oaths as tiny shells which at a touch  
Do fall to powder!

HUON.

Broken oaths!

COUNTESS.

Yes, oaths !

Thy life was all one oath of love to me !

Sworn to me daily, hourly, by thine eyes,

Which, when they saw me, lighten'd up as though

An angel's presence did enhance their sense,

That I have seen their very colour change,

Subliming into lines past earthliness.

Talk of the adjuration of the tongue—

Compare love's name, a sound which any life

May pipe ! a breath ! with holy love itself !

Thou'rt not forsworn, because thou took'st no oath ?

What were thy accents then ? thy accents, Huon ?

O ! they did turn thy lightest words to oaths,

Vouching the burden of a love-fraught soul !

Telling a tale which my young nature caught

With interest so deep, was conn'd by heart

Before I knew the fatal argument !

Huon, I charge thee quit the service of the Empress !

HUON.

'Twere against all honour.

COUNTESS.

No !

Give up her service !

HUON.

'Twere ingratitude.

COUNTESS.

Ingratitude, for what !

HUON.

She has advanced me

Past my deserts.

COUNTESS.

No, I deny it ! No !

Not equal to them! No! Thy golden deeds  
She has repaid with tinsel!

ULRICK (*entering*).

Please you, sir,  
The Empress summons you.

COUNTESS.

You are not going?

HUON.

My presence is commanded.

COUNTESS.

Are you going?

ULRICK.

My lord!

HUON.

I come.

COUNTESS.

You are going, then?

HUON.

I must go.

COUNTESS.

You must? Then go? Go, and farewell for ever!

[*They go out.*]

## ACT V.

## SCENE I.

*The Hall of the Castle.*

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*The EMPRESS, Courtiers, Knights, Heralds, &c. prepared to proceed to the Tournament.*

*Enter ULRICK.*

EMPRESS (to ULRICK).

WHY wait we for the Countess? What delays her?  
This day is dedicate to her; for her  
We are convened; and comes she last of all

ULRICK.

Madam, she craves your favour for this pause.  
Believe 'tis not remissness, but mischance,  
Retards her. Doubtless, she will come, anon.

EMPRESS.

Anon, my lord! Anon is not our time  
For friends to greet us, when they summon us.

*Enter three Attendants, the first bearing a coronet on a cushion, the second a pile of parchments, the third followed by Vassals, carrying money-coffers; last of all, the COUNTESS, plainly attired, followed by her Women, in costly dresses. She stops before the EMPRESS.*

EMPRESS.

Why, lady! what is this?

COUNTESS.

My liege, receive  
This emblem of that pomp which I resign,

Because 'tis adjunct to conditions, such  
As render it a burden to me, past  
The faculty of sufferance to bear.

EMPRESS.

Lady!

COUNTESS.

So please you, madam, give me leave.  
As joint executor with this worthy lord,  
Into your hands I also yield all right  
And title to this fair chateau, besides  
The lands and forests, its appendages,  
As well as vassals, natives of the soil.

EMPRESS.

But, lady—

COUNTESS

Madam, suffer me conclude.  
These are the coffers which my father left,  
And as he left them render'd to your highness;  
And with them all resign'd, save such endowment  
As shall entitle me to that retreat  
Holy and calm, wherein I mean to pass,  
I'll say, the remnant of my days, i' th' hope,  
Though few are past, still fewer are to come.  
Which option, as you know, my father's will  
Has left to me.

EMPRESS.

Then will you not abide  
The cast of fate in the tournament? nor take  
The husband she may send—nor yet select  
Yourself?

COUNTESS.

I cannot, madam.

EMPRESS.

How ?

COUNTESS.

I am  
Forestall'd.

EMPRESS.

By whom ?

COUNTESS.

By you !

EMPRESS.

Let every one  
Repair to the tournament. Let it proceed,  
As we ourself were there. And you, my lord,

[To ULRICK.

Preside for us. It is our will the lists  
Be open'd straight. The Countess stays with me.

[All go out, except the EMPRESS and COUNTESS.

We are alone ! Now, how am I a let  
To such espousals as your choice would make ?

COUNTESS.

Do you not know ?

EMPRESS.

Girl, be direct with me,  
Nor in the headlong passion of your soul,  
That seems to joy in strife and wrack, forget  
'Tis your liege lady that vouchsafes you audience.

COUNTESS.

That I forget, and everything beside,  
Except one thing, in still revolving which  
The earth hath shrunk in estimation  
Into a grain—the sun into a spark !  
Nought hath kept substance but my desolation,

Which seems to me to fill up space itself  
Till nothing else hath room.

EMPRESS.

Thy desolation ?  
Who made it for thee ?

COUNTESS.

Thou !

EMPRESS.

In what regard ?

COUNTESS.

In thy attractive favour shown to Huon !

EMPRESS.

I made thy desolation ? Thou thyself  
Didst make it with thy pride, the greater, but  
Worse portion of thee !

COUNTESS.

By my pride ?

EMPRESS.

Thy pride,  
Which, evil counsellor to thy love, advised it  
To blush with shame at homage from the which  
It could not yet refrain, because 'twas due—  
Tribute to such desert, as far behind  
Left all desert beside, and might have worn  
The subject's heart—whose mistress's it won !—  
Thy story—everything are known to me.

COUNTESS.

Then thou confessest it !

EMPRESS.

What ?

COUNTESS.

What ?



EMPRESS.

Beware !  
I brook not such a tone from thee.

COUNTESS.

The heart  
Will speak, despite the checks of shows and forms,  
Shadows compared to its realities !  
Is it not so with thee ?—e'er hast thou felt  
A pang ?—and if thou hast, whose, then, thy palace ?  
Thy retinue ?—thy guards ?—thy empire ?—Gone  
With all their proud appurtenances, and  
No habitation left thee, but thy breast,  
The only house of happiness or woe !  
How shall it be with me, then, with a heart  
Madden'd with torture ? Shall I cast about  
To furnish looks, and words, and tones for things,  
I have no interest in, and thou, that hast,  
In equal case wouldst give to disregard ?

EMPRESS.

Remember thou'rt a subject !

COUNTESS.

So I will  
While thou 'rt the empress ; but when thou becomest  
A woman—a mere woman like myself—  
Stapp'st from the eminence that lifts thee 'bove me—  
Level'st thee to me in one common nature—  
I deal with thee as woman deals with woman !  
I own thy power ! I must, and do ! Thy breath  
Can doom me exile, bondage, what it will !  
There I submit ! Thou art the empress there.  
But when thou thwart'st me in the interests  
Which are the right not more of one than all—

Trenchest upon my private peace—my love —  
 Thou dost me wrong, for which I challenge thee  
 As equal may an equal.

EMPRESS.

Come ! Thy challenge ?  
 What dost allege against me ?

COUNTESS.

Thou dost love him !

EMPRESS.

Ay, by my troth, as much as thou didst scorn him !

COUNTESS.

He did accuse me to thee ?

EMPRESS.

Wayward woman,  
 He never spoke of thee, except with love.

COUNTESS.

How couldst thou love him then ? How could thy great-  
 ness

Forget itself to try and steal a heart,  
 Thou knew'st to be another's ?

EMPRESS.

Steal !

COUNTESS.

Ay, steal !  
 Must we coin terms for those that are above us,  
 To make offences gracious to their ears,  
 When they commit them—which, by us enacted,  
 Would blast with damning names !

EMPRESS.

Thou hast a spirit !

COUNTESS.

Thou knew'st he loved me, and didst covet him !

Covet a heart at second-hand—an Empress!  
 Hear me that am a subject, and thy subject—  
 His heart was mine, till thou didst rob me of it;  
 Not of it all, but of a part—though if  
 A part be gone, go all! Well, as I said,  
 His heart was mine at first. 'Tis gone—my peace,  
 Hopes, everything, along with it! What then?  
 Would I have it back?—No!—I would sooner die!  
 Its worth was its fidelity—that lost,  
 All 's lost. Thou covetedst a faithless heart!

EMPRESS.

Didst thou deserve that heart?

COUNTESS (*weeping*).

I did!—I loved him  
 Better than thou couldst do!

EMPRESS.

I'faith, thou 'rt brave!  
 Thy love of him was persecution.

COUNTESS (*weeping*).

Yet  
 I loved him!

EMPRESS.

Loved him! It was tyranny,  
 Enforced without the mercy of a pause.

COUNTESS (*weeping still, and more bitterly*).

The more I loved him!

EMPRESS.

Loved him!—and constrain'd him  
 To nuptials he abhorr'd.

COUNTESS.

I did—and then  
 I loved him most!

[*In an agony of tears.*]

EMPRESS.

How had it fared with him,  
Hadst thou been I?

COUNTESS.

Far differently.

EMPRESS.

How?

COUNTESS.

I then had been above rebuke or blame!  
I would have given his merits their fair field,  
Encouraged them to challenge their deserts,  
Rewarded them till they had lifted him  
So near equality to me, the seat  
I fill'd, he might have shared along with me.

EMPRESS.

That field he found himself, without my aid.  
I saw him there, and challenged simple greatness,  
In spite of its disguise; desired it doff  
Its lowly suit, and show the thing it was;  
Nor stopp'd till, step by step, I saw it climb  
To where it stands; nor mean I to stop there.

COUNTESS.

How?

EMPRESS.

I design for him the highest grace  
I can bestow.

COUNTESS.

The highest!

EMPRESS.

Yes, beyond  
His hopes, until to-day—until to-day,  
Never divulged to him.

COUNTESS.

He knows it, then ?

EMPRESS.

He does ; and, till my promise is fulfill'd,  
With fears that shake him spite of certainty  
Of his immeasurable happiness—  
For such he thinks it—wears a doubtful life.

COUNTESS.

Thy hand !

EMPRESS.

The hand of her, more proud to be  
The empress of his heart than of my realm.

COUNTESS.

He shall not take it !

EMPRESS.

Not ?

COUNTESS.

Thy power is huge,  
But there are bounds to it !

EMPRESS.

What bounds ?

COUNTESS.

Right !—Law !—  
Imperial foot stops there. It dares not cross,  
And if it dares, it shall not.

EMPRESS.

Faith, thou'rt brave !

COUNTESS.

He shall not marry !

EMPRESS.

No ?

COUNTESS.

No !

EMPRESS.

Gods, a rock!  
She echoes me!

COUNTESS.

He shall not marry!

EMPRESS.

What!  
Again?

COUNTESS.

Wast thou the empress of the world,  
I'd say to thee again—he shall not marry!

EMPRESS.

Thou know'st a let?

COUNTESS.

I do!

EMPRESS.

The troth he pledged  
To Catherine—you see I am advised  
Of all! The marriage is annull'd.

COUNTESS.

It is?

EMPRESS.

It is!

COUNTESS.

How?

EMPRESS.

By the church!

COUNTESS.

The church? And yet  
He shall not marry!

EMPRESS.

What! Not marry thee?

COUNTESS (*changing, and falling on her knees*).

Madam !

EMPRESS.

The hand that I design for him—  
Crown of my favour, his deserts—is thine,  
Not mine, my girl—the guerdon fair for which  
He would not take my empire in exchange—  
Ay, with my hand, to boot !

COUNTESS.

My liege, my empress !

EMPRESS.

My fiery queen, and have I tamed you now ?  
Tamed you so soon ? I half repent me on't.  
Mine's the true spirit namesake ! It admires  
To see itself in others. 'Faith, my glass  
Never reflected me more honestly  
Than thou didst even now. Listen to me.  
I am thy Huon's friend and nothing more.  
Rise. Now we'll talk as sister does with sister.  
Hither thy Huon bears me company—  
Unwarn'd to what intent until to-day ;  
Until to-day, in darkness that the bar  
The church, with thy fair aid, 'twixt him and thee  
Did set—the church, at my persisting suit,  
Hath quite annull'd ; and now he's in the lists  
Striving to win thee ! He that never yet,  
In strait of life or death, much less a tilt,  
Suffer'd defeat. (*Trumpets*)—That flourish is the close.  
Smile at it, girl ! It makes thee Huon's wife !  
Huon—no more the serf—but nobleman—  
Nor nobleman alone ! This hour a prince,  
For thy fair sake !

COUNTESS (*dejectedly to herself*).

Would he were still the serf.

EMPRESS.

Dejected girl!

COUNTESS.

Madam.

EMPRESS.

They come! come hither!

Here take thy seat in the centre. Here thou art chief.

We are but second! Smile—thy Huon comes!

[*Music.* ULRICK and the rest re-enter from the  
Tournament. The EMPRESS anxiously surveys  
them. The COUNTESS absent and dejected.]

Where is he?

COUNTESS.

Madam?

EMPRESS.

Which is Huon?

[*Aside to COUNTESS.*

COUNTESS.

Which?

EMPRESS (*aside to COUNTESS*).

Methinks he is not here can make him out.

Girl, tell me is thy lover here or not?

He seems not here, and yet he must be here.

HERALD.

Madam, the lists are closed. The victor waits  
The prize which he has won. Shall he receive it?

EMPRESS (*aside to COUNTESS*).

Shall I say yes? I must say yes. Thou smilest.

I will say yes!—He shall receive the prize.

(*Aloud.*

Who is that that bows?



HERALD.

The victor, madam.

EMPRESS (*to* COUNTESS).

Ha! Do you know him?

COUNTESS.

Not in his armour; yet

Methinks I ought to know him were it he.

EMPRESS.

Sir Knight, so please you, raise your visor. 'Tis  
The prince of Milan! Girl—what means thine eye  
To blaze with joy? It looks on thy despair!  
The prince of Milan 'tis has won the day.  
Hear'st thou me? Know'st thou what I say?

COUNTESS.

I do!

Both hear and comprehend thee.

EMPRESS.

Ay, and smile.

COUNTESS.

And smile.

EMPRESS.

Art thou thyself? Am I myself?

I think myself the same! Where is Huon?

ULRICK.

Gone

To take his armour off.

EMPRESS.

How fared it with him?

ULRICK.

He entered first the lists, and one by one  
O'erthrew all comers, till the prince of Milan  
Unhorsed him.

COUNTESS.

Is he hurt ?

ULRICK.

No, madam.

COUNTESS (*starting up*).

Thanks !

My Lord, bring Huon hither ! Hither ! Hie !  
Now all is as it should be.

EMPRESS.

Should be, girl ?

Say rather should not be. Thy lover's foil'd.

Where is the ashy cheek that meets disaster,

The brow that's like the wrack ? the gusty breath ?

The quivering bloodless lip and quaking frame ?

These should be and they are not ! Where are they ?

Or rather wherefore see I in their stead

Things 'twould become to wait on holidays

Rather than days of penance ? Look not thus,

Else thou wilt make me hate thee !

COUNTESS.

Madam, madam,

I tell thee, and believe me, all is well.

EMPRESS (*indignantly*).

Then let the prince of Milan take his prize.

FREDERICK.

I claim it on my knee !

(*At the moment the Prince kneels, HUON led by ULRICK enters,  
and the COUNTESS rushes towards him.*)

COUNTESS.

How is it, Huon ?

'Thou look'st as hurt.

HUON.

Sped in the spirit, lady.  
 Forgetful of my charger, all unmindful  
 He lack'd my argument to hearten him,  
 Bent on the most surpassing prize alone,  
 I did not think to change him and he fail'd me.

COUNTESS.

Fortune, farewell! and pride go with thee! Go!  
 Welcome adversity! Shake hands with me  
 Thou tester of true hearts! whose homely fare  
 No flatterer sits down to—hollow friend,  
 Foe, masking thoughts of scorn with smiling face—  
 But truth and honesty! affection staunch!  
 That grasps the hand before it scans the sleeve,  
 And greets the lowly portal with a grace  
 More winning far than his, who thanks the gate  
 That spreads with pride, to let a monarch in.

EMPRESS.

Girl, I am loth to speak in terms of blame,  
 But thou hast much offended courtesy:  
 Not only slighting me, thy sov'reign lady,  
 But him to whom thy fate awards thee bride!

COUNTESS.

A wife must be a widow ere a bride.

EMPRESS.

A wife? no wife art thou!

COUNTESS.

I am a wife!  
 Before this goodly presence I proclaim it.  
 A wife by stealth, but still a wedded wife!  
 Wedded for love, as fervent, durable,  
 As ever led a woman to the altar!

EMPRESS.

Where is thy husband? where is thy husband?

COUNTESS.

Where my remorse, contrition, deprecation,  
Homage, and love, now throw me! I am kneeling  
At his feet! [*Kneels to HUON*]

HUON.

Thy husband, I?

COUNTESS.

My husband, thou!

HUON.

Was I not wed to Catherine?

COUNTESS.

My name is Catherine, as thou shouldst know,  
But, as thou knewest not, till now; the lips  
Pronounced that name in wedding thee—the hand  
Then given to thee—the troth then plighted thee—  
Were mine as truly as the breath that now  
Avows I am thy wife!—in debt to fate  
For baffling thee, for now she owns thee lord  
In thy adversity!

HUON.

Thou kneel'st to me!  
I marvel of thy words!—I overlook'd thee,  
Madam!—My wife, rise!—pray you, rise!—my own,  
My dear liege lady ever! I am feeble  
In words; but, oh! the strife is strong within,  
Of wonder, gratitude, humility,  
Pride, honour, love, outdoing one another!

*Enter CATHERINE, disguised.*

CATHERINE.

Fair Empress, justice!

EMPRESS.

Who asks for justice?

CATHERINE.

One that is most wrong'd  
In his honour; cheated by a craven knight,  
Who promised him to give him meeting here;  
But hath broken his word—no doubt, through cowardice.

EMPRESS.

What is his name?

CATHERINE.

Sir Rupert.

SIR RUPERT (*stepping forward*).

He speaks false!

I am here to my appointment.

CATHERINE.

Are you so?

Are you not maim'd in the arm?

SIR RUPERT.

No!

CATHERINE.

Nor in the leg, that you can't sit your horse?

SIR RUPERT.

No!

CATHERINE.

That is still more wonderful! Nor yet  
In your spirit?

SIR RUPERT.

No!

CATHERINE.

Most wonderful of all!

You do not mean to say you have the heart  
To fight with me?

SIR RUPERT.

That you shall see anon.

CATHERINE.

Anon, sir? now! but where are your good friends?

SIR RUPERT.

Here! [SIR OTTO and SIR CONRAD come forward.]

CATHERINE.

Gentlemen, I am sorry for the fall  
 You got in tilting for the Countess; but  
 'Tis nothing to the one which he shall rue,  
 As you shall see. Down on your knees and beg  
 Your life.

SIR RUPERT.

And beg my life!

CATHERINE.

Now what 's the use  
 Of pondering, on that which must be done.  
 Do not you know, sir,—have you borne cuffs  
 A thousand times, as well I know you have,  
 And know you not a bold face never yet  
 Made a bold heart? Down on your knees at once!  
 Valour won't come for stamping, sir! entreat  
 Your friends to hold you, that's a better way  
 To pass for a brave man.

SIR RUPERT.

I'll smite thee.

CATHERINE.

Do!

If you dare!

[*Throwing off cloak.*]

Ha! Have I brought thee to thy knee at last, sir?

Said I not I would bring thee to thy knees?  
Beware I say not I will keep you there.

SIR RUPERT.

What! Catherine?

COUNTESS.

Yes, Catherine, Sir Rupert.

SIR RUPERT.

O happiness!

COUNTESS.

Which thou hast well deserved.

SIR RUPERT.

Thou still wast gracious to me.

COUNTESS.

For thy truth,

Attested by thy jealous poverty.

I saw thy honest love for Catherine,

In secret cherish'd, as thou thought'st—as one

Conceals a costly treasure he has found,

And rightfully may keep, but being poor,

Doth fear to own, through the world's charity.

Thy Catherine, before thou fear'dst to claim,

Is render'd back to thee, confess'd thine own.

And with her, tender'd thanks, for sacrifice

In self-denying love and trust to me.

CATHERINE.

O more than paid in profiting her friend.

COUNTESS.

Yet to be paid! Huon, canst thou forgive

The scornful maid, for the devoted wife  
Had cleaved to thee, though ne'er she own'd thee lord ?

HUON.

I nothing see, except thy wondrous love.

COUNTESS.

Madam, our happiness doth lift to thee  
Its eyes in penitence and gratitude !  
Thou, chief in station, first to give desert  
Despite its lowliness, its lofty due !  
O, thou hast taught a lesson to all greatness  
Whether of rank or wealth, that 'tis the roof  
Stately and broad was never meant to house  
Equality alone—whose porch is ne'er  
So proud, as when it welcomes in desert,  
That comes in its own fair simplicity.

THE END.



# MARY STUART:

An Historical Tragedy,

NOW PERFORMING

AT THE THEATRE ROYAL DRURY LANE.

BY JAMES HAYNES,

AUTHOR OF "CONSCIENCE," "DURAZZO," &c.

LONDON:

JAMES RIDGWAY, 169, PICCADILLY.

MDCCCXL.

LONDON:  
PRINTED BY T. BRETTELL, RUPERT STREET, HAYMARKET.

TO

W. C. MACREADY, Esq.

MY DEAR SIR,

IT is not in the formal spirit of a dedicator, but with the heart-felt gratitude of a deeply-obliged friend, that I beg of you to accept the dedication of this Tragedy. It owes you every thing—its production on the stage—its adaptation to the stage—its preparation—its success. The main elements of that success were, the solicitude with which you watched its progress, and the power with which you grasped the character of *Ruthven*, seized on all the points, whether prominent or latent, and drove them through the public heart by the energy of your performance. But, perhaps, this is a topic, which, instead of dilating upon myself, I ought to leave to that fame which cannot be charged with flattery. For all your kindness—for all your exertion—for the position, such as it is, in which I now stand among the Dramatists of the day, and which I could not have reached without your assistance, accept this humble, but sincere, tribute of gratitude from

Your obliged, and devoted Friend,

JAMES HAYNES.

MORLAND'S HOTEL, DEAN STREET, SOHO.

*February 1, 1840.*



## ADVERTISEMENT.

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WHEN I first turned my attention to the subject of RIZZIO'S death, as the ground work of a Tragedy, I was chiefly attracted by the fierce grandeur of RUTHVEN'S character. It appeared to me, that the picture, which historians had drawn of that remarkable personage, was well calculated for poetical, and even for dramatic effect. Accordingly, I embarked my humble powers, with more ardour than consideration, in the attempt to construct a Play out of the existing materials, little thinking, at the time, what difficulties my imagination had concealed from my judgment. It was not, until I had proceeded too far to retract, (for no man likes to throw away his labour,) that I discovered how much the scantiness of the materials, the nature of the subject, and even the tone of the characters, were calculated to obstruct my design. RUTHVEN was too savage, and RIZZIO too despicable, to be faithfully represented on the stage; and

Mary's attachment to her favourite could not be rendered prominent, without the greatest danger, nor evaded, without suppressing the only circumstance, that could palliate, or indeed account for the sanguinary act. I do not presume to say, that I have surmounted these difficulties,—that I have produced scenes which, without countenancing the imputation of actual guilt, are still sufficiently marked by indiscretion, to soften the otherwise unmitigated horror of the catastrophe: but it was my intention to have done so; and I have stated the disadvantages peculiar to the subject itself, as an apology for those defects with which the Drama may be otherwise fairly chargeable.

To the Ladies and Gentlemen, whose talents in the performance of the different characters have contributed so much to the success of "MARY STUART" on the stage, and to every one concerned in its preparation, I beg to offer my most cordial thanks for their zealous and able assistance.

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## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

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|   |   |                   |
|---|---|-------------------|
| HENRY STUART, EARL OF DARNLEY, &c.<br><i>(titular King of Scotland)</i> . . . . . | } | Mr. PHELPS.       |
| JAMES, EARL OF MORTON, . . . . .  |   | Mr. G. BENNETT.   |
| LORD LINDSAY, . . . . .   |   | Mr. WALDRON.      |
| MAITLAND OF LETHINGTON, . . . . .   |   | Mr. H. MARSTON.   |
| GEORGE DOUGLAS, . . . . .   |   | Mr. HOWE.         |
| CHALMERS, . . . . .   |   | Mr. KING.         |
| THE EARL OF RUTHVEN, . . . . .  |   | Mr. MACREADY.     |
| DAVID RIZZIO, . . . . .   |   | Mr. ELTON.        |
| EARL OF BOTHWELL, . . . . .   |   | Mr. YARNOLD.      |
| EARL OF HUNTLEY, . . . . .  |   | Mr. HEATH.        |
| SIR NICHOLAS THROGMORTON <i>(Ambassador from</i><br><i>England)</i> . . . . .     | } | Mr. J. W. RAY.    |
| SIR JAMES MELVILLE, . . . . .   |   | Mr. J. LEE.       |
| GARCIA, . . . . .   |   | Mr. ROBERTS.      |
|   |   |                   |
| MARY STUART <i>(Queen of Scotland)</i> . . . . .                                  |   | Mrs. WARNER.      |
| THE COUNTESS OF ARGYLE, . . . . .   |   | Mrs. W. WEST.     |
| LADY CATHERINE <i>(Daughter of Lord Ruthven)</i>                                  |   | Miss E. MONTAGUE. |
| CELINE,                   { <i>(Foreign Ladies in attendance on</i>               |   | Miss COOPER.      |
| MARGUERITE,           { <i>the Queen.</i> }                                       |   | Miss PETTIFER.    |

Suitors, Attendants, &c.





# MARY STUART.

## ACT I.

### SCENE I.

*A Court Yard before MORTON'S House.*

*Enter MORTON, followed by LINDSAY.*

MORTON.

So! Maitland not yet come? no letter! no  
Dispatch! not even a message!

LINDSAY.

None, my Lord,  
But what I've told you.

MORTON.

That was nothing! nothing!  
Forgive me, Lindsay; but my mind's so harass'd  
I cannot speak in measured courtesy:  
To think that he should loiter at a time  
Like this, when Scotland's fate is in the balance!  
Nay, let me hear again what 'twas he said,  
If he said ought.

LINDSAY.

The words would signify  
That pressing business called him for awhile  
Another way; but I should scarce have time  
To tell you so, when he'd be here himself—  
And look!—

*Enter MAITLAND.*

MORTON.

'Tis he ! Well, Maitland ! what success ?  
What tidings from the West ?

MAITLAND.

Throughout the track  
I've measured in my journey, discontent  
Was every where—the storm-cloud fills the sky :—  
From every pulpit loud anathemas  
Are thundered at the Queen :—her enmity  
To the true worship shakes the crown upon  
Her head : nor is her love of foreigners  
Forgotten, nor her deadly hatred of  
The banished Lords : in short, some dire explosion  
Is ripening fast ; we must direct it, or  
Be swept away by 't.

MORTON.

Well ; and what have you  
Done for our cause ?

MAITLAND.

What every honest man  
Would wish to see were done. I urged the People  
To send in strong petitions for the pardon  
Of Murray.

MORTON.

That was well : 'tis the sole hope  
Of Scotland now. His pardon and return  
Would still controul the headlong course of ruin  
The Queen seems bent on. Did they promise you ?

MAITLAND.

All—to a man : there's noble stuff amongst 'em.  
Before you sun shall dive into the West  
I'll have some score of grave remonstrances

To back our efforts for his quick recall.  
But how have matters prospered in my absence  
With you at home ?

MORTON.

E'en as you left 'em—badly.  
The King is still estranged from us ; the Queen  
As much as ever in the hands of Rizzio.  
French counsels are the fashion, and we hear  
Nothing of England but abuse. The Pope,  
In spite of all John Knox's rhetoric,  
Builds up his Church anew, and sees it prosper,  
While murmurs, half suppressed, tell of the ire  
That's bursting for an outbreak.

MAITLAND.

Then, the more  
Our need of Murray's presence : let us strive  
For its accomplishment : his influence,  
As brother to the Queen, combining with  
His other qualities, gives him great power.

LINDSAY.

Look, my good Lord,  
A scion of your noble house approaches.

MORTON.

An offshoot from the stem. Young George was born  
Of some fair sinner to a Douglas, who  
Besought and won us to acknowledge him.  
But here he is. Well, George !

*Enter* GEORGE DOUGLAS.

DOUGLAS.

Not well, my Lord,  
If I may judge. Ha ! noble Maitland, welcome  
To Edinburgh once more.

MAITLAND.

Thanks, gallant friend.

But how is this ? you spoke complainingly  
As you came in—I know you 're not a croaker :  
What is the latest news ?

DOUGLAS.

A pageant, Sir :—

I stopped upon the way to see it move ;  
And who, d'ye think, led on the bright array,  
Shining like stars before it ?

MAITLAND.

Why, the King  
And Queen, of course.

DOUGLAS.

There was another still :—  
Guess who that other was.

MAITLAND.

Not Bothwell ?

DOUGLAS.

No.

MORTON.

Nor Lenox ?

DOUGLAS.

Nor yet Lenox.

MAITLAND.

Was it Sir James ?

I mean the Queen's adviser, prudent Melville ?

DOUGLAS.

You cannot, or you will not, look so low  
As truth must drag you. What would'st say if Rizzio  
Made up the third ?—King, Queen, and David Rizzio !!

MAITLAND.

Impossible !

DOUGLAS.

Not to those eyes that saw him.

MORTON.

And how did Rizzio seem to bear his state ?

DOUGLAS.

Like one who had a ponderous weight to carry—  
His own importance : and i' faith he carried it  
With a high head. The King spoke little to him,  
But the Queen smiled, and that was all he cared for.

MORTON.

'Tis through his artifice that Rome prevails—  
Through *him* that bigot's plot, the Bayonne league,  
Which binds 'em to extirpate Protestants,  
Finds favour with the Queen !—all his contrivance.

MAITLAND.

Well, let's succeed in bringing Murray back.

DOUGLAS.

Would we could put your project to the proof !  
But that's impossible :—the only man  
Whose boldness might accomplish such an end  
Is dying.

MORTON.

Ha ! you speak of Ruthven ?—What !  
Is he ——

DOUGLAS.

There's not an hour of breath in his lungs.

MORTON.

Your evidence ? What is your evidence ?  
He's of the Titan breed, in mind and body :  
A mountain of the North.

DOUGLAS.

Mountains have fallen ;  
And rocks have sunk ; and Ruthven's race is run—  
I left his chamber but an hour ago ;—  
He looked a corpse.

MORTON.

How could you waste the time  
In talking of a foolish pageant, when  
You had a fact like this to tell ?

DOUGLAS.

Because  
My hate of Rizzio, and my scorn of folly,  
Were greater than my fear.

MORTON.

You think too much  
Of your own wrongs ;—all's lost, if Ruthven's lost.

DOUGLAS.

Well, here comes Chalmers ; he was with him too ;  
Consult his judgment, as you question mine.

*Enter CHALMERS.*

MORTON.

You come from Ruthven, Chalmers ; is it life,  
Or death, with him ?

CHALMERS.

While there's a spark of life,  
I'll not despair ;—besides, he mends.

MORTON.

Hear that  
From an old soldier : One who has seen death  
Do many a hard day's work !

DOUGLAS.

And so have I  
 Seen death, without the sexton at his heels,  
 In many a battle :—though my years are few,  
 They fell on a good fighting time, thank fortune !

MORTON.

Still you must grant us Chalmers' right to judge  
 As well as your's ; and ours to judge between you.  
 But, to cut short all difference, I'll go  
 Myself. As you say, Ruthven's tongue alone  
 Can plead the cause of Murray ; and his cause  
 Is our's, and Scotland's.—If I find a stir  
 Of life-blood in his pulse, I'll raise it to  
 A throb shall beat with passion.

DOUGLAS.

Then you'll work  
 A miracle !

MORTON.

I'll wake him from the sleep  
 Of death itself, to plead his country's cause.

DOUGLAS.

We'll see you to the gate, and wish you well.

MORTON.

Then let's not creep, while time is galloping.

[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II.

*A Chamber in RUTHVEN'S House.*RUTHVEN *reclining on a couch*, CATHERINE *standing by him.*

CATHERINE.

My father, are you better now ?

RUTHVEN.

Look out  
O'er yonder hill, where winter, breaking up  
His snowy camp, is hastening to be gone.  
Such is my state!

CATHERINE.

And yet, that gentle sleep,  
From which you've just awakened, gives me hope,  
The crisis past, you will be well again.

RUTHVEN.

It may be so; but what have I to wish for  
In life?—My country's past a sick man's help,  
And past a sane man's hope! 'Tis gone to ruin!  
I've nothing left to wish—to care for, now.

CATHERINE.

Am I then nothing to you? O, my Father!—  
Let me not lose your love—or, if I must,  
Let it be some time hence,—that I may play  
The cheat for once, and die before it come.

RUTHVEN.

Talk not of dying—even in fancy talk not.  
I may not be a gentle father, Kate,  
But I'm a loving one. The bird, that feeds  
Her young with her own flesh, is harsh of note,  
Compare her with the lark that quits her brood  
To sing in upper air—O Kate—you know not,  
How dear you are to me.

CATHERINE.

I do—I do,  
My father—and I bless you for't! But come—  
For now I know you love me, will not leave me,



Nor send me from you,—I may tell you now  
The Queen desires my presence at the Court ;  
'Twas but a moment since, her mission reached me.

RUTHVEN.

It must not be :—I cannot spare you, Kate :  
I cannot part with you. She has her friends  
From every region of the quartered globe :—  
Let that content her. But, of this same Court  
You spoke of, prythee tell me what in all  
Its rare attractions pleased your fancy most,  
When you were there ? The ball ! the tournament !

CATHERINE.

Of all I saw or heard, the Signor's music  
Was that which won my heart.

RUTHVEN.

Indeed !

CATHERINE.

Oh, had you heard him too !  
You would have said, he was of Orpheus sprung,  
Or taught his art by syrens, or had traced  
The mermaid's plaint at sea, and caught it on  
His harp from the wild wave—or, bolder still,  
Had mounted to the spheric harmonies,  
And, where the rolling planets hymn to Heaven,  
Touched the wrapt choir.

RUTHVEN.

Give o'er this ill-judged praise ;  
It sounds unseemly from a maiden's lips.  
Mark me. I hate that Rizzio from my soul.  
I hate him for his country ; his religion :  
He's a magician too, and practises  
Upon the Queen with spells. Imp of the devil !

He plays the part of Belzebub in Scotland,  
And sells us all to Rome. Beware of him!

[*A knocking at the door.*]

How now! more visitors?—Who is't that knocks?

MORTON (*without*).

Commend me to Lord Ruthven.

*Enter Servant.*

CATHERINE.

'Tis your friend's  
The Earl of Morton's voice.

RUTHVEN.

I'll see the Earl.

[*Exit Servant.*]

Leave me, my child: I'll call you soon again;  
My heart will miss you.

CATHERINE.

O my dear, dear father!

'Tis joy to see you thus revived.

[*Exit.*]

RUTHVEN.

Revived!

Disease hath worn me from a giant's bulk  
To an anatomy; melted my flesh,  
Like wax away at the slow fire of pain;  
And that incurable malady, old age,  
Sits on my heart, and sinks me to the grave.  
Ha! Morton, welcome!

*Enter MORTON.*

MORTON.

How is't with my friend?

RUTHVEN.

He lives.

MORTON.

Improves, too. Hope's a good physician;  
If art should fail, there's strength in nature still.

RUTHVEN.

Yes ; when the limbs are young, the sinews free,  
The very bones elastic ; but, in age,  
Weak, withered, and though bent, unbending age,  
The healing office of the blood is o'er,  
And nature's self is on the side of waste  
And dissolution.

MORTON.

Talk not so, nor think so ;  
Remember what you have been.

RUTHVEN.

That's my torment :  
For now what am I, grovelling in the dust  
Even of mine own decay ? My sword is bent,  
My helmet rusted, and the standard brave  
That, like a skirt of Mars, shook overhead,  
In the high wind of battle, clings with mould.  
I have no strength : what can the dying do,  
But, in the base gradation of their fate,  
Become the dead, and rot ?

MORTON.

'Tis on record  
That Caesar was addict to faintings, fits,  
When he made Rome his footstool :—But remember,  
His strength was in himself :—his weakness was  
A thing of earth :—he spurned it as an alien,  
And, standing on the summit of the Age,  
Looked down upon infirmity !  
Ruthven ! the nobles of this once proud realm,  
Abandoned by the King, detested by  
The Queen, opposed by fortune, and forsaken—  
I grieve to say it—by the people's love,  
Which lives not longer than prosperity—

Look to you as their leader! If you spurn 'em  
There is no single chance for Scotland, but  
Submit to Rizzio's yoke!

RUTHVEN.

Fate strike the land  
With famine first, or with the spotted plague!  
Rizzio's! to Rizzio's yoke! you should not talk  
Of Mountbanks, as you would talk of Kings;  
Nor mix the lofty crime of power's abuse  
With rascal vices, such as crawl about  
The heart of such a wretch as Rizzio!

MORTON.

I speak my fear.

RUTHVEN.

Then cease to fear, and speak  
More like yourself.

MORTON.

The fire of that rebuke  
Shows Ruthven still alive: I will have hope  
For Scotland now.

RUTHVEN.

Whatever I can do  
To roll back ruin from my native rocks  
Into the sea, I will adventure with you.  
We must not be the slaves of sycophants,  
Nor crouch to fiddling tyrants, while we have  
A spot of ground to stand on, or lie under.  
From this time forth I'm one of you again.

MORTON.

I thought it would be so: I said it would.  
Ruthven, your hand: I thank you for our country—  
But to the end in view. There are petitions  
From Edinburgh—from Dumfries, Perth, and Glasgow —

Praying for Murray's pardon and recall :  
If, when your health allow, you would present,  
And by your speech enforce their argument——

RUTHVEN.

Nay, 'tis not that alone can save the state.  
Rizzio must be got rid of—Does the Queen  
Distinguish him, as she was wont to do  
Before her marriage ?

MORTON.

More so still, her bounty  
Heaps riches, favours on him.

RUTHVEN.

Then 'tis plain  
We must be rid of him—I see the way.  
We must search out the guilty secrets of  
This court, and bare them to the public gaze—  
The hidden story of the Bayonne league  
Must be unravelled ; and whatever tends  
To set the King and Queen at variance nursed,  
And cherished into life.

MORTON.

'Twere well to do 't—  
But how is 't to be done ?

RUTHVEN.

As every thing  
That's great and difficult, is done by patient  
And persevering toil. You've seen a pebble  
Washed whiter than the fleeces round the moon,  
And made a thing of cost and ornament,  
By the untiring wave. There's a deep moral  
In that small truth : the wave, the ceaseless wave,  
Hints to the mind the secret of its energy.

MORTON.

We look to you, my friend, for help and counsel.

RUTHVEN.

Morton, those same petitions, that you spoke of—  
Are they yet come?

MORTON.

By this time some of them  
Must have arrived—I'll go and see to 't, quickly.

RUTHVEN.

What is 't o'clock?

MORTON.

The last that struck was four.

RUTHVEN.

That 's late i' the day;—yet, without further pause,  
See there be sent a trusty messenger  
To Holyrood. Let him entreat o' the Queen  
A private audience for an ailing man.  
I'll make the prayer of those petitioners  
Speak out.

MORTON.

So soon, my Lord?

RUTHVEN.

It cannot be  
Too soon. Is not our country sinking—gasping?  
When Ruin's ireful tooth is in the flesh,  
An instant is an age. But go—I have  
Another scheme to manage in your absence:  
It flashed across my mind, while we were speaking.

MORTON.

This is indeed a happiness: 'twill cheer  
Our drooping friends.

RUTHVEN.

Let them be comforted.  
Farewell,—no words—they fill the place of action.

[*Exit* MORTON.]

*Enter CATHERINE.*

Now, Kate! come hither, Kate! and hear good news.  
Heaven and the lively peril of the times  
Have righted me.—Your father lives again.

CATHERINE.

O, not with words, but in my silent heart,  
I thank the Heavens for this.

RUTHVEN.

And thank them too  
For other joys, than old men's lives can give.  
You must to Court, my girl.

CATHERINE.

To Court!—I thought  
'Twas not your wish.

RUTHVEN.

But now, my mind is changed.

CATHERINE.

Yet why dismiss me from my duties here  
So suddenly?—'Tis true, your health revives :  
But in a little time 'twill more revive,  
And I be happier, without the fears  
That now would haunt me—I should dream of you,  
And see you on your sick bed languishing,  
And I not near to chafe your aching brow,  
Or kiss your burning hand.—Let me not leave you!

RUTHVEN.

Come, come, shake off this weakness : get you ready.  
A maid like you should learn to look abroad—  
And where the great are found, be found amongst 'em—  
Besides, I have my motives—what they are  
You need not now be told : But go, and henceforth  
Consider Holyrood your home.

CATHERINE.

Oh, no—  
My home is with my father.

RUTHVEN.

So it is.  
Here, in his heart, where you and life are one.  
But there are claims affection's self must yield to.  
Mark—as you love your country, and the order  
Of nobles in whose station you were born,  
And the religion in whose path you walk :  
In short, as you love all that should be loved,  
And in that all include myself, your father,  
'Tis fitting you should lend a helping hand  
To those great interests.

CATHERINE.

What can I do,  
A trembling maid, incapable and weak,  
To serve such interests ?

RUTHVEN.

Have you not eyes  
And ears, to see and hear ? Observe what passes  
At Court. Observe the Queen and Rizzio.

CATHERINE.

Ha !  
Am I to act the spy ?

RUTHVEN.

By Heaven, you drive  
My temper past the stretch of patience !—Spy !—  
The word was coined to frighten fools from truth.

CATHERINE.

But is't an office that becomes your daughter ?

RUTHVEN.

To save a nation, we must not be nice



About the means.—If men will sacrifice  
Themselves, their wives, and children, to deserve  
The name of patriot, 'tis a proof that rules  
Of common life are abrogate, and void,  
In this o'erwhelming claim. Go, do as I  
Command you.

CATHERINE.

Sir, you are  
My father: I must needs obey your mandate.

RUTHVEN.

Now that 's well said; 'tis like my gentle Kate,  
My own obedient Kate. But you look pale.  
I cannot bear such looks from you, my child;  
'Tis not what death can bring to me, but what  
It may take from me, fills my soul with fear.  
Look better, Kate.

CATHERINE.

I will in time, my father.

RUTHVEN.

I hope you will!—In very selfishness  
I hope you will—or I shall soon be nothing.

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF ACT I.

## ACT II.

## SCENE I.

*Holyrood House. An Open Court.*

*Suitors waiting before the door.*

*Enter GEORGE DOUGLAS and CHALMERS.*

CHALMERS.

You're an unwilling visitor to Court ?

DOUGLAS.

Unwilling and unwelcome. I hate Rizzio ;  
And he returns it. Once he sneered at me  
Because I did not walk into the world  
Through the church door. He should have paid his life for 't,  
But that Lord Morton struck my blade aside,  
And saved his fiddle-strings.

CHALMERS.

'Twas not fair play.

But who are these ?

DOUGLAS.

All suitors, as I guess ;  
Come, like ourselves, to swell the great man's levée.

*Enter GARCIA, with Papers, &c. The Suitors crowd round him.*

*First Suitor.*

Is Signor David,—is the Secretary

At leisure ?

GARCIA.

He will pass anon this way.

*First Suitor.*

I come to beg his interest with the Queen.

GARCIA.

He'll give you audience in the proper course. [Exit

DOUGLAS.

Mark you that lofty phrase—"He'll give you audience!"  
He'll condescend his ear.—It makes one's blood boil.

CHALMERS.

Keep down your choler, if you'd speak him fair.  
Look how they crowd, and cringe, and crawl to him.

*Enter RIZZIO, with Letters.*

*First Suitor.*

Good Signor!

*Second Suitor.*

Signor David!

*Third Suitor.*

Signor Rizzio!

*Second Suitor.*

Most honorable Secretary!

CHALMERS.

Soh!

They'll make a king of him at last.

DOUGLAS.

He's that

Already, if, to wield the functions, be  
To be a king.

RIZZIO.

I cannot hear you now.

*First Suitor.*

But one word, Signor; I have a brave son,  
Who deems it misery to be unknown:  
A word from you would lift him to distinction.

*Second Suitor.*

I have a brother, who, in fighting fields,  
Hath won his way through danger to neglect :  
A helping hand from you would make his fortune.

RIZZIO.

We'll talk of this another time—not now ;  
For I am pressed by matters of deep moment.  
Your cause shall fare no worse for your consenting.

*First Suitor.*

We will not trespass further, noble Signor.

[*Exeunt Suitors, bowing.*]

DOUGLAS.

They say the Devil has his worshippers,  
And I believe it.—Sir, a word with you.

[*Coming down.*]

RIZZIO.

Ha! gentlemen! I pray you pardon me—  
I saw you not before.

DOUGLAS.

We know what 'tis  
To wait, Sir.

RIZZIO.

But you should not practise it,  
If I had seen you. Is there any thing,  
So poor a man can do to serve you, Sirs?

DOUGLAS.

Nothing. Our suit is to Her Majesty—  
And from the Lords of Morton and of Ruthven.

RIZZIO.

I thought Lord Ruthven was abed, and ill?

DOUGLAS.

But there are two ways out of sickness ;—one  
Is death : the other is recovery :  
He chose the latter.

RIZZIO.

And a prudent choice.  
But what has he ? what can he have to ask  
Of the Queen's favour ?

CHALMERS.

To be honoured with  
A private audience, that he may deliver,  
With his own hand, petitions from the people.

RIZZIO.

You know, the Secretary should present  
Such documents.

CHALMERS.

But then, a Lord, methinks  
May claim some relaxation of the rule.

RIZZIO.

A friendly Lord.

DOUGLAS.

And who says Ruthven's not so ?

RIZZIO.

Sir, 'tis enough, the Queen will listen to  
Lord Morton ; but I cannot answer for  
The other Lord.

DOUGLAS.

Then, why presume for either ?

RIZZIO.

Presume ?

DOUGLAS.

Ha ! Does the word offend your Highness ?

RIZZIO.

It is not gracious, Sir, to taunt me thus,  
When I bespeak you fairly. What I said  
Was in obedience, not in pride : I dare not  
Mention Lord Ruthven to the Queen.

DOUGLAS.

And why ?  
 Because an insect buzzing round her ear  
 Hath trickled poison in 't. Why, 'twas but now,  
 Not weeks, nor days, but some few hours ago,  
 The Queen received his daughter as a friend :  
 Is 't possible she can account the father  
 An enemy ?

RIZZIO.

'Tis not for me to say ;  
 But what my orders are I must abide by.

DOUGLAS.

This comes of harbouring knaves and sycophants.

CHALMERS.

Douglas, be patient.

RIZZIO.

Let him rail, good Sir :  
 My duty to the Queen forbids retort ;  
 And so I take my leave, to spare disturbance.

[*Exit.*]

CHALMERS.

We 've lost our suit.

DOUGLAS.

'Tis all the better : Ruthven  
 Will urge the strong petitions still more strongly  
 Before the open Court.— Let 's hasten to him.

[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II.

*A State Apartment in Holyrood House.*

QUEEN, COUNTESS OF ARGYLE, MARGUERITE, and CELINE.

*Ladies discovered laughing. CATHERINE apart.*

QUEEN.

Hark'ye, Argyle! Is't fitting they should laugh thus;  
Talk thus, and bear thus hard upon our cousin  
Of England? She's a maiden Queen, you know!

MARGUERITE.

She's an old witch.

CELINE.

A red haired witch.

MARGUERITE.

A grey one.

ARGYLE.

Both red and grey; a sweet variety.

MARGUERITE.

'Tis said, her heart hath felt the power of love.

CELINE.

And welcomed it, or fame has much belied her.

QUEEN.

O slanderers! Why! a Queen fares with your tongues  
No better than a chambermaid. But where's  
Our Secretary, Rizzio?

CELINE.

The last time

I saw the Signor, he was on his knees

Before the picture of your Majesty

That hangs i' th' Hall. Thinking himself alone,

He poured forth such sweet raptures to the picture,

That if 'twere any thing but oil and canvas,  
 'Twould have walked down to him.

QUEEN.

Yes, if it had  
 Your love of flattery.

*Enter RIZZIO with papers.*

But here he is ;  
 Now, Signor, what are these ?

RIZZIO.

Letters, so please  
 Your Majesty.

QUEEN.

Come they from France ?

RIZZIO.

From France,  
 And England too.

[*Giving letters.*

QUEEN.

And what has England now to say to us ?

RIZZIO.

Some new remonstrance touching your late marriage.

QUEEN.

Let her remonstrate with her looking-glass  
 Against her small grey eyes, and freckled face.

[*Reads.*

Ha ! look you here ! She calls my lord and husband  
 The King, her servant ! What ! are Kings and Queens  
 But vassals to this haughty woman's pride ?

[*Flourish.*

RIZZIO.

Madam, the King, the Ambassador of England,  
 And all your Court approach.

QUEEN.

I'm glad to see  
 The Ambassador, that he may know my mind.



*Enter the KING, Court, AMBASSADOR, BOTHWELL, &c.*

*KING and QUEEN sit.*

So, Sir! your Queen would queen it every where;  
Aye, even in Scotland, as this protest shews,  
And her known succour to the traitor, Murray.

AMBASSADOR.

Beseech you, Madam, to think lightly of it:  
The marriage o'er what can protesting signify?

QUEEN.

'Tis strange, methinks, she has not yet protested  
Against the unlicensed rising of the sun;  
The flowing of the tides; the mad career  
Of winds, and other insubordinate acts  
Which unsubmitive nature practises!  
Yet, let her look to her own crown, or rather  
To that she calls her own; and say, if right  
Were done between us, who should reign in England?

AMBASSADOR.

I dare not, Madam, for the love I bear  
Your Majesty, report so rash a speech  
To England's Court—the answer would be war.

BOTHWELL.

Well, Sir, suppose it war!

RIZZIO.

My Lord, forbear—  
War should be met, as wise men meet misfortune,  
With manly temper, not with levity:  
A demon's breath alone should fan the flame.

QUEEN.

Rizzio advises rightly.  
Sir Nicholas, inform the Queen, your mistress,  
That, of our own free will and royal power,

We've ta'en the Earl of Darnley to our throne.  
 'Tis done ; and that 's our answer.

AMBASSADOR.

Gracious Madam !

I will repeat your answer faithfully. [*Exit with suite.*]

DARNLEY (*descending from the throne*).

What ! no appeal to me ! to none but Rizzio !  
 They rule the land between 'em : let 'em rule it. [*aside.*]

QUEEN (*descending from the throne*).

You've heard, my Lords, the insolence of England.  
 'Twere well her pride stopped here—but we have learnt,  
 By sure advices, she gives succour and  
 Protection to our enemies. There's Murray :  
 You know what I have done and suffered for him.  
 His titles and estates were all the gift  
 Of this fool hand ; yet now he turns upon it !  
 Elizabeth abets his hostile purpose ;  
 Nay, more, supplies him with the means of our  
 Annoyance—is this well ?

RIZZIO.

'Twill come at last  
 To blows with England's Queen.

QUEEN.

I seek it not.  
 But, if 'tis forced upon me, let it come.

DARNLEY.

She's all the sovereign ;—no appeal to me !  
 But what am I ?—She has her counsellor. [*aside.*]

MELVILLE.

Madam, the King seems moved.

QUEEN.

How now, my Lord !  
 Has aught displeased you ?

DARNLEY.

No; 'tis nothing—but  
The vision of the matrimonial crown  
Will sometimes cross my thought.

QUEEN.

Remember, Sir,  
You are a King.

DARNLEY

Yes, yes, you call me King,  
As slaves are called by mighty Cesar's name,  
To mock their wretchedness more bitterly :  
I thank you for the boon.

QUEEN.

O! Darnley, Darnley!  
Have I not done enough in doing all?

[A Page enters.

PAGE.

Madam ; the Lords of Ruthven and of Morton,  
Crave, with the younger Douglas, and some others,  
Permission to approach your Majesty.

QUEEN.

Admit them ; we've almost forgot their faces.

*Enter RUTHVEN, MORTON, DOUGLAS, CHALMERS, MAITLAND,  
LINDSAY, and others.*

You've ta'en us by surprise, my Lord ; we thought  
Your sickness more acute.

RUTHVEN.

Great Madam, there  
Are claims that sickness self must yield to : death  
Alone can cancel them. I am deputed  
By hundreds—thousands—of your Majesty's  
Most loyal subjects, to lay at your feet  
These, their petitions.

QUEEN.

What's the prayer they urge ?

RUTHVEN.

In chief, the pardon of the Earl of Murray.

QUEEN.

Hear this, my Lords : his pardon ! Murray's ! that —  
What shall I call him ?

RUTHVEN.

Call him what he is—  
Your brother, Madam.

QUEEN.

Then, the baser he,  
To be my foe.

RUTHVEN.

And the more blessed you,  
To be his pardoner.

QUEEN.

His ! his ! that traitor's !  
Never—so help me heaven, and as I hope,  
Myself, for mercy !

RUTHVEN.

Ha ! mark that ! you hope it ;  
O ! give it to that hope. You cannot tear—  
Tear, with your delicate hand, the bonds that nature  
Tied with her own :—you cannot put to death  
Affection in your living bosom :—no !—  
Pride, passion, or some bitter ecstacy  
May, for a moment, hide it from yourself,  
But there it is, mixed in the blood that sweeps  
The circle of your being, to revive  
Again, when the rash fit has spent its rage,  
And mercy claims her sway.

QUEEN.

Should mercy shut  
Her eyes to guilt ?

RUTHVEN.

No ; but with open eyes  
Should pardon it : for what is mercy ? Is 't not  
Forgiveness ? And what is forgiveness, but  
Remission of the penalty of crime ?  
If we must keep our mercy for the guiltless,  
We might as well give alms to rich abundance,  
Fire to the tropic's arid bosom, frost  
To the baked pole, and raindrops to the deep !  
The fault you hint at is in mercy's self,  
That spreads her wing above the head of guilt,  
And saves it for repentance.

QUEEN.

Say no more.

BOTHWELL.

Ruthven knows well that Murray still persists  
In plotting for the ruin of his country.

RUTHVEN.

Ha ! Bothwell, is that you ? I thought so ! You  
Know where to plant the foot, when a man's down ;—  
And Murray's down.

BOTHWELL.

And you know how to take  
The part of Rebels.

RUTHVEN.

Not, when you were one.

DARNLEY.

But is 't not true, what Bothwell says of Murray ?  
Has he not sworn it ?

RUTHVEN.

O ! when Bothwell swears,

I know what side the truth's on.

BOTHWELL.

Smearing villain!

[*touching his sword.*]

RUTHVEN.

Psha! Take your hand from off that heated steel—  
'Twill burn your fingers else.

BOTHWELL.

You need not fear—  
I thirst not for your blood.

RUTHVEN.

I know not that ;  
But this I know—my blood, Sir, hath its price ;  
And he must be no niggard of his own,  
Who takes it at the cost 'twill put him to.

RIZZIO.

My Lords, is this a tone for the Queen's presence ?

RUTHVEN.

What crawling thing is that, whose hiss I hear ?

DOUGLAS.

'Tis Rizzio!—David Rizzio!

RUTHVEN.

He, who plays  
The lute, and sings! Back, minion, to your place!  
Your office is to whisper, Sir; to whisper—  
Not to speak out like a man; for that were e'en  
As if a mole should strive to scale the wall,  
Instead of undermining it. Look to  
Your occupation;—'twill be better for you—  
Neglecting it, you'll lose your way, and fall  
Wretchedly into mischief.

RIZZIO.

Still I say  
You ought not to forget, Her Majesty,  
The Queen is here.

RUTHVEN.

So is the King here too !—  
And asks no upstart to assume his power.

DARNLEY.

'Tis true, that Rizzio takes too much upon him—

QUEEN.

He takes my part. Is that a fault ? to take  
His mistress' part against that scornful man ?

RUTHVEN.

I do beseech you, Madam, pardon me—  
I bend with reverence to the throne and you—  
But, when I'm barked at by so many curs,  
Passion will leap the bounds of ceremony,  
And anger bite its cords :—forgive me, Madam.

QUEEN.

Pass to the next Petition.

RUTHVEN.

There is yet  
Another prayer in this—it humbly begs  
For the dismissal of the foreigners.

QUEEN.

What have they done ?

RUTHVEN.

No matter—they are foreign.  
Our ancestors were wont to hate that name—  
And their example still should govern us.

QUEEN.

But they're all dead. You would not have the dead  
Govern the living !—If the dead could peep  
Out of their graves, they would not know this world  
To be the world they used to tread upon ;—  
Why should they rule it then ? Death knows no change ;

But life is full of changes, like the sky  
 With many weathers ; and our planet rolls  
 Amongst a thousand scattered influences  
 All turning upon change.

RIZZIO.

Lord Ruthven speaks  
 As if he 'd stamp upon the rolling earth  
 And cry out—"stop!" to the spheres.

DOUGLAS.

Peace ! Dastard, peace !  
 My Lord ! he sees your health has suffered lately !—  
 That gives him courage.

RUTHVEN.

Be't so, 'tis his instinct.  
 The cur will bark to see the lion fall.

RIZZIO.

'Tis possible, you may o'er-rate your lion,  
 And under-rate your cur. I've known such slips—  
 But why denounce me ? 'Sdeath, I'm not a worm—  
 A thing without a name, save the vile sound  
 That covers all the species ignominiously ;—  
 I have a man's heart beating in my breast,  
 And a man's arm to guard it.

DARNLEY.

Madam, are  
 The nobles to be taunted by your minion ?

QUEEN.

If nobles will begin the strife of words,  
 I cannot regulate its course to please them—  
 My business in this audience is to listen !  
 But those who break down fences should not murmur  
 That the way's clear for others as for them.



DARNLEY.

I thought you 'd take this course to succour him.

QUEEN.

Indeed, Sir! As for these petitioners,  
Your clients, my Lord Ruthven, let them know  
That we will duly weigh their least requests,  
And to our best of judgment, deal with 'em.  
Rizzio, attend us—we shall need your skill  
In harmony to drown the discords here.

—[*Flourish.* *Exit* QUEEN, *followed by* RIZZIO, &c.

DARNLEY.

Ruthven?

RUTHVEN.

You called me?

DARNLEY.

Yes! I 'd speak with you.

[RUTHVEN *dismisses* DOUGLAS.

O Ruthven, be my friend, for I have need.

RUTHVEN.

I am your friend—what can I do to serve you?

DARNLEY.

How should the wronged be served, but by revenge?  
Is every woman, think you, music's slave?

RUTHVEN.

There was a Queen of Egypt once—I mean  
The jilt that made a fool of Antony—  
And she loved music too! We know the dance  
She led her dupe.—By heaven! I 'd rather die  
Of Egypt's plague than trust its Cleopatras!

DARNLEY.

You 'd say that I 'm deceived, disgraced, dishonoured.

RUTHVEN.

Do you suspect them, then ?

DARNLEY.

Suspect !—By heaven

You 've almost stopped my breath with a word ! You dropped  
Some hints of this before, and so did Morton ;—

Hints that have scorched me with the penal fire  
Of this world's hell ; and yet the miscreant lives !  
Will no one rid me of that David ?

RUTHVEN.

Hush ! Keep back your vengeance 'till we 've further proof.

DARNLEY.

You talk of vengeance, as if 'twere an art  
Men learnt at school, and not a rooted instinct.

RUTHVEN.

I talk of vengeance, as an act of reason.  
Why does the lightning's flash so seldom kill,  
While the poised engine of inferior fire  
Counts every round to death ? Because the one  
Bursts from the bosom of the thunder cloud,  
And one is thought—directed. Leave revenge  
To time and me : 'twill not be lost between us.

*Enter DOUGLAS.*

But look ! George Douglas comes again ! How now ?

DOUGLAS.

The Commons are assembled to discuss  
The subject of the matrimonial crown.  
I thought it right to warn you.

DARNLEY.

There again  
My wrongs cry out. The Queen declines to use,  
Without their sanction, her prerogative.

RUTHVEN.

I'll try what may be done to win their favour.  
 Come, Douglas: as we go, I've something for  
 Your private ear, to help the working of  
 Our plans. Farewell, Sir: when we meet again,  
 I hope to bring the Crown along with me.

[*Exeunt.*

## SCENE III.

*The Gallery.*

The QUEEN, Countess of ARGYLE, CATHERINE, CELINE, MARGUERITE, and Ladies, &c. discovered.

RIZZIO at the Harp. *Music.*

ARGYLE.

Would you not augur, from his bended brow,  
 Leaning on thought, he loved ambitiously?  
 And so he does; but mark him, when he strikes  
 The magic string, and lifts his eyes to Heaven,  
 As if he looked at inspiration.

CATHERINE.

O there's a melody even in the pause  
 And stoppage of his song; for fancy fills  
 The resting place more sweet than others' music

[*Bold Music—Symphony.*

QUEEN.

Hark! hark! the echoes ring.  
 (*Leaning on ARGYLE.*) Is it the soul  
 Of genius, or the storm that wakes that note?  
 Or heaven or earth that tunes it to the swell  
 Of mighty winds and tempests? Hark, again  
 The minstrel hangs his head in melancholy—

[*Air.*[*soft music.*

And now the zephyrs steal among the strings  
 To touch his hand and die.—It was not falsehood  
 That bade the poet fancy stones to move ;  
 For there's a spirit in creation,  
 A mind in matter, captivate to song :—  
 The very comet, in his random sphere,  
 Obeys its voice, and smooths his bristling fires,  
 To listen while the golden planets sing ;—  
 The smallest clod of earth does, in its fair  
 Proportion to the wheeling worlds above,  
 Sustain the universal harmony,  
 And follow nature in her heavenly round !  
 'Twas therefore truth, not falsehood, told how trees  
 And stones could move, when music tried her skill ;  
 And thus the poet's thought is justified !

CELINE.

“ Nay I'll appeal at once to our good Queen [to CATHERINE.  
 “ For her decision—Please your Majesty,  
 “ The Lady Catherine will contend with us  
 “ That Scotland boasts a brighter sun than France.

MARGUERITE.

“ Why, now in truth does the sun ever shine on't ?

CATHERINE.

“ Ay, sweeter than on any other shore,  
 “ The wind may blow on Scotland harshly, yet  
 “ Its breath is healthful, and at winter's worst  
 “ Endurable, and when the summer comes,  
 “ 'Tis not a demon from the burning zone  
 “ That fires our climate, but a genial power,  
 “ The sister of the spring illumines it.  
 “ O ! how the hills and valleys welcome her !  
 “ The poorest weed that grows attempts a flower  
 “ To cast it at her feet.

QUEEN.

“ Well spoken, dear  
 “ Enthusiast, lover of thy native land.”  
 But this is too akin to gravity,  
 And we’ve enow of that when business calls us.  
 Come, what device? We’ve no sour faces here,  
 To make their sourer comments on our mirth;  
 So we’ll enact the matter of a play,  
 In our court fashion—ha! ha! when the Signor wakes  
 Out of his sleep. [*Pointing to RIZZIO, who is wrapt in thought.*]

RIZZIO.

Forgive an absent mind,—  
 And yet not absent neither; for my dream  
 Was e’en where all my thoughts are.

*All.*

But the play!  
 Let’s have the play!

QUEEN.

I’ll take the heroine’s part;  
 And, Rizzio, you shall thunder in the hero.

CATHERINE.

Good Heaven! Has madness slipped its chain to make  
 A show of Scotland’s throne? [*Aside.*]

QUEEN.

Now for the cue. [*Goes to RIZZIO.*]  
 Suppose yourself some troubadour of old,  
 And me the lady of your love.—Call down  
 The muse from Heaven to lend her burning tongue,  
 That you may speak in fire:—there is my hand.  
 Begin your speech with wax or alabaster.

RIZZIO.

What say you to the snow so white, so pure—  
 So like the mind that prompts this beauteous hand

To every gracious act ? Oh, Mary ! Queen !  
 The tongue that trembles to pronounce thy name,  
 Can ill perform thy praise, unequalled fair,  
 Surpassing all that ever fable told  
 Of loveliness.

[*Kneeling, he is about to rise.*]

QUEEN.

Good minstrel, ere you rise,  
 Wear this in token of your Queen's regard :  
 Around thy neck I twine the ribbon's coil,  
 An emblem of the love that merit wins :  
 And, pendent at thine heart, my likeness place  
 To last —

[*Hanging a portrait round his neck.*]

RIZZIO.

Till death ; for death shall find it there.

QUEEN.

Now, friends, your judgment on this moving scene—  
 Which is the better actor—he, or I ?

CELINE.

The Queen, who still is best in every thing,  
 Is best in this.

QUEEN.

Go to ! You flatter me.  
 What says our thoughtful friend ?

CATHERINE.

If acting be  
 The best that is the most unlike pretence,  
 I vote the Signor first ; tho' both were better  
 Than either ought to be.

QUEEN.

Tis well defined.  
 'You're a just judge, and I confirm your judgment.  
 But, Rizzio, we must mend our ways, and turn

Worse actors to be more approved of. Come,  
The play is ended, and the banquet waits,  
And welcome is already at the door,  
Impatient for your salutation. [Exeunt all but RIZZIO.

RIZZIO.

Oh! that I were a troubadour indeed,  
And thou my lady love! too charming Queen!  
I do remember, when I saw her first,  
She deigned to notice and to honour me;  
I kissed her white hand, as the votary kisses  
The waxen image of his patron saint,  
And then began the dream that ends in madness!  
Come, then, thou bright perdition of the mind;  
Thou bane of manly thought, and enterprise;  
But dearer than their fame, whate'er thou art,  
That in mysterious thralldom hold my soul;  
I'm thine, and though destruction yawn, I clasp thee!—  
Garcia! how now?—Whence come you?

*Enter* GARCIA.

GARCIA.

From your friends,  
Who suffer much indignity, because  
Of your high bearing to the nobles. They—  
Your friends, I mean—are discontent at this.

RIZZIO.

Indeed! Then is  
Your mission to advise me how to crawl?  
I've had some stern instructors in that lesson.

GARCIA.

You feel too deeply these indignities.

RIZZIO.

'Tis not so easy, as your thoughts may tell you,

To bear insulting pride. You'll say, despise it:  
 But there's a sting—a galling sting in scorn  
 That finds the weaker part of nature out,  
 And flings the nobler moral to the wind—  
 Wouldst have me thank contempt?

GARCIA.

I'd teach you patience.

RIZZIO.

Observe how darkly Douglas scowls upon us.  
 But patience is a virtue—you shall see  
 That I can practise it.

*Enter DOUGLAS and CHALMERS.*

DOUGLAS.

Is there no corner  
 Free from these foreign reptiles?

RIZZIO.

Come: he's in  
 A mood to quarrel now. We have no chance  
 But instant flight. [ *With affected humility to GARCIA.*  
 There's no way else to save us.

GARCIA.

I hope there's some salvation in our own  
 Right hands, if we're put to 't.

RIZZIO.

No, that would be  
 High bearing, and I'm convert to the low. [ *With a sneer.*

CHALMERS.

They speak of us.

DOUGLAS.

Ay, let them.—Rizzio, I  
 Owe you a favour for my mother's sake.  
 You chafed her memory once, and, like a dog,  
 Barked at her grave.



RIZZIO.

'Twas in my passion, Sir,  
A passion you provoked by fouler language.  
But as it is, I'm sorry for it—Forget it.

DOUGLAS.

Your sorrow is a cheat,—a coward's falsehood!

GARCIA.

Falsehood! Did you hear that? Coward and false!  
Is your hand palsied?—If you dare not use it,

[to RIZZIO, in great agitation.

Give me the sword.

[offering to take his sword.

RIZZIO.

Hold off! my sword's my own.  
You see I can forbear;—remember that,  
And so report it. As for this small man [pointing to DOUGLAS,  
With the great voice, I have no fear of him;  
He thunders, but not lightens,—harmless noise.

DOUGLAS.

Find me an equal who will tell me so,  
And mark how soon my sword ——

RIZZIO.

What could it do?  
An ungrown boy would whip you through the ribs  
While you were looking for your courage to  
Persuade it from the scabbard!

DOUGLAS.

Foreign slave!  
Again thou ly'st.

RIZZIO.

Take back the lie thrice-charged.  
For thee—thy very name's a lie; thy place  
Is with the caitiffs, who take pride in shame,  
And know not how to feel even for their mothers.

DOUGLAS.

Ha, villain! Draw! Draw—and defend thy life.

RIZZIO.

Blows are the best defence when ruffians brave us. [*they fight.*]DARNLEY, MORTON, *Lords, and Officers, &c. &c. rush in.*

DARNLEY.

Beat down their swords and seize 'em. Now what 's here?  
 A riot in the palace! Rizzio! You  
 Shall answer this.

RIZZIO.

And Douglas, Royal Sir,—  
 He shared the fault, and should the penalty.

DARNLEY.

Bear him to the strong chamber, [*pointing to RIZZIO.*]  
 Till we've time  
 To sit in judgment on his great offence.

RIZZIO.

Remember, Sir, I claim—

DARNLEY.

Away with him.

[*RIZZIO is borne off. Excunt all but DARNLEY.*]

Now, now he's in my power and he shall feel it.  
 Before another night steals on the world  
 I'll rid myself of him. But where is Ruthven?  
 He promised soon to greet me with the news  
 How the bloat Commons have decided on  
 My title to the matrimonial Crown.—  
 Let them beware. Rizzio shall feel my power,  
 And all who brave my hate, shall taste my vengeance.

[*exit.*]

END OF ACT II.

## ACT III.

## SCENE I.

*An Apartment in the Palace.*

*Enter DARNLEY and MELVILLE.*

*DARNLEY pacing the Apartment.*

DARNLEY.

I must see Ruthven, ere I deal with David.  
I must possess the matrimonial Crown,  
Ere I can think of aught ;—aye, e'en of vengeance.  
Look from the casement. Is there no one coming ?

MELVILLE.

None, please your Majesty !

DARNLEY.

No Ruthven yet !  
Go look again. There 's not a knave amongst 'em  
Who brings me news he thinks will gall my pride,  
But seems as if it pleased him.

MELVILLE.

Yonder, Sir,  
Lord Ruthven comes at last.

DARNLEY.

'Tis well ! 'Tis well !  
Comes he like one commissioned with a crown ?  
Where is he ?—'Sdeath ! how slow the sick man moves :  
But may be 'tis th' intelligence he bears  
Is not worth moving to communicate.

Hold! Here he comes : begone, and leave us. Now!  
Is the Crown mine ?

*RUTHVEN enters as the Attendant goes out.*

RUTHVEN.

They have refused it, Sir.

DARNLEY.

Refused! They know my power, and dare they for  
Their lives refuse? What reason did they give?  
They had some reason, or some pretext which  
They called a reason, for adventuring!  
What was't?

RUTHVEN.

Let me entreat your Majesty  
To be content with what you've heard; 't would rouse  
Your anger, and distress my tongue, to trace  
Their insolent proceeding further.

DARNLEY.

Nay—  
Speak, I command you.

RUTHVEN.

As you'll have it so,  
Why so you shall. One of 'em said, the Queen,  
When she proclaimed you King, usurp'd a pow'r  
Not her's by law. Another charged you with  
Truckling to Rizzio, and oppressing him  
When you had gained your ends. All were against you.

DARNLEY.

And you heard all, and brought away your sword  
Covered up safely in its leathern case!  
You should have spurn'd,—denounced their villainy,  
Thrust back their foul decision through their teeth.

RUTHVEN.

How, Sir!

I'm not a bravo, nor a cut-throat, hired  
To stop men's mouths with murder when they exercise  
A civil right.

DARNLEY.

Ha! traitor!

RUTHVEN.

Traitor!

DARNLEY.

Slave!

RUTHVEN.

King, you're ungrateful.

DARNLEY.

Dar'st thou tell me so?

Then take thy fate. *[rushes at him with his sword.*

RUTHVEN.

*[striking the sword from his hand.*

Not from a hand like thine.

Go, Sir! Pick up your sword—you'll find the fragments.

DARNLEY.

*[After a pause of great agitation.*

What have I done? 'Twas madness drove me to  
The desperate act.—Oh, Ruthven! Once my friend,  
Canst thou forgive?

RUTHVEN.

If I could not forgive,  
Where would be Darnley now?

*Enter MORTON.*

Ha! Morton!—you  
Have come in time to reach the King his sword:  
But wipe it first;—the blade hath met a stain.

MORTON.

[*Takes up the sword, and presents it to the KING.*

Receive it, Royal Sir. Ruthven, how's this?  
Methinks the ground's no place for such a weapon.

RUTHVEN.

Then, Morton, take my word, 'tis better there  
Than in bad hands that know not how to use it.  
But come; what's past is gone: let's look before us.  
You've business, may be, to despatch.

MORTON.

I came  
To ask the King what shall be done with Rizzio?

DARNLEY.

Ruthven, our quarrel's healed: you'll not refuse  
To lend your counsel?

RUTHVEN.

Sir, the course is plain.  
It needs no counsel. Let him have the form  
Of trial: by all means the form: what else  
He gets, 'twill be for you to take good care of.

DARNLEY.

I'll have him brought before me on the instant.  
Go, Morton, see it done.

MORTON.

He waits without:  
A moment will suffice to bring him here.

[*exit.*

RUTHVEN.

It were not wise that we should all assist  
In this transaction; therefore I'll withdraw.  
I gave my daughter cause t' expect me soon:  
But by the time you've heard the charge, I will  
Return to meet you.

DARNLEY.

Fail not to attend.

[*exit* RUTHVEN.]

Now for this whipster who reviles my power,  
Usurps my place, and makes his fortune by  
His impudence! I'll stop his proud career.

*Re-enter* MORTON, *followed by* RIZZIO, GARCIA, GEORGE  
DOUGLAS, CHALMERS, MELVILLE, &c.

MORTON.

Stand forward, Rizzio, at the King's command;  
And you, George Douglas, the accuser, stand  
Opposed to him.

DARNLEY.

(*To Rizzio.*) Are you prepared to plead  
To the offence whereof you are accused?  
Or would you, by a free acknowledgment,  
Throw yourself on our mercy?

RIZZIO.

Royal Sir,  
Most willingly do I confess my fault  
So far as I have erred. But if 'tis meant  
(As I collect from what has reached mine ear)  
To charge me with the onset in th' assault—  
That I deny. The man who charges me—  
Young Douglas there—he was the first to strike.  
'Tis true I struck again, but then my sword  
Was less a weapon to me than a shield.

MELVILLE.

Stand back, my Lords; make way there for the Queen.

DARNLEY.

How's this? The Queen! Madam, I did not look  
To meet you here.

*Enter QUEEN, attended by Ladies.*

QUEEN.

No, Sir—we seldom meet ;  
But, as the fickle will of accident  
Has thrown us, by some strange mistake, together,  
I hope we shall agree.

DARNLEY.

I hope so, too,  
For the crown's honour and its dignity :  
I would support it, tho' I wear it not.

QUEEN.

What is the present stage the cause has reach'd ?

DARNLEY.

Douglas accuses Rizzio as th' aggressor  
In an assault upon his life ; and Rizzio  
Admits the assault, but not th' aggression, which  
He charges upon Douglas.  
Our palace was the scene of violence.  
Their witnesses are equal, it appears,  
In number, but if rank should turn the scale ——

RIZZIO.

Oh, Madam ! Pause before you so determine :  
Pause, and consider well. Truth has no rule  
Of rank : 'twas made for all mankind ; and must  
Be sought for in th' essential part of man,  
The mind, that is the man.

DOUGLAS.

'Tis ever thus  
He talks of station with contempt ;—there's scarce  
A lord in Scotland but has felt his tongue.

RIZZIO.

Say rather there are few but with their tongues



Have injured me. They treat me like a slave ;  
 They call me base musician, mountebank ;  
 They elbow me in court, frown on me in  
 The streets : they set their menials to insult me.  
 Oh, 'tis fine pastime for the lordly pack  
 To tear a poor man's self-respect to pieces !  
 Then, if I call 'em to account, they jeer  
 And laugh—that laugh is worse than death to me.

— DOUGLAS.

Hark, how he rails against the nobly born !

RIZZIO.

I do not rail against the nobly born  
 When merit stamps their claim.—I honour worth ;  
 And rank—for aught I know, who cannot boast it—  
 May help the good that nature must begin.  
 But, when I see hard hearted pride rejoicing  
 To crush the weak, by Heaven ! it drives me mad  
 To think that one man should be born for power,  
 And t' other for oppression.

DARNLEY.

Will you hear  
 This insolence ?

QUEEN.

Not if I thought it such.

DARNLEY.

Then let's decide the cause, and stop the pleading.

QUEEN.

We have no clue to guide us through the maze  
 Of contrariety.

DARNLEY.

But we can judge  
 Between the credit due to men of worth  
 And men of yesterday ?

DOUGLAS.

It asks no skill  
To weigh the credit of a base Italian.

RIZZIO.

But, wherefore base?—Explain. Was Rome of old  
A land of baseness? Were her patriots base?  
Were the great Cæsars knaves? and Cicero!  
Was he a cheat, and Horace a buffoon?  
These were your base Italians!

DOUGLAS.

Nay, you speak  
From books—I spoke of living men.

RIZZIO.

And I  
Of men who live for ever! Men, whose names  
Were, like their souls, immortal!—men who stood  
Upon the mountain top of the whole world,  
The very Ida of the intellect!  
But, look again—I take a later day,  
When Italy and base Italians saved  
The wreck of learning, and the fountain springs  
Of liberty and glory from the Goth.  
What can you shew to match that matchless claim?—  
The glorious East, that in its bosom wears  
The morning, like a jewel, never shone  
So bright, as when the gates of Italy  
Opened to let the flood of science out  
Upon the world, and gilded all the sphere!  
You talk of base Italians! Learn to read,  
And you'll talk otherwise.

DARNLEY.

The Queen may choose  
To hear this boastful language, but it shall not

Turn us from justice, in whose name and by  
The weight and power of whose authority  
We banish you from Scotland.

QUEEN.

How! my Lord?

DARNLEY.

Rizzio is banished from this land for ever,  
Or I am King no more.

QUEEN.

Oh, be a King!

Put on the real crown, the kingly mind,  
And spurn injustice, as the antipathy  
Of your proud office, which is outraged by  
The very sound o' the name.

DARNLEY.

Ha! would you plead,  
Before my face, to save him? Thus it is  
Your favour to him makes your name a byword  
On every ribbald tongue—'Tis time 'twere changed.

QUEEN.

Is this a horrid dream, or a more horrid  
Reality? Am I the Queen of Scots,  
Or, as I seem to be, some helpless wretch,  
Insulted by some high barbarian?  
No, Sir; I'm still the Queen, and in the name  
Of my prerogative, I here reverse  
Your sentence, and deliver David Rizzio  
From your injustice! Rizzio, you are free;  
Free, as the King himself, to live in Scotland!

RIZZIO.

I know not what to say—My brain! my brain!

QUEEN.

Yet hold! There's yet one chance to save this breach.

*[motions back the Lords-*

Recall the hasty word your passion spoke ;  
 Revoke the sentence by your own decree,  
 And I, who set the Crown upon your head,  
 Will make it grow with greatness !

DARNLEY.

'Tis in vain.

I stand upon my right—You talk to marble.

QUEEN.

I talk to coarser and to harder stone,  
 That never could be hewn into man's image,—  
 The rock, the impenetrable rock. Farewell !  
 From this time forth our fates are separate.

[*going.*]

RIZZIO.

Oh, Madam ! Royal Mary ! Let me speak  
 Before you go. And yet, the monstrous charge !  
 Th' inhuman blasphemy ! It shocks my soul  
 To give it so much entertainment  
 As to expose it ! Sir, you are abused :  
 Some fiend has whispered in your ear to damn you :  
 Oh, drive the thought back to the hell it came from.  
 Look there ! look there ! even at your Queen and Wife !  
 Is there no process of conviction quicker  
 Than lightning strikes, to strike persuasion through you,  
 Where virtue shines from such a heaven as that,  
 And makes a doubt a crime ?

DARNLEY.

I 'll hear no more.

QUEEN.

'Twere useless now, for now I've done with you.

[*Exit with Suite.*]

DARNLEY.

Why stand you there t' insult me with your presence ?

Know you not you are free? Begone! [to RIZZIO.  
 Leave me, my friends. [*Exeunt Conspirators, &c.*

RIZZIO.

Farewell, Sir!

The hour will come you'll think of this and weep! [*Exit.*

DARNLEY.

The hour is come I'll think of this and vengeance.  
 Now, where is Ruthven?

*Enter RUTHVEN, followed by CATHERINE.*

RUTHVEN.

At your bidding, Sir,—

With further proof to satisfy your mind.

DARNLEY.

I need no further proof. The Queen has snatched  
 Her minion from my gripe!

RUTHVEN.

That's strong, indeed!

And yet there's stronger still. 'Twill take you but  
 A moment's time to hear. Stand forward, Kate.

Look up, and tell the King what you have seen—  
 For, mark me well! I know what you have seen—  
 Since you have been at Court.

CATHERINE.

And was't for this

You brought me here? I've seen no wrong at Court,  
 Or, if I did, 'tis not for me to name it.

RUTHVEN.

Shrink not, my child: I do not ask you for  
 One word beyond the simple facts you've witnessed;  
 But justice calls for them.

CATHERINE.

What is't you mean?

RUTHVEN.

There are but two short questions, and the answers  
 May be as short. In truth a word's a volume.  
 Was there a play performed at Court, in which  
 The actors were the Queen and Rizzio?

CATHERINE.

O Heaven! The Queen's undone!

[*Aside.*

RUTHVEN.

Speak—was there such a play?

CATHERINE.

There was—in harmless mirth.

RUTHVEN.

And was her picture, by the Queen's own hand,  
 Placed round the neck of Rizzio?

CATHERINE.

'Twas so placed;  
 But then——

RUTHVEN.

No doubt, in harmless mirth again.

[*to DARNLEY.*

DARNLEY.

'Tis proof on proof: their guilt's as clear as day:  
 So let us make their crime and punishment  
 A lesson to the world.

CATHERINE.

Oh, Royal Sir,  
 For mercy's sake impute not guilt to that  
 Most innocent act! My father was deceived:  
 He heard it with a false construction  
 From spies—from fiends, whose devilish art it is,  
 When they tell truth, to tell it still untruly.

RUTHVEN.

Why will you harm yourself and vex the King?

CATHERINE.

I know not why my heart has grown so bold,  
 But I could speak before th' assembled earth  
 In such a cause. Hear me, upon my knees.  
 Remember, King, your Queen is innocent.  
 By yon bless'd beam of light, still warm from Heav'n,  
 That beam is not more innocent of darkness  
 Than she of guilt.

DARNLEY.

Your facts disprove your oath.

CATHERINE.

No, on my life ; no, on my soul, they do not !  
 Try them in righteous scales ; dash the false weight  
 Of preconceived suspicion to the ground ;  
 Allow for human weakness in the judge,  
 As well as in th' accus'd, and you 'll not find  
 That facts are traitors to the cause of virtue.

RUTHVEN.

Come, Sir—she wrings my soul.

DARNLEY.

We will not hear her.

CATHERINE.

Justice hears all.

[*Exit DARNLEY.* CATHERINE *seizes*  
 RUTHVEN *as he is following.*

Oh, stay, my father, stay !  
 Leave me not thus abandoned by the thought  
 That I have been the cursed cause of mischief  
 To my kind patroness, the Queen. Speak to me  
 One gentle word, for I am weak and faint,  
 And may not long survive to trouble you.

RUTHVEN.

I thought I was all iron, but you 've found

The way to melt the ore. Why do you talk  
Of weakness? Is't to wound your father's heart?

CATHERINE.

O no, no, no! I love that heart too well.

RUTHVEN.

Then give it credit for an honest purpose.  
Nay, loose me, for the King expects me now.

[DARNLEY calls without "LORD RUTHVEN."

He waits! Let go your hold! I must not stay—  
Nay—though it break my heart, I must break from thee.

[breaks from her, and exit.

CATHERINE.

What shall I do? I'll to the Queen at once—  
If I can yet persuade her part from Rizzio,  
They may be saved; if not, destruction waits 'em!

[exit.

## SCENE II.

*A Gallery in the Palace.*

*Enter QUEEN, followed by RIZZIO, as importuning her. Ladies remain near the door.*

QUEEN.

Rizzio, I tell thee, no! I'll stake my throne  
Upon this issue. Ere he shall prevail  
Against me, kingdom, life, and all shall go.

RIZZIO.

'Tis terrible! If ruin came alone,  
I could defy; but to pull thee down too!

QUEEN.

If you go now, they'll say 'twas guilty fear—  
The flight of conscious crime. I'll have my will  
Obeyed, and not the King's; my pride demands it.



Therefore, no more of that.—But, tell me, Rizzio,  
How is 't that slander has the power to blast  
The fairest fame, and virtue none to save it?

RIZZIO.

Alas! 'twas so ordained. A word, a look  
Needs nothing but a foul interpreter  
To turn its simple language into shame.  
And what can virtue do? 'Tis on the rose  
The canker feeds; 'tis in the blossom's core  
The ugly worm carouses.—Such is slander!

QUEEN.

Oh, Rizzio! 'tis a fearful thing to look  
Upon the naked skeleton of life;  
'Tis worse than that of death for all its glare.

*Enter CATHERINE.*

CATHERINE.

Where is the Queen? Let me but see the Queen.

QUEEN.

How! Lady Catherine!

CATHERINE.

Madam! I am come  
To warn you. Ha! the Signor, too!

[*Seeing Rizzio.*

Forgive

My boldness—'tis no time to stand on forms  
When vengeance is abroad.

QUEEN.

Vengeance!

CATHERINE.

Oh! Madam!  
I fear the worst! my father and the King.

QUEEN.

I know their hate, but is a Queen to fear it?

CATHERINE.

'Tis not their hate I'd have you fear, but error  
That ruins more than hate. Suspicion has  
Possessed them with strange fancies: and what end  
May come of it no tongue can tell! O, Signor!  
Help me to plead this cause, for you are e'en  
The mark of their suspicion:—'tis most true—  
Then let me warn you, as my purpose was,  
To part for ever.

RIZZIO.

Ha! For ever, say you?  
By Heaven, I knew not till I had heard it from  
Another's mouth like a death doom announced,  
How hard it was to part!

CATHERINE.

Ah! Madam, hear me—You may never hear,  
Nor see me more. By nature weak, I feel  
My little strength outworn. If, as they say,

[*leans on one of the ladies.*

'Tis sometimes giv'n the dying to foresee;  
There is a horror in th' obscure of time  
Dependent on this hour's decision! Part!  
I speak it from the threshold of the tomb—  
Waste not the time in words, or thoughts—but part! [*Erit.*  
*As CATHERINE goes off, shouts and sounds of tumult are heard at a*  
*distance.*

QUEEN.

What dreadful sounds are these?

RIZZIO.

The whole day long  
An angry spirit has displayed itself  
Among the populace, and now it seems  
To rush with louder fury through the air?

QUEEN.

What is the cause ?

RIZZIO.

Their hate of foreigners,  
But most of me. I am the cause, and, yet  
I have not strength to tear myself away,  
And seek oblivion in the death of exile.  
Hark ! There again ! The sound grows louder still !  
Is 't hope that 's coming to an end ?

QUEEN.

No, no ;  
Hope has no end, but, even when life is sped,  
Leaps on the shadow of another world  
And sweeps through all eternity.

[Enter CELINE

How now ?

CELINE.

Fly, Madam ! Save yourself ! A mob is at  
The gate, demanding vengeance upon those  
Who caused your Majesty to sign the league  
Of Bayonne.

RIZZIO.

Traitors ! Tyrants ! Madam, give  
My sword but leave to make this cause its own.

QUEEN.

No, Sir ; no foreign swords ; 'tis not the way  
To quiet Scotsmen. But, if outrage should  
Approach us in our palace, you shall guard  
Our person and our life.

RIZZIO.

I take the charge ;  
More proud of it than fields where glory grows  
But here 's another messenger ! What news ?

*Enter* GARCIA.

GARCIA.

The tumult's at its height, and every moment  
'Tis feared the troops must fire to save the palace.

QUEEN.

Let all things else be tried first. Hold ! I'll go  
And shew myself.

RIZZIO.

Stay, Madam,—Think upon  
The risk you run.

QUEEN.

This is no time for thought ;  
And, as for risk, the way to 'scape's to meet it.

*[Exit, followed by CELINE.]*

RIZZIO.

By thee I take my stand, upon the line  
That life must pay to pass,—my post is there ;  
And in my heart I've that will make me fatal.

*[Exit.]*

END OF ACT III.

## ACT IV.

## SCENE I.

*An Apartment in the Palace.*

*Enter* COUNTESS of ARGYLE and CELINE.

ARGYLE.

I dare not look again upon the crowd :  
Their savage yells, their frightful faces, and  
Their rage, appal my soul—Where is the Queen ?

CELINE.

I know not, Lady ; for the multitude  
Within the palace cramm'd the avenues,  
And, in their eagerness to aid the Queen,  
Soon severed her from her attendants.

ARGYLE.

'Twas so I lost her too. But is there no one  
Can tell us of her fate ?

CELINE.

Here comes the Signor :—  
He knows, if any know, where we shall find  
Our Royal Mistress.

*Enter* RIZZIO.

RIZZIO.

'Twas but now I left  
The Queen, to learn some tidings of the fray,  
Which happily is ended, but I know not,  
Where, in my absence, she withdrew,

ARGYLE.

Then, is the danger past?

RIZZIO.

You hear the shouts no more.

ARGYLE.

No; all is silent;—Was't the Queen controul'd  
The riot? or her friends?

RIZZIO.

Neither. Before  
She reach'd the balcony, Ruthven was up,  
And with a bold harangue outbade the storm.

CELINE.

Thank Heav'n for this good news!

ARGYLE.

Amen. It may be  
She's in the chamber now:—let's seek her there,  
And be the Messengers of Peace to cheer her.

[*Exeunt ARGYLE and CELINE.*]

RIZZIO.

All's over now with me: yes—I must fly  
From hence to save the Queen; this tumult proves it.  
“But how will foul-mouthed Rumour scan the act;  
“And what will future story say of it?”  
'Twas but the other day I met a Beldam,  
Who fix'd her time-defying eyes upon me,  
And seem'd to read my features by the light  
Of some strange faculty. I asked her what  
She saw, and she said—Blood; then, pointing to  
The Palace-gate, she charg'd me in the names  
Of Love and Loyalty to go no more.  
I started at one word—the word was Love,  
And turning back a few bright leaves of time

I read it there, even as the Bellam told me,  
 And saw my guilt reveal'd. "But was it guilt?  
 "Is madness guilt? Is love that asks for nought  
 "But pity, guilt? If so, 'tis well revenged,  
 "And need not suffer more."—How, now, who 's there?

*Enter GARCIA.*

GARCIA.

A Friend.

RIZZIO.

Ha, Garcia!

GARCIA.

E'en the same, though changed  
 In fortune, and confounded by th' events  
 Around me;—Have you thought, what 's to be done?

RIZZIO.

We must away from Scotland.

GARCIA.

So, 'tis best.

The Bayonne League has raised all hands against us;  
 And now another whisper goes abroad:  
 They say that Ruthven's daughter pines to death.

RIZZIO.

Indeed!

GARCIA.

'Tis so reported.

RIZZIO.

Go; bid our friends prepare.

GARCIA.

They wait, concealed, below.

RIZZIO.

I'll come to you,  
 When I have bade the Queen a last farewell.

GARCIA.

Nay, come at once.—The sight of her will lead  
Your captive senses from the path : beware.

RIZZIO.

'Tis now too late ;—she's here :—I prithee leave me.

[*Exit* GARCIA.]

How like what we believe of angels, is  
What we behold of her !

*Enter* QUEEN.

QUEEN.

Rizzio, well met :  
You've come to wish me joy the tumult's o'er.  
Is it not so ?

RIZZIO.

From my full heart I wish it.

QUEEN.

But tell me how did Ruthven speak ?—You heard him.

RIZZIO.

Like one inspired. The spirit of rebuke  
Swept thunder from his lips ; nay, triumph'd o'er  
The rheums, that bent his frame ;—as if to shew  
What mind can do with matter, and the fire  
Of genius with the shell in which it burns :—  
But I have other news to mix with it,  
That will not sound so well : the Lady Catherine ——

QUEEN.

Ah ! what of her ?

RIZZIO.

'Tis feared her death draws nigh.

QUEEN.

There is an envious malice in the stars,  
That will not let me smile, but I must weep for't.



RIZZIO.

O! may those tears be dried by happier hands  
Than hers or mine, for we must both away ;  
I've come to take my leave.

QUEEN.

That's sudden too :  
Must all I love, then, leave me ?

RIZZIO.

On my knees  
I bless thee for that word :—'tis balm to grief,—  
'Tis life to death,—'tis transport to despair !

QUEEN.

What have I said ? Oh, Rizzio ! if I spoke  
Too strongly what I felt, should you —— farewell—  
Be generous, be just ; forget it, and  
Let me forget it.

RIZZIO.

Ah ! recall it not,  
For fear of me, or what my hopes may claim.  
If I could cherish even a wish that wrong'd you,  
These hands should tear this body from this soul,  
As worthless of its human covering !

QUEEN.

Enough : I do believe, and pity thee ;  
But yonder comes Argyle :—Leave me at once.

RIZZIO.

So soon ?

QUEEN.

'Tis short in act, but in remembrance  
'Twill last for ever :—yet, there's something else  
I would have said.

RIZZIO.

I'll stay till you recall it.

QUEEN.

No, no ! 'tis fitting you should leave me now ;  
But come again to-night ; and yet a voice  
Of terror seems to echo back my words,  
As if they were forbidden.

RIZZIO.

Gracious Queen, let not your fears impede the only glimpse  
That I shall ever catch of happiness,—  
You said, to-night !

QUEEN.

Once more, and that the last,—  
To-night I'll see thee.

[*Exit.*

RIZZIO.

Yes, though death himself  
Stood at the door, I'd brave his worst to enter.

[*Exit.*

---

SCENE II.

*An Apartment in RUTHVEN'S House.*

*Enter MORTON, and other Conspirators.*

MORTON.

The mob went further than 'twas our intent  
They should have gone ; but Ruthven soon recall'd them,  
And saved appearances.

DOUGLAS.

'Twas well-timed vigour :—But what's the gain,  
If Rizzio still must lord it  
O'er King and Nobles ?—

MORTON.

Nay, have patience, George :  
We've met to fix his fate.

DOUGLAS.

Where is the King?  
Where 's Ruthven?

MORTON.

Still, I say, have patience, man.  
Ruthven, you know, besides his malady,  
Is troubled for his child; and though he puts  
A stern face on his grief, it may be seen through.  
To-day he bit his lips, not knowing what  
He did, till blood ran from them, and at times  
You 'll hear a smother'd groan, stopping half-way,  
As if it met some thought of pride, that strove  
In vain to choke it.

MORTON.

Said you not, he promised,  
In case of Rizzio's death, to bind the King  
To our support by something stronger than  
His own capricious will?

MORTON.

He 'll keep his promise too.  
But see, they come together. Welcome to  
Your Majesty; and Ruthven, welcome home.

*Enter DARNLEY and RUTHVEN.*

DARNLEY.

Now, friends, you see what Scotland's court is come to,  
And Scotland's King and people! Foreigners  
Sit in high places: nay, insult us with  
Impunity, and mock the power they fear not.

DOUGLAS.

And that Italian dog, the worst amongst 'em,  
Usurps the very throne.

DARNLEY.

Our business is,  
To settle here, what vengeance we shall take.

LINDSAY.

Could we not still contrive to banish him?

RUTHVEN.

Ay—banish him.

[*Sneeringly.*]

LINDSAY.

We've ships enough.

MORTON.

And goodly fortresses :  
I've great faith in the virtue of stone walls.

CHALMERS.

My soul's so eager to be rid of him,  
And with him all his crew, that either course  
Will please me well, if it be promptly taken.

DOUGLAS.

What says Lord Ruthven?

RUTHVEN.

That my head is pained.

MORTON.

His heart more likely ; 'tis the thought of his  
Poor child, that sinks him.

DOUGLAS.

Is't your old complaint?

RUTHVEN.

Not so—but there are counsels sicken me  
As much as that, or more. I hate half measures,—  
I hate to see a spider spin his entrails  
To catch a fly. There was a time when men  
Looked to their own good swords to rid them of  
Their enemies :—It worked well, and saved trouble—  
But now, simplicity is out of fashion,  
And crookedness the rage.

DARNLEY.

Ruthven, my friend,  
 You give the best advice. Death—Death alone,  
 And the dark wrapper of eternal night,  
 Can lay his evil spirit low enough.

LINDSAY.

If 'tis your Majesty's desire, and Ruthven's.

DARNLEY.

'Tis mine as well. I'm for the long remove.

RUTHVEN.

What is't we seek to rid us of? A pair  
 Of hands, and other limbs, endued with motion?  
 If so, let them be tied. But no—'tis mind,—  
 The subtile power, that, with invisible organs  
 Acting upon the strange events of time,  
 Makes all things possible :—to conquer that,  
 We must extinguish it.

LINDSAY.

Then be it so.

MORTON.

Are we agreed?

*Conspirators.*

All—all.

RUTHVEN.

Naught else remains  
 But that we set to work like men prepared  
 For the world's judgment. We shall have the Queen—  
 The Queen and her revenge to cope withal.

DARNLEY.

But I am with you : I am one of you.  
 My sanction's your support.

RUTHVEN.

On that we build, Sir.

Here is a paper, drawn up in the sense

[*Presents a paper to DARNLEY.*]

Of such a declaration. Look : it states,  
That you approve the death of David Rizzio :  
No more :—sign that, and Rizzio's race is run.  
You start, Sir ; what's the matter ?

DARNLEY.

Would you bind me  
By such a fastening as was meant to hold  
The slippery knave to his engagements ? Would you  
Deal with a King, as with a trickster ?

RUTHVEN.

Sir,  
Our friends are here to answer for themselves.  
My mind's made up for the security.

[*Flings the paper on the table.*]

DOUGLAS.

And so is mine.

*All.*

And ours.

RUTHVEN.

You hear them, Sir !

DARNLEY.

Yet give me leave—I'd speak a word with you  
Alone.

[*to RUTHVEN.*]

RUTHVEN.

At your good pleasure, Sir. Pray, leave us, friends ;  
Your cause is safe with me. I'll not be fool'd.

[*Aside to Conspirators as they go out.*]

DARNLEY.

Shut close the door, and let me have your patience.  
Oh, Ruthven ! you have cut me to the soul.

Bonds, as the word denotes, are shameful ties :  
They bind by force and fear ; and he who signs one,  
Confesses to the base necessity.

RUTHVEN.

I cannot see this nice distinction, Sir,—  
An oath's a bond,—a promise is a bond,—  
A simple aye, or any dumb denotement—  
Jove's was a nod—are bonds : the writing down  
Is the preserving process, that defends,  
And not degrades it.

DARNLEY

Ah ! dost doubt me, then ?

RUTHVEN.

I love plain language, and am nothing loath  
To answer to straight-forward questioning  
In its own spirit. I do doubt you, Sir.

DARNLEY.

What right have you to doubt a sovereign's word ?

RUTHVEN.

I have a right to doubt an angel's word,  
When character's at stake. Sir, we're all men,—  
The palace and the cottage mark our place,  
But alter not our nature. Minds will change ;  
And circumstance, occasion's common drudge,  
Assails the strongest of us. If the deed  
Were done—I mean, the deed that takes off Rizzio,  
And you, from any cause, disclaimed your share in 't—  
What would become of us, your instruments ?  
The brand of an appalling infamy—  
The name of murderer—if not the fate—  
(And the name's worse) would mark the world's opinion.

DARNLEY.

But if his punishment be due to justice,  
What signifies the world— or what it says ?

RUTHVEN.

It signifies the world—that 's every thing—  
If I must spurn opinion, shew me to  
A cell where I can hide, and slap the grating  
In the world's face :—But to defy the world  
And live in 't is impossible !

DARNLEY.

Will not  
An oath suffice for your security ?—

RUTHVEN.

Look up into the region of the air !  
'Tis almost made of broken promises,  
Of words and oaths !—Yet where 's the trace to tell  
Who made and broke them ? Why, compar'd with this—  
And this is the security you'd give me !—  
The wounded bark is an eternal record :—  
There's more endurance in the imprinted sand,  
While waiting for the wave :—Sign, and be done.

DARNLEY.

I'll swear, but cannot sign.

RUTHVEN.

Good bye to you !

DARNLEY.

Hold, Ruthven !—Would you leave me ?

RUTHVEN.

Rather than  
Be made a cat's-paw, Sir, I'd leave the world  
To kittens and their tricks. The Queen may hold  
Her revels now, and sit up all night long,



With dance, and music, and the flattery  
Of fools, to keep her wakeful.

DARNLEY.

You distract me!—  
Stay—where 's the paper?

RUTHVEN.

There, before you, Sir. [*Pointing to the table.*  
Remember, when you sign, that Rizzio dies—  
The Queen submits—the House of Douglas reigns—  
These are the issues of that simple act,  
Which, tracing on the paper but a name,  
Gives in return a kingdom and revenge.  
Ha! do you pause?

[*DARNLEY hesitates, but at length snatches up the pen,  
and signs.*

DARNLEY.

Let me— 'tis done, and now  
I 'm in your power.

RUTHVEN.

Nay, nay, you 're flurried, Sir, (*taking the paper*)  
Compose yourself.

DARNLEY.

Yet give me back the scroll :—  
If after all he 's innocent,—or if ——

RUTHVEN.

Why look you now, what weakness you betray!  
One moment raving! and the next repenting!  
By Heaven! there 's more soul in a lighted faggot  
Than such a man!

DARNLEY.

Ah, now indeed I feel  
I 'm in your power.

RUTHVEN.

'Tis better so, than at  
The mercy of your own discretion.  
Yet, be a man ; take courage in the thought,  
That Rizzio's knell is toll'd.

DARNLEY.

When shall he die ?

RUTHVEN.

Before another morrow. See, the shades  
Of evening 'gin to draw their misty hoods  
Around them, and the mountains frown like fate ;  
'Twill be an awful night, a busy night,  
A bloody night—but Scotland will be free.  
How now ! who knocks ? Whate'er thou art, come forth.  
Seek you the King ?

*Enter MORTON, and other Conspirators.*

MORTON.

Ruthven, 'tis you we seek.  
Your daughter——

RUTHVEN.

What of her ? my daughter ? quick.

MORTON.

Controul yourself, my friend : be Ruthven still :  
Her life is ebbing fast ; and nothing would  
Content her, till her maidens brought her here,  
To beg your parting blessing, ere she die.

RUTHVEN.

There are some hearts that break : 'tis happy for them.

MORTON.

*[To the other Conspirators.*

Let's leave them to their melancholy meeting.

*[Exeunt Conspirators.*

[*As the Conspirators go out, CATHERINE is borne in.*

My child, what 's this I hear? They talk of death—  
But 'tis their talk. Ah me! you look it too!—  
Yet looks deceive us oft; and yours will mend—  
Smile on me, Kate;—but smile.

CATHERINE.

Are we alone?

RUTHVEN.

Away from all the world.

CATHERINE.

Then give me your  
Last blessing, father.

RUTHVEN.

Not, O! not the last!  
I'll bless you, as I bless you every night,  
To do so when the morning wakes again,  
But not to seal the parting, that's eternal.

CATHERINE.

The morn will wake again, but not to me:  
Yet, ere I die, let me entreat one favour.

RUTHVEN.

Oh Kate, my very soul's at your command,  
Ask what you will that's not impossible,  
And live, and take it.

CATHERINE.

Then, my father, shun,  
Forego the crime, for which you're leagued with monsters,  
Made out of men.

RUTHVEN.

What mean'st thou?

CATHERINE.

Look—this paper (*shewing a paper*),  
Knowest thou this paper?

RUTHVEN.

'Tis a letter from  
The Earl of Morton.

CATHERINE.

Planning Rizzio's death.

RUTHVEN.

Give it me back. Curse on the luckless chance,  
That lost it from my keeping!

CATHERINE.

Rather bless it  
As I do, if it guide your child to save you ;  
For 'tis salvation in a stronger sense  
To rescue and prevent a man from murdering,  
E'en than from being murdered.

RUTHVEN.

'Tis not murder.

CATHERINE.

Not murder! What! to kill the innocent!

RUTHVEN.

They are not innocent.

CATHERINE.

They are! they are!  
But e'en if not, still what have you to do  
With Heaven's eternal functions? O! this work  
Of retribution in a human hand!  
'Tis havock and not justice—help! I faint.

RUTHVEN. (*Snatching her in his arms.*)

Look up, my child! my Kate! 'tis granted, all,  
Rizzio's safe.—The Queen is pure—the world  
May revel, till it rot, ere I complain,  
So thou'lt but give me back the life I live in  
More than my own.

CATHERINE.

I cannot: my strength fails—  
My heart is stopped—Oh Father!

[*dies.*]

RUTHVEN.

Speak again!  
She's dead!—is death so short a ceremony?—  
'Tis but one pang—one moment's deeper faint—  
And nothing more. Kate! do you hear me, Kate?  
Not all the air that floats 'twixt this and Heaven,  
Can lend her one short breath; no, not so much  
As would make up a sigh to answer me.  
Ha! Morton!

*Enter* MORTON.

MORTON.

Come, my friend, this is no place  
For you to linger in. You must part.

RUTHVEN.

I know it.  
There's one was here before you, who has parted us,  
And far enough.

MORTON.

Nay, you must go from hence.  
Gaze not upon the dead: 'twill but distract you.

RUTHVEN.

I had a dream last night, that told me all.

MORTON.

Dismiss, forget it now—his mind's unsettled.

RUTHVEN.

Methought I saw the lonely power of death,  
With his pale crown, sitting upon a Throne  
Of ruin;—Though he had more subjects than  
The living world contains, they were to him  
As nothing—for his attributes were nothing;  
And his strange life—the life of death—was nothing.

Methought I saw the lonely Potentate,  
 Upon his breathless bosom lay his hand,  
 And then a thrill ran through my frame, which told me  
 I had passed under his dominion.

MORTON.

It shakes your soul too much to think of it.

RUTHVEN.

Next came the horrid chill of night and darkness,  
 That, like an ugly monster, swallowed up  
 The shape of things. Motion was at an end,  
 And form—The winds were hushed, the sea was mute,  
 The sky was voiceless, and the Earth itself  
 As silent as the moon. I strove to shake  
 The stupor from my senses, and at length  
 Burst the fell bondage of the grisly King,—  
 I woke, but O, to what reality?  
 Let me not think on 't. No—she's gone, and fate  
 Has done its worst!—There's comfort in that worst.  
 Proud scorn and fierce defiance are the passions  
 It sends to fight with lamentation,—  
 There is no terror now for me in things  
 Most terrible!—I love to see the storm  
 Shake from its fiery lap the seeds of death  
 Upon the wind, and rush from Heaven to Hell!—  
 I love to see the high wave dash the orbs  
 Of light, and feel the earth shake under me,  
 When ruin pelts it with the driving blast,  
 And plays the devil in the hurricane!

MORTON.

O, come, my friend!

RUTHVEN.

Lead where you will—I care not.

[*Exeunt.*]

## ACT V.

## SCENE I.

*An Apartment in the Palace.*

*Enter QUEEN, and COUNTESS of ARGYLE.*

QUEEN.

Lord Ruthven, to request an interview!  
What can his purpose be?

ARGYLE.

Mayhap to speak  
Of his bereavement.

QUEEN.

No; he's not a man  
To care for sympathy: more like he comes  
To bend my resolution to the King:  
But he may spare his pains, if that's his mission—  
Go, Countess—wait without—he's coming hither.

[ARGYLE *exit*, as RUTHVEN *enters*.

My Lord of Ruthven, I am sorry for  
Your trouble, which is shared by many here.

RUTHVEN.

Thanks to your Majesty—"Twas hard upon me,  
For I had nature's passport to precedence;  
But death's no courtier. To the purpose, though—  
Before my daughter died, she charged me with  
A last request, that in its spirit led  
To this our meeting—I would heal the breach  
That severs, as it were, the throne in two;

'Tis like the cleaving of the head of empire,  
Destructive in its certain consequence.

QUEEN.

Whate'er the consequence, the King's to blame.

RUTHVEN.

No, Madam, Rizzio is to blame—the King  
Would banish him : your Majesty protects him ;  
And, for a slave—a wretch not worth a thought—  
This mighty State is threatened with destruction,  
If neither will give way.

QUEEN.

And if one should,  
You think it ought to be the Queen ?—My Lord,  
In that our politics agree not.

RUTHVEN.

Yet,  
There's no disgrace in drawing back a step  
That rashly was put forward.

QUEEN.

Rashly, Sir !

RUTHVEN.

Your pardon, Madam ; if I may not speak  
Out plainly, I had better hold my tongue.  
Was it not rash to take the part of any man  
Against the King, your husband ?

QUEEN.

Darest thou then,  
Presume, as he presumed, to talk of guilt ?

RUTHVEN.

No, Madam ; not of guilt in its full meaning :  
But there's a sort of guilt in innocence,  
And weakness is its name. You are bewitched



By this curst sorcerer. What is this Rizzio,  
That you should throw before him as a shield,  
Your reputation? Or, is reputation  
So light a thing? If 'tis not virtue's self,  
It is the outward form we know it by,  
And we should love it dearer than our own,  
For virtue's sake—Madam, the world condemns you.

QUEEN.

You and your friends?

RUTHVEN.

I and the rest of men.  
We say that Rizzio is an evil spirit  
Haunting your matron bosom. Scotland hates him :  
Your husband hates him : you, if you had eyes  
To see what deep affliction springs from weakness,  
Would shun him, banish him, be rid of him ;  
And if you could not hate himself, would hate  
His sight, like infamy : there's ruin in't,  
And scandal, and remorse, and scorn, and shame.  
Upon my knees I pray your Majesty,  
Spurn not my words, because the words are mine ;  
But lay them to your heart ; and let them speak  
To the inward monitor.

QUEEN.

Am I thus fallen  
To be rebuked and lectured like a criminal ?  
But I'll not weep—no—are you not ashamed,  
Old man, to take the part of cruelty  
Against the unoffending and the weak ?  
Rizzio has done no wrong, and therefore he  
Shall suffer none.

RUTHVEN.

Then I've no more to say. My business was  
But to acquit my conscience and my heart

To her who is no more.—Madam, you've sealed  
The fate of Rizzio.

QUEEN.

Ha! What say'st thou? Dare  
To raise a finger in the way of harm  
'Gainst him or any whom the Queen protects,  
And you shall find that vengeance does not sleep,  
But for refreshment. Tell the King of this,  
And try your strength combined to alter it.

[*Exit.*

RUTHVEN.

We'll take you at your word, imperious woman,  
And sooner than you dream of.

*Enter DARNLEY and Conspirators.*

Welcome, Sir!

And you, my friends—welcome to each. You're come  
In time to find me all your own. The Queen  
Is bent on Rizzio's stay.

DARNLEY.

I told you so—

You've done with scruples now, I hope?

RUTHVEN.

For ever.

DARNLEY.

Then let us settle on the final plan.  
Morton has just relieved the guard, whose charge  
Is filled by others in our confidence.

MORTON.

But is it certain Rizzio sups to-night  
In the Queen's closet with the Queen?

DOUGLAS.

For certain  
He does intend it.

CHALMERS.

Shall we seize him as  
He passes through the court-yard, and dispatch him?

DARNLEY.

Not so; the Queen, who shared his crime, should share  
His punishment. Let's watch him to her closet,  
And there, before her face, inflict the blow.

DOUGLAS.

And let there be no shrinking when we come to't.  
If he should 'scape, my mother in her grave  
Would give a sullen groan. The villain dared ——

RUTHVEN.

Hush! the man's dead.

DOUGLAS.

Dead!

RUTHVEN.

Ay, in destiny  
Already dead, if we're all men, or any of us.

MORTON.

Is every thing prepared?

DOUGLAS.

Ripe for the blow.

MORTON.

George Douglas, be't your task to keep an eye  
Upon his movements, till he's safely lodged,  
And then to bring us word.

DOUGLAS.

Depend upon't  
I'll not lose sight of him.

DARNLEY.

Ruthven, you droop—  
Nay, rouse yourself!—Remember, you're our leader.

RUTHVEN.

I do.

DARNLEY.

But are you sure that your late loss  
Hath left no drop of weakness after it,  
Which, at the moment, may unnerve your hand ?

RUTHVEN.

You've heard the story of a lioness  
That saw her young whelp by the hunter speared  
One glorious day of chase. Furious she sprang  
From the thick jungle at the multitude,  
And made more havoc in their ranks than wildfire  
In brambles, till she fell. Nor quailed she then ;  
For when she fell, 'twas at the bleeding side  
Of her own offspring stretched in death. Close, close  
As mothers lie, she lay to 't ; stroked the skin  
By hunters rudely torn, and with a lick,  
Which was her kiss, pierced by a hundred wounds,  
Amidst a thousand shouts, she died lamenting  
The baby brute that from her fearful breast  
Drew milk and tenderness. Such as that mother,  
Am I a father. Such the grief I feel.  
Come, follow me, and you shall own its greatness.

[*Exeunt all but DOUGLAS and CHALMERS.*]

DOUGLAS.

Stay, Chalmers ;— a man likes to have a comrade  
Upon the watch.

CHALMERS.

We've watched together, George,  
Before to-night, but not in such a camp.  
Well ; Scotland must be saved.

DOUGLAS.

Look ! is that he ?

CHALMERS.

'Tis he and his friend Garcia.

DOUGLAS.

This way!—this way!

They must not find us here at such an hour.

[*They conceal themselves.*]

*Enter RIZZIO, and GARCIA.*

GARCIA.

I knew how 't would be when you met the Queen;—

But is 't not rash to venture now again.

The ship is ready, and your friends are waiting—

All are embarked: they look impatient for

Your coming, to set sail.

RIZZIO.

What—should I break

My promise?

GARCIA.

Should you risk your life, and those

Of others, who depend on you?

RIZZIO.

Nay, nay;

We 're not in Turkey, amongst infidels,

“That we should dread the bow-string.”

GARCIA.

But we 're in

A land of enemies; and when a Christian

Turns Devil, “he's a match for any Mussulman.”

RIZZIO.

Out, out! you let your terrors chill your manhood.

I have engaged to play a requiem

For the departed soul of that sweet maid,

Whose love you charge me with. My harp is in

The closet now, and only waits my hand.

GARCIA.

Well, if you must, I wish you well—that's all ;  
For, more than wish it is impossible.

[*Exit.*]

RIZZIO.

How awful is this midnight sleep and silence !  
The lamps burn dimly in the corridor ;  
The wind sighs mournful through the empty rooms  
Of state, like wisdom whispering vanity,  
And all the flaunting plumes that waved aloft,  
Like sea foam, on the billows of the main,  
Are, with the wearers, vanished. So it is  
With life ; yet, let me while I may, enjoy—  
Yonder's the door that in its keeping holds  
The richest treasure of the bounteous earth ;—  
I'll bless my senses with the sight of it.

[*Exit.*]*Re-enter* DOUGLAS.DOUGLAS (*speaking to* CHALMERS).

Go, Chalmers ; follow Garcia ; seize him, lest  
He cause some interruption to our course.  
Ha, the door opens ! Rizzio enters, and  
It closes after him ! He's safe within !  
I've tracked him into covert—now for the hunters !

[CHALMERS *exit.*][*Exit.*]

## SCENE II.

*The* QUEEN'S *Closet.*

*The* QUEEN *and* COUNTESS *of* ARGYLE *seated at table.* RIZZIO  
*at the harp.*

RIZZIO *sings.*

When the dead sleep  
'Tis weakness to weep ;

Their sorrows are past,  
And the hope that will last,  
Is that which looks over the Earth's narrow sphere,  
For the summer is there, but the winter is here.

“ When the dead rise  
“ From earth to the skies,  
“ Subdued is the night  
“ By the angel of light,  
“ And banished for ever's mortality's tear,  
“ For the summer is there, but the winter is here.”

QUEEN.

Thanks, Rizzio, for this sweetly plaintive strain.  
Which haply we shall never hear beyond  
The echoes of this night. Why do you rise ?

RIZZIO.

O! Madam, I am sick with melancholy,  
Dark thoughts of death, and parting, worse than death,  
Fall on my heart, like shadows on a tomb.  
“ I'll gaze upon this outward scene awhile,  
“ And think myself a spirit in yon sky, [*Going to the window.*  
“ And so forget the grief that troubles me.  
“ Look up, sweet Queen, and see with what a smile  
“ The current of the night runs on to morn.  
“ What is this wondrous universe, in midst  
“ Of which we seem to stand?—What are those orbs,  
“ And this surrounding sky, so richly wrought  
“ With gold, and painted with Heaven's light?—is this  
“ A frame to set so poor a picture in,  
“ As man? If so, there are, there must be, in him  
“ Great seeds, that shoot above the size of time;  
“ Immortal faculties, that grow for ever:  
“ Yes, even the breaking of the day-light sheds  
“ A revelation on his destiny.”

ARGYLE.

The wine cup, Signor, has a charm, they say,  
To lift up sinking hearts ; taste, taste, and try ;  
And if you 'd have a name to grace the act,  
Drink to the Queen.

[Gives a cup.

RIZZIO.

The Queen ! (*drinks.*) I feel refreshed.  
No wonder wretchedness should fly to thee,  
Thou bold artificer of unmade fortunes,  
That spurn'st the dull routine events are chained in,  
Laugh'st in the face of half-relenting truth,  
And mak'st the slave a king. I feel thy power,  
And thus I use the strength it girds me with,  
To kneel where every heart should pay devotion,  
And worship virtue's self in beauty's form.

[Kneels to the Queen.

QUEEN.

Nay, rise, and mock me not with praise : thy speech  
Would better suit an angel's excellence.

RIZZIO.

Then what art thou, bright vision of my soul,  
That look'st as heaven were here ? Ah ! must I go  
From hence, for ever into banishment ?  
O Queen ! I 'm punished, and I well deserve it ;  
For let me now confess I have deceived  
Myself and thee :—I was the willing dupe  
Of mine own artifice. 'Twas love alone  
That, covered with the name of gratitude,  
Lurk'd in my treacherous heart.

QUEEN.

Why have you told  
A secret that should never see the light ?

RIZZIO.

Because I have not e'en the virtue to



Conceal it. Seeing how you pitied me,  
 And, in your gracious favour, took my part,  
 I saw my crime, but saw not to correct it.  
 E'en now, I cannot, must not, will not leave thee,  
 Though death and ruin be my portion here.

QUEEN.

O Rizzio! when too late, I see my own  
 Rash conduct too; I've been to blame for much  
 Of this distress and error: I have acted  
 Lightly, not guiltily; but guilt and shame  
 Have small beginnings both: 'tis hell's device  
 To plunge it's victim into hopeless crime.

[A noise outside—they all start.

What sound was that?

ARGYLE.

It was an awful sound:  
 I'll seek to find the cause.

[Exit.

QUEEN.

Rizzio, if aught  
 Of ill should fall on thee, for my sake, how  
 Could I support it?

RIZZIO.

Be not downcast, Madam.  
 We're in your palace, and your palace is  
 The seat of your security, where all  
 Your crowned ancestors have kept their state:  
 Their memories are like ethereal guards,  
 And, with a charge from Heaven, they banish insult.

QUEEN.

Still, still, a sad foreboding shakes my soul—  
 The hour, the previous silence, and that sound!  
 The shudder of an earthquake seemed to follow it.

[COUNTESS of ARGYLE rushes in, and throws  
 herself at the QUEEN'S feet.

How now, Argyle! What means that look of fright?  
 Speak out at once—say something, or do something  
 To snatch us from our fear.

ARGYLE.

O Madam! madam!  
 When I have breath, I'll tell you—There's some evil  
 On foot within the palace.

QUEEN.

What? from whom?  
 Have you seen aught that showed this horror to you?

ARGYLE.

I have;—in th' outward porch, I saw a group  
 Of men, all armed:—the King, the King, was with 'em.

RIZZIO.

Then, 'tis my life they seek!

QUEEN.

But hear her! hear her!

ARGYLE.

Amongst the rest, was Ruthven, clad in steel.  
 Hark! 'twas the crash of armour. [*A crash is heard.*

QUEEN.

No; 'twas but  
 The wind; secure the door—bolt it.

ARGYLE.

'Tis fast. [*They secure the door.*

RIZZIO.

I hear the sound of footsteps.

QUEEN.

Heavenly powers!  
 O Rizzio, fear not: still the Queen protects thee.

RIZZIO.

The sound comes still!

QUEEN.

What's to be done? Yon window—  
 O no; the height's too great. Oh, powers of Heaven!  
 Ye, ye alone, can shield us—save us!

[*The tapestry which covers a secret door is raised,  
 and RUTHVEN appears in armour at the head of  
 the Conspirators—except MORTON.*

QUEEN.

(*shrieks.*) Ah! [rushing down with RIZZIO and ARGYLE.  
 Pale warrior, com'st thou from the realm unknown,  
 A semblance only of the man thou wast;  
 But art no longer? or is't life we see,  
 So like to death that we are horrified?  
 Speak to me;—wilt not speak?—then, Darnley, tell me  
 What are these men; why are they here in arms?  
 Are these companions for a lady's chamber,  
 Or suit they with a Queen's?

DARNLEY.

They better suit it  
 Than one I here behold, standing behind thee.

RUTHVEN.

Rizzio, come forth!

QUEEN.

'Tis Ruthven speaks at last,  
 And murder sounds in every frightful tone,  
 Ho! there!—Call in the guard!

DARNLEY.

The guard is here.

QUEEN.

What! are my faithful sentinels exchanged  
For such as these, whose watch is like the wolf's,  
Not for defence, but for aggression?

RUTHVEN.

Madam,  
I did not mean to speak: I came to act;  
But as your Majesty will have it otherwise,  
I must obey the call. You see before you  
A living man, but dying as he lives;  
A dying man, but living to perform  
An act of cold and calm severity,  
By justice self imposed. Nay, madam, frown not,  
Nor think to look me down. I have no fear;  
Or if I had, I've nothing now to fear for.  
Old, desolate, and childless, here I stand—  
I am not of your kind, nor of your clan,  
Nor of your world; but dead alike to all;—  
Yet I've a sense of what I owe my country,  
And that hath brought me, lock'd in martial mail,  
Against whose iron ribs your words are dash'd,  
In striking at my heart. (*Thunder.*) Hark! 'tis Heaven's voice  
Which says this hour must end the guilty joys  
Of Holyrood for ever.

QUEEN.

Darnley, are you  
A husband or a King?—a peasant's wife  
Would not have need to ask for vengeance, if  
She suffered such an insult in his presence!

RIZZIO.

The Queen is innocent, and I'm defenceless.

Look ! I'm unarmed, and you are cased in steel :  
I'm one, and you are many : spare me, therefore.

RUTHVEN.

Rizzio, come forth !—too long have you disgraced  
That place, poisoning the ear of Majesty.

Rizzio, come forth ! Let go the Queen's robe, caitiff.

Thus then, with the last effort of a hand  
That once might pluck the giant from his bed,  
Or heap, like Jove, th' eternal mountains on him,  
I drag thee to thy fate.

[*As he rushes towards RIZZIO the QUEEN interposes.*

QUEEN.

Hold off ! hold off  
Thy hand from the thrice blessed life of man !  
Strike not the great Creator in his image !

RUTHVEN.

There is a freezing horror in your words—  
But justice must be done—away with him !

[*Flings RIZZIO amongst the Conspirators, who drag  
him off the stage—RUTHVEN following.*

QUEEN.

Murder !—they'll shed his blood ! his guiltless blood !  
Will no one save him from these savages ?

Oh Heaven ! 'tis on thy mercy that I call

For vengeance ! O, be merciful, and kill

These killers !

[*Enter MELVILLE from folding doors.*

Now, good Melville, is there hope ?

MELVILLE.

Madam—

QUEEN.

Speak ! speak ! is he alive or dead ?

MELVILLE.

He's past the reach of help or injury—

Ha! look to the Queen! she faints! [*He rushes towards her.*]

QUEEN.

No; no more fainting—

Ruthven again! How's this?—He glares more like

A wounded tiger than a dying man.

[*RUTHVEN totters in, and sinks on a couch.*]

RUTHVEN.

Fetch me a cup of wine.

QUEEN.

Out, blood-stained monster!

Nor dare to ask for aught. Fetch him a cup

Of fire, that he may drink as demons drink,

For he is one.

[*The Queen faints.*]

RUTHVEN.

I feel as if I lack'd

The strength to die. Will no one help me to't?

MELVILLE.

Here's wine.

[*Gives him a cup.*]

RUTHVEN.

Thanks! thanks! there's vigour in the draught.

Where am I?—Wine!—more wine! How dark it is!

Midnight is not so dark. The stars have dropped

Into the Nadyr, and the Zenyth thunders

Like an uplifted hell-storm o'er my head.

Hush! there's a voice upon the wind.—Who spoke?

Who said the heavens are wrathful at the deed?

Who dared to breathe that Ruthven is a murderer?

For Scotland—'Twas for Scotland—for our country.

Attest it, powers above, we struck for right—

For right.—'Tis doomsday with mankind,—  
The pillars of the sky are tumbling—  
And all created nature feels the shock  
Of the main works above. Rage on, rage on—  
Ye dreadful sweepings of the thunder store ;  
Scatter me, bones and all, to the wind's fury.  
Still I repeat, it was a rightful blow.  
'Twas for our Country ! 'Twas—'twas for our Country ! [*dies.*]

THE END.

LONDON :

PRINTED BY T. BRETTELL, RUPERT STREET, HAYMARKET.





A

# LEGEND OF FLORENCE.

A Play.

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY LEIGH HUNT.

---

One step to the death-bed,  
And one to the bier,  
And one to the charnel,  
And one—oh where?—SHELLEY.

---

LONDON :  
EDWARD MOXON, DOVER STREET.

MCCCXI.

LONDON:  
BRADBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.

## PREFACE.

As it is now the custom to publish new plays on the day of their performance, I am unable to state here what will have been the success or otherwise of the present, as far as regards the stage. But I cannot help taking the first opportunity of saying, how delightful has been the intercourse it has occasioned me with my new friends the performers, from the moment when the fair manager first held out to me her cordial hand, down to the last pleasant interchange of jest and earnest during the business of rehearsal. In all my life I never met with a reception, on all sides, so full of what is most precious to an anxious author,—willingness to hear, promptitude to decide, an absence of every species of insincerity and mystification, and, what has particularly touched me, a generous encouragement to proceed in my new efforts, even should the first have tried the philosophy of every party concerned, by proving unsuccessful. When authors are treated in this manner behind the curtain, and the public see what is done to

please them by indefatigable attentions to every propriety of the stage, no wonder a sense of cheerfulness and abundance is associated with the idea of Covent Garden Theatre in the general mind, and that Madame Vestris, night after night, has seen her larger house fill as the smaller did, in spite of those who had begun to think large houses impracticable, and of the hostility even of that late pertinacious anti-playgoer, the bad weather.

If I omit specifying by name every one among the representatives of my *dramatis personæ* who have shown a willingness to befriend me (which indeed includes the whole list), they will attribute it partly to a disinclination to make my thanks appear mechanical and a matter of course. They will not grudge, however, the particular acknowledgments I feel bound to express towards the Stage-manager, Mr. Bartley, for a co-operation no less judicious than warm; and to Miss Ellen Tree, for entering into the character of the heroine with a sensibility of brain and heart which left me nothing to desire, except that no failure, occasioned by the authorship of the play, might ill reward it. Should I have been destined to undergo that new trial of old habits of endurance, it may be permitted my self-love, by way of consolation, not easily to forget the bright countenance which I saw standing beside me, in a glow of tears and exaltation, at the end of one of the perusals of the piece,—the climax, indeed, of the like kindly sympathies

from others of my genial friends behind the curtain. One of the agreeable surprises I met with upon making my first acquaintance with this part of the theatre (for I was never in a green-room before), was this freshness of imagination, and strong propensity to the enjoyment as well as business of the stage, which I had idly fancied to be not common to the profession. I had concluded, with a haste which the pleasures of my own studies should have warned me against, that when the business of a scene was over, they retired to their green-rooms to rest from their fatigues and be silent, or to talk of anything else; but I found them occupied in nothing so certain, unless it was the general playfulness of their animal spirits,—the natural wine, indeed, which is necessary to make an actor's blood what it is, and which manifests itself in a flow of companionship equally liberal and decorous. Such at least I have found the theatrical world, as it exists under the unaffected and generous government of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Mathews.

A word respecting the story of my play.—When I resided near Florence, some years ago, I was in the habit of going through a street in that city, called the “Street of Death,” (*Via della Morte*),—a name given it from the circumstance of a lady's having passed through it at night-time in her grave-clothes, who had been buried during a trance. The story, which, in its mortal particulars resembles several of the like sort that are popular in other countries, and which,

indeed, are no less probable than romantic, has been variously told by Italian authors; and I have taken my own liberties with it accordingly. But nobody, I believe, in Italy ever doubted the main facts. The names of the parties most concerned are those of real families, and handed down as belonging to the actual persons; and their characters (if my remembrance of the account given in a Florentine publication does not deceive me\*) correspond in their elements with those here attempted to be drawn out. Among the pleasures which I have had in making the endeavour, (for ultimate success, or otherwise, has no more to do with those, than the uses to which a tree may be turned, affect it while growing,) is the melancholy one of thinking, that the beloved friend whom I lost in that country had chosen the same subject for a poem, of which he has left a fragment. The motto from it in my title-page has enabled me to see our names together once more, and upon an occasion which even his noble dramatic genius would have taken to welcome me for love's sake, if for no reason more worthy of the companionship.

May I add, without appearance of presumption of another sort, that the versification of this play, in passages where the natural quickness and freedom of dialogue seemed to warrant it, is of a less apparent regularity than the drama has been accustomed to for a long time? I am aware, (and

\* The "Osservatore Fiorentino."

I say it with deepest reverence, and with a deprecation of immodesty even in thinking it necessary so to say it,) that the dramatist, high above all dramatists, has almost sanctified a ten-syllable regularity of structure, scarcely ever varied by a syllable, though rich with every other diversity of modulation. But noble as the music is which he has accordingly left us, massy, yet easy, and never failing him, any more than his superhuman abundance of thought and imagery,—I dare venture to think, that had he lived farther off from the times of the princely monotony of “Marlowe’s mighty line,” he would have carried still farther that rhythmical freedom, *of which he was the first to set his own fashion*, and have anticipated, and far surpassed, the sprightly licence of Beaumont and Fletcher. All I can say in excuse for my own departure from a custom so ennobled, is, that it suits, as well as I can make it, the amount of power I possess to indulge an impulse which I hold to be proper to dramatic dialogue, as distinguished from that of narration. But I beg the reader to give me credit for rating the utmost possible success of such a theory no higher than it deserves, when brought into comparison with that “all in all” of passion and imagination, of which it is only the least and lightest of servants.





TO  
ARMORER DONKIN, ESQ.,  
OF NEWCASTLE.

WITHOUT the aid of whose practical wisdom, in combination with his kind heart, the Author might never have had health or leisure enough to indulge himself in an effort of this kind, the following PLAY is inscribed by his

Obliged and affectionate Servant,

LEIGH HUNT.

CHELSEA, FEB. 6, 1840.



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

---

|   |           |                           |
|---|-----------|---------------------------|
| FRANCESCO AGOLANTI, a noble Florentine          | . . . . . | <i>Mr. Moore.</i>         |
| ANTONIO RONDINELLI, another                     | . . . . . | <i>Mr. Anderson.</i>      |
| FULVIO DA RIVA, a Poet                          | . . . . . | <i>Mr. Bartley.</i>       |
| CESARE COLONNA, an Officer of the Pope's Guards | . . . . . | <i>Mr. G. Vandenhoff.</i> |
| GIULIO, a Page                                  | . . . . . | <i>Mrs. Walter Lacy.</i>  |
| SERVANT   | . . . . . | <i>Mr. Payne.</i>         |
|   |           |                           |
| GINEVRA, Wife to Agolanti                       | . . . . . | <i>Miss Ellen Tree.</i>   |
| OLIMPIA   | . . . . . | <i>Miss Charles.</i>      |
| DIANA   | . . . . . | <i>Mrs. Brougham.</i>     |
| FIORDILISA                                      | . . . . . | <i>Miss Lee.</i>          |

SCENE—*Florence and its Neighbourhood.*

TIME—*During the Pontificate of Leo the Tenth.*



# LEGEND OF FLORENCE.

---

## ACT I.

### SCENE I.

*The High-road from Florence to Rome.*

*Enter DA RIVA and COLONNA, meeting.*

*Colonna.* Fulvio, immortal boy—poet—good fellow—  
Punctual moreover, which is wonder's climax,—  
How dost? and where hast been these eighteen months?  
At grass, eh? fattening with thy Pegasus,  
Like the most holy father!

*Da Riva.*

Dearest Cesare,

'Tis you, methinks, are the immortal boy,  
Growing nor fat nor thin, but still the same;  
Still the same bantering, glittering, blithe, good soul,  
Pretending to give blows, to excuse thy blessings.

*Colonna.* Nay, but the poet is the youth for ever,  
Howe'er he grow; let him feign even a bit  
Of a white top, like our old roaring boys,

Ætna and Vesuvius, with their sides of wine.  
 You know, Da Riva, for those hairs of thine  
 I ought to call thee father, if I could ;  
 But then thine heart, and this warm hand to match,  
 Will never let me think thee, somehow or other,  
 A dozen years older than myself.

*Da Riva.*

Years older !

A pretty jest, 'faith, when our souls were twins,  
 And thou but the more light one, like an almond  
 Pack'd in one shell behind a plumper. Well,  
 How dost ? and how does Florio and Filippo ?  
 And is the Pope really and truly come  
 At last, and in his own most sacred person,  
 To see and glorify his native place ?  
 Or hast thou shot before him, like a ray  
 Out of his orb ?

*Colonna.*

Thy simile has it, 'faith :

Here is his ray, shining upon thyself,  
 As his ray should ; and the good orb meanwhile,  
 Growing a little stout or so, reposes  
 Some nine miles off, and will be here next week,  
 Just by the time your speeches are all ready.

*Da Riva.* And tolets ?

*Colonna.*

Ay, and your extempore odes.

Well, well ; you see we are insolent as ever,  
 All well and merry.—Not so, eh ? in Florence ?  
 How is Antonio ? and pray, who was he,

That fellow yonder—there he goes—that left you  
Just as I came, and went off bowing so,  
With such a lavish courtesy and close eye?

*Da Riva.* That lavish courtesy and that close eye  
Will tell you how Antonio is. That fellow,  
As you call him, is one of the most respectable men  
In Florence. “Men,” do I say? one of the richest  
And proudest nobles; of strict fame withal,  
Yet courteous; bows to every one, pays every one——

*Colonna.* Oh villain!

*Da Riva.* Flatters every one; in short,  
Is as celestial out of his own house,  
As he is devil within it. (*Whispering in his ear*) Ginevra's  
husband.

*Colonna.* The devil it is! (*Looking after him*) Methinks  
he casts a blackness  
Around him as he walks, and blights the vineyards.  
And all is true then, is it, which they tell me?  
What, quite? Has he no plea? no provocation  
From lover, or from wife?

*Da Riva.* None that I know of,  
Except her patience and the lover's merit.  
Antonio's love, you know, is old as his,  
Has been more tried, and, I believe, is spotless.

*Colonna.* Dear Rondinelli!—Well, but has this husband  
No taste of good in him at all? no corner  
In his heart, for some small household grace to sneak in?

*Da Riva.* Nay, what he has of grace in him is not sneaking.  
 In all, except a heart, and a black shade  
 Of superstition, he is man enough !  
 Has a bold blood, large brain, and liberal hand,  
 As far as the purse goes ; albeit he likes  
 The going to be blown abroad with trumpets.  
 Nay, I won't swear he does not love his wife,  
 As well as a man of no sort of affection  
 Nor any domestic tenderness, can do so.

*Colonna.* A mighty attaching gentleman, 'ifaith,  
 And quite uxorious.

*Da Riva.* Why, thus it is.  
 He highly approves her virtues, talents, beauty ;  
 Thinks her the sweetest woman in all Florence,  
 Partly, because she is,—partly, because  
 She is his own, and glorifies his choice ;  
 And therefore he does her the honour of making her  
 The representative and epitome  
 Of all he values,—public reputation,  
 Private obedience, delighted fondness,  
 Grateful return for his unamiableness,  
 Love without bounds, in short, for his self-love :—  
 And as she finds it difficult, poor soul,  
 To pay such reasonable demands at sight,  
 With the whole treasure of her heart and smiles,  
 The gentleman takes pity on—himself !  
 Looks on himself as the most unresponded to



And unaccountably ill-used bad temper  
In Tuscany ; rages at every word  
And look she gives another ; and fills the house  
With miseries, which, because they ease himself,  
And his vile spleen, he thinks her bound to suffer ;  
And then finds malice in her very suffering !

*Colonna.* And she, they tell me, suffers dangerously ?

*Da Riva.* 'Tis thought she'll die of it. And yet, observe  
now :—

Such is poor human nature, at least such  
Is poor human inhuman nature, in this man,  
That if she were to die, I verily think  
He'd weep, and sit at the receipt of pity,  
And call upon the gods, and think he loved her !

*Colonna.* Poor, dear, damn'd tyrant !—and where goes  
he now ?

*Da Riva.* To Florence, from his country-house ; betwixt  
Which place and town, what with his jealousy  
Of the sweet soul, and love of mighty men,  
He'll lead a devil of a life this fortnight ;  
Not knowing whether to let her share the holiday  
For fear of them, and of Antonio ;  
Or whether, for worse fear, still of Antonio,  
To keep her in the shades, love's natural haunt.

*Colonna.* The town's the hiding-place. Be sure he'll take  
Some musty lodging in the thick of the town,  
To hide her in : perhaps within the sound  
Of the shows, to vex her ; and let her see what pleasures

She loses in not loving him.—Well, here am I,  
 A feather in the cap of the fair advent  
 Of his most pleasant Holiness Pope Leo,  
 Come to make holiday with my Tuscan friends,  
 And lay our loving heads together, to see  
 What can be done to help this gentle lady  
 For poor Antonio's sake, and for her own.

*Da Riva.* Ay, and amidst those loving heads, are lovely  
 ones.

What think you of the bright Olimpia,  
 And sweet Diana, her more thoughtful friend?—  
 You recollect them?

*Colonna.* What! the divine widows,  
 That led that bevy of young married dames  
 At the baths of Pisa, and whom we used to call  
 Sunlight and Moonlight?

*Da Riva.* The identical stars!  
 She of the crescent has a country-house,  
 Here in the neighbourhood, close by Agolanti's.  
 There are they both; and there Antonio is,  
 Waiting us two; and thence his friends the ladies,  
 Escorted by us two, will go to visit  
 Their friend Ginevra; partly, if they can,  
 To bring him better news of his saint's health;  
 Partly, for other reasons which you'll see.

*Colonna.* Charming! And wherefore stand you looking  
 then,  
 This way and that?

*Da Riva.* Why, *this* way is our road ;  
And that way I was looking, to see how far  
Our friend, the foe, was on his way to town.  
I have never, you must know, been in his house ;  
And little thought he, when he saw us here,  
What unexpected introduction, eh ?  
Was waiting us. I can't help thinking, somehow,  
He'll hear of it, and come back.

*Colonna.* For Heaven's sake, haste then.  
What ! loitering !—May the *husband* take the hindmost !

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## SCENE II.

*A Room in the Villa Agolanti.*

*Enter GIULIO and FIORDILISA, meeting.*

*Fiordilisa.* Alas ! my lady is very angry, Giulio !

*Giulio.* Angry ? At what ?

*Fiordilisa.* At Signor Antonio's letter.

Oh, she says dreadful things. She says you and I  
Will kill her ; that we make her, or would make her,  
Tell falsehoods to her husband, or bring down  
His justice on our heads ; and she forbids me,  
However innocent you may call, or think it,

Bring letters any more. She bade me give it you  
Back again—see—unopened.

*Giulio.* 'Tis a pity

That, too.

*Fiordilisa.* Why, Giulio?

*Giulio.* Oh, Signor Antonio

Read it me;—ay, he did—he's such a gentleman.  
He said,—“ See, Giulio, I would not have you wrong  
Your mistress in a thought; nor give you an office  
Might do yourself the thought of wrong, or harm.”  
You know I told you what he wrote outside—  
You recollect it—there it is—“ Most harmless,—  
I dare to add, most virtuous;” and there's more  
Besides here, underneath. Did she read that?

*Fiordilisa.* I know not. She read very quickly, at any rate;  
Then held it off, as tho' it frighten'd her,  
And gave it back. And she look'd angry too;  
At least, she did not look as she is used,  
But turn'd right so, and waived me to be gone.—  
I cannot bear to do the thing she likes not.

*Giulio.* Nor I.

*Fiordilisa.* Well—so I think. But hush—hush—hush!  
a step!

[*Runs to the window.*

And coming quickly!—'Tis the Signor—'Tis!  
So soon come back too!—Strike up the guitar—  
Strike up that song of Hope, my lady loves—  
Quickly now—There's a good little Giulio.

[*Exit.*

*Giulio.* Little ! well,—come, for such an immense young  
gentlewoman

That's pretty well ! She has fallen in love, I fear,

With some tall elderly person.—But the song.

*Giulio.* (*Sings.*)

Hope, thou pretty child of heaven ! I prythee, Hope, abide—

I will not ask too much of thee—by my suffering side.

Grief 'is good for humbleness, and earth is fair to see ;

And if I do my duty, Hope, I think thou'lt stay with me.

*Enter AGOLANTI.*

*Agolanti.* What frivolous ante-chamber tinkling now  
Attunes the pulse to levity ? puts folly

In mind of vice, as tho' the hint were needed ?

(*Listening.*) The door shuts, now the song's done. What  
was it ?

What sang'st thou, boy ?

*Giulio.* A song of Hope, sir.

*Agolanti.*

Hope !

What hope !

*Giulio.* I will repeat it, sir, so please you ?

The words, not music.

[*He repeats the words.*]

"Tis a song my lady

Is fond of.

*Agolanti.* When she's troubled most ? with sickness ?

*Giulio.* No, sir, I think when she's most cheerful.

*Agolanti.*

That

Paper within thy vest—Is that the words ?

Give it me.

*Giulio.* Nay, sir, it is none of mine.

*Agolanti.* Give it me, boy.

*Giulio.* I may not, sir.—I will not.

*Agolanti.* Play not the lion's cub with me. That letter  
Was given thee by Antonio Rondinelli.  
He, and the profane wit, Fulvio da Riva,  
Were seen this morning by the Baptistery,  
Talking with thee. Give it me; or myself  
Will take the answer to Antonio's house  
In bloody characters.

*Giulio (aside).* 'Tis a most sacred letter,  
And ought to fell him, like a cuff o' the conscience.  
Farewell, my place! Farewell, my lady sweet!  
Giulio is gone.—There is the letter, sir;  
Take it, (*aside*) and be a devil choked with scripture.

*Agolanti.* Unopen'd! come—thou meanest me well,  
Giulio?

Ah!—but—why didst thou loiter in thy message?  
How came it that this fair epistle kiss'd not  
The lady's fairer hands? for that's the style.

*Giulio.* It did, sir.

*Agolanti.* Did!

*Giulio.* Yes, sir. My lady had it.  
(*Aside*) How like you that? You have not read the whole  
On the outside. (*Aside*) His very joy torments him.

*Agolanti.* She read it not, like the good lady she is;  
But yet you gave it her.

*Giulio.*

He read it me ;

He did,—the noble Antonio read it me,  
To save my youth, every way, from harm.

*Agolanti (aside).* Some vile double signification, ad-  
dressed

To riper brains, must have secured the words.  
The foresight was too gross, if not a coward's !  
There has been, after all, I needs must own it,  
A strange forbearance, for so hot a lover,  
In this Antonio. It is now five years  
Since first he sought Ginevra ; nearly four,  
Since still he loved her, tho' another's wife ;  
And—saving that his face is to be noted  
Looking at hers wherever it appears,  
At church, or the evening walk, or tournament,—  
And that I've mark'd him drooping hereabouts,  
Yet rather as some witless, lonely man,  
Than one that shunn'd me,—my sharp household eyes  
Have fix'd on no confusion of his making ;  
No blush ; no haste ; no tactics of the chamber ;  
No pertness of loud servant—not till now—  
Till now ;—but then this *now* may show all this  
To have been but a more deep and quiet mastery  
Of crime and devilish knowledge—too secure  
To move uneasily,—and too high scornful  
Of me, to give me even the grace of trouble.  
And yet this seal unbroken, and these words— [Reading.

“Most harmless ;—I dare to add, most virtuous?”

And here again below ;—

“ I have written what I have written on the outside of this letter, hoping that it may move you to believe the possibility of its not being unworthy to meet the purest of mortal eyes.”

Filthiest hypocrite ! caught in his own bird-lime.

*(Opens and reads the letter.)*

“ As you have opened neither my first letter nor my second, written at intervals of six months each, from the moment when my name was first again mentioned to you since your marriage, I hardly dare hope that the words I am now writing shall have the blessedness of being looked upon, although they truly deserve it.

“ Truly, for most piteously they deserve it. I am going to reward (may I utter such a word ?) your kindness, by the greatest and most dreadful return I can make it. I will write to you no more.

“ But this promise is a thing so terrible to me, and so unsupportable, except in the hope of its doing you some good, that I have one reward to beg for myself ; not as a condition, but as a last and enduring charity.

“ I no longer ask you to love me, however innocently, or on the plea of its being some shadow of relief to you (in the sweet thought of loving) from an unhappiness, of which all the world speaks. [AGOLANTI *pauses, greatly moved.*



Is it so then? and the world speaks of me,  
And basely speaks! He has been talking then,  
And acting too. But let me know this *all*. [Reading.

“Neither yet will I beg you not to hate me; for so gentle a heart cannot hate anybody; and you never were unjust, except to yourself. [Pauses a little again.

“But this I do beg; first, that you will take care of a health, which heaven has given you no right to neglect, whatever be your unhappiness; and which, under heaven, is the best support of it;—and secondly, that when you think of the friends of whom death has deprived you, or may deprive, and whom it will give you joy to meet again beyond the grave, you may not be unwilling to behold among them the face of

“ANTONIO RONDINELLI.

“Written with prayers and tears before the sacred image of the Virgin.”

[AGOLANTI crosses himself, and pauses; then holds the letter apart, as if in disgust; and then again resumes his self-possession.

Giulio, I think since first I took thee from  
The orphan college, now some three years back,  
I have been no unkind master to thee, nor poor one;  
Have stinted thee in nought fitting thy station,  
Nor hurt thy growth and blooming?

Giulio.

Sir, you hired me

For certain duties, which, with kindly allowance



And scorn of this poor fop) learns dangerous pity  
 Of thy fair-seeming messages,—dangerous,  
 Not to her virtue, but her virtue's fame,—  
 This house thou leavest ! Thou wouldst taste the pride  
 Of poverty, and will, and kinless freedom—  
 Do so ! And when thou learn'st how friendship ends,  
 In treachery, and in thanklessness begun,  
 And the cold crust turns bitter and quarrelsome,  
 Blame not thou me ; nor think those tears are payment  
 For guilt on thy side, and for love on mine !

*Giulio (aside).* Love ! what a word from him ! and to  
 poor me,

Thus thrust upon the world, he knows not whither ;  
 (*Aloud*). Sir, you mistake my tears ; but 'tis no matter.  
 Guilty or not, I cannot quit this house  
 With thoughts less kind than sorrow.—Sir, farewell. [*Exit.*]

*Agolanti.* 'Twas virtuously done, if not most falsely,  
 This seemingly celestial aversion  
 Of the very eyesight from unlawful words.  
 Or was it part of the system ?—of the show,—  
 Which frets me daily with malign excess  
 Of undemanded patience ? cold at best,  
 Resentful as the worst ! Antonio,  
 I do suspect, she loves not ; me, I know,  
 She hates ; me, whom she should love ; whom was bound  
 And sworn to love ; for which contempt and wrong,  
 Fools, that love half a story and whole blame,

Begin to babble against the person wrong'd !  
 Times are there, when I feel inclined to sweep  
 The world away from me, and lead my own  
 Life to myself, unlook'd into with eyes  
 That know me not ; but use, and sympathy  
 Even with those that wrong me, and the right  
 Of comely reputation, keep me still  
 Wearing a show of good with a grieved heart.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Servant.* My lady, sir, hearing of your return  
 Home suddenly, and having visitors,  
 Entreats the honour of your presence.

*Agolanti (aside).* Now

To test this hateful gossip. “ Suddenly ; ”—  
 Was that her word, or the knave's ? No matter. (*Aloud*)

Visitors,—

Who are they ?

*Servant.* Lady Olimpia, and her friend  
 Lady Diana, with two gentlemen ;  
 Strangers, I think, sir ; one a Roman gentleman,  
 Come from his Holiness's court.

*Agolanti.* The same,

Doubtless, I saw this morning ; by which token  
 The other is the sneering amorist,

Da Riva. He, I thought, respected me ;

But see—he knows these women, they Antonio—

Have I been hasty? or is—The black plague choke  
All meddlers with—

*To the Servant.*

I will come speedily,

[*Exeunt severally.*]

### SCENE III.

*Another Room in AGOLANTI'S house. GINEVRA, OLIMPIA,  
DIANA, COLONNA, and DA RIVA, discovered sitting.  
FIORDILISA standing behind her lady's chair.*

*Olimpia.* Dearest Lady Ginevra, to remain  
Shut up when all the world are at the windows,  
Or otherwise owning the great common joy,  
Is clearly impossible.—Observe now, pray:—  
On Friday the Pope comes; Saturday, chapel  
At the Annunziata;—Sunday, at Saint Lorenzo;  
Monday, the chase; Tuesday, the race; Wednesday,  
The tilts and drama; and on Thursday he goes.  
So there's six lives for you; a life a day,  
To make you well again, and merry, and careless.

*Colonna.* Most vital arguments!

*Ginevra.*

Too vital, may-be.

Remember, Lady Olimpia, I have been ill;—  
I am but getting better; and such draughts  
Of pleasure and amazement, pour'd unceasing,  
Might drown the little faculties of poor me.

*Diana.* One day—could you not try one day, and then  
Enjoy, or fear another, as it suited?

*Olimpia.* Ay, one—one—one. Try but one day, and then  
Trust me if one day would not give you strength  
For pretty little two, and prettier three.

*Da Riva.* And, madam, the first day is both the noblest  
And the most gentle,—a flow of princely draperies  
Through draperied streets; bringing us, it is true,  
Emotion, but yet soothing it, and blessing  
With sacred hand. Weakness itself is touch'd  
At ceremonial sights like these, with sweet  
And no unstrengthening tears, bathing humility  
In heavenly reassurance. And, dear lady,  
'Twill give a nature, so composed as yours  
With Christian grace and willing cheerfulness,  
A joy at once sacred, and earthly, and charming,  
To see the face of the accomplish'd man  
Whom Providence, most potent seen when mildest,  
Has raised to be the prince of Christendom  
In this our day, when wit is questioning faith,  
And mild religion answers with *his* eyes  
Of charity, the unanswerable conclusion.

*Colonna.* Da Riva, I am to bring thy verse and thee  
To his Beatitude's most knowing knowledge;  
But do thou step before me, and speak thus,  
And thou art made a cardinal.

*Ginevra.* Is his Holiness  
So very and so beautifully gracious  
To eloquence and letters?

*Colonna.* I' faith, madam,  
Our blessed Father seems to be of opinion,  
That whatsoever good or beauty exists  
Must needs belong, like angels, to the church;  
And as he finds them, where severer men  
(Not the best judges of angels) might o'erlook them,  
He makes us know them better; bids them come  
Forth from the crowd, and show their winged wits,  
And rise, and sit within his princely beams.

*Olimpia.* Come;—you accord? you cannot resist reasons  
Sweet as all these? and to say truth, there is  
One gentle reason more, which must convince you.  
We want your husband's windows, lady mine;—  
They face the veriest heaven of all the streets  
For seeing the procession; and how can we  
Enter that paradise of a balcony  
Without the house's angel? What would people  
Say to the intruders, you not being there?

*Ginevra.* Oh, nothing very unseasonable, be sure;  
Nor what the lilies and roses in their cheeks,  
And wit in their eyes, could not refute most happily.  
Well, dear Diana, should my husband's judgment  
Encourage me to think my health would bear it,  
I would fain venture, but—I hear him coming.

At all events, the windows will be gladly  
 Fill'd with your pleasures ; the report of which  
 Will afterwards make them mine. [Enter AGOLANTI.

Sir, the ladies

Olimpia and Diana you know well ;  
 Also a name honour'd by all, Da Riva ;  
 Be pleased to know their friend, a courteous gentleman  
 From Rome, the Signor Cesare Colonna.

*Agolanti.* He's welcome, for his friend's sake, and his  
 own.

I trust our holy Father keeps his health, sir,  
 In this his gracious journey ?

*Colonna.* Sir, he holds him,

As his good habit is, in blest condition,  
 To the great joy of all that love good men  
 And sovereign church.

*Agolanti.* You hold, sir, I perceive,  
 Some happy office near his sacred person ?

*Colonna.* One of the poor captains of his guard, sir ;  
 Nor near enough to make the fortune proud,  
 Nor yet so far removed as not to share  
 Some grace of recognition.

*Agolanti.* I may not envy you :  
 But I may be allow'd to think such fortune  
 As happy, as 'tis worthily bestow'd.  
 Pardon me ; but this lady's delicate health  
 Will warrant some small trespass on your courtesies.



(To GINEVRA.) How fares it with my love these last three hours ?

*Ginevra.* (*Cheerfully.*) Thanks—I do very well.

*Olimpia.* I fear we have tired her Somewhat, with our loud talk, Signor Francesco.

*Ginevra.* No ; 'tis like bright health come to talk with us : Is it not ? (*To her husband.*)

*Agolanti.* (*Aside.*) She knows I hate it.—Lady Olimpia Brings ever a sprightly stirring to the spirit, And her fair friend a balm. (*Aside to GINEVRA.*) What want they now, This flaunter and this insipidity ?

*Ginevra.* (*Aloud.*) Our neighbour and her friends bring a petition, That it would please you to convenience them With your fair windows for the coming spectacle ; Yourself, if well enough, doubling the grace With your good company.

*Agolanti.* (*Aside.*) I thought as much. At every turn my will is to be torn from me, And at her soft suggestion. (*Aloud.*) My windows Cannot be better fill'd, than with such beauty, And wit and modest eloquence.

*Olimpia.* (*Aside to DA RIVA.*) Is he sneering ? Or is his zeal, and fame for polite manners, Proving itself, in spite of his own teeth ? Sharpening its edge upon this oily venom ?

*Da Riva.* Somewhat of both ; he sneers, because he hates us ;

And would not have it seen, because he fears us.

His will and vanity count on our obtuseness,

Just as it suits them. (*AGOLANTI and the Ladies talk apart.*)

*Colonna.* Noticed you how pale

The unhappy lady turn'd, when the song ended,

And she bade shut the door ?

*Da Riva.* She's paler now.

Let's interrupt him.—Good Signor Francesco,

We thank you much ; but windows, friends, and spectacle,

And, let us add, warranted by his love,

Husband and all, would miss the topmost flower

Of our delight, were this sweet lady absent ;

And she has threaten'd us with the cruel chance,

Unless your better knowledge of her health

Think better, than herself, of its free right.

*Agolanti.* Oh Sir, it were impossible to know

A lady better than she knows herself.

What say you, Madam ? (*To GINEVRA.*)

*Ginevra.* The best thought of all,

Perhaps, were to await the time's arrival,

And see how I feel then.

*Agolanti.* Truly, methinks,

A discreet judgment, and approved by all

Who set the lady's welfare above all,

As we in this room do.



## ACT II.

## SCENE I.

*A Garden of Diana's Villa.*

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*Enter RONDINELLI, COLONNA, and DA RIVA.*

*Colonna.* I pray thee, Antonio, be comforted.

*Rondinelli.* I am, I am ; as far as friends can comfort me :

And they do comfort. How can I love love,  
And not love all things lovely ? sweet discourse,  
And kindness, and dear friendships. But this suffering  
Sweet saint,—the man, the household fiend, I mean—  
Will kill her.

*Colonna.* I tell thee, no. In the first place  
Her health is really better. Is it not ?

*Da Riva.* Olimpia and Diana both have staked  
Their credit on it. The man's a fool no doubt,  
But she is wise.

*Colonna.* Ay, is she ; for lo ! secondly,  
She loves thee, Antonio.

*Da Riva.* Yes ; by that pure look  
We told thee of, at mention of thy name,  
She does ;—it was as though her mind retreated



And therefore greater power to bear) ; and yet  
 They do not kill ; partly, because of lovers ;  
 Partly, of pride ; partly, indifference ;  
 Partly, of hate (a good staunch long-lived passion) ;  
 Partly, because all know the common case,  
 And custom's custom. There'll be a hundred couples  
 To-night, 'twixt Porta Pinti and San Gallo,  
 Cutting each other's hearts out with mild looks,  
 Upon the question, whether the Pope's mule  
 Will be in purple or scarlet ;—yet not one  
 Will die of it ; no, ' faith ; nor were a death  
 To happen, would the survivors' eyes refuse  
 A tear to their old disputant and partner,  
 That kept life moving somehow.

*Rondinelli.* By which logic  
 You would infer, to comfort me, that all  
 Marriages are unhappy.

*Colonna.* Not unhappy,  
 Though not very happy.

*Da Riva.* With exceptions?

*Colonna.* Surely— for such good fellows as ourselves !

*Da Riva.* And doubtless  
 A time will come—

*Colonna.* Oh, ay ; a time will come—  
 Poet and prophet—*Redeunt Saturnia regna.*

Now hear him on his favourite golden theme,  
 “ A time will come ; ”—a time, eh ? when all marriages

Shall be like some few dozen ; exceptions, rules ;  
Every day, Sunday ; and each man's pain in the head  
A crowning satisfaction !

*Da Riva.* No ; but still

A time, when sense and reason shall have grown  
As much more rife than now, and foolish thorns  
As much less in request, as we, now living,  
Surpass rude times and savage ancestors.  
Improvement stopp'd not at the muddy cave,  
Why at the rush-strewn chamber ? The wild man's dream,  
Or what he might have dreamt, when at his wildest,  
Is, to the civilised man, his commonplace :  
And what should time so reverence in ourselves,  
As in his due good course, not still to alter ?

*Colonna.* Till chariots run some twenty miles an hour ?

*Da Riva.* Ay, thirty or forty.

*Colonna.* Oh ! oh ! Without horses ?

Say, without horses.

*Da Riva.* Well, to oblige you,—yes.

*Colonna.* And sailing-boats without a sail ! Ah, ha !

Well, glory be to poetry and to poets !

Their cookery is no mincing ! Ah ! ha ! ha !

[*They both laugh.*]

They certainly, while they're about it, do  
Cut and carve worlds out, with their golden swords,  
To which poor Alexander's was a pumpkin.  
What say you, Antonio ?

*Rondinelli.* My dear friends both,  
 What you were saying of the good future time  
 Made me but think too sadly of the present ;  
 Pardon me—I should think more sadly far,  
 But for your loves and ever generous patience.  
 Yet let me take you back to our fair friends,  
 From whom my gusty griefs bore you away.  
 Nay, my good wish rewards me :—see, one comes.

*Enter OLIMPIA.*

*Olimpia.* A certain Giulio, in a pretty grief  
 Though for himself alone, and not another,  
 Inquires for Signor Rondinelli.

[ANTONIO kisses her hand and exit.

'Twas lucky that I saw this Giulio first,  
 For he's a page of pages ; a Spartan boy ;—  
 Quite fix'd on telling his beloved Signor  
 Antonio all the truths which the said Signor  
 May now, or at any time in all futurity,  
 Insist on knowing. Poor fellow ! he's turn'd away.

*Da Riva.*

For what ?

*Olimpia.* Come in,  
 And you shall hear. Your ices and sherbets  
 Await you ; and your cheeks will need the cooling.

[*Exeunt.*



## SCENE II.

*A Chamber hung with purple, and containing a cabinet picture of the Madonna, but otherwise little furnished. GINEVRA discovered sitting at a window.*

*Enter AGOLANTI.*

*Agolanti.* Every way she opposes me, even with arms  
Of peace and love. I bade remove that picture  
From this deserted room. Can she have had it  
Brought back this instant, knowing how my anger,  
Just though it be, cannot behold unmoved  
The face of suffering heaven? Oh artifice  
In very piety! 'Twere piety to veil it  
From our discourse, and look another way.

*[During this speech, GINEVRA comes forward, and AGOLANTI, after closing the cabinet doors over the picture, hands her a chair; adjusting another for himself, but continuing to stand.]*

*Ginevra.* (*Cheerfully.*) The world seems glad after its  
hearty drink  
Of rain. I fear'd when you came back this morning,  
The shower had stopp'd you, or that you were ill.

*Agolanti.* You fear'd! you hoped. What fear you that  
I fear,  
Or hope for that I hope for? A truce, madam,

To these exordiums and pretended interests,  
 Whose only shallow intent is to delay,  
 Or to divert, the sole dire subject,—me.  
 Soh! you would see the spectacle! you, who start  
 At openings of doors, and falls of pins.  
 'Trumpets and drums quiet a lady's nerves;  
 And a good hacking blow at a tournament  
 Equals burnt feathers or hartshorn, for a stimulus  
 To pretty household tremblers.

*Ginevra.* I express'd  
 No wish to see the tournament, nor indeed  
 Anything, of my own accord; or contrary  
 To your good judgment.

*Agolanti.* Oh, of course not. Wishes  
 Are never express'd for, or by, contraries;  
 Nor the good judgment of an anxious husband  
 Held forth as a pleasant thing to differ with.

*Ginevra.* It is as easy as sitting in my chair,  
 To say I will not go: and I will not.  
 Be pleased to think that settled.

*Agolanti.* The more easily,  
 As 'tis expected *I should* go, is it not?  
 And then you will sit happy at receipt  
 Of letters from Antonio Rondinelli.

*Ginevra.* Return'd unopen'd, sir.

*Agolanti.* How many?

*Ginevra.* Three.

*Agolanti.* You are correct, as to those three. How  
many

Open'd?—Your look, madam, is wondrous logical ;  
Conclusive by mere pathos of astonishment ;  
And cramm'd with scorn, from pure unscornfulness.  
I have, 'tis true, strong doubts of your regard  
For him, or any one ;—of your love of power  
None,—as you know I have reason ;—tho' you take  
Ways of refined provokingness to wreak it.  
Antonio knows these fools you saw but now,  
And fools have foolish friendships, and bad leagues  
For getting a little power, not natural to them,  
Out of their laugh'd-at betters. Be it as it may,  
All this, I will not have these prying idlers  
Put my domestic troubles to the blush ;  
Nor you sit thus, in ostentatious meekness,  
Playing the victim with a pretty breath,  
And smiles that say “God help me.”—Well, madam,  
What do *you* say ?

*Ginevra.* I say I will do whatever  
You think best, and desire.

*Agolanti.* And make the worst of it  
By whatsoever may mislead, and vex ?  
There—now you make a pretty sign, as tho'  
Your silence were compell'd.

*Ginevra.* What can I say,  
Or what alas ! not say, and not be elided ?

You should not use me thus. I have not strength for it,  
So great as you may think. My late sharp illness  
Has left me weak.

*Agolanti.* I've known you weaker, madam,  
But never feeble enough to want the strength  
Of contest and perverseness. Oh, men too,  
Men may be weak, even from the magnanimity  
Of strength itself; and women can take poor  
Advantages, that were in men but cowardice.

*Ginevra. (Aside.)* Dear Heaven! what humblest doubts  
of our self-knowledge  
Should we not feel, when tyranny can talk thus.

*Agolanti.* Can you pretend, madam, with your surpassing  
Candour and heavenly kindness, that you never  
Utter'd one gently-sounding word, not meant  
To give the hearer pain? me pain? your husband?  
Whom in all evil thoughts you so pretend  
To be unlike.

*Ginevra.* I cannot dare pretend it.  
I am a woman, not an angel.

*Agolanti.* Ay,  
See there—you have! you own it! how pretend then  
To make such griefs of every petty syllable,  
Wrung from myself by everlasting scorn?

*Ginevra.* One pain is not a thousand; nor one wrong,  
Acknowledged and repented of, the habit  
Of unprovoked and unrepented years.

*Agolanti.* Of unprovoked ! Oh, let all provocation  
Take every brutish shape it can devise  
To try endurance with ; taunt it in failure,  
Grind it in want, stoop it with family shames,  
Make gross the name of mother, call it fool,  
Pander, slave, coward, or whatsoever opprobrium  
Makes the soul swoon within its rage, for want  
Of some great answer, terrible as its wrong,  
And it shall be as nothing to this miserable,  
Mean, meek-voiced, most malignant lie of lies,  
This angel-mimicking non-provocation  
From one too cold to enrage, and weak to tread on !  
You never loved me once—You loved me not—  
Never did—no—not when before the altar  
With a mean coldness, a worldly-minded coldness  
And lie on your lips, you took me for your husband,  
Thinking to have a house, a purse, a liberty,  
By, but not for, the man you scorn'd to love !

*Ginevra.* I scorn'd you not—and knew not what scorn  
was—

Being scarcely past a child, and knowing nothing  
But trusting thoughts and innocent daily habits.  
Oh, could you trust yourself—But why repeat  
What still is thus repeated day by day,  
Still ending with the question, “ Why repeat ? ”

[*Rising and moving about.*

You make the blood at last mount to my brain,

And tax me past endurance. What have I done,  
 Good God! what have I done, that I am thus  
 At the mercy of a mystery of tyranny,  
 Which from its victim demands every virtue,  
 And brings it none?

*Agolanti.* I thank you, madam, humbly.  
 That was sincere, at least.

*Ginevra.* I beg your pardon.  
 Anger is ever excessive, and speaks wrong.

*Agolanti.* This is the gentle, patient, unprovoked,  
 And unprovoking, never-answering she!

*Ginevra.* Nay, nay, say on;—I do deserve it,—I  
 Who speak such evil of anger, and then am angry.  
 Yet you might pity me too, being like yourself  
 In fellowship there at least.

*Agolanti.* A taunt in friendliness!  
 Meekness's happiest condescension!

*Ginevra.* No,  
 So help me Heaven!—I but spoke in consciousness  
 Of what was weak on both sides. There's a love  
 In that, would you but know it, and encourage it.  
 The consciousness of wrong, in wills not evil,  
 Brings charity. Be you but charitable,  
 And I am grateful, and we both shall learn.

*Agolanti.* I am conscious of no wrong in this dispute,  
 Nor when we dispute, ever,—except the wrong  
 Done to myself by a will far more wilful,

Because less moved, and less ingenuous.

Let them get charity, that show it.

*Ginevra* (*who has rescued herself*). I pray you,

Let *Fiordilisa* come to me. My lips

Will show you that I faint.

[*AGOLANTI rings a bell on the table ; and FIORDILISA enters to her mistress.*

*Agolanti*. When you have seen your mistress well again,

Go to *Matteo* ; and tell him, from herself,

That 'tis her orders she be excused at present

To all that come, her state requiring it,

And convalescence. Mark you that addition.

She's getting well ; but to get well, needs rest. [*Exit.*

*Fiordilisa*. Needs rest ! Alas ! When will you let her rest,

But in her grave ? My lady ! My sweet mistress !

[*Applying a volatile to her temples.*

She knows me,—He has gone :—the Signor's gone.

(*Aside.*) She sighs, as though she mourn'd him.

*Ginevra* (*listening*). What's that ?

*Fiordilisa*. Nothing, madam ;—I heard nothing.

*Ginevra*. Everything

Gives me a painful wonder ;—you, your face,

These walls. My hand seems to me not more human,

Than animal ; and all things unaccountable.

'Twill pass away. What's that ? [*A church-organ is heard.*

*Fiordilisa.*

Yes, I hear that.

'Tis Father Anselmo, madam, in the chapel,  
Touching the new organ. In truth, I ask'd him,  
Thinking that as the Signor is so moved  
By whatsoever speaks to him of religion,  
It might have done no harm to you and him, madam,  
To hear it while conversing. But he's old  
And slow, is the good father.

[GINEVRA kisses her, and then weeps abundantly.]

*Ginevra.* Thank Heaven! thank Heaven and the sweet  
sounds! I have not  
Wept, *Fiordilisa*, now, for many a day,  
And the sound freshens me ;—loosens my heart.

[*Music.*

O blessed music! at thy feet we lie,  
Pitied of angels surely.

*Fiordilisa.*

Perhaps, madam,

You will rest here, and try to sleep awhile?

*Ginevra.* No, *Fiordilisa* (*rising*). Meeting what must be,  
Is half commanding it; and in this breath  
Of heaven my mind feels duty set erect,  
Fresh out of tears. Bed is for night, not day,  
When duty's done. So cheer we as we may.

[*Exeunt*; the music continuing.]



## ACT III.

## SCENE I.

*A Room in AGOLANTI'S Villa.*

*Enter AGOLANTI.*

*Agolanti.* What have I done, great heavens! to be thus  
tortured?

My gates beset with these inquisitive fools;  
A wife, strong as her hate, so I be dumb,  
Falling in gulfs of weakness for a word;  
And all the while, dastardly nameless foes,  
Who know where I am weak, filling my household  
With talk of ominous things,—sad mourning shapes  
That walk my grounds, none knowing how they enter'd;  
And in the dead of night, outcries for help,  
As of a female crouching to the door.  
Let me be met by daylight, man to man,  
If 'tis to come to this; and to loud lies  
Answer with my contempt, and with my sword.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Servant.* The gentlemen that were here the other day,

Signor Da Riva, and the Roman gentleman,  
Desire to kiss your hands.

*Agolanti.* Fool! were not orders

Given you to admit no one?

*Servant.* To my lady, sir;

We did not understand, to you.

*Agolanti.* Idiots and torments!

*Enter DA RIVA and COLONNA. Exit Servant.*

*Colonna.* We kiss your hands, courteous Signor Francesco.

*Da Riva.* And come to thank you for the seats you have given us.

In all the city there is no such throne  
Of comfort, for a sovereign command  
Of the best part o' the show; which will be glorious.

*Colonna.* And with your lady for the queen o' the throne,  
The Pope himself may look up as he walks,  
And worship you with envy.

*Agolanti.* Nay, sirs, you are too flattering. Perhaps  
The lady—

*Colonna.* And what makes us the more delighted  
With your determination thus to give her  
Unto the grateful spectacle, is a certain  
Vile talk, sir, that has come to our disdainful  
And most incredulous ears of—What do you think?

*Da Riva.* Ay, sir, 'twill tax your fancy.

*Colonna.* Of your jealousy ;  
Nay cruelty, forsooth !

*Da Riva.* We laugh'd it down ;  
Look'd it i' the foolish face, and made it blush.  
Yes, sir, the absurdity was put out of countenance ;  
But then, you know, that countenance was but one ;  
And twenty absurd grave faces, going about,  
Big with a scandal, are as fertile as bees,  
And make as busy multitudes of fools.

*Agolanti.* Sirs, with this sudden incursion of strange  
news—  
And your as strange, I must say, though well-meant  
Fancy, of the necessity of refuting it—

*Colonna.* Fancy, good sir !—Dear sir, we are most loath  
To shock your noble knowledge of yourself  
With the whole truth—with the whole credulous fiction ;  
But to convince you how requisite is the step  
Thus to be taken in the truth's behalf,  
The theme is constant, both in court and market-place,  
That you're a very tyrant !

*Da Riva.* And to a saint !  
Vex her from morn to night—

*Colonna.* Frighten her—

*Da Riva.* Cast her  
Into strange swoons, and monstrous shows of death.

*Agolanti.* Monstrous indeed ! and shows ! That is most  
true.

Those are the shows ! and I am to be at the spectacle  
 To let her face make what display it can  
 Of the mean lie, and mock me to the world.  
 Pardon me—I'm disturb'd—I'm not myself—  
 My house is not quite happy—you see it—Whose is ?  
 But look, sir,—Why should Florence fall on me ?  
 Why select me, as the scape-goat of a common  
 And self-resented misery ? 'Tis a lie,  
 A boy's lie, a turn'd-off servant's lie,  
 That mine is a worse misery than their own,  
 Or more deserved. You know the Strozzi family,  
 You know the Baldi, Rossi, Brunelleschi—  
 You do, Signor Da Riva,—the Guidi also,  
 And Arreguerci:—well,—are they all smiles ?  
 All comfort ? Is there, on the husbands' sides,  
 No roughness ? no plain-speaking ? or, on the wives',  
 No answering, tart or otherwise ?—no black looks ?  
 No softest spite ; nor meekness, pale with malice ?  
 No smile with the teeth set, shivering forth a sneer ?  
 Take any dozen couples, the first you think of,  
 Those you know best ; and see, if matrimony  
 Has been success with them, or a dull failure ;  
 Dull at the best ; probably, damn'd with discord ;  
 A hell, the worse for being carried about  
 With quiet looks ; or, horriblemst of all,  
 Betwixt habitual hate and fulsome holiday.

*Da Riva.* Oh, sir, you wrong poor mix'd humanity,

And think not how much nobleness relieves it,  
Nor what a heap of good old love there lies  
Sometimes in seeming quarrel. I thought you, sir,  
I must confess, a more enduring Christian.

*Colonna.* And churchman, sir. I own I have been  
astonish'd—

Pardon one somewhat nearer than yourself  
Unto the church's prince—to hear you speak  
Thus strangely of a holy ordinance.

*Agolanti (aside).* These men will make me mad. Have  
they come here

To warn me, or to torment me?—Sir, the earth  
Holds not a man bows down with lowlier front  
To holy church and to all holy ordinances:  
It is their worldly violation mads me.

If my poor name be ever in sacred mouths,  
I pray thee say so; and add, I am a man  
Not happy quite perhaps, more than some others  
Of mankind's fallen race, in my home's Eve;  
Who, with some humours, yet is good as fair,  
And only makes me unhappy in the excess  
Of my desire to make herself most blessed.  
My conscience thus discharged, look'ye, fair sir,—  
A man of a less trusting sort—

*Enter a Servant.*

*Servant.*

My lady, sir,

Being worse since her last seizure at day-break,

The Nurse would fain send in the neighbourhood  
For—

*Agolanti.* Bid her do so. Tell her to send instantly  
For whom she pleases. (*Exit Servant.*) You will pardon me;—  
This troubled house of mine—At the good spectacle,  
I shall behold you.

*Colonna.* We take anxious leave, sir,  
Wishing you all good speed with the sweet lady.  
But something we had forgotten, in our zeal  
To tell our own poor story, tho' we came  
Partly to give it you,—a letter, sir,  
From a most dear and excellent friend of ours;  
Who, we dare say it, for reasons which your delicacy  
Will be glad, too, to turn to like fair grace  
Of liberal trust and gentle interpretation,  
Wishes your house all good and quiet fame.  
'Tis something very special that he writes of,  
So he assures us, and of instant urgency;  
But what we know not. [*Exeunt.*

*Agolanti (reads).* “If Signor Agolanti values his wife's  
peace, and life, he will meet the writer of this letter instantly;  
who will wait for him, an hour from the receipt of it, in the  
wood near his gate, by the road-side leading to Cortona.

“ANTONIO RONDINELLI.”

'Tis as I fear'd. He knows them, as I thought,  
And well? Is it a league? Conspiracy?  
And face to face too! He! This beats all boldness.

'Sdeath, must my time be *his* too! What strange matter  
Can give him right of speech! "Her life!" Who seeks it?  
What bloody juggle is to beset me now?  
I'll meet thee, Antonio; and before we part,  
Strange mystery shall be pluck'd from some one's heart.

[*Exit.*

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SCENE II.

*A Wood. RONDINELLI discovered waiting.*

*Rondinelli.* My bosom is so full, my heart wants air;  
It fears even want of utterance; fears the man,  
For very loathing; fears his horrible right,  
His lawless claim of lawfulness; and feels  
Shame at his poisonous want of shame and manhood.  
Yet she endures him; she can smile to him,  
Would have him better. Oh, heavenly Ginevra!  
Name, which to breathe puts pity in the air,  
I know that to deserve to be thy friend  
Should be to show all proofs of gentlest right.  
Oh be the spirit of thine hand on mine;—  
Hang by me, like a light, a face, an angel,  
To whom I turn for privilege of blest patience,  
Letting me call thee my soul's wife!

He comes.

*Enter AGOLANTI.*

*Agolanti.* I recognise the Signor Rondinelli;  
And in him, if I err not, the inditer  
Of a strange letter.—He would speak with me?

*Rondinelli.* Pardon me. I am sensible that I trespass  
On many delicacies, which at first confuse me.  
Be pleased to look upon them all as summ'd  
In this acknowledgment, and as permitted me  
To hold acquitted in your coming hither.  
I would fain speak all calmly and christianly.

*Agolanti.* You spoke of my wife's life. 'Twas that that  
brought me.

*Rondinelli.* Many speak of it.

*Agolanti.* To what end?

*Rondinelli.* They doubt  
If you are aware on what a delicate thread  
It hangs.

*Agolanti.* Mean you of health?

*Rondinelli.* I do.

*Agolanti.* 'Twere strange,  
If I knew not the substance of the tenure,  
Seeing it daily.

*Rondinelli.* A daily sight—pardon me—  
May, on that very account, be but a dull one.—  
I pray you, do not think I use plain words



From wish to offend : I have but one object— such  
As all must have, who know, or ever have known,  
The lady,—you above all others.

*Agolanti.* Truly, sir,  
You, and these knowing friends of yours, or hers,  
Whom I know not, might leave the proverb alone,  
Which says that a fool knows better what occurs  
In his own house, than a wise man does in another's.  
Good Signor Antonio, I *endure* you  
Out of a sort of pity : you understand me ;  
Perhaps not quite a just one. This same letter  
Is not the first of yours, that has intruded  
Into my walls.

*Rondinelli.* We understand each other  
In some things, Signor Agolanti, and well ;  
In some things one of us is much mistaken ;  
But one thing we know perfectly, both of us,—  
The spotlessness of her, concerning whom  
We speak, with conscious souls, thus face to face.—  
Signor Agolanti, I humbly beg of you,  
Well nigh with tears, which you may pity, and welcome,  
So you deny them not, that it will please you  
To recollect, that the best daily eyes,  
The wisest and the kindest, made secure  
By custom and gradation, may see not  
In the fine dreadful fading of a face  
What others see.

*Agolanti.* Signor Antonio,—  
 When others allow others to rule their houses,  
 To dictate commonplaces, and to substitute  
 For long experience and uncanting love  
 Their meddling self-sufficiency, their envious  
 Wish to find fault, and most impertinent finding it,  
 When this is the custom and the fashion, then,  
 And not till then, will I throw open my doors  
 To all my kind good masters of fair Florence,  
 To come and know more in my house than I do;  
 To see more, hear more, have a more inward taste  
 Of whatsoever is sweet and sacred in it,  
 And then vouchsafe me their opinions: order me  
 About, like some new household animal  
 Call'd servant-husband, they being husband-gods,  
 Yet condescending to all collateral offices  
 Of gossip, eaves-dropper, consulting-doctor,  
 Beggarily paymaster of discarded page,  
 Themselves discarded suitor.

*Rondinelli. (Aside.)* Help me, angel,  
 Against a pride, that, seeing thee, is nothing.—  
 You know full well, Fraucesco Agolanti,  
 That though a suitor for the prize you won  
 (Oh! what a prize! and what a winning! enough  
 Surely to make you bear with him that lost)  
 Discarded I could not be, never, alas!  
 Having found acceptance. My acquaintance

Not long preceded yours; and was too brief  
To let my love win on her filial eyes,  
Before your own came beaming with that wealth,  
Which, with all other shows of good and prosperous,  
Her parents justly thought her due. For writing to her  
Since, with whatever innocence (as you know)  
And for any opinions of yourself  
In which I may have wrong'd you, I am desirous  
To hold my own will in a constant state  
Of pardon-begging and self-sacrifice,  
And will engage never to trouble more  
Your blessed doors (for such I'll hope they will be)  
One thing provided.—Sir, it is,—  
That in consideration of your possessing  
A treasure, which all men will think and speak of  
(The more to the just pride of him that owns it),  
You will be pleased to show, even ostentatiously,  
What more than care, at this supposed sad juncture,  
You take of it: will call in learned eyes  
To judge of what your own too happy ones  
May slide o'er too securely: will thus revenge  
Your wrong on ill mouths, by refuting them:  
And secure kindlier ones from the misfortune  
Of being uncharitable towards yourself.

*Agolanti.* I will not suffer, more than other men,  
That wrong should be assumed of me, and bend me  
To what it pleases. What I know, I know;

What in that knowledge have done, shall still do.  
 The more you speak, the greater is the insult  
 To one that asks not your advice, nor needs it;  
 Nor am I to be trick'd into submission  
 To a pedantic and o'erweening insolence,  
 Because it treats me like a child, with gross  
 Self-reconciling needs and sugary fulsomeness.  
 Go back to the world you speak of, you yourself,  
 True infant; and learn better from its own school.  
 You tire me.

*Rondinelli.* Stay; my last words must be heard.—  
 In nothing then will there be any difference  
 From what the world now see?

*Agolanti.* In nothing, fool!—  
 Why should there? Am I a painter's posture-figure?  
 A glove to be made to fit? a public humour?  
 To hear you is preposterous; not to trample you  
 A favour, which I know not why I show.

*Rondinelli.* I'll tell you.  
 'Tis because you, with cowardly tyranny,  
 Presume on the bless'd shape that stands between us;  
 Ay, with an impudence of your own, immeasurable,  
 Skulk at an angel's skirts.

*Agolanti.* I laugh at you.  
 And let me tell you at parting, that the way  
 To serve a lady best, and have her faults  
 Lightliest admonish'd by her lawful helper,

Is not to thrust a lawless vanity  
 'Twixt him and his vex'd love.

*Rondinelli.*

Utter that word

No second time. Blaspheme not its religion,  
 And mark me, once for all. I know you proud,  
 Rich, sanguine during passion, sullen after it,  
 Purchasing shows of mutual respect,  
 With bows as low, as their recoil is lofty ;  
 And thinking that the world and you, being each  
 No better than each other, may thus ever,  
 In smooth accommodation of absurdity,  
 Move prosperous to your graves. But also I know you  
 Misgiving amidst all of it ; more violent  
 Than bold, more superstitious ev'n than formal ;  
 More propp'd up by the public breath, than vital  
 In very self-conceit. Now mark me——

*Agolanti.*

A beggar

Mad with detection, barking like his cur !

*Rondinelli.* Mark me, impostor. Let that saint be  
 worse

By one hair's-breadth of sickness, and you take  
 No step to show that you would have prevented it,  
 And every soul in Florence, from the beggar  
 Up to the princely sacredness now coming,  
 Shall be loud on you, and loathe you. Boys shall follow  
 you,  
 Plucking your shuddering skirts ; women forego,

For woman's sake, their bashfulness, and speak  
 Words at you, as you pass; old friends not know you;  
 Enemies meet you, friend-like; and when, for shame,  
 You shut yourself in-doors, and take to your bed,  
 And die of this world by day, and the next by night,  
 The nurse, that makes a penny of your pillow,  
 And would desire you gone, but your groans pay her,  
 Shall turn from the last agony in your throat,  
 And count her wages!

*Agolanti.* Death in thine own throat.

*Rondinelli.* Tempt me not.

*Agolanti.* Coward!

*Rondinelli.* All you saints bear witness!

[*Cries of* "Agolanti! Signor Agolanti!"

*Enter Servants in disorder.*

*First Servant.* My lady, sir.

*Agolanti.* What of her?

*Servant.* Sir, she is dead.

*Agolanti.* Thou say'st what cannot be. A hundred  
 times

I've seen her worse than she is now.

*Rondinelli.* Oh horror!

To hear such words, knowing the end!—Oh dreadful!

But is it true, good fellow? Thou art a man,

And hast moist eyes. Say that they served thee dimly.

*Servant.* Hark, sir.

[*The passing-bell is heard. They all take off their caps, except AGOLANTI.*

*Rondinelli.* She's gone; and I am alone. Earth's blank; Misery certain.—The cause, alas! the cause!

[*Passionately to AGOLANTI.*

Uncover thee, irreverent infamy!

*Agolanti (uncovering).* Infamy thou, to treat thus ruffianly

A mute-struck sorrow.

*Rondinelli.* Oh God! to hear him talk!

To hear him talk, and know that he has slain her!

Bear witness, you—you of his household—you,

That knew him best, and what a poison he was—

He has slain her.—What you all fear'd would be, has come,  
And the mild thread that held her heart, is broken.

*Agolanti (going off with the Servants).* Pietro, I say, and Giotto! away! away!

[*Exit with Servants.*

*Rondinelli.* Ay, ay; to justice with him! Whither with me?

[*Exeunt opposite.*

END OF ACT THE THIRD.

## ACT IV.

## SCENE I.

*A Room in the House of DA RIVA. COLONNA, OLIMPIA, and DIANA, discovered, the first looking out of a window. A funeral-bell is tolling at intervals.*

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*Colonna.* By the moving of the crowd the funeral comes.  
No;—yet I thought I heard the Choristers.

*Diana.* You did. Hark now—

*[A faint sound of Choristers.*

And now like some sweet sigh

Of heaven and earth it pauses.—You look sadder,  
Signor Colonna, than you thought you should,  
Within this festal week.

*Colonna.* 'Faith, gentle lady,  
I'd rather hear upon a winter's night,  
A dozen trumpets of the enemy  
Blow 'gainst my nestled cheek, than this poor weakness,  
Which comes to pass us, standing idly thus,  
Swallowing the lumpish sorrow in one's throat,  
'Twixt rage and pity.



*Olimpia.* I have noted oft,  
That eyes, that have kept dry their cups of tears,  
The moment they were touch'd by music's fingers,  
Trembled, brimfull.

*Diana.* It is the meeting, love,  
Of beauty so divine, with earth so weak.  
We swell within us with immortal thoughts,  
And then take pity on the feeble riddle,  
That lies thus cold, and thus rebuked in death.

[*Choristers resume, and continue during the dialogue.*

*Colonna.* I heard as I came in, one who has seen her  
Laid on the bier, say that she looks most heavenly.

*Diana.* I saw her lately, as you'll see her now,  
Lying but newly dead, her blind sweet looks  
Border'd with lilies, which her pretty maiden,  
'Twi'xt tears and kisses, put about her hair,  
To show her spotless life, and that wrong man  
Dared not forbid, for very piteous truth ;  
And as she lay thus, not more unresisting  
Than all her life, I pitied even him,  
To think, that let him weep, or ask her pardon  
Never so much, she could not answer more.

*Colonna.* They turn the corner now, and now they pass.

[*The Choristers suddenly become loud, and are heard passing underneath the window. After they have passed, COLONNA resumes.*

Farewell, sweet soul! Death and thy patient life  
Were so well match'd, I scarce can think thee alter'd.

*Enter DA RIVA.*

How now, Da Riva? Found you not Antonio,  
That thus you look amazed? What is't? No harm  
To his poor self?

*Da Riva.* None, none; to him, or any;  
None that shall be; monstrous, and strange, and horrible,  
As ignorance of the peril might have made it.

*Colonna,* }  
*Olimpia,* } To whom?  
and *Diana.* }

*Da Riva.* Prepare to hear, and to endure,  
A chance, the very hope of which is awful,  
It raises up a vision with a look  
So mixed of life and death.

*Colonna,* }  
*Olimpia,* } What is it?  
and *Diana.* }

*Da Riva.* You,  
Colonna, will to Antonio instantly,  
To keep him ignorant till all be known:  
You, my sweet friends, with me, to seek some nest  
Of balm and comfort, close upon the spot,  
Against a chance—Think me not mad, but hearken.

*Diana.* He has murdered her! He thought to murder  
her,

And his hand failed.

*Olimpia.* Poison ! Oh Heavens !

*Colonna.* Pray, calm them.

*Da Riva.* Scarcely ten minutes had I left you here,  
When Fiordilisa, paler than her mistress,  
Found me with Giulio by Antonio's door.

*Colonna.* You have not seen him then ?

*Da Riva.* Yes ;—the poor maiden  
Told us of an appearance she had noted  
All night about the lips of the dear lady,  
Which made her call to mind stories, too true,  
Of horrors in the dreadful pestilence,  
Of hasty shrouds, sleeps found to have been sleeps only,  
And gentle creatures grown so desperate,  
That they had raised their hands against their lives  
For waking to the sense of life itself.

*Olimpia.* Where now they bear her !

*Diana.* Not unknown.

*Colonna.* Be tranquil,

Watch has been set ?

*Da Riva.* And will look close till morn.  
Giulio, from time to time, 'twixt them and us,  
Will fly with news ; and meantime sweep we all  
Each to our tasks, and bless the hope that sets them.  
If true, oh think where but in sleep she lies :  
If vain, she still will bless us from the skies.

[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II.

*A Cemetery, with an open Vault in the back-ground, and a dim noise of revelry, as from some house in the neighbourhood.*

*Enter GIULIO.*

*Giulio.* What devilishness, and outrage to the dead,  
About whose homes the rudest-footed churl  
Treads softly, e'en by day. The noble hearts  
I serve, have been so gencrous, that these drunkards  
Count it but as a folly worth their cheating,  
And have shut up their promised vigilance  
Within the roaring wine-house. (*Noise again.*) Only one  
Remains within the gate, who let me in,  
Staring 'twixt sleep and glass-eyed sottishness.  
Yet see—the vault has been left open, wide  
As fear could wish. What, if !—Methinks the man  
Look'd at me yonder;—yes, and is still looking;—(*Noise  
again*)  
And now the noise allures him, and he turns.  
Hark ! Not a sound, but when the riot swells!  
So still all else, that I can hear the grass  
Whisper, as in lament, through its lorn hair.  
I'll in, and look.—What if a hope almost

As dreadful, for the moment, as worst fear,  
Show to my heart its selfish cowardice,  
And I should see her, not still laid, but risen !  
Sitting perhaps, with eyes encountering mine,  
And muttering lips ! I'll take thy burden, horror,  
Upon me, for love's sake and gratitude's ;  
Oh will I, Heaven ! e'en should my knees melt under me,  
And every pore turn to a swoon of water.

[*He enters the Vault, and returns.*

Gone ! Borne away ? or of her own self gone ?  
Gone, without friend to help, or to pursue !  
And whither ? or with help itself how dreadful !  
What hands for lilies innocence in the night !  
Perhaps that very house—What ho, there !—you !

[*The gate of the Cemetery is loudly shut.*

He shuts the gate ! he shuts, and is himself  
Gone ! and forbid it, Heaven, not for my sake,  
But hers, but hers, left me, perhaps on purpose,  
To call in vain, and 'gainst the bolts grow mad !  
Pardon, sweet Heavens ! I'll not be mad, for fear  
Of madness, but be calm. What ho, there ! Stay !  
Come back, for Heaven's sweet sake, and ope the doors.

[*Exit.*

## SCENE III.

*A Room in AGOLANTI'S House in Florence. AGOLANTI discovered looking out of an open window, and then quitting it. Sound of lutes in the distance.*

*Agolanti.* That sound of homeward lutes, which I arose  
Out of my restless bed, to feel companion'd with,  
For some few passing moments, was the last  
To-night in Florence. Not a footstep more  
Touches the sleeping streets; that now seem witch'd  
With the same fears that walk around me still,  
Ready to greet me with unbearable eyes.  
All air seems whispering of me; and things visible  
Take meaning in their shapes, not safe to know.  
Oh that a masculine and religious soul  
Should be thus feeble! And why? what should I fear?  
My name has worship still; and still will have it,  
If honourable wealth and sacred friends  
Can shield it from mad envy; and if I err'd  
Sometimes as husband, she I loved err'd more,  
With spirit so swelling as outstrain'd her life.  
Oh, every man's infirmities, more or less,  
Mix with his love; and they who in excess  
Feel not all passions, felt not love like mine,

Nor knew what worlds, when my despair seem'd angriest,  
I could have given for one, for but one look  
Of sure and heartfelt pity in her eyes.  
But she is gone; and for whate'er I did  
Not well, I have humbled me to the god of power;  
And given the shrine, near which her dust is laid,  
New glorious beams of paintings and of gold,  
Doubling its heaven to the white angelical tapers;  
For which, they say, the sovereign Holiness  
Himself will thank me. And yet,— thus, even thus,  
I feel,—a shudderer at the very silence,  
Which seems preparing me some angriness.  
I'll close the window; and rouse Ippolito  
To read to me in some religious book.

[*Going towards the window, he stops and listens.*

What was it? a step? a voice?

*Ginevra (is heard outside).* Agolanti!

Francesco Agolanti! husband!

*Agolanti (crossing himself and moving towards the window).* It draws me,

In horror, to look on it.—Oh God!—I see it!

There is—something there—standing in the moonlight.

*Ginevra.* Come forth, and help me in—Oh help me in!

*Agolanti.* It speaks! (*very loudly.*) I cannot bear the  
dreadfulness!

The horror's in my throat, my hair, my brain!

Detestable thing! witch! mockery of the blessed!

Hide thee ! Be nothing ! Come heaven and earth betwixt us !

[*He closes the shutters in a frenzy, and then rushes apart.*

Oh God ! a little life ;—a little reason ;—

Till I reach the arms of the living.—Ippolito !

Tonio ! Giuseppe ! Lights ! Wake Father Angelo !

[*He staggers out.*

---

#### SCENE IV.

*A retired corner in Florence, in front of RONDINELLI'S House, with Garden-wall and Trees. RONDINELLI out of doors, musing.*

*Roudinelli.* A gentle night, clothed with the moon and silence.—

Blessed be God, who lets us see the stars ;  
 Who puts no black and sightless gulf between  
 Those golden gazers out of immensity,  
 And mortal eyes, yearning with hope and love !—  
 She's now a blessed spirit beyond those lights,  
 With happy eternal cheek. And yet, methinks,  
 Serious as well as sweet is bliss in heaven,  
 And permits pity for those that are left mourning.  
 Gentle is greatest and habitual nature !  
 Gentle the starry space ! gentle the air !  
 Gentle the softly ever-moving trees !



Gentle time past and future ! both asleep,  
While the quick present is loud by daylight only.  
And gently I come to nature, to be worthy  
Of comfort and of her, and mix myself  
With the everlasting mildness in which she lives.—  
Sweetest and best ! my couch a widower seems,  
Altho' it knew thee not : and I came forth  
To join thee as I could ; for thou and I  
Are thus unhoused alike, and in no home.  
The wide earth holds us both.

*GINEVRA enters, and halts apart, looking at him.*

*Ginevra.* Antonio !

*Rondinelli.* Oh earth and heaven ! What art thou ?

*Ginevra.* Fear not to look on me, Antonio !

I am Ginevra—buried, but not dead,  
And have got forth and none will let me in.  
Even my mother is frighten'd at my voice,  
And I have wander'd to thy gentle doors.  
Have pity on me, good Antonio,  
And take me from the dreadful streets at night.

*Rondinelli.* Oh Heaven ! Oh all things terrible and  
beautiful !

Art thou not angel, showing me some dread sight  
Of trial and reproof ? Or art thou indeed  
Still living, and may that hand be touch'd with mine ?

*[She has held out her hand to him.]*

*Ginevra.* Clasp it, and help me towards thy door ; for  
wonder

And fear, and that long deadly swoon, have made  
Me too a terror to myself, and scarcely  
I know how I stand thus.

*Rondinelli (moving slowly, but eagerly, and breathless towards her).* Infold us, air !

Infold us, night and time, if it be vision !  
If not—if not—

[*He touches her hand, and clasps her to his heart.*

It is Ginevra's self,  
And in Antonio's arms !—She faints ! Oh sweetest !  
Oh cheek, whose tears have been with mine—She'll die !—  
She'll die, and I shall have kill'd her !

*Ginevra (sliding down on her knees).* Strength has risen  
o'er me from the depths of weakness.  
Oh Signor Rondinelli ! Oh good Antonio,  
Be all I think thee, and think not ill of me,  
Nor let me pass thy threshold, having a fear  
Of the world's speck, to stain a spotless misery.

*Rondinelli.* Oh rise ; and when I think that thou canst  
stand  
Unhelp'd of these most glad but reverent arms,  
Aloof will I wait from thee, as far apart  
As now I closely grasp'd thee. I was mad,  
And am, with joy, to find thee alive, and near me ;  
But, oh blest creature ! Oh lady ! Antonio's angel !

Say but the word—do—and I love thee so,  
That after thou hast tasted food and wine,  
Myself will bear thee to thy house, thy husband,  
Laying a heav'n on his repentant heart.

*Ginevra.* Never. The grave itself has been between us ;  
The hand of heaven has parted us, acknowledged  
By his own driving me from his shrieking doors :  
And none but thy door, and a convent's now,  
To which thy honourable haste will guide me,  
Shall open to me in this world again.  
Shelter me till the morn. Thou hast a mother ?

*Roulinelli.* Blessed be Heav'n, I have ;—a right good  
mother—

Gentle, and strong, and pious. She will be yours,  
So long as our poor walls boast of inclosing you,  
And instantly. You scarcely shall have set  
Your foot in the house, but with religious joy,  
She will arise, and take you to her bed,  
And make a child of you, lady, till you sleep.

*Ginevra.* Blessed be Heav'n indeed. I can walk strangely.

[*Exeunt.*

## ACT V.

## SCENE I.

*A Room in the House of RONDINELLI, who enters.*

---

*Rondinelli.* Five blessed days, and not a soul but we  
Knows what this house in its rich bosom holds.  
The man whom dear Diana bribed to secrecy  
For our sakes, is now secret for his own ;  
And here, our guest is taken for a kinswoman,  
Fled from a wealthy but a hated suitor,  
Out of no hatred, haply, to myself ;  
For which, as well as for her own sweet sake,  
The servants love her, and will keep her close.  
She holds my mother's hand, and loves her eyes ;—  
And yester evening she twice spake my name,  
Meaning another's. Hence am I most proud,  
Hence potent ; hence, such bliss it is to love  
With smallest thought of being loved again,  
That though I know not how this heav'n on earth  
Can change to one still heavenlier, nor less holy,

I am caught up, like saints in ecstasies,  
Above the ground ;—tread air ;—see not the streets  
Through which I pass, for swiftness of delight,  
And hugging to my secret heart one bosom.  
I live, as though the earth held but two faces,  
And mine perpetually look'd on hers.

*Enter GIULIO.*

How now, sweet Giulio? why so hush'd? our visitor  
No longer sleeps by day. (*GIULIO kisses his hand.*)

And why this style  
Of pretty reverence and zeal, as though  
You came betwixt myself and some new trouble?

*Giulio.* Nay, sir.

*Rondinelli.* You smile, to reassure me. Well;  
Yet you breathe hard, and have been flying hither,  
Your pretty plumage beaten with the wind,  
And look as haggard pale, as when you brought  
The daybreak to us from that cage, and found  
Safe-housed our bird of paradise. What is it?

*Giulio.* I came, that Marco might not come. I thought,  
Dear lord and master, Giulio's lips had best  
Bring news of one whose face the servants know not,  
Now in the hall, asking to speak with you.

*Rondinelli.* What face?—Who is it?

*Giulio.* He saw me, and started;  
And yet not angrily.

*Rondinelli.* Who saw? No kinsman

Of my dear mother's guest?

*Giulio.* No, sir; no *kinsman*.

*Rondinelli.* No officer from the court, or clergy?

*Giulio.* Neither.

*Rondinelli.* Our mutual friends are all, this instant,  
with us,

Here, in the house. They, if they saw this man—

Say—would they know him?

*Giulio.* Surely, sir; none better,

Or with less willingness;—though five short days

Have bow'd him down, as with a score of years;

His eye that was so proud, now seems but stretch'd

With secret haste and sore anxiety;

And what he speaks, he seems yet not to think of.

*Rondinelli.* Come, let us speak his name, lest a mad  
chance

That 'tis not he, make me repent the cowardice.

'Tis he? the man?

*Giulio.* The Signor Agolanti.

*Rondinelli* (*aside*). Life is struck black. Yet not so,  
sweetest face,

Not so. He shall not hurt a hair of thy head,

While the earth holds us.—Guess you what he knows?

*Giulio.* All.

*Rondinelli.* How?

*Giulio.* I saw, coming from out his door,

The sexton's boy, his lowering front in smiles  
 For some triumphant craft; and not long afterwards  
 Came he, half staggering, shrouding with his cap  
 His haggard eyes. He bent his steps this way,  
 And I took wings before him, to give Marco  
 Speech for him should he come, and be his harbinger,  
 Sir, with yourself.

*Rondinelli.* Best boy! my friend, and brother!

But, Giulio, say you not a word elsewhere.

You understand me?

*Giulio.* Oh sir,—yes.

*Rondinelli,* Bid Marco

Conduct him hither.

*Giulio.* Geri and myself

May remain then? Not within hearing, sir,

But within call?

*Rondinelli.* Good lad! but there's no need.

See you, that not another eye in the house

Behold him coming.—Let him be shown up.

[*Exit GIULIO; and after a while, enter AGOLANTI, looking round the room. They pause a little, and regard one another.*]

*Agolanti.* You know why I am here?

*Rondinelli.* I do.

*Agolanti.* Five days—

(*Aside*) Rouse thee, Agolanti. Never shook'st thou yet

At living face:—what quail'd thee, coming hither?

(*To RONDINELLI.*) Five days, and nothing told a husband?

*Rondinelli.*

Nothing!

*Agolanti.* Nothing that he deem'd mortal.—But with  
whom

Am I thus speaking? With one honourable?

One who though lawless in his wish, was held

Scrupulous in action? of nice thought for others?

*Rondinelli.* The angel who came hither, is angel still.

*Agolanti.* Signor Rondinelli, respect this grief.

It respects thee, if thou art still the man

I thought thee once. A graver faith than most,

And love most loving, if its truth were known,

Did, from excess of both—But what is past,

Is past;—a gentleman is before me;—his foe,

Or one he deem'd such, at a disadvantage;

Illness, on all sides, gone;—I am here; am ready

To beg her pardon for that sore mistake,

Which for its very madness, friends, methinks,

Might haste to pardon;—and so take her home.

*Rondinelli.* Your words are gentle, Signor Agolanti:—

I thank you; and would to Heav'n, what must be borne,

Were always borne so well. The thing you speak of,

Seems easy, but in truth is not so.

*Agolanti.*

How?

*Rondinelli.* A bar has risen.

*Agolanti.*

A bar!



*Rondinelli.* Which, to speak briefly,  
Has render'd it not possible.

*Agolanti.* Not possible!

(*Aside.*) He said that she was "angel still."—(To RON-  
DINELLI.) She still

Is living?

*Rondinelli.* Yes.

*Agolanti.* And here?

*Rondinelli.* She is so.

*Agolanti.* Able

To move? recover'd?

*Rondinelli.* She is still but weak,

Yet hourly gaining strength.

*Agolanti.* What hinders then—

You do not speak. Tell me, what strange prevention,  
What inconceivable "bar," I think, you call'd it—

*Rondinelli.* Signor Francesco, shall distress you  
greatly;

And, for all sakes, as you will see too well,

Would to God any other man on earth

Had to make this disclosure.

*Agolanti.* In God's name then,

What is it?

*Rondinelli.* Her own consent would be required.

*Agolanti.* Well?

*Rondinelli.* And 'twould not be given.—She 'll not return.

*Agolanti.* Will not return!—How "not return?" She's  
well?

She's better—perhaps would wait some days—yes—  
Well, sir—when will she? I'll see her instantly,  
And then we'll settle when. But you can tell me  
At once.—Be pleased to say, sir, when you think  
She'll come.

*Rondinelli.* 'Tis her own terrible word I speak, sir,  
The night when she stood houseless at my door,  
Dead to the past, alive to virtue only,  
And honourable grief. She will return  
Never.

*Agolanti.* Never return! Ginevra Agolanti  
Never return? not come to her own house?  
Impossible!—Witchcraft has been here! Seduction!  
Where is she? Let me see her—instantly, sir!  
Would you part man and wife?

*Rondinelli.* Alas! she holds them  
Parted already, not by me.

*Agolanti.* A wife  
Has but one home, sir.

*Rondinelli.* Sir, she thought so.

*Agolanti.* Sir, fever and delirium would not have  
made

A friend unpardonable in my eyes  
For having mis-beheld me.

*Rondinelli.* Surely, sir:—  
Yet I conceive there is a difference.  
But I am not the judge.

*Agolanti.* You are, sir ;—I fear  
You are ;—I fear you have made yourself the judge, sir,  
The criminal—the detainer. Why say nothing  
Of her being here? Why let me find it out  
From a gross boy, who has quarrell'd with his master,  
And makes my shame his profit? Housed with thee too!

*Rondinelli.* Nay, in the melancholy convent housed,  
Soon as its doors, now hung with flowers for Rome,  
Be open to admit the appeals of sorrow!

*Agolanti.* Appeals of lies and crimes.—And so my wounds  
Must be torn open afresh! hidden from none!  
All eyes must stare upon me! I demand  
To see my wife ;—the lady Agolanti:—  
She is detain'd here. Horrible light begins  
To dawn; there has been dreadful mockery—  
Conspiracy! Worse! You have dishonour'd her.

*Rondinelli.* 'Tis false.—Be calm. Let both be calm,  
nor startle  
Feminine ears with words. Wait in this room,  
Here, on the left, awhile ;—I'll bring herself  
To look upon thy speech, if it so please her ;  
If not, my mother, sir,—you have heard of her,—  
From whom, so help me God, I never yet  
Beheld her separate.

*Agolanti.* I demand—

*Rondinelli.*

This way.

[*Exeunt.*

## SCENE II.

*Another Room.*

*Enter RONDINELLI; and to him, from the opposite side, GIULIO with FIORDILISA, who kisses his hand.*

*Rondinelli.* Sweet Fiordilisa, you attend your mistress  
Too closely. You grow pale.

*Fiordilisa.* 'Twas Giulio's paleness, sir,  
Struck me with mine.

*Rondinelli.* Fear not for him, or any one;  
You see me pale, yet see me smiling too:  
Now go, and with the like good flag advanced  
Of comfort beyond trouble, tell your lady  
I would entreat one word with her, alone.

*Fiordilisa.* I'll think, sir, trouble cannot come to stay  
Within so quiet and so bless'd a house;  
And so I'll try to look. [Exit FIORDILISA.]

*Rondinelli (who has been writing something).* And now  
you, Giulio,  
Go tell the friends who come to greet her rise  
From the sick bed, what shade has follow'd them.  
I fear, from some deep whispering on the stairs  
I caught but now, as we were coming up,  
They heard us wrangling. Say, all's quiet now—

They'll see me soon ; and give this to my mother.

[*Exit GIULIO with the paper ; and enter GINEVRA.*]

My mother would have been before me, lady,  
To beg an audience for her son ; but you,  
Being still the final and sole arbitress  
Of a new question, come with sudden face ;  
It might besit you also, for more reasons  
Than I may speak, to be its first sole hearer.

*Ginevra.* What is it ?

*Rondinelli.* Nothing that need bring those eyes  
Out of the orbs of their sweet self-possession.  
Your thoughts may stay within their heaven, and hear it.  
'Twixt it and you, there is all heaven, and earth.

*Ginevra.* My story is known, ere I have reach'd the  
convent ?

*Rondinelli.* Even so.

*Ginevra.* And somebody has come to claim me ?  
From *him* ?

*Rondinelli.* Not *from* him.

*Ginevra.* From the church then ? No !  
The state ?

*Rondinelli.* I said not *from* him. He is shaken  
Far more than you should be, being what you are,  
And all hearts loving you.

*Ginevra.* Himself !

*Rondinelli.* Himself.—

His haughty neck yet stooping with that night,  
Which smote his hairs half grey. (*She weeps.*)

*Ginevra* (*aside*). Alas!—yet more  
Alas, that I should say it.—Not loud then?  
Not angry?

*Rondinelli*. Only with your vows of refuge,  
And those that stand betwixt his will and power;  
Else humble; nay, in tears, and seeking pardon.  
(*Aside.*) She's wrung to the core!—With grief is't? and  
what grief?

Oh now, all riddles of the heart of love,  
When 'twould at once be generous, yet most mean;  
All truth, yet craft; a sacrifice, yet none;  
Risk all in foppery of supposed desert,  
And then be ready in anguish to cry out  
At being believed, and thought the love it is,  
Martyr beyond all fires, renouncing heaven  
By very reason that none can so have earn'd it;—  
Oh, if she pities him, and relents, and goes  
Back to that house, let her yet weep for me!

*Ginevra*. When I said “Never” to that word “return,”  
He had not suffer'd thus; had not shown sorrow;  
Was not bow'd down with a grey penitence.—  
Sir—I would say, kind host—most kind of men—  
My friend and my preserver—

*Rondinelli*. Say no more,  
So you think well of me.

*Ginevra*. I could say on,

And twenty times as much, so you would think it  
Best, some day hence.—Speak not.—

*Rondinelli.*

Yes, honour bids me;

Honour, above all doubts, even of poor self,  
Whether to gain or lose ;—bids me say bravely,  
Be wise, while generous—Guard the best one's peace,  
Whoe'er that is ;—*her* peace—the rights of goodness  
And vindication of the o'er-seeing heavens,  
High above all wrong hearts,—his,—or mine own.

*Ginevra.* Although you call me “best,” who am not so,  
I'll write that last and noblest admonition  
Within the strongest memory of my soul,  
For all our sakes. The way to him.

*Rondinelli.*

One word.

My mother—she—will see you again sometimes  
In your lot's bettering from its former state,  
As surely it must, your friends now knowing all,  
He sad for all.

*Ginevra.* It is a help I look for.

*Rondinelli.* Her son—forgive him that at this last  
moment

He makes this first and only mention of him,  
Since you vouchsafed to rest your troubles with us,—  
His first—his last ;—may he too, as a friend,  
Hope—that a thought of him—a passing memory—  
Will sometimes mix with hers ?

*Ginevra.*

To think of her

Will be to think of both.

*Rondinelli.* Oh gentlest creature,  
 If what I am about to say to thee  
 Offend thee in the least, count it such madness  
 As innocence may pity; and show no sign  
 Of thy displeasure. Be but mute; and sorrow  
 With as mute thanks shall resume common words.  
 But if, in thy late knowledge of Antonio,  
 Thou hast seen nought, that under happier omens  
 And with all righteous sanction, might have hinder'd thee  
 From piecing out his nature's imperfections  
 With thy sweet thoughts and hourly confidence,  
 Reach him, oh reach, but for one blissful moment,  
 And to make patience beautiful for ever,  
 Thy most true woman's hand.

*[She turns aside, and holds out to him her hand.]*

My heart would drink it.

*[He strains it with both hands against his bosom.]*

Do thy worst, memory, now.—We have known each other  
 For twenty years in this. Your tears embolden you  
 Even to look at me through their glittering veil,  
 And set me some sweet miserable task :—  
 I understand ;—yes, we'll go quietly,  
 And you will let me keep this hand to the door ?  
 We will walk thus. This little walk contains  
 A life !—Might you say one word to me at parting ?

*Ginevra.* Antonio !—may your noble heart be happy.

*[She clasps her hands, and speaks with constant  
 vehemence, looking towards the audience.]*



Alas! alas! Why was that one word utter'd  
To bear down the last patience of my soul,  
And make me cry aloud to Heaven and misery?  
I am most miserable. I am a creature  
That now, for fifteen years, from childhood upwards,  
Till this hard moment, when the heavens forbid it,  
Have known not what it was to shed a tear,  
Which others met with theirs. Therefore mine eyes  
Did learn to hush themselves, and young, grow dry.  
For my poor father knew not how I loved him,  
Nor mother neither; and my severe husband  
Demanded love, not knowing lovingness.  
And now I cry out, wishing to be right,  
And being wrong; and by the side of me  
Weeps the best heart, which ought not so to weep,  
And duty's self seems to turn round upon me,  
And mock me; by whose law nevertheless  
Do I abide, and will I; so pray Heaven  
To keep me in my wits, and teach me better.  
Turn me aside, sweet saints, and let me go.

[While RONDINELLI, who has fall'n on his knee, is  
stretching his hands towards her, the voices of  
AGOLANTI, COLONNA, and DA RIVA, are  
heard in violent quarrel\*.

---

\* The following words of the quarrel are supposed to be uttered during the most violent confusion, and partly at once:—

*Agolanti.* Who sent you here? I never asked for you,  
Nor you—

*Colonna.* And who for you?

*Ginevra.* His voice ! In anger too ? Did you not say  
That he was calm ? Heart-stricken ?

*Roudinelli.* He seem'd so.

*Ginevra.* Perhaps is so, and they mistake his sorrow.  
There's mercy in it: for when danger comes,  
Duty cries loudest. Ay, and here's the friend  
Will not forsake me still, but bear me on,  
Right where the trumpet of the angel calls.

[*He speeds her out.*

## SCENE THE LAST.

*Another Room in RONDINELLI'S House. AGOLANTI and  
COLONNA, in loud dispute, with their Swords drawn,  
DA RIVA interposing.*

*Agolanti.* I say—

*Colonna.* What say you then ?

*Da Riva.* Well, let him speak.

*Agolanti.* Who ?

*Da Riva.* Shut the door,

I say.

*Colonna.* Ay, who ? What idiot, or what brute  
Could that be ?

*Agolanti.* Heaven itself, whom you blaspheme.  
My voice shall reach it.

*Da Riva.* Door ! the door ! he has open'd it  
On purpose ; see you not ? Follow him out.

*Agolanti.* I say, that nothing upon earth, no insolence—

*Colonna.* House-coward!

*Da Riva.* Hush.

*Agolanti.* Nor prudent friend—

*Colonna.* Still, coward.

*Agolanti.* Nor talk of law, nor threats of church itself,  
Shall move my foot one jot from where I stand,  
Till she whom law, church, heaven and earth join'd to me,  
Shall join me again, and quit this infamous house.

*Da Riva.* To be twice slain in thine?

*Colonna.* And twice thrust forth,  
If she return to fright thee?

*Agolanti.* I've seen the page here;  
Seen you; guess at your women; and shall know  
What hideous trap has steep'd her soul in blushes,  
If she come not.

*Colonna* (*going to draw his sword*). Blush in thy grave  
to say so.

*Enter RONDINELLI with GINEVRA, followed by his Mother,  
OLIMPIA, DIANA, GIULIO, FIORDILISA, and Servants.*

*Rondinelli.* Forbear! an angel comes. Take her, and  
pray  
Just Heaven to make her happy as thyself.

*Colonna.* Antonio, thou art damn'd to think it. See—

*Da Riva.* He shrinks from her again in very fear,  
Which in his rage of vanity he'll avenge.

*Agolanti.* I hear not what they say, my poor Ginevra,  
Thinking of thee alone.—Come, bear thee up,  
And bravely,—as thou dost. We'll leave this place—  
This way—So—so—

*Da Riva.* Antonio, will you let him?  
Think of herself.—'Tis none of yours, this business,  
But the whole earth's.

*Rondinelli.* She will not have me stay him—  
I dare not—My own house too—See, she goes with him.

*Da Riva.* Call in the neighbours—

*Colonna.* Do, there's a right soul—  
Tell all.

*Agolanti.* She's with me still! She's mine! Who stays us.  
*Olimpia* and *Diana.* Ginevra! sweetest friend!

*Agolanti.* Who triumphs now? Who laughs? Who  
mocks at pandars,  
Cowards, and shameless women?

*Ginevra* (*bursting away from him*). Loose me, and  
hearken.

Madness will crush my senses in, or speak:—  
The fire of the heavenward sense of my wrongs crowns me;  
The voice of the patience of a life cries out of me;  
Every thing warns me. I will *not* return.  
I claim the judgment of most holy church.  
I'll not go back to that unsacred house,  
Where heavenly ties restrain not hellish discord,  
Loveless, remorseless, never to be taught.

I came to meet with pity, and find shame ;  
 Tears, and find triumph ; peace, and a loud sword.  
 The convent walls—Bear me to those—In secret,  
 If it may be ; if not, as loudly as strife,—  
 Drawing a wholesome tempest through the streets ;  
 And there, as close as bonded hands may cling,  
 I'll hide, and pray for ever, to my grave.—  
 Come you, and you, and you, and help me walk.

*Agolanti.* Let her not stir. Nor dare to stir one soul,  
 Lest in the madness of my wrongs I smite ye.

*Ginevra (to AGOLANTI).* Look at me, and remember.

Think how oft  
 I've seen as sharp a point turn'd on thyself  
 To fright me ; how, upon a weaker breast ;  
 And what a world of shames unmasculine  
 These woman's cheeks would have to burn in telling.—  
 The white wrath festers in his face, and then  
 He's devilish.

*Rondinelli.* Will you let her fall ? She swoons.

[*He catches her in his arms.*]

*Agolanti (turning to kill him).* Where'er she goes, she  
 shall not go there.

*Colonna (intercepting him with his own sword).* Dastard !  
 Strike at a man so pinion'd ?

*Agolanti.* Die then for him. (*Strikes at COLONNA.*)

*Diana and Olimpia.* Help ! Help !

[*The doors fly open, enter GIULIO followed by  
 Officer and Guard.*]

*Giulio.* 'Tis here! Part them, for mercy's sake.

*Colonna.* Die thou. (*He pierces him.*)

*Da Riva.* He's slain! What hast thou done?

*Colonna.* The deed

Of his own will. One must have perish'd, sir (*to Officer*);

One, my dear friend (*to DA RIVA.*) Which was the  
corse to be?

*Da Riva* (*looking at it*). There's not a heart here, but  
will say, 'Twas he.

[*Curtain falls.*]

THE END.

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